
Political Relationship of India with United States of America, Japan and Russia: A Political Approach

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Abstract

India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a "global strategic partnership", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. India's relations with Russia have made little progress since they got stalled following the end of the Cold War. Today their bilateral ties—officially labelled “special and privileged strategic partnership”—focus heavily on defence cooperation, while the economic partnership remains listless even as the respective relations of the two with other states have grown rapidly. Similarly, the friendship between India and Japan has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. The Japan-India Association was set up in 1903, and is today the oldest international friendship body in Japan. This paper analyses the ebbs and flows of India's political relationship with United States, Russia and Japan. It seeks to examine the changes underway in the Indian foreign policies and political relationship with United states, Russia and Japan owing to domestic policy goals and the changing world order – to understand how they have influenced their bilateral ties. While the relationship remains generally strong and without significant obstacles, India and other countries need to critically examine the substance and future of their ties for a more coherent policy outlook.

Keywords: Cold War, Strategic partnership, Foreign policy, Bilateral ties.

Introduction:

India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a "global strategic partnership", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. The emphasis placed by the Government in India on development and good governance has created opportunity to reinvigorate bilateral ties and enhance cooperation

under the motto - "ChaleinSaathSaath: Forward Together We Go", and "SanjhaPrayas, Sab ka Vikas" (Shared Effort, Progress for All) adopted during the first two summits of Prime Minister of India and USA. The summit level joint statement issued called the India-U.S. relationship an "Enduring Global Partners in the 21st Century". Regular exchange of high-level political visits has provided sustained momentum to bilateral cooperation, while the wide-ranging and ever-expanding dialogue architecture has established a long-term framework for India-U.S. engagement. Today, the India-U.S. bilateral cooperation is broad-based and multi-sectorial, covering trade and investment, defence and security, education, science and technology, cyber security, high-technology, civil nuclear energy, space technology and applications, clean energy, environment, agriculture and health. Vibrant people-to-people interaction and support across the political spectrum in both countries nurture our bilateral relationship.

India and Russia shared decades of close linkages at the highest levels during the Soviet era. The tumult of the immediate post-Soviet years, however, reverberated through the Indo-Russia relationship as well, as the newly established Russian Federation sought to rebuild its foreign policy. The years immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union saw the Boris Yeltsin administration adopting a pro-Western foreign policy orientation. For India, meanwhile, it was the time it began liberalising its economy and looking to the West for trade and investment. Both countries, therefore, were occupied with domestic priorities while adjusting to a changed world order with the United States (US) as the sole superpower.

Throughout the various phases of history since contacts between India and Japan began some 1400 years ago, the two countries have never been adversaries. Bilateral ties have been singularly free of any kind of dispute –ideological, cultural or territorial. Post the Second World War, India did not attend the San Francisco Conference, but decided to conclude a separate peace treaty with Japan in 1952 after its sovereignty was fully restored. The sole dissenting voice of Judge RadhaBinod Pal at the War Crimes Tribunal struck a deep chord among the Japanese public that continues to reverberate to this day. The modern nation States have carried on the positive legacy of the old association which has been strengthened by shared values of belief in democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law. Over the years, the two countries have built upon these values and created a partnership based on

both principle and pragmatism. Today, India is the largest democracy in Asia and Japan the most prosperous.

Political Relations between India with United States, Russia and Japan

The frequency of high-level visits and exchanges between India and the U.S. has gone up significantly of late. Prime Minister visited the U.S.A, and held meetings with President of USA, members of the U.S. Congress and political leaders, including from various States and cities in the U.S., and interacted with members of President's Cabinet. He also reached out to the captains of the U.S. commerce and industry, the American civil society and think tanks, and the Indian-American community. A Vision Statement and a Joint Statement were issued during the visit. During the visit, the two sides issued a Delhi Declaration of Friendship and adopted a Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region. Both sides elevated the Strategic Dialogue between their Foreign Ministers to Strategic and Commercial Dialogue of Foreign and Commerce Ministers.

Political relations between India and Russia have historically been steady and cordial. The two countries have had the advantage of what analysts refer to as a "problem-free environment" despite a weak economic base. A total of 19 annual summits have been held uninterrupted, alternately in India and Russia, since they were first instituted in 2000. The leaders of the two countries also meet regularly at the meetings—or on the side-lines—of various multilateral organisations like the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and G20. Indeed, it was Russia that pushed for India's entry into SCO; India became a full member. A major reason for this was Moscow's desire to prevent the organisation from being dominated by China, a concern that was shared by the Central Asian states as well. China, while initially resistant to the idea, agreed on the condition that Pakistan too joined the multilateral body.

The two sides also signed the 'Strategic Vision for Strengthening Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy' and agreed on the 'Partnership for Global Peace and Stability'. Russia bestowed the Order of St Andrew the Apostle "distinguished contribution to the development of a privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly ties between the Russian and Indian peoples." Apart from the annual summits, the defence ministers of the two countries get the chance to meet regularly as they co-chair the Inter-

Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC). These annual meetings seek to review defence cooperation between the two countries. India's external affairs minister is the co-chair of the Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), while the Russian side is represented by the deputy prime minister. Other ministerial level meetings also take place annually, ensuring regular contacts at different levels of the government between the two countries.

The political relationship between India and Japan in the first decade after diplomatic ties were established, several high level exchanges took place, including Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi's visit to India in 1957, Prime Minister Nehru's return visit to Tokyo the same year (with a gift of two elephants) and President Rajendra Prasad's visit in 1958. The visit of their Highnesses, the then Japanese Crown Prince Akihito and Crown Princess Michiko in 1960 took the relations to a new level. The momentum of bilateral ties, however, was not quite sustained in the following decades. After Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda's visit to India in 1961, the next Prime Ministerial visit from Japan was by Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1984. Prime Ministerial visits from India included Smt. Indira Gandhi (1969 & 1982), Shri Rajiv Gandhi (1985 & 1987) and Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao (1992). A transformational development in the economic history of India was Suzuki Motor Corporation's path breaking investment in India in the early 1980s that revolutionized the automobile sector, bringing in advanced technology and management ethics to India. A test of the reliability of Japan as a friend was witnessed in 1991, when Japan was among the few countries that unconditionally bailed India out of the balance of payment crisis.

The beginning of the 21st century witnessed a dramatic transformation in bilateral ties. During Prime Minister Mori's path-breaking visit to India in 2000, the Japan-India Global Partnership in the 21st century was launched. The Joint Statement signed by Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Shinzo Abe in 2006 factored in the new challenges, and the relationship was upgraded to a Global and Strategic Partnership with the provision of annual Prime Ministerial Summits. A Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Japan and India was concluded in 2011.

Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko visited India. Their Majesties visited Delhi and Chennai. PM Abe paid an official visit to India for the 8th Annual Summit with

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. During the visit, the two sides upgraded the relationship to a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'. Both sides also agreed to establish the 'India-Japan Investment Promotion Partnership'. PM Abe pledged to realize public and private investments worth JPY 3.5 trillion and doubling of the number of Japanese companies in India over the next five years.

In a special gesture, India also announced "visa on arrival" scheme for all Japanese travellers, including for business purposes. A 'Japan-India Make in India Special Finance Facility' of JPY 1.3 trillion was also established. Following the meeting, the two Prime Ministers issued a Joint Statement and a Fact Sheet. 10 Agreements/MoUs/ MoCs were signed/exchanged in a wide range of areas, including cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, manufacturing skill transfer programme, outer space, marine, earth and atmospheric science and technology, agriculture and food related industry, transport and urban development, textiles, cultural exchange and sports.

The two countries have several institutional dialogue mechanisms, which are held regularly, at senior official and functional levels to exchange views on bilateral issues as well as regional and international cooperation. There is Foreign Office Consultation at the level of Foreign Secretary / Vice Foreign Minister as well as a 2+2 Dialogue at the level of Foreign and Defence Secretaries. Similarly, there are dialogue mechanisms in diverse fields such as economy, commercial, financial services, health, road transport, shipping, education etc. to name a few sectors.

Conclusion

India and Russia continue to share a common strategic rationale for their relationship: apart from bilateral synergies, the two are members of various multilateral organisations including BRICS, RIC, G20, East Asia Summit and SCO—where avenues for cooperation on issues of mutual importance exist. There is also a need for cooperation in areas like counterterrorism, cyber security, the Afghanistan conflict, outer space, and climate change. The fact that Russia holds a permanent seat.

However, India and Russia will have to diversify their areas of cooperation beyond energy and defence. Also, concrete proposals in the areas already identified by the two countries

need to be identified and implemented on a priority basis, including start-ups, infrastructure, shipbuilding, river-navigation, high speed railways, space, food processing, and high-technology products. India and Russia's relationship cannot flourish on defence and historical linkages alone. With systemic changes underway in international relations, new dimensions of cooperation need to be found to build a strong economic and strategic partnership. Both India and Russia will have to learn to navigate their relationship amidst challenges emerging not just from bilateral factors but also regional and global ones, as both countries seek to strengthen their position at a time of flux in the international order.

In recent years, there has been a change in the composition of the Indian community with the arrival of a large number of professionals, including IT professionals and engineers working for Indian and Japanese firms as well as professionals in management, finance, education, and S&T research. The Nishikasai area in Tokyo is emerging as a "Mini-India". Their growing numbers had prompted the opening of three Indian schools in Tokyo and Yokohama. The community is actively engaged in events organized by the Embassy. The Indian community lives harmoniously with the neighbours and has developed relations with local governments to become valuable members of the Japanese community. Approximately 27,000 Indians live in Japan.

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