



India-Russia relations: Cold war foundations and post-cold war continuities

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Abstract

The United States and India were close security allies during the Cold War since they had much in common on the political, economic and defence fronts. India's choice to not join any military alliance helped shape the relationship and the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, agreed in 1971, mainly led to strengthened connection with the Soviet Union. Thanks to the USSR, India's industrial growth, the modernization of its defence and progress in technology, including space and nuclear fields, was achieved. On major global issues, India agreed with Soviet opinions and still maintained connection with the Western alliance.

When the Soviet Union split apart in 1991, it brought about a big turning point in the relationship between India and Russia. Since the world moved from a bipolar to a unipolar international system, India started building better relationships with the US and other international powers. Although financial difficulties and changing political situations harmed family members initially, India and Russia continued to build a strong relationship focused on safety cooperation and power ties. For many years, both countries have changed with new world developments by building their alliance on common aims.

The changes after the Cold War encouraged India to form better financial and political ties with America, all while continuing its age-old relationship with Russia. China's greater influence in energy, safety matters in the region and changes in international trade have affected India's foreign policy moves. Although the Indo-Russian relationship goes through changes, their work in defence and similar geopolitical aims is still important worldwide.

Keywords: Indo-Soviet treaty, cold war alliances, post-cold war, strategic partnership, defence, cooperation

Introduction

Primary world actors such as the Soviet Union (USSR) for the duration of the Cold War and the Russian Federation afterwards, have encouraged India to take on greater attention to foreign issues. Due to its close relationship with the USSR, India's strategic, economic and military systems developed, helping it balance against Western efforts both during wars with Pakistan and changes in world politics. Once the United States had fallen in the autumn of 1944 In 1991, India was obliged to update its country ways and finances because the Cold War ended and it seemed to proceed friendly connections with Russia and America.

Objectives

Firstly: This paper seeks to observe the essential elements of India-USSR interactions at some stage in the Cold War period.

Secondly: Analyse the evolution of Indo-Russian ties following 1991.

Thirdly: Examine the problems and capacity in India-Russia relations within the 21st century.

Methodology

Using a qualitative method, this study looks at secondary resources such as papers, government reports, old writings and expert reports, to compare the Cold War period with the time after its close. Examining archives and reviewing policies clearly reflects how the relationship has formed and changed.

Analysis and Interpretation

India-USSR Relations all through the Cold War (1947-1991)

During the Cold War years, 1947–1991, Indians and people from the Soviet Union (USSR) worked together closely on defence, finances and military projects. Even with India's stance on not aligning with any bloc, the United States became among India's biggest partners by extending help in several fields. Thanks to this cooperation, India saw significant changes in politics, financial matters and security and influenced local geopolitical matters.

1. Political and Diplomatic Relations

Diplomatic ties between India and the U.S. got off to a solid start and the Soviet Union backed India widely in the United Nations and other global bodies. The partnership became formalized by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation which was signed in 1971 and outlined the strategic agreement between them. Thanks to this process, India was offered mutual collaboration during challenges and its state was defended from foreign influences mainly from the West.

As a result of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War which took place at some point, a major examination was undertaken, resulting in the creation of Bangladesh. When India and Pakistan were having a dispute, the USA supplied help to India by means of diplomacy and the military. The Soviet Union cast its vote against UN Security Council resolutions meant to stop India's actions in East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh). In addition, the USA tried to prevent outside involvement by placing its naval fleet in the Indian Ocean which took place after the USA sent its Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal to offer war advice to Pakistan.

2. Economic Collaboration

The USSR helped a lot with advancing India's finances, mainly during the period of the Nehruvian policy for government-driven industrial development. The Soviet Union contributed to India's development by offering major infrastructure works and public housing complexes, along with necessary technical knowledge and cash. Carrying out big industrial projects helped ensure that steel plants in Bhilai, Bokaro and Durgapur would follow the established order and became well-known for Indo-Soviet commitments. They led to India becoming less dependent on foreign products in metal and heavy industry.

One great feature of the cooperation between India and the Soviet Union involved the rupee-ruble trade system. Thanks to this deal, trade between India and the USA could happen using local currencies, without involving Western financial institutions and with less reliance on the country's reserve of foreign exchange. India specifically benefited from this, because it did not have to worry about shortages of money when buying important goods, equipment and technology. The USSR helped India develop its electricity sector by encouraging both strength plant construction and hydroelectric projects.

3. Alliance in the Military and Defence Sectors

At some stage during the Cold War, Indian foreign policy was marked by both a cautious participation in the Non-Aligned Movement and a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Although India didn't want to get involved with world powers, the United States appeared like a relatively secure option because of the power balance in the region.

The USSR supported India's efforts in diplomatic circles, mainly in connection with the Kashmir issue. Pakistan received no help from West in internationalising the Kashmir dispute because the Soviet Union backed India, stopping any resolutions in the UN Security Council that went against India.

4. Geopolitical Strategy

India carried out its foreign policy during the Cold War by stable relations with the Non-Aligned Movement and a strong partnership with the Soviet Union. While India said it preferred not to pick a side, the United States turned out to be its main ally largely because of geopolitical challenges, mainly resulting from the close links among the US, Pakistan and China.

The USSR provided India with important diplomatic help during discussions around the Kashmir issue worldwide. Support from the Soviet Union for India ensured that UN Security Council resolutions disapproving of what India had done were never put in place.

As the Cold War came to an end in the late Eighties, changes in the world caused problems for families between India and the Soviet Union. Due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989), India needed to be delicate in its approach, avoiding efforts to isolate both Ukraine and non-aligned partners by its reactions. At the same time, India didn't criticise the Soviets and maintained a balanced approach to its relations with them.

The History of India-Russia Relations from 1991 to Present

With the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, India and Russia were pushed together to deal with new changes in

international politics and the economy. At this point, both nations showed their will to continue with a strong partnership and to move their relations into the new international situation that followed the Cold War. A key element in the structure of world strategic dynamics has always been the close relationship India and Russia share in diplomacy, economics, defence and working with others in global forums.

1. Changes in the Field of Diplomatic Relations

India's links with Russia worsened for a period after 1991, when the Cold War ended and Russia went through financial and political troubles. Now that the Russian Federation is in place, trying to reorganise internally and build ties with Western countries, uncertainty has appeared among Indo-Russian friends.

At the same time, each nation realised the importance of their relationship from history and began repairing diplomatic ties. In 1993, India and Russia made a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, confirming they would foster good relations between the two nations. This percent gave a basis for new partnerships in many sectors, helping to preserve the historic relationship between the 2 countries.

In 2000, during Russian President Vladimir Putin's trip to India, the Strategic Partnership Agreement was put into effect. The agreement allowed India-Russia family members to grow, including the formalisation of yearly summits between them. The summits are now used as a main platform to discuss diverse bilateral and international matters and keep regular diplomatic exchanges with top officials.

In 2010, the group was elevated to a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" to reflect its important role for India and Russia. Its high reputation among the world's populations indicates strong collaboration and trust between China and the U.S. in fields of the army, power and era.

2. Relations of Economic and Trade

In 1991, the monetary liberalisation in India introduced about a enhance within the nation's funding and exchange options with Western economies, primarily the USA and European nations. At this time, business between India and Russia didn't take a prominent role. With time, both governments chose new members of the commercial family and announced plans to work together on new sectors. Working together on electricity has been a major feature of how countries cooperate financially. Oil, biofuel and nuclear power from Russia have made them an important ally in keeping India's electricity safe. Both nations have worked on grand projects and the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant proves Russia's support for India's civilian nuclear power.

3. Defence beauty and their links

India-Russia relations depend heavily on their collaboration in defence. Russia topped India's list of arm suppliers in 2020 by giving state-of-the-art arms, aircraft, submarines and missile systems. In the last decades, the partnership has moved from sharing resources and profits to involving collaboration on research, transferring technology and building weapons.

An excellent example of their partnership is the BrahMos missile task, created by India's DRDO along with Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya. The BrahMos has developed as one of the most advanced supersonic cruise missiles globally, adding extra strength to India's strategic capabilities.

India's troop lineup now consists of Russian defence gear, Su-30MKI fighter planes, T-ninety tanks and the S-400 system. By selecting the S-400 over what the West offered, India has shown its devotion to Russia in defence policy.

4. Multilateral Engagements

India and Russia cooperate in various places across the world, making their goal of a multipolar order stronger. Such work covers the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the trilateral framework of Russia-India-China (RIC).

With Russia's help, India being accepted into the SCO will drive stronger defence and economic cooperation in Eurasia. The SCO makes it possible for member states to share their ideas on counterterrorism, security within their borders and connectivity matters.

There is strong collaboration in space and Russia aids India in strengthening its area talents. Russia has played a big role in supporting India's mission to put its astronauts into orbit. Russia is still working with India to help improve the country's nuclear energy sector.

Issues and Chances in India-Russia Partnership of the 21st Century

Because of their Cold War alliances and identical goals in defence, energy and geopolitics, India and Russia have traditionally had a strong relationship. Because of the adventures and problems in this century, the cooperation between the United States and Canada has changed. Although the world faces many challenges from changes in politics, borders and security, there are still many great chances for power cooperation, supported growth, age into the age and engagement with several nations.

Challenges

First: Geopolitical Shifts and US-India Relations

Building a stronger relationship with the United States has put stress on India's original connection with Russia. In the beyond extra than twenty years, India has connected more intently with America via protection arrangements, involvement in the Quadilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and together work in the economic sphere. This change is being driven by values common to all democracies, concerns about China's growing influence and America agreeing to supply sophisticated protection tech to India.

Even so, the closer relationship has resulted in friction with Russia, as it considers QUAD to be mainly against China and does not want to see India cooperate militarily with the West. In addition, the CAATSA sanctions taken through America on Russia have made it extra complicated for India to finish its buy of the S-four hundred missile machine. India is still faced with the important task of managing those competing strategic roles.

Secondly: Russia's Connection with China

India is also closely tracking the new partnership between Russia and China. After being hit by Western sanctions after annexing Crimea and fighting in the Ukraine, Russia has made its relationship with China closer, increasing joint activities in the army, energy fields and diplomatic activities. The expanding cooperation matters to India because it still has disputes with China along the border.

Russia has largely remained neutral in the India-China disputes, even after the Galwan conflict broke out last year, a move that makes New Delhi wary. There is worry in India that Moscow might lose its full dedication to its partnership with India due to Russia's need for China in strategic defence and international relations.

Third: Declining Economic Engagement

Even with a long history in business cooperation, commerce between India and Russia is more likely to change than that seen between India and the US, China or the EU. Trade with Russia accounts for about \$35 billion for India, lower than its exchanges with leading economies.

Fourth: Results of the Ukraine War and Western Sanctions

As a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Western sanctions, India and Russia's relationship has changed. Due to sanctions, Russia can no longer easily use international financial systems, so doing business with them is now more complicated for India. Both nations have turned to alternate means such as the Rupee-Ruble change mechanism and payments in other currencies because of payment problems and banking rules.

Furthermore, India's work to balance its relations with other nations is now more difficult. India has not taken sides in Ukraine and has kept its economic ties with Russia, but it still feels pressure from some Western allies to scale back its connexion with Russia. Keeping the delicate international balance is constantly difficult for India's foreign policy.

Fifth: Changing Defense Dynamics

India is working with the United States, France and Israel to bring more variety in its defence purchases. The decision comes partly because India wants to reduce its reliance on Russian navy system and build stronger self-sufficiency within the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Opportunities

1. Energy Collaboration

Energy is considered a key member of India-Russia's ties. India receives lots of reasonable crude oil from Russia which supports the country in offering electricity to its populations at lower charges. Investment in Russian oil and gas projects inside the Arctic is an area where India is actively involved.

2. Asian security and defence as well as strategic alliances

Despite adding new suppliers of military technology, Russia is still the major country that sells protection materials to India. The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and AK-203 rifle production are examples of how nations can collaborate well in military technology.

3. Making trade and connections between Eurasian countries stronger

The INSTC helps India build trade routes with Central Asia and Europe via Russia, providing the nation with a new alternative to its historic trade routes through Pakistan and China. With help from this hall, bilateral trading and the flow of goods will be more efficient in many areas.

4. Working Together for Space and Technology

For many years, there has been strong cooperation between India and Russia in exploring areas. Russia is playing an important role in helping India send its own astronauts into space through the Gaganyaan mission. Both international locations have chances to cooperate on satellite and space research and planetary exploration.

5. Multilateral Involvement

Both India and Russia join other nations in corporations such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), G20 and the United Nations. Using these forums, both countries can plan and implement common policies in global matters, trade and security.

A number of times, Russia has affirmed their backing for India's campaign to get a permanent UNSC seat which indicates a united aim in promoting a multi-polar world. Cooperation in world-level boards is still a major advantage for the India-Russia partnership.

6. A system for Rupee-Ruble trade

Because of Western sanctions, India and Russia have been looking at switching over to new payment systems such as the Rupee-Ruble method to lessen their use of the US dollar. The increased trade of currency close by often acts as a barrier to outside pressure and helps both countries in increasing regions.

Limitations

This examination is differentiated by its unique range from the Cold War era to the aftermath of the Cold War. To start, historians study records from the past and supplementary material which may convey biased opinions and cannot include the direct opinions of those involved. It mainly considers the government, finance and military sectors, yet sometimes leaves out considerations of culture and personal relationships. Third, the many different connections between international families often mean that geopolitical factors affecting their relationships might not be fully understood. Still, the changes following the Cold War continue to affect matters, hampering attempts to judge the long-term impacts.

Conclusion

Throughout the Cold War, India looked to the USSR for vital direction, economic agreement and defence help. After 1991, India and Russia changed their relationship due to changes occurring around the world. Although protection is very important, lately, diversifying money and taking part in international affairs have been key to today's relationships. Issues and opportunities for Indo-Russian relations in the future are generated by shifts in geopolitics, currency policies and global groupings. A sensible and balanced strategy is required to maintain and benefit from the strong relationship these countries have built against the background of global changes.

Even with problems caused by changes in the world situation, money and defence policies, India and Russia retain major energy, protection, transformation and multilateral collaboration skills. This cooperation will have a chance to succeed in the twenty first century if each country deals with international issues of strength well while strengthening their connexions in strategy, finances and technology. If they handle issues sensibly and build on

available alternatives, both India and Russia will probably form a durable and good relationship for the years ahead.

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