

Pak-Russia Relations: Exploring the New Avenues

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Abstract

The relations between Pakistan and Russia are developing vis-à-vis geo-political and geo-strategic transformations in the international system. This paper seeks to study the regional and bilateral interests of both countries that influence this relationship. The convergence between the two former adversaries on counter-terrorism and narcotics control remains an integral part of their developing ties. Currently, it can be seen that military to military cooperation including defence procurement is increasing between the two states. It is important that other aspects of this relationship such as economic and technical cooperation are also being explored to build an enduring relationship. The two states have the potential to influence and improve regional and international security matrix through cooperation on counter-terrorism, drug trafficking and money laundering on bilateral as well as regional forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This would require serious efforts and a long-term commitment from both sides.

Keywords

Pakistan, Russia, Counter-terrorism, Defence Cooperation, Economic Integration, Drug Trafficking

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Introduction

The scope of Pak-Russia relations has changed over the years. Both countries are aiming to overcome a difficult past that has long been an impediment in the way of moving forward. With the Cold War period in hindsight, their rivalry, both direct and indirect, has remained etched into the memories of both states serving as one of many factors preventing close ties. It is also true that India's closeness to erstwhile the Soviet Union and adversarial relations with Pakistan on one hand and Pakistan's alignment with the United States on the other also made it difficult for the former Soviet Union and Pakistan to foster and maintain friendly ties. A process to foster better ties after the Cold War, began in 2003 under President Musharraf who visited Russia at the invitation of President Putin. Though it functioned merely as an ice-breaker since no Pakistani leader had visited Moscow in over three decades,¹ nonetheless it opened a window of opportunity to discuss bilateral relations between the two states at the highest level. Since then, both states have strengthened military to military ties with convergence on combatting terrorism, narcotics control, organized crime and more recently in furthering objectives of regional forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

This change in the relations between the two countries owes much to the changing geo-political and geo-strategic environment. The US is beginning to realign itself in many regions especially in the Indo-Pacific region. This change has stirred a shift in its South Asia Policy which has led to overtures towards India to balance China. The Russian policy makers understand that this growing alliance will affect Russia's position in South Asia.

Historically, Indo-Russian relations have remained deeply rooted in defence procurement and production of military equipment. Even now, India continues to be Russia's biggest arms buyer at

thirty-five percent of the total Russian arms exports it purchased in 2017.² The recent deal worth \$5.2 Billion of S-400 Air Defence System is a hallmark of their deep-seated and vibrant relations. India has also leased a nuclear-powered Submarine INS Chakra from Russia for a period of 10 years, worth \$2 Billion, which gives India an edge in the naval domain as well.³ At the same time, India has been diversifying its defence procurement partners which has had an effect on Russia's defence industry. Thus, in order to boost its defence industry and attract new buyers, Russia is also diversifying its clientele and reaching out to new markets, where Pakistan figures in. The uplifting of arms embargo on Pakistan in 2014 was essentially a Russian maneuver to clear the way for the sale of military equipment to Pakistan.

In the backdrop of Afghanistan problem, both states have been working on different platforms to bring stability to Afghanistan. Since 2014, Pakistan and Russia have been strengthening bilateral relations which include military to military ties, energy deals, defence procurement, and anti-narcotics collaboration. There is a growing ambition and desire from both sides to bolster ties in all these domains. Nonetheless, it is easy to blow up the scope of relations out of proportion and undermine areas that require attention as well as have the potential to forge closer ties.

Moreover, it is yet to be seen whether the two countries can explore a defence trade relationship amid a weak economic situation being faced by both states. With the new government taking reins in Pakistan that seeks to improve the economic situation, there is a possibility of increased cooperation in defence trade, economic cooperation, technical assistance, and other arenas as well. How Pakistan and Russia use these opportunities and overcome the difficulties is yet to be seen. In this paper,

therefore, this relationship's opportunities and challenges are discussed in detail.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for Pakistan's improving relations with Russia is not based on a zero-sum game anymore. Both states appreciate that in a complex evolving international system, it is important to engage with multiple partner states. Moreover, during the Cold War, alliance systems remained the basis of international rules of engagement. However, such rules do not apply anymore as manifest in the way current international relations are evolving. More and more states are seeking to work with states with which they had adversarial relationships in the past. For instance, while the US and Cuba were Cold War rivals and their history is marred by acrimony, both states began building a working relationship under former US President Obama.

Similarly, Pakistan and Russia are looking for ways to put the Cold War rivalry and the Afghan War behind them. For Pakistan, the importance of ties with the US is significant as ever, and it is not likely to disengage with the United States. Rather Pakistan is constantly looking to foster closer ties with other big powers in the region. Until the recent past, Pakistan remained a close ally of the United States, however, due to the current geo-strategic and geopolitical tilt of the US' policy, it favors India over Pakistan. Pakistan's relationship with Russia can be described using the derivative power⁴ theory coined by Michael Handel wherein he notes that in order to increase its own power quotient in the regional or international system, a small state derives its power from a major power. For Pakistan, one of the reasons behind improving ties with Russia is to have a third source for defence procurement beside China and the US. Therefore, for Pakistan, improving its ties with Russia is based on its own objectives of

securing an ally in the form of a major power that can help meet its security requirements.

It is important to understand the geo-politics of South Asia to gauge how Pakistan is affected by the role of the United States in the region. As a part of its geo-strategic goals, the US seeks to employ India to contain China which is visible in the growing Indo-US relationship. Naturally, this has implications for the security of Pakistan and the strategic stability of the region. Being a smaller power, it is important for Pakistan to minimize the losses incurred from losing the US as a strategic ally on one hand, and preparing itself against the growing strategic balance in India's favor on the other. In any case, while Pakistan appreciates that Russia and India have been strategic allies over six decades, it is earnestly moving to develop an enduring relationship with Russia.

Similarly, for Russia, the importance of India as a defence partner cannot be disregarded and while it wants to enhance bilateral ties with Pakistan, it is unlikely that it will result in strained ties with India. With regard to Russia's ties with Europe and US, it can be observed that after the annexation of Crimea into Russian Federation in 2014, its relationship with the West has deteriorated.⁵ The US Strategic Posture Review flags the growing tensions between the West and Russia owing to the latter's alleged violations of international legal and political commitments.⁶

Nevertheless, while the significance of the US and Europe remains high in terms of its foreign and economic policies, Russia is also looking towards the East. The 'Look East'⁷ policy announced by President Putin underlines the importance of Russia's relations with the Asia-Pacific region. Russia needs markets for its military hardware, industrial goods and energy products. As a country of

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220 million people, Pakistan provides a huge market for Russian goods and services.

Russia is facing a security challenge emanating from Afghanistan which seeps into the Central Asian States and leads into Russian territory. Following Russian victories against Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (now Islamic State [IS]), some of the militants escaped to Afghanistan which Russia believes to be a source of threat to Russia's security as well as Central Asian States – a region which is essentially a sphere of Russian influence. As almost ten percent of the Russian population is Muslim, and the Central Asian States are Muslim states, there exist fears in Russian establishment that parts of the population can be sensitized by IS to be used against the Russian government and territorial sovereignty.

As Afghanistan's neighbor and a frontline state in the US War on Terror, Pakistan has not only faced the war but also overcome, to a large extent, the challenges it had posed. It has destroyed terrorist and militant networks and hideouts inside its territory after stern military action against the militant groups. Russia, therefore finds in Pakistan's success an opportunity to learn from its experience and seeks to improve its ties with Pakistan to address the Afghanistan issue. To achieve this common objective, increased cooperation in the fields of anti-terrorism and combatting organized crime with Pakistan is imperative.

It can be observed that Russia's interest in Pakistan is not based on a linear set of objectives. This growing friendship is based on mutual security apprehensions, economic interests and regional cooperation. Similarly, Pakistan's interest in developing stronger ties with Russia is also multi-faceted and ranges from developing a defence partnership including defence procurement, meeting its energy needs to reducing dependence on one country for its security needs.

Relations-Post USSR

The disintegration of the Soviet Union is marked as a turning point in Russian history. While Gorbachev's 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' policies were already in place, the real move forward towards an open economy and political system only fell into place once the communist system collapsed.

During this period, Pakistan and the newly formed Russian Federation began to see eye to eye on many issues, which can be seen through the high-level talks and visits by officials. During this time, the need for collaboration in the fields of defence, outer space technology and peaceful uses of nuclear energy were deliberated upon. However, there came a standstill in the relations when Pakistan recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Russia viewed this as a provocation and a possible factor that could encourage extremism in Central Asian States. Although efforts were made to improve relations during the second government of Nawaz Sharif from 1997-1999, however, Russia's backing of India in the Kargil War disrupted the prospects of better relations between the two states.⁸

Nevertheless, it can be seen that both states had areas of common interest. However, the policies followed by both sides did not align. During the 1990s and 2000s, major steps to improve the relations could be taken, however, the interaction between the states remained limited. As a smaller power with a smaller economy, Pakistan did not appear to be a lucrative market for Russian products. Moreover, since both states do not have common borders, they posed little significance to each other in terms of a security threat. Throughout the 1990s until 2001, Pakistan and US did not enjoy close relations and Pakistan had been placed under sanctions by the latter. Tense relations with the United States

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could have created space for improving Russia-Pakistan relations but did not happen as Russia was then mired in its own internal security and economic problems.

Nonetheless, the bilateral relations between Russia and Pakistan slightly improved after 9/11 – Pakistan’s abandoning of the Taliban might have triggered the thaw in the relations between them. It wasn’t until President Pervez Musharraf’s ⁹ visit to Moscow in 2003 that the relation’s dynamics changed.¹⁰ This visit provided both room and stimulus to improve ties between the two states and marked the beginning of a new era in Pak-Russia relations. Pakistan relaxed its position on Russia’s application as an observer state in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2005¹¹ while Russia reciprocated by accommodating Pakistan’s observer status at Shanghai Cooperation Organization.¹² In the years that followed, the evolving strategic relationship between the US and India– the Indo-US deal in focus – also provided room for development in Pak-Russia relations in due course. On the other hand, Russia under Putin was overhauling its military and defence production facilities. Similarly, the US presence in Afghanistan after 9/11, prompted Russia to reevaluate its regional policy and reset its future role in the region. Under these circumstances, both Russia and Pakistan found a conducive environment to develop closer ties.

Evolving Pakistan and Russia Relations

Both Pakistan and Russia now understand better the dynamics of their bilateral relations and the need to develop strong military to military and institutional relationship. As Pakistan faces a huge energy deficit and Russia is one of the biggest exporters of oil and gas in the world, Russia finds Pakistan an important market for its energy exports.

It is also important to understand the growing relations in the perspective of commonalities of interests of Pakistan and Russia in South Asia and its neighborhood. While Russia is seeking economic partners in South and East Asia, it also wants to ensure a safer neighborhood. In its quest to keep its areas of influence secure, Russia wants to restrain elements of dissension in the Central Asian States contiguous to Afghanistan. There are two major issues that Russia wants to cater to in Afghanistan; militancy/terrorism and drug trafficking. It is important to note the enhanced efforts by Russia to keep militancy in Afghanistan in check since Russia was instrumental in driving ISIS out of Iraq and Syria¹³ which resulted in some of those groups and their offshoots shifting to uncontrolled areas in Afghanistan. There have since emerged newer layers and sources of threats to Russia and its areas of influence emanating from Afghanistan. The self-styled Islamic State of Khorasan also known as ISKP has added to the list of militant entities operating from within Afghanistan.¹⁴ ISIS's Khorasan affiliate in the north of Afghanistan is viewed by Russia as a direct threat to both its own national security and that of the Central Asian states within its sphere of influence. Naturally the presence of anti-Russian entities worries the Russian security forces and intelligence agencies. It is evident in Russia's continued efforts to curtail advances being made by militants towards the Central Asian States. Under SCO, an anti- terrorism, separatism, extremism force was established known as the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure or more commonly called as RATS.¹⁵ Both Pakistan and Russia, under this arrangement, have agreed to jointly work to improve coordination between their forces fighting terrorism and increase efficiency in eliminating terrorism from the region.¹⁶

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Moreover, both Russia and Pakistan seek an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned national reconciliation process to pave way for peace in the war-torn country and settling Afghanistan's drawn-out struggle and insurgency. Russia is supportive of Pakistan's efforts in Afghanistan to create an environment of peace in the region and Pakistan reciprocates by supporting and participating in Russia's initiative of holding Afghan peace talks.¹⁷ In 2017, as a part of Russian led Afghanistan Peace Initiative, a conference was held in Moscow where 12 nations including China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, India, and Central Asian nations were invited. The US, which was also invited earlier, declined to participate in the peace initiative which severely undermined the Russian efforts. Similarly, in 2018, another conference was to be held and Russia invited the Taliban as well. However, Afghanistan declined to attend the conference this time citing the Afghan government's decision to hold direct talks with the Taliban without foreign involvement.¹⁸ Once again, the United States also declined Russia's invitation to participate and remarked, "We support Afghan-owned and led initiatives to advance a peace settlement in Afghanistan."¹⁹ Russia has since postponed the dialogue. It has, however, continued its efforts to persuade Afghanistan to rejoin the dialogue process. There had since been a consensus on holding the conference and it was held in November 2018. Afghanistan sent an unofficial delegation and the US also participated in the Moscow conference. There was an agreement that these talks should "lead to direct talks between US (Afghan government) and the Taliban."²⁰

Currently, the scope of Pak-Russia ties can be divided into three major parts; firstly, there is an increased activity and cooperation in the military to military relations, secondly, Pakistan and Russia are collaborating on combatting drug-fighting and organized

crime. Finally, the prospects of an enduring and fruitful economic relations need to be analyzed.

Military Relations

Pakistan has been combatting terrorism in its own territory and has successfully uprooted major sources of terrorism from the country following operations Zarb-e-Azb²¹ and Radd-ul-Fassad.²² These operations were well received in the Russian security and political spheres. Russia commends Pakistan's efforts to curb and eliminate the rampant militancy, extremism, terrorism, and separatism.²³

Russia appreciates Pakistan's expertise in tackling the militants, apparent in its eagerness to hold joint counter-terrorism exercises with Pakistan. While the US undermines the progress made by Pakistan with regards to combatting militancy, Russia has found an opportunity to learn from the Pakistani experience and apply it against the forces that threaten its own territory or areas of influence. Russia understands that Pakistan's north-western and south western areas have a difficult terrain for navigation and combatting, therefore the successes against militant forces in this region exemplify Pakistan's capabilities even more.

A first of its kind between the two states, a joint-exercise took place in 2017, known as Druzba (Friendship in Russian language) 2017 in Pakistan.²⁴ A second set of joint exercises took place in Karachi-Cherkess in Russia.²⁵ In the same year, Senior Russian military officers also visited Waziristan, an area bordering Afghanistan which was formerly under the control of terrorists, and endorsed Pakistan's claims of its success against militants. Pakistan joined as a formal member of SCO in June 2017 and

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participated in a joint-military exercise, which also included India, aimed at countering terrorism.²⁶

Similarly, the friendly visits by a fleet of Russian anti-submarine ships and other vessels at Karachi Port and the visit of two Russian ships to participate in the Pakistani-Russian Joint anti-drug exercises in the Arabian Sea, code-named Arabian Monsoon 2014 and Arabian Monsoon 2015 show that the two states are jointly working to control narcotics and drug trafficking in the region through increased military to military as well as institutional ties.

It is important to analyze Pakistan's success in the war on terror. The political stance taken by the US where it criticizes Pakistan for its failures in Afghanistan does not resonate well in the Russian echelons of policy-making. The US, while having made breakthroughs in many regions of Afghanistan has been unable to reduce Taliban presence from the Afghan territory.²⁷ While Pakistan's western border and Afghanistan's eastern border share the same topography, the success achieved by Pakistan is all the more remarkable keeping in view its limited resources. Pakistan's success can be gauged by the number of terror incidents which have gone down from around 5500 in 2013 to nearly 500 in 2018.²⁸ Pakistan's military has naturally stirred not only Russia's interest but also put trust in Pakistan's ability to wipe out terrorism. The military to military contact in anti-terror activities is important for Russia as it faces similar issues where destabilizing factors including trans-border militants, terrorists and religious extremists pose threat to Russian internal security. The unstable political and security environment in Afghanistan has seriously affected regional security and stability. Therefore, both Russia and Pakistan are working together to ensure that Afghanistan becomes stable.²⁹

In order to formalize cooperation against militancy and terrorism, agreements have been signed between Pakistan and Russia to begin a new period of cooperation and collaboration against terrorism and fifth generation warfare. In 2015, the two countries signed a defence cooperation agreement and a military-technical cooperation accord – which allows arms trade between the two countries and cooperation in weapons development.³⁰

With regards to defence hardware and technology, Pakistan has shown interest in buying Russian air defense systems, Su-35 Jets, and T-90 Tanks.³¹ Currently, Pakistan is in talks with Russia to purchase both. However, there remains a caveat to the sale of military hardware to Pakistan that can be used for other purposes apart from counter-terrorism missions. It is yet to be seen whether Russia would want to engage in such a defence partnership with Pakistan which could be an irritant in its ties with India.

In what can be assessed as a landmark change in Pak-Russia relations, the two states signed the Contract on Admission of Service Members of Pakistan in Russian Federation's Training Institutes during the Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee (JMCC).³² This will allow Pakistani troops to be trained in Russia. This change comes as the US suspended the financing for a military training program for Pakistani officers.³³ Russia's bid to replace the US to train Pakistan's military officers can subsequently translate into further cooperation in the military to military relations. With this program, the goodwill for Russia in Pakistan's policy corners will increase.

Cooperation on Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime

The issue of drug trafficking as a part of organized crime is also a serious concern for the Russian Federation.³⁴ Due to the large-

scale lawlessness in Afghanistan, opium and other drugs such as Hashish production is growing. Illegal drug consumption in Russia is a serious issue³⁵ and by some estimates, up to 85 percent of poppy cultivation area in Afghanistan is under Taliban control.³⁶ Moreover, apart from the drug-trafficking and illegal drug consumption, the nexus between terrorism and drug trafficking is also an issue that undermines Russia's security matrix.³⁷ The production of drugs in large quantities in Afghanistan and its trafficking to the neighborhood of Russia is a source of constant threat for Russia as the revenue generated through its trade is allegedly used to purchase weapons and recruit more militants. It is suspected that militancy and organized crime in Russia's neighborhood are being financed from these sources.³⁸

Both Pakistan and Russia have joined hands to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.³⁹ Pakistan's Interior Ministry has been playing an active part in helping Russia prevent the flow of drugs into its territory through Pakistan and a Joint Working Group is functioning to countering this menace.⁴⁰ In this regard, Pakistan and Russia have held drug-trafficking exercises and shared information to enhance cooperation. Pakistan has sent some of its Anti-Narcotics officers for training in Russia as a part of bilateral agreement. Russia, on the Quintet Forum, has also signed agreements with Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, and Tajikistan to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.⁴¹ Joint training will advance their skillset and train them to tackle the narcotics trade in the country. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia and Anti-Narcotics Forces of Pakistan have also developed information sharing on issues of countering and prevention of illicit narcotics trafficking and use of drugs as well as relevant data and expertise.⁴²

Economic Cooperation

In the wake of strained relations between Pakistan and the US, Pakistan has been seeking to adjust the direction of its foreign policy towards a possible greater regional cooperation with strong economic powers in Asia. These efforts have most notably translated into strengthening China-Pakistan economic cooperation, the most visible aspect of which is the much discussed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Russia remains another powerful possible ally, but economic relations and cooperation between the two countries have not yet taken off. During 2004-05, the bilateral volume of trade had reached \$320 million. Almost a decade later, Pakistan's exports to Russia were reduced to a mere \$234.91 million against the imports of \$206.98 million.⁴³ It can be seen that while the two countries have remained regular trading partners, "the volume of the two-way trade hardly reflects the actual potential of their trade."⁴⁴ Russian Ambassador Alexey Yurievich Dedov on a visit to Peshawar in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province iterated the same concern, arguing that "there is a great potential for increasing trade between the two countries and for this purpose contact between the two governments, businessmen and people needs to be increased."⁴⁵

While the erstwhile/former Soviet Union and Pakistan had periods of high-level of economic cooperation in the past, marked by oil and gas exploration,⁴⁶ defence equipment and the setting up of a Steel Mill in Pakistan in 1970s with the techno-financial assistance of Soviet Union, the current economic cooperation is limited. Efforts have been underway in the last two decades to boost trade and economic ties. In 1999, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (IGC) was signed between Pakistan and Russia.⁴⁷ This agreement paved the way for putting in place the institutional mechanism of bilateral

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interaction. Its first session was held in March 2000⁴⁸ and it has since been instrumental in developing a better understanding on economic and trade relations between the two states.⁴⁹

Moreover, within the IGC framework, the first Pakistan-Russia Investment Forum was held with participation by businessmen, officials and experts from Russia. Besides widening the scope of bilateral trade, the two sides have agreed on the Draft Agreement on Settlement of Mutual Financial Claims and Obligations on Operations of the former USSR. Pakistan and the Soviet Union had some pending payments claims against each other amounting to a few hundred million dollars. As per the Russian by-laws, it cannot initiate a loan-facility for Pakistan until all pending payments are cleared. With the help of this draft agreement, this impediment will be put to rest, allowing Pakistan and Russia to enhance their economic ties.

In 2017, the fifth session of IGC focused on trade and investment as well as Pakistan's energy needs through the Working Group on Energy. This gave the impetus to build an 1100 KM long 'North-South' Gas Pipeline with a capacity of 12.4 Billion Cubic Meters of Liquefied Natural Gas. An MOU was signed by Russia's Gazprom and Pakistan's Oil and Gas Development Limited (OGDCL) in 2017 in Saint-Petersburg which was a step further towards implementation of the project.⁵⁰ Russia also plans on assisting in a 600 MW electric power plant in Jamshoro District and a 1200 MW Guddu gas fired power plant in Pakistan. Discussions are underway to finalize agreements on these projects. While many of these projects have their own set of challenges in terms of financing and international sanctions on Russia, it is important to note that economic ties are growing between Pakistan and Russia.

Conclusion

Pakistan and Russia's growing relations are seen as a natural response to a flourishing Indo-US nexus. Moreover, Pakistan is seeking to manage as well as improve its ties with the US. Both states are seeking to capitalize on all possible bilateral ventures without disrupting their ties with other states and appreciate the need for better relations between Pakistan and Russia.

With regards to regional security, both for Russia and Pakistan, a peaceful Afghanistan and a peaceful neighborhood to Russia is of paramount importance. The need for a peaceful and safe neighborhood guides its terms of engagement with Pakistan as well. Moreover, it is evident from the recent advancements in Pak-Russia relations that Russia trusts Pakistan's ability to combat terrorism and is actively pursuing Pakistan for anti-terrorism training. After Pakistan's inclusion in the SCO where regional security and counter-terrorism are high priority tasks, both states can play a significant role in achieving mutual security related goals in Afghanistan. The current collaboration on anti-narcotics, drug trafficking, and organized crime is important for Russia and therefore Pakistan is taking decisive steps to assist Russia in controlling these problems.

Currently, Pakistan's economy and the sanctions on Russia by the West limit the level of cooperation between the two states. At the existing level, Pakistan does not have the purchasing power to procure Russian defence equipment. On the other hand, Russia cannot provide loan facilities to Pakistan owing to its own deteriorating economy as a result of US-led sanctions on Russian businessmen and state-owned companies. This predicament also means that Pakistan will remain unable to replace India's position vis-à-vis Russia and similarly, Russia would not be able to replace

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the US. Therefore, while ambitious projects can be drafted and signed, the practicality of such projects materializing would require third-party investment or loan facilities from International Financial Institutions such as World Bank or IMF which function under Western influence. Therefore, the lack of funds can have immense implications for these projects and possibly undermine the true potential of economic relations between the two states.

However, the benefits of a close partnership are apparent to both states. Russia has a robust defence production industry which can help Pakistan boost up its defence capability and help train Pakistani technicians, scientists, and engineers to produce defence equipment indigenously. On the other hand, Pakistan's counter-terrorism expertise is vital for Russia's security interests.

While forging close relations, both states are cognizant of the fact that there are no permanent friends or allies in the international system and interests guide new relations, however for a mutually beneficial and long-term partnership, they will need to tread this new path carefully and expand it to multiple levels of cooperation.

End Notes

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²² Note: Launched by Pakistan Army, 'Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad' across the country on February 22, 2017 this operation aims at indiscriminately eliminating residual / latent threat of terrorism, consolidating gains of operations made thus far and further ensuring security of the borders. Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Civil Armed Forces (CAF) and other security / Law Enforcing Agencies (LEAs) will continue to actively participate / intimately support the efforts to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country. Available at <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=3775>

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