



INDO-RUSSIA BILATERAL RELATIONS IN 21ST CENTURY

Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Though there was a cordial bilateral relation of India with USSR, after its collapse such relationship was decreased. Both the countries have similar interests with reference to strategic issues, socio-economic development, space research, combating terrorism, etc. As such, once again the bilateral relations between India and Russia were gained importance in twenty-first century. The Declaration on Strategic Partnership signed on October 2000 is beginning new dawn of bilateral relations. Russia is one the major countries from India is getting Arms and Weapons. Energy and Space Research are also few of such sector through which the relations are improved between India and Russia. Combating terrorism is emphasized by both the countries.

KEYWORDS

Introduction:

India and Russia were having strong strategic, defence, economic and diplomatic relationship during the cold war period. After the collapse of the USSR, once again the Russian Federation improved the bilateral relations with India. After a period of stagnation in Russian-Indian relations throughout the 1990s, Russia has considerably intensified its contacts with India in the political, economic, military, industrial and cultural sector. The declaration on strategic partnership signed in October 2000 provides a development framework for a long term perspective.

Indo-Russia Relations in 21st Century:

It is observed that both India and Russia are victims of international terrorism and aimed to fight against terrorism. For this purpose, there was need for cooperation and coordination between India and Russia, which are with similar interests. For this purpose, the Moscow Declaration signed by them in November 2001 and in the frame work of the Joint Working Group on combating international terrorism¹. After the terrorist strike in New York and Washington DC on India and Russia condemned such terrorist strike and even supported combat against terrorism, though neither of the two countries contributed troops to the US led coalition.

The then Russian President Putin visited India in December 2002. During this visit India agreed to intensify the strategic partnership with Russia, the latter supported India's position on Pakistan and asked it to end support for cross-border terrorism. The Russian endorsement of the Indian position on terrorism on Pakistan reflected its desire to maintain traditional good will in relations by showing sensitivity to India's security concerns².

During this period, Afghanistan was suffering from terrorism under the control of Taliban. India and Russia shared similar views on the situation in Afghanistan as both the strategic partners and even focused on economic reconstruction of the war-ravaged nation. While rejecting the concept of bad Taliban and good Taliban, India and Russia welcome the Afghan Government's Policy of reintegrating those individuals who agree to give up violence, adhere to the Afghan constitution and do not have ties with the AL-Qaeda and other terrorist group³.

Apart from strategic issues, there is scientific cooperation from Russia as it assisted India in the Chandrayan-2 space mission through satellite. It was launched to receive high precision navigation signals for civilian and military purposes. In this way, it has also helped to fight against cross border terrorism.

A new landmark was set up when, the Russian President Vladimir Putin's first visit to India in October 2000 and the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visit to Moscow during December 4-6, 2005, which helped the continued importance of Indo-Russian cooperation in a changing geopolitical scenario.

Russia and India attach a lot of importance to their interaction in the

energy sector, which embraces the construction and modernisation of hydroelectric and thermal power plants. In 2006, the first assembly block of the Tehri hydro power plant (Uttaranchal) – the tallest dam in Asia-erected with Russian assistance was commissioned. At the same time, Silovye Mashiny (power machines) of Russia and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) concluded a contract on the joint modernisation of five power generating units of the Obra thermal power plant (Uttar Pradesh), with an aggregate capacity of 1,000 MWe⁴.

In 2009, India and Russia agreed to extend the IRIGC-MTC by another ten years till 2020. Joint projects during this period include development of a hypersonic version of Brahmos cruise missile, multi role military transport aircraft and fifth generation fighter aircraft. There are also plans for the serial production of T-90s main battle tanks in India under transfer of technology. It is hoped that these would contribute significantly to the development of India's military industrial complex and also provide India, access to cutting edge military technology.

There were also trilateral relations among the Russia, India and China (RIC) to exchange views on regional and global issues and for the mutual benefit of all these countries, there is need for sharing of current information and knowledge and to establish peace and stability in the region. The RIC had its ninth trilateral meeting of Foreign Ministers at Bengaluru October 2009 and the ninth trilateral Track II academic meet was held in New Delhi from December 7 to 9, 2009. New Delhi and Moscow believe this Track-I and Track-II trilateral meetings help in improving understanding and strengthening peace and stability in the region.

In January 2010, the Indian defense minister A. K. Anthony and the visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister of Russia, Sergey Borisovich Ivanov held the Sixth round of their interaction and it was decided that the next meeting of the IRIGC-MTC will be held in Moscow. Some of the significant developments during the January 2010 meeting included (a) License production and technical documents for the RD 33 series 3 aero engines: (b) general contract for RD 33 series 3 aero engines and associated products: and (c) a protocol of intent for the joint development and production of multirole transport aircraft. This is for the first time in 2010, both countries have pledged to upgrade their trade to \$ 20 billion within five years, current Indo-Russian trade of \$ 10 billion compares poorly to India's trade with others, 60 billion with China, \$50 billion with the US and poised to be \$15 billion with France 2012. Russian imports from India amounted to \$3.1 billion or 1% of its overall imports, and 0.7% of India's overall exports in 2014.

After Pokhran nuclear tests, through there was misunderstanding about India by different countries including Russia, with the time, Russian telecom giant Sistema's investment, India and Russia today signed two key defense deals worth about Rs. 25,000 crore for the supply of 42 new SU-30 MK1 combat aircraft and 71 MI-17V5 helicopters to this country.

When the defence relations are analyzed, it is found that, Russia is the dominant supplier of arms to India and the defence relationship between these countries paved way to other relations such as cultural and strategic relations.

With a USD 34.8 billion defence budget (2010), India imports more than 70% of its arms, an amount totalling over USD 2 billion annually. As reported by Wikipedia5 (2017), India and Russia have several major joint military programmes including:

- BrahMos Cruise Missile Programme
- 5th Generation Fighter Jet Programme
- Sukhoi Su-30MKI Programme (230+ to be built by Hindustan Aeronautics)
- Ilyushin/ HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft
- Additionally, India has purchased/ leased various military hardware from Russia:
- S-400 Triumf 12
- Kamov Ka-226 200 to be made in India under the Make in India initiative
- T-90S Bhishma with over 1000 to be built in India
- Akula-II Nuclear Submarine (2 to be leased with an option to buy when the lease expires)
- INS Vikramaditya Aircraft Carrier Programme
- Tu-22M3 Bombers (4 ordered)
- US\$900 million upgrade of MiG-29
- Mil Mi-17 (80 Ordered) more in Service
- Ilyushin I-76 Candid (6 ordered to fit Israeli Phalcon radar)
- The Farkhor Air Base in Tajikistan is currently jointly operated by Indian Air Force and Tajikistan Air Force.

Both countries signed a defence deal worth \$2.9 billion during President Putin's visit to India in December 2012. The 42 new Sukhois, to be produced under licence by defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics, will add to the 230 Sukhois earlier contracted from Russia. Overall, the price tag for the 272 Sukhois - three of the over 170 inducted till now have crashed - stands at over \$12 billion. The medium-lift Mi-17 V5 helicopters (59 for IAF and 12 for home ministry/BSF) will add to the 80 such choppers already being inducted under a \$1.34 billion deal inked in 2008. The value of India's defence projects with Russia will further zoom north after the imminent inking of the final design contract for the joint development of a futuristic stealth fifth-generation fighter. This R&D contract is itself pegged at US\$11 billion, to be shared equally by the two countries. So if India inducts over 200 of these 5th Gen fighters, as it hopes to do from 2022 onwards, the overall cost of this gigantic project for India will come to around US\$35 billion since each of the jets will come for upwards of US\$100 million at least.

On 7th November 2009, India signed a new nuclear deal with Russia apart from the deals that were agreed upon by the two countries earlier.[95] India and Russia are in discussion for construction of two more nuclear power units at Kudankulam. Two units of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant are already operational. During Russian president Vladimir Putin's visit to India for the 13th annual summit, a co-operative civilian nuclear energy road map was agreed to. Running until 2030, sixteen to eighteen new reactors will be constructed, with installed capacity of 1000 MW each. A 1,000 MW reactor costs around \$2.5 billion so the deal may touch \$45 billion in worth.

Conclusion:

Though USSR was strongest in terms of technological and socio-economic development, after the disintegration, the Russia has suffered. Though last decades of twentieth century are with lesser hopes for both India and Russia bilateral relations, the twenty-first century witnessed good bilateral relations with common views between these countries. India has always remain good market for Russia's energy and defence materials and Russia has a strong scientific and technologies based that India can get advantage. There is greater demand for Indian goods in Russia. In this way, mutual trade activities and sharing knowledge were helped to establish the relationship between India and the Russia. Apart from these issues, there are also other issues with common interests are education, space research, combating terrorism, etc, which have strengthened Indo-Russia Relations.

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