



Research Paper

India-France military relations in the 21st century

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ABSTRACT:

Good diplomatic relations with other countries is key to prosperity of each nation. Given, every nation has its strengths and weaknesses, the main aim of each country is to stabilize itself, and gain a better economic, political, social and military status-quo. There are many factors which affect the relation between two countries-such as geographical factors, culture and history, economic factors, technology, military affairs, and many more-while some may have propitious effects, others may be deleterious. Protection association and collaboration is based on memorable French and Indian military cooperation's which stretch back to the Carnatic Wars. India was intensely engaged with both World War I and World War II and endured immense loss of lives on combat zones in France. In this venture we expect to feature the significance and the impacts of military relations among India and France, how the relations have changed over the 21st century and what potentially anticipates later on.

Keywords: Indo-France, Military, UNSC, Civil Nuclear Deal, aerospace, Strategic partnership, Rafael deal, France- India relations

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I. SCOPE

The scope of this project is to provide a detailed and insightful analysis on the relationship between India and France on the basis of strategic and military background, in the 21st century, based on the meticulous study of various references and research papers. It also aims to show how the relationship between the two countries, which initially started from a buyer-seller relation, improved to the current one where both the countries have come into a strategic alliance, the major events in history that led to such a development, and any future prospects for Indo-French Defence Cooperation .

II. OBJECTIVES

The principle targets of this survey paper are: -

1. Highlight the importance of military and strategic relations between India and France.
2. How Indo-French relations impact their economic, political, social and global status.
3. The possible future developments in the relationship between India and France.
4. The reasons India and France entered into a strategic alliance.
5. Assess and review the full spectrum of our bilateral engagement with France.
6. Factors affecting military Indo-French relationship.
7. How in the long run this strategic alliance will help India become a Great Power in South-East Asia?

III. INTRODUCTION

India and France's close relationship dates back to the 17th century. This paper aims to highlight the importance of this relationship as well as the events that led to the development and strengthening it in the 21st century.[3] With the initiation of this strategic partnership in 1998, all areas of bilateral cooperation - regular-high level exchanges as well as commercial exchanges such as defence, nuclear energy and space- have seen a significant growth and improvement.

France being the first country to enter into an agreement on nuclear energy with India, as a consequence of the waiver given by International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, enabled India to propound their agenda of nuclear cooperation to the International community. Moreover, areas such as investment, science, technology, education, and welfare of the citizens have seen a significant growth

and wide-ranging cooperation. This relation between India and France is built and burgeoned on the historic collaborations and interactions between the French and Indian military.

France has always been supportive of India's efforts to gain a permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) [9]. Dassault came out on top in the Indian Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) competition to supply 126 combat aircrafts to the Indian Air Force (IAF). The long-standing relationship between France and India has resulted in extensive research and development in the areas such as Aerospace and Civil Nuclear energy apart from the flourishing military matters. France has proven to be one of the most important allies of India and vice versa.

IV. INDIA-FRANCE RELATIONS: EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS

A. 1998 Partnership:

India and France have been in close relations for many decades now. The two nations consented to a vital organization arrangement in 1998. Continuous connections at the most noteworthy political levels, complete protection participation and dynamic social linkages have additionally added to developing the organization. Combination of their perspectives on multi-polar world request and their confidence in multi-literalism for tending to worldwide difficulties help them in creating more prominent political cooperative energy at the worldwide level.

B. Make in India and India's initiatives:

It appears India is warily observing how political and financial situation unfurls in Europe. New Delhi looks for more noteworthy collaboration with European nations for encouraging monetary development, framework improvement, speculation and innovative help for projects, for example, 'Make in India', 'Advanced India', 'Aptitude India', 'Swachh Bharat' and so forth. India's participation with Europe is likewise pivotal for successfully managing worldwide difficulties, including environmental change, global fear based oppression, exchange protectionism and traps of globalization. In a similar vein, India and France have been taking activities to additionally grow their collaboration to encourage foundation and financial projects. French organizations have indicated enthusiasm for these projects.

C. EU Interaction of India

India and France have been growing their relationship in the midst of changing territorial and worldwide elements. During his visit to India, President Macron noticed that India's collaborations with Europe would move if the UK withdraws from the EU. He communicated his craving to make France "India's best accomplice in Europe," supplanting the UK as New Delhi's "passage to Europe." [12] India and France further are willing to invest in other forms of defense strategies that will strengthen the diplomatic relationship of both the nation.

D. 2018 MOU:

French President Emmanuel Macron paid his first official visit to India in March 2018. During the visit, India and France held wide-ranging talks on issues of regional, bilateral and global importance and explored avenues for expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The two countries explored wide discussion for strengthening defense, military and strategic ties and thus signed 14 agreements/MoUs for widening cooperation in the areas of nuclear energy, renewable energy, environment, smart city, and sustainable development, prevention of drugs, railways etc. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Macron co-chaired the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which was held on 11 March in New Delhi. This conference was attended by 23 Heads of States and governments. In addition to this, President Macron also visited Prime Minister Modi's parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, for participating in various events.

E. Other Agreements:

Protection collaboration with France is likewise observed as very significant in changing key elements in the Indo-Pacific. French help in multilateral discussions, which saw India's promotion, for example, MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime), the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group was significant. [15] France has likewise been supporting India's candidature for perpetual enrollment of UNSC and participation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

V. DEEPENING DEFENCE CORPORATION:

Defence cooperation is the most essential aspect in the India-France strategic partnership. India has mentioned France multiple times as 'one of (its) most trusted defence partners.' [2] There are usual and coherent visits regularly between Service Chiefs of both India and France concerned over issues of defence and

development. They practice regular naval and defence exercises such as Shakti - Army, Varuna - Navy and Garuda -Air Force. Along with these service-level staff talks, both the superpowers share a High Committee on Defence Cooperation, which is scheduled annually at the level of Defence Secretary and the French Director General. Various training programmes, staff courses etc regularly take place between the two countries.[3] Ahead of President Macron's prestigious visit to India, French Defence Minister Florence Parly scheduled a meet in New Delhi for holding talks on boosting security and defence ties. She discussed with her Indian counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman a number of issues such as regional security, maritime cooperation, situation, co-development of military platforms, transfer of critical technology for various defence projects and security projects.[4] During this strategic visit of President Macron, India and France have taken crucial initiatives to bolster their security ties.

India and France came together as one of the strongest defence and security alliance of the 21st century by signing auspicious Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. The Joint Strategic Vision recognizes the importance of India and France in the as allies in the 21st century and necessity of power in the Indian Ocean. Both countries share similar concerns over the enormous challenges such as trafficking, respect for international law by all States, maritime traffic - terrorism and piracy, fight against organized crime, combating climate change and its consequences on security, smuggling and illegal fishing, natural disasters, etc. The two countries also hold paramount share on logistics support, which would strengthen cooperation between their defence and armed forces, including the two navies. The Joint Strategic Vision also emphasizes that France and India commit to utilizing every situation of their naval ships calling at the latter's ports for holding passage exercises (PASSEX). New Delhi and Paris would be open to strengthening strategic partner countries in the region to furthermore practice in their exercises.[5] Prime Minister Modi celebrated this reciprocal logistics support agreement as a 'golden step'[6] in the history of India-France strategic and defense cooperation.

To strengthen the northern Indian borders from countries such as Pakistan and China, India and France signed the most prestigious and financial government-to-government deal in the 21st century to supply 36 Rafale fighters in 2016. Prime Minister Modi and President Macron expressed their gratitude and satisfaction at the progress of their defence and strategic ties in acquisition of Rafale fighters. The first batch of 5 Rafale aircrafts have arrived in India on 29th July 2020. Both the leaders also took guard in the commissioning of INS Kalvari, the first Scorpene submarine made in India by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. In strong collaboration with French shipbuilder Naval Group under the Indian Navy 'Project 75' programme. To further strengthen its defence cooperation, strategic relationship as well as boost indigenous defence manufacturing base, India seeks greater French investment in its defence sector. Historically, India and France have successfully implemented the strongest of joint defence and strategic projects. The Indian missile manufacturer, Bharat Dynamics Limited(BDL), has manufactured more than 10,000 anti-tank Milan missiles with strong collaboration of France; Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL) is producing the light helicopters, Cheetah and Chetak, with cooperation from France, Furthermore, under the P-75 contract, six Scorpène submarines are under construction. Keeping future strategies in mind, French Safran and India's DRDO are discussing collaboration on fighter engines.[7]

Strong political synergies and past successful cooperation encourage India and France to further explore further expansion of their cooperation in defence manufacturing, strategic ties and joint research & development. The Joint Statement also states that Prime Minister Modi and President Macron celebrate the success of the Joint Strategic Vision and look forward "...to expand and deepen the ongoing defence manufacturing partnerships". They acknowledged that 'Make-in-India' provides ample and essential opportunity for Indian and French defence enterprises for co-development and co-production of defence equipment in India, including through transfer of know-how and technologies and sharing services.

VI. RAFAEL VERDICT: WHAT IT MEANS FOR INDIA

The Supreme Court gave a spotless chit to the Narendra Modi government in the Rafael contender planes bargain case, saying audit petitions against the arrangement needed legitimacy. The court struck down requests that had looked for reconsideration of the December 14, 2018 decision which said there was no event to question the dynamic cycle in the acquirement of 36 Rafael warrior planes.[13]

A. What is the Rafael deal?

India in September 2016 inked an immediate arrangement with the French government to buy 36 new Rafael contender planes in a 7.87 billion euro.[11] Arrangement incorporates more than 3 billion euros of work for the Indian business throughout the following 7-8 years. India to get 28 single seater planes and 8 twin seaters for preparing.

B. How will Rafael help the air force?

The Indian Rafael's convey the RB arrangement of tail numbers, named after current Air Force Chief RKS Bhadauria.[10] The Rafael weapons bundle outguns all different weapons frameworks in the district and will enable India to draw in Pakistani planes from a separation without being followed. Likewise, the air to ground SCALP rocket will have the option to bring down essentially any objective inside Pakistani soil with dead exactness.[17] Exactness long-run ground assault rocket that can take out focuses with extraordinary precision. Has a scope of a lot more than 300 km which implies that for the Balakote activity, Indian planes would not have expected to traverse the Line of Control and could have directed the strike from well inside own airspace.[8]

C. How does Rafale stack up against Pakistan?

For very nearly twenty years, the flying corps has been outgunned with regards to long range weapons and sensors by the Pakistani aviation based armed forces. Authorities concede that for every Pakistani F 16 noticeable all around, two Su 30MKI planes must be mixed due to the American source planes unrivaled radar and rockets.[18] The Rafael will switch this and give IAF the definitive edge with better sensors and weapons. Joined with the up and coming conveyances of the S 400 air protection framework one year from now, it will enormously improve Indian air predominance in the locale. This is the new strategy.

D. Arrival of first Batch:

The primary cluster of 'game-changing' Rafael contender planes have arrived at Ambala, and will before long be accepted into the Indian Air Force, authorities have said. The five Rafael flies left the Merignac airbase in French port city of Bordeaux on Monday, and showed up in India in the wake of covering a separation of about 7,000 km.[19][20]

E. Warning to China:

The airplane are required to essentially help the IAF's battle capacities when India is secured a strained fringe column with China in eastern Ladakh. The IAF has just sent all its bleeding edge warrior planes in key airbases along the Line of Actual Control, the de-facto outskirt among India and China.[20]

VII. CONCLUSION:

The Indo-French bilateral relations have been the longest and one of the most successful relationship in the world. What adds to its significance is the fact that it was based on the historic defence partnership and cooperation between the two countries which stretch back to the Carnatic Wars. From then the relationship has only burgeoned and has rarely seen any setbacks.

The two countries have partaken in many joint-military activities, for example, the Bastille Day march in 2009 for which the Prime Minister of India was the Guest of Honor – the first run through ever that Indian soldiers partook in another nation's public day march. Based on the of the organized talks and the Defense Cooperation Agreement among India and France, a few gatherings on the subject of mechanical joint effort and development, and administration trades are held as often as possible. This cordial connection among India and France has given a lift to the Make-In-India crusade due to enormous number of French organizations showing their enthusiasm for opening up assembling and specialty units in India.

This has helped both the French and Indian economy. This shows military relations have an inescapable impact and isn't restricted to itself. The ongoing advancements, for example, the effective conveyance of the Rafael Jets by the French Defense and Security firm Dassault has raised the desires for both the countries, with both anticipating significantly more prominent participation for common advantage. Thus, the Indo-French relation has proven to be one of the most important relationship that India has with other nations. Furthermore, many other nations model their own relations on the Indo-French bilateral relations especially military relations, which essentially highlights the significance and importance of this relationship.

VIII. ABBREVIATIONS:

- UNSC: United Nations Security Council
- MMRCA : Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft
- IAF: Indian Air Force
- PASSEX: Passing Exercise
- BDL: Bharat Dynamics Limited
- HAL : Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- DRDO: Defence Research and Development Organisation
- ISA: International Solar Alliance
- EU: European Union

- MTCR: Missile Technology Control Regime

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Author's Profile:



Yash Raj was born in Tatanagar on 16th November 1997. He completed his Senior High School from DAV Public School, Tatanagar. Yash is currently in his seventh semester with a GPA of 9.22 pursuing his B. Tech in Computer Science and Engineering from Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India. Yash has been the winner of the prominent VIT Hack and has been awarded for the same by the chancellor and board of directors. His areas of interest include MEAN Stack Development, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Forensics and Database Management. Yash has advanced knowledge of the python programming language and has been certified by Hackerrank. Yash has interned with leading companies like JP Morgan & Co. and Tata Steel Ltd. He is currently working on COVID-19 web portal analysis and forensic cybersecurity.



Pranav Agarwal was born in Bhubaneswar, Odisha but most of his life he has lived in Bangalore. He has completed his schooling in Bangalore. He is currently a final year college student perusing B.Tech in computer science. He is always enthusiastic in learning what's happening around the world with heavy interest in technology. He always strives to be perfect and also tries to understand everything to the core. Being so technically oriented he has taken part in many hackathons and won the Google Developer club organised hackathon in 2018 and winning the VITHACK organized by Vellore institute of technology itself in 2020. Never affording to take rest, he is still eager to chase more accomplishments.



Gaurav Ravindra Dudhe was born in Achalpur, Maharashtra on 29th June 1999. Growing up with the increasing technological advancements, as well as being a technology enthusiast he aspires to become a Software Engineer. He completed his Secondary education from Ryan International School, Nerul and Higher Secondary education from Jaipuria School, Sanpada. He is currently pursuing his B. Tech. in Computer Science from Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India. His major fields of interest are software development and hybrid application development.

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