

India's Relationships with Europe and Russia: Fading Glory?

No aspect of Indian foreign policy is more challenging to address than its comparatively underwhelming relationship today with Europe, in spite of dynamic trading ties, and its long-standing, valued, but somewhat shopworn relationship with Russia.

This chapter focuses primarily on Western Europe (sometimes through the lens of the European Union (EU) and Russia. The Nordic countries have mattered to independent India, not least because they were generous providers of assistance in decades past, but their weight in the Indian calculus has probably declined as their identity (with the exception of Norway) became enshrouded in that of the wider EU. Likewise, while a degree of comity was evident with the states of Eastern Europe during the era of India's friendship with the Soviet Union, they are not a major preoccupation for India today. Note deserves to be made of the singular role of Yugoslavia during the era of Marshall Tito, which, together with India, Egypt, and Indonesia, largely forged the concept and the institutional framework for non-alignment in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

India's relationships with Western Europe and Russia evoke history of empire, exploration, and geopolitical tensions. India still reminds many students of history and of international relations of former British colonial global power and reach, with the Raj having served as what British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli called the 'jewel in the crown' of the British Empire. For Russia, India played a significant role as Britain's instrument and leaping off territory in the 'Great Game' of the nineteenth century for control of Central Asia and regions stretching from Turkey to Afghanistan. India also serves as a reminder of efforts to grow Russia's own influence and reach (rather successfully) throughout this same region during the Cold War. Largely unnoticed in Western Europe and Russia, India has emerged swiftly as an increasingly equal, and, in terms of forward momentum, a more potent global

player than they could have conceived of only twenty years ago. The extent to which India had indeed served as the economic and to some degree security anchor of the British colonial enterprise might have provided a hint of what India could achieve on its own.

Shifting perceptions of relative influence and power among Western Europe, Russia, and India have been influenced by the new saliency of economic growth and weight as a prime indicator within the global pecking order, as has India's centrality in managing current and future global challenges such as climate change and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. On both of these counts, among others, India has a key role to play. Even today, while the United States enjoys a comfortable global lead in political, military, and economic power, new concepts such as human security are increasingly playing a role in the definition of state power. This is leading to a polycentric or multipolar global dynamic in which India can, if and when it wishes to, play an increasingly significant role.¹ Can this assertion be made of Russia or the European Union, today significant actors in international relations, but neither with much wind in their sails?

This chapter first discusses India's pre-colonial and colonial links with Western Europe as well as its relationships with Russia and regions of Russia's near-abroad. It then examines the content of relationships between India and the European Union and its leading member states, addressing the challenges for India of accommodating the twists and turns of the EU 'construction' saga. It thereafter offers an analysis of Indo-Russian ties and the specific successes and challenges attending that relationship. It looks at Europe's geostrategic significance for India, caught as the continent is between the likely dominant powers of the twenty-first century, the USA and China. In its final paragraphs, it offers some brief conclusions on India's relationships with Western Europe and with Russia, marked as they are by India's rise and the relative stagnation of these formerly important and still relevant partners.

The Indo-European relationship

History in brief

India's early encounters with Europe were consistently anchored in maritime trade. While maritime trade was a lifeline for coastal Indian states by 1498, the idea that the sea could be political, a strategic commodity in its own right dominated by a state rather than by commercial competition, was a relatively new concept for Indians.² The arrival of Portuguese naval forces in the region, beginning in 1498, changed this and brought European traders, explorers, and soldiers to India for the next 450 years. Among the European powers to

hold interests of varying significance at different times in India were the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British.³

The French early on had as much of an interest in India as the British, founding major trading companies to compete in South Asia with Britain's famed East India Company.⁴ French aspirations to an Indian jewel in its imperial crown were dashed by the British victory over France that ended the Seven Years' War.⁵ While the French devoted some further effort to carving out zones of influence and control in India, the Fourth Mysore War of 1799, culminating in the death of Tipu Sultan, and Napoleon's failure to move any further east than Egypt, ended any plausible scenarios for an India dominated by France (which, in Asia, focused instead on Indochina). France did retain minor dependencies, in such places as Pondicherry in India's south and Chandernagor near Calcutta, so insignificant as to make them acceptable to the British.⁶

The British, by comparison, dominated India from the late 1700s until India's independence in 1947, initially through the expansive paramilitary and economic influence of the British East India Company (EIC). British success in subjugating India was due critically to the ability of the EIC to capitalize on local political divisions and utilize pre-existing local logistical infrastructure to gain political and military dominance over India, establishing territorial control of the Indian peninsula by the early nineteenth century.⁷

Through both World Wars, as noted in Chapter 2, Indian forces operated under the auspices of the British military, with Indian troops being found in nearly all major theatres of war, particularly in Europe and the Middle East during the First World War and in the Pacific and South Asian theatres, as well as in Italy and north Africa, in the Second World War.⁸

In Europe, particularly the UK, a perception lingers that the British did much for India, but the reverse is mostly true. Indians are gracious about those British institutions and modernizations that have proved useful since independence, including the Westminster parliamentary system, adopted both at Union and at State levels throughout the country, a judiciary largely modelled on British conceptions, and the infrastructure such as the Indian railroads. Indeed, a small minority of the country's elite remains determinedly Anglophilic (while many more are drawn to the rougher-hewn charms of the USA). But the experience of British brutality, racism, and expediency (particularly, London's poor planning for Indian independence) have left Indians prepared to believe the worst of Britain at the slightest provocation, for example when Indian film star Shilpa Shetty was insulted during a broadcast of the television reality show *Celebrity Big Brother* in the UK in 2007, this news completely overshadowed a visit to India at the time by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown. The irony is that many non-resident Indians

have built successful lives, a number of them in very prominent national roles, in the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic modern nation that Britain has become in recent decades.

Portuguese colonial rule extended in India until 1961, when Prime Minister Nehru ordered the military takeover of Goa. However, Portuguese culture, cuisine, and art mixed felicitously with those of India's West Coast, and today Goa is one of India's foremost beach holiday playgrounds, with considerable international appeal. The French were wise enough, perhaps spurred on by their local difficulties in Indochina, to negotiate with Delhi the peaceful, staged handover of their Indian colonies between 1954 and 1962, thereby retaining a number of privileges for those holding French nationality in Pondicherry and in their smaller outposts. Like Goa, Pondicherry today retains some of its European flavour, although most of its culture is, of course, Indian.

India's interactions with Europe during the Cold War mainly revolved around the bipolar nature of the global order during the years 1946–89. Much economic assistance was obtained from both Cold War camps. India's attempt to minimize the adverse effects for it of the highly polarized Cold War environment led to its non-aligned position, which allowed it to pursue productive relations with both East and West and served it well during most of the decades involved. But the end of the Cold War heralded many changes for Europe and for India, which required re-engineering of relationships, and, for India, a relative reordering of its partnerships. Prime Minister Rao, coming to power just after the end of the Cold War, recognized a unified Western and Central Europe as a potential major power in the making, and provided it with some profile within his foreign policy.⁹ This was significant for the European Union given the pace of growth of India's own economy and of its economic engagement with the rest of the world.

Economics and trade

Since its inception, the Indo-West European relationship has been dominated by trade. However, while historically the trade relationship tended to be Eurocentric in its colonial and immediate post-colonial orientation, the current trend is towards a much more equal dynamic. Figures for 2008–9 put Indian total exports to the EU states at US\$39.3 billion, and total imports at US\$42.7 billion.¹⁰

However, trade figures show that India's economic interaction with European countries is very much focused on specific players within the EU, with a vast majority of India's trade relationship focused on only a handful of states. Table 10.1 illustrates this focus, with the top ten trading partners for India in the EU listed according to exports and imports in 2007–8.

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Table 10.1. Top Trading Partners for India in the EU

EU State	Indian exports 2008–9	EU State	Indian imports 2008–9
UK	6,649.53	Germany	12,006.02
Germany	6,388.54	UK	5,872.32
Netherlands	6,348.69	Belgium	5,776.77
Belgium	4,480.32	France	4,632.48
Italy	3,824.58	Italy	4,428.19
France	3,020.86	Sweden	1,952.50
Spain	2,538.15	Netherlands	1,914.95
Greece	878.43	Finland	1,219.64
Denmark	583.66	Spain	1,023.80
Sweden	566.69	Austria	701.64

Note: All figures in US\$ million.

Source: Government of India, Department of Commerce, *Export–Import Data Bank* (consulted June 2010).

More salient than these country-by-country figures, however, is that Europe's position in India's overall global trade is shrinking. The percentage of India's total trade made up by imports and exports from EU states is slowly decreasing as the Indian economy grows. Table 10.2 illustrates this by listing the percentage of Indian trade made up by European imports and exports in the decade from 1998 to 2009. In the case of India's imports from Europe, the relative decline is all the more worrying for European countries in that India's share of the world economy has been growing rapidly.

Not surprisingly, the distressing trends reflected above are also indicative of the increasingly marginal focus accorded to West European states within Indian foreign policy. Thus, India, while still maintaining high priority bilateral relations with a handful of European states, has shaken off any sense

Table 10.2. European Imports and Exports as Percentage of Indian Trade

Year	Imports from Europe (as % of total Indian imports)	Exports to Europe (as % of total Indian exports)
2008–9	14.07	21.23
2007–8	15.28	21.17
2006–7	16.06	21.21
2005–6	17.43	22.53
2004–5	17.31	21.84
2003–4	19.29	14.51
2002–3	20.90	22.55
2001–2	20.71	23.17
2000–1	21.12	24.00
1999–2000	22.39	26.25
1998–9	25.68	27.71
1997–8	26.23	26.83

Note: All figures in US\$ million.

Source: Government of India, Department of Commerce, *Export–Import Data Bank* (consulted June 2010).

of Eurocentricity in its worldview, preferring to focus on the USA, East Asian states (particularly China), and sometimes Russia, as truly strategic interlocutors.

At a formal level, new frameworks have been developed for meaningful engagement, as when India and the EU secured a 'strategic partnership' in 2004.¹¹ This was followed up by several further negotiated texts such as an India–EU Joint Action Plan, which covers a wide range of fields for cooperation including trade and commerce, security, and cultural and educational exchanges.¹² However, these measures lead mainly to dialogue, commitments to further dialogue, and exploratory committees and working groups, rather than to significant policy measures or economic breakthroughs. Indeed, one wonders whether the all-consuming nature of intra-EU negotiations and the tremendously self-absorbed requirements of Indian domestic politics lend themselves to more than these diplomatic niceties, in the absence of hard facts compelling or inviting closer ties.¹³ The major stumbling block to greater Indo-European trade cooperation may be the fact that both parties are so similar in some ways, comfortable with each other but experiencing little compulsion towards closer ties. Pallavi Aiyar writes:

The EU certainly does not have it easy. Protectionist trade unions, a coalition of 27 member-states with divergent priorities, and a convoluted internal-decision making process do not make for quick results. In this regard, India is Europe's doppelgänger. Cumbersome coalitions, powerful civil society organizations and conflicting interests amongst political constituencies are also a hallmark of the decision-making process in New Delhi. But European officials rarely acknowledge these parallels, choosing instead to . . . disparage India for faults the EU itself can be charged with.¹⁴

While there is substantial room for India and the EU to focus their trade relationship on areas of perceived mutual interest, such as science and technology or the services sector, the relationship will eventually have to breach the dam of current protectionist measures in agricultural trade, not least in the multilateral setting of the multilateral Trade Negotiations, where EU countries were only too happy to watch USA–India differences over agriculture attract the lion's share of attention in 2008 while their own policies and preferences were no less problematic for India.¹⁵

And which are the countries of the European Union that India takes seriously? Not surprisingly, in view of its own geostrategic concerns, the major former colonial powers that also happen to be the Western European permanent members of the UN Security Council, France and the UK, enjoy pride of place. This is even reflected in how the Indian Ministry of External Affairs allocates country responsibilities among its senior officials—in the case of immediate neighbours and of permanent members of the UN Security Council,

this responsibility lies with the Foreign Secretary rather than a subsidiary senior official. This remains true in spite of both France and the UK underperforming relative to potential in their economic links with India. Germany matters as a trading partner (ranking high on both sides of Table 10.1), but also, importantly, as a country like India challenging the established order of states within the UN Security Council, both of them partnering with Japan and Brazil since 2004 in demanding permanent seats of their own in the Council. Several other West European countries register somewhat in India, notably Italy, which shares with India the distinction of having spawned several great civilizations reflected in extraordinary artistic, literary, and other cultural accomplishments.¹⁶ Spain, somewhat in the same vein, is of interest to India, not least because of its privileged links with most of Latin America, a continent whose potential India is only now beginning to explore fully, with major private sector links building up. Finally, Dutch economic entrepreneurship and trading dynamism is recognized in India as impressive.

Defence and security

European and Russian markets have historically provided the answer to India's continuously growing defence procurement needs. Between 2004 and 2008, India was the second largest purchaser of major conventional weapons systems, encompassing 7 per cent of the world's total trade in these systems.¹⁷

During the early Cold War, Britain was the primary exporter of arms to India, a result largely born out of former colonial ties.¹⁸ France, whose strategic relationship with India did not take off fully until the 1970s, was a significant provider of major weapons systems during the latter half of the Cold War: systems which included the Mirage fighter-bomber and the AMX battle tank.¹⁹ Even recently, from 1999 to 2008, India was Britain's second largest client for major weapons systems, purchasing 14 per cent of its total arms exports.²⁰

However, Europe's top companies are finding themselves being increasingly edged out by the sheer volume (and increasing sophistication) of Russia's exports, and particularly by India's increased access to US defence markets.²¹ Perhaps the biggest indicator of India's direction in the defence procurement field will be its final decision in the months or years ahead on the Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MRCA) contract, estimated to be worth US\$12 billion.²² With major US, Russian, and European firms vying for the contract offering some of their best platforms, India's decision on the MRCA aircraft contract will be an important indication of whether Europe is still a major contender for India's defence business.²³ The probability is high that Europe will continue to capture some of the Indian market as Delhi is inclined to spread risk widely amongst suppliers.

Regardless of the major contracts still to be won, there are indications that Europe is playing less of a role in India's defence policy, being replaced by more active bilateral engagement with European states on specialized defence-related fields such as counterterrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, and disarmament. For example, the Indo-French Working Group on Terrorism has met annually since 2001. This may be the best option for both parties, considering that Russia will likely continue to be India's primary supplier of major weapons systems, enjoying residual cost advantages if not always a qualitative edge, and that states such as the UK and Germany have a comparative advantage in specialist functions such as counterterrorism, forensic investigation, and surveillance technology.²⁴ The ongoing insurgency in Kashmir, the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, and numerous mass-casualty terrorist attacks targeting India's urban centres over the past decade suggest that cooperation in counterterrorism and European remote surveillance technology could be more useful to India in the future than Europe's traditional heavy defence industry.

Energy interests

Energy is a primary concern for India, and will only become more of a priority in future years. India's reliance on energy imports from other states is rising rapidly with the growing Indian population and continued economic growth.²⁵ Imports accounted for 72 per cent of India's supply of oil in 2004–5.²⁶ Table 10.3 illustrates that coal is still the dominant energy source for India, but Indian infrastructure for coal production is inefficient and the increasing emphasis on environmental protection standards globally suggests that India will be under increasing pressure domestically and internationally over coming decades to identify cleaner alternatives.²⁷ This will be doubly true if, as some predict given current rates of consumption, India's coal reserves largely disappear within the next fifty years.²⁸

Table 10.3. Main Energy Sources for India

	Mar-02	Apr-03	May-04	Jun-05	Jul-06
Coal	341.3	361.3	382.6	407.0	430.9
Lignite	26.0	28.0	30.3	30.1	31.1
Electricity					
Installed capacity (x1,000 MW)	126.2	131.4	137.5	145.6	157
Generation (bn kWh)	596.5	633.3	665.8	697.4	744.3
Crude petroleum	32.0	33.4	34.0	32.2	34
Petroleum products	100.0	107.8	111.6	113.2	119.6
Natural gas	31.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Fiscal years, April–March; millions of tons production unless otherwise indicated.

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report 2008: India* (London: Economist, 2008), 16.

At the same time, an over-reliance on oil and natural gas imports carries with it significant problems as well, not least of which being that India could be drawn more deeply into the geopolitical quagmire of the West Asian region.²⁹ Potential instability in West Asia makes further diversification in the sources of Indian oil and gas imports a strategic necessity.

Europe does provide an attractive alternative for India, not only in the form of importable energy, but also for technology and knowledge transfers, especially further to high-tech initiatives such as nuclear, solar, and hydroelectric projects (although Indian science and technology capacity, if harnessed to the challenge, is certainly up to significant innovation of its own in these areas). The India–EU Joint Action Plan emphasizes energy security as a primary concern of both and created a panel to examine matters of mutual interest in this area, stating that the Plan will give priority to ‘joint efforts in the development of more efficient, cleaner and alternative energy chains’.³⁰ It also identifies eight core aspects of energy security for close cooperation including the promotion of energy efficiency, and technology related to the transfer of energy between grid systems and the further development of nuclear power.³¹ In addition to this, the EU is cooperating with India and other states in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project.³²

However, such grand schemes are likely to be the exception rather than the rule, the latter represented by bilateral cooperation and private-sector projects. Significant European energy companies have substantial interests in India, including the British Gas Group, Royal Dutch Shell, Cairn Energy of Scotland, and Gaz de France.³³ On a bilateral basis, European governments that are experienced in energy matters are likely to be favoured by India as partners. A good example is France, whose success with nuclear power and significant defence ties with India have opened doors for deeper bilateral ties on energy issues. Franco-Indian energy cooperation became significantly closer with the signing of the Framework Agreement for Civil Nuclear Cooperation in January 2008 and a follow-up agreement in September 2008 that allows Paris to sell to Delhi French nuclear reactors.³⁴ And bilateral cooperation does not preclude the EU Council and Commission, as institutions, from projecting a plausible united front on proliferation issues, specifically support of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), while engaging with India as a rising nuclear power.

Political culture

While the drivers of Indian relations with Western Europe mentioned previously are mostly economic, there is a final factor that serves as an asset underpinning their ties: the constitutional arrangements and political culture

of the states involved—specifically the electoral democracies that they have in common.

India is rightly proud of its democracy, and playing on genuine values-based convergence where it exists, as well as interests-based considerations, is helpful. Democracy, which has given voice to so many perspectives in India, underpins an essential moderation of its body politic in international relations. In a work examining the philosophical underpinnings of Indian foreign policy, Nalini Kant Jha writes:

A preference for the middle path is the hallmark of Indian tradition and culture as seen in the Sanskrit saying which goes, *ati sarvatra varjayet*: let us eschew excess at all times. This saying underlines India's philosophical abhorrence of absolutes, of extremes, of the tendency to see things strictly in terms of black and white.³⁵

And this factor in Indian political life is sometimes explicitly but more generally tacitly acknowledged in the West (which, nevertheless, would like India to be more open to urging its own political values on, for example, Myanmar). Sunil Khilnani argues that the Indian adoption of democracy was the third act in the great play of liberal democracy, which started with the ideas underpinning the French Revolution and continued with the American Revolution.³⁶ While the form of democracy varies tremendously across Europe, the Westminster parliamentary system that the Indian Union and its states and to a degree the EU have adopted creates commonality of experience and of constitutional understanding between India and many European nations.

Long-standing educational ties between India and Europe have shaped much of India's elite class over the years, although, particularly after Indian independence, the lure of the top American universities somewhat displaced the earlier focus on Oxford, Cambridge, and other leading UK universities. Indira Gandhi noted the importance of scholars, both Indian and European, in the development not only of Indo-European understanding, but also of Indian self-awareness.³⁷ Indians and Europeans have worked hard on educational exchanges, with both sides reaping rich benefits.³⁸ For example, Jawharlal Nehru's political identity emerged in Europe, through his study of the movements of Garibaldi and of Sinn Fein's resistance to British rule in Ireland.³⁹

The benefits of shared educational ties run both ways. France, for instance, benefits from the high-quality academic research generated by its *Centre de Sciences Humaines* in Delhi, a hub of social science research on India, which serves as a striking tribute to the significance France attaches to the study of India and its society.⁴⁰ Further, partly as a colonial legacy, France can boast of the impressive *Institut Français de Pondichéry*, which engages in multiple scholarly activities relevant to South and Southeast Asia in a wide variety of fields (including environmental ones), not least the painstaking

conservation of ancient Indian Sanskrit and other texts.⁴¹ While the work and accomplishments of these French institutions might seem marginal relative to the vibrant bilateral French economic relationships with India, in fact they are complementary thereto and much appreciated in India and Europe alike.

Unlike some other features of the relationship, Indo-European educational links have been marked not just by talk, but also by action. The Asia-Link programme, for instance, provides opportunities for higher-education institutions in both India and Europe to meet and interact on common projects.⁴² The India–EU Joint Action Plan also places significant emphasis on furthering educational ties.⁴³ Statistics in Britain show that Indian students represent the second most numerous group of foreign students in the UK (after Chinese), with Indian rates of enrolment rising steadily (while those of China are falling slightly).⁴⁴ There is similar interest in South Asia among European students who are keen to engage in cultural and educational experiences beyond those offered on their own continent, and increasingly European business and science students are recognizing the rising significance of India in these sectors. Advances in communications technology and the availability of cheap international travel have favoured internships and student exchanges in and with India.

The exchange of students is, however, only one aspect of a wider cultural effort by some European states to maintain links with India. Several West European countries devote considerable effort and resources to promoting their own culture and to establishing links with Indian artistic, literary, and performing arts communities. Both France and Germany in recent years—through such institutions as the *Alliance Française*, French cultural centres, and the *Goethe Institut* (operating out of eight Indian cities)—have far outstripped the effectiveness of the British Council which, to the consternation of many Indians, appears to have abandoned much of its traditional role in promoting the British arts and literature—and creating corresponding connections between India and Britain—for the money-making potential of English-language courses, albeit highly regarded ones.⁴⁵

The Indo-Russian relationship

History in brief: India's Russian interactions

The Indo-Russian relationship does not extend back as far as that of the colonial powers and their forebears. The Himalayas and the Hindu Kush insulated India from meaningful early contact with Russia (although Central Asia played an important role as a passageway to China and as the point of

origin for some of the dynasties that dominated northern India after the Muslim conquest). Much of the relevant history is marked by the 'Great Game' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during which Russia attempted to encroach on Britain's dominance of the South Asian and parts of the Central Asian regions as well as Iran. The inhospitable environment of the Caucasus and Afghanistan, both central to the Great Game, and their distance from home base provided a powerful buffer between India and Russia. Russian expansion, culminating during the Second World War, with a significant Russian presence in Iran and de facto domination of the Caucasus, left India well beyond the Soviet sphere of influence.

However, the beginning of the Cold War, which roughly coincided with India's independence from Britain in 1947, created considerable and sustained Soviet interest in India. As a result of its conflict with China and its experience of the USA as an unreliable partner, India backed into an ever more comprehensive relationship with Moscow, culminating in the 1971 treaty of friendship. Soviet weapons were vital to its successful military campaign in East Bengal in 1971 and, indeed, formed the backbone of Indian military procurement for decades.⁴⁶ Christopher Andrew and former KGB officer Vasili Mitrokhin discuss the ease with which the Soviet secret service could operate in India:

The Asian intelligence successes of which the [KGB] was most proud were in India, the world's second most populous state and largest democracy. It was deeply ironic that the KGB should find democratic India so much more congenial an environment than Communist China, North Korea and Vietnam.⁴⁷

This said, Delhi worked hard to remain independent, and thus could never be included entirely in the Soviet 'camp', however much Washington and some of its allies resented India's close relationship with Moscow.

Economics and trade

While the strategic partnership agreement signed by India and Russia in 2000 offered more substance than the India-EU agreement of 2004-5, economic considerations (leaving aside energy projects) were not central.⁴⁸ Instead, the more concrete steps envisaged were in the areas of the political and defence relationships.⁴⁹ This is generally true of the overall Indo-Russian relationship since Russia began to recover from post-Cold War economic turmoil. India has focused on its own needs: arms deals, nuclear cooperation and political dialogue.

Table 10.4 illustrates the economic results. While there is growth in the trade relationship in absolute terms, the Russian share of India's booming trade is stagnating.

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Table 10.4. India's Trade with Russia

Year	2004–5	2005–6	2006–7	2007–8	2008–9
INDIAN EXPORTS TO RUSSIA	631.26	733.15	903.69	940.61	1,096.34
% growth of exports to Russia	–	16.14	23.26	4.09	16.56
India's total exports	83,535.94	103,090.53	126,414.05	163,132.18	185,295.36
% growth of India's total exports	–	23.41	22.62	29.05	13.59
Exports to Russia as % share of total exports	0.76	0.71	0.71	0.58	0.59
INDIAN IMPORTS FROM RUSSIA	1,322.74	2,022.19	2,409.05	2,478.16	4,328.28
% growth of imports from Russia		52.88	19.13	2.87	74.66
India's total imports	111,517.43	149,165.73	185,735.24	251,654.01	303,696.31
% growth of India's total imports		33.76	24.52	35.49	20.68
Imports from Russia as % share of total imports	1.19	1.36	1.3	0.98	1.43
TOTAL INDO-RUSSIAN TRADE	1,954.01	2,755.33	3,312.73	3,418.77	5,424.62
% growth of total trade		41.01	20.23	3.2	58.67
India's total trade	195,053.37	252,256.26	312,149.29	414,786.19	488,991.67
% growth of India's total trade		29.33	23.74	32.88	17.89
Indo-Russian trade as % share of total Indian Trade	1	1.09	1.06	0.82	1.11
TRADE BALANCE					
India's Trade Balance	–27,981.49	–46,075.20	–59,321.19	–88,521.83	–118,400.95

Notes: All figures in US\$ million.

Source: Government of India, Department of Commerce, *Export–Import Data Bank* (consulted June 2010).

Indian President Pratibha Patil's visit to Russia in September 2009 highlighted the limited scope of Indo-Russian bilateral trade. For both, official trade was a paramount concern, with Patil stating 'We need to ponder over why our economies should be satisfied with the current level of trade volumes', and emphasizing that trade levels between the two states were a poor reflection of the 'close political ties'.⁵⁰

The Indo-Russian economic relationship has tended to follow the course of Russia's economic fortunes, marked by a serious partnership throughout much of the Cold War, but a floundering one during the 1990s when Russian mismanagement of the transition to a market economy left the country economically in shock.⁵¹ Russia's recent economic upturn, driven by oil and gas prices, has enabled both states to re-explore a more substantial economic relationship; however, the fragility and unpredictability of Russia's economic

performance leaves medium- and long-term future joint endeavours beyond the defence and nuclear sectors uncertain.

This is particularly so as India builds further content into its 'Look East' policy and explores more meaningful ties with Asian partners, and as it capitalizes on strong links with the US private sector. Indeed, India's end-user agreement with the USA provides India easier (although not unlimited) access to the US arms market, a development that might undercut Russia's most lucrative area of cooperation with India.⁵² However, while Western partners have proved to be volatile in the past (for example, the sanctions placed by the USA on India after the 1998 Pokhran II nuclear tests), Moscow has proven itself to be a reliable (if sometimes unexciting) weapons supplier, and is likely to remain an attractive partner for India, if only as a hedge against Indian over-reliance on others.⁵³

Defence procurement

India's reliance on Russian military hardware has continued over the last two decades since the dissolution of the USSR. And for Russia, India is an important client. Table 10.5 indicates that India is still Russia's second largest customer for conventional weapons exports, after China.

Russia is also, by a vast margin, India's primary supplier of conventional systems, confirming the strength of the weapons procurement relationship. This is illustrated in Table 10.6.

Recently, India has used its long-standing relationship with Russia to acquire weapons platforms intended to bolster India's power projection capability. For instance, India has purchased the *Admiral Gorshkov* (now INS *Vikramaditya*) aircraft carrier and SU-30MK long-range fighter aircraft, and is set to lease an *Akula* class nuclear attack submarine once it is delivered to the Russian Navy.⁵⁴ In addition to power projection platforms, India has also purchased two series of Russian T-90 main battle tanks, the first in 2001 for an estimated US\$700 million, and the second in late 2007 for US\$1.2 billion.⁵⁵ These substantial Indian purchases indicate that the Indo-Russian defence relationship continues to be significant for both parties involved.

Russia's position as the dominant supplier of India's weapons is, however, being challenged by the American government, backed by the entrepreneurial US defence industry.⁵⁶ Indeed the United States may be slowly changing the Indian arms procurement equation, not least by becoming more involved with the Indian military across the services in joint operations and planning. With this shift, India's procurement of military hardware that is compatible with US systems makes increasing sense, and is a requirement that US companies are perfectly happy to satisfy.⁵⁷ Lockheed Martin recently signed a deal with the Indian Air Force to provide six C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, and Northrop

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Table 10.5. Suppliers of Major Conventional Weapons

Supplier	Share of global arms exports (%)	Main recipients (share of supplier's transfers)
USA	31	South Korea (15%) Israel (13%) UAE (11%)
Russia	25	China (42%) India (21%) Algeria (8%)
Germany	10	Turkey (15%) Greece (13%) South Africa (12%)
France	8	UAE (32%) Singapore (13%) Greece (12%)
UK	4	USA (21%) India (14%) Chile (9%)

Source: Appendix 7A, SIPRI Yearbook 2009.

Table 10.6. Recipients of Major Conventional Weapons

Recipient	Share of global arms imports (%)	Main supplier (share of recipient's transfers)
China	11	Russia (92%)
India	7	Russia (71%)
UAE	6	USA (54%)
South Korea	6	USA (73%)
Greece	4	Germany (31%)

Source: Appendix 7A, SIPRI Yearbook 2009.

is seeking an export agreement from the US government in order to provide India the E2D Hawkeye airborne early warning and control system (AWACS).⁵⁸ European competitors are also challenging Russia on some significant Indian procurement projects. Following a deal signed in 2005, France has provided India with licenses to build six Scorpene class diesel submarines and has transferred a number of SM-39 Exocet missiles.⁵⁹

The most significant albatross in the Indo-Russian defence relationship is the Russian failure to provide India with the refitted *Gorshkov* aircraft carrier on time and for the originally agreed price. The project has gone vastly over both deadline and budget, with the programme now costing India more than if it had acquired a new aircraft carrier from Russian competitors.⁶⁰ Indian naval officers and the Indian government have complained about the matter sharply and publicly, and it has done Russia's reputation as a supplier little good in India and beyond.

More subtly, India and Russia tend to have different outlooks on the use of military means to achieve global influence and to project power. Russia has

shown an inclination for pre-emptive or first-strike military operations such as those in Chechnya and more recently against Georgia. With the exception of the 1971 war culminating in the independence of Bangladesh, India has mostly responded to attack rather than taking the initiative.

Political values

India's political values evince deep attachment to liberal constitutional democracy, in contrast to Russia's increasingly tenuous rule of law and the unattractive state of its politics to most outsiders (Vladimir Putin's domestic popularity to date notwithstanding). India and Russia might well have clashed at times over political values or over Russia's aggressive tactics against Georgia in South Ossetia in 2008. However, India's strong attachment to classic conceptions of the absolute sovereignty of states and its commitment (in most instances, particularly outside its immediate neighbourhood) to non-interference in the internal affairs of other states—diplomatic predispositions shared by Moscow—have saved the partners from the inconvenience of any public criticism of each other's policies.

Significant efforts were made during the Cold War to promote broad-based ties between the two countries. Typically, these ties took the form of Indo-Soviet 'Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations'.⁶¹ But, with time and a shifting outlook among Indians (and also Russians), government-driven efforts to promote friendship between the two populations seem both dated and redundant.

The ties of political (and wider) culture between India and Western Europe do not extend in quite the same way to Russia. During the Cold War years, many Indians received high-quality scientific education in Russia, and India benefited significantly. Nowadays, Indians going abroad are more drawn to Western, particularly US, British and Australian universities than Russian ones, with some also favouring leading Asian institutions, including in China and Singapore. Thus, while the habit of political dialogue and the comfort of a long-standing relationship between Delhi and Moscow should not be discounted, at the level of popular culture, Russia is now largely absent from India.

Energy interests

While India looks to Europe for long-term cooperation in reforming its energy sector, it looks to Russia to help satisfy its immediate and growing need for imported oil and natural gas. India increasingly relies on energy imports and Russia possesses a large surplus. The benefits of these complementary circumstances have already begun to be exploited by India. Its US

\$1.77 billion investment in the Sakhalin I project yielded its first shipments to India, amounting to over 600,000 barrels of oil, in November 2006.⁶² India is vigorously pursuing further measures with Russia such as involvement in the Sakhalin III project and a possible joint exploration venture with Gazprom in exchange for a guarantee to buy 50 million tons of Russian oil per annum.⁶³

Russia has also been a valuable partner for India on the nuclear front, helping India to pursue its strategic goal of energy diversity. Russian technical assistance contributed greatly to the completion of two nuclear reactors at Koodankulam, and in late 2008 the two governments signed a further agreement under which Russia will build four more reactors for Indian use.⁶⁴ In addition to this, Russia agreed to sell \$700 million worth of uranium fuel to India for use in its reactors.⁶⁵

Beyond energy security, a significant geopolitical calculus is involved in India's energy romance with Russia. India hopes that Russia can help it secure greater reach into and political influence in Central Asia (including several former Soviet republics), which, in the future, will likely be the route for several major oil and natural gas pipelines of potential interest to India. Tanvi Madan writes:

While India wants to be part of the 'new great game', it is being careful not to step on any toes—especially influential Russian ones—in the region. Central Asian countries might view India's entry as the addition of an alternate player. But

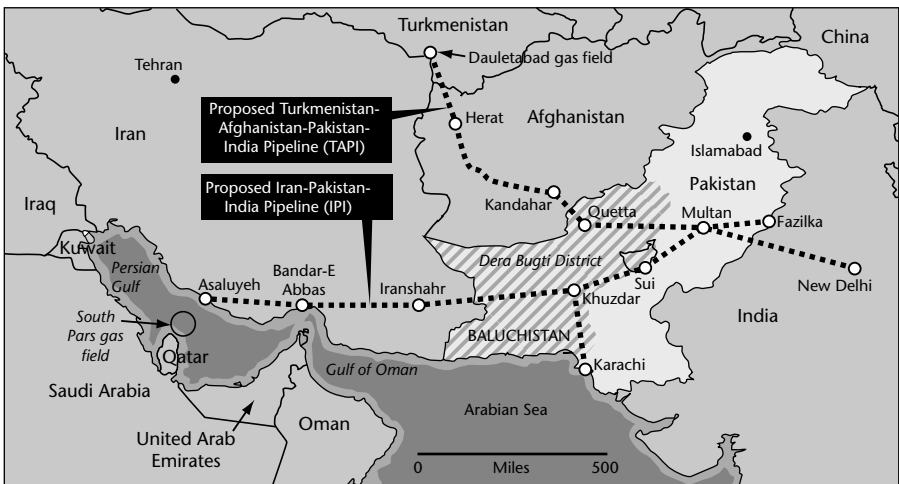


Figure 10.1. Two Proposed Pipelines in South Asia

Source: Ariel Cohen, Lisa Curtis and Owen Graham, 'The Proposed Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline: An Unacceptable Risk to Regional Security', *Backgrounder* #2139 (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, 30 May 2008).

India believes that it needs Russia's cooperation—or at least acquiescence—to be successful in the region.⁶⁶

The geopolitical game over pipelines in India's extended neighbourhood is already a lively one for Delhi. The proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline (illustrated in Figure 10.1) that was to have taken natural gas from Iran's plentiful gas fields and pumped it into Pakistan and India has been a confusingly off-and-on affair with India sending many mixed signals over time, some apparently related to its nuclear negotiations with the USA during the years 2005–8.⁶⁷

Indian participation in the project seems to have been put on hold, amongst other reasons, because of India and Iran's inability to find common ground on the price India should pay for Iranian gas and the structure of the deal.⁶⁸ Reported Russian interest in the IPI project could relate to its dislike of a possible alternative favoured by the USA.⁶⁹ The US-backed competing Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, would cut Iran, currently under mild UN but stringent US sanctions, out of the deal while simultaneously increasing America's influence in the region over Russia's.⁷⁰ While US influence will not determine India's policy, increasing Indo-US cooperation on nuclear and defence matters makes the American viewpoint difficult for Delhi to ignore altogether.⁷¹

As part of its widening geostrategic lens, India has taken an increasing interest in partnerships with Central Asian states outside of the energy sector, and Russia's acquiescence, often for a price, is grudgingly necessary in these manoeuvres. Tajikistan, one of India's important Central Asian partners is home to India's first external military airbase at Ayni.⁷² Tajikistan is strategically important for India, sharing borders with two states that raise strategic concerns for India: China and Afghanistan.⁷³ The relationship was recently highlighted through Indian President Patil's visit to Dushanbe in September 2009.⁷⁴ India is also studying the potential of resurrecting a version of the Silk Route to increase trade between Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.⁷⁵

India and the Central Asian Republics share perspectives and concerns in many areas including counterterrorism, counter-narcotics, and small arms proliferation; these concerns are, of course, aggravated for all parties by the persistence of instability in Afghanistan and the northwestern regions of Pakistan.⁷⁶ Pakistan, because of the dominance of Islam in Central Asia, may see the region as an obvious bet for the expansion of its influence.⁷⁷ However, several Central Asian governments, fearful of Islamic radicalism and wary of the close ties between Pakistani militants and organizations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), are increasingly turning to India to form a unified front against violent Islamist movements which Pakistan's

government currently seems unable to curb. This was attested to by the generally unified front exhibited at the October 2009 meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization consisting of several Central Asian states, Russia, and China, with India and others as observers.⁷⁸ India made a point of highlighting the necessity of counterterrorism cooperation, a point with which all of the member governments would have agreed.⁷⁹

Russia and India can establish common cause in promoting stability in Central Asia. Both would benefit from energy pipeline projects through the region that would not be importuned by violence and criminality, and both wish to see the influence of radical Islam diminish. If these actors can build on these shared energy and security interests, India's presence and influence in Central Asia could grow without necessarily irritating China.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan became a prominent topic during summit talks between Indian Prime Minister Singh and Russian Prime Minister Putin in Delhi in March 2010, with India reportedly expressing fears arising from an increasingly possible NATO withdrawal. Some Western voices have suggested that in such an eventuality, India could revive its former relationship with a re-energized 'northern alliance' in Afghanistan, buttressed by Russia and perhaps Iran, leading to a soft or more formal partition of the country in due course. Most Indian geostrategic analysts deplore this line of thinking (not least because it concedes to Pakistani influence at least 40 per cent of Afghanistan, including the capital, Kabul), but it cannot be dismissed given the unpromising alternative options available to Delhi were the Taliban to take power (or meaningfully share it) in Kabul.⁸⁰

Russia and Europe in the middle

The geostrategic positions of India's potential partners

Both the European Union and Russia find themselves in flux in the current global environment, with economic performance, and, in the case of the European Union, a sense of shared purpose, very much in question. How the Europeans and Russians manage these challenges will determine their future relationship with a rising India as much as India's own preferences and policies. India has for some time been pursuing both a closer strategic relationship with the USA, as exemplified by their negotiations towards nuclear cooperation; and, in a less focused way, with China and the Pacific region, as heralded in India's 'Look East' policy. Likewise, India's interests in

and engagement with the Middle East have also been growing and hold significant potential, as suggested by a growing Indo-Israeli security partnership and Indian economic relations with the Persian Gulf states.

All this, however, leaves Europe and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Russia in a middle ground between India's regional and global strategic priorities. While Russia has great potential to engage India over energy, its own political and economic roller-coaster, and its strained relations with several of the Central Asian states, leave Russia in a still uncertain position to fulfil India's desiderata in a full strategic partnership of the sort the two countries had enjoyed during earlier decades.

The early twenty-first century is witnessing what is likely the beginning of a role reversal for India and Russia. The transition to a form of democracy and the end of the Soviet Union has been painful for Russia, while increased global integration and the end of a bi-polar global power structure has worked wonders for India in many respects. These developments have produced new ordering in the global power hierarchy for India and Russia, the former rising quite fast but from a limited subregional base, the latter stagnating or, in some views, declining. Russian and Indian interests do not clash. For this reason, the relationship between the two countries should not be unduly affected by the tectonic shifts in geostrategic advantage. But the relationship is not likely to regain the convergence of positioning witnessed in the mid-Cold War years.

Western Europe, while theoretically and to a large degree technically unified through the European Union, is still encumbered by the independent personalities of its leading member States, which have not hesitated to undermine pretensions of a common foreign policy when it suited them to do so (or simply when they wished to demonstrate they could do so). While India has engaged with the EU on several impressive formal diplomatic initiatives, substantive results are few to date.

The position of being caught in the 'middle ground' between India's major foreign policy priorities makes pretty well anything to do with Western Europe less urgent geostrategically for India than much else. Christophe Jaffrelot wrote as early as 2006:

It is disappointing to find that the European Union hardly figures on the Indian 'radar screen', despite tangible efforts to relaunch cooperation between the two political entities. If remedial action is not undertaken quickly, Europe may well find itself completely sidelined by this new first order Asian—and indeed international—actor.⁸¹

Meaningful engagement should not be impossible, since both Europe and Russia have significant interests in common with India. And, in the case of Russia, there is much habit of regular high-level consultation. However, the

ability of each to achieve a genuine strategic relationship with India (as opposed to an essentially mercantile one) is constrained by the uncertain prospects of Russian economic development and of the European integration process.

India's preference for interest-based bilateralism

Because of the EU's continuing internal incoherence, a factor which slows serious EU diplomatic initiatives to a crawl, India has been most comfortable continuing to engage European states on a bilateral basis, focusing on those capitals that can deliver significant results (for example, Paris in the realm of defence and nuclear issues).⁸² An assessment by Eric Gonsalves of Indo-European relations, although written almost two decades ago, still rings generally true today:

The gradual decline of the role of the European countries in Asia despite the coming into being of the European Community and their gradual reduction to becoming an appendage within the Western alliance... made the interaction between India and Western Europe basically secondary in nature and centred on bilateral concerns...⁸³

India may invest even greater effort into strengthening its bilateral ties with major European states (and possibly multilateral ties with the EU, if the latter can prove more agile) should a perception arise that the current US administration is increasingly courting China. Evan Feigenbaum points out that Indian fears of a US-China 'G-2' are based on reasonable concerns in Delhi that such a relationship could embolden China in the still-unresolved border disputes between the two countries and, where possible, to undercut Indian economic influence.⁸⁴ Were this to happen, India might well turn to Europe in an effort to maintain balance and diversity in its foreign policy (an option equally applicable to Russia). However, attempts to forge a G-2 power bloc are today highly speculative.⁸⁵

Ratification of the EU's Lisbon Treaty introducing a number of constitutional and structural changes, including the creation of an EU President and of a foreign policy czar, was intended in part to enhance the EU's standing on the global stage. However, the significance of these developments in 2009 for India (and much of the world) was seriously undermined by the appointment of Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy, self-described as a 'grey mouse', and the little-known EU Trade Commissioner, Baroness Catherine Ashton, as EU President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs respectively. Both were seen as low-common-denominator compromise candidates who posed little threat to the leading member states. Indian commentators were unimpressed, as were, privately, Indian political figures.⁸⁶

Perhaps the most important multilateral diplomatic engagement of 2009 occurred in Copenhagen on climate change. West European countries had long argued that in view of their rapid economic growth, India and China needed to offer national commitments towards global goals (which the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 had not required of them). However, to the consternation of many Europeans and possibly the quiet satisfaction of Delhi, EU members found themselves marginalized in the key negotiation, involving only Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and the USA on the final day of the meeting. This surprising development and the resulting weak conference outcome were widely interpreted as highlighting the relative eclipse of Western Europe's prominence on this key global issue.⁸⁷ Thus, while India could pride itself on having played a leading role, and an unusually conciliatory one at that (allowing China to serve as a punching bag for activists and other critics), the under-performance by the EU was evident to all.⁸⁸ Several Indian commentators saw events at Copenhagen as heralding a decline in the multi-lateral fabric, not necessarily to the disadvantage of India's interests.⁸⁹ Indian legal scholar Poorvi Chitalkar comments: 'India's often instrumentalist take on multilateral relations rooted in its national interest may in fact equip it well for an enhanced role in major upcoming negotiations on global issues, where give and take among a few key countries likewise disposed will determine the outcome.'

India has unsurprisingly continued to pursue a bilateral relationship with Russia, strongly anchored in India's interests. Delhi has, over the last two decades, pursued Russia as a constantly available supplier of cheap albeit relatively sophisticated weapons systems, and of energy. However, India has increasingly been looking to diversify, especially in defence, to the detriment of Russia's export potential, but potentially to the benefit of West European competitors.⁹⁰ As Anuradha Chenoy argues, the 'old model' Indo-Russian relationship is on its way out, yielding to a relationship that is more fluid, one allowing India to design more varied regional and global policies consistent with its new global economic position.⁹¹ Thus, Russia's relations with a rising India are similar to those of Western Europe: each partner in these relationships must become accustomed to a new balance in which India plays a more prominent role.

Russia, recently the post-Cold War 'black hole' of global power, appears to be making some sustained progress in restoring its global standing. And, on balance, this very much suits India's vision of a multipolar world where India can engage a number of essentially equal major powers, each with its own particularities, strengths, and weaknesses. During his visit to Delhi in March 2010, Prime Minister Putin emphasized how much in the technological and military procurement fields Russia may still have to offer India, and also highlighted Russia's significance for Central Asia, an area in which India's interest

continues to grow.⁹² The history of friendly relations between India and Russia will serve each well in helping Moscow and Delhi to navigate the complexities of a relationship in which a significant realignment of power is occurring.

Conclusions

Although there are substantial differences between the Indo-EU and the Indo-Russian relationships, there are common current and potential interests that act as 'drivers' of India's interactions with each, defence and energy among them. While India's international profile is rising, those of Western Europe and the Russian Federation are stagnating or declining for varying demographic, economic, and geostrategic reasons. For all of Russia's oil and gas reserves, its troubled emergence from the communist era, marked by uncertain rule of law, confounding economic management, and bullying behaviour towards some of its close neighbours, has left it with an international reputation for touchiness, unreliability, and a proclivity for both diplomatic and economic brinkmanship.

Western Europe, home to all of the world's major colonial powers, and very much the 'centre of the world' in the nineteenth century, but then undermined by two devastating world wars in the twentieth century, has increasingly found itself caught in between an American superpower and a rising Asia today encompassing two very significant potential competitors, China and India. However, the ability of the European powers to maintain both internal unity and external effectiveness today on the global stage is, at best, a work in progress. Until a more convincing formula can be devised by EU member states to empower their common institutions, possibly through strong implementation of the Lisbon Treaty over time, the EU's full potential is likely to remain unrealized. And, on an individual basis, it is unlikely that any of the EU member states, with some exceptions in niche issues and products, will be able to play a role comparable to that of China or India globally over the long-term on current trends.

Indeed, by the end of 2009 a new world order seemed to be emerging, with the USA, China, India, and Russia in the vanguard, Brazil near behind, and the West European countries struggling to define how their economic weight might again be translated into international influence and geostrategic power. Although India itself is beyond the reach of such behaviour today, bullying financial policies of the UK and the Netherlands towards non-EU member Iceland between 2008 and 2010 and Germany's less-than-spontaneously generous stance over Greece's financial plight (however self-induced) in early 2010 may conjure up unpleasant memories for a country which spent so many decades under European colonial rule. One prominent ambassador of an EU member state in Delhi remarks:

One would like to believe that India and the European Union should naturally draw close. Ideally, they would see each other as rising powers, each open to supporting the emergence of the other. In reality, however, each has a tendency to look to the most powerful poles in international relations rather than towards each other, and each spends more time deploring the shortcomings of the other rather than building the foundations of future partnership.⁹³

Russia remains in a precarious geopolitical and economic position, which inevitably affects its relationship with India. While in recent years economic prospects for Russia have improved (along with rising prices for oil and gas), the collapse of the USSR entailed tremendous costs to self-confidence, geostrategic heft, and national cohesion, as low-level conflicts in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Ossetia attest. After a brief romance with wildcat capitalism, mainly notable for the rise of the oligarch class, Russia is still in search of a model of economic development that can wean it away from over-reliance on hydrocarbons and provide the quality of life for its citizens that the EU countries deliver for theirs. Less aggressive diplomacy with its Western neighbours in future decades could, in fact, lead to greater influence internationally by creating common cause between the Western European powers and Moscow on a number of issues (as seemed plausible during the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras). But its domestic political, economic, social, and foreign policy development may yet hold a number of unsettling surprises ahead, much as the rest of the world would prefer otherwise.

Thus, even though the Russian Federation remains a significant military and geostrategic actor, the relatively modest size and questionable management of its economy exert a drag on its overall credibility and influence. Any Russian resurgence is unlikely to restore it fully to superpower status, not least, as with Japan, because of its disastrous demographic profile with a rapidly aging and shrinking population. However, Russia will remain a major regional power, influencing its own vast neighbourhood spanning Europe and Asia, notably in Central Asia and in the Caucasus, and seeking to further its own interests through such influence. Occasionally this will mean rubbing up against the EU and even the USA in the latter region, and possibly against China in some of the former. But friction with India seems unlikely for reasons of geographical distance and broadly compatible foreign policy philosophy.

Overall, the Indo-Russian and Indo-European relationships are in gentle decline compared to some others, not least in the trade sphere, because of India's rise but also because Western Europe to some degree, and certainly Russia, find themselves in a position of some economic uncertainty and of geopolitical flux. And while India also is in flux, it enjoys economic tailwinds producing economic momentum and hence greater international credibility than the absolute figures would argue for.

These relationships will likely continue to be defined by the key interests of India, mainly in private sector development, defence, and energy. Unlike India's relationships with China and the USA, Delhi may well find itself becoming the dominant partner. However, this scenario will take time to unfold and is not pre-ordained, involving as it does a number of currently imponderable factors relating to each of the EU, Russia, and India, not least involving the domestic realities produced by their complex political systems.