

## France And India: New Shift In An Old Relationship

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*The developing trajectory of Indo-French ties emanates from considerable alignments at a policy level.*

As the first batch of the Rafale fighter jets perched down on the tarmac at the Ambala Air Force base, it evoked a sense of national euphoria not seen in recent memory as far as any kind of military acquisition by India is concerned. The euphoria, mostly generated by a persistent and heightened media coverage was not just because of what the Rafale brings to the table in terms of augmenting India's air power, which it does, but essentially because the induction happened in the backdrop of an increasingly volatile geo-strategic environment. To specify, the clashes at Galwan valley in June 2020 where 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives, marked a turning point in the relationship between India and China. This was echoed in the words of the late General Bipin Rawat, India's first Chief of Defence Staff, who had stated the fact publicly that it was China and not Pakistan that is India's biggest enemy today. Such a scenario that entails reworking of strategic thinking as well as action-to deal with new challenges, has brought the indispensability of time tested and old partners back to the fore. And one such partner is the Mediterranean country of France.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND MILITARY TIES**

The road to strategic ties was taken during the days of the Cold War. Notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet Union was India's prime security and diplomatic partner, France added a different dynamic by striving to balance India's excessive dependence on Soviet Union. Apart from the attractiveness of India as a market for export, France also appreciated and identified with the strategic disposition of India in the larger South Asian region. For instance, France had leaned towards India's side during the India-Pakistan War of 1971. This happened despite the fact that the United States was actively in Pakistan's support during the war. Not limited to the dynamics of that particular conflict, France visibly traded on a relatively independent course on several matters like nuclear technology, space and defence cooperation with India.

A definitive turning point in the ties was witnessed in the late 1990s. With the USSR becoming history, French President Jacques Chirac was determined on behalf of France to fill the vacuum and stated a "strategic partnership" between the two countries. France strongly advocated on the need to remedy India's exclusion from the global nuclear order. This resonated very strongly with the Indian administration. The integrity of such a stand came to the fore when post the "Pokhran-II" nuclear tests, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government at the Centre had to face international criticisms, condemnation and sanctions. But France not only refrained from criticizing the action but instead increased its strategic engagement with India. At a time when India had become a nuclear pariah, such a standby France resounded solidly across and among the establishment in India and in an emotional plane, lingers on till this day.

## 21ST CENTURY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The signing of the strategic partnership agreement in 1998 catapulted Indo-France relations to new heights and a new plane. It set the ball rolling for the culmination and progression of this relationship in the 21st century with its set of challenges and realities. The strategic partnership facilitated high-level meetings between the National Security Advisor to the Indian Prime Minister and the diplomatic advisor to France's President. Talking about the renewed impetus France is putting onto Asia, as is being stated in the French Defence White Paper of 2008-09, Gireesh (2020) comments that France's appreciation of the future scenario of Asia is an extremely important step, and it is quite apparent in its diplomatic ventures in the region, especially in its outreach to India.

### POLICY CONVERGENCE, DEFENCE DEALS, INDO-PACIFIC

The developing trajectory of Indo-French ties emanates from considerable alignments at a policy level and is not merely the result of some officialese surrounding deliberations around Europe's "strategic autonomy" or India's commitment to diversify its supplies of military equipment. To appraise with an instance, the visit to India by French President Emmanuel Macron in 2018 concurrently also saw the announcement of the "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region".

Such a long-standing alignment of outlook has had a positive bearing, leading to the successful execution of significant defence deals, like the Inter-Governmental agreement for the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets in 2016, between the two countries. The strengthening of the strategic relationship has seen a positive spillover effect onto other areas as well. This gets apparent by the fact where fresh after his re-election in April 2022, President Macron meets the first head of state in Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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## Weapons In Space~I

**By Govind Bhattacharjee**

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*As an aspiring space power with demonstrated capability, India cannot afford to remain behind, especially in view of the extraordinary increase in Chinese space assets and its unconcealed ambition to rule space.*

In November 2021, Russia launched a Direct Ascent Anti-Satellite Missile (DR-ASAT) to destroy its own defunct satellite, Kosmos 1408, littering space with 1,500 pieces of microscopic debris which posed an immediate danger to both the Chinese space station "Tiangong" and the International Space Station (ISS). Russia was not the first nation to conduct an ASAT; China in 2007, the USA in 2008, and even India in 2019 had done the same. But the increasing frequency of such tests by space-faring nations indicates the increasing militarisation and weaponisation of space.

Space has long been used for communication, tracking, imagery, positioning, navigation, and satellite surveillance; many of these have potential for military uses and some countries have developed comprehensive space-based architecture to facilitate military activities on the ground. While militarization of space is pretty old – even during World War II, Germans had used their V2 rockets for military purposes – weaponisation is a recent phenomenon; it involves putting weapons with significant destructive potential in space or on celestial bodies.

Space weapons can target enemy assets like satellites or weapons systems in space either from the earth or from systems placed in orbit above the earth. Space weapons generally fall into two categories: Directed-Energy Weapons (DEW) and Kinetic-Energy Weapons (KEW). A DEW seeks to destroy its target with focused energy of lasers, microwaves, particle beams, etc., while a KEW does so by firing projectiles from space towards the earth; these acquire destructive powers through kinetic energy simply by falling at high velocities. These projectiles can be as basic as metal rods, or as advanced as a multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle (MIRV) ~ a missile payload that contains multiple warheads capable of striking multiple targets simultaneously.

According to a June 2021 research study by Claire Mills and others titled “Militaryisation of Space” and published by the House of Commons Library, UK, there are 3,372 satellites in space, of which 2,612 (77 per cent) are in low earth orbit (LEO, up to 2000 kms above the earth). 562 more are in geosynchronous earth orbit (GEO, at 35786 kms distance), also known as geostationary orbit as a satellite here appears stationary to an observer on the earth due to the same orbital period. Only 139 are in medium earth orbit (MEO, between the LEO and the GEO); 516 of all these satellites are estimated to have a military or dual-use purposes, and over half of these ~ 265 ~ are in LEO, where their low altitude coupled with short orbital periods make them ideal for earth observation and surveillance.

The USA leads the constellation of satellites with 1,878 satellites, followed by China (405), Russia (174), the UK (166), Japan (82) and India (60). As of February 2022, India had only 53 operational satellites in space. Space also has a substantial litter, corpses of nearly 3,000 satellites purposelessly roam the loneliness of space, besides 34,000 pieces of junk exceeding 10 cm in size. All these orbiting bodies pose a significant risk to future satellites. Some countries like Japan are trying to cleanse space of such debris by using lasers to push them back into the terrestrial atmosphere where they will automatically burn up.

International law classifies outer space as a ‘Global Common,’ meaning outside any country’s national jurisdiction and hence to be governed only by international legislation. The high oceans, Antarctica, and even cyberspace are examples of ‘Global Common’, in respect of some of which there are international treaties. International law, including the Charter of the United Nations, applies to outer space and celestial bodies, which are free for exploration and use by all nations in conformity with international law. Activities in space are regulated by the United Nations Outer Space Treaty (OST) of 1967 which has been ratified by 111 nations.

As per Article II of the treaty, “Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.” Article IV of OST prohibits the “establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies” while binding nations not to “place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, or install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner”. The responsibility for this lies with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which lacks the necessary legal authority or even the institutional capacity to enforce it effectively. In the absence of any effective enforcement mechanism, it is left to the discretion of individual countries who would be inclined to put their own national interests over the interests of the global common.

Another agreement in 1979, the Moon Agreement, similarly forbids the use of the moon for military purposes or its weaponisation, but this treaty has been ratified by only 18 countries, which includes no spacefaring nation. The big three space powers – USA, Russia and China – have not even signed it. India and France had signed the treaty in 1980 but haven’t ratified it so far. As the space race heats up, it becomes even more necessary to bring nations together into negotiation leading to agreements about the peaceful use of space. So far there is not even an agreement on where the earth ends and space begins,

e.g., NASA defines space to begin at 80 kms above the sea level on earth, while some other organisations define it at 100 kms. If countries cannot even agree on the distance at which space begins, implications may indeed be serious.

As Tim Marshal says in his book, “The Power of Geography”, (Elliott & Thompson, 2021), if nation ‘A’ believes that space begins at 80 kms and nation ‘B’ believes it begins at 100 kms, then if ‘A’ flies its satellite over ‘B’ at 90 kms, the latter can shoot it down. The OST did not even define ‘peaceful purpose’; Russia wants it to mean that all military-related activities should be illegal, while the USA asserts that military purposes are lawful as long as they remain ‘non-aggressive’, which as per the UN Charter means activities that prohibit ‘the threat or use of force’, a definition that leads to multiple contradictions. This ambiguity was sought to have been removed by the Moon Treaty which remains inoperative in the absence of ratification by a majority of the world’s nations.

**[Read complete article on website thestatesman.com](http://thestatesman.com)**

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## **Tour Of Duty**

**By Lt Gen (Dr) N B Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC**

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The tour of duty (TOD) proposal for the military is one of the several transformative proposals that are being put forward by the Govt to rein in the bloating revenue budget particularly of the Army. Being manpower intensive it is obvious that the proposal would impact the Army most and should be evaluated keeping the Army’s operational requirements in mind. Taking into account the prevailing security landscape in the sub- continent it is obvious that the military’s goal should be to maintain near and long-term readiness i.e. the ability to fight terrorism and endeavor to possess integrated military capabilities to discourage aggression or pre-emption. If the sole criteria of reforms is budget based then operational capability could drop drastically as has happened to Germany, where the defence budget faced major cuts whenever it came to tightening of Govt expenditure.

The Army, being manpower intensive, certainly requires right sizing with a strong focus on personnel and force efficiency. One will have to do more with less, specially boots on ground (BOG). The TOD could usher this change if a human capital-intensive approach is adopted. The Army has traditionally been employing officers in jobs that need narrow competencies primarily because of the zero-error syndrome. There are a number of areas where direct entry junior / non commissioned officers can replace officers doing routine repetitive jobs equivalent to desk/section level in IT, logistics, policing, personnel management, finance, acquisitions, intelligence, information collection and collation. Traditionally, such jobs are handled by class II/ non gazetted officers in other ministries.

TOD needs to be introduced with the aim of upscaling skills and competencies of the human capital essentially, personnel below officer ranks (PBOR) in technical Corps, combat support arms and fighting arms in that order. A ratio of 5:3:2 can be adopted initially. Over the years hi tech has entered the Army at a staccato pace. Consequently, organizational and personnel changes have been half baked, following old mindsets. A case in point is the manner in which the immense advantages of IT, networking and data mining are yet to be effectively utilized in enhancing operational effectiveness. The shelving of the battlefield management system (BMS), EMERALD and such other automation projects reinforces this argument.

Networking could have reduced the number of weapon platforms by enhancing battlefield agility, led to better situational awareness, improved deployment, led to demand reduction and brought in distribution-based logistics. It could have enabled better force design of field formations using concepts like modularity and reduction of organic assets.

Starting with engineering Corps, recruitment of Diploma and ITI candidates can bring in enduring changes. The training time of the TOD personnel can be drastically cut. After about 8 weeks of military training, they can be provided with 8 to 10 months of specialized technical and on the job training relevant to the Corps and readied for a tenure of 4 years before release. It is learnt that a TOD of 3/4 years and five years service is being considered. If implemented with a sense of purpose and ownership, I foresee a big advantage-- in the overall enhancement of technical ethos and better exploitation of the power of technology for operational effectiveness in fields like surveillance, intelligence analysis, cyber, logistics and engineering sustainment. Those retained will add to the Army`s combat effectiveness. Being technically qualified, released personnel would not face major hurdles in finding a second career in the industry.

Some facilitation by the Govt for their employment in DPSUs, ordnance factories airport /seaport/ highways authority, police and PMFs would be helpful. One strategic fallout of this migration will be a remarkable upscaling of skills and competencies for Make in India programme of the Govt. The enviable achievements of Israel in the field of military and information technology has been due to the regular migration of technicians from Israeli Defence Forces into the civilian workforce. India too could replicate this human capital-intensive growth strategy that focused on knowledge and innovation.

For combat arms like the infantry and cavalry, it may be of greater practical consequence to keep a certain number of vacancies say 10% to be tenanted by personnel from paramilitary on a rotational basis for longer tenures. The nature of competencies needed being largely similar, it could straight away lead to savings in pay and pensions. There will be virtually no expenditure on training, may be onboarding for a few weeks in the units. Coming largely from the same rural stock, these personnel will seamlessly integrate and be keen to acquire higher end weapon, devices and platform handling skills. This could also lead to enhanced force efficiency in their parent organizations like the BSF, CRPF, ITBP, SSB, etc. In the long run it could relieve Infantry and Rashtriya Rifles from counter insurgency duties. The critical issue that needs addressal will be the reluctance of the home ministry to come to the rescue of defence ministry, given the siloed working that is prevalent in the Govt. This is where a systems view has to prevail at the highest level.

The defence budget has seen the rise of expenditure on pensions at an average rate of 10.7 percent since 2012-13. The share of pensions has shot up to 26 percent of defence budget in 2019-20 touching nearly 1,20,000 crores this year. A balance has to be found some where. Sheer reliance BOG may not be the answer, seeing the expanding security landscape . In any case the current force design of World War II vintage, has not been able to stymie pre-emption or ingress at the borders and it is time to leverage technology to address the element of repeated surprise by the adversary be it irregulars or conventional forces.

BOG have to be supported by an integrated capability that gives staying power on the battlefield. That will be possible when an holistic view gets taken unlike the teeth to tail ratio template which the Army has adopted over the years. Transformation of the Army is not only transformation of arms, but simultaneously that of supporting arms and services. A mere introduction of 10% TOD personnel in an Infantry battalion could bring in savings of about 40,000 personnel overall. Similarly, bringing in 10-15% technically qualified TOD personnel in the three engineering Corps can save pensions of around 40,000 personnel. Adopting such a methodology, an overall reduction of 1,00,000 plus regular personnel is implementable initially and maybe more later.

A strategy of all round demand reduction of BOG has to be adopted to make TOD a success. IT, networking and robotics can lead to large savings of personnel managing communications, supplies, clothing, spares and ammunition at each level. Superior technical ethos of operators and gunners (ability to rectify weapon glitches instead of raising hands) can lead to reduction of technicians. At least an attempt needs to be made. The rapid pace at which hollowness is setting in, can only be offset by ploughing in larger monetary resources for modernization.

TOD needs to be implemented in the military with the right strategy – human capital-intensive approach that lays stress on skills and competencies than sheer numbers and some facilitative regulations by the Govt like lateral moves from and to paramilitary forces and other department of Govt of India and State Govts. The military should welcome this reform. Rightly crafted and implemented it has the potential to upscale operational efficiencies not only in the military but also in other institutions of the Govt.

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## India, China Relations Threaten To Freeze Over

**By Srikanth Kondapalli**

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The invasion of Ukraine has upended world geopolitics, disrupting the already fragile relationship between India and China.

As Ukrainians resist the Russian invasion, a renewed cold war is heating up between Russia and the NATO partners. Western sanctions are intensifying on Russia and the situation threatens to engulf other regions, challenging other tense regional dynamics – including the fragile relationship between India and China.

India and China's relations have been plagued by a territorial dispute that flared into a border skirmish on June 15, 2020, resulting in 20 Indian soldiers being killed and an estimated 43 Chinese soldiers injured. This not only restricted the development of bilateral relations, but also sowed seeds of a new cold war between India and China.

The Cold War between the US and Russia featured two countries vying for global and regional leadership, engaged in an ideological conflict of democracy versus socialism, and campaigns of military containment and proxy wars. The two countries never broke into person-to-person warfare, nor were there economic interactions, and the massive nuclear weapons threat lingering in the background remained just that.

Just as a reminiscent dynamic emerges between Russia and NATO, so too is a cold war of sorts between India and China, a relationship that has been complicated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

While India and China have exhibited neutrality during United Nations debates over the invasion, and both countries have good relations with Russia, there are qualitative differences in the type of relationship they have.

India's relations with Russia, specifically its importation of arms, serves mainly to address the challenge from China. Meanwhile, China's support of Russia shows a united front against NATO and the United States' hegemony and power politics.

On the other hand, India had intensified the 2+2 dialogue mechanism – an approach that pairs India's foreign and defence ministers with their overseas counterparts – not only with the US, but with other Quad partners. Notably, some Chinese commentators have castigated Quad as an "Asian NATO" in the making.

Some of the features of the Cold War US-Soviet hostility are now seen in the Ukrainian conflict and are also reflected in the differences between India and China.

For instance, the 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2017 wished for China to “occupy the centre stage” in global and regional orders, suggesting a potential tussle among major powers was on the cards, including in India-China relations.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, addressing the May 2014 Conference on Interaction on Confidence Building Measures at Shanghai, said Asian countries should look after their own security (i.e. resisting any help from the US), a posture that was seen as carving out a leadership position in Asia for China.

Both of these are not acceptable to India (or for that matter to Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey or Kazakhstan). A leadership tussle in Asia could trigger a new cold war-type conflict in Asia in the near future.

India has instead advocated for multipolarity in Asia in the face of China’s coercive diplomacy over Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Philippines, India and others. It continues to resist China calling the shots in Asia.

Much like the Cold War, containment is all the rage again. Since 2013, through its Belt and Road Initiative, China began constructing infrastructure projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and is gradually bringing Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar into its vortex.

China’s arms transfers, aid, interference in the internal affairs of these Southern Asian countries has been stepped up to counter India. While China’s efforts may be to acquire allies and friends in different parts of the world as a part of its global hegemonic drive, it could lead to potential full-fledged containment of India.

Additionally, the nuclear threat is back. China’s violation of many written agreements, their mobilisation of forces and military casualties have led to both sides mobilising an estimated 200,000 troops across the Line of Actual Control. In addition to the ground forces, air forces have also been on high alert for the past two years.

However, unlike in the Cold War between the US and the then Soviet Union, India and China currently have not reported any strategic forces mobilisation. This could be partly due to the fact that both abide by ‘no first use’ nuclear policy. While both tested different types of missile systems, no public display of nuclear deterrence is visible so far unlike between the US and the then Soviet Union.

Hence the world has so far avoided another ‘Bay of Pigs’ incident in India-China (although, since 2009, India has been prepared for a ‘two-front war’ under nuclear conditions”).

But unlike the Cold War, which saw the US and Russia have no dialogue outside of ‘mutually assured destruction’ posturing and a few secret negotiations, leaders in India and China are amenable to sharing global power in a ‘multipolarity’ phenomenon.

India and China interact in multilateral institutions like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), or at Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit meetings. However, the observable ‘warmth’ generated at Wuhan and Chennai “informal summits” between the Indian and Chinese leaders in 2018 and 2019 has disappeared of late.

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## **Nation is Indebted to:**

**Alluri Sitarama Raju**

**(4 July 1897 – 7 May 1924)**



Alluri Sitarama Raju was born into a Telugu speaking family, in the current state of Andhra Pradesh, India.

Venkata Rama Raju, father of Alluri Sitartam Raju, was a free-spirited man, with immense self-respect, and great love for freedom. He once chided a young Rama Raju for practicing the, then prevalent custom of Indian people saluting the Europeans acknowledging their superiority. His father died when his son, Alluri was just eight.

He completed his primary education and joined High school in Kakinada. At age 15, he moved to his mother's hometown of Visakhapatnam and enrolled at Mrs. A.V.N. College for the fourth form exam. While there, he often visited far flung areas in the Visakhapatnam district and became familiar with the struggles of the tribal people there.

Indicative of his future as a leader, Alluri in his high school days was often found riding his uncle's horses to distant hilly places and familiarising himself with the various problems being faced by different tribes, who were then living under British colonial rule. He was particularly moved on seeing the hardships of the Koyas, a hill tribal people

Alluri was annoyed when he saw, the efforts of Christian missionaries to gain converts by any means amongst the hill tribes, as he saw it as a tool to perpetuate imperialism.

Noting the grievances of the tribals, and finding solutions to their problems, he started to organise and educate them about their rights, and prepared them for a fight against the oppression and tyranny of the forest and revenue officials, missionaries and police

He was nicknamed "Manyam Veerudu" (transl. Hero of the Jungle) by local villagers for his heroic deeds.

Alluri adopted aspects from the Non-cooperation movement, such as promoting temperance, and the boycott of colonial courts in favour of local justice, administered by panchayat courts, to attract people's support. However, this approach did not last long.

When his Non-Cooperation movement did not give desired results, he built strong and powerful troops of fighters. Sporting traditional weaponry like bow-and-arrow, spears and employing tactics like using whistles and beating drums to exchange messages amongst themselves, the revolutionaries managed to achieve spectacular successes initially in their struggle against the British.



The British struggled in their pursuit of him, partly because of the unfamiliar terrain, and also because of the local people in the sparsely populated areas who were unwilling to help them, and were often outrightly keen to assist he, including with providing shelter and intelligence.

To neutralise and capture Alluri Sitarama Raju, the then district collectors, of East Godavari, and Visakhapatnam, having jurisdiction powers over the areas of rebellion employed all means possible, both fair and foul, from burning villages to destroying crops, killing cattle and violating women, all to no avail.

After putting up a massive effort for nearly two years, the British finally managed to capture Alluri in the forests of Chintapalle, he was then tied to a tree and executed by shooting on 7 May 1924 in the village of Koyyuru. A tomb of him currently lies in the village of Krishnadevipeta, near Visakhapatnam.

The heroic efforts of young Alluri in fighting an all-out war without any state powers, against one of the most powerful empires have been recognised by all. The British Government grudgingly acknowledged him as a powerful tactician of the Guerrilla warfare which lasted for nearly two years, the fact that they had to spend over ₹40 lakhs in those days to defeat him speaks for itself.

The Indian Government has released a postal stamp in his honour at the village of Mogallu, considered by many to be his birth place. The Government of Andhra Pradesh, besides building memorials at places associated with his life, granted a political pension to his surviving brother.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has carved out a new district from the erstwhile Visakhapatnam district and has named it as District “Alluri Sitharama Raju”

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