

The relations of pakistan and russia



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The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been a hot zone for the international community for well over a decade. Pakistan's long history of hostilities with India, the nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India, along with the growing presence of virulent homegrown terrorism, and large restless Muslim population-demographic trends indicate that it will be the largest Muslim nation in a few decades- are all factors that make Pakistan an arduous conundrum for the international community. Moreover, Pakistan is heavily involved with territorial disputes -namely with India over the Kashmir territory-and the Pakistani civilian government is considered by many to be weak and there are numerous conflicts with the growing presence of Muslim extremists. Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, poses grave and unique challenges to the international community seeking nuclear non-proliferation in the South Asian region. At the same time, Pakistan presents the West with unique opportunities, being a highly influential actor in Afghanistan, where NATO forces continue to fight Taliban insurgents.

The political relationship between Pakistan and the Russian Federation trace back to 1948 shortly after the establishment of the sovereign state of Pakistan. Since then, both countries have had what the current Russian ambassador to Pakistan, Sergey Peskov, calls a " rising and falling" relationship[1]. Pakistan's support of the mujahideen, or anti-Soviet Afghan freedom fighters during the 1979 Soviet War in Afghanistan, has strained Russian and Pakistani political relations. In addition, Russia's friendly ties with Pakistan's rival, India - a strong relationship that dates back to Soviet times- have fanned political tensions between Russia and Pakistan.

Nonetheless, there have been significant economic, political, and diplomatic

ties between the two countries, since the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 2003, Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf visited the Kremlin on an invitation from the Russian President, Vladimir Putin followed by Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Fradkov's visit to Pakistan in 2007. These visits have paved the way for the two countries to improve bilateral relations through signing agreements for enhancing economic cooperation, trade, and educational and scientific exchanges.

The Russian attempt to seal closer ties with Pakistan may lead to further military armament of Pakistan, which will increase hostilities in the South Asian region. Pakistan is in constant military enmity with its rival, India and the growing Russian presence in the region may well reignite old Cold War sentiments between the Moscow and Washington DC.

Pakistan – Russian Relations:

1950s: Both countries initiated bilateral relationship by establishing diplomatic relations through embassies and consulates in Moscow and Karachi.

1960s: The relations were further amplified by several trade agreements as well as official diplomatic visits by Pakistani President Ayub Khan and Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin.

1970s: A strain in relations between Pakistan and Soviet Union amid political turmoil in Pakistan that resulted in the separation of East Pakistan and creation of an independent state of Bangladesh. This political strain was caused by the Soviet Union signing a strategic partnership agreement with

India and becoming an active supporter and reason for the separation of East Pakistan. However, economic relations between the countries remained intact.

1980s: Relations became worse following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the active Pakistani (through the Pakistani intelligence services, ISI) support to the Afghan guerilla fighters. Afghanistan situation alter substantially with the Soviet policy of “ Perestroika” and “ Glasnost”, and the joint efforts by the two countries to bring a political solution to the Afghan problem resulted in the Geneva agreement in 1998, followed by the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. Some trade activities (on a very small scale) still continued. The 1980s was also the time when Pakistan began venturing towards aligning with the United States and happily joined the U. S.-led Cold War era defense pacts - SEATO and CENTO.

1990s/2000: With the Russian Federation emerging as a successor to the collapsed Soviet Union, the two countries established new relations based on mutual cooperation and interests of both countries. And although both Russia and Pakistan are actively engaged in diplomacy, this relation has largely been aimed to promote economic, trade and cultural cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.

Now: Pakistan maintains a relatively strong relationship in terms of economic and trade cooperation. However, Pakistan fears that coming too close to Russia may cost them losing its close tie with the United States. But now for Pakistan, a new window of opportunity in its foreign policy is opening as the

United States is leaning more on Pakistan to resolve the current Taliban question in Afghanistan and devise its successful exit strategy.

Indo-Russian Strategic Partnership: Ever since India's Prime Minister Jawaharala Nehru visited the Soviet Union in June 1955, India and Russia have had strong strategic, political and military relations. Despite India's courtship of the West during the Cold War, and shift of allegiance after the collapse of the USSR, India still maintains close ties with Russia. India is currently the second largest arms market for the Russian weapons industry. An estimated 70 percent of India's military supplies are imported from Russia. Both countries have built strong diplomatic relations through embassies and consulates, and since 2000, their relationship became even stronger with the Indo-Russian Strategic Partnership. The Indo-Russian Strategic Partnership is a military partnership that allows cooperative military arms exchange along with exchange in military training, research and development. The partnership also allows joint military exercises, along with development of aircraft carriers, cruise missiles, fighter aircrafts, nuclear submarines, and more. Furthermore, the Indo-Russian Strategic Partnership is also complemented by a trade partnership, worth \$ 3 billion in mutual trade surplus. This partnership brings many more benefits for the two countries, but one of the most essential aspects of it is the nuclear energy cooperation between the two nations. In 2008, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, travelled to New Delhi and has agreed to amplify India's nuclear energy. Putin promised to build six nuclear reactors in India by 2017.

Pakistan -China Strategic Partnership: Pakistan and China share a mutual close relationship which resembles the relationship of India and Russia.

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China rallied behind Pakistan's vehement stand against the Soviet war in Afghanistan. China saw the Soviet war as a strategic threat to Pakistan. China, who is not too friendly with India, also supports Pakistan on the controversial Kashmir territory issue. Pakistan reciprocates by supporting China's international widely unpopular stand on Tibet and Taiwan. Both countries share very close and strong military and economic relations. On the economic front, China has been heavily investing in Pakistani infrastructure and both countries have signed free trade agreements. On the defense side, China provides substantial military assistance to Pakistan. The Chinese have established weapons production factories in Pakistan and they have also initiated projects to build fighter aircrafts, cruise missiles, bombers, and space technology in Pakistan. Both countries have also participated in joint military exercises. Most importantly, China has played a key role in the development of Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure, especially at times when export restrictions were placed on Pakistan to prevent them from enriching uranium. In addition, China developed and designed Pakistan's first water reactor to produce plutonium.[2]

United States - India Civil Nuclear Ties: India enjoys strong civilian nuclear ties with the United States beginning with the approval of an agreement by the U. S. Congress in 2008 to facilitate nuclear cooperation between the two countries. The agreement is seen as a turning point in the relations and introduces a new aspect to international nonproliferation efforts. The agreement suspends a three-decade U. S. freeze on nuclear trade with India, and provides U. S. assistance to India's civilian nuclear energy program, as

well as enhances the cooperation in energy and satellite technology, all under IAEA supervision.[3]

United States Military Aid to Pakistan - Kerry-Lugar Legislation: On June 24, 2009, the United States Senate unanimously passed the Kerry-Lugar Bill (or S. 962: Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009). This bill authorize the appropriation of \$ 1. 5 billion a year over the FY 2009- FY 2013 period - a total of up to \$ 7. 5 billion over five years - for non-security assistance to Pakistan.[4]