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Biden/Harris As PM Modi's "Dream Team"?



*The US will have a Vice President of Indian descent. Kamala Harris, Biden's Vice-President elect, born in the USA, is the daughter of an Indian lady from Chennai, South East India, who had immigrated to California for higher studies. Kamala Harris' father was Jamaican, who had immigrated to the USA, also for higher studies. According to all accounts available, Kamala's Indian background must be predominant, although she grew up in an African-American community. She may call herself a person of colour, but Indians first of all will see in her the Indian legacy. And Indians may ask themselves what is in it politically for India, write former Swiss Ambassadors **Philippe WELTI** and **Daniel WOKER**, Co-founders of [Share-an-Ambassador/Geopolitical Coaching](#).*

India's media and the public at large remember well the high-profile official encounters between their Prime Minister Modi and US-President Trump, one in America, one in India, both noticed for a stark contrast between the extravagancy of the receiving audiences of tens of thousands of people and its meagre political content. Both leaders, loyal to their reputation, had prematurely announced tremendous benefits flowing from their encounters. But in the end, both made minimal concessions in their assumed national interest and both reaped minimal benefits for their economies. Trump did not get the large arms deals he had expected, Modi did not get higher US-immigration quotas for Indian specialists he had wished. Exaggerated receptions, exaggerated promises, much ado about practically nothing! The two leaders' comparable populist policies and rhetoric had proven that they were unable to generate mutually beneficial advantages.

This is the background against which Kamala Harris' partial Indian identity must be measured. The future Vice President of the USA has, in her professional career as Californian law enforcement official and senator, fought for equality for women, for races, for different ethnic descents; she has campaigned on the belief in the value and importance of democratic institutions for fairness in society. Most probably, she will

therefore see in Modi's Hindu-nationalist policies and achievements the opposite of her values and of American interests. When judging Modi's explicit anti-Muslim bias extending into literal persecution, Kamala Harris may inevitably remember her Indian civil service grandfather's endeavours for the resettlement of refugees from East Pakistan in the aftermath of the country's partition with Pakistan. Recently, Harris expressed concern about Kashmir, whose autonomous status India's central government revoked last year. Clearly, Modi would have a critical standing before Harris and the prevailing political culture of the Democrats.

On the other hand, a new Administration in Washington will bear in mind that the United States have developed, since Bush's rapprochement with India in 2000, a strategic partnership with India. The partnership is one of the US' cornerstones in its Pivot to Asia and its Indo-Pacific concept for the protection and the promotion of free and open maritime lines on international waters in the region. Also, it serves, in the framework of alliances with other Asian nations, to contain Chinese expansion into South East Asia and the Pacific.

Thus, Modi, despite his controversial domestic position as a political leader will also figure as a strategic heavyweight in America's regional power equation. He will remain an essential interlocutor of the incoming Democrats' Administration in Washington. In addition, the Biden/Harris Government will be more aware of the moral value and strategic importance of steady reliable relations with allies than the Trump Administration has demonstrated with its repeated disrespect for longstanding loyalties. Therefore, India will remain, with or without Modi, one of the key US-allies in the Indo-Pacific region.



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