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Foreign development assistance provided by China, India and Russia.....	2
Prelude or the parameters of the foreign development assistance allocated by China, India and Russia	2
Common features in the foreign development aid of China, India and Russia	3
Motivations	3
The South-South Cooperation: the ins and outs	3
Formats of the foreign development assistance.....	4
China’s foreign development aid model	4
India’s foreign development aid model	5
Russia’s foreign development aid model	7
Cooperation or competition.....	9
China-India-Russia: a scalene triangle	9
Cooperation of three countries in the matter of FDA: trilateral and bilateral levels	9
Rivalry between the trio.....	9
Position of other regional powers.....	10
Conclusions	11
BIBLIOGRAPHY	13

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

“Freedom and power bring responsibility. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye ... as long as there are tears and suffering. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for anyone of them to imagine that it can live apart”.

Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of independent India)

“Tryst with Destiny” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India pronounced on 14 August 1947

When a major pandemic arrives, awareness of the need for altruism, at least interested, appears.

Jacques Attali

Interview by Jacques Attali : “Face à un grand choc, il faut aller à l’essentiel, être utile aux autres”, France Culture, 22/03/2020

Dedicated to Taij Batbayar DASHTSEREN, to my beloved parents and parents in-law

Foreign development assistance by China, India, and Russia

by Batchimeg DASHTSEREN

China, India, and Russia are undeniably important foreign development assistance (FDA) donors. In some regions the Chinese aid allocation exceeds the aid provided by the traditional official development financial institutions. Beijing, New Delhi, and Moscow represent three distinct models of aid allocation, which we describe as the Chinese Model (BRI-leading donor), the Indian Model (active triangular cooperation donor) and the Russian Model (region-level-aid shaping donor). Capitalizing on its financial capacity and guided by the appetite for a new global financial architecture, Beijing is able to lead and finance the cross-border projects over the world. India is mindful of its limited funding potential and of the importance of having the allies capable to neutralize the Chinese impressive rising. It is why India relies on reinforcing of its foreign development aid under a triangular model. Russia due to the international sanction linked to the Crimea is limited in its power to act according to its own rules. Moscow is intended to enlarge region-level cooperation. In 2019 the first Russia-Africa and Russia-Latin America and Caribbean Summits took place where the sides declared their intention to develop the cooperation on mutually beneficial condition. The writing off USD 20 billion debt owed by African countries was announced during the first Russia-Africa Summit. If we use the expression of Alexander Gorchakov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire (1856-1882) “*Russia is composing herself*” asking herself how to reinforce develop its foreign development aid status.

Prelude or the parameters of the foreign development assistance allocated by China, India and Russia

In this paper we cover official resources and private finance mobilised by Chinese, Indian and Russian official interventions in the destination to the developing countries. These flows will be studied in connection with the notions such as “Official Development Assistance” (ODA) and “Total Official Support for Sustainable Development” (TOSSD).

The Official Development Assistance flows are, according to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the concessional flows containing a grant element provided by official agencies, or by their executive agencies to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA recipients and to multilateral development institutions promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective. In 2019 the ODA by DAC member countries totalled USD 152.8 billion.

In a parallel, during the last two decades the development aid provided by the non-DAC member countries is gradually growing.

As far as the total Official Support for Sustainable Development, this is focused on sustainable development and includes both concessional and non-concessional support, from multilateral and bilateral finance providers, including South-South and triangular co-operation providers (OECD: 2020). The current pandemic crisis opens new opportunities for strengthening international cooperation and developing new directions; QUAD leaders (India, Japan, USA, and Australia) have agreed recently to deliver one billion doses of coronavirus vaccine to the ASEAN countries by the end of 2022.

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

On the one hand Pekin, New Delhi, and Moscow, are not members of the DAC; in their foreign development assistance (FDA) the non-concessional element is important; the political, ecological, social, and financial prerequisites for lending are much more flexible compared to the traditional ODA donors. For this reason, the ODA related data will not be able to explain the Chinese, Indian and Russian foreign development aid models in their entirety. On the other hand, provided that the Data Survey on TOSSD has only first been conducted in 2019 the TOSSD methodology is too recent to be chosen as a unique base of research. Therefore, we will explore both of ODA and TOSSD related available data. In this manner we will demonstrate concessional and non-concessional financial flows in destination to developing countries provided by China, India and Russia under bilateral, triangular and multilateral format and their tendencies of development for the near future. In addition, after chronological summarizing of the relevant facts, we tried to see the trends for the coming years.

Common features in the foreign development aid of China, India and Russia

Motivations

In general, a foreign development assistance arises from the following rationales: idealistic reasons; close cultural (ideology, religion, common language) and geographic-historical (common borders, region-level perspective, and colonial past) ties; economic expectation (access to natural resources, employment solution for donor); strategic importance for the donor countries; recipient's economic and political potential, military, political and economic alliances, and common security.

In the doctrine the economic and political consideration for international development assistance is largely underlined. For the post-soviet era scholars "*the effectiveness of foreign development aid must be assessed ... from the point of view of strengthening the security of donor countries*" (N.A. Kasymova, 2011), "*prevention of the problem or minimizing its consequences for Russia*" (Kosachev, 2014). Bermeo from Duke University states that "*... stimulating development in the poorest countries became one of the tools for solving the internal problems of developed countries*" (Bermeo, 2017).

For the current fiscal year 2021 China and Russia are upper-middle-income economies and India is lower-middle-income country. They face several ecological, demographical, and economic problems. Nevertheless, China and India, described by the Western countries as "*growing powers*", and Russia - "*regional power up to 2045*" (2015 UK National Security Strategy) "*seeking to restore its great power status*" (US National Security Strategy 2017), have chosen to be active FDA donors.

The forms, the dominant sectors, and the geographical repartition of FDA of the three countries lead us to distinguish the following common drivers for their FDA strategy: economic empowering, increasing geopolitical weight in the multipolar world order, in particular ensuring favourable votes in the UN General Assembly, positive image building, and restriction of the other regional competitor.

The South-South Cooperation: the ins and outs

The 1955 Bandung Conference of Asian and African States laid the foundation for *South-South Cooperation* (SSC) for development and mutual assistance. Unlike Russia, which does never consider itself as a member of the *Global South*, China and India declared themselves "*Southern Countries*". But Moscow is conscious that it is in its political and pragmatic interest to work out further joint steps with the South-South countries and enter a more detailed discussion for the converging national interests (Kosachev, 2014).

The SSC donors due to their common colonial past consider that their engagements are relationships based on equality and mutual benefit; it is why they do not speak of "donors," but "development partners." Indian PM Modi's speech on India's future Africa policy of the 25th of July 2018 displayed the persistence of such values.

SSC countries are more reticent to the political, social, and ecological prerequisites of their aid and promote non-interference. The 2000 Beijing Declaration announced that "*the politicization of human rights and the imposition of human rights conditionalities on economic assistance should be vigorously opposed*". The same position was taken by Russian president Vladimir Putin in an interview realised during the first Russia-Africa Summit held on October 2019: "*Russia is ready to provide help without political or other conditions.*" At this Summit, Putin called for "*joint efforts to develop full-scale mutually beneficial co-operation ...*"

In 2015 the launch of the Russia-CELAC Mechanism was officially resolved on the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation without any conditions.

Whereas the traditional ODA donors focus on social sectors spending including education, health, and governance, many Southern donors tend to finance infrastructure and industrialisation. For example, in Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region the Chinese foreign financial aid is directed in priority to financing of the objects of infrastructure (52%), energy (31%) and the

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

remaining part is used for trade funding, budgetary support and other mixed projects (Levy and Rose, 2019). India also allocated many lines of credit for the infrastructure construction such as a Colombo-Matara railway, a coal power plant at Sampur (in Sri Lanka); Zaranj-Delaram highway, 220 KV power transmission line (in Afghanistan); and Tamu-Kaleva-Kalemyo railway (in Myanmar). Russian aid is, globally, concentrated in the energy sector (USD 6 billion's loan by Rosneft to Venezuela as advance payment for future oil deliveries) (K. Lou, R. Sagdiev, 2019).

Formats of foreign development assistance

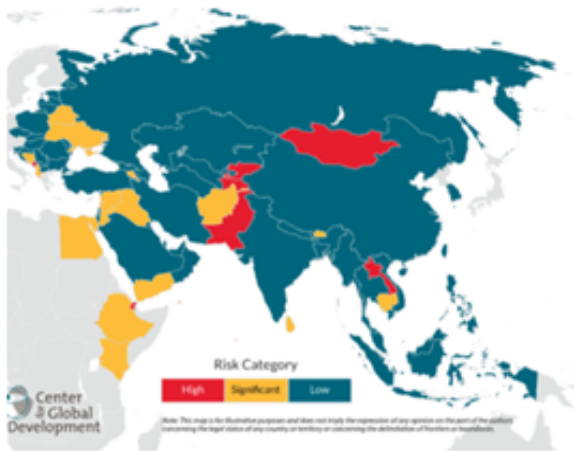
China's foreign development aid model

China began engaging in FDA in 1950, one year after the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), based essentially on ideology. With the openness policy of 1978, Beijing gradually moved to seeking of its economic utility; with the collapse of the USSR appeared a Chinese political ambition to participate in post-Soviet space (Kashin V.B, Korolev A.S, Pyatachkova A.S, 2017). Beijing diminished by half its debt from DAC donors during the first decade of 2000s (Potapenko, 2014).

Pursuant to the 2010 National Conference on Foreign Aid defining the major tasks for strengthening and improving foreign aid in new circumstances some evolution has occurred: according to the 2014 data the weight of grants has been decreased from 41% to 36.2% and the share of interest-free loans fell from 36 % to 8.1% of total Chinese aid (Kashin V.B, Korolev A.S, Pyatachkova A. S, 2017). While from 1950 to 2012, Beijing provided USD 56 billion FDA (White Paper: 2014), in 2014, the annual aid flows were estimated USD 4 billion, that are similar in volume to a third of the UK's aid budget (L. Lynch, Sh. Andersen and T. Zhu, 2020).

Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) gave a major step in the China's foreign development aid policy. Beijing sees "a strong synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as well as the development strategies of African countries." (The Beijing Summit: 2018).

Figure 3: Risk including BRI pipeline projects



Countries that have signed a MOU on the BRI with China



BRI and "going out and buy" policy now pervade the whole development assistance strategy of China. The largest Chinese companies resourced in majority by the Chinese banks, such as Chinese Development Bank, construct cross-border projects. To name a few: the African Information Highway; electrified railway Addis-Ababa – Djibouti, the railway Mombasa-Nairobi, deep-water ports on the shores of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean and Luanda International Airport in Angola... The Chinese national companies operated as the main contractor for 30% of the new energy capacity in sub-Saharan Africa in 2010-15 (Benazeraf, 2016). As early as in 2009 the Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE obtained lines of credit amounting to USD 30 and 25 billion, respectively.

The risks of debt burden resulting from the Chinese BRI-centred FDA are largely studied. J. Hurley, S. Morris, and G. Portelance found that there are 10-15 countries that could suffer from debt distress due to future BRI-related financing, with eight countries of particular concern (Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, the Maldives, Mongolia, Montenegro, Pakistan, and Tajikistan). Today, Beijing holds 35 % of the total external debt of Kyrgystan (Alda Engoian, 2020) and more than half of Tajikistan's external debt (Jardine B. and Lemon E., 2020). Around 20 per cent of all African government debt is owed to China.

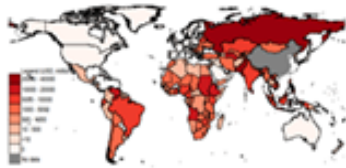
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The national companies – main constructors of the large projects, may be exposed to debt burden. 57% of China’s national debt is corporate debt, of which ~70% is in state-owned enterprises (McKinsey, 2019). In this connection we suggest that Pekin will solicit more the local and multilateral financial institutions for financing of the cross-border projects.

In 2018 Beijing established the Chinese International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA)s “to use aid as a tool to maximize China’s foreign interests and increase its influence on the global scale” (L. Cornish, 2018). The agency’s refrain is moving “from ‘foreign aid’ to ‘international development cooperation’” (从‘对外援助’到‘国际发展合作’)” (J. Mardell, 2018). Below are the major recipients of Beijing’s development assistance and the countries that have signed a “Development Cooperation Agreement” with the CIDCA (L. Lynch, Sh. Andersen, and T. Zhu, 2020).

World maps of China’s development assistance (2000-2014, financial amount)



Source : http://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/pdfs/WPS46_Aid_China_and_Growth.pdf

Countries that have signed “Development Cooperation Agreements”



Bilateral aid accounts for up to 90% of all China’s foreign development aid. In recent years, Chinese trilateral and multilateral aid has significantly expanded through the Greater Mekong Subregion Program, the Central Asia Economic Cooperation Program, and the International Poverty Reduction Center in China (G. T. Chin and B. M. Frolic, 2000). China participates in trilateral aid with USA (in Liberia) and France (in Sub Saharan Africa).

Today, China's foreign development image is genuinely complex. On the one hand, the Chinese national energy channels that would become a basis for the economic corridors of BRI (G. Christoffersen, 2018), are omnipresent over the world: China holds a 23-percent stake in Brazil’s third-largest energy firm; more than 10,000 Chinese firms operate in Africa, claiming nearly 50 percent of Africa’s internationally contracted construction market (Yang D, 2019). On the other hand, Beijing has an intention to be a leading actor in the new international financial architecture. According to the Chinese Finance Ministry “China will hold a 30.34 % stake and 26.06 % of the voting rights in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, making Beijing the largest shareholder in a Chinese-led development bank that will rival institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank”. If in 2015 at the United Nations’ tribune Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed “... to forge the new win-win partnership and build a community of destiny for humanity”, in 2018, he wants to “lead the reform of global governance” (Thomas Eder, 2018).

India’s foreign development aid model

Since gaining independence in 1947, India has developed economic and political cooperation with Asian and African states within the framework of South-South cooperation, thus reinforcing its claim to act as a representative of developing countries. In 1964 New Delhi amplified its aid with the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.

After the economic liberalization in 1991 Indian policy has gradually shifted towards paying greater attention to economic impact of the bilateral relation. In 2003 New Delhi decided to diminish its dependence on external donors and at the same time to “enlarge its support to the national efforts of other developing countries” (Government of India, 2003). In 2004 India effected the bilateral debt pre-payment amounting to USD 1.6 billion.

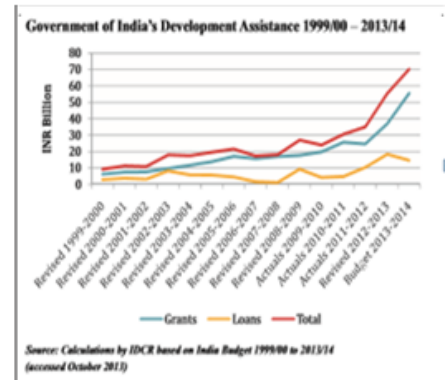
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India's aid allocation by country 2008-2010



Source: *The Needy Donor*, Andreas Fuchs, Krishna Chaitanya Vadlamannati, February 6, 2013
<https://www.aiddata.org/blog/india-the-needy-donor>



Source: Calculations by IDCR based on India Budget 1999/00 to 2013/14 (accessed October 2013)

At the same time as the BRI is declared in China, New Delhi's annual foreign development assistance budget increased from USD 940 million (in 2012) to USD 1.5-3 billion (in 2014). In 2015 India recorded credit lines for USD 11.7 billion and cancelled the debt of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries at the level of USD 24 million.

India is active player on multilateral arena. In 2004, India lent more than USD 400 million to Brazil, Indonesia and Burundi under the IMF Financial Transaction Plan. In 2007-2008, Indian development assistance under the MEA's jurisdiction reached USD420 million (Bijoy C.R., 2009). India co-founded the global network of Exim Banks and Development Finance Institutions (G-NEXID) and promoted the creation of the Development Cooperation Fund (DCF) under the ECOSOC.

Nevertheless, Indian politicians have no illusions regarding its financial capacity to overshadow the powerful neighbour, China: "*We need Africa not only for oil but for political power too.... but we do not have the money of the Chinese or the military might of the Americans. Therefore we have to rely on cooperating with African nations...*" (Walz and Ramachandran, 2010); "*It would be suicidal for the Government of India to match port for port and airport for airport with China*" (MEA of India, 2018). India is involved in several regional development banks in Africa, its shares are far lower than China's. India holds 0.27 per cent of the shares in the African Development Bank, China 1.2 per cent; for the West African Development Bank the figures are 0.07 per cent and 1.09 per cent respectively, and for Afreximbank 0.24 per cent and 5.48 per cent respectively (Wagner C, 2019).

Qualified duly as the "*oscillating pivot state*" (Ivashentsov G.A) "*swinging between East and West*" (Manoj Joshi, 2019), India is looking for other groupings in its own interests and become a member of the JAI (Japan-America-India trilateral), Quad (US, Australia, India and Japan) not limited to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Russia-India-China Groupings (RIC) and BRICS, of which China and Russia are members too.

In the FDA matter New Delhi is more actively committed under selective triangular format. The triangular relation permits to India have one foot on two boats: continue its engagement within the frame of SSC on the one hand, and thanks to the ODA traditional donors enlarge its financial capacity to allocate resources, learn from their experience and share their geopolitical values, on the other hand. As ECOSOC stated, "*triangular cooperation is acting as a bridge between South-South and North-South cooperation*".

Thus in 2014 New Delhi signed with USA "Vision Statement for the Strategic Partnership (SGP)" and the "India-US Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development". The *Feed the Future India Triangular Training* (FTF-ITT) programme, launched in 2016 was a step forward in the US-India Triangular Cooperation Programme for Africa and is addressing the issues of massive poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

The cooperation with the European Union's countries (EU), specifically within the frame of "Asia Connectivity Policy" and "India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025" set up new instruments for cooperation in third countries.

"Statement of Intent on Partnership for Cooperation in Third Countries" signed by India and UK in 2015 destined to maximise the development impact of Indian partners in generating research, mobilising innovations, delivering services, and promoting economic exchange through investment and trade. The UK-India Triangular Cooperation has conceptualised several breakthrough projects such as The DFID-TERI Partnership for Clean Energy Access and Improved Policies for Sustainable Development; "Supporting India's Trade Preferences for Africa", the Strategic Health and Nutrition Partnership; The Global

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

Knowledge Partnership Programme ; the Global Research Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security, Health and Women; The India–UK Global Partnership Programme on Development and The Innovative Ventures and Technology for Development.

Based on the 2000 India and Germany strategic partnership the two countries have been promoting programmes in India and Africa to expand alternative energies and improve energy efficiency.

Russia's foreign development aid model

Moscow's foreign development aid began with the coming to power of Khrushchev. Soviet support in 1960 in a share of gross national product, was roughly equal to the United States' aid contributions at the time (Asmus G., Fuchs A., Müller A., 2017). The Soviet Union succeeded to create loyal groupings consisting of the socialism-oriented countries and some of the non-allied countries.

After the cessation of the USSR due to the then economic and political situations its successor, Russian Federation could not provide the foreign development assistance at the same level as her predecessor. But the *"inherited mentality of a superpower"* (Beletskaya M, 2015) was not forgotten. Thus, after the transition to the market economy and testing of its political allies formed in 1990s, Russia came back to the international development aid scene in the first decade of 2000s.

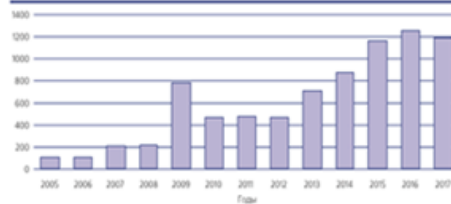
Moscow's international development assistance more than tripled (from USD 520.9 million to USD1.7 billion) between 2010 and 2015. In 2016 Russia wrote off USD 424.94 million's foreign debt land in 2017 provided USD 1.19 billion aid to developing countries (Zaitsev, Knobeli, 2017).

Recipients of Russian aid (2011-2015)



Source: in Russia's foreign aid re-emerges, by Gerda Asmus, Andreas Fuchs, Angelika Müller, April 9, 2018, <https://www.aiddata.org/blog/russias-foreign-aid-re-emerges>

Russian foreign development aid 2005-2017 (in mln USD)



Source: Ministry of Finance, Russian Federation in: РОССИЯ КАК МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ДОНОР В 2017 г. | Юрий ЗАЙЦЕВ, Александр КНОБЕЛЬ// Russia as an international donor in 2017; Ил. Zaitsev, A. Knobel// Russian economic development, vol.25; n°. December 2018-January 2019

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

By 2016, Russia's top 10 foreign development aid recipients were:

TOP 10 COUNTRIES THAT RECEIVED RUSSIAN FOREIGN AID BETWEEN 2011-2016 (in mln USD)							
Countries	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total 2011-2016
Kyrgyzstan	12,65	37,92	76,73	202,87	322,81	198,81	851,79
Cuba		5,58	2,76	176,98	351,97	352	889,29
North Korea	22,39	15,5	33,61	68,42	59,77	58,63	258,32
Nicaragua	73,63	10,86	36,4	17,24	5,56	12,04	155,73
Serbia	13,1	9,49	36,47	16,21	11,25	11,7	98,22
Armenia	3	5,79	5,26	5,86	37,37	40,33	97,61
Tadjikistan	6	15,21	17,12	19,48	21,76	13,66	93,23
Syria		11,17	12,95	7,33	22,1	4	57,55
Mozambique		0,09	13,05	8	8	8	37,14
Guinea	5,87	0,97		16,79	6,25	6,32	36,2

Source : MOF, Russian Federation

At the same time as India signed its bilateral agreements with USA and UK, in 2014, the Russian aid was largely concentrated to the CIS countries, notably within the framework of the Eurasian Economic community. It was in line with the 2014 Concept of the State Policy of the Russian Federation on the international development assistance. In this area Russia took a decisive part in the creation and operation of the Eurasian Development Bank and Anti-crisis Fund EurAsEC (2009). Russia was the second donor of the EAEU in 2017 after the EU development financial institutions.

The ascension of Beijing and New Delhi as emerging donors with their respective BRI (China) or the “Mosam Project and the Spice Path” (India) pushed Moscow to review her FDA strategy. As from 2015 Moscow shifted away from multilateral format, judged as “largely philanthropic and impersonal” (Kosachev, 2014) to bilateral format. “Only under the bilateral format is our aid seen and clearly associated with Russia... and becomes not only a tool to support partners from poorer countries, but also an effective instrument of foreign policy and influence”, wrote a former head of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo). “The international development assistance is not a “charity for the sake of charity, but pragmatic method of realization of national interests”, reported a governmental document. If by 2015 42% of Moscow’s total aid was provided on a multilateral basis, in 2016 a bilateral assistance reached 74.5% of the global assistance. There are few data regarding the Russian triangular cooperation outside the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). We could name the participation of Russia in financing for a Libyan museum.

Nevertheless, from the Russian perspectives the economic and political spin-offs resulting from the FDA are estimated insufficient. But at the same time, there is a gap between the ambitions to gain leading position in international development assistance and a real state of play. Russia remains a modest player at the FDA scene compared to many other donors such as USA and China. The former head of Rossotrudnichestvo deplored that “Unfortunately, our ability to legislate the FDA “fashion”, and, as a result, the pursuit of national interests in the international development arena is still limited”.

In addition, due to the current international sanction the parameters of actions of Russia are limited. Under the American pressure, the Russian state company Gazprom was obliged to sell its equity in Venezuelan energy company. Conscious of the importance of bilateral relation with regional institutions (ASEAN, African Union, and CARIBBEAN Integrations structures) Russia is looking to build and consolidate its cooperation with these structures. The Russia’s 2016 Foreign Policy Concept highlighted the growing role of these regions in global affairs and stated the importance of strengthening the relations with them. Thus, the first ASEAN-Russian summit held in 2005, the LAC and Russian summit and the Russia-African summit took place in 2019.

If we use the expression of Alexander Gorchakov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire (1856-1882) “Russia is composing herself” and is examining the modalities to conciliate the outputs of the FDA with the Russian interest and address the impact of the international prolonged sanction. Between these options we cite the recent health diplomacy consisting in production of the Russian vaccine SPUTNIK V in Argentina. (CNN: March 3, 2021).

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

Cooperation or competition

China-India-Russia: a scalene triangle

Cooperation of three countries in the matter of FDA: trilateral and bilateral levels

Moscow, Beijing and New Delhi recently unite their voices in the field of FDA: at the 16th Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of three countries in 2019 the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and urged developed countries to honor their ODA commitments in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

In the Russian literature “*the cooperation with China in promoting the development of infrastructure and energy in the poorest countries of Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America*” was encouraged. In 2016 Beijing and Moscow jointly declared their desire to cooperate in the matter of “assistance to developing countries” and a creation of the China-Russia Investment Fund for Regional Cooperation and Development in the amount of USD 14.5 billion has been decided.

The Chinese loans to Russia increased by 50 per cent between 2014 and 2015 and reached USD 15.6 billion. In 2017 the Russian counterpart repaid USD 9.5 billion (Sino-Russian relations: 2019). At his CIDCA press conference of March 2021, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi declared the interest of China in the mutually beneficial cooperation with Russia, by further synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union.

During the Soviet period, 16 % of the Indian foreign development aid came from Moscow along with Aid Consortium and Plan Colombo. The sides are working towards the creation of an ‘Energy Bridge’ between the two countries, which is based on robust civil nuclear cooperation, LNG sourcing, partnership in the Oil and Gas sector, and engagement in renewable energy sources. Moscow and New Delhi decided to coordinate their mutual effort in destination of the third countries. For instance, the implementation of the Rooppur NPP construction project in Bangladesh is put into place along with the Indian Department of Atomic Energy, the Ministry of Science and Technology of Bangladesh and the Russian state-run atomic energy group Rosatom (Rosatom). Srei Infrastructure Finance signed a memorandum of understanding with Vnesheconom bank to create a USD 200 million IT and Innovation Fund to explore investment opportunities in technology companies in Russia, India and other selected regions jointly.

As from 2015 the five-year plan for the development of trade and economic relations between China and India began to operate.

Rivalry between the trio

India, Russia, and China see each other not only as partners, but also as competitors. The competition is accentuated on the one hand by the economic factors such as a need for energy resources; access to the markets, and on the other hand, by the geopolitical and ecological factors (fight for permanent membership in the UN Security Council; territorial problems; access to water resources, a constantly growing number of Chinese dams...).

The competition for influence is intense everywhere where their interests coincide: in the Central Asia, where the Russian footprint is important; in the South and Southeast Asia that are a “*kind of hybrid geo-cultural spaces equally susceptible to both Indian and Chinese influences*”, also in “*hopeful*” Africa (Mullen:2014) and in LAC.

The largest share of Moscow’s aid flow is directed to Kyrgyzstan. Between 2011 and 2016 Moscow provided to Bishkek USD 851 million’s aid and in 2013 USD 188.9 million debt was cancelled. Kyrgyzstan’s borrowing from China was raised from USD 10 million in 2008 to USD 1.7 billion in 2019. The half of foreign aid inflows to Tajikistan, composed essentially of a preferential loan destined to the development of the energy system, comes from Beijing. The Indian presence in the Central Asia is enhancing by the noticeable presence in Tajikistan (Ciboulet T., 2020); in 2018 New Delhi announced USD 20 million grants for mutually agreed projects. (MEA India: 2020). In addition, an oil refinery of USD 1 billion is being built with Indian aid in Mongolia (President.mn, 2019).

Producing nearly 2 million barrels per day, as well as 500 million cubic feet natural gas, Southeast Asia is an important FDA recipient. Beijing’s aid to the ASEAN countries has been increased almost seven times during 2005 – 2014 (from USD 3 billion to 20 billion). The ASEAN-Russian Federation Summit acting from 2005 is expected to strengthen a cooperation “*in mutually beneficial fields such as industry and power engineering*”. From the perspective of New Delhi, its FDA budget for Asia does not

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

ceased to grow. In addition, India enhances the country's influence via the “Act in East” strategy, the “Neighborhood Policy” and the “Security and Growth for All in the Region policy”.

Through the programmes like the ITEC, the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (TEAM-9), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Focus Africa programme during 2008 – 2015 India has committed to the African countries USD 7.4 billion in concessional credit and allocated USD 1.2 billion in grant. At the Third India – Africa summit (2015), India offered additional 10 billion US dollars in concessional loan. It is noted that Africa supplies around 24 per cent of the Indian energy thereby reducing its dependence on Middle Eastern countries.

Today China is the largest oil importer over the world. It is why about 70% of Chinese economic aid to Africa is concentrated to states with rich reserves of mineral resources - Angola, Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Sudan (Potapenko, 2014). At the China – Africa Summits 2015 and 2018, USD 60 billion financing for Africa was announced. Today, 8 out of 10 top recipients of Chinese assistance are the African countries (Brennan D, 2020). But despite the important scale of the Chinese FDA, the largest donor of Africa remains the USA, that disbursed USD 12 billion just to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017 (Brautigam D., 2020).

Russia contributed on average USD 44.6 million to Africa annually between 2010 and 2015, that is still far from its 284.8 million to Asian countries. In 2011, Russia cancelled the African debt amounting at the level of USD 36.2 million (Minfin, 2014). Taking into consideration its weak economic presence in Africa, where less than 1 % of total foreign direct investment stock is originated from Russia (Europarl, 2019), Moscow tries to reshape post-Soviet cooperation with the continent: The Russian national energy companies signed a memorandum for drilling rights in Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria, a preliminary agreement to build a nuclear power plant in Ethiopia and agreed to begin an Egyptian reactor construction.

China's loan commitments to Latin American and Caribbean governments for the 2005-2016 totalled more than USD 141 billion that exceeds the sovereign credits that this region received over the same period from institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank and the Development Bank of Latin America, which amounted to USD 117.8 billion, USD 85.5 billion and USD 55.1 billion, respectively. In LAC the “loan-for-oil” deals, where loans are repaid by the direct supply of fuel, mineral or agricultural resources, account for around 50% of the total funding (K. Levy and C. Rose, 2019).

At the first Indian-Caribbean Summit 2019 PM Indian Modi announced USD 14 million grants for community development projects in the region. He also extended USD 150 millions in line of credit for renewable energy, solar and climate change related projects. There are a lot of expectations and critics regarding the Indian FDA in the region (Arora S, 2020; Misra D, 2019). The Central America received from Moscow a development assistance of the same magnitude (USD 170.8 million in 2016).

Position of other regional powers

The regional competition is more evident when we compare the trio's figures with those of the regional important donors such as Japan and South Korea. The following geographical and geopolitical drivers reinforce the rivalry: territorial integrity, a long-term economic security (energy independence, access to minerals, market for goods) and geopolitical influence (permanent seat in UNSC, number of quote-parts in the important world financial institutions).

P. J. Schraeder, S.W. Hook, and B. Taylor found the following three types of recipients of Tokyo's financial aid during the “cold” war: (1) important sources of raw materials vital to Japanese industry, such as copper in Zambia and Zaire, uranium in Niger, and chromium in Madagascar; (2) potential future sources of such raw materials, including chromium in the Sudan and oil in Gabon; or (3) major economic markets, such as Kenya and Nigeria, capable of absorbing Japanese exports. Today, post-Fukushima Japan's reliance on imported fossil fuel has increased to almost 90% which led Tokyo to activate its FDA in Africa. Starting from the creation of a Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), 1993, Japan allocated USD 47 billion to African countries. At TICAD 2019 the Japanese PM made a commitment of private sector investment of more than USD 20 billion. In the current year Japan agrees USD 668 million loan to African Development Bank fund to help replenish the lender's main development fund (Reuters, 2021).

With the expansion of China, Japan focuses on the fields where the Japanese image will be associated with its technical skill and quality under the flagship of the Tokyo Strategy 2018 and the Japanese Partnership of Quality Infrastructure (PQI) program (USD 200 billion funding for the projects to be carried out in Africa and the South Pacific as well as Asia). Japan is conscious about losing its geopolitical weight and is taking significant steps to mitigate this situation both independently and in reliance on the partnership with other states. For example, India and Japan work together in the Indo-Pacific, including Africa, within the program Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) launched in 2016, axed on quality infrastructure, institutional connectivity, enhancing

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

capacities and skills, and people-to-people partnership. On the other hand, Tokyo does not exclude to cooperate with its rival: During his visit to Beijing in 2018, the Japanese PM Abe declared to cooperate with China at regional and global levels on different fields including BRI. Beijing highlighting the relation of two countries “*have gotten back on track*” and declared “*The Chinese side stands ready to work...to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation*” (Chinese President Xi Jinping’s phone call to the Japanese PM: September 25, 2020).

Another regional power, South Korean ODA has been increased 30 times from the second half of 80s until the midst 2000s (Yejoo K, 2012). According to the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in 2013 South Korea allocated to the Asian countries USD 210.63 million; USD 95.78 million to the African countries, USD 55.34 million to the countries of Latin America; and USD 21.78 million to the countries of the Middle East. As well as in Chinese practice, the South Korean firms often need the support of its government (Kalinowski T and Joung P, 2016). For example, state-owned firm Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) received in 2018 funding of 1.8 billion USD from the Import-Export Bank of Korea and the Korea Trade Insurance Corporation to commence the construction of a floating platform to process natural gas in Mozambique (Jae-man Ko and Ha-yeon Lee, 2018). The share of KOGAS investment in this exploration equals to South Korea’s nationwide demand for gas for more than five years (Owusu V, 2019).

The Korean FDA strategy is fairly noted in the development literature: “*...To establish global status as a middle power, Korea must be recognized as such by the international community. To gain this recognition, Korea must cooperate in solving prominent global issues such as poverty.*” (Hyo-sook Kim, 2017). Seoul is also seeking cooperation with its influent neighbor, China: in 2017 was signed a memorandum of understanding for inter-governmental cooperation between China and South Korea to establish a cooperation channel in the energy sector. The synergy between Seoul’s “Eurasian Initiative” launched in 2013 in development infrastructure and China’s BRI was noted.

Conclusions

Thus, based on our research, we resume that the foreign development assistance is an instrument for assuring a long-term economic security and geopolitical influence for the donors. To achieve the expected result, the FDA is used with other political and economic leverages such as diplomacy (hard as well as soft) and foreign economic relations. This holistic approach allows understanding the impact of the political decisions took by the FDA receiving countries. For example, recently Russia cancelled the remaining debt owed by Guyana, wrote off USD 32 billions in Cuba’s Cold War-era debt and issued new credits. Russian companies Rusal, Gazprom, Rosatom and Rosneft operate in the sectors such as power plant, nuclear technology, oil, gas in several LAC countries (data by the Caribbean Council; R. Evan Ellis, 2015). In 2017 Moscow decided to refinance to Venezuela USD 3.15 billion in bilateral loans and to delay almost all payments until after 2023. In addition, Moscow’s cultural and military cooperation in this region is notable. The impact of these measures taken is evident: in 2014, Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela voted against the resolution condemning Russia’s action in Crimea, Brazil abstained from voting against Russia.

The Chinese alliance with the African countries provided the similar results: among others, most African countries sided with China at the United Nations General Assembly, including on North Korea’s human rights record in 2007 and on a statement to oppose the USA veto power on judicial appointments at the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization (WTO). “*More African countries attended Forum on China-Africa Cooperation than the similarly-timed UN General Assembly meeting in 2018*” (Daniel Yang, 2019).

However, these three countries are not the exception by making from their international development assistance an instrument of saving of their national interest. In the global manner, the national interest of the donors is considered and privileged. This statement is confirmed both by the empirical facts and by the official documents. The United States Government Budget for the Fiscal Year 2021 stated that the International Development Finance Corporation and the vindicated reforms at the Multilateral Development Banks will complement and enhance US strategic interests in the developing world (Budget of the United States Government, 2021). The promotion of the national interest is documented also in the United Kingdom’s aid strategy document (UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest:2015) and in the revised Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter (2015). Despite the declining in 2019 the United States remains the largest ODA donor (USD 34.6 billion). The US is followed by Germany (USD 23.8 billion), the United Kingdom (USD 19.4 billion) and Japan (USD 15.5 billion) (OECD, 2020).

Throughout this paper we aimed to evidence the scale of the foreign development aid by China, India, and Russia. The task was complicated by the fact that their foreign development aid figures cover not only concessional and non-concessional aids but also foreign direct investment data, cultural diplomacy, and foreign trade. On the other hand, the detailed information per projects is not available; the grant-element is not indicated clearly. 50% of China’s foreign lending is not reported to the World Bank or International Monetary Fund.

Asia Power Watch

an observatory of Asia-Pacific economic power

In the global manner, lack of transparency and irregularity in mutual accountability undermine the efficacy of the development aid. During the last decade, the indebtedness of the developing countries is increased critically. Between 2010 and 2020, the LAC external debt almost doubled (from 1.3 trillion USD to 2.4 trillion USD); the debt situation is also alarming for Africa. In our mind, the enhanced cooperation between the all multilateral developing banks (MDB) and national development banks will improve considerably the situation.

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