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A Trusted Friend India and France

Dr. PRANATI

LNMU , DARBHANGA,

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Abstract:-

France is one of the oldest, most trusted of India's partners ,possibly second only to Russia But today with Russia having established an uncomfortably close relationship with china, India's reliance on France has become that much greater . Even though India has traditionally remained uneasy with terms like alliance , Modi used the term to describe the relations with France at his speech at UNESCO in paris , Where he said . "Today in 21st century , we talk of Infra. He has describe as IN+FRA, which means the alliance between India and France".

Key Words:- Strategic Partnership , Maritime , Outer Space, Bilateral relation, Indian Ocean

1. Introduction

Indo-French cooperation in this area is ambitious and several collaborative projects are currently being considered. Bilateral military contacts are being strengthened through joint exercises. France and its defence industry also actively contribute to the "Make in India" programme in the defence sector. The first conventional submarine, Scorpene, which started being built in India in 2008 with transfer of technology and support from DCNS, began sea trials in 2015, and the second in January 2017. An agreement on India's acquisition of 36 Rafale fighter jets was concluded in September 2016. This has paved the way for unprecedented technological and industrial cooperation for the next four decades to come.

2. Strategic Partnership

Since the end of the Cold War, India has signed "Strategic Partnership" agreements with more than 35 countries. Among the earliest was the one with France, signed in January 1998, during President Jacques Chirac's visit to India. The strength of this partnership was in evidence at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) when China sought to raise the subject of Kashmir in an informal, closed door session, originally convened to discuss the situation in Mali. France, supported by Russia and the United States (US) and other non-permanent members, led the move to block the Chinese initiative.

India and France share a common trait of civilization exceptionalism, and after the Cold War ended, both countries were quick to espouse the virtues of multipolarity. French discomfort with a unipolar system was clear when French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine described the US as a hyperpuissance. Visualizing the changing geopolitics with focus shifting from Euro-Atlantic to Asia-Pacific, France decided on India as its preferred partner in the Indian Ocean. Even before India's nuclear tests in 1998, France declared that the nation's exclusion from the global nuclear order was an anomaly, and that needed rectification. After the nuclear tests, France displayed an instinctual understanding of India's security compulsions. The strategic dialogue that began in 1998 has grown over the years to cover nuclear, space,

defence, cyber security, intelligence-sharing and counter-terrorism cooperation. Bilateral military exercises between the three services, beginning with the navies in 2001, followed by the air forces in 2004, and the armies in 2011, have now become a regular feature.

The **3 principal pillars** of this strategic partnership are:

- a. Defence cooperation
- b. Space cooperation
- c. Civil nuclear cooperation

1. The commonality in the relationship is that both countries support a multi-polar world led by democracies and not one that is polarised into two factions.

2. France has been a continued supporter of India's claims to a permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

3. France has also been a great supporter of India for membership to all the four multilateral export control regimes, namely, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and the Australia Group (AG).

4. France's support was instrumental in India's accession to the WA, MTCR and the AG

5. Both nations are strongly in the war against global terror.

3. **Bilateral relations with France:**

France and India view each other as important partners in space technology and applications. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its French counterpart Centre National de Etudes Spatiales (CNES) have a rich history of cooperation and collaboration spanning more than five decades. The cooperation started with the setting up of sounding rocket launching facilities at Thumba (India) in the early 1960s and progressed through the development of liquid engines in the 1970s. ISRO and CNES worked as equal partners in the realization of two joint satellites. The MeghaTropiques satellite for monitoring tropical atmosphere was launched in late 2011 and the Satellite for ARGOS and ALTIKA (**SARAL**) was launched in 2013. Both these satellites were launched using India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). These satellites continue to provide useful data for atmosphere monitoring, environment monitoring and ocean surface topography. Cooperation in space was one of the highlights of the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to France in April 2015 with the following events:

- **Joint ISRO-CNES Exhibition:** A joint ISRO-CNES exhibition was held at CNES Headquarters (Paris) to mark the completion of 50 Years of Cooperation in Space.
- **Signing of MoUs:** Two MoUs and a program for reinforced cooperation on Space was signed and exchanged between the two sides as part of the visit.
- **Release of Stamps:** Two stamps carrying images of jointly developed satellites - Megha Tropiques and SARAL, were released during the visit.
- **Visit to CNES, Toulouse:** Honorable Prime Minister of India visited CNES facilities at Toulouse and was updated on the bilateral cooperation activities.

Under a commercial Launch Service Agreement between Antrix Corporation Limited and ASTRIUM SAS, a company under EADS, France, an advanced Remote Sensing satellite - SPOT-7 built by ASTRIUM SAS was successfully launched on-board ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle from India on 30th June 2014. Ariespace, France has been the major provider of launch services to Indian Geo-Stationary satellites. Subsequent to the launch of APPLE satellite on a co-operative mode in June 1981, 19 Geo-Stationary satellites of India have been launched by Ariespace on a commercial basis including the advanced communications satellite GSAT-15 launched on November 10 2015. France has proven to be a reliable supplier for components, spares and equipment for the Indian Space Programme.

4. France and India in the Indian Ocean

With regard to maritime security (with a focus on the Indian Ocean), India and France have reiterated the importance of respecting international law by all states, in maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight, piracy, weapons and human trafficking, illegal fishing and smuggling. There can be little doubt who they are referring to.

The decision to launch joint patrols in the Indian Ocean and the articulation of a clear strategy by the French for the same comes out of the recognition of the increasing centrality of the Indo-Pacific to global geopolitics. The French interest in the Indo-Pacific is not new. Mentions of the rising profile of the Indo-Pacific have appeared in the French White Paper on Defence and National Security since the beginning of the 21st century. Furthermore, the desire to “look beyond West Africa to the entire Indian Ocean and East Asia region and to seize opportunities that may emerge in this region” have figured in the French security calculus since 2009. France has thus been looking for opportunities to deepen and consolidate its ties with countries in the Indo-Pacific.

This is largely motivated by France’s stake in the region. The presence of overseas French territories in the form of the islands of La Réunion, Mayotte and French Southern and Antarctic Territories in the Indian Ocean; as well as Clipperton, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and the Wallis and Futuna Islands in the Pacific make stability in the Indo-Pacific Paris’ priority. France has one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones (henceforth, EEZ) in the world which is over 10 million km² in area — in sharp contrast to India’s 2.7 million km² — 90 % of which is located in these two oceans.

The shifting competition in the Indo-Pacific from ‘bipolar’ to ‘tripolar’ has also inspired France’s policy. While the US and India remain united in their desire to curtail Chinese influence and expansionism, the methods with which they seek to prevent that are beginning to diverge. The shifting competition in the Indo-Pacific from ‘bipolar’ to ‘tripolar’ has also inspired France’s policy. While the US and India remain united in their desire to curtail Chinese influence and expansionism, the methods with which they seek to prevent that are beginning to diverge. The increasingly transactional appearance of the Indo-US dynamic necessitates a step backwards for the Indian government, and the increasingly militarised posture of American president Donald Trump runs counter to India’s more economically-driven approach toward ensuring freedom of the seas.

5. Maritime Security

Maritime security cooperation: France and India’s respective leaders desired in March 2018 to give a fresh impetus to this longstanding area of our cooperation, which was initiated with the launch of the first bilateral naval exercise, Varuna, in 1983. Now bolstered by a joint strategic vision in the Indian Ocean, the cooperation between our two countries has become resolutely operational in several areas:

- Exchange of information in the area of maritime surveillance: implementation since 2017 of a “White Shipping” agreement and the conclusion in March 2018 of a general security agreement laying down the framework for the daily exchange of data on the Indian Ocean region for the purposes of security and stability in the region;
- Reciprocal logistics support between the French and Indian armed forces: the reciprocal logistics support agreement, which was concluded in March 2018 and entered into effect in December 2018, has further strengthened the cooperation between our navies by providing them mutual access to our military bases. The anti-aircraft destroyer FNS Cassard inaugurated the implementation of this agreement with its call at the Mumbai naval base from 24th to 29th January 2019;
- Heightened cooperation at multilateral bodies: France and India are determined to deepen their coordination at international organisations through concrete steps: support to France’s candidacy at the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), where India plays a prominent role; France’s chairing of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in 2020, which will be an opportunity to closely associate India with France’s priorities.

France and India celebrated 50 years of their exemplary cooperation in this area in 2014.

6. Outer Space

The agreement on the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, signed on 30 September 2008, extended and clarified the areas of cooperation, particularly emphasizing the study of climate change using space-based facilities for Earth observation, or the development of telecommunications satellites for commercial purposes. This agreement made it possible to develop the Megha-Tropiques satellite, launched on 12th October 2011, and the SARAL satellite, which was put in orbit on 25th February 2013.

The April 2015 MoU signed between the French (CNES) and Indian (ISRO) space agencies enriched cooperation projects. It led to the finalizing of a joint mission of India’s Oceansat-3 satellite hosting France’s Argos system for climate monitoring and tracking, scheduled to be launched in 2019. It has also resulted in the third jointly developed satellite, Trishna, for thermal infrared imaging. France is also considering contributing to India’s space agency, ISRO’s, upcoming inter-planetary missions to Mars and Venus. January 2017 saw new cooperation in satellite launch technology.

The ambitious Joint Vision for Space Cooperation signed in March 2018 paved the way for coordinating our space and maritime collaborations and enabled the commencement of work on a constellation of micro-satellites for maritime surveillance.

Finally, France supports India's ambition to launch a human space flight by 2022. In September 2018, CNES thus concluded an agreement with ISRO for training programmes and bioastronautics.

7. Conclusion

India and France both share the same vision for a new balanced multipolar world, which must be based on the rule of law. They also share the same vision on the main challenges of the times, be they security developments in Asia and the Indo-Pacific, or combating international terrorism. But it is by possessing the capability of ensuring national security and making strategic choices that most efficiently defend their shared principles and visions.

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