

A Privileged Relationship: Russia and India's Rekindled Strategic Partnership

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Introduction

Warm relations between India and Russia have been integral to both countries' foreign policies for decades. Twenty years ago, in October of 2000, Russia and India signed a Declaration on Strategic Partnership. Although Moscow was not the first with which India endorsed such a document, relations with Russia are positioned as an immensely privileged strategic alliance. Simultaneously, discussion about supporting these relations with tangible projects has become a relevant part of meeting the interests of both countries.

To date, the Declaration on Strategic Partnership is the most comprehensive document shaping relations between Russia and India. It is also considered the basis of economic relations between the two states. Since then, the countries have expanded trade and economic relations, gradually opening up new areas of cooperation.

However, since the close of the Cold War, both Moscow and New Delhi's focus on internal challenges have led to a certain decline in the dynamics of bilateral relations. It is only in recent years that Russia and India have once again set themselves the goal of developing common responses to new challenges facing the international community by prioritising these bilateral associations.

With neither country perceiving a direct security threat from each other, Russia-India relations have long testified to its benefits in the realm of defence, energy cooperation, education, science and technology. A characteristic feature of Russian-Indian relations over the years has been the high intensity of political contacts. Every year, high-level meetings and negotiations are held to discuss key areas of cooperation between the two countries, as well as current international and regional matters. This discussion paper examines Russia-India relations and argues that this strategic partnership will continue to hold both multilateral and regional importance for both countries.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin (L) and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) shake hands as they pose for a photo at the Hyderabad House in Delhi in New Delhi, India on October 05, 2018. (Kremlin Press Office - Anadolu Agency)



Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov welcomes Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India during their meeting at the Russian Foreign Ministry building in Moscow, Russia, on October 20, 2015. (Sefa Karacan - Anadolu Agency)

Historical Background

Russian-Indian relations are characterised by activeness and consistency, despite momentous changes in the international arena. Within these relations, we can distinguish two periods of partnership: The first is between 1990-1999, also known as the 'cooling period'; in 2000, the second period began, which has been labelled as the 'revival of cooperation'.

The Soviet Union maintained a multifaceted relationship with India that extended from the political and economic, to cultural and technological ties. During the Cold War, Moscow and New Delhi managed to build strong strategic, military, economic and diplomatic ties. While there was a short period of tension in the 1990s, a convergence of local and international interests soon

brought the two actors back together. Close relations with India, which began in the 1950s, represent the most successful attempt by the Soviet Union to develop closer relations with Asian states. Bilateral ties began with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in June 1955. Nehru aspired to broaden India's economic ties in order to diminish India's dependence on the West. Bilateral ties were furthered by Nikita Khrushchev's crucial visit to India in the fall of 1955 (Singh, 1988). Subsequently, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union supported Indian sovereignty over the disputed territory of Kashmir and the Portuguese coastal enclaves¹ (Prasad, 1973).

¹ Portuguese India, or Portuguese Estado da Índia, was the name once used for those parts of India which were under Portuguese rule from 1505 to December 1961. Portuguese India consisted of several isolated tracts: (1) the territory of Goa; (2) Damão, or Daman, with the separated territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, north of Mumbai (formerly Bombay); (3) Diu with Pani Kota Island on the southern coast of the Kathiawar Peninsula in Gujarat state.

In 1965, the Soviet Union successfully served as a mediator between India and Pakistan after the India-Pakistan border conflict. Alexey Kosygin met with Indian and Pakistani representatives and helped them negotiate an end to the military conflict in Kashmir (Ganguly, n.d). The August 1971 signing of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Republic of India is considered the culmination of the Soviet-Indian friendship.

Since 1991, the treaty's framework has been updated, and over 250 bilateral documents have been signed. Another fundamental document of Russian-Indian relations is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Russia and India, signed on January 28, 1993. The period from 1991-1999 saw a decline in Russian-Indian relations in economic, military-technical, and cultural spheres, the two countries practically did not interact with each other, the financial indicators of trade turnover declined sharply, and there were practically no exchanges of official visits (Unnikrishnan et al., 2015).

The next turn in bilateral relations occurred during Vladimir Putin's visit in October 2000, in which the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the two states was signed. Since 2000, top-level diplomatic visits have taken place annually. Russia and India have pledged to cooperate in domestic and international affairs as well as security concerns held in common. Meetings between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Russia are held every year and are the most important mechanism of bilateral cooperation within the framework of the Strategic Partnership.

On November 12, 2003, Russian President Putin and then Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee signed the Declaration on Global Challenges and Threats to International Security, which, among other things, expressed their joint interest in seeing a more multipolar world, emphasising the UN's critical role in solving international problems and conflicts. In 2007, then-Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh arrived in Russia on an official visit. This visit led to the signing of intergovernmental agreements on the joint development of a transport aircraft and promising fighter aircraft, cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking, and lunar exploration.

In 2008, then-president Dmitry Medvedev visited India, during which he held talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. As a result, the two sides signed a Joint Declaration to facilitate the construction of nuclear power plants at new sites in India based on Russian projects. In 2009, Singh took part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS² summits in Yekaterinburg. In 2010, several more bilateral agreements were signed, including treaties on space and military cooperation. Moreover, Russia continued to support India in the Kashmir conflict. In contrast, Russia saw Pakistan as a threat to international security and a source of terrorism.

In 2014, Modi expressed support for Russia in connection with the events in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, the exacerbating economic situation in Russia, and the sanctions imposed by the US and EU ("India's friction with the US rises", 2021), making it clear that it would not support sanctions against Russia. In 2015, Vladimir Putin paid a visit to India, where Modi warmly welcomed the Russian President, saying that "times have changed, but our friendship has not". New Delhi claimed that the Russian Federation has legitimate interests in Crimea, and the conflict between Russia and the West should be resolved peacefully.

Since the 2000s, the fight against terrorism has been a top priority for the two countries. In 2000, the Russian-Indian Working Group on Afghanistan was established, the priority of which was to restore the economy, create security, and ensure the non-proliferation of drugs. The main principles of cooperation in this area are reflected in the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism of November 2001. In March 2015, New Delhi hosted Russian-Indian consultations on the situation in Central Asia, exchanged views on the situation in the region, discussed threats to regional security, and clarified Russia and India's role in ensuring the stability and economic development of the Central Asian states.

The multilateral framework has been an area of nurtured commitment for India and Russia, one that has led to Russia supporting issues like a permanent post at the United Nations Security Council and entrance into the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. Efforts aimed at improving cooperation are also noticeable in formats including the SCO, BRICS, and the Eurasian Economic Union.

² BRICS is the acronym coined to associate five major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

Russia-India relations in the changing international arena

Trade

Today, the Russian economy is experiencing particular difficulties as a result of sanctions imposed by Western countries. Oil prices have fallen, subsequently devaluing the Ruble and causing significant damage to the country's financial sector. This has been exacerbated by the marked decline in trade with Russia's largest economic partner, the European Union, in recent years. In these challenging economic conditions, Russia is aiming to correct the trade imbalance by turning its attention to Asia's rapidly developing markets, especially India, whose economy has recently experienced rapid growth. This financial cooperation can be a good incentive for the development of the Russian economy and give further depth to the strategic relations between the countries.

The Indian economy is undergoing a stage of active development, which today creates a reasonable basis for expanding business contacts and promoting new projects between them (Shikin, 2021). Nevertheless, despite the acceleration of growth and immense opportunities, the trade turnover between Russia and India has not risen to its potential (Volodin, 2007). In general, to revise trade and economic relations, it is necessary to understand the existing regulatory and legal framework, main stages of development, and the past positive experiences of cooperation, which can all help bolster future bilateral cooperation in various fields.

In 1989 and 1990, Russia's share in India's foreign trade was 16% and 17%, respectively (Budhwar, 2007). By 1994, it had fallen to 2%, and in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, it reached 0.96%. In 2016, the trade turnover between Russia and India was estimated at \$ 7.71 billion, a decrease of 1.52% from 2015. According to experts, in order to maintain the privileged status of Russian-Indian relations and create a promising dynamic for future cooperation, trade turnover has to increase to at least \$17-18 billion. (Singh, 2021).

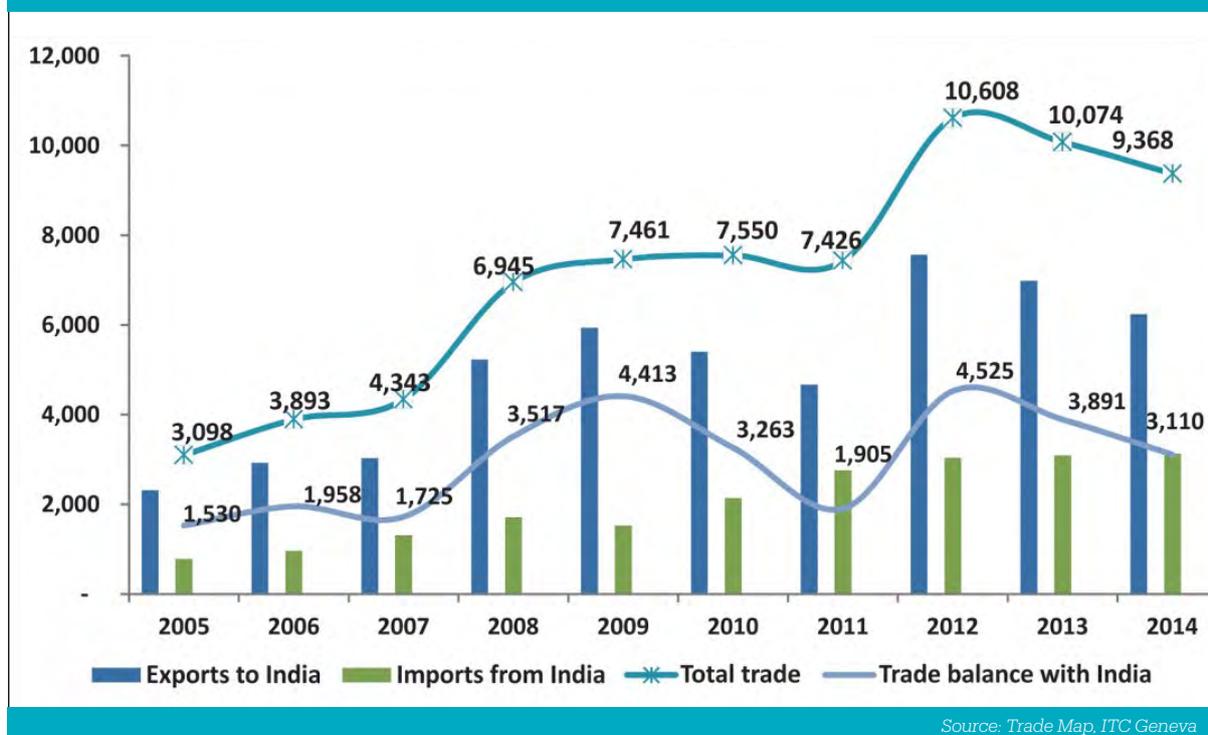
Over the past 15 years, mutual military-technical projects have been implemented, joint development of natural resources is underway, and the number of academic programmes and educational exchanges is growing.

Trade relations have been gradually reviving since the 2000s. In 2002, the trade turnover between the two countries was \$ 2.1 billion; in 2003 it reached \$ 3.3 billion (Arun, 2017). India has adopted several large and long-term programmes: production and transportation of hydrocarbons, construction of thermal power plants, hydroelectric power plants, metallurgical plants, improvement of railways, development of electronics, telecommunications, and biotechnology.

In December 2004, during the President of the Russian Federation's visit to India, new agreements were signed and primary attention was paid to economic and scientific cooperation. The trade turnover from 2005-2008 has increased by about 30% every year since. Despite the global economic crisis, the positive dynamics of Russian-Indian trade cooperation persisted in 2009. The trade turnover increased by 7.5%; its volume reaching \$7.5 billion (Consulate of India, n.d). Now, the trade turnover is about \$10.5 billion. The two states have initiated a bilateral trade target of \$30 billion by 2025 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2021). The content of such trade from Russia to India is composed largely of aerospace equipment, ferrous metals, precious stones, components of nuclear power facilities, cereals, hydrocarbon raw materials, electrical equipment, and fertilizers. India supplies pharmaceutical and machine-building products, coffee, tea, spices, clothing, fabrics, and food to Russia.

Since the 2000s, there has been a new round of bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas sector. The most critical joint oil and gas projects are Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2. Since 2001, the Indian oil and gas corporation "Owengisi" has been involved in the development of the Sakhalin-1 oil and gas field in the Bay of Bengal with the participation of Gazprom ("Sakhalin-1 Oil and Gas Project", n.d). The impetus for the development of bilateral relations was the agreement between the Russian government and the India government "on the promotion and mutual protection of investments" dated December 23, 1994. Based on this agreement, a 2010 treaty was signed "on cooperation in the oil and gas sector". The two countries agreed to implement joint projects in exploration, production, processing, transportation, storage, sale, and use of oil and natural gas and to establish joint ventures.

Figure 1: Trends in Russia's Trade with India, 2005-2014 (US\$ mn)



In 2005, the Indian economy was supported by the "oil strategy", which was based on two political imperatives. The first was to ensure price stability by creating a "single Asian market" for petroleum products and transferring improved oil production and refining technologies to the Indian side. The second was the political institutionalisation of existing economic relations (based on mutual supplies of hydrocarbons and exchange of technologies) to coordinate policies towards other states, regions, and groupings. Experts note that thanks to Russia and India's close cooperation in this direction, Russia can now supply about 10% of the current gas imports to India and up to 5% of oil imports.

In June 2011, Gazprom and the Indian companies GAIL, Gujarat State Petroleum Company, and Petronet signed memorandums of cooperation to supply India with 7.5 million tons of liquefied natural gas per year for 25 years. In August 2012, Gazprom and GAIL signed an agreement on the supply of liquefied natural gas, which provides for the export of Russian liquefied natural gas to India in the amount of 2.5 million tons per year for 20 years. In 2013, the Russian Federation hosted a Russian-Indian summit, as a result of which the two states agreed to create a joint research group to study the likelihood of direct land transportation of

Russian hydrocarbons to India. Rosneft signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Indian public sector multinational Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Russia's Arctic shelf.

The two countries' plans for the development of the "peaceful atom" are extensive. At the moment, Russia and India have reached an agreement on the supply of 12 nuclear reactors to the Indian market. In the construction of nuclear power plants on India's territory, Russia's has far surpassed other partners' contributions, completing a second nuclear power plant unit, "Kudankulam". During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Russia in June 2017, a general agreement to build six Russian-design nuclear reactors was signed. Two Russian-built VVER-1000 reactors entered commercial operation in Kudankulam 1 in December 2014, while units 3 and 4 were built at the site in 2017. The agreement covers the construction of units 5 and 6 on the site.

Since 2007, the Russian-Indian Forum on Trade and Investment has been held annually. The Russian-Indian Business Council currently operates under the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

The total volume of Indian investments in the Russian economy from 2000-2015 amounted to more than \$8 billion, and Russian investments in India in the same period totalled about \$4 billion (Shikin & Bhandari, 2017). Russian investments are mainly directed at the development of nuclear energy and technologies, as well as in the transportation sector.

Mutual investment is no longer limited to the energy sector. The opening of new transport routes linking Russia and India may also serve as powerful incentives for the growth of trade and economic ties between the two countries ("India Russia trade", 2019). The first example of such is the International Transport Corridor (ITC) "North-South". On December 8, 2016, an international conference was held in Moscow, organised by the Embassy of India, the Russian Ministry of Transport, and the Embassies of Azerbaijan and Iran. This was the first time that the North-South MTC was discussed in a quadripartite format. In comparison with the standard transport route, which today passes through the sea bypassing Europe, the North-South transport route provides several advantages, the most significant of which is the speed of cargo delivery. While sea transportation from Mumbai to St. Petersburg requires almost six weeks, delivery via the MTK takes only three weeks.

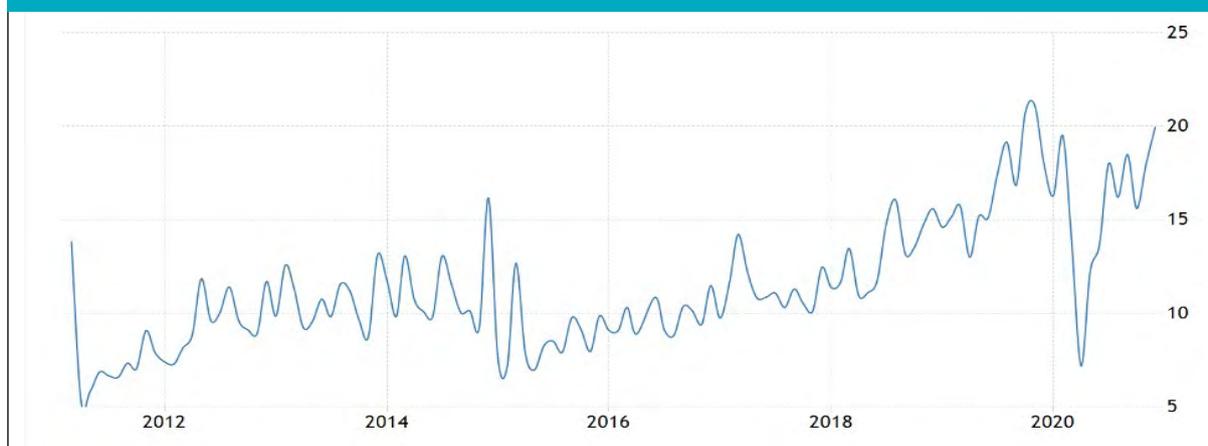
The significance of the North-South MTK project is not limited to material, technical, or economic factors. For Russia, there are apparent political preferences from the implementation of the project in the face of sanctions imposed by Western countries and the need to

look for new ways to import goods that cannot be produced in Russia.

For India, which is seeking to create a free trade area with the Eurasian Economic Union, participation in this project will open up access to integration with the region and help solve technical and bureaucratic problems. The highest level of overall trade was recorded in 2012 when the trade turnover reached \$10.6 billion ("India Exports to Russia", n.d). However, this figure was significantly lower than New Delhi's stated goals. In 2016, at the BRICS summit in the Indian state of Goa, the leaders of Russia and India set a goal to increase trade turnover to \$30 billion by 2025 [Kumar 2017: 89]. It is evident that the activation of traditional approaches to cooperation, such as the modernisation of enterprises built in India with the assistance of the Soviet Union, as well as military-technical cooperation and support in the field of nuclear energy, can stimulate trade and economic relations.

Increasing the high-tech component of Russian exports to India is an up-and-coming and essential area of concern. For example, Russia recently offered to cooperate in the production of components for the Sukhoi Superjet-100 and MS-21 aircraft. Russian business is showing some interest in participating in the telecommunications sector in India. In particular, a joint venture between Sistema and the Indian company Shyam Group, Sistema Shyam Teleservices Limited, was established. In 2017, Sistema merged its telecommunications assets in India with another major company, Reliance Communications.

Figure 2: Indian Exports to Russia increased to 19.96 INR Billion in December from 17.97 INR Billion in November of 2020.



Source: Trade Economics

The introduction of a free trade regime between India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) may contribute to the expansion of Russian-Indian cooperation. To this end, a joint research group has been formed and already begun its work, the results of which should present conclusions on the feasibility of an agreement.

In addition to the aforementioned areas of cooperation, there are many other, equally promising areas, particularly in the field of technological exchange. Here, India can provide significant assistance to Russia in the production of software, and other IT and computer-based services, with some experts even referring to India as a 'technological superpower'. There are also prospects in the field of investment cooperation: Russian firms have shown a willingness to invest in significant infrastructure projects in India, such as cargo corridors and industrial facilities, smart cities, and utilities.

Analysing the content and dynamics of Russian-Indian trade and economic relations, we can conclude that during the period under review, they experienced both ups and downs. Gaps in the regulatory framework, systemic crises in the global economy, and protective measures harm economic cooperation between Russia and India.

However, even against the background of the decline in trade turnover, Russia and India have continued to organise multi-format meetings with the participation of Russian and Indian industrial circles. This suggests that both countries consider each other as strategic partners in the economic sphere.

Military Cooperation

In 2015, India became the second-largest buyer of weapons from Russia, with arms contracts totalling approximately \$5.5 billion ("Russia Ready to Increase", 2017). To date, a new programme on military-technical cooperation between Russia and India for 2011-2020 is in effect, which includes the implementation of 200 joint projects (Chaudhury, 2020). In 2013, a significant event in the field of military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and India was the transfer of the aircraft carrier Vikramaditya to the Indian Navy. India has joint ventures with Russia in the military-industrial sector, and the countries plan to jointly develop a multi-purpose transport aircraft, a fifth-generation fighter aircraft, additional ships, submarines, updated tanks, and other modern equipment.

The most important aspect of this plan are the joint military exercises, which have been held regularly since 2005. The Defence Ministers of India and Russia organise annual meetings to discuss the status of current projects and various issues of military-technical relations. The partnership between the two countries is mutually beneficial, as it will expand the area of work within not only India but also the Asia-Pacific region.

During the last election campaign, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced that it would pursue the goal of "developing domestic defence technologies" and stim-

ulate the production of military products in the country, both for the armed forces and for export. In 2016, the joint production of Su-30MKI fighters, T-90 tanks, and anti-ship missiles was launched. Agreements were reached on the supply of S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems, the production of frigates for the Indian Navy, and the creation of a joint venture for the production of Ka-226T helicopters. Cooperation in space is also a part of this plan: Russia and India are jointly developing launch vehicles, satellite navigation, and applied space technologies ("Rossija i Indija opredelili", 2019).

According to Russian experts, India is purposefully diversifying its arms imports and purchasing weapons systems manufactured in accordance with its domestic interests. Moreover, for several decades, India has been acquiring domestic licenses in order to develop the production of military equipment within its territory. This policy has allowed New Delhi to gain access to several technologies available on the market.

Today, Russia can offer India a wide range of modern weapons, from unmanned aerial vehicles to multifunctional robotic systems. This was made possible due to large-scale investment programmes in the Russian military-industrial complex. An additional competitive advantage is provided by the devaluation of the Russian Ruble.



Opening ceremony of the Center-2019 military exercise is held in the southern Orenburg region with the participation of military chiefs from China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, in Orenburg, Russia on September 16, 2019. (Russian Defense Ministry - Anadolu Agency)

Military-technical cooperation between Russia and India is being carried out on a systematic and long-term basis. Russian and Indian officials at different levels often point out that cooperation in the military-technical field is one of the foundations of the strategic partnership. India is the only country in the world with which Russia is implementing a long-term (2011-2020) programme of cooperation in the field of armaments. The Russian-Indian Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation, under the chairmanship of the Defence Ministers of Russia and India, has played a significant role in this development. Russia is a major exporter of military hardware to India. From 2012-2016, Russia accounted for about 68% of military supplies to India. During the Russian-Indian military-industrial conference in March 2017, the parties discussed possible ways to provide comprehensive after-sales service of Russian (Soviet) - made weapons and military equipment within the framework of the "Made in India" programme.

In early October 2018, on the sidelines of the Russian-Indian summit talks, a contract was signed for the supply of S-400 Triumph air defence systems. India will receive five S-400 regimental sets, a deal valued

in excess of \$5 billion. Deliveries of the S-400 to India will begin after 2020, the official representative of the FSMTC, Maria Vorobyova, told Interfax in June. Later, in the Indian city of Korva, Indo-Russian Rifles PRIVATE Limited, a joint Russian Indian enterprise, was opened for the production of Kalashnikov assault rifles of the "two-hundredth" series.

Russia and India are preparing a new version of the programme of military-technical cooperation, designed for the period after 2020. President Vladimir Putin stated at a press conference in Vladivostok that "Russia and India are closely cooperating in the field of military-technical cooperation, and the programme for military-technical cooperation until 2020 is being successfully implemented. We are working on a new version of it for the next ten years" ("Rossija i Indija gotovjat", n.d). Russia plans to offer the MiG-35 fighter to participate in the Indian tender for 110 light fighters.

Indo-Russian relations' backbone is the defence industry: Moscow still supplies approximately 60% of India's defence demands, despite the fact that New Delhi has expanded its purchasing efforts to include the US, Israel and Europe.

Post- Pandemic Cooperation

As the world continues to grapple with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the changing international system only adds to the uncertainty. The rivalry between the US and China was not unexpected, but the acceleration of the confrontation due to the pandemic has made this bipolar dynamic the pivot around which the new world order is likely to revolve.

India-Russia bilateral relations are free from active conflicts, strongly creating a sense of long-term strategic partnership during the pandemic. Thus, it is appropriate to examine the impact of these circumstances on the long-standing "special and privileged partnership" that New Delhi and Moscow seek to demonstrate in the face of ongoing changes in global politics.

Russia's relations with China and India, and henceforth its involvement in the conception of Greater Eurasia, have been demonstrated in the recent Sino-Indian dispute at Ladakh. In 2020, the Kremlin arranged a trilateral agreement among the foreign ministers of India and China, bringing the two parties together following deadly conflict between New Delhi's and Beijing's armed forces in the Galwan Valley, located in the disputed territory of Ladakh (Sahay, 2020). The three states – Russia, India and China – operate collectively in a 'Greater Eurasian Partnership' structure to discuss their internal, regional, and global affairs. Later, at the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's invitation, the three countries' foreign ministers participated in a video discussion and agreed to improve cooperation with ASEAN countries. They also decided to collaborate via BRICS, the SCO, and the UN.

During the initial stage of the pandemic, Vladimir Putin and Narendra Modi discussed the joint efforts of the countries in the fight against the spread of coronavirus infection. The interlocutors confirmed their mutual intention to strengthen the multifaceted Russian-Indian relations within the context of the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership. According to the Russian trade representative in India, Alexander Rybas, India has sent Russia 13 million tablets of hydroxychloroquine out of the requested 105 million (Ria, 2020).

Even though the pandemic has had a disastrous impact on world health, economics, and politics, it has opened up opportunities to explore new engagements and alignments and shape new leadership roles. Given the

traumas experienced as a result of Covid-19 in numerous countries, experts have begun to examine the pandemic's influence on the position of governments in the post-pandemic era, including states' new priorities and policies developed to accomplish their interests. By the end of 2020, during their seasonal summit, New Delhi and Moscow had signed the 'Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement', a treaty that would give access to each other's military bases and support facilities.

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh V. Shringla's first visit abroad in 2021 was to Moscow on a two-day trip beginning February 17. According to a press release from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, the meeting aimed to deliberate on bilateral as well as topical issues of regional and global importance.

During his visit, Shringla participated in the India-Russia Foreign Office Consultation with the Russian side being led by Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov. This indicated the importance New Delhi attributes to its close and strategically planned relations with Moscow.

Covid-19 has also opened new avenues of cooperation. Moscow has signed agreements with India on local production of Russian vaccines and to conduct clinical trials of the Sputnik V vaccine. In November 2020, Russia's sovereign wealth fund and the Indian pharmaceutical firm Hetero signed an agreement to produce and deliver more than 100 million doses per year in India of the Sputnik V vaccine.

Conclusion

Russia and India have been and remain important strategic partners. However, the existing model of interaction has largely exhausted itself. It is thus in their common interest to bring a new framework to the alliance, one fully corresponding to the realities of world politics in the 21st century.

Giving new impetus to relations with New Delhi would allow Moscow to diversify its policy in Asia. However, in order for their partnership to flower, both Russia and India must do their utmost to prevent third-parties from having a significant impact on their bilateral relations. The parties need to systematically improve the modal-

ities of interaction through regular contacts at the level of ministries and departments, not limited to annual bilateral summits, but also through better economic ties.

Traditionally, the Indo-Russian partnership has been built on politics, military security, nuclear energy, anti-terrorism and space cooperation. Thus, with the development of new Covid-19 related joint projects, it is important to observe the effect of these developments on long-term relations, particularly as India and Russia attempt to position themselves amid the ongoing flux in global politics.

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