

Russian Arms Deals: Implications for Regional Politics and Economy

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Abstract

This article analyses the role of Russia's arms deals in international politics and its insinuations for the domestic economy. Arms trading has been well recognized as a tool for executing a nation's foreign strategy. Therefore, exploring the drivers behind arms exports uncovers a nation's priorities. Even though the relationship between the US and Russia relationship has worsened since Putin took power, Moscow has steadily increased its weapons sales in a few other geographic territories. This article examines Russian military exports to China and India to understand Russia's thought process behind its export policy. The article further contends that international politics has presented itself as a key factor in devising the policies and procedures associated with Russia's arms deals. Although Russian military exports have benefited the domestic economy in various ways, particularly in the early years of Putin's administration, to create a polycentric world and strengthen Russia's status as a regional power, Russia also utilized arms exports to preserve leverage and influence on its allies.

Keywords

Russia, arms deal, international politics, China, domestic economics

Introduction

The leaders of different nations set policy plans for explicit reasons. The causes wherein they connect with have desired 'impacts' that they wish to accomplish (Cerny, 1980; Hermann, 1990; Palmer & Morgan, 2011). This paper examines the connections between two principal hypotheses, i.e. 'elements of global politics' and 'domestic economic components'. Initially considering the domestic features, this paper emphasizes that domestic economic difficulties are the major factors that impact Russia's economy. In explicit terms, the paper attempts to understand how the

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significance and volume of weapons exports contribute to or subtract from the country's general commerce.

Furthermore, the impact of the arms trade on Russia's defense industry and the capability for innovative work (necessary to develop future weapon frameworks) is also considered. Although the stability of the military sector and the economic benefits of the weapons trade are interwoven, the centralization of command over arms trade under the government over the trade has shown Russian defense institutions' propensity for biased decision-making (Mitchell, 2007). In this regard, due to the defense industry's reduced autonomy, it can be inferred that Kremlin policy is responsible for Russia's economic success rather than the actions taken by the military industry. In this vein, the paper argues that global political elements influence Russia's capacity to exercise impact and influence to achieve Putin's foreign strategy goals. According to Professor Bobo Lo of Chatham House, these goals include strengthening what is known as polycentrism, balancing the US in a geopolitical framework, and elevating Russia's status as a tremendous force (Lo, 2004).

This article's foundation lies in the contextual analysis of different geopolitical areas, namely India and China, to further expand the understanding of the role of Russia's arms deals in the international system. Russia shares a large outskirt with China. The 6th longest border in the entire world lies between these two countries. China, as a significant regional power, legitimately underpins Putin's desire to counter the West and ensure expansion to the rest of the world (Lo, 2015). Given the ongoing political issues and barriers between the West and Russia, China is a logical geopolitical partner and economic opening for Russian financial and political capital. Russia hopes to act in this capacity as a link between the West and the East. In this situation, the trade in arms in the area may entice China to support the achievement of that objective. Another contributing factor towards the arms deal between China and Russia is the rising regional tensions and the escalating North Korean threats that are driving up militarism and thus creating a substantial market for buying weapons.

In addition, South Asia is a significant region to test assumptions behind foreign military deals with Russia. In South Asia, India is Russia's principal trading partner. India has been the largest exporter of Russian armaments since the fall of the USSR (Arms Trade Database, 2017). Thus, in consideration, this article employs the *realist* theoretical construct while focusing on power. *Realists* have claimed for years that the US-ruled post-Cold War monopolar world and the bipolar post-Cold War world were both relatively simple systems resistant to 'wars of mistake'. They also believed that nuclear weapons made fighting more expensive and impossible for countries to go to war.

A historical timeline is the most logical and straightforward way to understand weapons sales to and from the Soviet Union and Russia. With the help of this in-depth analysis, this paper aims to answer the question: How does Russia maintain its weapon sales across the globe, and what are the political and economic costs and benefits of its broader arms sale program?

Henceforth, the paper unveils the investigation of Russian military-technical cooperation during the Soviet period, which was maintained by the early post-Soviet era into the 1990s. Further, it is vital to establish a comprehensive conceptual foundation for the scholarly study of weapons sales. The paper then delves into the arms deal and weaponry sale with China and India, respectively. After understanding the weapon trade between the respective countries, the paper focuses on understanding and exploring the role of Russia in the Indian and Chinese markets in

the foreseeable future to devise a game plan for Russia to sustain its geopolitical might in the region.

Methodology

This article uses the descriptive analytical methodology, a qualitative approach, to conduct analysis. Both primary and secondary sources are utilized, including various academic papers, periodicals, and pre-existing literature focused on the subject of direct arms transfers between Russia and buying countries. To understand the domestic elements, this paper uses local Russian media outlets and organizations such as Sputnik, the Moscow Times Newspaper, and the Eurasian Daily Monitor, which elaborate on Russia's military and economy.

Russian Military-Technical Cooperation

In 1982, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace senior associate Andrew Pierre released his landmark paper, the *Politics of Arms Sales Worldwide*. The many justifications for governmental sales of military equipment to other countries were fully summarized. Specifically, Pierre argued that economic, security and political concerns all had a role in weapons exports. Overall, Pierre's work offered a robust platform around which other experts have constructed their arguments about weapons sales until the present day.

Pierre (1982) was at the forefront of theorists who hypothesized that foreign policy was the causative process underlying international armaments transfers. He said it in the best way he could have: "The sale of weapons is a huge global industry that should be seen mainly from a political standpoint. They are more than just a military alliance, a political or economic trend, or an issue with weapons control" (p.23). According to Pierre, the sale of weapons involves several policy issues that need various analyses, trade-offs, and balancing of long-term hazards and short-term profits, which might sometimes be at odds.

Pierre looked at the benefits and drawbacks of each transaction based on the unique motivation driving the sale to determine if a given trade in weapons is constructive or harmful. His original justifications were based on 'influence and leverage'. Pierre (1982) asserts that influencing essential decisions affecting other countries' foreign policy is the main benefit of selling armaments. In addition to providing leverage, weapons transfers may produce influence by serving as a significant symbol of cooperation, amicable ties, and a manifestation of academic support or sympathy. In addition, armaments provide access to military and political leaders, creating influence. Governments utilize the preemptive sale strategy to prevent other countries from getting equivalent advantages by purchasing foreign military gear. Therefore, the benefits of arms deals might either strengthen one state's power and influence over another or prevent a rival state from obtaining similar benefits (Pierre, 1982).

Pierre was not the only one who assessed Soviet objectives. According to Ian B. Anthony, the transfer of weapons is essential to military aid intended to achieve strategic objectives in crucial regions like the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, according to German specialists on war and peace, Herbert Wulf stated that the Soviet Union had two main objectives when selling armaments. First, it was thought that arming communist and non-aligned nations would increase worldwide support for the Soviet Union while lowering support for Western allies, turning the provision of weapons into a tool for foreign policy in the conflict between the two main alliances. Aiding

Third World anti-imperialist and anti-colonial organizations served as the second goal to deepen the ideological divide between the West and the Third World (Wulf, 1993).

These objectives intended to disentangle the prevailing capitalism model from emerging countries' political and economic growth. Like Pierre, Wulf dismissed any justification for selling weapons since no evidence had benefitted the Russian economy. Since some primary recipients could not afford the purchases, sales of Soviet armaments sometimes brought more issues than benefits. In the 1980s, as the Soviet Union's economy crumbled, Russia was compelled to reduce its weapons shipments significantly. Because of this, even though a state's economic collapse may be the primary reason for stopping such sales, profit may only be a correlative motivation for selling weapons if the gross margin is insufficient.

The Russian government deliberately got into sporadic agreements with unrelated enterprises to sell military goods. According to Blank, Moscow's involvement in selling weapons was primarily motivated by political considerations rather than commercial ones (Blank & Levitzky, 2015). However, Blank also argued that Russia's aggressive pursuit of weapons importers was irrational since they sold guns to absolutely everyone at fire sale rates, including Russia's geopolitical friends and these partners' direct security adversaries. According to Blank, such action would jeopardize Russia's security and exacerbate regional instability. Thus, despite early attempts by Blank to assert that political motives for weapons sales took primacy, he could not downplay the substantial influence that economic factors had on Russian supplies of military equipment throughout the 1990s.

Recent analyses of Russia's weapons trade remain unclear about the Kremlin's possible objectives for using military cooperation. According to Blank and Levitsky (2015), it is incorrect that economic motivations dominate Russia's arms trade since they accept that economic factors, including generating money and strengthening scale advantages in the defense industry, may be cited as reasons for purchasing weapons. Blank and Levitsky bolster their argument by claiming that Moscow sells armaments in an attempt to influence friends in addition to generating money. In addition to enhancing Moscow's standing as a significant power, the writers also highlight access to natural resources, maintaining defensive connections with possible future allies in commerce and defense, and getting access to overseas bases (Blank & Levitzky, 2015).

Despite the length of this list, Blank and Levitsky continue to support the theory advanced by prior academics. They insist that the bulk of foreign military sales are motivated by Russia's ambition to govern and wield influence over other countries. Connolly and Sendstad used case studies from different regions, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Asia, in their investigation into Russian weapon sales from 2000 to 2016 to ascertain the effects of Russia's exports of military hardware on those regions' overall trade balances and fiscal health. They caution that Russia's success as a weapons exporter may have severe effects since Russian businesses increase their weapons sales to countries outside their traditional clientele, thus hurting ties with those countries and their import. The report's authors contend that Russian weapons exports have greatly enhanced manufactured product exports and are essential to supporting the nation's military complex (Richard & Cecilie, 2017).

Russia's Arms deals with China (2011-2017)

Military aviation is Russia's essential export to China from 2011-2017. After extensive haggling over specifics and shifting requirements, Russia decided to sell China the Su-35S Flanker-E in 2015 for \$2 billion, making China the only country to own the aircraft (Arms trade database, 2017). The agreement was a compromise between both countries, as Russia had the option to abstain from permitting the production of aeroplanes in China, thus forcing China to purchase the aircraft at a relatively high price (Blank, 2016). Numerous other factors contribute towards the formulation of this agreement, particularly both countries being political friends and foreign funding is required in Russia due to the current economic sanctions imposed by the West attributing to Russia's annexation of Crimea and interference in Ukraine. The 'Achilles heel' produces the engine to improve the current aeroplane (Cao & Feng, 2013).

The Chinese were still assembling their homemade fifth-era fighter, the J-20 when they realized the existing engine was inadequate. Although it was a part of the Su-35S, Moscow had been hesitant to sell the AL-41 engine without a significant aircraft purchase (Sloman et al., 2015). Since the Chinese had bought Su-35s, Moscow was ready to provide Beijing with an extra engine, especially an order for AL-41 turbofans (Arms trade database, 2017). China also bought a few sets of various-engine aircraft while its firms attempted to create capable indigenous replacements.

Beijing purchased an Al-31 engine for its J-15 aircraft in 2011. The Chinese also bought D-30 engines for their armada of aircraft and vehicles that year (Arms Trade Database, 2017). Moreover, China purchased transport aircraft and helicopters during this stage. As these sales illustrate, Beijing, despite everything, relied upon Russia for aircraft engines; but since MIC (Military-Industrial Complex) capabilities have grown at home, China no longer purchases the enormous quantities of aerial weapons it did in the 2000s. Russian shipments of marine and land frameworks to China were modest compared to exports of diverse platforms and aerial weaponry.

During this time, China refused to agree to a purchase agreement with Russia for any ships or other naval equipment. While the Russians and Chinese frequently discussed purchasing Lada-class submarines during dealings, a deal was still being determined (Schwartz, Paul, 2017). China's local capacity to deliver modern submarines and ships had eliminated Beijing's interest in Russian maritime systems. Following quite a while of discussion, Moscow and Beijing settled a \$3 billion agreement in 2015 for China to purchase S-400/SA-21 Growler systems (SIPRI, 2017). However, Moscow sales to Beijing regularly included authorized production deals and innovation transfers, and the purchase of the S-400 had no such choices for the agreement (Kelly & Fergus, 2018).

Chinese imports of Russian weapons were substantial in the middle of the 2000s. However, they fell between 2005 and 2010 before mostly stabilizing until 2017. Despite a decline in overall sales, Russia was nevertheless able to maintain its position in the Chinese market because of its ability to equip cutting-edge military equipment with advanced technology (Blank et al., 2015). Due to China's MICs' opposition to modernizing aircraft engines and its insatiable need for new armament systems like the S-400, Moscow had possibilities to capitalize on. Along these lines, despite Moscow's decrease in general imports to China, Russia still kept up a decent foothold in the arms market of China.

China: Economic and Political Benefits

The arms sales of Russia to China have yielded a few political and economic advantages. Regarding local financial additions, Chinese agreements have given massive money inundations to the defense industry of Russia. These monetary advantages were particularly significant during Putin's government when the MIC of Russia was bouncing back from the financial mess of the 1990s. The fate of numerous Russian military enterprises "may rely significantly on their potential to create fortunes overseas," the Jamestown Foundation said in 2001. Beijing replaced the US as Russia's primary customer by purchasing \$15.4 billion worth of weapons from Moscow between 2000 and 2005, or almost 48% of all Russian exports (Arms Trade Database, 2017, n.d.).

Weapons sales to Beijing also benefited the local economy. Due to China's acquisitions, Putin has to transform the Russian MIC into an authoritarian, centralized organization. As a result of this process, a few smaller companies were merged into larger ones that resembled the Soviet MIC, the South Korean chaebol, the Japanese keiretsu, or the South Korean chaebol (Blank, 2007). For instance, Putin gave Decree No. 140, which solidified each significant aeroplane maker in Russia, for example, Yakovlev, Tupolev, Sukhoi, Mikoyan, Irkut, and Ilyushin, every single privately owned business under one administratively controlled power (United Aircraft Corporation). Additionally, Putin established Rosoboroneskспорт, a single Russian weapon export control agency, to help lessen conflict inside the organization (Blank, 2007). Spanish academic Antonio Sánchez-Andrés asserts that "the military industry has been revived via the sale of weapons as a tool of the economy (Sánchez-Andrés, Antonio, 2004, p. 689)". Such revamping streamlined Russia's capacity to control the industry of defense. Therefore, arms sales of Russia to China had different constructive outcomes, in any event, in the Kremlin's eyes, more than economic increases.

In addition to boosting domestic economic gains, the arms sales to China had several positive effects on international politics, including the expansion of military-to-military cooperation, the balancing of American dominance in Asia, and the reduction of Russian strategic security risks in Central Asia. Support for the current strategic alliance between China and Russia has shown these benefits. Russia's efforts to create a multipolar order to counter American global dominance and restrict American influence in Asia have been greatly aided by this friendly relationship, which is documented in official documents like the Treaty of Friendly Cooperation and Good-Neighborliness between Russia and China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2001).

Shared viewpoints on a range of pro- and anti-Western geopolitical issues, including Russian activities in Chechnya, American withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, NATO expansion, the American-led attack on Iraq, Russia's support for the Al-Assad regime in Syria, and Russian meddling in Ukraine, have been used to compare China-Russian relations. Concerning China's backing of Russian activities in Chechnya, "Beijing not just stayed quiet, it supported the Kremlin" in its actions against Chechen protestors (Lo, Bobo, 2004, p. 307). The West denounced all Russian policies, whether they promoted immigration, violated human rights, or violently evicted populations. Despite President Jiang Zemin's assertion that "the Chinese side feels that the Chechen crisis is exclusively a domestic concern of Russia and supported the Kremlin's operations to strike against separatist and terrorist

elements” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2001, n.d.) in the middle of the 2000s, China maintained its position on Chechnya. George W. Hedge received criticism from both Beijing and Moscow for concurrently supporting the termination of the ABM Treaty. The states emphasized in a joint statement that the ‘ABM Treaty’ should be upheld since it currently serves as the cornerstone for strategic stability and the framework for the abolition of strategic weapons (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2001). Therefore, through a positive connection with China, strengthened through arms deals, Moscow obtained a vital accomplice against the US and regularized Western forces.

Beijing's inferred endorsement of Russia's attack on Ukraine is another sign of the Russia and China association. Even though Moscow's actions were directly at odds with China's fundamental international strategies, particularly its unwavering support for the principles of non-interference, territorial integrity, and national sovereignty, Beijing did not denounce Moscow's actions in Crimea and has maintained its composure in public discussions of the matter. China “regards Ukraine's regional sovereignty and integrity, but says Western nations should ponder Russia's serious security concerns,” according to the Reuters newswire (Reuters, 2017, p. 5). However, this tactical balancing effort showed that China would refrain from absolutely condemning Russia's participation. China could not help but disagree with Russia's justifications for its actions in Ukraine. The cooperation between Russia and China on arms agreements enhances each nation's stance on crucial international strategic concerns.

Beyond these converging geopolitical circumstances, Russia sold armaments to China to oppose American supremacy. Because of his rising anti-Western feeling, Putin needs partners to help him in his attempts to promote ‘polycentrism’ and erode American unipolarity. Moscow lacks the means to confront the US on its own. Despite not being the most significant ally owing to its financial clout and participation in organizations like the BRICS and UNSC, Beijing remains Russia's most crucial partner. The Kremlin believes that China is essential to reorienting the world's gravity toward the Asia-Pacific, according to Bobo Lo (2015). Putin has attempted to amplify China and Russia's ideological conflict with the West to counter ‘US unilateralism’ (Nalbandov & Robert, 2016). The involvement of China in BRICS has played a significant role in making this feasible.

Furthermore, China's participation in BRICS is a critical factor in Putin's support for polycentrism. China's membership in BRICS puts into question Western perceptions that Moscow lacks allies in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine. Beyond cooperation in different organizations, the Putin government is also essential to China to confront American power in Asia.

Future Role in the Chinese Market

Putin's current colossal agreements of Russia's modern platforms would seem to show an uplifting point of view towards a fruitful and beneficial Russia-China military cooperation. Nonetheless, selling weapons to China might bring much-needed finances for Russia's economy and give the Kremlin an undue amount of trust in Chinese political backing. In any case, the motivating dialogue concerning these weapons' sales obscures significant negative patterns currently being ignored by Russia (Sukhankin & Sergey, 2017). In particular, China's current advancement of its MIC, increasing Chinese arms exports, Moscow's arms sales to geopolitical rivals of China, and fundamental Russia and China strategic inconsistencies add to the decrease of the arms sales of Russia to China.

Because of the expanded abilities of the Chinese MIC, China no longer engages in Moscow's proposals to import older weapons. However, it requests the most current platforms. Although China may still be Moscow's go-to source for specialized technology like propelled air defense systems and engines, its stock of Russian weaponry is dwindling fast. Beijing's imports of Russian hardware have changed to specific hardware, and such changes have likewise diminished a lot of Chinese imports from Russia. At last, as Matthew Bodner stated that "Russia has a minimal list of weapons equipment that it can offer to China at this point" (Bodner & Matthew, 2016, p. 6). Therefore, Russian arms shipments to China will continue to decline if China's military sector is not modernized and its weapon systems are not improved to be more technologically sophisticated.

China's developing portion of worldwide arms exports is another upsetting element for future Russia and China relations. China has progressively developed its independent arms sector, undercutting Russia in international markets by learning about Russian objectives and putting certain unique concepts into practice. China wanted to rule the world in the middle of the 2000s, and Russia had no problems with its exports. However, in 2002, Pakistan thought Chinese weapons were inferior (Hagelin, 2002). However, late changes are all the more disturbing for Russia. In particular, China's exports from 2012 to 2016 rose by 74% (Matthews et al., 2017). The exports of China from 2013 to 2017 position it fifth on the international weapons market. Such a quick rise in the worldwide market share of China is disturbing for Russia.

The rising influence of China in the Central Asian nations will also be a problem for the Putin administration. Despite Beijing's lack of financial incentives for Moscow, the CSTO, which consists of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, is an essential member of the SCO. Beijing is building several significant infrastructure projects in Central Asian nations as part of the OBOR Initiative, some of which will include gas and oil pipelines that circumvent Russia and restrict Russia's capacity to carry out comparable projects.

Despite Beijing's efforts to lessen Moscow's influence in the region, Moscow has the most to gain by keeping its economic relations with the Central Asian nations. The CSTO is a useless organization that only exists to support Russia's decision to set up a military base in a former Soviet republic. In his explanation of Russia's primary goal for the organization, Robert Nalbandov claims that the CSTO has developed into a tool for global strategy as a consequence of Russian dominance in the military and political spheres (Nalbandov & Robert, 2016). The geopolitical position of China is less instrumental, and it is additionally attractive to the nations of Central Asia. Subsequently, China's endeavors along the southern border of Russia are much the same as NATO expansion on the western border of Russia. While Moscow, despite everything, keeps up a dependable balance in the nations of Central Asia, China's monetary invasions and 'chequebook diplomacy' show a solid capability of pulling those nations from Russia's circle and towards China. If Putin's administration is unwilling to acknowledge China's increasing regional influence in the countries of Central Asia, geopolitical shifts will worsen ties between Russia and China.

The expansion of China's MIC, its worldwide influence, the export of more weapons, and other geopolitical objectives adversely impact Russia's potential future arms sales to China. Therefore, Putin's capability to generally influence Russia-China relations and leverage weapons agreements with China to get any financial or political gains is waning. According to Nicole Ng, Beijing often decides how ties between

Russia and China will develop while Moscow is still in a position to reply (Stronski & Paul, 2018). Beijing maintains a more robust state structure, which gives Beijing a more powerful position and a more amiable demeanor when dealing with Moscow.

Russia Arms Manages India (2014-2017)

India did not agree to any binding arms agreement with Russia in recent years. Although the demand for arms from India was enormous before that decade, India's restraint from new agreements does not come as a surprise. Numerous other factors contribute towards the decline in demand from India, such as the 'Made in India' initiative to develop regional manufacturing and industry. Prime Minister Modi specifically envisioned the MIC of India expanding its capabilities: "Rather than bringing in every defense equipment, we need India to turn into an exporter of this hardware throughout the following years". Additionally, Indian secretary of defense Amitabh Kant stated, "We need the worldwide defense organizations should come to India not simply to offer us yet, in addition, to manufacture here and export to different nations" (Lakshmi, 2015, p. 9). Such an adjustment in Indian policy made erosion points in weapons deals as foreign sellers had to agree to internal production in India and transfer technology.

Delhi's Western relations development resulted from Modi's 'Made in India' programs. India was no longer a 'rogue state' for US Therefore, caution and deliberate distancing relationships were required. US gradually merged with the Indian weapons sector under the Obama administration to offset Russia's influence as the nation's leading weapon supplier. The US monopoly in the Indian market, however, was short-lived.

After a short hiatus, Delhi started negotiating new military agreements with Moscow in 2016. During a conference in Goa, India announced a \$5 billion purchase of S-400 Triumf/SA-21 air defense systems. This purchase arrangement still causes friction between the two nations since they have yet to agree on a few parameters. India continues to haggle with Russia over the purchase price while also asking manufacturers based on 'Made in India' programs (Economic Times, 2018). Delhi established a \$2 billion proposal in 2016 to provide T-90S MBTs under a license. Similarly, India purchased BMP-2 IFVs for \$141 million in 2017 after a series of postponed conversations in 2015 (Arms trade database, 2017).

Regarding aerial platforms, Russia and India settled a few helicopter deals. India eventually started doing business with the two countries in 2014 when it purchased Ka-226T Hoodlum light helicopters. Delhi was granted permission to produce 140 locally and import the remaining 60 from Russia, similar to past big requests for Russian weapons. To purchase Mi-17V-5 Hip vehicle helicopters, Delhi has agreed to spend \$1.1 billion (Arms trade database, 2017).

Additionally, India decided to purchase two Talwar-class frigates from Russia, one of which would be built in India for use as an air defense platform. Finally, Russia agreed to modernize the Akula-class nuclear submarine in line with the information supplied by India, and India agreed to buy one. Likewise, with most ongoing arms deals, this agreement is still in the last discussions as Russia and India work out the remaining details. Altogether, Moscow's arms deal with Delhi from 2000 to 2017 shows a persistent linkage between the two nations. While deals changed yearly, the Indians' negotiating power commonly increased in the government of Putin. Russia attempted to take advantage of as many lucky breaks as possible in its request to keep up its general market share.

Economic and Political Benefits (India)

Putin's arms deal with India have benefited Russia in several ways. Firstly, considering the local economic advantages, Delhi's purchases have provided enough money for the arms industry of Russia to guarantee its solvency and extra innovative work and have made up for the general decrease in arms exports due to the declined demand from China. Secondly, regarding the money flow for the MIC of Russia, India has offered the best financial contributions in 2017 compared to all the other importers of Russian weapons. Chronologically speaking, between 2000 and 2004, India was the second-largest supplier of MIC transactions in Russia, accounting for nearly 17% of all military-industrial complex (MIC) deals (Arms trade database, 2017). The arms agreement with India instantly benefited Russia's MICs in that respect and was generally successful in boosting the nation's economy. Besides this, Putin has also gained politically from Russian military shipments to India along with its regional economic gains. The most notable improvement in ties between India and Russia is the ongoing flow of military exports. Through this continuous relationship, Putin has earned India's backing in international organizations, evidenced by India's support in the two nations' ongoing military cooperation and involvement in strategic issues. Finally, by using his connections with India, Putin has made progress in creating a polycentric system that would challenge the global control of the US.

A free trade pact between Delhi and the EEU (Eurasian Economic Union) has also come under pressure from Moscow. By managing a group like the EU, Putin's administration tried to unite the former Soviet states. In 2013, India expressed a strong desire to begin FTA discussions, immensely frightening the United States. Both India and Russia started conducting a joint report to decide the attainability of FTA in 2016. Since 2018, negotiations between New Delhi and Moscow have been ongoing without producing a formal agreement. Despite the sluggish progress in this area, such institutional strategies could strengthen trade ties between Russia and India. Furthermore, India's involvement in the financial association managed by Russia would assist Russia's profile in solidifying its reputation as a formidable force, given that it is not a former Soviet republic like the other EEU countries.

On the one hand, India has profited financially and politically from Russian arms supplies. On the other hand, Putin has benefited politically from India's continued backing of various stances of Russia on specific international issues, consequently opposing the West and US. Putin has also used his relationships with Delhi to advance multilateral organizations like the BRICS and the EEU to improve his reputation and preserve Russia's status as a superpower. Further, Russia has utilized its relationship with India to ensure its influence in Central Asia. Altogether, these benefits incentivize Russia to continue its weapons trade with India.

Future Role in the Indian Market

Both Russia and India have mutually benefited from the trade in weapons. Putin can maintain his influence in South Asia by contributing to the sale of weaponry. He utilized it to challenge US dominance and support the BRICS countries in establishing his ideal multipolar system. Due to Moscow's rapidly increasing and strengthening contacts with Delhi, a territorial force agent in South Asia could respond to threats to Russia's southern border, including Islamic foes in Central Asia. India, amid industrial upgrading, particularly in the military sector, has attained cutting-edge propelled weapons from Moscow. However, a few obstacles are in the

way of strengthening the India-Russia relationship. While the facts confirm that Delhi frequently agreed with Russia's stance on geopolitical matters, Delhi has routinely sustained close links with the West, particularly the US. Alongside this duality, with technical inadequacies with arms exports with Russia, the development of India's MIC can be considered as an escalation in external rivalry and thus could present itself in the future as a major strategic issue, thus justifying worry in the Kremlin.

After an extensive stretch of negligible arms exchanges between Pakistan-Russia in 2015, Pakistan officially announced a deal to purchase Mi-35M Hind-E helicopters. With this regard, India presented its distaste towards Moscow as Putin attempted to explain this trade as an attempt to bolster Pakistani anti-drug activities. On the other hand, Moscow's current connections with Beijing present additional challenges for Putin to oversee. China's associations with Pakistan and the currently suffering India-China conflict over Arunachal Pradesh make participation between New Delhi and Beijing dubious. Any signs of Moscow enhancing its relationship with Beijing devoid of reciprocation of the same actions with India can potentially drive Delhi away from Russia into the arms of US. Bobo Lo expressed, "Historical doubt among New Delhi and Beijing tests Moscow's ability to seek after a different policy in Asia without preference to individual connections" (Lo & Bobo, 2015, p. 178). In these circumstances, the Putin government attempts to utilize India and China as accomplices in Putin's polycentric order to maintain a balance between the two states and thus provide Russia with authority. Therefore, Russia needs to take each step cautiously not to estrange one of its central Asian associates, India.

Conclusion

Even while Putin's government first wanted financial advantage from his arms transactions with China, the gathered data on military sales to China indicate that the primary motivation behind these sales was political gain. During the middle of the 2000s, with low domestic military expenditure, the MIC of Russia received critical funding from Beijing's sizable import market. However, as China's defense industry developed, Beijing's demand for weapons decreased, serving as a significant problem for Russia as its weapon sales would not yield the desired financial capital. Despite these issues, Russia is currently concentrating on offering China some of its most outstanding equipment. Given Russia's estrangement from the West due to its participation in Ukraine, Putin needs geopolitical friends to balance out his actions. In this case, Beijing was an excellent choice because of its expanding economic and military might. However, if Russian military aid to China continues, renewed military cooperation between the two nations is possible. In this case, Beijing has a more decisive influence on the relationship as its markets and economic progress while Moscow declines.

The Russian arms sales to India have continuously expanded during Putin's government. In contrast to Beijing, Delhi has been unable to develop its MIC quickly, due to which its interest in foreign weapons is consistently rising. Although purchases of some of Russia's military hardware have benefited India financially, Putin has undoubtedly put Delhi's political benefits above India's financial gain as his top priority. These political benefits are sourced from strengthening strategic ties between Delhi and Moscow due to weapon supply from Russia to India. Capitalizing on this Indo-Russia relationship, Putin's administration has gained another essential non-Western ally, one that can offer him political support on geopolitical issues and a

democratic state that can aid Russian-driven geopolitical establishments by giving them a stronger sense of authenticity.

According to Russia, India's participation in this scope has expanded Moscow's worldwide impact and image as an extraordinary force. Despite current sales to India, new changes in the Indian approach, like the 'Mad in India' movement, point to a presumable future decrease in importing of the weapons of Russia. Besides rivalry from different arms, western merchants like US and France compromised Russian strength in the Indian market. In this manner, while exports of Russian weapons to India may keep up at their present level, Russia's long-period capacity to continue such sales is potentially unsustainable.

Moreover, considering the driving factors of arms sales and the long-term sustainability of Putin's arms export strategy, for Beijing, Moscow's capacity to apply leverage over China through arms sales has drastically decreased under Putin's government as Russia is coming up short on military hardware that is alluring to China. On the other hand, although the MIC of India's advancement follows China's model at a different speed; however, India has decided to purchase vast military equipment from Russia. In the long run, for Russia to hold influence and control over Beijing and Delhi, Putin should utilize various techniques, such as exploring other markets that demand weapons. Suppose Russia's weapons market shrinks in the foreseeable future, and its potential partners (India and China) lose their interest in Russian arms. In that case, it is optimal for Russia to move to different markets where the possibility of pulling conceivable geopolitical accomplices is possible. The Middle East is one model in this regard. Considering this, if foreign armies enhance their equipment in the future to respond to the escalating security concerns, Putin may be able to subject Russia to political gains.

Although it is highly unlikely for Moscow to stop providing armaments in the near future, even though their strategic allure is devastating, Putin has expertly incorporated the sale of weaponry into his strategies that are intended to advance polycentrism, counter American hegemony, and reestablish Russia's position as a significant world power. According to Lo, the over-personalization of transitory and fluid political and economic problems often hinders Putin's goals. Due to Russia's aggressive weaponry dispersing, other countries may be better equipped to balance the region or minimize the harshness of the West. However, the overall impact of Moscow on the global dynamics cannot be minimized. Even though governments will continue to exert pressure on Moscow, Putin's strategy is untethered as it is mainly limited to enhancing global influence.

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