

Russia-India-China Triangle : An Overview



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ABSTRACT

Russia- India- China, all the three countries advocate non-alliance and non-confrontation. This shows that these states are not only making efforts to evolve cordial relationship among themselves, but also want to maintain good relations with other countries. The basic principle of their relationship is the Asian security. It is bound to have a positive impact on Asian security if their ties are improved and more countries are persuaded to observe these principles. China, Russia and India have great potentialities of cooperation. Secondly, they have another reason of their unification and i.e. American hegemony. Consequently, the possibility for the formation of Russia, India and China cooperation is indeed extremely strong.

Keywords: Russia, India, China, triangle, Asian, geopolitics, hegemony

Introduction

Russia-India-China is an important region in terms of its geopolitics implications for global politics. Population of these three countries together amounts to around 2.4 billion, which is 40% of the world total population. They cover a total area of 29.96 million square km, which is 22.5% of the total area in the world. Undoubtedly, the three countries is abundance in terms of availability of human resources, market potential and rich endowment of natural resources. The most profound changes in the world after the end of the cold war have not only led to the end of rivalry between two super powers but also relaxation of tensions throughout the world.

All the three countries are faced with the difficult task of developing their economy. Of the three countries, China has common borders with both Russia and India. Except for three small islands, China has been able to resolve its border problems with Russia. The two countries have also reached agreements on strengthening military confidence and mutual reduction of military forces in border areas to ensure peace and stability on the borders between the two countries. Though the question of Sino-Indian boundary continues to remain unresolved, yet leaders of the two countries are confident to resolve their boundary issues through peaceful negotiations and without the use of force. Bilateral relationship between China and India has steadily improved. All round

cooperation between Russia and India has been further expanding and China-Russia strategic cooperation has also been deepening. Development of the bilateral relationship has provided a sound basis for the trilateral cooperation among the three nations. The cooperation has gained a strong momentum and as long as patience and perseverance is maintained, cooperation of these countries may develop further.

India, Russia and China have similar views on major international and regional issues. They cooperate with each other in economic and energy sectors. An important area of cooperation for the three countries is energy security. Russia is an energy surplus country. China and India are energy deficient. If the three of these countries can work together, they can invest in joint project that facilitate the flow of oil and gas from Russia and from Central Asia into China and India. Here are some relevant areas of cooperation that enhance the great possibility of this triangular relationship. India-Russia and China continue to oppose the hegemonism and power politics. The US hegemony is one of the major factors in the formation Russia-India-China axis, as each of the three countries are major political actors of the world. Relations among Russian-Chinese-Indian community with the United States are one of the most important aspects of their global policy.

In the post-cold-war era, the USA has triggered the complications and dramatic changes

in the international relations. 11 September 2001 became an important landmark in the development of the new trends. The three countries have signaled to the USA that its unilateralism is breeding a serious concern among other big powers of world. Russia, China and India have expressed their concerns over the USA's unilateral attitude and aggression on the name of preventive attempts and humanitarian intervention. The old slogan of US, 'one who is not with, is against us' has been transformed in the concept of 'axis of evil'. On this, the meeting between the three foreign ministers in New York on 12th September 2002 marked an important event.

All the three had a friendly exchange of views on important current international issues. Significantly they agreed that their respective permanent representative in the UN will keep in touch with each other. All the three searched how we can individually or collectively encourage USA to use its formidable power- military, economic, technological and even cultural- for global good. It is in USA's own interest to arrest the growing anti-US feeling around the world. The US has to carry the rest of the world with it on all important issues of war and peace.

All these states are opposed to the US hegemony and stressed the need for enhanced cooperation between China, Russia and India to ensure a multi-polar world and a new international political and economic order. The growing US military and diplomatic influence in Central and South Asia is also not in the interest of these states. The war against Iraq has further enhanced the US unilateral image in the entire world. Such consequences have focused the need for a Beijing-Moscow-New Delhi triangle, a potential alliance of three nuclear powers, which theoretically would be able to balance American power in the coming years.

Another vital issue which creates the great possibility of this trilateral cooperation is concerned with the reorganization of the United Nations. The role and place of the UN is challenged again and again in the contemporary world. The events in Iraq have echoed long in the UN and carried without the sanction of the UN Security Council. Yugoslavia was also bombed i.e. counter to all the

norms of the UN. It was quite clear that NATO has been taking its military decisions by circumventing the UN Security Council. The UN was unable to stop America's will of aggression.

The same logic is followed in the resolution passed at Russia's initiative at the last session of the General Assembly entitled 'Reacting to Global Threats and Challenges', its content reflects the ever more widespread opinion the UN must provide the basis for a comprehensive system to counter current threads and challenges. The UN requires an urgent improvement in its system for its real purpose. Russia-China-India advocates the most effective adaptation of the UN to the new international realities. The three nations deeply favoured the multilateral political initiatives within the UN framework.

The three countries can make joint efforts to strengthen the central role of the UN in maintaining world peace and promoting development. All these can conduct trilateral consultation on major international questions before or during the UN General Assembly every year. Such cooperation at the international level was also pushing them towards this strategic triangle. This factor, which undoubtedly strengthens the possibility of such cooperation, is clearly proved with the unambiguous support by both countries to India as a contender for a permanent seat in Security Council by both China and Russia.

Beside it, India, Russia and China are concerned with the dangers of international terrorism linked to religious extremism and separatism. India has bilateral official-level dialogue with both Russia and China on counter-terrorism. Presumably, the same is true between Russia and China, particularly within the frameworks of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, one of whose first acts was to sign the Shanghai Convention on combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. Similarly, India and Russia have agreed to "Co-operate in the fight against international terrorism separatism, organized crime and illegal trafficking in narcotics".

Thus Russia, China and India, are coordinating with each other not only at bilateral level, but also within the frameworks of various international and regional organizations. It is matter of

comfort that issues of struggle against terrorism are deeply included in the agenda of talks among the three countries. Russia, China and India are showing similarity in their approaches. They practice the similar philosophy of counter-terrorism in which there is no place for elements of double standard, i.e. division of terrorists into 'good' and bad, as well as 'freedom fighters' and 'cruel murder'. The anti-terrorist task of each of the three countries include mutual interests in the struggle against trafficking of narcotics, smuggling of weapons and other type of transnational crimes.

Moreover, their joint opposition to power politics is also another motivation for Russia-China-India strategic partnership; all the three countries accept the new security concept that advocates mutual security based on mutual trust and disarmament. They oppose strengthening and enlarging existing military alliance including expansion of the NATO, as well as forming new military blocs. As for the situation in Iraq, it was important that the three nations coordinate their stand and there was an attempt on their part to persuade the US to abandon policy of unilateralism.

Consequently US led NATO's role in continued violence that had provided the stimulant for this strategic triangle initiatives. In November 1995, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev warned that in response to NATO's planned eastward expansion, Russia would also turn to its East flank to seek new allies. For instance, during the NATO air strike on Yugoslavia, all the three states issued statements to condemn the strikes. However, the shared position was not the result of consultations and coordination. All the three big powers took their position independently.

On the question of Kosovo, Russia, India and China shared positions at least on three issues. First, the US-Led NATO invaded the territorial integrity of a sovereign state; second, intervention

in other's internal affairs is against the norms of international law; and third, NATO's war against Yugoslavia without a UN mandate constitutes an illegal act of aggression. All the three countries accept the new security concept that advocate mutual security based on mutual trust and disarmament. They opposed the strengthening and enlarging existing military alliance, including the expansion of NATO.

Conclusion

Although it is easy to dismiss economic cooperation among India, China and Russia by saying their economies are competitive. But it is worthwhile to explore the avenues of trade, investment and other forms of economic ties among them. It is much easier to dismiss the strategic triangle concept on the ground that China and India have large scale strategic divergences. But there are examples of countries with strategic divergences which have managed to come together in various groupings, for the better and not for the worse. For instance, in the 1960's Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia had experimented with 'Maphilindo' notwithstanding the Filipino-Malaysian territorial dispute and the confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia.

Despite decades of unfriendly relationship of India, and Pakistan both are parts of SAARC and continues to be member of this grouping. As has been pointed out earlier, Russia, India and China, are member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. It would thus be worthwhile to explore the possibility of forging a triangular cooperative arrangement among India, China and Russia. The prospects of cooperation between these three states in the 21st century may go far beyond the trends mentioned in the present research. It goes without saying that this cooperation must be based on stable economic, scientific and technical ties and relations.

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