

## Putin's Propensity Toward Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities for Islamabad

**Abstract:** *There are no permanent enemies or friends in international relations, only national interests are permanent or supreme. Historically, Pakistan's relations with USSR have never been friendly. The paper will examine the reasons behind the disaffection relationships between Russia and Pakistan. From the USSR's point of view, Pakistan has a strategic relationship with the U.S. and was declared the enemy of Moscow. From Pakistan's point of view, USSR is inclined towards India. In this emerging multipolar world, Pakistan needs to modify its foreign policy according to the changing regional and international environment. Russia, an emerging global power, is reconsidering its policy towards South Asia. Pakistan is a strategically important state in the region. Hence, it is essential for Islamabad to look towards a friendly relationship with regional players, which must be based on mutual trust and cooperation. This qualitative research aims to analyze the international regional and domestic factors responsible for the change in Russian foreign policy and its implication for Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Pakistan, USSR, Bilateral Relations, Unipolarity, Multipolarity, US

### Introduction

Pakistan has significant regional importance and is, furthermore, developing internationally. Geographical location and its closeness to key Seas and land paths are attractive for contemporary global politics. Consequently, her external policy has a deep influence on the global and regional affairs of the states. Pak- Russia relations compared with those of the United States of America have not been cordial due to numerous subsidiary crucial factors. Although Russia and Pakistan have never indulged in any mutual clashes, their geo-

political interests and alliances have always continued to be poles apart (Taimoor, 2018). Islamabad's enmity with Delhi and cordial relations with America always cloud ties with Moscow. Pak-Russia Relationship has always depended on Great-Game alignment.

The Soviet government had always been desirous of fostering relations with Pakistan owing to the country's unique location because Pakistan provides access to the Indian Ocean and the Middle East. Soviet leader *Joseph Stalin* extended a request to *Liaquat Ali Khan* to visit the USSR in 1949

\* PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

† PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡ Professor, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: [Muqarrabakbar@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:Muqarrabakbar@bzu.edu.pk) (Corresponding Author)

(Kundi, 2018). But Pakistan preferred to go to the United States of America. Pakistan's acceptance of the US invitation annoyed the USSR as it cast doubt on the country's non-alignment policy. In retaliation, the Soviet Union extended huge military and economic assistance to India. The Soviet Union demonstrated its resentment and gave an initial thrashing to Pakistan over its unfriendly gesture (Rabbani, 2014).

In addition, from 1954 to 1958, relations between both nations remained strained, marred by hostility toward each other. The USSR did not welcome Pakistan's entry into American-led alliances CENTO and SEATO overtly, opting for a pro-Indian policy and regarding Kashmir as part of India (Saikal, 2006). "However, fragile relations between Pakistan and the USSR received a severe jolt when Pakistan allowed the use of its airbase by the USA for spying on the Soviet Union" (Hussain S. R., 1987). Nevertheless, a ray of hope surfaced in 1961, when the Soviet Union offered to explore oil in Pakistan. A number of ties followed for the development of air links, the promotion of technology, and scientific knowledge.

In 1965, Ayyub Khan, President of Pakistan, visited Moscow and clarified his position with reference to Western alliances (Ahmed, 2013). The Soviet leadership offered to mediate between India and Pakistan during the 1965 war. *Alexei Kosygin* arranged a meeting between *Ayub Khan* and *Shastri* in Tashkent. This agreement was concluded between Pakistan and India, which ended the 1965 war. During the war of 1971, the Soviet Union openly sided with India (Paracha, 2020). It also warns other countries to keep them away from the war. USSR support for India proved decisive, and it provided diplomatic cover for India's involvement in East Pakistan by extending support to the UN Security Council. In 1972, Pakistan-Moscow relations were almost on the verge of collapse. "With Russian umbrage and a hostile posture, *Zulfiqar Ali*

*Bhutto* launched his preventive diplomacy that was aimed at avoiding the global power intervention, which had made the weaker states easy prey to the coercive diplomacy of the stronger ones" (Moskalenko, 2014). Mr *Z.A. Bhutto* visited Moscow in March 1972 and tried to break the ice. He paid his second visit to Russia in 1974. This trip was successful in acquiring assistance for Pakistan Steel Mills. On 27<sup>th</sup> December 1979, Soviet troops landed in Kabul. On 28<sup>th</sup> December, the Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan formally informed General *Zia ul Haqq* that her country sent a limited military force to Afghanistan at her request for providing assistance. He further told President *Zia* that the force would be withdrawn as soon as its task was done. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan shook up the world and received widespread condemnation. Pakistan also condemned Soviet infiltration. Pakistan called upon the UN Security Council to take action and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Because Pakistan thinks that Soviet troops on her western borders, were alarmed by her national sovereignty. If the Russian military were allowed to consolidate its grasp in Kabul, their next desire would be Islamabad. Because Pak would accomplish the past Soviet wish to get access to the warm waters.

This situation did not at all; suit Pakistan from a security point of view. Pakistan therefore, decided to protect their national interests. Pakistan openly condemned the Russian military intervention in Afghanistan. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan had a profound impact on Pakistan. Islamabad was becoming a frontline state in the Cold War, around 2.5 million Afghan people escaped towards Pakistan and the state turn into a base camp for Mujahedeen. They were combat counter to the occupying Russian forces. Warfare continued in Afghanistan

even after the Soviet withdrawal in February 1990.

Rapprochement between Russia and Pakistan took place for a decade, which observed momentous military collaboration ties. When the Russian minister came to Islamabad on an official visit 45 years later, in Dec 1994. A milestone was succeeded, when a TWO billion dollar agreement was concluded between Pak-Russia for the creation Gas pipeline Project, from Karachi to Lahore in Oct 2015 (Taimoor, 2018). Pakistan and Russia believed in a multinational super project with CPEC and CARC have been giving the system for the regional amalgamation. Furthermore, Pakistan's geographical importance can play a significant role in the restoration of the Silk Road project and "Eurasian" ambition (Masood, 2018). In wider analysis, probe the new developments in Pak-Russia relationships in positions of feasibility, collaboration, prospect and recent challenges for trade. Moscow's Relations with Delhi that bringing the trust deficit with Islamabad, especially in the background of economic and political affairs. The study suggests both Pakistan and Russia improve cultural linkage, consolidation of bilateral ties, long-term policy design, the CPEC, SCO and Pan-Eurasian incorporation.

Putin's tilt towards Pakistan started when he was re-elected as president of Russia. He wanted to rebuild Russia's old status as a Superpower. Putin reconstructed Russia's policy towards South Asia especially Pakistan because India's longtime partner and large Arms purchaser tilt towards the US. So Russia has a desire to replace Pakistan and enhance Military and Economic ties. A few years ago, the Russian Military engaged with Pakistan in joint Military exercises. Russia wanted to cooperate with Pakistan in the energy sector, the Lahore to Karachi Gas pipeline, the Upgradation of Steel Mill Ltd, Technological

advancement, especially the Transfer of peaceful nuclear energy technology. Recently, the Russia-Ukraine war profound impact on the Russian Economy, because Russia faces a strict economic embargo from the West. Russia is searching for a new market to sell its goods, Oil and Gas at low prices.

### Historical Pak-Russia Relations

Historically, Pakistan's relationships with the Soviet Union were not friendly. The causes of these unfriendly relations between the two countries are numerous. Although the Soviet Union and Pakistan did not engage in bilateral clashes, the independence of Pakistan on August 14, 1947, was not seen as a satisfactory development for the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union considered the separation of the Sub-continent as the outcome of the "divide and rule" scheme of the British Raj in Hindustan. However, Pakistan and the Soviet Union started political relations in 1948.

Soon after its creation, Pakistan had to face numerous difficulties economically, territorially and financially. In 1949 the first PM of Pakistan received an invitation to visit from the US and Soviet USSR, but the PM of Pakistan went to the US instead of Soviet Union invitation. Pakistan's unfriendly gesture towards Moscow resulted in Soviet Union's incline towards Hindustan. Consequently, USSR suitable chief arms dealer to Hindustan that intensified Pakistan's Security threat from Delhi.

Moreover, Pakistan join the Western military alliances: SEATO in 1954, and CENTO in 1955. The basic purpose of these alliances was to stop communist expansion toward the West which was established to strengthen the American bloc against a presumed threat from the communist states. Soviet Union did not like Pakistan's alliance with the US, which it interpreted as a

containment policy against it, by America. Despite this, Islamabad guarantees that relationship in the alliance, strengthens its defence to counter Hindustan. USSR leadership observed Pakistan with disbelief. When Islamabad and Moscow progress their relations, there were exchanges of cultural and economic visits from both sides. "In 1956 both Soviet Union and Pakistan established a trade covenant under which both agreed (MFN) the most favoured nation prestige" (Owais, [2007](#)).

In 1958, USSR exhibited her desire to provide technical assistance mainly in the agriculture sector, floods control programs, pest control and soil erosion to Pakistan. Although, in May 1960 U-2 spy-plane event, which carried mutual relation between the two countries to their worst position, US aircraft U-2, which took off from Peshawar air base was detected by the Soviet Union radar and was shot down, and the pilot, Francis Gray Powers was arrested. The Soviet prime minister Nikita Khrushchev burst out with extreme fury and threatened to take strict against Pakistan (Chaudhri, [1966](#)). Meanwhile, Islamabad's policy of alliance towards the European bloc was not long-term fruitful for it. Islamabad's entire reliance upon the Western states had damaged her brokering position.

Although, USSR leader *Khrushchev's* accepted the will of the Kashmiri people's right of self-determination to decide their future and not accepted the Indian stance. Pakistan's policy observer gave credit to *Ayyub Khan's* visit to Moscow that broke the barrier of Hindustan policy to keep Pakistan away from the Soviet-Union past decade (Hussain S., [2010](#)).

In 1963, the two countries progressed diplomatic relations, the Soviet Union offer Pakistan long-term loans of 300 million dollars for Oil exploration (Azad, [2016](#)). President Ayyub Khan went to Moscow in 1965 and meet Soviet leadership, which was

direct personal among countries top leadership (Khatak, [2011](#)). This visit paved the way towards removing misunderstandings. Both states sign up three treaties on cultural exchange, trade cooperation and economic ties.

In 1968, Soviet PM *Alexey Kosygin* came to Islamabad, he pronounced the limited capacity of arms supply to Pakistan 10 million USD, as against Seven million USD arms assistance to Hindustan (Imtiaz, [2019](#)). In 1971, relations between the Soviet Union and Pakistan exacerbated, with the signing of the agreement of peace and friendship with Hindustan. Moscow acted a critical role in the division of Pakistan, by its position at UNSC by supplying armed aid to Hindustan, during the 1971 India Pakistan war (Khan, [2011](#)). After that, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto assumed PM Office, he visited the Soviet Union twice first in 1972 and then second in 1974. During these tours, Bhutto discussed financial assistance, bilateral political disputes, and international and regional issues. "In his article "Bilateralism" which was published in 1976, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto recalls that there were two basic reasons behind strained Soviet-Pak relations. One was the identification of Soviet interests with those of India and the second was the purblind attitude of Pakistani leaders (prior to Bhutto) towards the Soviet Union" (Bhutto, [1976](#)).

### **Pak-Soviet Relations during Afghan War**

---

On December 26, 1979, Soviet Union troops landed in Afghanistan. On December 27, the Soviet ambassador to Pakistan formally informed President *Zia ul Haqq* that his country sent a military formation to Afghanistan and that the Soviets requested assistance in dealing with foreign interference" (Ikram, [2014](#)). The Soviet envoy further told President *Zia* that the formation would be withdrawn as soon as

its task was done. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan shook up the world and received widespread condemnation. Pakistan was one of the states that intensely condemned Soviet Union infiltration. It also called upon the United Nations Security Council to take action and demanded the immediate leave of foreign military troops from Afghanistan.

The communist force's invasion of the Republic of Afghanistan had a severe impact on Pakistan's land border. That was the reason Pakistan became a front-Line state in the Afghan War during the Cold War. The presence of Soviet Military forces on Pakistan's western border and political turmoil in Afghanistan were worrisome for Islamabad (Anwar, 2004). If the Soviet army made a stronghold in Afghanistan, their next goal would be Pakistan because the Soviet administration had a desire to access the warm water of the Arabian Sea. This situation did not suitable for Pakistan's Security point of view. Therefore, Pakistan decided to protect its national interests, so Pakistan openly criticized the USSR's military intervention in Afghanistan.

During the Afghanistan guerrilla warfare, the Soviet Union invasion from 1979-89 carried the full support of American led European bloc such as financial and arms support to the Afghanistan struggle (Rehman, 2010). After the communist military forces outflow in 1989 from Afghanistan, they remain involved in the Afghan civil war. In Afghanistan civil war Pakistan's and Soviet interests were remain confused. Pakistan would not be hostile to its Western alliance but was insecure from the eastern border with India. The Soviet Union were afraid of the emergence of the Islamic Renaissance in Central Asia. Further Soviet Union felt the consequences of destabilization in Central Asia.

Furthermore, Pakistan and the Soviet Union both states have an interest in the

Afghanistan war. The Soviet Union stressed that if the Taliban would defeat the Northern Alliance under Ahmed Shah Masood, they would consolidate their power and then they would be backing Islamic uprisings in Central Asia and outside, thus weakening the whole region. The creation of the Taliban phenomenon in Afghanistan is supported by Pakistan, but Islamabad claims that the Taliban Mujahedeen are a local phenomenon, they emerged in Afghanistan during the Civil War (Akbar, 2015). Although, Islamabad has always pressured the international community, delivering peace in Afghanistan is a necessary political settlement among all stakes, under the auspices of the (UNO) United Nations Organization.

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan resumed its financial and military support from the US. Islamabad's administration is scared about the communist expansionist ideology towards the Indian Ocean. In contrast, Pakistan started supporting the Taliban Mujahedeen to counter Soviet ambition (Ayub, 1978). Pak-Soviet relations remained unfriendly until 1988 when Soviet forces started withdrawal from Afghanistan. After the disintegration of the USSR Pakistan Russian relation entered a new phase.

### Pak-Russia Relations in post 9/11Era

After the disastrous event of Sep 11, Pakistan appeared as a front-line partner of the Western coalition, which was formed by the US to counter-terrorism. It was not possible for the American-led alliance to eradicate terrorist activities or Al Qaeda organizations from Afghanistan without Pakistan's support (Manzoor, 2010). Pakistan played an important role in controlling the terrorist activities in the region, which was beneficial for Russia and

both states emphasis on enhancing friendly relations for mutual cooperation.

Islamabad and Moscow have a lot to attain from a relationship of cooperation and understanding. Despite their past difference keeping in view, when any change occurs in international and regional political dynamics both come together for mutual interest. In 2001, the first major development was achieved before 9/11 President Musharraf sent ISI chief General Mahmood to Russia as his special conversational partner (Sajjad, [2014](#)). During this visit, an MoU was signed to give sixteen MI-17 helicopters to Islamabad, after that Moscow and Islamabad engaged in proactive diplomacy to progress bilateral relations. Foreign Minister *Aziz Khan* went to Russia in Jan 2002, for mutual consultation on political and economic ties. Russia Business Council was set up in Moscow in August 2002, comprising three leading businessmen from both countries.

The most significant step towards development in relations between the two countries was in February 2003, President *Musharraf* went to Russia. "During this visit, Pakistan and Russia concluded three contracts to enhance diplomatic cultural ties to resolve visa and immigration issues" (Abbas, [2016](#)). The fourth covenant for debt rescheduling could not be concluded because of differing versions of the amount. After President General Musharraf's visit, Moscow's FM *Igor Ivanov* came to Pakistan in 2003 and followed by Pakistan's FM *Khurshed Kasuri* also go to Russia an agreement was signed. The agreement supports building a wheat reserve. Pakistan bought 15 thousand tons of wheat from Russia at a very cheap price of 198 USD per ton (Haider, 1998). In the field of energy and fuel, there are numerous benefits available to progress and advance technology.

In October 2005, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr *Shaukat Aziz* visited Russia and

attended the SCO meeting both leaders meet on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. They discussed international and regional issues including Afghanistan, the Middle East and the nuclear issue of Iran. "An agreement was signed by *Gazprom* Russia's energy giant and Pakistan's Ministry of natural resources. The agreement was beneficial to the construction of gas pipelines, exploration of natural gas fields, underground storage facilities, and substitution of fuel and compressed gas used in transportation (Mubarak, [2005](#)). On 8th October 2005, when an earthquake hit the northern part of the country. Moscow was among the states to hurry with Pakistan's support, its rescue teams along with humanitarian aid landed in Islamabad the very next day.

In April 2007, the Russian PM *Mikhail E Fradkov* came to Islamabad with high officials, after nearly four decades. This visit was of significant importance against the backdrop of regional developments in South Asia (Hanif, [2013](#)). During the visit, two agreements were concluded one was the promotion of arts, culture, archaeology, and cinema and combating illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotics and a MoU was signed for the upgradation of Pakistan's Railways. Russian Prime Minister also met President Pervez Musharraf, during the meeting he said that Pakistan live in an important place in Russian Foreign programs, and his realm respected Pakistan's endeavours for bringing prosperity to the region.

In view of the unfriendly attitude of America towards Pakistan and friendly relations with Hindustan and its unprecedented interests in becoming a US partner and Pakistan and Russia expressed their desires to reestablish their interests (Azad, [2016](#)). Recent regional developments have forced Russia and Pakistan to come close to each other. Russia wants to get involved on a wider scale in regional affairs

as it is wary of the growing influence of the US and NATO in the region.

After the 9/11 incident, Pakistan decided to join the US block to eradicate terrorism. Once again, relations between Pakistan and Russia remain strained. Moscow wants to enhance cooperation with Islamabad at two levels. Firstly, Russia will cooperate with Pakistan against terrorism and play a vital role in regional stability. Secondly, the Russian administration counters US cordial relations with India (Islam, [2009](#)).

### **Pak-Russia Relations during Putin's Reign**

Putin take president office in 1999, Moscow was struggling with the economic and financial crisis and he knows that the US and its partners constructed an empire of influence, on the downfall of the farming USSR. Especially, it was hard to defend the charge that notwithstanding Western financial and economic assistance, the US and its allies were behind the Soviet Union's downfall. After that Putin's main objective was to exploit Russian foreign policy to enhance foreign investment, based on a free market economy, which would collaborate with the global economy (Taimur, 2018). Putin's coming to power in Russian Federation aroused mixed sentiments in Pakistan and Russia. Pakistan anticipated that Putin would rethink its external policy towards South Asia, which was less pro-Indian. Consequently, Moscow's severe policy toward Chechnya increased its influence in the Central Asian States. In contrast, Pakistan has some extreme caution and mistrust. Although Putin has claimed to continue its "privileged strategic Partnership" with India yet Russia is also intended to make good relations with Islamabad without spoiling its relations with New Delhi (Naqvi & Massod, [2017](#), 27).

Pakistan's FM Mr. *Sattar* said that his government wanted to improve ties with Moscow. Amid *Kurk's* tragedy, President Musharraf sent two messages to his counterpart. First, Moscow would save his submarine, and Second, it would show condolences for the deaths of people (Musharraf, [2006](#)). An unscheduled meeting between President Musharraf and President Putin amid the Conference in New York took place, both leaders talked ten minutes (Shazia, 2018). According to Islamabad's report, Musharraf talked with Putin in a pleasant mood. Both counterparts presented friendly gestures, and they did not raise any discordant issues. President Putin's diplomat *Yastrzemski* presented a message to Musharraf. Russian Federation contained assurance to Islamabad that Russian Military engagement with Hindustan, would not subvert the South-Asian region. Pakistan replied confidently to Russia's proposal to sign a mutual treaty, assured not to initiate visas to Chechen agents. "In October 2000 President Putin visited India which was observed in Pakistan as quite hopeful, proposed that visit will to lead the easing of regional tension and helping to solve Kashmir issue" (Ambreen, [2019](#)). Pakistan's government appreciated President *Putin's* request for Indo-Pak bilateral talks, but at the time Hindustan PM *Vajpayee* rejected talking to the military government.

President General Musharraf went to Russian Federation and then the PM of Pakistan, Mr. *Zafar Ullah Khan Jamali* in the following year 2003 visited Moscow. Combined-operational groups are formed for cultural and economic cooperation and strategic stability (Shaheen, [2017](#)). In December 2003, the Russian delegation consisted three members of heavy mechanical Industries visited Islamabad. Russia's automobile firms wanted to invest in the PAK automobile sector. Moscow showed his interest in selling machinery and

spare parts to Pakistani firms. "PM *Mikhail Fradkov* and PM *Shaukat Aziz* express their views on different projects. Islamabad and Moscow concluded the investment pact, combating human trafficking, smuggling of narcotics and further expanding trade and economic ties" (Dobell, [2012](#)). Three MoUs also signed up graduation of the *Mughal Pura* Bridge workshop, the laying of a new railway track and the supply of sleepers and railways in main areas of Pakistan.

In response, to the development of relations with Pakistan, Russian Federation endorsed Islamabad's bid to become a participant state of (SCO). Russian President Putin publicly supported Pakistan's full membership of (SCO). Russia is a leading member of (SCO) and now Pakistan is a full member since 2017 (Masood, 2018). The (SCO) can play an important and constructive part in increasing bilateral as well as multilateral relationships between Islamabad and other member states. Russian can play a significant role in easing tension between Indo-Pak by using the (SCO) platform to enhance cooperation between them and encourage both countries to return to the negotiation table for a peaceful resolution of their disputes.

Another important field that might promote improving relations between Russia and Pakistan is the (CPEC), which would be advantageous to both countries. All the countries in the region, including Russia, have been given invitations from Islamabad to participate in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Islamabad significant strategic position in the region, it is the gateway for north to south and east-west corridor. The (CPEC) enhances the importance of Gwadar for the Russian Federation. "Russia may gain entry to the Indian Ocean, to become an active part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This corridor connected Russia and its neighbouring states Gwadarport, which would help to increase trade

and investment, but it also beneficial to Pakistan's growth and progress enhance connectivity, interdependence, and regional cohesion" (Fahad, 2019).

In contemporary times, nuclear proliferation is yet another domain, that can demand the cooperation and collaboration of all the world states especially the nuclear weapon states (NWS). Russian Federation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest and responsible nuclear weapon state (NWS) in the world, and it can be contributed to curbing the issues of nuclear proliferation in the world, and support the states to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes" (Topchyanov, [2017](#)). Although Russian Federation can help Pakistan enter (NSG) and back for a criteria-based approach for induction into this group. Russian Federation can support Pakistan for the peaceful use of nuclear energy by providing the latest nuclear equipment and technology to Islamabad because of the potential of the country in producing cheap and clean energy. This would support Islamabad in fulfilling its energy needs and address many concerns of the world states regarding Pakistan's nuclear program.

The new chapter of Russia-Pak bilateral relations began with joint military exercises, which were evolving South Asian regional politics and launched international debate. "The first joint strategic venture as a result of bilateral agreements signed in December 2014, adds 200 military personnel to strengthen the cooperative ties between forces of both states (Atiq, [2020](#)). The turning point of Pak-Russia relations was the two-week joint counter-terrorism exercises, such as the Arabian Monsoon naval drill in 2014 and 2015. Pakistan was perceived to be a rather proficient reaction of Russia against India/US friendly policy. Pakistan Army Chief Gen *Reheel Sharif* visited Russia in 2015 after that Moscow Sign up an agreement with Islamabad, to buy Mi-35 helicopters. In 2017, Islamabad received more Mi 35M



helicopters from Russia and Pakistan navy spearheaded the *Aman* naval exercise, which included 35 countries' participants. In February 2018, Pakistan Army Chief Gen *Qamar Javaid Bajwa* visited Russia both states formed a joint Military Commission, both countries sign up the Security Training Contract, Moscow train Pak Army troops in the Russian army institutions. (Hassan, [2021](#)).

Since, the beginning of the new millennium, the graph of Russia-Pak Ties has been on an upward trajectory. The current geopolitical and regional environment conditions appear to be extremely encouraging for Islamabad-Moscow relations to fly high. There are multiple sectors like defence, geo-economic, regional politics, science and technology, education and counter-terrorism, in which both states can cooperate for mutual benefit. Moscow has shown interest in the energy sector of Pakistan and further investing in agriculture, infrastructure and development sectors. It is imperative that Russia and Pakistan capitalize on the current momentum of progressing ties and solidify their friendly relationship.

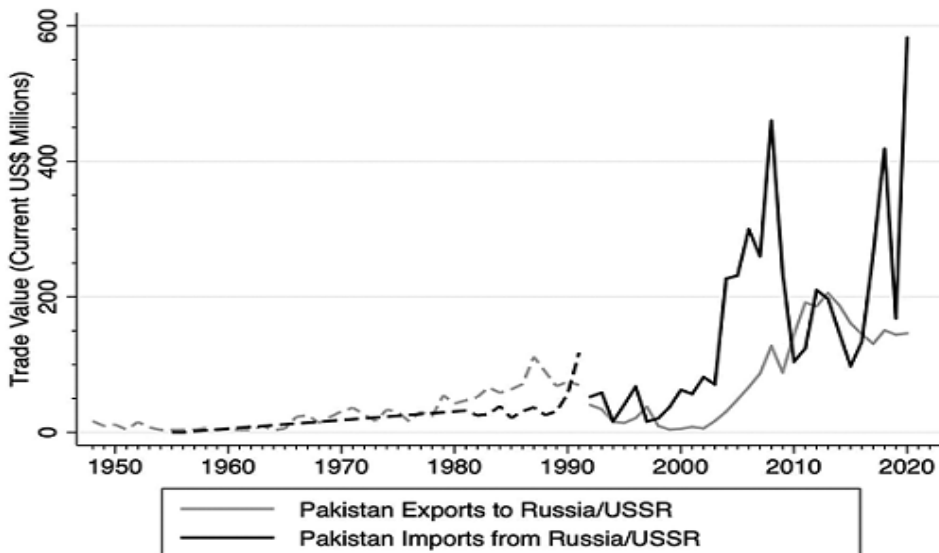
### Shared Challenges and Opportunities

- Moscow and Islamabad are struggling with numerous mutual challenges, especially; terrorism and Security Matters. Both countries must progress cordial relations to counter these shared threats.
- A statement issued by the Russian envoy to Pakistan that, Moscow neither opposed nor blocked Pakistan's request to join NSG. Further, he said we were prepared to work with consensus-based deliberations on this matter (Ambreen, [2019](#)).
- Moscow is considering opportunities, such as progressing a gas pipeline

from Iran to Hindustan through Gwadar, it is Russia's preparation to pass gas through Pakistan and India. This project has been delayed due to US opposition.

- Although China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) fits in President Putin's vision of Euro-Asian ambition, linking the South Asian region with Central Asia. This project will turn into a suitable way for Russia.
- Cultural activities between Pakistan and Russia are limited, people of both states have limited knowledge regarding their customs, and values. If Russia and Pakistan both progress in cultural activities and extend academic linkages, journalist discussion can help to mend relations.
- Moscow's tilt towards Islamabad came after its relations with Western countries got strained and India old partner of Russia started warm-up relations with the US, depicting that there is no perpetual foe and friend in international relations, there is a logical explanation behind Moscow's sudden shift towards Islamabad and Pakistan move towards Russia.
- Pakistan is an agricultural economic country. It needs to enhance its agricultural and poultry exports to Moscow. Because Russia is struggling imports bane from European Union after the Ukraine War. Islamabad can collaborate with Moscow to improve and expand its storage and packaging facilities for such products.
- Russia and Pakistan both countries desire to consolidate their two-way trade among both countries stated beginning at 87.5 million Dollars before Putin, subsequently that increased around sevenfold amounting to USD 728 million in 2020.

**Figure 1.** Pak-Russia bilateral trade USD 1950 to 2020.



Source: I.M.F Figures by (CEPII) gravity Data-set V01.2022-02.

- The universe is facing an era of a tectonic shift, Russia's war against Ukraine has put an end to an epochal. New powers have emerged and come out of politically assertive and economically strong China. In this new political world, different countries and different models of government are competing for power and influence.
- Russian President Putin's vision is clear, to challenge the United States' supremacy, collaborate with China, to respond American domination and become a prominent actor and sustain its impact in the international arena. It is true that Islamabad turns well in Moscow's geo-financial vision, due to operational changes in the World Order.
- Islamabad should think cautiously, about its policy towards the US in changing world political dynamics from Uni-Polarity to Multi-Polarity but the US is still the main actor. Islamabad is not in a position to challenge the US, If Pakistan

eliminates the US formula from its external Policy. Pakistan may call needless misfortune for itself.

- Unluckily, Pakistan's external policy towards Russia is still less-clear because of its reliance on the West, while corresponding to her unsettled relationship with Hindustan.

## Conclusion

Pakistan and Russia move towards a mutually beneficial relationship after a long history of opposition and hostile attitudes. Russia and Pakistan were close to each other during the change of world politics from a Uni-Polar to a Multi-Polar order. Relations between Moscow and Islamabad are relatively stable, but there is still room for improvement and much work remains to be done. There are three rising factors driving Moscow's interests in Islamabad currently: CPEC, the future of Afghanistan, the market for armaments, and strategic sales, including space cooperation Both Russia and Pakistan, can bring harmony to Afghanistan while excluding their one-

sided interests to escape the threat of terrorism and extremism, which may eliminate Kabul. Pakistan's foreign policy approach should be self-interested rather than India-centric. Archrivals like China and the USA, Russia and China, and India and China are increasing ties among themselves and searching for convergence in divergence. Pakistani leadership must also learn from these instances of changing perceptions. The Euro-Asian Economic

development and collaboration in Multi-lateral bodies such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) enhance coordination. The SCO can help Hindustan and Pakistan decide their differences and turn toward economic cooperation and regional integration. More connectivity guides deep collaboration; Islamabad has huge potency to attain if it creates the right choices.

## References

- Abbas, K. (2016). Russia's Revival; Opportunities and limitation for Pakistan. Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 15-19. <https://ipripak.org/russias-revival-opportunities-and-limitations-for-pakistan/>
- Ahmed, S. (2013, 6 5). *Soviet invitation to Liaquat recalled*. p. 1. Dawn. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1020592/soviet-invitation-to-liaquat-recalled>
- Akbar, M. (2022). A Critical Analysis of Taliban's Emergence in Afghanistan. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 35(1), 213-224. <http://pjss.bzu.edu.pk/index.php/pjss/article/view/302>
- Ali, H. (2008). *Recent Trends in the Foreign Policy of Pakistan*. The World Today, 22-33.
- Ambreen. (2019). Pakistan relations with Russia emerging trend for Islamabad. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 7-19.
- Anwar, Z. (2004). Pakistan-Russia Relations in the regional and global context. *Central Asia Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 33-55.
- Atiq, A. (2020). Islamabad and Moscow are the reluctant allies and future friends. *Defense journal*, 19(3), 41.
- Azad, T. (2016). Pakistan Russia Strategic Partnership; New horizon for cooperation. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 32-58.
- Bhutto, Z. A. (1976). BILATERALISM: NEW DIRECTIONS. *Pakistan Horizon*, 29(4), 3-59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41393324>
- Chaudhri, M. A. (1966). *Pakistan's Relations with the Soviet Union*. University of California Press, 33.
- Dobell, W. M. (1964). Pakistan's Relations with the Major Powers and Some Minor Agreements. *Pacific Affairs*, 37(4), 384-395. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2755131>
- Hanif, M. (2013). Pakistan-Russia Relations: Progress, Prospects and Constraints. *IPRI journal* XIII(2), 63-86. <https://ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/art4han.pdf>
- Hassan, K. F. (2021). Russia-Pakistan Strategic Relations: An Emerging Entente Cordiale. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 8-64. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIP/Display/Article/2473361/russiapakistan-strategic-relations-an-emerging-entente-cordiale/>
- Hussain, S. (2010). Soviet's policy to Afghanistan challenges. *Institute of strategic studies Islamabad*, 21-44.
- Hussain, S. R. (1987). PAK-SOVIET RELATIONS SINCE 1947: A Dissenting Appraisal. *Strategic Studies*, 10(3), 64-88. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45182719>
- Hyder, K. (1966). Recent Trends in the Foreign Policy of Pakistan. *The World Today*, 22(11), 482-491. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40393802>
- Ikram, R. M. (2014). *International Relations*. Lahore: Jahangir's world times publications.
- Imtiaz, A. (2019). Pakistan-Russia economic ties. *Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 6-33.
- Islam, T. (2009). Pakistan and Russia's relation a new dynamic era. *Strategic Institute Islamabad*, 21-29.
- Khan, M. A. (1964). The Pakistan-American Alliance: Stresses and Strains. *Foreign Affairs*, 42(2), 195. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20029681>
- Khan, M. T. F. (2018). Pakistan's Growing Relations with Russia: Factoring in the Role of the US. *Strategic Studies*, 38(2), 87-103.

- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48539139>
- Khan, M. T. F. (2019). Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards Russia: New Directions. *Strategic Studies*, 39(3), 89-104.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544312>
- Khan, Z. A. (2011). New trend in Pakistan-Russia Relations since 9/11. *Journal of research society of Pakistan*, 48(2).  
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/33f64881d9a5d0ab0e1cae3a9cd932a1/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=616538>
- Khatak, M. F. (2011). Pakistan-Russia Relation Since 9/11: implication for Pakistan Security. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 11-22.
- Kundi, M. A. (2018). Why Visit to Moscow not Materialized: Myths and Realities. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55(1), 131-141.  
[http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/10\\_55\\_1\\_18.pdf](http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/10_55_1_18.pdf)
- Manzoor, A. (2010). *Pakistan-Russia Relation in the post-Cold War Era*. Quaid Azam University thesis MPhil, 129-228.
- Meer, S. (2018). Putin's Relations with Pakistan'; cooperation and opportunity. *Journal of Social Sciences Islamabad*, 12-23.
- Moskalenko, V. (2014). Russia and Pakistan shared challenges and common Opportunities. *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 112.  
[https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Brief-Russia\\_Pakistan2014.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Brief-Russia_Pakistan2014.pdf)
- Mubarak, H. (2005, November 14). *Islamabad Moscow seeks better ties*. Dawn, p. 1.
- Musharraf, P. (2006). *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*. UK: Simon and Schuster.
- Naqvi, A. H., & Masood, Y. (2017). Rejuvenating Pakistan-Russia Relations: Discernable Trends and Future. *Strategic Studies*, 37(4), 18-38.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48537570>
- Owais, M. (2007). Pakistan-Russia Relations: Economic and Political Dimensions. *Pakistan Horizon*, 60(2), 125-139.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41500067>
- Paracha, H. (2020). Dawn News website.  
[www.dawn.com.pk](http://www.dawn.com.pk)
- Rabbani, M. I. (2014). *International Relations*. Lahore: Jahangir' world times Publications.
- Rehman, A. u. (2010). Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan. *ISSRA Journal in Islamabad based Institute*, 12-32.
- Saikal, A. (2006). *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*.  
<http://ibtauris.com/en/Books/Humanities/History>
- Sajjad, B. (2014, november 21). *Pakistan and Russia sign landmark defence cooperation agreements*. Dawn News Paper :  
<https://epaper.dawn.com/>
- Shaheen, A. (2017). Pakistan relations with Russia emerging trend for Islamabad. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 7-19.
- Topcyhkanov, P. (2017). *Where does Pakistan fit in Russia's South Asian strategy?* Carnegie Moscow Centre.  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/01/16/where-does-pakistan-fit-in-russia-s-south-asia-strategy-pub-67696>