

New Paradigme in India-Russia Relations

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ABSTRACT

The paper focus briefly about the historial background of the India - Russia relations, It depicted how since the very early times both these countries are linked and dependent on each other. This paper also mentions about both the countries has new approaches in India-Russia Relations, forgien Policy structures which indicated the importance of the irbilatéral relations and régional coopération. It also gives both the countries view on international problems concerned with fighting terrorism as both the countries are the major sufferer from terrorism and thus supportive to each other and some common views on the matter. This paper indiçâtes about both the countries interest in creation of the more democratic, multipolar world and wants peace and stability and thus shares similar views on many aspects. The both countries want broad, deep and durable ties with each other. Leaders of both the states are confident that both these nations can promote peace and brotherhood in the new century. The paper indicates the idea that India needs Russia as much as Russia needs India. It is highly important for both the countries to maintain good relations and cooperate with each other.

Key words: bilatéral relations, forgien policy, terrorism.

Introduction

Indo-Russian relations are time-tested and based on continuity, trust and mutual understanding. It is comprehensive and multifaceted and encompasses all areas including political, economic, defense, scientific & technological and cultural spheres, based on shared perceptions and mutuality of interests and mutual benefit India recognised Russia as the successor-State to the former Soviet Union. Russian leadership has described Russia's relations with India as being "special". Former President Boris Yeltsin in his public references to India mentioned to continue "traditionally friendly relations" and continuing "cooperation with this great Asian country". Relations with Russia are an

important foreign policy priority for India too.

The need for close relations with India has also been referred by President Vladimir Putin who has stressed the geo-political significance of Indo-Russian relations. In the Foreign Policy concept released by Russian Federation on July 10, 2000, has been stated that one of the crucial directions in the Russian foreign policy in Asia is to maintain friendly relations with the leading Asian states including India. India and Russia have expressed interest in further deepening and diversifying their close and multifaceted ties with a view of establishing a strategic partnership. A Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of India and the Russian Federation was signed

during the State Visit of President Putin to India during October 2000. These bilateral documents lay down the broad contours of Indo-Russian relations in the 21st Century. This would also carry forward the principles of bilateral relations contained in the bilateral treaties of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of August 9, 1971, of Friendship and Cooperation of January 28, 1993, the Declaration on further development and enhancement of cooperation of June 30, 1994 and the Moscow Declaration on the Protection of Interests of Pluralistic States of June 30, 1994. A total of more than 60 Agreements have been concluded between India and the Russian Federation since 1992 to give the necessary politico-legal basis to the relations. During the recent State Visit of President Putin to India, few more bilateral documents were signed. The friendly relation with both the countries will continue and will develop more in the future.

Historical Background

Strategic alliance between India and Russia has endured well over 70 years. The strong links between the two countries were forged in the early 1960s as a fallout of the Cold War. India had spurned American overtures to join a military alliance, preferring to opt for what was then a newly coined word, nonalignment. India's honeymoon with China had ended in defeat and disillusionment in 1962. The Soviet Union's relation with China had soured and Moscow was looking for a counterbalance to China in the south and India fitted into the slot nicely.

Although nonalignment required maintaining equidistance from both Washington and Moscow, it was apparent that New Delhi was a little closer to the latter. The bonds really became strong when the West refused India's genuine requirement for sophisticated weapons and arms. The Soviet Union was more than willing to fill the gap. The initial

Indian hesitation to go in for Soviet arms slowly vanished when it was discovered that the Soviets had, in some areas, better equipment than was expected. What came as a pleasant surprise was that both the price quoted by the Soviets and the terms offered would make the purchases really attractive. Over the next 40 years India's armed forces became the largest recipients of Soviet arms. Even today more than 70 per cent of the equipment in the Indian Army, Air Force and Navy is of Soviet origin. The Indian Navy received Soviet submarines, missile boats, patrol vessels, destroyers and mine sweepers. Soviet long range maritime aircraft formed the backbone of the Navy's maritime reconnaissance squadrons. With Soviet assistance the Indian Navy turned the sleepy naval base at Vishakhapatnam into a modern naval dockyard and berthing facility. The Indo-Soviet friendship really flowered in 1971 when India confronted Pakistani excesses in the erstwhile East Bengal. The Soviets jumped in when the West rejected Indira Gandhi's plea for help. The zenith of Indo-Soviet political cooperation was reached during the 1971 war. The Bangladesh liberation struggle broke out at a time when Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were engaged in forging a new strategic relationship with China. Yahya Khan of Pakistan was the secret channel of communication between the American and Chinese leaders and was duly rewarded for his efforts by the creation of a Washington-Beijing-Islamabad axis aimed against India and Bangladesh. India responded to the new Washington-Beijing-Islamabad axis by signing the Indo-Soviet treaty of peace and friendship. Moscow also used its veto in the UN to thwart attempts by imposing a ceasefire before the Pakistani army. When Washington sent the US Enterprises into the Bay of Bengal in a demonstration of support

to Pakistan, Moscow responded by dispatching a submarine to the same area.

Never before or after such countervailing power of the Soviet Union employed to greater advantage in India's favour. The resulting 20-year peace and friendship treaty was the acme of Indo-Soviet friendship. Soviet arms, some of them delivered by express means, contributed considerably to India's victory in 1971. The Soviet Union too gained considerably from having India as its southern ally. The Soviets had a strong fleet in the Indian Ocean to counter the US presence.

During the Sixties, after failing to obtain modern Western fighter aircraft and submarines, India turned to Moscow for sophisticated military equipment and technology. Though India was careful to avoid over-dependence, Russia became the major foreign source of equipment for the Indian air force and navy. India's indigenous defense industry benefited greatly from

access to Soviet technology. In the economic field, too, India was able to obtain leverage from its Soviet ties. Thus, when the US declined on ideological grounds to assist India to set up a public sector steel plant, India turned to Russia for help. And thus, India's first public sector steel plant was set up in Bhilai (Indian steel City) with the Soviet support. Once it was clear that India had a Soviet option, it became easier to obtain Western cooperation in setting up new plants in Durgapur and Rourkela (other Indian industrial cities).

However, having relation with each other for the past 30 years both the countries are still largely dependent on each other and support's each other considerably. Today, India needs Russia as much as Russia needs India.

India-Russia Relationship: Past, Present & Future

India-Russia relationship has evolved into an equal partnership. The deep roots of this relationship go back to the early 20th century when India was under British rule and the Czars ruled Russia. The Russian Revolution of 1905 inspired Indian freedom fighters. Mahatma Gandhi was also struck by the similarity in the prevailing conditions in Russia and India. He developed a close connection with Russia and carried on lengthy correspondence with Leo Tolstoy. Russia's communist leader V.I. Lenin followed with interest and sympathy the nascent Indian freedom struggle. Following 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet leaders understood that their revolution stood better chance of success and encouraged India to become free and independent. Many Indian freedom fighters who were greatly inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution established personal contacts with the Soviet leaders. It was Pandit Nehru's thinking, which laid foundation of the policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Soviet Union. After visiting Soviet Union in 1927, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Jawaharlal Nehru came back deeply impressed with the Soviet experiment. He was convinced that poor developing country like India needed to follow not the capitalist path but a development model that emphasized social justice, equality and human dignity. Nehru was emphatic that India must develop close and friendly relationship with the Soviet Union. It is noteworthy that even before India became independent, an official announcement was made on 13 April 1947 on the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union.

Nehru's faith in the Soviet Union was immense. The Soviet Union consistently gave India valuable political, diplomatic and strategic support bilaterally as well as in international forums on Kashmir and other vital issues affecting India's national interests. It was Soviet diplomatic backing and material support and the confidence provided by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, which enabled India to successfully undertake the operations in 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh. This political understanding was underpinned by a strong economic and strategic relationship. Beginning in the 1950s, India received from the Soviet Union generous assistance for its industrialization as well as for development in the areas of defense, space and atomic energy. Short of capital, foreign exchange and technology, India appreciated the support that it received low-priced economic credits for infrastructure projects repayable in rupees; reliable affordable and good quality military supplies, also on credit and supply of crucial products like oil and oil product, fertilizer, metals etc. mostly via swap deal. Some of India's globally competitive public sector companies like BHEL, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), as well as the steel industry in India, were set up with Soviet cooperation. The first Indian Institute of Technology set up with foreign collaboration was the one in Mumbai with the Soviet support. Soviet Union helped India in many ways to become more self-reliant and was a true partner of India.

Indo-Russian energy cooperation is also expected to get a boost in the coming years. India imports oil, mostly from the volatile region of Middle East. However, to sustain current high rate of growth, India need to secure and diversify sources of energy

import. According to the International Energy Agency, India would be the third largest energy consumer in the world by 2025 after US and China. Russia, India's trusted strategic partner is destined to play a vital role in ensuring India's energy security in the coming decades.

The former Soviet Union played a major role in building India's energy sector by building tens of hydropower stations, developing India's coal industry, finding oil in Indian soil and helping in setting up India's energy major ONGC. Indo-Russian energy cooperation acquired new dimensions in the post-Soviet period, particularly in the hydrocarbon and nuclear sector. India has invested \$2.8 billion in the Sakhalin energy project, controlling 20% stakes in the venture and has purchased Imperial Energy, (London-listed oil major in Tomks region). These are India's largest investments abroad in energy sector.

India is energy deficient country and Russia is energy surplus and therefore, a mutual interest lies in this sector. Indian side feels that there is a clear compatibility between India's needs and Russia's resources. Indian side is adopting a policy to implement the experience of Sakhalin-1 to other oilfields in Russia. India's policy is to promote the idea of India's willingness to offer Russian companies to participate in Indian oil and gas projects, both upstream and downstream, as well as to undertake joint exploration in other countries too. India has geared-up its energy diplomacy and is moving quickly to penetrate in the Russian energy market.

India and Russia have also been trying to engage each other to boost-up the economic partnership through Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Today Russia is a WTO member and it also has formed Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan to a "Common Economic Space". Therefore, it is expected that CEPA with the

broader Eurasian region might come-up soon. It is expected that Russia will also invest in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) project. This project covers an area of about 400,000 sq.km and six states with a population of 178 million. This project incorporates nine mega industrial zones.

However, there are still certain issues related to inadequate banking and financial services, lack of brand promotion, removal of discrimination in insurance coverage and quality control concerns are coming-up as a stumbling block in Indo-Russian economic cooperation. The Russian side appreciated that the simplified visa regime for Russian citizens being implemented by the Indian side and this move had contributed to a 24% increase in Russian tourists travelling to India in the year 2011-12 as compared to the earlier years. India and Russia are also trying to collaborate on new areas which need to be explored further, like in the area of democratisation process, social policy diffusion, in religious dialogues, in promoting secularism, tolerance, multi-ethnicity, for developments of internal economic management and planning etc. which are all significant areas for both India and Russia and could be addressed together.

India-Russia relationship has many positive dimensions and can move on steadily. India's connections with other former Soviet States especially with the two distinct parts of Central Eurasia i.e. five states of Central Asia and three States of South Caucasus is also significant and the relationship is developing significantly over the past two decades since these countries got their independence.

Is Russia Relevant for India?

Vladimir Putin is visiting New Delhi this year for the 15th Indo-Russian Summit after having reincorporated Crimea into Russia

and taken a tough stance against the West in the Ukraine crisis. He has stood up against the various attempts by the West to isolate Russia. There is no doubting that a renewed standoff between Russia and the West has ramifications. These events have put India in an awkward diplomatic situation. Further, Moscow's big shift towards Beijing has caused worries and its decision to forge defence cooperation with Islamabad has sown confusion and doubts in New Delhi. In a veiled signal, Putin also sent Russia's Defence Minister to Islamabad weeks before his own visit to New Delhi.

Russia is upset with India's defence procurement policy and is unable to digest the fact that the United States is overtaking Russia in the Indian weaponry market. Many in Moscow are sulking, seeking retribution by ending the arms blockade of Pakistan to compensate for the losses suffered in the Indian market. A host of voices has emerged in the Russian media asking with 'whom does India stand the US or Russia?' In India, sceptics question whether the old and time-tested Indo-Russian ties have any relevance for either country today.

The two countries have substantially moved away from each other, as can be seen from the divergent courses of their foreign and defence policies. Even the 'buyer-seller' defence relationship is being threatened by global competitiveness. India's disappointment stems from Russia's failure to meet delivery schedules, its sudden jacking up of costs, reluctance to transfer technology and the supply of unreliable spares. The late delivery of INS Vikramaditya was a case in point. New Delhi is impatient about the progress being made in two joint flagship projects – the stealth Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) based on PAK-FA or Sukhoi T-50 and the Multi-Role Transport Aircraft

(MTA) based on Il-214. As things stand, it may take years before production of these aircraft will begin. India and Russia need to tie up the loose ends of these and other joint projects to strengthen bilateral defence ties.

Two-way interactions between India and Russia have dwindled. The annual trade turnover targeted to achieve \$20 billion by 2015 still hovers around \$10 billion. While the reasons for this are well known, actions to bridge the huge information gap, language barrier, connectivity issues and stiff travel regulations that impede growth in ties are lacking. There remains a serious gap in academic research as well. Russian institutions lack funds. The once popular "Russian studies" in India and "Indology" in Russia are almost dead.

Surely, Russia would be worried about Modi's 'Make in India' campaign and the proposed Indo-US Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI). The DTTI, in particular, seeks to go beyond a transactional defence relationship by freeing India from import dependency through co-production and co-development in several big-ticket items that are aimed at boosting India's security and economy. It hopes to create jobs and make India a competitive defence exporter. Be that as it may, behind Modi's perceptible message seems to lie the understanding that neither the US nor Russia would be able to satisfy his 'Make in India' demand.

India-Russia relation and Terrorism

Beginning this month, India and Russia are celebrating 70 years of diplomatic relations. Could you review the 70 years for us? Seventy years of history of diplomatic relations between India-Soviet/Russia establish the privileged and special partnership that covers strategic, defence, economic, cultural and people-to-people relation between the two countries. For both

countries it is a model bilateral relationship. There is an underlying consensus across the political class, political parties, governments, academia and people in the two countries that this relation has served them both well and stood the test of time. Even as the international political system has seen many changes, many regimes in both India and Russia have changed, the Indian-Russian relationship is tried and tested. Things have moved rapidly since 2000, both in India and Russia.

Russia faced a decade of economic and social turmoil after Soviet disintegration in 1990. Russia re-emerged as an important player after 2000, when President Vladimir Putin took over power. The fragmentation and crises of the Russian state started ending. Putin helped reinvigorate the Russian economy, brought back dignity and stability in Russia and has been restoring the plurality and heritage of its varied past. India has been developing at a fast pace for some decades. Some of the problems the two countries faced after Soviet dissolution, like the collapse of the rupee-ruble trade, problems in defence supplies, breakdown of state sector trading, were addressed by the two leaderships in a most cordial, patient, tolerant and flexible manner. This helped the making of significant Indo-Russian strategic agreements and multiple new ties in 2000. This has continued since then and in the Goa Summit multiple agreements were again signed.

Further, both Russia and India expanded their engagements with other countries. India had tried to have vigorous ties with the USA while Russia started developing close economic and political ties with China. This was seen by the other as a dilution of Russia-India ties. However, Russia and India were both committed to the construction of a multi-polar world. Russia and India have a multi vector foreign policy, which means ties

between Russia and India are not diluted because of their relation with third countries.

The Indian ambassador to Russia warned that country recently about its relationship with Pakistan. This is unusual, not just because of the tone of the discourse but also because, given Russia's history with India, that it should feel the need to get closer to Pakistan. Russia has been facing major issues with the US and NATO in the last few years. Because of Russian policies to regain Crimea, Ukraine, now a Western ally was broken up. Russian policy vis-à-vis Syria, stopping regime change, which was US policy, and other such Russian moves led to the imposition of unilateral sanctions on Russia. This hurt Russia economically. The Chinese saw this weakness and provided Russia with revenues by importing huge amount of oil and gas and increasing trade and signing a strategic partnership with Russia.

The present US administration and Russia seem to be pals. On the other hand, the US has got directly involved in a war with Syria on President Donald Trump's orders. How should we interpret this? US missile strikes on a Syrian airbase in Homs, in response to a chemical weapons attack on a Syrian town earlier where many people, including children died due to poisoned gas attacks, is a marker in the Trump administration's foreign policy. It shows a renewal of US aggressive intervention in faraway conflicts. It establishes that Trump would seize a moment of emotion and anguish to jump into a fray, without investigation, if necessary, to retain US policing of international situations. It also shows that Trump would be willing to turn around from his proposal of a "different" foreign policy, where he rejected regime change — in this case on President Bashar al-Assad. Further, the priority Trump had proposed on stopping terrorist forces

under the Islamic State in collaboration with Russia could be overturned.

Moscow, which had condemned the chemical attacks in Syria earlier, argued, as did the Assad regime, that rebel and terror groups, not the Assad regime, carried out the chemical attacks. The Russians invited the US to do a thorough investigation to establish their allegations. Meanwhile, Russia has strongly condemned US missile attacks that killed nine people, including four children. The Kremlin declared US action a violation of international law. Moscow's reaction, in turn, shows that they are unlikely to forsake their allies and clients to better their relations with the US.

Economic relations between India and Russia

India gets more than 60 per cent of its defence equipment and platforms from Russia. The strength in this is the transfer of technology that Russia does and the fact that India and Russia have agreements that equipment they develop in India can be exported to third countries. Russia is developing the Indian nuclear power sector. India has huge interests and investments in Russian hydrocarbons as Russia is a major producer. Russia has interests in supporting Indian infrastructure.

There are weaknesses on the issue of traditional exports, ever since the Soviet dissolution. Trade between the two of \$10 billion is meagre. India accounts for only 1.2 per cent of Russia's overall trade. The leadership of both countries is making an effort to increase this, There is a Russia India free trade agreement in process and proposals for a India-Eurasian Economic Union. But radical creative measures are needed. I believe it is time to rethink the rupee-ruble trade. Russia has developed the

SWIFT banking system as an alternative to the Western controlled one. The BRICS are in place with the New Development Bank and many new channels. In this context the two can begin to work out an alternative system.

India's Foreign Policy Challenges

Fluidity in global geopolitical dynamics on verge of 2017 centering on USA, Russia and China with consequent impact on Indian foreign policy is already evident with the initial posturing of US President-elect Trump. India's foreign policy management since May 2014 has notched appreciable and dynamic successes under the leadership and personal diplomacy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India's diplomatic profile has gone up and the Are we witnessing seismic shifts in the Russia-India-China triangle? It would seem so but the shifts are long in the making.

Historically, Indo-Russian relations have been far stronger than Sino-Russian relations. In recent years, however, and especially since the onset of the crisis in Ukraine in 2014, the dynamics of this "strategic triangle," as former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov called it, have changed. Despite a shared history of strong bilateral relations and overlapping multilateral memberships, India and Russia are drifting apart. The flurry of agreements signed in October 2016 notwithstanding, defense ties are weakening and economic relations have failed to meet targets.

More important, each country now worries about the other's relationship with its main strategic competitor India is anxious about tight Russo-China relations, and Russia is concerned about the recent uptick in Indo-U.S. relations. Indeed, despite a good working relationship between Russian president Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, relations between Russia and

India have been deprioritized in both capitals. While this deprioritization has significance on multiple levels, the concern here is the implications of weaker bilateral ties for Indo-Russian cooperation toward reforming the global order.

India, while certainly in possession of a strong strain of anti-Westernism in its own foreign policy, has nevertheless viewed BRICS primarily in terms of geo-economics and India's ongoing efforts to increase its voice in prime organs of global governance. Countering U.S. supremacy as such is, for India, a useful side benefit of BRICS rather than the group's main propose. But these differences and misalignments did not prevent India and Russia from cooperating within BRICS to act as a forceful lobbying subgroup of the G20 during the acute phase of the 2008 global financial crisis. They also did not block BRICS's agreement to open its own development bank and a currency pool in 2014. Indeed, the crosscutting and conflicting interests among all the members of the BRICS group are one reason its effective cooperation on some issues (narrow though that may be) is notable. Members' differing views on the global governance endgame should be understood as nothing new in considering the future of the BRICS project, or in considering the value Russia and India each see in the group.

The changed is the calculus Russia and India each brings to their interactions within the BRICS. The issue on both counts is China, and more specifically how Sino-Russian and Sino-Indian relations have an impact on coordination among the BRICS group of countries. The major turning point was 2014, the year that marked the Russian annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine, and Modi's election in India. These watershed moments led to dramatic changes in U.S.-Russian and U.S.-Indian relations and

changed priorities within the Russia-India-China trilateral grouping.

The crisis in Ukraine and its effect on relations with the Euro-Atlantic community (especially U.S.-Russian relations) left Russia with few strategic options beyond turning to China. While the Kremlin had been attempting to build political and economic ties with China for over a decade, it was only after 2014 that these efforts began to translate into not only somewhat stronger economic links but a strategic reorientation as well. The Sino-Russian relationship is neither uncomplicated nor unlimited in possibility, but it serves both countries' strategic interests to deepen cooperation and coordinate positions on some global issues. While Russia's longstanding concerns about Chinese dominance in their shared neighborhood, Chinese influence in the Russian Far East, and the imbalances in the makeup of bilateral trade have not disappeared, they have eased or been overtaken by more pressing concerns.

Further, close relations with India would in no way address any of those problems. Indian foreign policy has also made notable shifts since 2014, but in the opposite direction. Since the Modi government came to power, relations between India and China have been on a downward trend, while relations with the United States have reached almost unprecedented levels of cooperation.

In a recent Modi's emphasis on economic development and the concordant need for advanced technology and foreign investment, Modi's strong domestic support and changes to India's structural environment, particularly reflecting concerns about a more aggressive China. Strong relations with Russia have historically been a hedge against the third concern, and steady defense ties including the import of some of Russia's most

advanced weapons have somewhat addressed the first issue. In a world where Russia is increasingly close to China (including selling China advanced weapons systems), however, India can no longer be sure that Russia is solidly in its corner.

Conclusion

Both states are equally interested in the creation of a more democratic, multipolar world and want peace and stability. The treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation signed showed a bright light on the essence of "special" Indo-Russian relations opening the door for strategy. It sets common goals and spheres of cooperation. While consolidating creative work of the past, there was need to impart new dimensions to Indo-Russian cooperation. India and Russia have been struggling to come to terms with a world that has changed fundamentally. Ties between them are broad, deep and durable. Some previously convergent interests have dissipated and there is potential for a clash of some redefined interests. The post-cold war era has thrown new challenges to Russia and the challenges these which are self-imposed, in the sense these challenges are certainly the product of new system i.e. Democracy India is also a big democracy hence, there will not be an dialogical blackode, India could ably teach Russia as to how democracy could be absorbed, there is probably no country in the world as rich Indian democracy as to be a successful democracy Russians should learn from Indian experience.

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