

India's Prime Minister Modi's Conversations with Russia's President Putin

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According to the Kremlin's official website, President Putin never said anything about "Russia's steadfast support for India's efforts to protect its interests against cross-border terror attacks", but that didn't stop Prime Minister Modi's office from misleadingly implying that he did as India continues doing whatever it can to save face after Pakistan gave it a "bloody nose" earlier this week and its decades-long partner in Moscow pragmatically signaled that it regards Islamabad and New Delhi as international equals by offering to host peace talks between them.

President Putin called Prime Minister Modi on Thursday in a conversation that covered Russia's repeated condolences for the [Pulwama attack](#), anti-terrorism, and the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) that will take place later this year in Vladivostok. Putin's call came just hours after Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said that his country [would host peace talks](#) between India and Pakistan if they asked it to do so, meaning that the Russian leader's outreach to his Indian counterpart should be seen as Moscow's first move in that direction.

This explains why Putin's pretext for calling Modi was to reiterate Russia's condolences for the Pulwama attack, as it in turn allowed him to broach the topic of whether or not his counterpart was interested in Moscow hosting peace talks between his country and Pakistan. At no time during the conversation, however, is there any plausible indication that Putin walked back Russia's neutral "balancing" position towards this conflict by taking India's side, whether directly or through a euphemism. In fact, here's what the [Kremlin's official website](#) had to say about the call:

"In addition to the message sent earlier, Vladimir Putin once again conveyed his condolences to the people of India in connection with the killing of Indian security force personnel in a terrorist attack on February 14.

In this context, the two leaders condemned international terrorism and any methods used to support it stressing, the need to step up the uncompromising fight against the terrorist threat.

While discussing the crisis in relations between India and Pakistan, Vladimir Putin expressed hope for a prompt settlement.

Topical issues on the bilateral agenda were also touched upon. The Russian President emphasised that Russian-Indian cooperation was developing quite successfully as a privileged strategic partnership. The two sides expressed interest in further promoting interaction in all areas, including military-technical ties.

Vladimir Putin invited Narendra Modi to take part in the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September 2019 as the main guest. The two leaders

agreed to continue personal contact.”

Nevertheless, that didn't stop the [Indian Prime Minister's office](#) from misportraying their conversation (bolded emphasis is the author's own):

“The President of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Vladimir V. Putin called Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on phone today.

President Putin expressed his deep condolences on the Pulwama terrorist attack. He also conveyed solidarity of the people of the Russian Federation with the people of India in the fight against terrorism.

The Prime Minister thanked President Putin for Russia's steadfast support for India's efforts to protect its interests against cross-border terror attacks, and renewed India's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in countering terrorism as a pillar of privileged and special strategic partnership. Both leaders agreed that the concerned should stop all support to terrorism.

Both the leaders also agreed that the growing cooperation between the two countries will take their Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership from strength to strength.

President Putin reiterated the invitation to the Prime Minister to attend the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok later this year. The Prime Minister welcomed the invitation and underscored the significance of growing economic cooperation, including in the Russian Far East, between the two countries.”

It's categorically false that Russia ever expressed any “steadfast support for India's efforts to protect its interests against cross-border terror attacks”, which is a euphemism for supporting [India's fake “surgical strike” against Pakistan](#), but New Delhi felt compelled to pretend that this was the case in order to save face after Islamabad gave it a “[bloody nose](#)” earlier this week. Furthermore, this false portrayal of reality might have also been [another Indian infowar attack against Russia](#), albeit this time intended to as a last-ditch effort to provoke Pakistan into rejecting Moscow's mediation offer.

Indian media, which is heavily influenced by the state (especially since the BJP returned to power in 2014), has been pushing the narrative that Russia's relations with Pakistan are insincere and that Moscow would never regard Islamabad as being equal to New Delhi. This inaccurate notion was based on the arrogant belief that billions of dollars' worth of business deals with Russia would somehow “buy off” the Kremlin and preempt its rapprochement with Pakistan, which was a failed policy if there ever was one because the two are now enjoying the fruits of a [strategic partnership](#).

Russia's 21st-century grand strategy of becoming the [supreme “balancing” force](#) in Afro-Eurasia precludes the taking of partisan sides in any conflict, let alone one as high-stakes as between India and Pakistan (and especially in light of [Moscow's diplomatic gains with the Taliban](#) being the result of close coordination with Islamabad). That's why objective observers should have known from the get-go that Modi's office was misportraying his conversation with Putin after it misleadingly made it seem like Russia said something in connection with its supposedly “steadfast support for India's efforts to protect its interests against cross-border terror attacks”.

India's permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies ("deep state") dangerously seem to believe the Bollywood narratives that they propagate among the masses, which has contributed to them having an over-inflated sense of their country's importance in International Relations and especially with Russia. Few Indians, let alone those in a policymaking capacity, could have imagined that Russia would regard India and Pakistan as being equals, as this contradicts decades of indoctrination but nevertheless proves just how much International Relations is changing at the dawn of the [emerging Multipolar World Order](#).

Unable to accept this, yet also unable to decline Russia's mediation offer lest it be regarded as an irredeemable American proxy (which Moscow already suspects that it might be on the way to becoming [after Lavrov hinted as much](#) earlier this week), India felt that it's only recourse was to misportray Modi's conversation with Putin in the naïve hopes that Pakistan would take its words at face value and overreact in such a way that it would refuse to let Russia host peace talks between it and India. Unsurprisingly, this infowar attack also failed.

[Sputnik](#) reported the following about Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi's recent interview with CNN:

"Commenting on Russia's willingness to mediate between India and Pakistan to try to ease bilateral tensions, Qureshi said that Islamabad is ready to accept such an offer.

"[Russian Foreign Minister Sergei] Lavrov has offered to mediate. I do not know about India but I want to say this to Russia, that Pakistan is ready to come to the table and de-escalate tensions," Qureshi underlined."

Unlike India, Pakistan has no problem with Russia returning to South Asia and expanding its "balancing" strategy to such a point that it can mediate between the region's two nuclear-armed powers. India, however, feels as though Russia inflicted a mortal wound to its international prestige by regarding Pakistan as being equal to it, which it legally is in terms of international law but which New Delhi has refused to recognize due to its Bollywood belief in being an "exceptional superpower". Going forward, this latest infowar trick might further erode Russia's trust in India while simultaneously increasing its trust in Pakistan.

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