Growing Russia-India Cooperation Strengthens Global Stability

With its sanctions intrigues and the desire to demonstrate a servile adherence only to the United States, Europe is increasingly becoming a global strategic periphery. Asia, on the contrary, is moving forward in terms of the global significance of the events taking place there.

Against this background, the strategies of Russia and India complement each other, striving to balance Eurasian affairs in the emerging multipolar world order. They seek to achieve this by coordinating their efforts through multilateral institutions and enhancing bilateral cooperation, especially in the economic, technological, military, and regional spheres of integration. Clear evidence of this was the working visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin on December 6 at the invitation of India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the participation of the leaders of the two countries in the 21st Russian-Indian Annual Summit, “Russia - India: Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity.”

As emphasized in the joint statement following this summit, the past five decades of the 1971 Treaty on Peace, Friendship and Cooperation and two decades of the Strategic Partnership Declaration symbolize the long-standing, time-tested Russian-Indian relations. This relationship is carried with mutual trust, respect for national interests, and similar positions on various international and regional issues. As significant powers with shared responsibility, the privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India remains the pillar of global peace and stability.

Despite restrictions associated with the pandemic, in the first half of 2021, bilateral trade showed an increase of about 38% compared to the same period in 2020. At the same time, both leaders acknowledged that the significant volume of bilateral trade does not match the potential of the strategic partnership between Russia and India. The
During the summit, it was confirmed that cooperation in energy was one of the critical elements of bilateral ties and an “energy bridge” between the two countries. The parties resumed joint efforts to implement the Roadmap for the Development of Cooperation in the Hydrocarbon Industry for 2019-2024 to enhance bilateral cooperation in the energy sector. They welcomed the opening in Moscow of the Indian Energy Center, which represents five oil and gas state-owned companies of India, to strengthen ties with interested Russian energy companies.

The Indian side welcomed the growing participation of Russian companies in the modernization of the railway sector in India. Russia’s interest was implementing projects using Russian technology, equipment, and capital in India. Especially in alert and telematic systems, high-speed rail projects, railway electrification. Taking into account the principles of Indian programs “Make in India” and “Self-Sufficient India.” Emphasis was placed on more active and efficient use of the North-South international transport corridor to reduce cargo transportation, time, and cost, and promotional communications in the Eurasian space. In this context, the conclusion last year of a service agreement between Russian Railways Logistics and the Container Corporation of India (Concor) on the joint development of multimodal cargo transportation services along the North-South International Transport Corridor was welcomed. The Russian side supported India’s proposal to include the Chabahar Port in the North-South ITC. The leaders emphasized that communication initiatives should be based on the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, respect for local priorities, financial sustainability, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. The Indian side informed that the study of the profitability of the Chennai Vladivostok Maritime Corridor is almost complete, and the studies carried out to date indicate several opportunities to increase the volume of traffic per the recommendations formulated following the study of this issue. The sides noted with optimism that implementing the recommendations would give an additional impetus to developing bilateral trade.

In addition, cooperation in nuclear energy is developing. There is, for example, the construction of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Bangladesh, with the participation of India. In 2014, we agreed on constructing the second stage of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in the south of the country, constructing about twenty nuclear power units, and the disposal of nuclear waste. It can be assumed that the Indian side is currently interested in constructing another nuclear power plant in the north of the country.

The summit confirmed the importance of holding meetings, including exchanging views on political and security issues at the global and regional level, of the Russian-Indian Intergovernmental Commission on Military and Military-Technical Cooperation. The first dialogue of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Defense Ministers of the Russian Federation and the Republic of India in the 2 + 2 format was held in New Delhi on December 6, 2021, was reaffirmed. Usually, India, negotiates in the 2 + 2 format with the QUAD partners - Australia, USA, Japan. But, as we can see, the same format was chosen with Russia, and even more expanded, taking into account the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Igor Sechin, also present in the Russian delegation. He represents the Russian energy complex on this occasion. It can be said that this format is the most functional since it allows you to solve many different issues at once.

It was emphasized that military and military-technical cooperation has traditionally been the cornerstone of the Russian-Indian incredibly privileged strategic partnership. Given India’s desire for self-sufficiency, the partnership is currently being reoriented towards joint research and development and advanced defense technologies and systems production. About 80% of the military equipment of the Indian armed forces is of Russian origin to this day. India is one of the main buyers of Russian weapons: over three decades, it has purchased about $70 billion in arsenal from Russia, and the volume of military orders exceeds $ 14 billion. Moscow, in particular, has a contract with New Delhi to supply five regimental sets of the latest S-400 anti-aircraft missile system by the end of 2024, and an agreement has been signed to produce AK-203 assault rifles in India. The Indian tender announced a new Russian fighter, MiG-35, which surpasses competitors in many ways. Experts note that the advantages of the S-400 over American complexes are too significant for India and other countries to refuse to buy them, even under the threat of US sanctions. Analysts emphasize that Russian equipment enjoys well-deserved popularity in the Indian arms market. India may become the first foreign buyer of the S-500 after saturating the Russian army with these complexes, said Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov. “In some cases, we sell to India what we don’t sell to other countries,” Borisov recalled.

The two countries’ leaders noted with satisfaction the significant coincidence of approaches to foreign policy priorities. They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the Russian-Indian incredibly privileged
strategic partnership, both in the context of existing bilateral relations and in addressing regional and international issues. They expressed a mutual intention to strengthen and develop bilateral relations for the benefit of the peoples of Russia and India.

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