

It's Time for Pakistan to Join the Eurasian Development Bank

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Joining the Eurasian Development Bank could send the strongest signal yet of Pakistan's multipolar and friendly intentions towards Russia and dispel the second thoughts that some of Moscow's Indian-aligned "deep state" elite may have about the sincerity of its motives, thereby accelerating the already rapid rapprochement between them as a pragmatic reaction to the hostility that both Great Powers stand to be subjected to as a result of the Trump Administration's National Security Strategy.

Russia and Pakistan have been moving closer to one another across the past couple of years, with their [fast-moving rapprochement](#) becoming [multidimensional](#) and extending across the military, political, energy, and even economic realms. The steady progress that has been made on these fronts is commendable and certainly has the potential to pioneer game-changing geopolitical developments if the present trajectory continues, but what's crucially needed at this time is a financial accelerant that can take everything to the next level.

There are [many potential projects](#) waiting in the pipeline, but thus far no formal mechanism for actualizing them. On top of that, there are still some "[traditionalist](#)" holdouts in the Russian "deep state" who are suspicious of Pakistan's motives for deepening its engagement with Moscow, believing that Islamabad is mostly engaged in highly publicized but ultimately non-committal talk in order to drive a wedge between Russia and India. It's therefore in Pakistan's best interests to send as direct of a signal as possible that it is sincere in its desire to enter into a strategic partnership with Russia, and applying to join the [Eurasian Development Bank](#) would deliver an unambiguous message in this regard.

There is no clearer institutional step that Pakistan can take towards Russia than that, since even the act of applying to join would draw a lot of positive attention in Moscow by symbolizing the first real interest that any non-Soviet state has ever had in this framework. The membership negotiations could also open up an additional channel of communication between Russian and Pakistani decision makers, thereby setting into motion other cooperative initiatives and infusing them with a new inertia. Not only that, but both Great Powers could use this as a peaceful and pragmatic opportunity to respond to the hostility that they stand to be subjected to as a result of the Trump Administration's [National Security Strategy](#).

This policy-forming document describes Russia as one of the US' "strategic rivals" that must be countered at all costs, and it doesn't shy away from using harsh and confrontational language against Pakistan. Quite evidently, both Moscow and Islamabad are in Washington's

crosshairs, though New Delhi is interestingly (though [expectedly](#)) being coddled and encouraged to become Beijing's chief geopolitical rival in the Afro-Pacific space [for all of this century](#). Russia senses that the US' support for India poses a challenge to Moscow's efforts to diversify its military and nuclear energy relationship with New Delhi into the real-sector economic sphere, while Pakistan recognizes that it's all but lost its former American "ally" in the War on Terror.

Correspondingly, Russia seeks to expand its partnership with Pakistan as a means of showing India that it has other options, which will hopefully cause New Delhi to reprioritize the improvement of its disappointing commercial cooperation with Russia. Likewise, Pakistan can no longer depend on American developmental assistance nor ever hope to play the US off against China for its ultimate benefit, instead coming to the conclusion that it's more prudent to replace the US with Russia since Moscow and Beijing could engage in friendly Silk Road competition with one another along CPEC instead.

Basically, Russia and Pakistan both want to show their traditional but increasingly distrusted Indian & American partners that geopolitical alternatives exist, with the additional benefit being that their newly diversified relations with one another can also help them negotiate better deals from their shared Silk Road counterparts in China. Just as Russia is looking to establish concrete economic influence in South Asia, so too is Pakistan seeking the same in Central Asia, and the Eurasian Development Bank is the perfect institutional vehicle for actualizing their respective visions and placing the two states on the path to a strategic partnership.

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