

If Crimea Matters, Russia Should Support Kashmir

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There are striking structural similarities between Kashmir and Crimea that should make Russian decision makers think twice before endorsing the unilateral actions of their decades-long Indian partners if they want to remain politically consistent.

[Kashmir](#) and Crimea share many structural similarities that most observers might have missed upon first glance or if they were earlier influenced by the anti-Pakistani and -Russian infowars waged by their geopolitical opponents, but both countries should be aware of them and use these commonalities to take their [strategic partnership](#) even further in the future. These two highly geostrategic regions were left out of those two Great Powers as part of the legacy of subjectively defined administrative borders carved out by political entities that no longer exists, which were the British Raj and the USSR respectively. Had Kashmir and Crimea's people been able to vote on their political futures in 1947 and 1991, they'd have joined Pakistan and Russia, but both of them were denied their UN-enshrined rights to self-determination and instead found themselves unwilling parts of India and Ukraine.

They key difference, however, is that the [UNSC mandated that a plebiscite be held in Kashmir](#), while the global body never issued such a recommendation when it came to Crimea. It's already been seven decades and the Kashmiris still haven't been able to vote on their future, yet the Crimeans were able to assemble a referendum in roughly seven days owing to the urgent threat of ethnic cleansing that they were facing in 2014 from the new fascist authorities of post-coup Ukraine. The Kashmiris are also facing a similar such threat nowadays too, as Pakistani Prime Minister Khan [recently warned](#), yet they're unable to hold their planned plebiscite owing to the much worse degree of Indian military occupation that they're presently under when compared to the relatively weaker Ukrainian one that the Crimeans were subjugated to at the time.

It's here where Russia has the chance to show the world that it's politically consistent in supporting what structurally amounts to Pakistan's Crimea of Kashmir by at the very least not openly endorsing the [unilateral actions](#) of its Indian partners earlier this week. New Delhi might nevertheless order its international perception managers to frame Moscow's silence as tacit approval, though, which is why Russia should consider speaking out against India's violation of international law and especially what [The Times of India](#) quoted Home Minister Amit Shah as saying on Tuesday. The Cabinet official also serves as the President of India's ruling BJP religious extremists and was on record telling parliament that

"Kashmir is an integral part of India, there is no doubt over it. When I talk about Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Aksai Chin are included in it and can die for it".

Russia routinely criticizes Ukrainian officials whenever they claim that they're willing to retake Crimea by force, so it should in the interests of political consistency also do the same when one of the most influential men in the nuclear-armed state of India threatens to kill people in the parts of Kashmir currently under Pakistan and China's control, especially seeing as how both similarly nuclear-armed states are SCO members together with Russia and the second-mentioned one is a part of BRICS too. Moscow, however, might be wary of New Delhi [weaponizing their military-industrial ties](#) and more rapidly pivoting towards Western suppliers as punishment for Russia refusing to tow its narrative line or even outright rejecting it, which could contribute to the Eurasian Great Power possibly sacrificing its soft power for the sake of not disrupting its budgetary revenue in that scenario.

That said, Russia has earned the envied reputation among Western and non-Western audiences alike of solidly standing up for the rules-based international order as defined by the UN Charter, so it might not want to ruin this intangible strategic benefit no matter how high the financial costs are that India could impose on it. In fact, India might not even be able to use those current and future contracts as economic blackmail because its armed forces can't rapidly transition away from Soviet- and Russian-provided equipment, so any fears that Moscow's decision makers might have in this respect could turn out to be overblown fearmongering [peddled by New Delhi's "agents of influence" in their "deep state"](#). Russia's "[Return to South Asia](#)" has seen it trying to carefully "[balance](#)" the region, but it could all be for naught if it takes a partisan approach by backing India's illegal actions, which is why it should think twice before falling for the temptation to reactively do so.

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