

## China-Russia: “Shaping a regional consensus on stabilising the Afghan situation”

Pakistan, Russia agree to enhance cooperation

By [Global Research](#)

Region: [Asia](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

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*\* Qureshi tells SCO conference peaceful, stable Kabul is Islamabad's priority*

*\* Hails world support on anti-terrorism efforts in region*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Russia agreed on Friday to give new impetus to bilateral relations in various fields and work for greater regional cooperation.

During a meeting between Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Conference on Afghanistan, the two foreign ministers also agreed to hold bilateral talks in this regard. Qureshi also held meetings with Tajikistan Foreign Minister Khamrokhon Zarifi, China's Deputy Foreign Minister Song Tao, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Organisation of the Islamic Conference Secretary General Professor Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Online reported.

Priority: Addressing the conference, the foreign minister said Pakistan had no greater priority than a peaceful, stable and united Afghanistan. He said the democratic government had worked to bring about a qualitative transformation in its relations with Afghanistan with a new level of mutual trust. He said Pakistan would continue to lend all possible assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and would shortly host the third Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) in Islamabad.

He said the people of Afghanistan have been the victims of instability, violence, terrorism, factional fighting, illegal arms, narcotics production and trafficking, and organised crime. He said Pakistan had also suffered grievously along with Afghanistan due to spill over, APP reported.

Qureshi said Pakistan has been host to the world's largest refugee population, with all its attendant consequences. "The security forces and the people of Pakistan continue to render tremendous sacrifices in addressing these formidable challenges," he said.

He said the Afghan people deserved peace, security, stability and progress. "They deserve strong institutions, effective governance, meaningful reconstruction, and sustainable economic development," he added.

Support: Qureshi appreciated the international community's support in strengthening counter-terrorism capacity and advancing the development goals in the area. He said Pakistan attached great importance to its association with the SCO, and had a strong

commitment to the organisation's principles and objectives and wished to deepen its partnership. He said Pakistan would like to have optimal participation in the SCO's frameworks for greater economic integration, including customs cooperation, energy development, transport facilitation, and investment promotion.

The foreign minister said Pakistan wanted to be associated with the SCO's Regional Counter-Terrorism Structures (RCTS) and it desired closer inter-regional links as President Asif Ali Zardari had urged the ECO-SCO cooperation at the ECO Summit in Tehran recently. He said the SCO had correctly identified terrorism, extremism, narcotics and trans-border organised crime as grave challenges confronting regional security. "Pakistan believes that SCO's normative framework based on the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual trust, equality, deference to diversity and a common aspiration for development offer the right perspective for durable stability in the greater SCO region," he said. He stressed the need for dialogue rather than taking just military measures.

Qureshi said Russia and China, two leading nations of the world, had an important role to play in shaping a regional consensus on stabilising the Afghan situation. agencies

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