



**The 15th Russia-India-China (RIC) Trilateral Academic Conference
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Hosted by
The Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS)

in collaboration with
**Institute of Far Eastern Studies (RAS) &
China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)**

Summary Report of the Discussions*

General assessment of the International/Global Scenario

- While the centre of gravity of international relations has now clearly shifted to the Asia-Pacific region – new uncertainties have emerged with the Trump administration.
- Relationships amongst the RIC are likely to be influenced by the readjustment of their respective ties with the US.
- China and India are becoming weighty actors in world affairs. They will increasingly play a more significant role in global affairs.
- China is seen as playing the role of both a “stabilizer” and “booster” in the world economy. (China)
- Russia, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, perceives itself as contributing to development of a positive and unifying agenda. (Russia)
- Anti-globalisation trends are exerting pressure on the international order and economic security.
- The RIC mechanism will be a major factor in shaping the new discourse on Globalisation
- Central Asia and the SCO will be a crucible for both understanding the dynamics of Multilateral Cooperation and managing and reconciling complex differences and interests. A constructive cooperative agenda in Central Asia must be forged urgently.

* Specific views of Scholars are indicated by the country name in parentheses. In other cases, the views/perspectives/assessments are shared by all scholars from all three countries.

- Central Asia must be connected with South Asia – Russia and China must lead the efforts in this regard. (India)

Bilateral relations within RIC Format

- RIC countries, especially China and Russia which are already big influencers in global governance, should now collaborate jointly to come up with mutually beneficial tactics for bilateral development. (Russia)
- With regard to trade imbalance between India and China, a mechanism can be devised to work out the rules of trade and in that process create political synergies too.
- In the case of bilateral differences – the third party should be careful to not take sides.
- India and China and Russia could conduct more joint exercises – perhaps in Afghanistan and Pakistan. (China and Russia)
- While Russia works equally well with both India and China, there exists some tension between India and China. There needs to be a continuous dialogue on the areas of divergences.
- It is crucial for all three to accommodate their respective concerns *vis-à-vis* each other, which has paradoxically greatly intensified the relevance of the RIC.

UN and Global Governance Institutions

- The global community – led by RIC and other Multilateral fora - needs to consolidate its efforts to ensure a stronger coordinating role for the UN.
- Greater emphasis on the interaction of each member of RIC with the UN (including the activities in the UNSC) and cooperation with international financial structure (WTO, IMG, ADB, etc). (Russia)
- RIC must jointly coordinate discussions and proposals for global institutional rule making. (China)

RIC: Issues, Roles and Challenges

- The five vectors of cooperation formulated in 2015 - deeper interaction of business communities, think-tanks, cooperation in the spheres of agriculture and healthcare and elimination of natural disasters' consequences - should be broadened to include energy, high technologies and environment protection.
- RIC should lead the way in formulating a forward-looking agenda to address challenges pertaining to building a just, equitable and peaceful world keeping in view the year 2030, which has been earmarked by the UN to achieve the SDGs. Two of the SDG goals – goals 16 and 17 – are very important.
- RIC countries share a common interest in ensuring the continuance of economic globalisation – but are also committed to a process which seeks to reconcile regional demands for employment and resource allocation with evolving pattern of global trade.

- Urgent need to energise BRICS, the RIC and IBSA for promoting economic cooperation and meeting financial, environmental and technological challenges.
- Forums like NDB and AIIB must be used as platforms for cooperation.
- Active participation in the activities of the SCO, for Russia, India and China, gives their trilateral cooperation an international legal basis.
- Conscious efforts required to promote people-to-people ties; a special effort has to be directed toward increasing the numbers of students in each other's countries.

SCO and the Issue of Terrorism

- It is important to bear in mind the integral nature of three types of relations; bilateral, regional/multilateral and universal/global – while attempting to devise solutions to specific problems.
- RIC countries must explore the ways by which the the SCO would be the chief vehicle for providing and ensuring stability and security in the region.
- SCO needs to have a specific cooperative strategies for specific areas and dedicated funds.
- The admission of India as a SCO member-state at the SCO Summit of 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan, will mean that the RIC format will be in a way institutionalized within the SCO and can greatly add to the stature of the SCO as a multilateral organisation.
- The SCO offers broad scope for economic cooperation; participation in the SCO will strengthen India's "Look East" policy.
- The situation and response varies in all three countries – the specific views of scholars from three countries are detailed separately.

Views of Indian Scholars:

- Arriving at common definition of terrorism is crucial if complementary methods of countering terrorism are to be adopted.
- The fight against terrorism should not become a means to seek influence and leverage.
- Efforts must be devised to win the youth especially the alienated youth population in the Islamic countries.
- On the issue of nationalism, RIC can initiate a broader civilizational counter-discourse, which would respect diversity while upholding unity, given their history as three great civilizations. This could add to the soft power measures.
- As the SCO membership expands, more concerted efforts should be debated so that the problem of terrorism in the AfPak region is not neglected or ignored.
- Russia and China should come together and support India's help in creating agriculture technology in Afghanistan.

Views of Chinese Scholars:

- For SCO's success, cross-border traffic cooperation and clear demarcation of borders is imperative.
- The three countries should start cooperating under the larger framework of SCO by sharing information on terrorist activities and signing agreements in order to enhance

cooperation efficiency. [In efforts to counter ETIM, China has enacted the “Anti-terrorism Law” and Russia and India could follow this model.]

- Solution to Afghanistan issue – Anti-terror cooperation among China, India, Russia, Pakistan and central Asian countries necessary.
- Chinese side expects India to play a constructive role in Afghanistan’s governance given India’s rich experience in anti-terror campaign and governing highly diversified country.
- India-Pakistan relations needs to improve (economically to begin with) – which would open up significant prospects for the SCO.
- Bilateral and multilateral ties with other nations too can be negotiated, example with Pakistan.
- There can be a possibility of inviting a third party to join CPEC after consultation with Pakistan.

Views of Russian Scholars:

- Peacekeeping potential may also be explored.
- Need to prioritise issues requiring immediate attention such as the Syrian situation, counter-ISIL and counter-Taliban activities.
- SCO should collectively prevent the channelising of illegal funds into Central Asia, which could be backed by a stronger military force.

Global Commons

- RIC should set up platforms to work together and shape the new norms and rules for the Cyberspace. This should be a collective exercise and not a matter for a few big powers only.
- The current body of rules and norms are inadequate in dealing with destabilization activities that are borne out by the difference in the way countries define “critical infrastructure”.
- RIC can be a consolidating force in international negotiations with regard to the Global Commons. (Russia)
- The problem of Polar Regions as global commons and exploitation is quite serious and we need to evolve strategies for dealing with two important scenarios, one is passing of ships in cold and difficult ice regions and secondly rapid provision of rescue in disaster. (Russia)
- RIC should actively dialogue with and work with the US and other Scandinavian countries which have garnered much experience in this regard.

Suggestions for future RIC Cooperative Activities

- Participation of more independent actors to broaden the range and ambit of topics.
- Instead of large projects, focus on small working groups with specific targets and action.

- Studies could be conducted about the past and coming economic growth trajectories by the respective Governments using their own resources – in order to provide information and understanding about the investment climate among the three countries.
- Some topics that can be undertaken are building of regional public goods, connectivity and security cooperation.

Furture Events/Developments which could have a bearing on RIC Cooperation

- US-Russia bilateral relations as they deal with structural differences.
- The Sino-Russian relations/engagement in the context of the uncertainties generated by the Coming of President Trump
- The US-China Economic Differences and how the new US administration will address them – this is bound to affect a large number of countries.
- Post-Brexit European Union and a possible domino effect and intensifying anxieties in Europe.
- The above is likely to figure in Germany and France who are about to enter their respective election year.
- How the US-Israel relations fare after the Jerusalem settlement issue will determine many issues, especially the hot-spots in the Middle EAst
- The US new attitude towards the nuclear deal with Iran could affect regional security and stability.
- Japan’s “new security laws” removing the ban on collective self-defence has officially come into effect. This will have repercussions in the Asia-Pacific region.
- ROK’s agreement with the US on THAAD affects both China and Russia.
- Changes may occur in US policy towards the DPRK.
- The emerging strategic debates with regard to the OBOR – China’s determination to ensure its acceptance from the majority of countries
- Two major conferences to be hosted by China in the coming year: the first is the ‘Belt and Road’ International Cooperation Summit Forum in mid 2017 and the 9th meeting of BRICS leaders.