

OPPORTUNITIES UNBOUND: SUSTAINING MULTI-DIMENSIONAL INDO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

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India's relations with the erstwhile Soviet Union (Russian Federation) are founded on trust and mutual interest. This trusted relationship played a significant role in India's economic development and security after independence. There were good reasons 'for' and 'against' cooperation with both power blocs during the Cold War. India had decided upon a quasi-socialist and planned economy style of the Soviet's economic system. India opted for the Soviet Union while officially retaining a 'non-aligned' status and maintaining equidistance with both blocs. India and the Soviet Union enjoyed a strong strategic, military, economic and diplomatic relationship. India greatly gained from the Soviet Union in developing its core industries and laying the foundation for future growth. The Indo-Russian strategic partnership has been built on five major components: politics (with a sustained, regular dialogue at the highest level), defence, civil nuclear energy, counter-terrorism and space cooperation.¹ In recent years, the economic component has grown in importance with both countries setting

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1. "Long Way to go For the Indo-Russian Ties", *Russia and India Report*, URL: http://indrus.in/articles/2012/12/20/long_way_to_go_for_indo-russian_ties_21159.html, accessed on February 26, 2013.

The Soviet leaders endorsed the entire range of Indian foreign policy based on the *Panchsheel* and supported India's position against Pakistan on Kashmir.

a target for \$20 billion in bilateral trade by 2015.² India and Russia have moved to the phase of joint design and development, and of multi-year joint collaboration programmes with substantive sharing of critical technologies. The military-technical cooperation between India and Russia has been the centrepiece of their bilateral relations.

EMERGENCE OF INDO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

During the Cold War, India, while not a member of a bloc, enjoyed a proximate relationship with Russia.

A cordial relationship with India that began in the 1950s represented the most successful of the Soviet attempts to foster closer relations with Third World countries. Jawaharlal Nehru had expressed admiration for the Soviet Union's rapid economic transformation. After Josef Stalin's death in 1953, the Soviet Union expressed its hopes for friendly cooperation with India. This aim was prompted by the Soviet decision to broaden the country's international contacts and to cultivate the non-aligned among the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. The relationship began with a visit by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Soviet Union in June 1955. It was followed by the trip of Premier Nikolai Bulganin and General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev to India in November and December 1955. The Soviet leaders endorsed the entire range of Indian foreign policy based on the *Panchsheel* and supported India's position against Pakistan on Kashmir. The Soviet Union also supported India's position vis-à-vis Portugal on Goa, which was territorially integrated into India as a union territory by the Indian armed forces in December 1961 (it became a state in May 1987).³

The Indo-Russia relationship has embraced political, economic and military cooperation. This strategic cooperation was achieved in August 1971 with the signing of the "Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and

2. "India and Russia set US\$ 20 BN Bilateral Trade Target by 2015", *Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre*, June 2012, URL: <http://m.oifc.in/Resources/News/India-and-Russia-set-US-24-20-BN-bilateral-trade-target-by-2015>, accessed on February 26, 2013.

3. "Russia", URL: <http://countrystudies.us/india/133.htm>, accessed on February 26, 2013.

Cooperation". The treaty became a bulwark of India's territorial integrity, shaping the geo-politics of the Indian subcontinent and strengthening regional security and world peace. It provided a strong boost for developing multifaceted bilateral cooperation in all spheres of human activity, converting into a special relationship in the 1980s.⁴ The contextual imperatives that forged the India-Russia strategic cooperation were from the Indian side: the US-Pakistan military alliance and aid, Indo-US estrangement, Sino-Pakistan strategic relationship and Sino-Pakistan-US strategic convergence. The Soviets had also accepted India's preeminence in South Asia, rather than seeing through the lens of the Indo-Pakistan relationship, as the US was repeatedly prone to do.⁵

Nehru obtained a Soviet commitment to neutrality on the India-China border dispute and the war of 1962. During the India-Pakistan War of 1965, the Soviet Union acted with the United States in the UN Security Council to bring about a ceasefire. By 1965, the Soviet Union was the second largest national contributor to India's development. These new arrangements contributed to India's emergence as a significant industrial power through the construction of plants to produce steel, heavy machinery and equipment, machine tools, and to generate power and extract and refine petroleum. Soviet aid was extended on the basis of long-term, government-to-government programmes which covered successive phases of technical training for Indians, supply of raw materials, progressive use of Indian inputs, and markets for finished products. Bilateral arrangements were made in non-convertible national currencies, helping to conserve India's scarce foreign exchange. Thus, the Soviet contribution to Indian economic development was generally regarded as positive.

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 which was a part of the Cold War, the Indian government avoided condemnatory language

4. Arun Mohanty, "The Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty and its Legacy" *Mainstream*, XLIX (38), September 10, 2011, URL: <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article2989.html>, accessed on February 26, 2013. Also see, "Indo- Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation", *The Times of India*, URL: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Indo-Soviet-Treaty-of-Friendship-and-Cooperation>,

5. Deepa M. Ollapally "The Evolution of India's Relations with Russia: Tried, Tested, and Searching for Balance" in Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospects*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 231-232.

and resolutions that could antagonise the bilateral relations. India called for withdrawal of all foreign troops and negotiation among the concerned parties. In meetings with Soviet leaders in New Delhi in 1980 and in Moscow 1982, Indira Gandhi pressed for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and for the restoration of Afghanistan's traditional non-alignment and independence.

After the Soviet Union disintegrated, India was faced with the difficult task of reorienting its external affairs and forging relations with the 15 Soviet successor states (Commonwealth of Independent States). But in 1993, New Delhi and Moscow worked to redefine their relationship according to post-Cold War realities. During the January 1993 visit of Russian President Boris Yeltsin to India, the two countries signed agreements that signalled a new emphasis on economic cooperation in bilateral relations.⁶

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AFTER THE COLD WAR

India and Russia have sustained the close and cordial strategic relations of the Soviet era. This is reflected in the exchanges of visits between the two countries at the levels of heads of state and Prime Ministers. Both the countries have similar foreign and security policies which are based on the concept of a "multipolar" world. It is in this context that Russia has its interest in the South Asian region where it gives primary importance to India. Russia is one of the trusted partners with which India has a mutual compatibility and a close political, military and economic partnership for decades. Russia (and the Soviet Union) contributed to creating India's key strengths and capabilities in the nuclear, defence, space and heavy industry sectors when no other country was willing to support India's endeavours to modernise.⁷ Despite the hype surrounding the visits of other members of the P-5 (permanent five members of the Security Council), India's relationship with Russia has brought it greater benefit than other major countries.⁸ India

6. "Yeltsin Reaches Accords in India," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1993, URL: <http://articles.latimes.com/keyword/india-foreign-relations-russia>, accessed on February 26, 2013.

7. Martin Malek, "Russian Policy Toward South Asia: An Update," *Asian Survey*, 44(3), May-June 2004.

8. Pallavi Pal, "The Way Ahead in Indo-Russian Ties", *IDSA Comment*, December 20, 2010, URL: http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/TheWayAheadInIndoRussianTies_ppal_201210, accessed on February 26, 2013.

sees Russia as a longstanding and time-tested friend that has played a significant role in its economic development and security. Since the signing of the “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” in October 2000 (during the visit of President Vladimir Putin to India), India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character, with enhanced levels of cooperation taking place in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, trade and economy, defence, science and technology and culture.⁹ Under the “Declaration of Strategic Partnership”, several institutionalised dialogue mechanisms have been put in place that operate at the political and official levels, and ensure regular interaction and follow-up on cooperation activities. During the visit of President Dmitry Medvedev to India in December 2010, it was decided to further elevate the strategic partnership to the level of a “special and privileged strategic partnership”. The 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Russia was celebrated on April 13, 2012.¹⁰ India benefits from its relationship with Russia in areas that are critical to Indian interests like Kashmir, energy security, and in relations with China and Central Asia.

INTENSIFYING POLITICAL-ECONOMIC FRIENDSHIP

After the Cold War, India continued to rely on Russia as an ally in resisting the “unipolar world order”. The Russian attempt to construct multipolarity is based on collective security and the politics of inclusion. The multipolar vision emphasises non-military solutions to international problems. The bilateral agreements give India-Russia relations multiple directions and establish strategic and political sub-systems. The annual summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalised dialogue mechanism. Since the Declaration of Strategic Partnership, meetings have taken place alternatively

9. “India-Russia Relations”, January 2012, URL:http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Russia_-DEC_2012.pdf, accessed on February 26, 2013.

10. “India-Russian Relations”, January 2013, URL:http://indianembassy.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=50&Itemid=449&lang=en, accessed on February 26, 2013.

in India and Russia. The 13th Summit meeting was held in Delhi on December 24, 2012, between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The two governments have also established two Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commissions (IRIGCs)— one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, co-chaired by the Indian External Affairs Minister and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister and another on Military Technical Cooperation co-chaired by the two Defence Ministers, both of which meet annually.¹¹ The IRIGCs comprise the main body that conducts affairs at the government level between both countries.

India and Russia are closely collaborating on matters of shared national interest at the UN, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Group-20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). India has been given an observer status at the SCO and has been asked by Russia to become a full member. Russia has expressed interest in joining the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) of which India is a founding member. The emergence of groups like the BRICS and G-20 is reflected in the bilateral strategic partnership, ushering in a world order of multilateralism.¹² Russia has strongly supported India for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. The United States has declared its unambiguous support for Japan and remained evasive on the question of permanent membership for India.¹³ In addition, Russia has backed India joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). India is seen as a like-minded country that serves the interest and goals of the non-proliferation regimes.¹⁴ Russia and India also intend to strengthen their cooperation on intend issues concerning the reforms of the United Nations and its Security Council. Russia has backed India's

11. Ibid.

12. Aurobinda Mahapatra, "India- Russia Partnership: Continuity in the Midst of Change", *Russia & India Report*, 2011, URL: http://indrus.in/articles/2011/12/20/india-russia_partnership_continuity_in_the_midst_of_change_14045.html, accessed on February 26, 2013.

13. Mussarat Jabeen, "Indian Aspiration of Permanent Membership in the UN Security Council and American Stance", *South Asian Studies*, 25(2), July-December 2010, p.243.

14. "India Moving Closer to Joining NSG, US Leads the Charge," *Deccan Herald* (New Delhi), September 24, 2012, URL: <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/280773/india-moving-closer-joining-nsg.html>, accessed on February 25, 2013.

claim for permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The joint declaration said that the UNSC reform should be carried out in such a way as to reflect the modern-day realities and make it more representative and effective in resolving the existing and emerging task of the global politics.¹⁵ Both countries have also played key roles towards advocating fair play in international regimes and democratisation in the decision-making of international financial bodies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.¹⁶

As New Delhi looks at an alternative policy to secure its strategic interests, the partnership between India and Russia is likely to strengthen in the coming years.

With the US in relative decline, Russia and India are struggling with the implications of rising Chinese hegemony over the Asian strategic landscape. Both countries have a common goal to make the world more just, democratic and secure and to facilitate resolution of global and regional problems in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.¹⁷ The rapidly deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan has also been instrumental in bringing India and Russia closer in recent years. Moscow has repeatedly underlined that the situation in Afghanistan impacts the security of both India and Russia, underscoring their convergence of views and interests on the matter. Their stepped-up cooperation on Afghanistan comes at a time when India is worried about the departure of Western troops from Afghanistan in 2014.¹⁸ As New Delhi looks at an alternative policy to secure its strategic interests, the partnership between India and Russia is likely to strengthen in the coming years.

15. "Russia Supports India's Claim for Permanent UNSC Seat" *The Hindu*, December 7, 2009, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/russia-supports-indias-claim-for-permanent-unscc-seat/article61516.ece>, accessed on February 26, 2013.

16. Mahapatra, n. 12.

17. Vladimir Putin, "For Russia, Deepening Friendship with India is a Top Foreign Policy Priority", *The Hindu* (New Delhi), December 24, 2012, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/for-russia-deepening-friendship-with-india-is-a-top-foreign-policy-priority/article4232857.ece>, accessed on February 26, 2013.

18. Harsh V. Pant, "How Strong are the Ties that Bind Russia and India?", December 31, 2012, URL: http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/column_how-strong-are-the-ties-that-bind-russia-and-india_1783591, accessed on February 26, 2013.

The economic relations are an important component of bilateral cooperation. Bilateral trade between Russia and India was severely affected due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The break-up of the USSR in 1991 and India's economic liberalisation resulted in a drastic reduction in bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Both economies are resurging and, at the same time, diversifying. Gradually, both countries have built a sound legal foundation for promoting trade and economic ties. Agreements on mutual investment protection and avoidance of double taxation are in place for facilitating ties.¹⁹

Russia's joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has facilitated more India-Russian trade cooperation and investment. The government banks of the two countries have signed an agreement to set up a US \$2 billion fund for promoting trade and investment.²⁰ The protocol on completion of bilateral negotiations on the accession of Russia to the WTO and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation between the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India and the Ministry of Economic Development of Trade of the Russian Federation were signed in 2010.²¹ The IRIGC is the body that conducts economic relations between the two countries. These include the Indo-Russian Forum on Trade and Investment, the India-Russia Business Council, the India-Russia Trade, Investment and Technology Promotion Council and the India-Russia Chamber of Commerce.

Enhancing trade and economic cooperation between India and Russia is a key priority for the political leadership of both countries. Bilateral trade has been growing steadily in the past two decades and witnessed positive growth despite the international financial and economic crisis in 2008-09. India is Russia's 10th largest trading partner, accounting for 1.4 percent of Russia's total trade, while Russia is India's 29th, making up just

19. Arun Mohanty, "Indo- Russian Trade and Economic Cooperation: The Way Ahead" in P. Stobdan, ed., *India- Russia Strategic Partnership: Common Perspective* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence and Analyses, 2010), p. 170.

20. "India, Russia Seek New Stimulus for Traditional Partnership During Putin's Visit", *Xinhua*, December 26, 2012, URL: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/752325.shtml>, accessed on February 27, 2013.

21. Keith Timimi, "Indo-Russian Trade Relations", *Economy Watch*, April 8, 2010, URL: http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/russia/indo-russia-trade-relation.html, accessed on February 27, 2013.

0.97 percent of India's total trade.²² Trade in 2009 was US\$ 7.5 billion, US\$ 8.5 billion in 2010, and in 2011, it reached US\$ 8.9 billion. In 2011, Russian exports to India amounted to US\$ 6.1 billion and imports from India to Russia amounted to US\$ 2.8 billion. The two-way investment between the two countries stands at approximately US\$ 7.8 billion. Given the respective size of the Indian and Russian untapped economies, there is vast potential for an increase in bilateral trade volumes and investment. In 2009, both sides set a target of US\$ 20 billion in bilateral trade by 2015.²³ Special attention is being paid to the energy sector, pharmaceuticals, Information Technology (IT), steel, hydrocarbons, aerospace, diamonds and food products. Russia still relies on India for pharmaceutical exports that were one of the mainstays of Indo-Soviet trade. But in 2010, the Russian government sought to protect its domestic pharmaceutical industry by lowering the price of drugs and imposing regulations on foreign manufacturers, a plan which pushed a number of Indian pharmaceutical companies out of Russia.²⁴

Given the respective size of the Indian and Russian untapped economies, there is vast potential for an increase in bilateral trade.

The greatest hindrance to trade between India and Russia is the lack of trade routes. There is need to optimise the shipping route because, until a viable and shorter route for trade is worked out, higher growth rates in trade of goods will continue to be hampered. The agreement on the new India-Russia transport corridor may help in reducing transport costs. The present route, which passes through the Suez Canal and enters the Russian port of St. Petersburg via Kotka (Finland) and Rotterdam (Netherlands), is long and time consuming. The new route—Mumbai-Bandar Abbas-Astrakhan—

22. For details, see Katherine Foshko Tsan, "Re-energizing the Indian-Russian Relationship: Opportunities and Challenges for the 21st Century", 2(1), *Jindal Journal of International Affairs*, August 2012, p. 162.

23. Vladimir Radyuhin, "Indo- Russian Trade Posts Impressive Growth," *The Hindu* (Moscow), January 26, 2013, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/indorussian-trade-posts-impressive-growth/article4348097.ece>, accessed on February 27, 2013. Also see, "India-Russia Relations", (January 2013) URL: http://indianembassy.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=50&Itemid=449&lang=en, accessed on February 27, 2013.

24. Foshko Tsan, n. 22, p. 164.

would comprise sea and land links across India, Iran and Russia and will shorten travel time by as much as ten days. Thus, the North-South Corridor which can link Mumbai to St. Petersburg with a 40 percent cut in cost and time, needs greater attention from both countries.²⁵ Despite the interest shown by both sides to increase bilateral flow of goods and services, there are still some trade barriers, and non-tariff barriers continue to plague bilateral trade. The Indo-Russian economic relationship is still dominated by defence sector transactions. The Military Industrial Complex (MIC) still stands at the core of strong Indo-Russian economic linkages.²⁶ Indo-Russian bilateral trade is far below the existing trade potential and there is a need for cooperation to increase bilateral trade.

BUILDING UP DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP

During the Cold War period, the Soviets were consistently more open to providing high technology and advanced military equipment than the US.²⁷ The military-technical cooperation has traditionally been accorded the most prominent status in the entire spectrum of the bilateral relations. The first deals involving the deliveries of Soviet weapon systems to India were made in August 1962, when India purchased helicopters, transport aircraft and MiG-21 jet fighters. The same year, the construction of production facilities for military hardware was undertaken at Nasik, Koraput and Hyderabad. After the India-Pakistan armed conflict in 1965, the US and other Western countries imposed an embargo on the exports of weapon systems to India and Pakistan. From that time, the principal supplier of arms and military equipment to India became the USSR. Throughout the period from 1965 to 1969, the USSR accounted for 80 percent of India's

25. Rajeev Sharma, "Transport Corridor Offers Many Opportunities for Indo- Russian Trade", *Russian & India Report*, November 29, 2012, URL: http://indrus.in/articles/2012/11/29/north-south_transport_corridor_offers_many_opportunities_for_indo-ru_19421.html, accessed on February 27, 2013. Also see, Vladimir Radyuhin, " India, Russia will Strive to Galvanise Bilateral Trade", *The Hindu* (Moscow) November 18, 2011, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/article2639758.ece>, accessed on February 27, 2013.

26. Niveta Kundu Das, "India and Russia Need to Deepen Economic Relations", *IDS Comment*, March 7, 2007, URL: http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/IndiaandRussiaNeedtoDeepenEconomicRelations_NDKundu_070307, accessed on February 27, 2013.

27. Ollapally, n. 5, p. 231.

imports of military hardware. Consequently, by the mid-1990s, nearly 70 percent of the Indian Army, 80 percent of the Indian Air Force and 85 percent of the Indian Navy was equipped with Russian made military hardware.²⁸ Following the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India in 1993, a long-term programme on military and technical cooperation till 2000 was endorsed. The joint venture to produce the BrahMos missiles was established in early February 1998 in conformity with the agreement between the Russian and Indian governments on the development and production of anti-ship cruise missile systems.²⁹

In September 2008, India and Russia decided to extend their military cooperation for another 10 years beyond 2010 and set up an apex body to monitor proper focus. In a joint statement, Defence Ministers A.K Anthony and Anatoliy Serduykov, agreed to take the relationship further from the vendor-seller one to areas of design development, co-production and co-marketing of military hardware. Further, the Indian government reached an agreement with Sukhoi to upgrade 42 SU-30MKI with new radars, avionics and BrahMos supersonic missiles. The project was carried out by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at the cost of \$ 2.34 billion with the assistance of Russian experts. By the end of this decade, the Indian Air Force (IAF) will have a total of 272 SU-30 MKI fighters in service at a total cost of around \$14 billion, making it the dominant aircraft in the IAF.³⁰

Arms sales have been the pillar of Russia-India relations. After the Cold War period, over 70 percent of India's military equipment imports were from Russia.³¹ India and Russia have several major joint military

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28. Jerome M. Conley, "India- Russia Military and Nuclear Cooperation: Implications for US Security", US Air Force, National Strategic Institute Studies Paper, February 2000.

29. Tatiana Shaumyan, "Russian-Indian Bilateral Cooperation" in Stobdan, ed., n. 19, pp. 156-159.

30. T. M. Asthana, "Russia- India Military Cooperation in the Future", in Jasjit Singh, ed., *India-Russia Relations* (New Delhi: Knowledge World Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2012), p. 68.

31. "India, Russia Sign New Defence Deals", *BBC News*, December 24, 2012, URL: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-20834910>, accessed on February 27, 2013.

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programmes and supplies of military hardware, including: the BrahMos cruise missile programme, fifth generation fighter jet programme, Sukhoi SU-30MKI programme (230+ to be built by HAL), Ilyushin/HAL tactical transport aircraft, nuclear powered submarines, Typhoon class, destroyers, and T-80, etc.³² In December 2012, India and Russia signed defence deals worth around \$ 4 billion. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called Russia a key partner in India's efforts to enhance its defence preparedness. Both countries took note of the progress made in the joint development and production of high-technology military equipment and projects.³³

Recently, the defence relationship between India and Russia has been drifting apart. The relationship has been strained due to delays and frequent price changes for the *INS Vikramaditya*.³⁴ In the meantime, the Indian government has sought to diversify its foreign weapons suppliers despite the higher costs and complexity. The Indian military began buying large quantities of Soviet weapons but has always complemented these purchases with European and Israeli systems.³⁵ The Government of India has also awarded non-Russian companies, including American ones, multi-billion dollar contracts for advanced military equipment.

However, Russia continues to be India's largest defence partner. Russia has sold India some weapon systems that it has not offered to other countries. Geo-political ties remain strong, with the two countries elevating their relationship in 2011 to that of a "Special and Privileged

32. Subhash Kapila, "India-Russia Strategic Cooperation", URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper144>, accessed on February 27, 2013.

33. "India Signs \$ 4- bn Defence Deals with Russia", *Indian Express* (New Delhi) December 25, 2012, URL: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/india-signs-4bn-defence-deals-with-russia/1049883>, accessed on February 27, 2013.

34. *INS Vikramaditya* is the name of an aircraft carrier set to enter service with the Indian Navy in 2013. It was postponed after three of the eight boilers that power its four engines broke down during sea trials in September 2012.

35. Richard Weitz, "Maturing of Russian- India Defence Relations", *Journal for Defence Studies and Analyses*, 5(3) 2012, p. 89.

Strategic Partnership".³⁶ The sales and other defence cooperation have been institutionalised in regular meetings of the Russian-Indian Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation which meets annually at the level of Defence Ministers. Both countries have undertaken a series of joint military exercises. Joint exercises like "Indira-2010" serve as a good opportunity to build bilateral military-to-military cooperation and demonstrate development of the defence forces.³⁷ The joint military exercise not only strengthens the bilateral military cooperation but gives the countries an opportunity of learning from one another. Russia is the only country with which India has such an institutionalised military cooperation mechanism at a such high level.

COLLABORATION IN AEROSPACE AND ENERGY SECTORS

India and Russia have been collaborating in several high-technology space projects. The space partnership is mainly focussed on space navigation, lunar exploration and man-controlled space flight programmes. India could not have made such deep forays into space without the Russian cooperation. It was the erstwhile Soviet Union that had launched the first Indian satellites, Aryabhata and Bhaskara, from its Baikonur cosmodrome, in the 1970s and 1980s. Rakesh Sharma, the first Indian astronaut, travelled to the Soviet Salyut-7 space station in 1984.³⁸ In 2004, both the countries signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement on cooperation in outer space for peaceful purposes and the Inter-Space Agency Agreement on cooperation in the Russian satellite navigation system. The cooperation provides joint use of the Russian Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) and the possibility of launching Russian spacecraft on Indian-made space launch vehicles. GLONASS, a radio-based satellite navigation system, operated for the Russian government by the Russian Aerospace Defence Forces, is an

36. Niveta Kundu Das, "President Vladimir Putin's India Visit will Boost-up India-Russia Relations" *Valdai International Discussion Club*, December 24, 2012, URL: <http://valdaiclub.com/asia/52980.html>, accessed on February 28, 2013.

37. Anatoly R. Klimenko, "Russia-India Strategic Partnership: Military and Military- Tech Aspects" in Singh, ed., n. 30, p. 63.

38. "Rakesh Sharma", URL: http://www.aerospaceguide.net/astronaut/rakesh_sharma.html, accessed on February 28, 2013.

Space is an important sector of Indo-Russian bilateral cooperation. India's flagship space agency, ISRO, has plans to launch its first manned space flight in 2017.

alternative to the US-controlled Global Positioning System (GPS). Both countries are exploring the possibility of developing equipment for earth probes, joint research in the area of engines for spacecraft, and joint projects for probing the lunar surface and building a space-based solar observatory to study X-ray radiation.³⁹ The two countries are cooperating on projects such as the Moon mission Chandrayaan-2 and the human space flight project. Chandrayaan-2 is a joint lunar exploration mission proposed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Russian Federal Space Agency and has a projected cost of

Rs. 425 crore. On April 20, 2011, the jointly developed Indian-Russian students satellite "Youthsat" was successfully launched by India on a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket.⁴⁰

Space is an important sector of Indo-Russian bilateral cooperation. India's flagship space agency, ISRO, has plans to launch its first manned space flight in 2017. The Indian government is eyeing deep space missions for a lunar human landing by 2020 and participating in an international expedition to Mars that is tentatively planned for 2030.⁴¹ ISRO's ambitious programmes include the setting up of several ground facilities like launch pads, an astronaut training centre and a mission control centre. India and Russia have collaborated on technologies in the space sector which integrate into platforms that India is developing.⁴² India needs to catch up with other countries that are investing heavily in research and development.

39. "Russia, India Sign Space Cooperation Protocol", *ESA Permanent Mission in Russia*, URL: http://www.esa.int/About_Us/ESA_Permanent_Mission_in_Russia/Russia_India_sign_space_cooperation_protocol, accessed on February 28, 2013.

40. Rajeev Sharma "Indo- Russian Inter-Governmental Commission to Meet in mid-October", September 26, 2012, URL:http://indrus.in/articles/2012/09/26/indo-russian_inter-governmental_commission_to_meet_in_mid-october_17907.html, accessed on February 28, 2013.

41. Shaumyan., n. 29, p.163.

42. Rajeev Sharma, "Space Pacts to put Indo-Russian Ties in Still Higher Orbit", *Russian and India Report*, December 6, 2012, URL:http://indrus.in/articles/2012/12/06/space_pacts_to_put_indo-russian_ties_in_still_higher_orbit_19591.html, accessed on February 28, 2013.

In the field of energy, Russia's importance for India is likely to keep growing as the Indian economy expands at an unprecedented rate. India is an energy deficient country and Russia has surplus energy which makes for mutual interest in this sector. By 2030, India is expected to become the third-largest energy consumer, next to the United States and China, and ahead of Russia and Japan. Russia's oil output has risen dramatically (after dropping nearly 50 percent from the Soviet era), making it the world's second largest producer, behind only Saudi Arabia. Russia is the world's largest producer of natural gas and has the biggest share of the world's gas reserves. India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Limited (OVL) is gaining an important foothold in Russia's oil and natural gas production, especially on Sakhalin Island and Siberia.⁴³ OVL was allowed to acquire a 20 percent stake in the Sakhalin I project totalling more than \$2.8 billion which constitutes India's largest investment abroad.⁴⁴ The Russian gas giant Gazprom has entered into a strategic cooperation agreement with the Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) to supply gas and hydrocarbons. A gas deal was signed with Gazprom for 20 years for importing 2.5 million tonnes of liquid gas a year.⁴⁵ Russia's massive energy resources can ensure India's vital energy security. Both the nations can expand cooperation in the energy sector as they did in the defence sector.

Russia has been a valuable long standing partner of India's nuclear energy programme. Russia recognised India as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology and an impeccable non-nuclear proliferation record. The construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) with two units of 1,000 MW is a good example of nuclear energy cooperation. During President Dmitry Medvedev's first visit to India in December 2008,

43. "ONGC Videsh Ltd Eyes Stake in Russia's Arctic Blocks", *The Times of India* (New Delhi), August 20, 2010, and URL: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/ONGC-Videsh-Ltd-eyes-stake-in-Russias-Arctic-blocks/articleshow/15565361.cms>, accessed on February 28, 2013.

44. Nivedita Kundu Das, "Energy Cooperation Between India and Russia: Policy and Approach", *Russia and India Report*, October 11, 2012, URL: http://indrus.in/articles/2012/10/11/energy_cooperation_between_india_and_russia_policy_and_approach_18291.html, accessed on February 28, 2013.

45. "GAIL Inks Gas Deal with Gazprom" *The Times of India* (New Delhi), October 2, 2012, URL: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/GAIL-inks-gas-deal-with-Gazprom/articleshow/16633028.cms>, accessed on February 28, 2013.

an agreement was signed for the construction of four more nuclear reactors at Kudankulam with Russian technical help. The signing of the agreement on civil nuclear cooperation marks a new milestone in strengthening the existing Indo-Russian relations.⁴⁶ The agreement went beyond the 123-Agreement in the civil nuclear energy sector with the United States. The Indo-Russian nuclear pact gives enrichment and reprocessing rights to India and assures the country against termination of ongoing projects and fuel supply arrangements if bilateral nuclear cooperation is ended.⁴⁷ India has faced a nuclear trade ban since its first atomic test in 1971 amid its refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) designed to limit the spread of nuclear technology.

India and Russia are considering setting up a joint project to build a factory for the production of nuclear fuel in India. The possibility of setting up a nuclear fuel facility in India is envisaged in the Inter-Government Agreement on Cooperation in the use of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes.⁴⁸ Russia is to provide for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel in India under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

INDISPENSABLE COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

India and Russia have been Science & Technology (S&T) partners for a very long time. The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC-TEC), the Integrated Long-Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Programme are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral S&T cooperation. A working group focusses on collaboration activities in mutually

46. "India, Russian Ink Nuclear Deal", *Geopolitical Monitor*, December 5, 2008, URL: <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/india-russia-ink-nuclear-deal-1494/>, accessed on March 1, 2013.

47. Vladimir Radyuhin and Sandeep Dikshit, "India and Russia Sign Civil Nuclear Agreement" *The Hindu* (Moscow), December 7, 2009, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article61503.ece>, accessed March 1, 2013. Also see, Sandeep Dikshit, "India- Russia Civil Nuclear Pact Practically Sealed", *The Hindu*, Moscow, December 6, 2009, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indiarussia-civil-nuclear-pact-practically-sealed/article60980.ece>, accessed on March 1, 2013.

48. Vladimir Radyuhin, "Plan for Nuclear Fuel Plant in India", *The Hindu* (Moscow), March 24, 2010, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/plan-for-nuclear-fuel-plant-in-india/article244473.ece>, accessed on March 1, 2013.

agreed priority areas of biotechnology, industrial realisation of technologies, medical research, meteorology, oceanology and seismology. In 2010, the programme was extended for 10 years with a renewed mandate: "Innovation Led Technology Growth". An Indo-Russian Science & Technology Centre was set up in 2011-12 with a branch each in Delhi and Moscow to promote transfer of technologies developed jointly/ independently by scientists of the two countries.⁴⁹ A Memorandum of Cooperation was concluded between the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.⁵⁰

Russia is keen to use the Indian experience in the area of building IT parks in several leading cities.

India is a leading nation in Information Technology (IT), with a 40 percent annual growth. The profits of Indian software exports are comparable to the revenue from Russian gas exports to Europe. Russia is keen to use the Indian experience in the area of building IT parks in several leading cities.⁵¹ India should also participate in the Russian initiative to create a counterpart to Silicon Valley in Skolkovo, outside Moscow. The Russian IT and innovation sector is competitive and Russia enjoys enormous depth in scientific studies.⁵² In December 2012, the two governments concluded a protocol on Protection and Usage of Intellectual Property Rights. The Indo-Russian Science and Technology Centre, with units at Moscow and Delhi was set up in December 2011 to catalyse transfer of successful technologies between the two countries.⁵³ The Indo-Russian science and

49. "India-Russia Relations" (December 2012), URL: http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Russia_-DEC_2012.pdf, accessed on March 1, 2013.

50. "Joint Statement on the 13th India- Russia Annual Summit: Partnership for Mutual Benefit and a Better World" October 16-18, 2012, Delhi, URL: <http://ristc.com/>, accessed on March 1, 2013.

51. Arun Mohanty, "Indo- Russian Trade and Economic Cooperation: The Way Ahead", in Stobdan, ed., n. 19, p. 170.

52. Pallavi Pal, "The Way Ahead in Indo- Russian Ties" *IDSA Comment*, December 20, 2010, URL: <http://www.idsa.in/node/6435/2006>, accessed on March 1, 2013.

53. Vladimir Radyuhin, "Russia-India Scientific, Technology Centre Opened", *The Hindu* (Moscow), December 16, 2011, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2718289.ece>, accessed on March 1, 2013. Also see, "Indo-Russian Science & Technology Cooperation", Embassy of India, Moscow, URL: http://www.indianembassy.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60&Itemid=520&lang=en, accessed on March 1, 2013.

technology cooperation is pivotal in promoting modernisation as well as commercialisation of innovative technologies.

COOPERATION IN COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

International terrorism is perceived as a threat to both India and Russia and they have expressed concern that the international coalition against terrorism has not paid sufficient attention to volatile regions like Kashmir, Chechnya, etc. Both countries agreed that there is no justification for terrorism, and this must be fought against, without compromise, and wherever it exists. Russia has supported the Indian draft at the UN on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).⁵⁴ In December 2003, both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in combating terrorism. A Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism meets from time to time. India has faced terrorist activities in Kashmir and Russia in Chechnya; both countries are supportive of each other on the issue of international terrorism. Russia's stand on the issue of Kashmir and the terrorism faced by India has been consistent and unconditional over time or regime change. Every Russian leader has reiterated this and it forms the basis for India's trust in Moscow. Russia has never tried to balance India's interest with Pakistan and India has never put itself in a position of having to compete with other countries to prove its loyalty by approving all other Russian positions.⁵⁵ Both countries have resolved to exchange information and set up working groups to address the problem globally.

NEW TRENDS IN CULTURAL RELATIONS

India and Russia have historically enjoyed solid and strong traditional ties in the cultural sphere. Humanitarian cooperation has a particular significance for both countries which have a great cultural heritage. The Jawaharlal

54. See, "India and United Nations, Counter- Terrorism", URL: http://www.un.int/india/india_counter_terrorism.html, Also see, "UN Meet: India to Press for CCIT UN Reforms," *The Times of India* (New Delhi), September 19, 2010, URL: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-09-19/india/28269009_1_terror-groups-comprehensive-convention-international-terrorism, accessed on March 1, 2013.

55. Debashis Sarkar, "Indo-Russian Relations", URL: http://www.academia.edu/2103282/Indo-Russia_Relations, accessed on March 1, 2013.

Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC) at Moscow maintains close links with Russian institutions. In the past, cultural activities were held, promoting people-to-people contacts between the two countries. There are also Russian experts in Indian languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit and Pali. In 2008, the Year of Russia in India was held. In 2009, the Year of India in Russia was conducted. In September 2011, a mini Festival of Indian Culture was organised in Russia, while several cultural events and academic conferences were held as part of the celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. In 2012, the Embassy of India in Moscow organised a very large number of academic, cultural and other events to mark the 65th anniversary of India-Russia diplomatic ties. A Festival of Russian Culture was organised in India from October 4 to November 29, 2012. And a “Days of Moscow” event was held in Delhi from October 26-29, 2012. The Indian community in the Russian Federation is estimated at about 15,000. There are approximately 4,500 Indian students enrolled in medical and technical institutions in the Russian Federation. About 90 percent of these students are pursuing medical studies in 20 universities/institutions spread across the country.⁵⁶ Frequent educational projects, youth exchanges and tourism should be more actively promoted and developed.

CONCLUSION

India and Russia support the concept of a multipolar world, an idea shared by many developing countries. A foreign policy based on a multipolar world supports the coexistence of collective security which fosters common regional interest. As India’s economy continues to grow, regional collaboration and cooperation rather than hegemony is what it wants in the international politics. Building regional alliances and being proactive in organisations like the SCO, SAARC and BRICS will broaden the Indo-Russian bilateral relationship into a multilateral one. The political friendship between the two countries needs to be harnessed and used in several areas, where the

56. “India-Russia Relations”, January 2013, URL: http://indianembassy.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=50&Itemid=449&lang=en, accessed on March 1, 2013.

countries enjoy synergy. People-to-people contacts should be strengthened and there is a need to get support across the political spectrum like that which existed in the past. In the meantime, India also needs to be aware of the strategic options in the emerging international security environment. Seeking convergence with Russia cannot be at the expense of India's quest for new strategic relations with other emerging countries. Nevertheless, in the evolving world order, which is characterised by uncertainty, the partnership has emerged, appreciating each other concerns while keeping the primary determinants of the relations unchanged. Hence, the Indo-Russian partnership can be described in the paradigm of continuity amidst change in the global politics.