

Nepal Pledges to Pursue Policies of Independence

The political developments in Nepal are interesting and worth studying.

In the post-Monarchical period, the Nepal had witnessed long periods of political instabilities. In two decades period, no govt. has lasted beyond 8 or 9 months. There were many permutations and combinations in the political forces. The drafting of Constitution has proved to be a herculean job.

Now, a coalition of Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist and the CP Nepal (Maoist Centre) is in power in Nepal. These two parties together carry a two thirds (174 out of 275 MPs) majority in the Parliament. So the govt. claims a political stability for its rule. It has spelt out its policy positions on various questions.

The Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali has said in an interview published in July 20, 2018 issue of FRONTLINE: "While protectionism in the US or the United Kingdom represented the interest of the multinationals, the capitalists and a handful of the elite there, here in Nepal the nationalist feeling represents the aspirations of the broad masses of people, who want to be independent in the real sense. Independence is not a word or terminology. We talk about its real implications. We have every right to choose our path of development, to choose our system of governance and to choose our foreign policy independently."

"In the past, in various cases, our internal policies became the bilateral agenda (between Nepal and India). We are bit embarrassed when our Prime Minister visited another country and said that our constitution would be in this way or that way; when he expressed his commitment saying that this time I was defeated but next time I promise I would fulfill my commitment. This is absurd."

"So not only in discussions with India and China but elsewhere too, we want to draw a clear boundary line stating that internal matters will never be the issues in a bilateral discussion. Second, we have an independent foreign policy. Sometimes we have seen in the past that some Prime Ministers pledged to go in compliance with your foreign policy in the UN and in other multilateral fora. That is totally unacceptable because Nepal is an independent country. It has its own priorities and concerns. India has its own regional and global aspirations. Similarly China, too, has aspirations. We cannot be a part of these ambitions."

When asked about Nepal's "special" relationship with India, the Nepal foreign Minister said: "Sometimes, the word 'special' can have various connotations. So we refrain from using the word. But it is unique one ... the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) is working hard to totally evaluate our relations The 1950 treaty (Indo-Nepal Treaty on Peace and Friendship) must be reviewed and must be replaced by a newer one that reflects the present-day situation."

Nepal's Prime Minister K.P.Oli has said in an interview on June 23, 2018 in Beijing: "We are firmly committed to not allowing our territory to be used against the sovereign interests of our neighbors. We have the resolve to maintain this and we naturally expect similar assurances from our neighbors."

With regard to relations with India and China, he said: "We believe that Nepal can serve as a bridge between our two neighbors. In fact we want to move from the state of landlocked to a land-linked country through the development of adequate cross border connectivity. Our friendship with both neighbors places us in an advantageous position to realize this goal."

Here these ideas reflect the feelings and aspirations of Nepal people. It seems, the Nepal Govt. has formulated these policies reviewing the performance of previous Nepal governments as well as the experiences it had from the rulers of other countries like India who had shown enough of their exploitative nature and big brotherly behavior.

We are now in a capitalist world dominated by imperialism. In this situation, it is not difficult to understand how difficult it will be for a small and weak country like Nepal to pursue an independent path in the face of hurdles and attacks from the imperialists and big corporate houses. Future alone can tell how the strong and dependable democratic economic foundations are laid, especially in the country side, for the democracy to sustain in the political sphere; how the problems of working class, peasants and other oppressed people are addressed and how their support is mobilized in the struggle to face the challenges in the way of translating the aspirations of independence into a reality.
