

Russia, China, India and Iran: The Magic Quadrant that Is Changing the World

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With the end of the unipolar moment, which saw Washington dominate international relations, the richest and most powerful Eurasian countries are beginning to organize themselves into alliance structures and agreements that aim to facilitate trade, development and cooperation.

At the height of the US unipolar moment, Bill Clinton was leading a country in full economic recovery and the strategists at the Pentagon were drawing up plans to shape the world in their own image and likeness. The undeclared goal was regime change in all countries with unapproved political systems, which would allow for the proliferation of US-made “democracy” to the four corners of the earth. Clearly Eurasian countries like Russia, India, China and Iran were on top of the to-do list, as were countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

The bombing and destruction of Yugoslavia was the final step in the assault on the Russian Federation following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Yeltsin represented the means by which Western high finance decided to suck all Russia’s wealth, privatizing companies and plundering strategic resources.

China, on the other hand, saw a rebirth as a result of American and European manufacturing companies relocating to the country to take advantage of the cheap labor it offered. India, historically close to the USSR, and Iran, historically averse to Washington, were struggling to find a new balance in a world dominated by Washington.

Tehran was clearly in an open conflict with the United States because of the 1979 Islamic revolution that liberated the country from Western submission under the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. India understood the new reality, laying the foundations for a close cooperation with Washington. Previously, the use of jihadism in Afghanistan, through the coordination between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States, had severely undermined relations between India and the United States, remembering that New Delhi was an important ally of Moscow during the Cold War.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the commencement of the unipolar era, India, Russia, China and Iran started down their paths of historical rebirth, though starting from very different positions and following different paths. India understood that Washington had immense economic and military power at its disposal. Despite the early embraces between Clinton and Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, relations between New Delhi and Washington reached unexpected heights during the Bush era. A series of factors helped to weld the bond. There was, firstly, the reality of India’s great economic growth. Secondly,

India offered the opportunity of counterbalancing and containing China, a classic geopolitical scenario.

During this delicate unipolar period, there were two highly significant events for Russia and China that represented the beginning of the end for Washington's plans to dominate the planet. First of all, Putin became president of the Russian Federation on December 31, 1999. Secondly, Beijing was accepted into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Today's Chinese economic power took flight thanks to the Western industrial companies relocating their manufacturing to China so as to see their dividends triplicate and costs more than halve. It was a winning model for the capitalist, and a loser for the Western factory worker, as we would come to see 20 years later. The strategic thinking of the newly elected Putin was geopolitically visionary and had at its base a complete revamp of Russia's military doctrine.

China and Russia both initially sought to follow the Indian path of cooperation and development with Washington. Moscow attempted a frank dialogue with Washington and NATO, but the decision by the US in 2002 to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) marked the beginning of the end of the Western dream of integrating the Russian Federation into NATO. For Beijing, the path was more downhill, thanks to a vicious circle whereby the West relocated to China to increase profits, which were then invested into the US stock market, multiplying the gains several times. It seemed like the Americans were onto something until, 20 years later, the entire middle and working classes found themselves being reduced to penury.

In this period following September 11, 2001, Washington's focus shifted rapidly away from confronting rival powers to the so called "fight" against terrorism. It was an expedient way of occupying tactically important countries in strategically important regions of the planet. In Eurasia, US forces settled in Afghanistan on the pretext of fighting al-Qaeda and the Taliban. In the Middle East, they occupy Iraq for the second time and have made it an operational base from which to destabilize the rest of the region in the decades since.

While India and China mainly pursued peaceful growth as a means of economically empowering the Asian region, Russia and Iran early understood that Washington's attention would eventually fall on them. Moscow was still considered the deadly enemy by the neoconservative Cold War warriors, while the Islamic revolution of 1979 was neither forgotten nor forgiven. In the decade following 9/11, the foundations for the creation of a multipolar order were laid, generating in the process the huge transitional chaos we are currently experiencing.

India and China continued on their path to becoming economic giants, even as there is a latent but constant rivalry, while Iran and Russia continued on their path of military rejuvenation in order to ensure a deterrent sufficient to discourage any attacks by Israel or the US respectively.

The breaking point for this delicate geopolitical balance came in the form of the "Arab Spring" of 2011. While India and China continued their economic growth, and Russia and Iran grew to become regional powers that were difficult to push around, the US continued its unipolar rampage, bombing Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq after having earlier bombed Yugoslavia, as the Pentagon devising light-footprint operations in the Middle East with the help of the Saudis, Israelis, Brits and French, who aided and armed local jihadis to wreak havoc. First Tunisia, then Egypt, and finally Libya. More dead, more bombs, more chaos. The

warning signs were apparent to all regional powers, from China and Russia to India and Iran. Even if the synergies were still not in place, it was clear to everyone what had to be done. US destabilization around the world had to be contained, with particular focus on Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa.

Slowly, and not without problems, these four countries began a military, economic, political and diplomatic cooperation that, almost a decade later, allowed for the ending of the US unipolar moment and the creation of a multipolar reality with different centers of power.

The first confirmation of this new phase in international relations, favoured by historical ties, was the increasingly multifaceted cooperation between India and Russia. Another factor was China and Russia being drawn to the Middle East and North Africa as a result of the Obama administration's actions in the Middle East with its Arab Springs, bombing of Libya and destabilization of Syria. They feared that prolonged chaos in the region would eventually have a negative effect on their own economies and social stability.

The final straw was the coup d'état in Ukraine, as well as the escalation of provocations in the South China Sea following the launch by the US of its so-called "Pivot to Asia". Russia and China were thus forced into a situation neither had thought impossible for the previous 40 years: the joining of hands to change the world order by removing Washington from its superpower dais. Initially there were amazing economic agreements that left the Western planners stumped. Then came the military synergies, and finally the diplomatic ones, expressed by coordinated voting in the United Nations Security Council. From 2014 onwards, Russia and China signed important agreements that laid the foundations for a long-running Eurasian duopoly.

Obama's legacy did not stop, with more than 100,000 jihadists unleashed on the country, financed by US and her allies. This led Moscow to intervene in Syria to protect its borders and obviate the jihadists' eventual advance on the Caucasus, historically Russia's soft underbelly. This move was hailed by the Pentagon as a new "Vietnam" for Russia. But these calculations were completely wrong, and Moscow, in addition to saving Syria and frustrating the plans of Washington and her confederates, greatly strengthened its relationship with Iran (not always a simple relationship, especially during the Soviet period), elevating it to the high level of regional cooperation.

Obama's legacy was to inadvertently create a strategic triangle involving Iran, China and Russia and their development of high-level projects and programs for the region and beyond. It represents a disaster for US foreign policy as well as the unquestionable end of the unipolar dream.

Jumping forward a few years, we find Trump in the driving seat of the United States, repeating just one mantra: America First. From the Indian point of view, this has further aggravated the relations between the two countries, with sanctions and duties placed on India for what was a Western decision in the first place to shift manufacturing to low-wage India in order to further fatten the paychecks of the CEOs of Euro-American companies.

Modi's India is forced to significantly increase its ties to Iran to guarantee its strategic autonomy in terms of energy supply, without forgetting the geographic proximity of the two countries. In this context, Russia and Iran's victory against terrorism in the Middle East pacifies the region and stabilizes Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Libya, thereby allowing for the development of such new projects as the mega Silk Road 2.0 investment on which Beijing

places considerable importance.

We could go on in this vein, detailing how even China and India have overcome their historical mistrust, well aware that divide and rule only benefits those who are on the other side of the ocean, certainly not two countries experiencing great economic growth with a common border spanning thousands of miles. The meetings between Modi and Xi Jinping, as well as those between Putin and Xi Jinping or Putin with Modi, show how the intention of these three leaders is to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for their citizens, and this cannot be separated from a stronger union together with an abandonment of disputes and differences.

The synergies in recent years have shifted from the military and diplomatic arenas to the economic one, especially thanks to Donald Trump and his aggressive policy of wielding the dollar like a club with which to strike political opponents. One last step that these countries need to take is that of de-dollarization, which plays an important role in how the the US is able to exercise economic influence. Even if the US dollar were to remain central for several years, the process of de-dollarization is irreversible.

Right now Iran plays a vital role in how countries like India, Russia and China are able to respond asymmetrically to the US. Russia uses military power in Syria, China seeks economic integration in the Silk Road 2.0, and India bypasses the dollar by selling oil in exchange for goods or other currency.

India, China and Russia use the Middle East as a stepping stone to advance energy, economic and military integration, pushing out the plans of the neocons in the region, thereby indirectly sending a signal to Israel and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are occasions for peacemaking, advancing the integration of dozens of countries by incorporating them into a major project that includes Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa instead of the US and her proxy states.

Soon there will be a breaking point, not so much militarily (as the nuclear MAD doctrine is still valid) but rather economically. Of course the spark will come from changing the denomination in which oil is sold, namely the US dollar. This process will still take time, but it is an indispensable condition for Iran becoming a regional hegemon. China is increasingly clashing with Washington; Russia is increasingly influential in OPEC; and India may finally decide to embrace the Eurasian revolution by forming an impenetrable strategic square against Washington, which will shift the balance of global power to the East after more than 500 years of domination by the West.

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