

To: Prime Minister Narendra Modi
From: Chief of Staff
Subject: Ministerial Appointments in preparation of upcoming elections
Date: January 18, 2016

Problem:

We, the Bharatiya Jana Party(BJP), must take drastic action in order to maintain our power in the legislature in preparation for the 2017 electoral elections and to renew your mandate in the 2019 national election. Many key regions are under opposition rule which threatens your power as the chief executive.

Solution:

I propose we start forming a new coalition government with key individuals by appointing key individuals to ministerial positions. This will secure the votes of demographics that are electorally contentious. Our top priority is the region of Uttar Pradesh as it holds 80 of the 545 parliament seats. The conclusion is that we need a majority rule in the government to prevent an unproductive gridlocked legislature that would result in your removal from power.

Problem in depth:

In our parliamentary system the executive branch and legislative branch are fused and so coordination is encouraged(Samuels). It is very unlikely for you to have a productive rule if the BJP becomes the minority party because you do not have the same veto powers as the president. Fighting against the legislative body that would mostly disagree with your stances can and will result in your removal from office in a vote of no confidence. As a prime minister you do not have special agenda setting powers that a president would(cox). You cannot take a minority stance and pull the legislature towards your agenda from the status quo. You have to appoint ministers that will promote your agenda on your behalf.

Solution in Depth – Agenda Setting Power

I recommend that you forming a coalition with key parties by appointing legislators to ministerial positions. The ministerial positions are special agenda setters in parliament so can decide what to vote on and what the terms of debate are. The majority government gains all of these agenda setting powers. Therefore, maximizing the number of agenda setters in your party is in your best interest because it also maximizes your power to use the legislature to your party's goals. This means you will expand the number of appointed ministers thus increasing the total number of agenda setters than can push forward your agenda.

How is agenda setting a factor?

Legislators prefer to spend the least amount of time possible voting. All motions must be passed in the plenary time, the time where there is an open assembly. Special agenda setting powers to a select few help save time but also give them unique powers and is where our

ministers can exploit the legislature. In a legislature with no special agenda setters, plenary time is squandered and an Otherwise minor opinion can completely stall the passing of a popular piece of legislature. Without these special agenda setting powers, unanimity is required and gridlock is likely because the ability to veto vastly outweighs the ability to pass legislature.

Positive agenda power:

New ministers have proposal rights that can bypass first going to a committee, meaning enacting laws becomes expedited. Even if a minister has a minority opinion they can manipulate the limited amount of time in order to make an otherwise not unpopular bill pass the floor by first suggesting bills that are extreme so that it looks reasonable in comparison.

Without these special agenda setting powers we would have to make all motions unanimous as any legislator could just veto. However, since we have the power of the ministers we can end filibusters by setting special rules to bring debates to an end.

Our agenda setting ministers will set the time and order in which to vote on certain bills. This will give us the bargaining power when we make deals to trade votes across party lines. If our bills are always first, we can always make sure that opposing parties uphold their end of the bargain by voting for our own bills and we vote for them later. With more individuals with agenda setting powers. Our ministers avoid most of the negative agenda setting powers that the opposition has at their disposal such as veto gates.

Safeguard:

You are right to be concerned about creating coalitions with non-party members and I offer a solution. We will put BJP senior members in committees where we place junior ministers of coalition parties (Thies 2001). This will give our party the clout to influence what goes on in committee to make sure ministerial bills are not overly different from our own opinion. The main goal is to push ministerial bills through to the legislature and appear as a decisive government more than a resolute one.

Reelection:

If our government controls the agenda, then the opposition will be removed from the legislative process almost entirely based on the aforementioned benefits and can only veto bills. In response to gridlock, the only way the minority coalition will be able to get anything done is by going to the public for favor and trying to advance its agenda. This is where your office as chief executive becomes the most vulnerable. Although within parliament, parties and coalitions are the only means to gain office, the Prime Minister has to appeal to the public. My team of political analysts have calculated the optimal candidates for the minister positions that will gain you the necessary favor to win in an open election. In short, the proposed ministers are from a diverse background of castes and regions which will gain you enough popularity in the coming election.

In the scenario that we lose the majority in parliament and become a minority government we have the potential to be rolled (vetoing a bill but being ignored). Although the probability of

being rolled is unlikely it is important to not abuse veto power as we are not a presidential system and can be easily voted out of power.

Recommendations: Our government needs to look decisive in order to maintain control of the legislature. Coordination between yourself and the legislature is encouraged and necessary if we are to enact important legislature (Samuels). The main step is to appoint ministers from critical regions. Not all of the proposed new ministers are from current political allies. These appointments will form the backbone of a new coalition. The goal is to not dilute our current political party but rather increase the reach of our appeal to India.

I recommend we expand the cabinet by 19 new ministers. They will be from key regions castes and parties. Ministers have special agenda setting powers and the expansion will maximize our positive agenda setting power under our control creating a decisive and popular government. Secondly we will form a coalition government with the parties of these appointed ministers. This will give us the support in the electoral races we need to maintain a majority in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Lastly you will have enough political clout to win the national election as the incumbent after creating a healthy functioning government with minimal gridlock and a ministry from a diverse background.

References:

Thies, M. 2001. Keeping tabs on one's partners: the logic of delegation in coalition governments. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45: 580–98.

Cox, Gary W. "The Organization of Democratic Legislatures." Oxford Handbooks Online, 2009. Doi:10.1092/oxfordhb/9280199548477.003.0008

Samuels, David. "separation of powers." Oxford Handbooks Online, 2009. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9280199566020.003.0029