

Lavrov Outlined the Priorities for Russian Regions' International Economic Outreaches

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

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The contours of Russia's geo-economic grand strategy in the present decade's "Age of Complexity" are now apparent. Beyond the former Soviet core of the Union State, EAEU, and the CIS (all three of which are envisaged as the basis upon which the aforesaid strategy will be built), the Kremlin considers China, India, and the majority-Muslim countries of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye (the three pillars of its Ummah Pivot) to be equally important partners.

Russia successfully survived the West's unprecedented sanctions blitz over the past nine months and is now ready to take tangible steps in the direction of radically reforming its international economic priorities. This [newly restored world power](#)'s dozens of regions have been encouraged by the authorities to lead these efforts, which was the focus of Foreign Minister Lavrov's meeting on Friday with the [Council of Heads of Russian Regions](#) in Moscow where he outlined their priorities.

According to him, the most pressing task is to comprehensively expand mutually beneficial economic engagement with the Union State's Belarusian half, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Related cooperation with the SCO, BRICS, and BRICS+ countries then follows, which he envisages being simultaneously advanced at the international, regional, and municipal levels, the last of which should concern smart cities when dealing with ASEAN, he said.

Border and transport infrastructure with China, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia should be modernized, Lavrov suggested, and regional cooperation subsequently expanded with China, India, Turkiye, and Iran as well. The Gulf Kingdoms and Syria must also continue playing a growing role in Russia's regional driven economic strategy under the current conditions, too. Not to be forgotten, the Foreign Minister added that Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America should also remain on the regional heads' minds.

Reviewing these suggestions, it's clear that post-Soviet integration mechanisms take first place among Russia's priorities, which is sensible considering existing ties, geographic

proximity, and reduced logistical costs. Moving beyond this Eurasian core, the next concentric circle predictably includes China/Mongolia, Iran, and Turkiye, after which come the Gulf, India, and Syria. The rest of the Global South then rounds out the remainder of this strategy.

It's important at this point to emphasize the growing significance of [India](#) in Russia's regional driven geo-economic grand strategy. Lavrov declared that "The relevance of region-to-region cooperation with India has increased by orders of magnitude. Our partners are interested not only in increasing the supply of energy, agricultural products, fertilisers and precious metals from Russia, but also in setting up joint ventures in various fields."

Over the past nine months, Russia [jumped](#) from being India's 25th largest trade partner to its fifth, mostly due to the export of oil [exploding](#) by over 50 times. Despite the energy-centric impetus behind this trend, these [mutually complementary multipolar Great Powers](#) realize that their interests are best served by building upon this newfound basis to further diversify their economic ties in accordance with their leaders' previously stated vision to take yearly trade to a [whopping \\$30 billion a year](#).

Getting there once is possible by further scaling up their energy relations, but that level can only be confidently sustained by taking advantage of this year's unexpected economic opportunity to comprehensively diversity their trade ties exactly as Lavrov suggested. This is by no means an easy feat, but it also isn't impossible either since the political will is present and the economic incentives are self-evident, especially since Prime Minister Modi continues practicing a [truly independent foreign policy](#).

Had he and his team capitulated in the face of [unprecedented American pressure](#) upon them to unilaterally concede on their objective national interests by dumping Russia in order to please their new strategic partners on the other side of the planet, then none of this would be possible. Russia would have become [disproportionately dependent on China](#) as its only valve from Western sanctions pressure, which would have upset the careful balance of influence between India and the People's Republic.

In response, that South Asian state would have been coerced into becoming the US' "junior partner" in a desperate bid to restore a semblance of that selfsame balance, which in turn would have weakened its strategic autonomy and likely resulted in the creation of rigid [New Cold War](#) blocs in Asia. Instead, by [bravely defying this unfriendly pressure](#) from its new partner, India managed to help break through the [prior bi-multipolar intermediary phase](#) of the [global systemic transition](#) to [multipolarity](#).

That outcome unlocked the myriad economic opportunities that are now more easily available to Russia and which Lavrov explained in his speech to the Council of Heads of Russian Regions on Friday. There's now little chance that Russia will ever become disproportionately dependent on any given partner, especially since India will always act as a friendly, gentle, and non-hostile counterweight to China in this respect, the role of which will be complemented by the [Gulf](#), [Iran](#), and [Turkiye](#), too.

Those last three couldn't on their own, nor collectively, function in any effective sense as a friendly, gentle, and non-hostile counterweight to China in preemptively averting Russia's potentially disproportionate dependence on the People's Republic during the early months of the West's sanctions blitz. India was the only country capable of playing such a role,

which thereafter made it possible for those three to collectively function as complementary counterweights with time.

Considering this, the contours of Russia's geo-economic grand strategy in the present decade's "Age of Complexity" are now apparent. Beyond the former Soviet core of the Union State, EAEU, and the CIS (all three of which are envisaged as the basis upon which the aforesaid strategy will be built), the Kremlin considers China, India, and the majority-Muslim countries of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye (the three pillars of its [Ummah Pivot](#)) to be equally important partners.

Pakistan could have played a [pivotal role](#) in the last-mentioned category had its multipolar former Prime Minister not been overthrown in early April by a [US-orchestrated post-modern coup](#) that knocked that strategically positioned country out of the geo-economic game at its most important moment. Be that as it was, that development didn't adversely affect Russia's related grand strategy all that much even though it [would have been in Eurasia's best interests](#) had that regime change not happened.

In any case and returning to the regional driven focus of Russia's economic engagement with its Global South partners, it's incumbent on this newly restored world power's constituent parts to take the lead in continuing to pioneer mutually beneficial trade and investment ties with the examined countries. It'll still take a few years for everything to bear more fruit, but the progress that's been achieved thus far – especially with respect to China, India, and the top three countries of the Ummah Pivot – is impressive.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a regular contributor to Global Research. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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About the author:

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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