

India Act East Policy: Relations and Cooperation with Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

With its historical origins in the popular struggle for liberation from colonial rule and the national struggle for independence, India and Vietnam have historically shared close and cordial bilateral ties. Mahatma Gandhi and Hồ Chí Minh, respectively considered the Father of the Nation in India and Vietnam, led people in their valiant fight against colonialism in both nations. In the post-Cold War sense, India-Vietnam relations are influenced by both their shared common experiences and their mutual concerns. Both have suffered from bordering country aggression. Indeed, India was the first non-communist nation to recognize the reunited Vietnam, and has had a good relationship ever since, one that has stood the test of time. In the post-cold war background, however, China's shadow over this relationship is looming big. As India's "Look East" policy matures, India seeks to engage the Chinese periphery with the nations. Vietnam has also been pushed by the changing geostrategic trends to forge greater strategic cooperation with India. In international politics, bilateral relations between nation states are determined by a broad range of factors, including geographical position, historical history, socio-cultural affinities, political and economic visions held by the respective states, their philosophy of nation-building and unforeseen regional development contingencies, the logic of political expediency and the degree of regional development. The bilateral ties between India and Vietnam are a classic example of underlying external forces that have a lot more causal impact on the nature of relations than the individual considerations of national interest by both countries themselves. This article also concern that India should establish potential areas of cooperation and proactively interact Vietnam to further strengthen this relationship.

Key word: India, Vietnam, foreign policy, bilateral relations, economic cooperation

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I. RELATION AND COOPERATION TRENDS BETWEEN TWO STATES

Relations between India and Vietnam have been extremely good and cordial since Prime Minister Nehru and President Hồ Chí Minh laid their foundation more than 50 years ago. In the popular struggle for liberation from foreign rule and the national struggle for freedom, historically strong and cordial ties have their historical origins. Nehru was one of Vietnam's first visitors after winning the Battle of Điện Biên Phủ in 1954 against the French. President Hồ Chí Minh went to India in February 1958¹.

Political relations have improved recently as evidenced by leaders from both sides in many high-level visits. Trade and economic relations keep rising. India's push under the 'look East' strategy that before called 'Act East' combined with Vietnam's increasing regional engagement and India's paying rich dividends. Vietnam is a main regional partner in South-East Asia. Since 1992, there has been comprehensive establishment of bilateral relations between India and Vietnam in many fields such as economic links, agriculture and manufacturing². Not limited to economic reasons alone, there has been extensive promotion of bilateral military cooperation which includes the selling of military equipment, intelligence sharing, joint naval exercises, and counterinsurgency and jungle warfare training. India and Vietnam collaborated in a joint declaration of 2003 on the development of an "Arc of Advantage and Prosperity" in Southeast Asia. To this end, Vietnam has done

¹India Vietnam relations, https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Vietnam_13_01_2016.pdf

²Baladas Ghoshal, Some New Thoughts on India's Look East Policy, Institute of peace and conflict studies, Delhi, 2009, no-54

much to support the importance of India's relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its negotiation of an Indo-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement³.

What is new in the Vietnam–India relationship is the acceleration and intensity of bilateral cooperation since Prime Minister Modi government. Government led to new developments in all fields of cooperation, particularly in political, diplomatic, defense and trade. In addition, India and Vietnam have developed strategic alliances, including comprehensive cooperation to build nuclear power, enhance regional security and fight terrorism. The Indian Navy has been invited several times with a view to improving Indian and Vietnamese military relations. Also, Vietnam has acknowledged Indian support for a peaceful settlement of South China Sea territorial disputes. India refers to Vietnam as one of the foundations of the "Look East" strategy for India. India and Vietnam jointly held their first bilateral naval exercise in 2018, in Vietnamese waters.

The Mekong-Ganga Partnership is formed in India and Vietnam with the aim of developing and strengthening close ties between India and the South-East Asian countries⁴. Vietnam has firmly endorsed India's bidding to a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) permanent post, not only to authorize Indian membership of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). In various regional forums such as ASEAN, East Asia Conference and the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM), India and Vietnam cooperate closely with the United Nations and World Trade Organization (World Organization)

New Development of India-Vietnam relations after Modi government

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought new developments in all areas of cooperation, particularly in the fields of politico-diplomatic and defense. What's fresh is the pace and strength of bilateral cooperation since the visit of Prime Minister Modi in the conventional Vietnam–India relationship. Part of this is shown by the way that two official visits by senior Vietnamese leaders to India were made shortly after the visit: Defense Minister Ngô Xuân Lịch and Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, President of the National Assembly in both December 2016⁵.

High visits and meetings between the two sides are regular. The last of these was a visit to Vietnam in November 2018 by the Indian Chief of Army Staff of General Bipin Rawat. He visited the Vietnam National Assembly, only the first visit he got from Chinese President Xi Jinping, just a week after Indian President Ram Nath Kovind had concluded his state visit. Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visited Vietnam as well before Kovind's visit⁶. India equipped Vietnamese armed forces with military equipment and military training. Sales of other weapons, such as the Akash surface-to-air missile, are being debated. India and Vietnam, one of the very few that Viet Nam has formed, have already completed a strategic partnership. Indeed, India may offer cruise missile Brahmos for Vietnam. India has sanctioned Vietnam by lending \$500 million in defense equipment purchased⁷.

The second iteration of bilateral naval exercise between both countries began in 2019 with military-military cooperation between India and Vietnam. In bilateral boxes outside Cam Ranh Bay in Khánh Hòa Province, Vietnam, the Indian Navy and the Viet Nam People's Navy were involved⁸.

Dimensions of Diplomatic strength

The political relationship between the two countries has been strengthened through visits by the respective leaders. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an official visit to Vietnam on 2-3 September 2016 at the invitation of Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Vietnam's Prime Minister. The two Prime Ministers witnessed the signature of several bilateral agreements following their bilateral talks. The new aspect of bilateral cooperation after Prime Minister Modi's visit to the traditional relationship between Vietnam and India is the speed and power. The visit further enhanced Vietnam's good ties with India. The two countries have switched from

³ Harsh V. Pant, The India Vietnam Axis, WSJ, 2011. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111903791504576584653465899250>

⁴ Mekong-Ganga Cooperation: Cooperation Breaking Barriers and Scaling New Heights, ASEAN-India center at RIS, 2017

⁵ Thanh Niên. 'Giá trị, tầm nhìn của Thủ tướng Ấn Độ, đến Việt Nam' [Values from the Visit to Vietnam of the Indian Prime Minister], 2016. <http://thanhnien.vn/the-gioi/gia-tri-tu-chuyen-tham-cua-thu-tuong-an-do-den-viet-nam-740710.html> (accessed on 15 September 2016).

⁶ Government of India, Consulate General of India, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. <https://www.cgihcmc.gov.in/page/bilateral-relation/>

⁷ AFP, India to give US\$500 million 'defense credit' to Vietnam for arms deals, SCMP, 3 Sep 2016. <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2014167/india-give-us500-million-defence-credit-vietnam-arms-deals>

⁸ Indian Navy, Second Edition of Indian Navy-Vietnam Peoples' Navy Bilateral Exercise Concludes, 2019. <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/second-edition-indian-navy-vietnam-peoples'-navy-bilateral-exercise-concludes>

Strategic Partnership to 'Full Strategic Partnership'⁹. Prime Minister Modi statement that the decision to talk at a press conference at the Vietnam Government Office on 3 September 2016.

*upgrade our Strategic Partnership to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership captures the intent and path of our future cooperation. It will provide a new direction, momentum and substance to our bilateral cooperation. Our common efforts will also contribute to stability, security and prosperity in this region*¹⁰.

The Indian Prime Minister 's statement shows that India attaches importance to its relations with the Republic of Vietnam and that Vietnam is a cornerstone of India 's Act East Policy. From 24 to 26 August 2014, Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj visited the 3rd ASEAN-India Think Tank Network meeting of 25 to 26 August, Hanoi Regional HOMs Conference and held bilateral meetings with the Vietnamese leaderships, to attend. Minister of Defense Manohar Parrikar visited Vietnam officially from 5-7 June 2017 with the help of a seven-member delegation of senior officials. A business conference for defense industries was held in addition to the visit. Dr V. K. Singh visited Vietnam from 20-23 April 2017, General (Retd.) of MoS for External Relations. He visited Hồ Chí Minh City and opened the Indian City Center, besides Hanoi. Minister of Trade and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman, attended the RECP Meeting held in Vietnam on 21-23 May 2017. At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Nguyễn Phú Trọng, President of Viet Nam, Shri. Ram Nath Kovind, President of India and his Spouse, paid a State visit to Viet Nam from 18-20 November 2018. The President of India was accompanied by a high-level official delegation, including Minister of State Shri Anant Kumar Hegde, Members of Parliament, and a large business delegation¹¹.

High-level visits from both sides have been very frequent. From the Vietnam. In the framework of ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Reading Series, in August 2014, Prof. Nguyễn Xuân Thắng, President of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS). In October 2014, Tạ Ngọc Tấn, President of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Public Policy visited India. A memorandum of understanding was signed during the visit with the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA). In March 2015, Vietnamese Politburo Member and President Nguyễn Thiện Nhân of the Vietnam Fatherland Front came to India. General Defense Minister Phùng Quang Thanh visited India on 23-26 May 2015. Minister of Defense Ngô Xuân Lịch visited India on 3-5 December 2016. Prime Minister Modi was also named. From 8-11 December 2016, Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, President of the National Parliament of Vietnam, visited India. Dr Trương Minh Tuấn, Minister of Media & Radio, visited India from 24 to 29 March 2017. During the visit, the two Ministers signed the Joint Work Implementation Document. On 24 August, the IT Joint Working Group convened in Hanoi for the first time. On 3 and 5 July 2017, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Phạm Bình Minh visited India. Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyễn Xuân Phúc to attend ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit-2018 and as Chief Guest for India's Republic Day 2018. President of Vietnam Mr. Trần Đại Quang his official state visit in March 2018. Vice President of Vietnam Mme. Đặng Thị Ngọc Thịnh official visit in India in February 2020¹².

During the visit the two sides also agreed that 2017 would be the year of the 'Friendship Year of Vietnam-India,' to mark the 45th anniversary of full diplomatic ties and the 10th anniversary of the formation of a two-country strategic partnership¹³.

This guarantees a friendly environment, helping foster mutual cooperation and the political relations between both parties to coordinate various events in Vietnam and India., in the sense of these attempt to improve the bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Relationship, which extended the discussions between delegations of both national and educational parliaments.

II. RELATION & COOPERATION

Defense Cooperation's

This is a crucial area for bilateral co-operation, which was further reinforced when Premier Modi declared that a credit line worth US\$ 500 million will be extended to Vietnam. India has thus demonstrated its

⁹Vietnam has signed 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships' with three countries, namely, China (2008), Russia (2012) and India (2016).

¹⁰ Pmindia. 'Press Statement by Prime Minister during His Visit to Vietnam', 2016. http://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/press-statement-by-prime-minister-during-his-visit-to-vietnam/(accessed on 15 September 2016).

¹¹ Vietnam bridge, The overview of VN President's visit to India, 2018. <https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/government/196465/the-overview-of-vn-president-s-visit-to-india.html>

¹² Embassy of India, Hanoi, Vietnam. <https://www.indembassyhanoi.gov.in/page/india-vietnam-relations/>

¹³ NguHiep, Center for S&T Communications, Ministry of Science and Technology Vietnam, 2016. <https://www.most.gov.vn/en/news/649/opening-the-8th-friendship-festival-of-vietnamese--indian-people.aspx>

clear commitment to help Vietnam develop its defense capacity¹⁴. Also, one of the tangible steps towards the commitment to progress defense cooperation is the signing of the agreement for the development of offshore patrol ships. It shows that India is not only talking about it, but also working for efficient cooperation between the two countries. India is likely to sell a wide variety of military apparatuses and equipment to Vietnam according to Diplomat¹⁵. In order to strengthen the military cooperation between the two countries, India and Vietnam will continue to use track II diplomacy, confidence-building initiatives, as well as joint militant activity. Both parties have dedicated themselves to improving the military partnership in the war against terror and cross-border crimes.

The unprecedented 30-member delegation, including the Chief of Staff and the Departmental Head of Staff of the Air Force and the Navy of Vietnam, accompanying Defense Minister Ngô Xuân Lịch in India on the 7 December 2016. The success of both naval cooperation and military and air cooperation was pursued by Gen. Ngo within the parameters of the Extensive Strategic bi-lateral partnership. Indian vessels have visited Vietnamese ports regularly, while in February 2016 a Vietnamese vessel took part in the International Fleet Review in Vishakhapatnam for the first time. The two navies cooperate in maintaining maritime order and safeguarding maritime trade against threats such as piracy, terrorism etc.¹⁶.

Negotiations on the possibility of selling the BrahMos and Akash missiles are a sign that the Vietnam-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership has been successful for the past year, and is one of the strongest partners in the region. India has agreed in principle to sell the missile BrahMos to Vietnam and negotiations are under way. In the interim, India also offered to sell the Akash missile with 25 km of enemy aircraft, helicopters and drones. The 'keen interest' in obtaining the Akash missile has shown Vietnam. The Akash missile is easier to sell than the BrahMos because 96% of the weapon is indigenous. When the deal is concluded, the inclusion of the Akash rocket in Vietnam's defense system will significantly increase its military capability and its strong defense, preventing China from launching a pre-emptive strike, as it can trigger further reprisals¹⁷.

The first ever representative office in Hanoi has been founded by India's Bharat Electronics, with the objective to market weapons, naval systems, military communication systems, Electronic Warfare, combat management systems and coast surveillance systems for the company¹⁸. Cyber safety cooperation is expressed in the Nha Trang Army Software Park, which was developed with \$5 million Indian financial support¹⁹. The plan in which India will train pilots of the Vietnam People's Air Force on their Su-30 MK2Vs similar to the IAF Su-30 MKIs, is also being explored both in India and Vietnam. The goal of the cooperation is to enhance Vietnam's combat capacity in the event of disturbance. Since 2013, the Indian Navy trains Vietnamese mariners to operate Kilo-class submarines of the Vietnamese People's Navy (VPN) at Visakhapatnam. India's Larsen & Toubro, under the aegis of an Indian \$100 million LoC is implementing an order to construct 10 high-speed patrol vessels for the Vietnamese Border Guards. India is a pioneer in improving two Vietnamese frigates of the Petya class, where spares had been supplied in the past²⁰.

The joint declaration on India's vision of Vietnam's 2015–20 security ties was a guiding force in bilateral defense contacts before the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Vietnam. The upgrade to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in bilateral relations during the visit of the Prime Minister emphasizes that the two countries have a strong future direction and reflects on this partnership. Although the bilateral relations between Vietnam and India had earlier been more affected by external factors, they are more influenced by the

¹⁴ Ho Binh Minh, India offers \$500 million defense credit as Vietnam seeks arms boost, Reuters, 3 Sep 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-vietnam-india/india-offers-500-million-defense-credit-as-vietnam-seeks-arms-boost-idUSKCN11905U>

¹⁵ Das, Shaheli. 'Modi's Visit to Vietnam: What's on the Agenda?' The Diplomat, 30 August, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/08/modis-visit-to-vietnam-whats-on-the-agenda/> (accessed on 5 October 2016).

¹⁶ Panda, Rajaram. 'Án Đô . và Viê . t Nam : Liê nkế t, hô ~ tro., lâ ~n nhau vì nhu ~,nglo.,nichchung' [India and Vietnam: Mutual Linkages and Support for Common Interests], International Scientific Conference Proceedings: Vietnam–India: 45 Years of Diplomatic Relations and 10 Years of Strategic Partnership. Hanoi: Ho Chi Minh National Political Publishing House, 2017. pp. 47–48.

¹⁷ PTI. India, Vietnam hold talks on sale of Akash, Brahmos missiles, The Economics Times, 12 July 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-vietnam-hold-talks-on-sale-of-akash-brahmos-missiles/articleshow/56959972.cms?from=mdr>

¹⁸ Elizabeth Roche, Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurates Bharat Electronics' representative office in Vietnam, Livemint, 13 Jun 2018. <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/ZvQS6wKTZSYLgn7pB0U4VP/Nirmala-Sitharaman-inaugurates-Bharat-Electronics-represent.html>

¹⁹ The Saigon Times Daily, "Vietnam, India upgrade ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership", 5 September 2016, at <http://english.thesaigontimes.vn/49493/Vietnam-India-upgrade-ties-to-comprehensive-strategic-partnership.html> (accessed 23 February 2017).

²⁰ Devirupa Mitra, India and Vietnam Upgrade to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, The Wire, Sep 2016. <https://thewire.in/external-affairs/india-and-vietnam-upgrade-to-comprehensive-strategic-partnership>

choices made by both countries. In the larger Asian region, Vietnam and India have both become more united in their strategic vision and have given their Extensive Strategic Partnership a clearer path. Vietnam and India are also opposed to forming military alliances and threatening third countries using military bases. Both countries also support the development in the area of an open, balanced and integrated security system. Lastly, both countries support freedom of navigation and free trade in comply with international law²¹.

Economic Cooperation's

India is marked by a growth in economic and commercial interest in its ties with Vietnam. India is currently one of Vietnam's top ten trading partners. In October 2014, the two parties agreed on a strategic thrust in economic cooperation in the Indian-Vietnam Strategic Partnership during their former Premier Nguyễn Tấn Dũng's visit to the India. Five primary sectors were then defined as thrust areas of clothing and textiles, pharmaceuticals, agricultural commodities, leather & footwear, and engineering during the second meeting of the Joint Subcommittee held on 20 January 2015. On 15 March 2016, the third JCM session took place in New Delhi²².

In recent years, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has seen steady growth. India is currently one of Vietnam's top ten trading partners. GOI data indicated that in April–November of fiscal year 2016–2017, total trade between the countries amounted to USD 6244,92 million. Both parties agreed to set a USD 15 billion bilateral trade target by 2020. Machinery and equipment, fish, pharmaceuticals, cottons, vehicles, textiles and leather accessories, cattle feed ingredient, chemical items, plastic resins, plastics, fibers, weapons, ordinary fabrics of all kinds, and jewelry & precious stones are main export commodity products in India²³.

The key imported commodities in Vietnam are cellular phones & appliances, machinery and hardware, machinery and equipment, chemicals, rubber, ordinary goods, wood and wood products, all forms of cloth, pepper, transport facilities, steel products, coffee, boots, chemicals, polymers and resins.

Indian investment in Vietnam remained constant at approximately US \$1 billion, but is expected to increase in the next few years. In 2016, Indian companies announced 17 new ventures with a total capital of US\$ 98.12 million in the areas of food, fertilizers, auto parts, textile supplies, etc., as announced by the Foreign Investment Agency of Vietnam. With these projects, India has now 131 big projects with total investments of around US\$ 707.95 million, which ranks 25th among 110. Vietnam's figure does not include third country Indian investments. Investment sectors are primarily oil, mineral exploration, agriculture, sugar, agrochemical, informatic and automotive products²⁴.

During Modi's visit to Vietnam, Prime Minister Modi urged Vietnamese companies to actively pursue opportunities to participate in the 'Make in India' initiative to benefit from preferential terms. In line with Vietnam law, Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc also pledged to set the conditions to be favorable for Indian companies to invest in Vietnam²⁵. Both sides are focused on promoting the strengths of each other in the field of textiles and clothes, pharmaceuticals, equipment, IT and services. Statistics from the Vietnamese General Department of Customs indicate that both quality and quantity has increased bilateral trade between Vietnam and India²⁶.

Cultural & Educational Cooperation's

India Vietnam's historical cultural connection, perhaps Buddhism is the most obvious aspect. Over the last 2000 years the Buddhism has had a significant and continuous effect on the culture of Vietnam. In cultural ties there are some similarities and influences of Buddhism and Hinduism. The Vietnam National Administration

²¹ Godbole, Avinash. 2017. 'Quan hệ, quốc phòng Ấn Độ. - Việt Nam: Lịch sử, và triển vọng' [India–Vietnam Defense Relation: History and Prospects], Ky, yếu tố hòa, o khoa học quốc tế "Việt Nam - Ấn Độ: 45 năm quan hệ, ngoại giao và 10 năm đổi mới tích cực". Hanoi: Ho Chi Minh National Political Publishing House, p. 388.

²² ANI, How India and Vietnam can increase bilateral trade, Business Standard, Feb 2019. https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/how-india-and-vietnam-can-increase-bilateral-trade-119022500121_1.html

²³ Embassy of India, Hanoi, Vietnam, "India-Vietnam Relations" <https://www.indembassyhanoi.gov.in/page/india-vietnam-relations/>

²⁴ Ngọc Mai, Vietnam, India target bilateral trade of US\$15 billion in 2020, Hanoi Times, Feb 2020. <http://hanoitimes.vn/vietnam-india-target-bilateral-trade-turnover-of-us15-billion-in-2020-311186.html>

²⁵ Dân Trí. 'Toàn văn Tuyên bố chung Việt Nam - Ấn Độ.' [Joint Statement between Vietnam and India], 2016. <http://dantri.com.vn/xa-hoi/toan-van-tuyen-bo-chung-viet-nam-an-do-20160903201752868.html> (accessed on 14 September 2016).

²⁶ Hai Anh. Việt Nam - Ấn Độ: Thu, o, ngma, i song phu, o, ng ta ñng ca, , chất và lu, o, ng [Vietnam–India: Bilateral Trade Increases in Both Quality and Quantity], Thô, i báo tài chính Việt. t Nam [Vietnam Finance News], 23 March 2017. <http://thoibaotaichinhvietnam.vn/pages/kinh-doanh/2016-09-01/viet-nam-an-do-thuong-mai-song-phuong-tang-ca-chat-va-luong-35199.aspx> (accessed on 23 March 2017).

of Tourism has cited that the Cham has seafarers and that Hinduism motivated them, starting with a brief, “Such turned into the artistry of historic Cham architects and artisans that their temples and stone carvings are a number of the maximum shifting relics discovered in Southeast Asia today²⁷”. It in addition notes, “Given their coastal location. At its peak, the Champa Kingdom managed the exchange in spices and silk among China, India, Indonesia and Persia”. Highly cosmopolitan, this tradition turned into closely motivated via way of means of Hindu ideals followed from India. Many in their shrines honor Shiva—frequently proven as a linga, at the same time as their carvings depict all way of Hindu deities²⁸.

There are approximately 200 Hindu temples in Vietnam that are currently in a dilapidated state and this clearly identifies the culture ties between them. In Hồ Chí Minh, where three temples are situated, the Chettiyar community in Tamil Nadu has a considerable influence. The famous temple of Mariamma has both devotees from India and Vietnam. Bodh Gaya has a Vietnamese Buddhist pagoda that draws large numbers of pilgrims from Vietnam²⁹.

The organizing of Indian Buddhist Days Festivals at the Mandala Great Stupa, Tay Thien Pagoda, Vinh Phuc province in Vietnam, is an important feature of the many events which celebrate 45th year diplomatic relations and 10 years of the Strategic Partnership between India and Vietnam. This event helped rekindle the cultural and spiritual ties between Vietnam and India through Buddhism³⁰.

Conservation and renovation of monuments of Cham: the Indian Archaeological Survey carries out a conservation and rehabilitation project at My Son, Vietnam's UNESCO heritage site. The project illustrated the old relations between India and Vietnam with the Hindu Cham civilization. On 10 October 2014, an MoU was signed between India and Vietnam. At My Son in central Vietnam, at the end of February 2017, an archeological survey of India began its mission. During the first working season, the team excavated and conserved various artifacts until May 2017. In January 2018, the second ASI team working season began³¹.

In September 2016, the Indian Cultural Center opened in Hanoi with the goal of strengthening India's cultural presence in Vietnam. The Center offers monthly courses on yoga, dance and music³².

The Year of Friendship is celebrated in 2017 to mark the 45th anniversary of establishing diplomatically-led relations and 10th of forming the Strategic Partnership. There are various cultural activities, food festivals, exhibits and academic seminars and conferences during the year. From 5 to 15 March 2014, an India Festival was celebrated in Vietnam. It took place in Hanoi, Danang and Hồ Chí Minh City with the following members: Classical Dance Contest from the Sangeet Natak Academy, the Buddhist Festival by Himalayan Historic Institute, Food Festival, Kalbelia Group's folk dance, Mehendi, and Yoga. The festival took place in the city.

From 12-23 December 2015, three Vietnamese Cities (Danang, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) organized the first ever India Film Festival (IFF). Eight Vietnamese subtitled Hindi films have been shown during the festival. On 19 December 2015 a seminar was held in Hanoi on "Movie Partnership and its Work to Promote Tourism." India was a participant country at the Hanoi International Film Festival in November 2016 (1-5 Nov). Four films were screened at the Festival by the New Delhi Film Directorate. During the Film Festival, many Indian films were shown³³.

From 21 to 28 July 2016, an Indian youth delegation visited Vietnam in the context of the two countries' Youth Exchange programme. This was the first visit in 2014 to the MOU. From 27 March to 5 April 2017, the Vietnamese Youth Delegation visited India.

²⁷Do Thu Ha, Cultural and Educational exchange between India and Vietnam in the context of a rising India, ASEAN-India Network of Think-Tanks, 2ND Round Table, 2014. <http://aic.ris.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Do-Thu-Ha-paper.pdf>

²⁸Sudarshan Ramabadran, INDIA-VIETNAM'S SHARED CULTURE: THE CHAM CIVILIZATION, Center for Public Diplomacy, Dec 5, 2019. <https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/india-vietnam's-shared-culture-cham-civilization>

²⁹Chi P. Pham, Nation building and religion in post-reform Vietnam: a case study of the Mariamma temple, South East Asia Research journal, volume 27, 2019 - Issue 2

³⁰Thu Phuong, 'Khaima ngày văn hoá Phật giáo Ấn Độ tại Việt Nam lần thứ 2 năm 2017' [Opening Ceremony of the 2nd Indian Buddhist Days Festival in Vietnam 2017], The News, <http://baotintuc.vn/thoi-su/khai-mac-ngay-van-hoa-phat-giao-an-do-tai-viet-nam-lan-thu-hai-nam-2017-20170316210124081.htm> (accessed on 29 March 2017).

³¹Doan Loan, Dac Thanh. Vietnamese, Indian experts at odds over restoration of UNESCO relic, VN Express International, May 6, 2018. <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnamese-indian-experts-at-odds-over-restoration-of-unesco-relic-3745493.html>

³²Ozgur Tore, Indian cultural center opens in Hanoi, Vietnam, FTN news, April 2017. <https://ftnnews.com/other-news/32111-indian-cultural-center-opens-in-hanoi-vietnam>

³³India -Vietnam Relations, 2017. https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Relations_Website_Sept_17_.pdf

On January 7, 2012, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of full diplomatic relations, the Institute for Indian and South-West Asian Studies under the aegis of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences opened in Hanoi. During the State Visit to Vietnam by President Pranab Mukherjee in September 2014, both presidents inaugurated the Center for Indian Studies at the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, the Communist Party of Vietnam's highest educational institution. The Department of Oriental Studies, Vietnam's University of Social Sciences and Humanities, has an Indian Studies section.

India is committed to providing Vietnamese students and staff with several scholarships as well as special Buddhist studies scholarships in India. India will enable Vietnam to develop the Software Park at Nha Trang Telecommunications University with US\$ 5 million. The Space Cooperation Agreement would also allow both parties to participate in joint work in this area. On this occasion, too, the Indian Cultural Centre. Indian Dance and Yoga classes were now opened and many Vietnamese, particularly young people, participated³⁴.

A proposal is being considered in the context of an ASEAN-India Cooperation Process to create a center for satellite and data reception and imagery in Vietnam. The center will be funded entirely by India and the implementing agency will be the ISRO. It uses data from Indian remote sensing satellites and uses them for various technological applications³⁵.

Aid by IBSA: IBSA sponsored the Danang Rice Seed improvement project with a USD 529,000 IBSA fund grant³⁶. A Medical Training e-learning project was completed at Haiphong Medical University. It will be officially opened in the coming months.

Vietnamese's younger generation is especially enamored by Bollywood dances and many Indian television serials dubbed in Vietnamese dominate the TRP ratings on local TV channels. Though most tourists are still drawn by the beauty of the 'Land of Buddha' from Vietnam to India.

LIMITATIONS OF RELATIONSHIP

However, there is also evidence that this partnership does remain amid this inherent attraction and the closeness of the strategic relationship.

Vietnam faces the same difficulties as most of its neighbors, when measured against Beijing: Hanoi is also worried about offending China, while trying to develop its capacity to protect against China. Therefore, Vietnam was very unwilling to cooperate with other countries against China. Specially a support for the Quadrilateral Security Initiative (Quad) is wary of being considered.

Vietnam tends to be worried with how much it can expand military ties with India, in addition to multi-stakeholder alignments such as the Quad. For example, while Vietnam purchased naval facilities from India and allowed India to train its naval personnel, Hanoi rejected the need to purchase additional facilities from India. India's credit line for Indian military equipment has been extended to Vietnam by \$500 million; most of this remains unused.

What this implies is that while the Indo-Vietnamese relationship is profound, particularly in the defense sector, and although strong strategic reasons for bringing both countries together, the relationship is also theoretically simple. Hanoi must also worry about the possible negative reactions of China as far as more help is needed. Concerns of India-Vietnam have already been expressed in Chinese media³⁷.

New Delhi must be cautious not to get too close to Vietnam, in particular given its unwillingness to move against China. India herself dragged her feet on the Quad. And concerns about China's negative response not only concern India and Vietnam, but are widespread in many peripheral China countries.

The tremendous strength and Chinese ability to make use of diplomatic and economic tools means that the majority of its neighbors are hesitant to implement balancing policies too strongly. This means that New Delhi is responsive to Vietnam's concerns and not too optimistic about its potential.

III. CONCLUSION

In recent years, Vietnam and India have established a strong base for both countries to develop their links, thanks to their traditional relationship and confidence. The relationship between India and Vietnam has

³⁴Embassy of India, Hanoi, Vietnam, Ambassador's Remarks at University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City, Dec 2019. https://www.indembassyhanoi.gov.in/speeches_detail/?id=15

³⁵Sanjeev Miglani, Greg Torode. India to build satellite tracking station in Vietnam that offers eye on China, Reuters, 25 Jan 2016. <https://in.reuters.com/article/india-vietnam-satellite-china-idINKCN0V309W>

³⁶FAO in Vietnam, Establishment of Rice Seed Production Hub in Hoa Tien Commune, Hoa Vang District, Da Nang City, Viet Nam. Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations. <http://www.fao.org/vietnam/programmes-and-projects/success-stories/ibsa/en/>

³⁷Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan. "Is India expecting too much from its strategic partnership with Vietnam?", Observer Research Foundation, Dec 2018. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/is-india-expecting-too-much-from-its-strategic-partnership-with-vietnam-46252/>

seen positive developments in all fields over the last few years. Both countries are committed in a number of areas to improving bilateral ties. The bilateral relations under the Modi governments were characterized by substantial development, in particular in the areas of political exchanges, defense, maritime and economic cooperation. Modi's government will continue to consider Vietnam is a central pillar in the "Act East Policy" and the "Indo-Pacific strategy" by pursuing foreign policy suitable for a major power. In the years ahead, the priorities of Vietnam-India relations will likely be cooperation on defense, maritime, energy and cybersecurity. But Vietnam's ties with India will be challenged by China, especially for military, maritime and offshore petroleum and gas cooperation. The visit of the leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Modi and President Ramnath Kobind, as well as Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, General Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng, President Trần Đại Quang and Chairperson of National Assembly Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân. A number of co-operation agreements are signed and cultural diplomacy and personal relations with each side have been promoted. These efforts will certainly be a landmark in improving the bilateral relationship and will help to enhance multi-cooperation.

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