

The Analysis of Relations in the China-India-Usa Strategic Triangle

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Abstract

The presented work is devoted to the study of the influence of such a form of relationship as a triangle on the behavior of states and their interaction within the framework of a tripartite format. The relevance of this topic is due to the dominant position of the United States in the world, as well as the growing role in the system of international relations of two Asian giants, China and India, capable in the 21st century to confront Western countries in the international arena. The role of the China-India-USA strategic triangle - key players in the world political arena - will increase in the near future. Using the example of the interaction of the three states of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India and the United States of America, the study examines and analyzes the main principles of the successful coordination of the three sides in the triangle: balance of power, refraining, and security. The main conclusion of the presented study is the importance of maintaining a balance in the strategic triangle "China-India-USA", since the aforementioned countries occupy important positions in the main areas of international relations: economy and security, the world order in the Asia-Pacific region depends on them. The methodological basis of the work is the general humanitarian research method - system analysis, which allowed us to analyze the principles of construction and functioning of the triangle as a system as a whole, and also to study the features of all components of this system, their interdependence and internal patterns of development. The materials of this article can be used in the future by international experts, orientalist and economists studying the Indo-Pacific and Asia-Pacific regions, as well as when reading a course of lectures and writing textbooks.

Keywords: strategic triangle, international relations, balance of power, People's Republic of China, regional security, India, United States of America.

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Strategic triangles represent an important element in international relations. A triangle is a system in which the interrelationships of all existing actors are observed, and a change in one side of the triangle generates impulsive waves, under the influence of which the transformation of opposite sides occurs. The further process of wave transmission forms a control tool - feedback. Consequently, changes in one part of the triangle in one way or another affect other participants in the international process, as well as the strategic plans of states depend on the plans of other states.

The existing relationship and foreign policy between any couple in the strategic triangle affects the relationship between each participant. In cases of a change in the nature of relations between parties A and B, the relations of parties B and C change in parallel, often there is a situation in which actor A is forced to build her relationship with actor B, taking into account the possible impact on relations with a third state or union C.

Interaction in a triangle is based on three key principles:

1. Balance of power.
2. Refraining.
3. Security.

Balance of power is a state policy aimed at balancing other states. Comparing its potential with opponents in order to protect its national interests, the state achieves the desired balance in the international arena in two ways:

1. By building up its own power in the military, economic sphere and pursuing a reasonable foreign policy.
2. Entering into various alliances with potential allies to combine common efforts.

German politician Otto von Bismarck at a meeting with Russian ambassador P.A. Saburov pronounced his famous rule: "All politics can be reduced to a formula - try to be among the three in a world ruled by a fragile balance of five powers. This is the only true defense against the formation of hostile coalitions" [1].

Balance of power

The central idea of the balance of power is that the balance of power is necessary to maintain peace, while the imbalance creates the prerequisites for the growth of tensions. If balance is prioritized correctly, military aggression is minimized in such a situation. The dynamics of the balance of power is of great importance in the key region of the world - Asia.

The balance of power in the China-India-USA strategic triangle is highly variable. Newly elected US President Joe Biden can look forward to further deepening cooperation in New Delhi to build a global partnership. Throughout the history of bilateral relations, relations between the United States and India have not always looked cloudless. However, in the last decade, Washington and New Delhi have undergone a reassessment of relations, and steps are being taken to deepen diplomatic and military ties, and cooperation in the trade and economic sphere is actively expanding [2].

During the reign of Donald Trump, India and the United States signed a number of important agreements in the military sphere, the exchange of intelligence, on intellectual property rights [3], all of these agreements make it possible with a high degree of probability to talk about the possible signing of a bilateral trade agreement in the near future.

However, despite many diplomatic initiatives and existing agreements aimed at increasing trade, disputes remain over the terms of trade duties and barriers, intellectual property rights and migration policy [4]. This indicates that strategic partnerships do not need to be immediately accompanied by improved economic ties, or vice versa; although there is an opportunity for higher levels of development of trade and economic relations and attracting investment.

Both states are united in an effort to limit the spread of China's influence within its own borders, for India in Southeast Asia, and for the United States as a whole, as the main competitor in the struggle for global leadership.

Claiming to be the leader in the Asian region, India is anxiously watching its own economic lag behind China. This fact pushes India to seek opportunities to form an alliance to counter the rise of China.

New dynamics in bilateral relations became apparent with the arrival of Barack Obama in the White House. In 2010, US President Barack Obama, speaking in front of the Indian Parliament during a visit to New Delhi, supported India's application to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. As a result of the meeting, a number of agreements were signed in the trade and economic sphere [5]. The total amount of the agreements amounted to a record amount of more than \$ 15 billion. The contract for the supply of 10 military transport aircraft C-17 Globemaster III in the amount of \$4.1 billion [6] stands out in particular. This contract is the largest in the history of military-technical cooperation between New Delhi and Washington.

Despite the development of the military-technical sphere, India is trying to pursue a diversified policy in the field of arms procurement, thereby avoiding dependence on one supplier. By diversifying the pool of suppliers, which includes the United States, Russia and the EU, India seeks to create a tough competitive environment and achieve concessions in pricing policy, as well as gain access to technology.

In June 2010, Indian Foreign Minister Somanahalli Krishna and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held a four-day series of meetings as part of the first Indian-American strategic dialogue at such a high level.

Experts in Washington shared the troubling expectations of Indian analysts about the rapidly growing Chinese power. In this situation, the Obama administration began the process of shifting the focus of attention from the problems of the fight against terrorism to the inclusion of the struggle for leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. The US aspiration to become a leading player in the Asia-Pacific region was demonstrated in the speech of US Secretary of State H. Clinton at the 2011 APEC summit, when she stated that "the 21st century will become America's Pacific century" [7].

The economic component is also important in trilateral relations. China has become India's leading trading partner. According to Indian trade statistics, India's bilateral trade with China was \$ 77.5 billion in 2020, up from \$ 85.5 billion in 2019 [8]. India's trade deficit with China narrowed from \$ 56.5 billion in 2019 to \$ 45.9 billion in 2020 as Chinese imports fell by 10.8% to \$ 58.7 billion from \$ 74.9 billion in the previous year. Despite this, India remains dependent on Chinese supplies of heavy engineering products, telecommunications equipment and household electrical appliances. India is still far more dependent on trade with China than China is on India.

There is an increase in trade turnover between China and the United States at the end of 2020 up to \$586.72 billion. At the same time, the export of Chinese products to the United States increased by 8% and amounted to \$451.81 billion. Imports of American products increased by 9.8% to \$134.91 billion. China's surplus in 2020 amounted to \$ 316.9 billion, an increase of 7.1% in annual terms compared to 2019 [9]. Analyzing the trade turnover within the strategic triangle, one can notice a positive balance of China in trade, both with India and the United States. In Sino-Indian trade relations, there is a great dependence of India on the supply of Chinese products, while in Sino-American trade relations, on the contrary, there is China's dependence on the United States as the main market for its products.

India's reliance on Chinese imports narrows India's ability to leverage an alliance with the United States to prevent China from strengthening. The interdependence in trade and economic relations is forcing China to build relations with India to the extent that its relations with the United States are. Chinese companies are already facing trade restrictions from the US and other countries, resulting in overcapacity, making it difficult for China to ignore a market as large as India.

Refraining

The United States, trying to combine its potential with that of India, is counting on achieving refraining of the PRC. Despite the fact that the United States reacted negatively to the fact of nuclear tests in India, imposing sanctions, the blockade period lasted no more than 30 years. In 2005, an agreement was signed between the countries under which India extended the IAEA guarantees to civilian nuclear facilities. The United States supports India's ambition to develop rocket technology to contain China. In the case of increased regional and global rivalry between India and China, Indian refraining forces will play a key role in the India-US coalition to counter Chinese influence. The formation of such a full-fledged coalition seems unlikely in the short term. In external affairs, the Indian government is trying to maintain strategic autonomy in decision-making.

India's nuclear doctrine is aimed at creating a deterrent, using its nuclear potential only as an opportunity for an adequate retaliatory strike. However, the development of bilateral Sino-Pakistani relations is forcing India to increase and modernize its nuclear shield. In August 2016, Indian Prime Minister N. Modi announced the commissioning of the first nuclear submarine "Arihant", allowing India to become the owner of a full-fledged nuclear triad.

Despite this, their limited capacity and the existing doctrine of using nuclear forces only as a retaliatory measure allows China to avoid considering India's nuclear forces as a potential threat. On the contrary, the focus of China's attention is on the US nuclear forces, having significantly increased their potential under the presidency of Donald Trump and accelerating the arms race.

Security and arms race. The arms race in the China-USA-India strategic triangle is a complex process, since it is necessary to take into account the interrelationships of all three parties. If actor A increases its military power in response to the increase in the military potential of country B, then country C is also forced to take its own steps on security issues, which creates a problem within the triangle, increasing security issues.

So, in response to the military strengthening of China, the modernization of the Indian army began, but Pakistan perceived India's actions as a threat and in response also began to build up its military forces.

The United States as a major player in the global arms market, supplying weapons to Pakistan, faced strong opposition from India. In the same way, when supplying arms to India, Pakistan showed concern and diversified supplies, buying arms from China and Russia, thus the problem of the arms race within the triangle became complex [10, 11].

One of the reasons for the buildup of the arms race is China's implementation of the String of Pearls program. The goal of this initiative is to create a chain of "anchor points" stretching from Hainan Island along the northern Indian Ocean coast to the coast of East Africa. Along the so-called necklace, the PRC proposes to deploy large-scale construction of strongholds of military-strategic importance for the permanent presence of the PRC in the Indian Ocean in order to ensure the security of its sea trade communications.

The transfer of the port of Gwadar to Beijing for 43 years served as a signal for New Delhi to intensify its policy in the Indian Ocean. India-China rivalry for regional influence has now taken on a new arena of rivalry.

India, which historically considers the Indian Ocean region a zone of its own influence, perceives the modernization of the Gwadar infrastructure as a potential threat to its national security. In addition to using it as a major logistics trade hub, China can also deploy naval forces there, capable of controlling sea routes from Europe, Africa to the Asia-Pacific region.

The nature of relations in the strategic triangle is becoming complex due to the impact of the globalization process and, as a consequence, the strengthening of trade and economic interdependence and mutual influence in other areas. To solve a number of problems of an international nature, it is necessary to create coalitions between countries. Thus, the numerous challenges that arise in the world arena lead to the formation of various forms of relations, including in the form of triangles. A balanced foreign policy is becoming more and more in demand and allows avoiding an unnecessary and dangerous arms race, maintaining a balance of power acceptable to all participants and a failed containment policy, directing its energy to the development of mutually beneficial cooperation.

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