



## Russia's Balance Between India and China

**OE Watch Commentary:** Much has been written about the strengthening military relationship between Russia and China over the past several years. President Putin has even used the term “strategic partnership” to describe Russia’s close military ties with Beijing. However, as the accompanying brief excerpts suggest, the current Kremlin leadership appears unwilling to sacrifice its extensive military sales and cooperation with India to curry favor with their Chinese “strategic partner.”

The first excerpt from the pro-business *Kommersant* asserts, “Russia will accelerate the implementation of a key defense contract with India, which provides for Delhi’s delivery of five S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems (SAM), and will also intensify negotiations on the supply of 33 MiG-29 and Su-30MKI fighters to India.” As the article points out, the Indian Defense Minister recently met with senior Russian defense officials to expedite the deal “to receive Russian fighters and air defense systems as soon as possible.” The article points out that while the Chinese side did not officially comment on the contracts, an article in the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party advised “if Russia wants to soften the hearts of both the Chinese and Indians, it is best not to supply India with weapons at sensitive moments.”

The second excerpt from the mostly pro-Kremlin *Svobodnaya Pressa* includes comments by military expert Viktor Litovkin, who asserts “India is the largest buyer of Russian weapons,” and that “up to 30% of our arms exports go to India.” Litovkin describes the “joint arms production” Russia has with India, to include: “Su-30MKI aircraft..., T-90S tanks..., and BrahMos supersonic ship rockets.” The article also quotes retired Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov who claims “India is our most important geopolitical ally in the 21st century.” Ivashov reminds readers that “India is not only a member of the SCO, it is part of the BRICS group of countries,” and that it is in Russia’s interests “to maintain multilateral relations of strategic and geopolitical cooperation” with India.

Less than two weeks after a border clash, soldiers from India and China participated in the Kremlin’s Victory Day parade on 24 June. By selling advanced weapon systems to India, Kremlin officials apparently believe that they can prevent a broader conflict while still maintaining strong ties with China and India. As Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov claims in the second excerpt, the “Russia-China-India triangle - while maintaining the balance of power - ...is the stabilizing geopolitical factor for the whole of Greater Eurasia.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

*“India is our most important geopolitical ally in the 21st century...”*



*Members of the Indian contingent on Red Square during 2020 Victory Day parade.*

Source: Kremlin.ru via Wikimedia, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=91513145>, CC BY 4.0



## Continued: Russia's Balance Between India and China

**Source:** Sergey Strokan, "Российское оружие спешит в Индию (Russian weapons rush to India)," *Kommersant*, 26 June 2020. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4391564>

*Russia will accelerate the implementation of a key defense contract with India, which provides for Delhi's delivery of five S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems (SAM), and will also intensify negotiations on the supply of 33 MiG-29 and Su-30MKI fighters to India. The agreement to boost military-technical cooperation with the largest buyer of Russian weapons was the main result of the visit to Moscow by the head of the Indian Ministry of Defense Rajnath Singh. Delhi's desire to receive Russian fighters and air defense systems as soon as possible is caused by the growing need to neutralize threats from China and Pakistan, which are carrying out accelerated modernization of their air forces.*

*...Although the main purpose of the visit was to participate in celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of the Victory, Rajnath Singh held a series of meetings and negotiations in Moscow in which Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov.... citing sources in Delhi, reported that the Indian delegation would ask Moscow to expedite the supply of Russian weapons....*

*...The Chinese side has not officially commented on the planned acceleration of the implementation of Russian defense contracts with India. However, on the eve of the Indian delegation's negotiations in Moscow, a comment appeared under the heading "Will India Test Russian-Chinese Friendship?" ... People's Daily notes: "If Russia wants to soften the hearts of both the Chinese and Indians, it is best not to supply India with weapons at sensitive moments...."*

**Source:** Andrey Polunin, "Назло Америке: Русские С-400 долетят до Индии с ускорением (To Spite America: Russian S-400s will fly to India with acceleration)," *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 26 June 2020. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/269282/>

*Moscow at the request of Delhi will accelerate the execution of the contract for the supply of five S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems (SAM) to India, and will intensify negotiations on the supply of 33 MiG-29 and Su-30MKI fighters. This was made clear by the head of the Indian Ministry of Defense, Rajnath Singh, following a three-day visit to Russia, which ended on June 25....*

*...“India is the largest buyer of Russian weapons,” said military expert, retired colonel Viktor Litovkin. “Delhi acquires significantly more than Beijing - up to 30% of our arms exports go to India. Moreover, India is the only country in the world with which we have joint arms production enterprises. For example, we, together with the Indians, are making the Su-30MKI aircraft. ...India and Russia also have a joint program for licensed production of T-90S tanks - it has recently been extended to 2028. ...India and Russia are doing BrahMos supersonic ship rockets, which Indians now use not only on land and ships....*

*...“India is our most important geopolitical ally in the 21st century,” said Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov... “In fact, it is the Russia-China-India triangle - while maintaining the balance of power - that is the stabilizing geopolitical factor for the whole of Greater Eurasia.”*

*“We need India precisely as a balance between China and Russia. Let me remind you that India is not only a member of the SCO, it is part of the BRICS group of countries, and Delhi and Moscow simply need to maintain multilateral relations of strategic and geopolitical*

### Fangs of the Lone Wolf

Chechen Tactics in the Russian-Chechen Wars  
1994-2009

Dodge Billingsley  
with Lester Grau

*Fangs of the Lone Wolf* is about combat experience in urban, mountain and fairly open terrain. It is not a comprehensive history of conflict. This book is a series of snapshots — of vignettes — describing the difficulty, the hardship, the victories and the defeats of the participants. It is an examination of the raw data of combat in a foreign land, and is aimed to advance the professional military study of conflict.

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