

Russia's UNSC Kashmir Stance Wasn't Influenced by India or Pakistan, but by China

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Russia didn't want the issue of Kashmir to be brought before the UNSC at all, though it allowed China to go forward with the meeting out of respect for their strategic partnership but then remained conspicuously silent about India's threats against it in order to convey its disapproval towards Beijing.

Background Briefings

Russia's UNSC stance towards Kashmir has generated a lot of discussion due to how differently it's been interpreted, with some saying that Moscow sided with Islamabad by allowing the Beijing-initiated meeting to take place while others claim that it reaffirmed its support of New Delhi's position by twice saying that it regards the issue as a bilateral one. The author takes the latter approach and extensively explained his views in the following analyses about the topic that were published within the last week:

- ["Alt-Media Enters New Era: Russia & China Divided Over Kashmir"](#)
- ["What Explains Russia & China's Differing Stances Towards Kashmir?"](#)
- ["It's A Wrong Interpretation That Russia Supported Pakistan At The UNSC"](#)
- ["Interpreting Russia & China's UNSC Stances Towards Kashmir & Crimea"](#)
- ["Confirmation Bias Explains The Misportrayal Of Russia's UNSC Stance Towards Kashmir"](#)
- ["Russia's Silence On India's Anti-Chinese Threats Is Deafening"](#)

Silence As A Statement

It's the last one of the six aforementioned articles that's the most revealing about what really influenced Russia's position towards Kashmir. It wasn't its relations with India or even Pakistan, but China, because Beijing brought the issue before the UNSC out of solidarity with Islamabad and due to its own national security stakes in the conflict even though Moscow would have preferred for this not to have been discussed at all in that format.

Russia allowed the meeting to go forward out of respect for its strategic partnership with China, but then remained deafeningly silent in response to India's anti-Chinese threats, specifically the one made by Home Minister Amit Shah about how people "[can die](#)" over his country's claims to Chinese-administered [Aksai Chin](#) and the overall concern that the Chinese Foreign Ministry [officially expressed](#) for its territorial sovereignty after India's ["Israeli"-like](#) unilateral move in Kashmir earlier this month.

It's very rare that the Russian Foreign Ministry misses an opportunity to opine about

international matters, yet it chose not to make any comment whatsoever in response to a leading official in one of the world's few nuclear-armed states threatening to kill people in its similarly nuclear-armed neighbor after his government made a move that infringed on their territorial sovereignty. This absence of action can be interpreted as an action in and of itself, namely one that conveyed the message that Russia is displeased with China.

The Limits Of The Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership

At the very least, Russia is showing the world that it and China aren't "allies" like many in the Mainstream and [Alternative Media](#) portray the two as being for their own separate reasons since it would have otherwise said something in Beijing's defense had their relationship really been on that speculative level. Instead, Russia knew that saying the wrong word would ruin one of its two most important strategic partnerships, hence why it chose to stay silent and let India's warmongering go unaddressed.

To be clear, it's inconceivable that Russia endorses Shah's statement or would in any way encourage Indian aggression against China's territorial sovereignty so its silence shouldn't be interpreted as support, the same way as its passive acceptance of China's move to take Kashmir up with the UNSC shouldn't be interpreted as support for the multilateralization of this issue either. Rather, Russia was forced into an unenviable strategic position due to events outside of its control and therefore sought to "[balance](#)" between all partners.

This, naturally, includes the [global pivot state](#) of Pakistan as well, with which Russia is currently engaged in a [rapidly moving rapprochement](#) that [recently turned into](#) a strategic partnership in its own right last year. That's why Foreign Minister Lavrov [accepted](#) his counterpart's invitation to talk about Kashmir last week and these two countries' increasingly close military ties remain [completely unaffected](#) by Moscow's UNSC stance towards the issue.

Triangulation

From the Russian perspective, each of the three states that are party to the Kashmir Conflict have their own roles in its grand strategy, which is why Moscow doesn't want to offend any of them if it can help it. China is pioneering the [Belt & Road Initiative](#) (BRI) with which President Putin [announced his plans](#) to integrate the Eurasian Union, and it's also a major customer for Russia's resources. India, for its part, is a huge (but [quickly declining](#)) arms market, as well as a profitable partner when it comes to nuclear energy cooperation.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's importance derives from Russia's [diplomatic](#) and military-intelligence cooperation with it mostly stemming from their shared interests in bringing peace to Afghanistan, as well as the fact that Islamabad is Beijing's top international partner. Nevertheless, Russia does attempt to "triangulate" between the three in order to promote the regional "balancing" act that it's practicing through its "[Return to South Asia](#)". For instance, China and Pakistan help Russia hedge [against the implications](#) of India's [pro-American pivot](#).

Likewise, the Russian-Indian Strategic Partnership could serve to "balance" China all across the Eastern Hemisphere if taken to its maximum extent in the long-term future and especially if Moscow clinches a "[New Detente](#)" with Washington that ends up indirectly involving the US in this relationship to that end. As for the Russian-Pakistani relations, Moscow can learn a lot from Islamabad's experience being a key transit state for BRI via

[CPEC](#), which could in turn help it take better advantage of its role in the Eurasian Land Bridge.

Concluding Thoughts

Considering all of this, Russia would have preferred not to have been placed in a position where it's forced to choose between its partners, but this was impossible after India's "Israeli"-like unilateral move infringed on China's territorial sovereignty and triggered Beijing into bringing up Kashmir at the UNSC, something that it didn't necessarily have to do but did so anyway partly on behalf of its "[iron brother](#)" in Islamabad. The complicated strategic triangle of the Kashmir Conflict therefore put Russia in a very tricky position.

Unlike how it's widely seen by both friends and foes alike (again, each for their own reasons), Russia wasn't calling the shots at all this time, but merely reacting to them, and in a purely defensive way at that with the utmost care to avoid offending its three partners' sensitivities through any unexpected moves that would contradict their expectations. Pakistan was unable to bring Kashmir up at the UNSC, nor was India able to prevent China from doing so, which is why Russia's response was influenced by its relations with China.

Not wanting to actively disrespect China in front of the rest of the world, Russia passively allowed the meeting to take place, though it also remained passive in the face of India's threats against its partner too in order to signal its disapproval of Beijing bringing Kashmir to the UNSC. If Russia had the choice, it would have rather that Kashmir not been discussed at the global body, but there's no changing the fact that it was, though this means that Russia's "balancing" act between China, India, and Pakistan just got all the more difficult because of it.

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