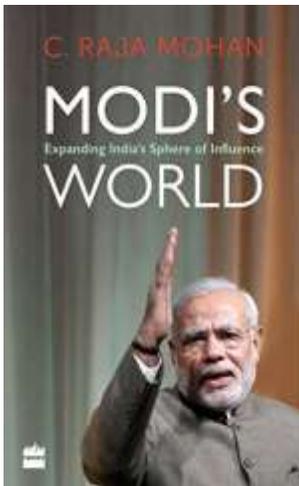


Vol. 7, No. 2: CLRI May 2020 | p. 240-244

Shubhangi Kansal Reviews C R Mohan's *Modi's World*

Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence

Modi's world, an exemplary blend of columns from the strategic point of view is authored by C. Raja Mohan; one of India's leading commentators on diplomacy and national security who has also worked as a foreign affairs columnist at Indian Express for a considerable period of time. His book brings attention to how Narendra Modi's robust diplomacy has elevated India's position on global platforms and how his government is focused to achieve international goals for the country by improving relations with neighboring countries. The book considers the fact that Modi government is initiating major pathways envisioning improvements in international relations and building upon from where his predecessors Manmohan Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee left.



"Make your passion, your paycheck" goes the saying, holds true in case of both- Modi and the author. Have a glance through the biography of Narendra Damodar Das Modi and dig a bit deeper, one can find his passion for social service in addition to his innate self-sacrificing nature which inspired him to enter into the politics of the nation and opt for it as an occupation. Similarly, I feel Raja Mohan's passion for South Asian Studies during his college days must have provided him an edge, henceforth acting as the driving force of inspiration behind his writing.

The book comprises of 10 chapters where the author introduces key differences between UPA-I, II's agenda with NDA's manifesto for the 2014 elections. Remaining text deals with the diverse topics of Indian international politics ranging from India's 'Neighbours First' policy to the 'Pakistan Problem,' touches onto India's series of new partnerships with giant economies such as US, China and Japan, also covers developments around Indian Ocean region leaving us with a food for thought i.e. 'Does this mark the beginning of Modi Era for India?'

As a reviewer, I found Chapter 9, 'Cultural Diplomacy' an engaging read- not only because it infuses India's soft power with diplomacy but also because it talks about Modi's linguistic approach. In a country where English decides the competence of an individual, Modi has been non-hesitant in using Hindi for delivering most of his speeches. Modi's idea of 'vikaasvaad' and 'vistarvaad' i.e. progress and expansion appealed to me the most. The fact that he understands where India has been lacking for so many years and working on it relentlessly is what differentiates him from the crowd. He also realizes that India is doing relatively good in terms of manpower and intelligence, the only problem is our lack of focus on the grounds that bind us together, for example Religion, Cricket, Yoga precisely the fields he included into his focus list.

By and large, Raja Mohan focuses upon the importance of regional diplomacy as the key to achieve the status of 'Vishwaguru' or 'Sone ki chidiya' as India was referred to before Independence. Modi's

wisdom and self-standing has been commendable. Even in 2014, his tactics proved to be successful in handling sensitive issues like practicing regional diplomacy with Pakistan, USA or China.

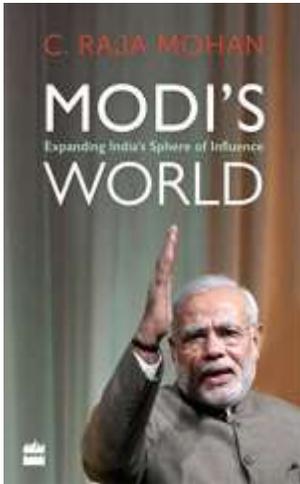
Modi, at first was suspected to be negative about Pakistan since he bashed the nation during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat; led to a nation-wide dilemma when he relied on the policy of friendly relations with neighbourhood Pakistan. Though Modi has been claiming of 'No-First Use of Power,' has firmly mentioned the policy of 'Zero Tolerance' if the neighbours initiate any application of force. Want an example? Have a look at India's Insurgence attack against Pakistan after URI attacks. Talking of the giant economies, Modi wanted to increase the foreign direct investment from China which he did in Gujarat, now wanted the whole nation to benefit; thus making India's cooperation with China a part of the Sabarmati Summit, did not ignore China's border transgressions too. Regarding USA, Modi aimed to establish closer ties which proved to be a great success after 'PM's R-Day invite to Obama' which established as a benchmark in the Indian history, the first time Delhi invited American President to Republic Day Celebrations and laid the foundations of a strategic bilateral partnership on counter-terrorism and homeland security demonstrates Modi's eye for detail. Henceforth, it can be summarized that a common pattern has been followed throughout the text i.e. Modi has a strong bent towards Confident Globalization in terms of free flow of money, goods and services with an increased emphasis on military, per se.

While Modi acted on the roads of rationale and practicality so far, which he inflicts by parting ways from NAM and anti-West mode of functioning followed during the Nehruvian era of 38 years; the following statement is my favorite take away from the book-

"The re-orientation of India's international role might well have acquired an irreversible momentum under Narendra Modi"

The reason this statement touched me the most is due to its relevance and accuracy of future predictions. Modi undoubtedly did

an appraisable job without letting the country down even once, and the fact that the author has been so confident with Modi's single-handed decisions within the limited time frame of 9 months (after which the book published) is quite surprising, surely adds up new concepts to the social science lexicon.



Overall, I would rate the book as 4/5 as it is an effective commentary and a good read for the people of all ages given the ease of language. Take away from the book are clarity in author's viewpoints, insights into India's political system since Independence including its loopholes, Modi's government policy and its pros and cons, and how the policies have succeeded/ failed in uplifting India's image on international forums. What doesn't work in the book's favor is the limited timeline covered, so you can't expect the book to give you a fair analysis of the long-term vision and the work to be done. To sum it all, I would say read it if you want to witness the vision and work done by Modi government in 9 months tenure.

The thought that reading Modi's World provoked in my mind is, "If all of the economic and social policy decisions were quick and effective under Modi, what were the reasons behind the delay of UPA government's lack of initiative on the same? Was there a problem with India being a diverse country or red-tapism compiled with internal politics that made the decision-making process tedious, if that is the case how has the scenario evolved?"

Title: Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence

Author: C. Raja Mohan

Publisher: HarperCollins India

Available: Amazon

About the reviewer



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About the author

C. Raja Mohan

C. Mohan, a leading commentator on international affairs, has long offered deep insights into India's engagement with the world. The Foreign Policy magazine named him one of the world's top hundred global thinkers in 2009. He is a contributing editor for The Indian Express and a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, Delhi. Raja Mohan is also associated with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore, and the Lowy Institute, Sydney. He has served on India's National Security Advisory Board. His earlier books include Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy; Impossible Allies: India, the United States and the Global Nuclear Order; and Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.



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