

From Special Partner to Limited Alienation -- New Trend of India's Strategy towards Russia

Li Qingyang^a, Wang Weimin^{b,*}

School of Government, Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, Shanghai, China, 201701
^a772695312@qq.com, ^bwangcontact@163.com
*Corresponding author

Abstract: *With the rapid development of its own strength, India has become an important border power body in the political chess game of great powers in this century, and is beginning to adjust the strategic direction of major powers by taking advantage of its unprecedented international position and extremely special geographical environment. In this context, India's strategy towards Russia is facing a new round of positioning. Its adjustment to Russia strategy is not only related to the development of India-Russia relations, but also of great significance to the regional geopolitical security environment. This article around India to Russia's strategic adjustment this topic, first reviews the history of India since 1962 on Russia's strategic change, and then to India on Russia's strategic adjustment agent in factor analysis, based on this model to describe India after the picture and put forward the strategies of major powers limited strategic alienation as India to Russia's strategic developments, Finally, based on the relevant judgment of strategic circle, this paper analyzes the prospect of a new round of India's strategy against Russia from the perspective of alliance theory and lists three possible scenarios in the future.*

Keywords: *India-Russia Relations, Strategic Appeal, China-U.S. Relations*

1. Introduction

Since 1962, when India and Russia began to establish a close security relationship, India's strategy towards Russia can be roughly divided into three stages: active neutrality, special partnership and limited alienation. Through the investigation of these three stages, it can be seen that India's adjustment of its strategy towards Russia over the years is not only influenced by the 1962 Sino-Indian War, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the 2018 Indo-Pacific Strategy, but also closely related to India's own strategic demands arising from the domestic political changes. At present, due to the absence of the process factors constituting the special strategic partnership between India and Russia, as well as the influence of structural factors such as The political ecology of India and the dependence relationship between India and Russia, India's strategy towards Russia is changing from special strategic partnership to limited strategic alienation, which is unified in India's own great power strategy.[1]

2. The historical development of India's strategy towards Russia

The historical development of India's strategy towards Russia can be divided into different stages from time and space. The former mainly refers to the four stages separated by the 1962 Sino-Indian War, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the Indo-Pacific strategy in 2018, while the latter is based on the multiple interactions of different nature and degrees between India's national interest circle and Russia.

From the perspective of time, the three events roughly divide India's strategy toward Russia into four stages: negative neutrality, positive neutrality, special partner, and limited alienation. First of all, India was in a passive and neutral stage after independence until 1962 Sino-Indian War. During this period, India believed that it was uniquely geostrategic enough to ensure national security, and therefore prioritized economic development over defense development.[2] Under the influence of Nehru and his pacifist ideology, India adopted a non-aligned policy towards the major powers of the world, which in essence was a passive neutrality without any political, military and security cooperation. However, after 1962, India's security ties with the Soviet Union began to grow closer,

gradually carrying out a series of arms sales cooperation. Although India still claimed that it adhered to the policy of non-alignment, due to the two countries' prediction of common threats in South and East Asia, India's neutral attitude towards the Soviet Union in fact changed from negative to positive, and signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between India and the Soviet Union in 1971, marking the establishment of bilateral quasi-alliance.[3] This long-standing strategy of active neutrality was hit by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and had to be adjusted again. This strategic uncertainty was only tentatively clarified when the two countries signed the Indo-Russian Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 1993.[4] Since then, India-Russia strategic relations have warmed up all the way again: Putin visited India in 2000 signed the declaration of strategic partnership, after the cold war between the two countries has formed a stable security cooperation relations and on the basis of the implementation of the strategy in each region of the tacit understanding, Mr Medvedev visited India in 2010 signed by the Russian joint statement printed is explicitly described Russia relations as a special strategic partnership.[5] Under Modi, India has become more active in international affairs, taking on an opportunistic and pro-Western tone that contradicts the traditional view that Russia is an indispensable power player in India's diplomatic strategy. And, more importantly, the United States also pay more attention to India's strategic position, in succession since 2016, and India signed the memorandum logistics exchange protocol (LEMOA), communication compatibility and security protocol (COMCASA) and the geographical space cooperation basic exchange and cooperation agreement BECA three agreements, give the position of India near us Allies. In this context, the introduction of the Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2018 has gradually shifted India's strategy towards Russia from a special partner to a limited separation. Despite claiming that Russia still plays an important role in India's defense while getting closer to the United States, the shift in strategy towards Russia clearly shows that the Modi government believes that continuing the post-Cold War special India-Russia partnership will not be conducive to India's strategy of rising as a great power through the competition between China and the United States.

From the perspective of space, the change of India's strategy towards Russia is reflected in the interactions between India's national interest circle and Russia. Since its independence, India has always regarded itself as the most important regional power in South Asia, and its external strategy design is also reflected in the circle structure from the advantages of South Asia, balance of power and surrounding stability to important national interests and relevant international organizations and international issues. First of all, the circle structure of national interests determines that India's long-term goal is to pursue its own dominant position in South Asia and balance of power in the Asia-Pacific.[6] After the third India-Pakistan War established its dominant position in South Asia, India turned its attention to the pursuit of the balance of power among great powers, and Pakistan and China became the most concerned countries for India.[7] In this process, the Soviet Union (Russia) interacted with India's strategic direction by exerting its influence on China and Pakistan. At the same time, the fundamental goal of India's foreign policy is to pursue the status of "great power with sound and sound".[8] Traditionally, India has sought to lead the third world by boosting its prestige among third world countries by opposing collectivization and supporting multilateralism, but in recent years this quest has morphed into a claim for a say in some international organizations.[9] Interactions between the two sides have become more frequent as Russia has the room for cooperation that India needs on issues such as the expansion of the UN Security Council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. But on regional issues, the India-Russia interaction is not going exactly in the direction India wants. For the first time, Russia cancelled an India-Russia summit as India drew closer to the United States and chose to hold military exercises with Pakistan during the period of the India-Pakistan conflict. In addition, Russia has also put pressure on India by not inviting India to participate in the Afghan Security Summit, which concerns the interests of both Countries. In general, India's national strategic focus is constantly changing in its own interest circle, while Russia influences India's strategic direction through interactions of different degrees and different natures.

From the above analysis based on time and space, it can be seen that the historical evolution of India's strategy towards Russia presents three characteristics: first, the shaping of India's strategy towards Russia is the result of a two-way interaction between international pressure and domestic politics, which is reflected in the change of India's national interest focus and the double interaction of the behavior of great powers outside the region; Secondly, although in the current stage adjustment, Russia's position in India's national defense security has declined compared with that before, the long-term history since 1967 shows that Russia has always occupied an important position in India's foreign strategy. Third, India's current limited alienation from Russia is in line with India's macro strategic logic, that is, limited active following to the United States and limited active checking and balancing to China. This macro strategic goal makes India harm its national interests no matter it gets

closer to or too far away from Russia.

3. The reason of India's strategic change to Russia

In order to explain the current India-Russia relationship and provide a judgment basis for India's future strategic direction, domestic and foreign academic circles have long focused on the period from the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the 21st century, and various literatures mainly discuss the question "why India turned to a special partner towards Russia after the end of the Cold War". However, most Indian scholars ascribe the opportunity of strategic adjustment to the two countries' similar strategic pursuit of a multipolar world, the increase of common interests in dealing with the problems in the surrounding region, and the tendency of pragmatism in political and security issues.[10] Factors relative to use isolated issues and specific guidance for India on Russia's strategic adjustment, this article through to explore the structural factors of macro choice, political ecology, India and Russia dependencies from India and the international power structure from three aspects, as the cold war as the beginning period of the long history of the past in India for Russia's strategic adjustment has a persuasive explanation.

3.1 Political ecology in India

The change of India's domestic political ecology is the biggest internal factor affecting India's strategic adjustment to Russia. At the material level, with its comprehensive national strength approaching or even surpassing That of Russia, India believes that it has gained an unprecedented international position. At the ideological level, the ferment of domestic extreme nationalism has also changed India's perception of Russia's strategy.

First of all, the proximity of the comprehensive strength of India and Russia is the fundamental internal variable of India's strategic change towards Russia, which has changed the relationship of dependence between India and Russia and led to the fermentation of the following extreme religious nationalism. From the research on the change of the comprehensive national strength of major countries in the world in the past 50 years, it can be seen that the development speed of India after the Cold War has exceeded the vast majority of countries except China, and its strength has rapidly approached Russia and has a tendency to surpass it.[11] The proximity, equivalence and even transposition of the comprehensive national strength of the two countries have made qualitative changes in their national status and fundamentally shaken India's strategy towards Russia, making the former no longer dependent on the latter. From India's point of view, today's world is a de-unipolar world, in which the relative decline of the United States, the rise of China, but unable to surpass the decline of the United States in the short term, and the decline of Russia together form a very special international structure. And India is emerging as a growing powers of critical margin at the very heart of international politics.[12] In this context, India believes that it has become something everyone is trying to win over, and that even NATO, which is not so closely linked to its security, needs to work with India to fend off global uncertainties.[13] In fact, similar views exist in other countries. A survey report by the Chicago Global Council of the United States pointed out that in the next two decades, India will be "the major power with the most partnerships", while china-India relations will decline, India-Russia relations will remain unchanged but mainly partnership, and India-US partnership will further develop.[14] With considerable autonomy in international affairs, India has expanded the index of its rise in the 21st century from pure economic rise to global ties of military security, and will not give up its advantageous position in the current international structure unless there are serious security challenges that it is difficult to deal with alone. And the limited separation from Russia is the inevitable choice to maintain this status.[15]

Secondly, India's strategic perception of Russia is no longer the "world power that can guarantee its own security" in the Indo-Soviet era, and India's domestic strategic culture has also changed from Nehru moralism, Hindu nationalism, realism and liberalism to extreme nationalism.[16] After the 21st century, the strategic perception of India and Russia towards each other can once be defined as "cooperative partners that can compromise", but this strategic perception is becoming more and more radical and negative, especially after the Ukraine crisis and china-India border conflict, both countries' strategic perception towards each other has added expansionary signs. In his comments on China-Russia relations in 2020, Putin mentioned the possibility of a strategic alliance with China and predicted that China, Russia and Germany would play important role as great powers in future international affairs, but did not mention India. But In India's eyes, Russia is positioned as nothing more than a declining

power.[17] Obviously, both India and Russia are seeking prestige as great powers, but there is a contradiction between “India's pursuit of impressive great power status” and “Russia's revival of great power status”. To be exact, the increasing extreme nationalism and the social attitude towards Russia under its influence determine the direction of India's strategic adjustment towards Russia is bound to run counter to Russia's demands. Despite a long after its independence India's domestic strategic culture shows the characteristics of diversity of the historical periods, but actually since Nehru opened India since the long-term pursuit of great-power status, nationalism is always with the Indian policymakers and society corresponds to the inherent thinking mode, and finally in the recent years in the form of extreme held the dominant position of India's strategic culture.[18] In addition, the long-term dominance of the nationalist Indian Party in Indian politics and the stimulation of the Sino-Indian border conflict have also intensified extreme nationalism, making India quite repelling to external forces and their possible threats, and thus more inclined to show a tough deterrence posture in foreign policy. At the international level, the world is facing a resurgence of realist power politics, the hegemony of liberal ideology is shaken, and countries are becoming more uncertain about their environment and worrying about unknown risks. Under such circumstances, nationalism, an ideology that has played a vital role in the independence and development of many third World countries, naturally becomes a strategy used by countries including India to safeguard their own security and maximize their own interests. The spread of nationalism in the world and in the region also means that neighboring countries will adopt a large number of domestic first, beggar-thy-neighbor measures, which will inevitably affect India's domestic politics. Under such internal and external two-way effects, India's nationalism becomes more and more extreme, making its strategic adjustment to Russia gradually show more exclusive “India centrism”.

3.2 India-Russia dependence

In essence, India-Russia dependence depends mainly on the position of each country in each other's national strategy, which is restricted by the changes of domestic political ecology as well as the influence of extraterritorial actors. This determines that the dependence between India and Russia must be a national security relationship in the geographical sense.

From the perspective of geopolitics, the geopolitical and diplomatic environments of India and Russia are significantly different, so both sides have different needs to change the existing security relationship. After the end of the Cold War, at least for the moment, most countries except China and Belarus are hostile to Russia, leaving Russia in an extremely disadvantaged diplomatic and geopolitical environment. In contrast, The diplomatic environment of India, which reached an understanding with the US and Europe in the 1990s and has become the key country that major powers are trying to win over in this century, is indeed gradually improving. However, the improvement of diplomatic environment is not equal to the improvement of geopolitical environment, and the conflicts with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries make India always bear great pressure in dealing with neighboring issues. As a typical land and sea complex country like Russia, India has always expected to obtain relatively safe or relatively friendly geographical environment, so it tries to have a friendly and stable Southeast Asia in the east, and maintain an equally friendly and stable Iranian plateau in the northwest. Thus, under the background of the world power shift to East Asia and the INDO-Pacific strategy of the United States, a more favorable geopolitical environment for India's security can be created.[19] The differences in the geographical and diplomatic environments of the two countries determine their huge differences in security needs. Russia is eager to change the status quo and hopes that more countries, especially neighboring countries or major stakeholders, can maintain good relations with it so as to safeguard national security. India, with its diplomatic advantage, is in no hurry to change things. Such differences in overall security needs lead to different attitudes of India and Russia towards further development of security relations between the two countries. During the Cold War, The quasi-alliance that India relied on the Soviet Union no longer exists, and the reality is that Russia expects more friendly relations with India to break through the diplomatic blockade and sanctions imposed by the United States and Europe.

At the factor level, this geopolitical dependence is mainly reflected in defence sales: India's buying needs are gradually falling below Russia's export needs. First, the technical level of Russian armaments is not fully applicable to India's defense needs, and the effective utilization is not high; Second, America's advanced weapons are fungible compared with Russia's, so imports of American-made weapons have squeezed the share of Russian weapons in India. Third, India already has a nuclear deterrent capability, its national security is basically guaranteed, and advanced weapons are fungible, so India's arms purchases tend to achieve political objectives rather than just the security objectives of the

Cold War. In this context, for India, it is obvious that cooperation with the United States can more effectively deal with the “security threat” from China while realizing India's composite strategic goals in the region, which means that India's dependence on Russia has been reduced.[20]

In general, the India-Russia security relationship has changed from the symmetrical dependence relationship in which the Soviet Union was dominant in the Cold War to the symmetric dependence relationship in which India is more dominant at present. Moreover, Russia's demand for changing the status quo is much greater than India's, which results in the obvious vulnerability of the basis of the bilateral symmetric dependence relationship. On the one hand, After the cold War, Russia is no longer the only security guarantee for India, nor is India the only choice for Russia to radiate its influence in South Asia. On the other hand, Russia itself faces multiple geopolitical security dilemmas, and its power is insufficient to intervene directly in South Asia as the Soviet Union did. This vulnerability implies that when one partner in a dependent relationship breaks the relationship with the other, the cost is not too high.[21] To be precise, the collapse of the 1970s quasi-alliance with the Soviet Union would mean the loss of India's sole security guarantee and primacy in South Asia; But for the current India-Russia security relationship, as long as it does not completely abandon the partnership with Russia, India's choice of a pro-Western strategic path and thus limited alienation from Russia will not lead to any disastrous consequences.

3.3 International power structure

The change of international power structure is the biggest external factor affecting India's strategic adjustment to Russia. No matter the Sino-Indian War in 1962, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the Indo-Pacific strategy in 2018, India's previous adjustments to Russia's strategy are undoubtedly directly related to regional and non-regional powers. As for the influence of international power structure on its strategy, India during the Cold War mainly judged between the United States and the Soviet Union, believing that the Ideology of the Soviet Union was more harmonious with India and that the Soviet Union had more influence on India's national security than the United States, so it tended to seek cooperation with the Soviet Union. But in the post-Cold War era, especially in the past decade, India first needs to make a judgment between China and the United States, and then take into account the bilateral relations between India and the United States and India and Russia, so as to adjust its national strategy accordingly.

There is no doubt that India has made a choice between China and the United States. Following the United States and balancing China have become the main contents of India's foreign strategy. At present, the widening gap in power between China and India, the disharmony of national identities and the persistent lack of strategic mutual trust brought about by the rise of China have led many Indian elites and people to believe that India's traditional strategy towards China has completely failed, and all efforts to normalize relations with China through rational negotiations are futile.[22] In addition, China and India are also in the border dispute, trade imbalance, the Brahmaputra river and China-Pakistan economic corridor and anti-terrorism issues exist serious differences, these factors make the Indian and American scholars believe that as China's strength and its growing influence in the region as a rising, India will be more and more difficult to achieve its strategic goals. On the other hand, although India and the Soviet Union were in a quasi-alliance for a long time during the Cold War, the United States never explicitly listed India as an enemy, and began to approach India openly after the 1990s. In the context of China-US strategic competition, India's status in the INDO-Pacific strategy of the US is rising rapidly. As Vinay Kaura, an Indian scholar, put it when discussing India's current diplomatic pattern: India is at the center of America's Indo-Pacific strategic vision and the two countries face similar challenges, so it is of great significance for India to maintain its strategic partnership with the United States.[23]

Yet adjusting Russia's strategy solely on the basis of a choice between China and the United States is likely to be contradictory. Because the checks and balances the Chinese choose to follow the United States also for India to continue to close to Russia, the excessive alienating Russia is not good for India's national interests, especially the security of security interests, therefore, even wrestling Kaura such advocates the India-US strategic partnership of Indian scholars also think that India should continue to strengthen contact with Russia's traditional ally. The crux of the matter is that the trilateral relationship between India and Russia is highly uncertain. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia has always supported a sort of Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral cooperation model, and believes that India has a strategic tacit understanding with Russia at the regional level.[24] After first articulating this cooperation mechanism in 2015, Putin reiterated its significance during Modi's visit to Russia in June 2017. As Russia's relative decline, however, the proposal to India already has less attractive, and senior

Russians also realized for Russia's strategic judgment error of tacit understanding, and therefore put forward under the condition of stable only if the parties have consensus Russia would stick to hold trilateral mechanism, otherwise only a temporary freeze or weaken the relevant foreign investment.[25]Accordingly, Russia's Kashmir policy has changed from “supporting India and suppressing Pakistan” to “paying equal attention to India and Pakistan”.[26]At the same time, the west will tend to Russia's “into the Asian integration strategy” described as “China strategy”, defined the China-Russia cooperation against the axis of “convenience”, and thus think as Russia's reliance on China more and more big, harm the interests of China will also make Russia's national interests is damaged.[27]The deepening of interest solidarity between China and Russia further promotes India's strategic alienation from Russia and reduces Russia's position in India's national strategy.That is why, among the many factors listed by Indian academics as influencing power structures in South Asia, the degree of cooperation between Beijing and Moscow is as important as the BELT and Road Initiative.[28]Interestingly, although Indian officials and academic circles are concerned about the gradual deepening of the joint interests between China and Russia, Russia has different views on the changes in Russia-India relations caused by the development of China-Russia relations.In the view of most Russian scholars, the conflict between India and China does not cause Russia to change its policy of seeking Asian partners, and Russia is not willing to act as a mediator in the conflict between China and India. Even some Russian scholars have called on Russian change to India too strategic attitude, believe that India advocated by India too is a based on constructivism to the concept of culture and regional integration, but not before Russia based on realistic view defined geopolitical strategic concept, so Russia should adjust the cognitive biases, and will benefit from it because of the change of attitude.[29]

Despite the competing views, India's judgment on China-Russia relations will not change significantly in the near term, nor will it alter its active and limited strategic distancing from Russia.This is because since the rise of China, especially since the India-China Galvan Valley crisis, India's judgment on the changes in the international power structure has determined that limited adherence to the United States and limited checks and balances on China have become the tone of its national strategy, and its strategic adjustment to Russia must conform to this tone.

4. India's real strategic aspirations behind the evolution of India-Russia relations

Despite the complexity of the global balance of power, recent developments between India and Russia suggest that both sides are trying to maintain good relations in 2022, with Putin's visit to India in particular going some way to bridging some of the policy gap between Moscow and New Delhi.On December 6, 2021, During Putin's brief visit to India, the two sides held the first 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi and decided to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and advance the Vladivostok-Chennai energy corridor.The partnership gives Russia a key gateway to the Indo-Pacific region and gives India the prospect of tackling its own energy consumption rather than relying on the volatile Middle East.However, the biggest variable facing the quasi-alliance between India and the United States is India's policy appeal to Russia based on its own great-power strategic considerations.Against the backdrop of the game between China, the US and Russia as major powers, the international situation is full of uncertainties. However, India's demand just touches on the hidden structural problems, which affect and will continue to plague India-Russia relations. It requires the two countries, especially India, to take very targeted measures to resolve them.

4.1 India's “silence” in the context of Ukraine Crisis

The issue is further complicated by India's pursuit of confrontation with China and Russia's antagonistic relationship with the West, as well as weak India-Russia economic ties and the yearning of India's political and social elites for the US, most recently in Ukraine.It is not hard to see how India's close ties with Both Moscow and Washington have landed it in a delicate diplomatic quandary as tensions rise over Ukraine.While most of America's western Allies have played up criticism of a possible Russian “invasion” of Ukraine, India has kept a cautious silence.On the one hand, India certainly does not want to undermine its long-term cooperative relationship with Russia by criticizing and trying to intimidate Russia on the side of the US and Europe. On the other hand, if Russia does launch a military attack in Ukraine, India's strategic interests will surely be seriously damaged.As a result, it will be harder for Indian policymakers to balance their bilateral relations with the U.S. and Russia as the situation escalates and leads to pressure from the U.S. to join a coalition of Western democracies opposing Russia's military mobilization.

In fact, India and Russia have cooperated as closely in recent years as they did in the early days of the cold war. After the outbreak of the Crimean crisis in 2014, India also remained silent throughout the whole process, even abstaining from the UN resolution on safeguarding Ukraine's territorial integrity. In turn, Putin thanked India for its "restrained and objective" stance on Crimea, and when COVID-19 broke out, many Indian-watchers were quick to point out that it was Russia -- not the US -- that immediately came to India's aid. In addition, Russia is by far India's largest arms supplier, making nearly 60 percent of its military supplies in Russia, a fact that some observers see as an important factor in India's ongoing border standoff with China.[30] Therefore, India insisted on purchasing S-400 missile defense system from Russia even at the risk of being sanctioned by US. Despite India's insistence that its decision was based on the need to protect its national security interests, the US remains deeply concerned about India's purchase of a multi-billion dollar missile defence system from Russia. At a press briefing, State Department spokesman Ned Price made it clear that Russia's sale of the S-400 missile defense system to India "underscores the destabilizing role Moscow is playing in the region and potentially beyond." [31] It is particularly noteworthy that the remarks were made against the backdrop of rising tensions over Ukraine. At a time when the Biden administration is trying to project a tough stance on Russia, urging all countries to avoid large arms deals with Moscow, India's move naturally drew strong opposition from the White House. But India eventually resisted pressure to make any changes to the deal.

4.2 India's strategic aspirations

It must be noted, however, that India's silence in the Ukraine crisis cannot be attributed solely to the development of bilateral relations between India and Russia in recent years and Russia's important role in promoting India's growing military strength. Behind the nostalgia for historical feelings and the emphasis on current arms purchases lies India's own great-power strategy. For New Delhi, simply turning to Washington and the West to counterbalance Beijing is not the best way. Only by keeping Moscow stable as another power center besides Washington and Beijing, and consolidating a multipolar world order that is different from the bipolar confrontation between China and the United States, can India's own interests be best sought. It is this calculation that has led India to refuse to follow the lead of its US ally and continue to remain silent on Russia's assertive actions in Ukraine and elsewhere. Of course, this strategic appeal also means that India's strategic interests will be seriously hurt in the event of another violent military conflict in Ukraine. Continued silence will not keep India out of the loop, as intense hostility from the US and the West and potential new sanctions against Russia will surely hit the Russian economy hard, pushing it towards China and making it even more dependent on Beijing for economic cooperation and assistance. At the same time, the sanctions against Russia will also bring heavy obstacles to the current development of India-Russia defense trade, and even completely eliminate the possibility for India to obtain advanced weapons from Russia for a certain period. If the situation deteriorates to such an extent, India's own strategy of enhancing its power in a multipolar world order will become difficult to achieve, even as its military rise is blocked and a more powerful China is backed by Russia.

Thus can conclude that the powers strategic appeals to the India do not choose in the form of quasi alliance with the United States at the same time completely deviate from Russia, because India's desire to achieve is not itself relies on America and the west's power to curb the rise of China, but in a multipolar world, with its own strength counterweight to China. This is the inherent sense of strategic autonomy after its independence. It is precisely this sense of autonomy and the resulting strategic appeal that urges India to ask Russia to play the third pole in the bipolar confrontation between China and the US, providing conditions for India's rise in the future to truly create a multipolar order. However, this also means that India's strategic demands are greatly subject to Russia's actions. Especially from the perspective of structure, India is relatively weak, unable to exert enough influence in the game of great powers. In the face of the development of the situation, India can only watch and see in silence instead of actively intervening. Ukraine crisis is the best proof that India can only remain silent during this period and is completely incapable of urging Russia to exercise restraint through gentle persuasion. Despite the rapid development of us-Russia relations, since India has not signed any clear and strict military covenant, it is completely impossible for India to constrain THE US policy towards Russia in the name of "obligation" and to "kidnap" powerful Allies for its own interests in matters concerning its own strategic interests.

5. Prospects of India's strategy of limited alienation from Russia

On the one hand, they need to maintain political and security cooperation with Russia, and even expect Russia to exert a significant influence on regional and international affairs. On the other hand, they are completely unable to control or guide Russia's actions. While the joint statement issued after Putin's visit showed that the two sides did narrow their differences on thorny issues such as Afghanistan, Indo-Pacific strategy, quadrilateral security dialogue and Russia-China relations, India also had a clearer understanding of Russia's position on the India-China border dispute in 2020 and was satisfied with Russia's "neutrality". But India also knows not to overestimate the positive signs in India-Russia relations, especially when they run counter to long-term trends in international affairs such as US-China strategic competition and US-Russia strategic confrontation. In this context, India's strategic appeal is more like a tightrope walking in the great power game between China, the US and Russia, and the influence of Russian factors on India-US relations, India-China relations and India's neighborhood policy will only be further highlighted in the future. In the face of an increasingly narrow foreign policy space, Indian policy makers will face an unavoidable test of how to choose between major powers. Therefore, the author believes that the following three scenarios may occur in the future:

The first is the pattern in which America, America and Russia still contain each other. The premise of this scenario is that Russia's dependence on China is reduced, and the US-Russia relationship is eased and turned around. The United States tries to draw Russia together to contain China and form a trilateral containment model. The key point of this situation is the adjustment of strategic relations between China and Russia. From the existing cooperation model, China and Russia tend to focus on Central Asia, Northeast Asia, military and security cooperation and economic cooperation, and the cooperation between the two countries in the Far East is more and more favorable to China, and there is even an argument that Russia's Far East is "Sinicized". At the same time, in order to maintain its position in the cooperation model, Russia has also been increasing its military influence in Southeast Asia, an area of concern to China, in order to thwart China's dominance in the region. Level in central Asia, Russia has a tendency to use the characteristics of the buffer to safeguard national sovereignty, so the choice of partners in the future, the Russian tend to India rather than China, Russia, China arms exports are falling, regarded as Russia's backyard of central Asia, Russia also do not want to have too much influence in China. In addition, Russia has also tried to counter China's economic superiority by bringing India into some regional organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Comprehensive the above view, the trilateral containment model of China and the United States on the premise of China-Russia strategic relations between change and existing such possibility, at the same time the United States tried to woo Russia to participate in the checks and balances among China's strategy, in the situation in India will have a high degree of strategic autonomy, best for India to achieve their goals.

The second is the model of China-India-Russia cooperation. The premise of this scenario is the warming of Sino-Indian relations and the consensus of cooperation between the two sides. Meanwhile, China, India and Russia jointly promote the trilateral cooperation model to maintain regional stability. In the past, the staunch supporter of the trilateral cooperation model between China, India and Russia was Russia, which became a milestone in the construction of the trilateral cooperation model after Premier Zhu Rongji's visit to India in 2002. Meanwhile, the institutionalization process of the trilateral meeting between China, India and Russia is also an important indicator to measure the trilateral cooperation model. And trilateral meeting systematization largely under the control of the development of China-India relations, and define the future the possibility of the trilateral cooperation mode level there are major differences, some scholars pointed out that China and India and Russia mode lack common foundation, between the three countries are friends and not the enemy of the state, there are also some scholars pointed out that among the three countries in common: Including, but not limited to, their joint support for the UN mission, their condemnation of NATO's actions in Kosovo, their sensitivities about violations of national sovereignty (Chechnya, Taiwan and Kashmir), and the large number of Muslim countries on their borders, Three kingdoms there is support for multilateral mechanisms include the BRIC nations, the SCO, APEC, south Asian regional cooperation organization, and the association of south-east Asian nations (ASEAN), etc., in the judgment of the future, think that China and India and Russia among the three countries still exists a lot of multilateral issues can become the three modes of cooperation premise, despite the region's extreme nationalism and instability are rise. As a key part of the three-country model, there are three types of perceptions in India about the possibility of the warming of China-India relations. The first view is that the improvement of China-India relations has been exaggerated and there is no substantive progress in bilateral relations except for trade relations and there is still hostility. The second view think that China-India relations

have appeared since 1988 is a paradox, fundamental improvement and points out that on the one hand, the bilateral economic and trade relations and continue to promote multilateralism, on the other hand is a strategic mutual trust between the two countries has been influenced by the boundary issue, the Tibet issue and Pakistan, and the third point of relatively optimistic, Since 2000, China and India have entered an era of comprehensive cooperation, and bilateral trade has made substantial progress. At the same time, there will be progress in cultural, military contacts, border negotiations and other issues. The characteristics of China-India relations are friendship rather than competition. Comprehensive the above term, for China and India and Russia the trilateral cooperation pattern possibility debate focused on whether can promote the cooperation between China and India, in this situation will be the most in Russia's national interests, Russia can be through the trilateral cooperation mode can not only achieve the goal of the initiative multipolarity and multilateralism, and can compete from western sanctions.

Finally, an alliance between India and the United States. The premise of this scenario is that Russia's continued decline will eventually lead to Russia's loss of strategic value to India, in which case India will gravitate towards the US alliance system. As mentioned above, the fundamental reason why Russia is still important to India and why it is difficult for India to simply check and balance and abandon Russia is that Russia still has huge international power and influence. However this premise and the comprehensive national strength has the relevance of Russia, with the decline of Russia's national power, India will be evaluated again on Russia's strategic gain and loss, Russia also unable to promote China and India and Russia trilateral cooperation pattern and further deepening degree of dependence on China, the formation of the alliance between the Indo-US mode will be inevitable. In addition to Russia's comprehensive national strength, Russia's political polarization forces such as opposition parties in Russia can also become one of the factors contributing to Russia's loss of strategic value to India. For example, the opposition forces led by Alexei Navalny made significant progress in Russia's 2020 local elections. A weak Russia would eventually bring India closer to America's alliance system. In summary, the alliance mode between India and the United States is based on the premise that Russia completely loses its strategic value to India. This mode will make the United States become the biggest beneficiary, enabling India to join the Alliance system of the United States and promote the Indo-Pacific strategy and contain China more advantageous.

6. Conclusion

From the historical evolution of India's strategy towards Russia, bilateral relations between India and Russia have a relatively good tradition on the whole, which is reflected in the harmonious interaction between the leaders of the two sides and the friendly attitude between the public of the two countries in the present era. Not only has India insisted on buying Russian weapons systems under PRESSURE from the US, Modi himself is one of only four foreign leaders to be awarded Russia's highest medal, the Order of St Andrew. Ordinary Russians regard India as a reliable and friendly country with few problems in bilateral relations. In particular, one of Mr. Putin's only two trips abroad in 2021 will be to India, a sign of Russia's increasing emphasis and deliberate effort to present itself as a longstanding and friendly partner elsewhere at a time of rising tensions with the West. However, under the background of China's rapid rise and gradual strategic competition with the United States, the friendly degree of India-Russia relations is not enough to meet India's own great power strategic appeal, which leads to the important feature of limited alienation of India's strategy towards Russia. From India's point of view, if it is to become a great power in a multipolar world order, India-Russia relations must be further developed, which in effect requires Russia to readjust and upgrade its cooperation with India.

In India, India and Russia relations present the causes behind the problems, Russia's policy makers didn't look at the Indian status and trend, ignored the India's economic and technological development achievements in the past three decades, still the continuation of the 1960s when the most closely relationship orientation, India as a non-aligned policy of the third world countries, Will try to keep a low profile in international affairs. This has led Russia to assess India's strategic aspirations as a middle power, unaware of India's status as a rising power, image and ambition to become one of the poles of a multipolar world. This strategic appeal is the root cause of India's growing closeness to the US and hostility to China. Therefore, in order to get rid of the current limited alienation and further development of India-Russia relations, Russia needs to re-understand India's strategic appeal in the process of in-depth cooperation between the two sides. To be more precise, India hopes that Russia can understand the difference between India and the United States in the strategic goals of the Indo-Pacific region, and thus dispel the negative and misgivings about India's strategy. On this basis, Russia should make corresponding efforts to allay India's concerns over Russia's strategic relationship with China and

related cooperation with Pakistan to increase mutual trust. Obviously, when the Russian to “correct” India's strategic position and take action to reassure each other, maintain, mutual trust, India will be Russia's strategic adjustment on again, end limited alienation, and Russia more close contact, in Europe and Asia, within the scope of build a stable partnership accord with India's strategic demands.

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