

US Sanctions Got India to Ditch Iran, Will Washington Get It to Ditch Russia Too?

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The announcement by India's Oil Minister that his country will replace US-sanctioned Iranian oil imports with those from "major oil-producing countries" despite the dramatic Bollywood show that New Delhi has made up until this point out of "defying" US sanctions makes one seriously wonder whether India's preparing to ditch Russia next if the US imposes CAATSA sanctions against it over the S-400s.

Shattering The "Indian Illusion"

The "[Indian Illusion](#)" has been shattered after India's Oil Minister [tweeted](#) that his country will replace US-sanctioned Iranian oil imports with those from "major oil-producing countries" such as the Islamic Republic's hated GCC foes of [Saudi Arabia](#) and the UAE that America [said](#) will [step up their exports](#) in order to stabilize global prices after Washington announced that it won't renew its anti-Iranian oil sanction waivers. New Delhi made a dramatic Bollywood-like show over the past year out of "defying" US sanctions, with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj announcing last May that India will [only obey UNSC sanctions](#) and not those unilaterally imposed by the US in contravention of international law.

The Oil Minister himself said back in October before the waivers were issued that India will [continue buying](#) Iranian oil in spite of the US sanctions, later [crediting Prime Minister Modi](#) a month later when the US eventually granted it the waiver. Adding "credibility" to the illusion that India's perception managers were masterfully creating, it was then reported that the country will [use rupees instead of dollars](#) when trading with Iran, a bold move that even fooled an RT columnist who headlined his op-ed on this development as a "[response to US global bullying](#)". As is now known, however, appearances can be very misleading, and in actuality the same country that was vowing to "defy" the US actually ended up quietly implementing its new patron's will.

This proves that senior Indian officials such as the Minister of External Affairs and Oil Minister were lying to the world this entire time, publicly claiming to oppose the US while secretly working in coordination with it behind closed doors to ensure that their country doesn't suffer from Trump's sanctions. The over-hyped "oil-for-rupee" payment plan was ultimately nothing more than a temporary workaround that New Delhi evidently didn't care too much about to continue in truly opposing the US following the expiration of its sanctions waiver early next month. It can therefore be said that India was relying on multipolar/"multi-alignment" rhetoric in order to disguise its secret subservience to the unipolar hegemon.

The Path Towards CAATSA Sanctions

This stunning realization has major implications for Russian-Indian relations because the US is considering sanctioning the South Asian state for its planned purchase of the S-400s, a threat that [still hangs](#) over New Delhi's head like a Damocles' sword over half a year since the original agreement was signed during President Putin's visit to the country. Judging from the Iranian precedent, India will probably pull out of the S-400 deal if the US does indeed impose CAATSA sanctions against it over this purchase, which Washington might seriously pursue in order to deal a deathblow to Russian-Indian relations just like it recently did to [Iranian-Indian ones](#) through the latest oil sanctions.

The argument against sanctioning India over the S-400s is that it needs these systems in order to "defend" against China and Pakistan, but the latest Indo-Pak dogfight [ended in a total humiliation](#) for India and exposed it as an [aggressive rogue state](#) instead of the peaceful one dutifully following international law to a tee like it had meticulously misrepresented itself as being up until that point. Recognizing the truth that India won't fall victim to regional aggression but is actually the state initiating hostilities in the first place, the US might no longer consider the S-400s to be of primary national security concern for the South Asian state enough to warrant a sanctions waiver for them.

Russia's Pakistani Recourse

In the event that the US sanctions India for this purchase, it would be doing so as part of a power play to "poach" this lucrative arms market from Russia and replace the country's wares with Western ones from its own military-industrial complex and that of its French and "Israeli" partners' too. Russia, left flatfooted by this possibly impending betrayal by its "bhai" (from the Soviet-era slogan of "Rusi-Hindi Bhai Bhai", "Russians and Indians are brothers"), might then seriously consider clinching a deal with Pakistan to sell it the upwards of \$9 billion of equipment that the Deputy Director of the influential Moscow-based [Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies](#) (CAST) think tank [estimated](#) is in the cards in his organization's recently released book "[Pakistan: Beyond Stereotypes](#)".

It should be noted that Russia's permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies ("deep state") are under the powerful influence of the Indophile lobby, but the [increasingly public divisions that have recently emerged](#) between that faction and the "balancing" pragmatics led by Russia's Special Envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov have only intensified after the latest Indo-Pak dogfight but have seen the unquestionable victory of the latter following Moscow's offer to mediate between the two Great Powers as part of its grand "[Return to South Asia](#)". In this very sensitive context, any Indian betrayal of Russia in response to the US' CAATSA sanctions would discredit the Indophiles once and for all and expose them as either unprofessionally naive or worse after they put their careers on the line claiming that this would never happen.

It's beyond obvious at this point that the S-400s wouldn't retain the balance of power between India and its potential adversaries but disrupt it after the latest regional events revealed that New Delhi is an aggressive rogue state instead of a peaceful one dutifully abiding by international law, yet Russia won't voluntarily scupper the deal because it stands to gain a lot of much-needed money from it that takes on a higher significance against the backdrop of the West's anti-Russian sanctions. Having said that, however, the deal is worth [a little more than \\$5 billion](#), meaning that Russia could conceivably replace its lost profits if it sells slightly more than half of the military equipment that CAST estimates the [global pivot state](#) of Pakistan is looking to purchase.

Concluding Thoughts

India's betrayal of Iran in response to impending American sanctions and its energy pivot towards the Islamic Republic's hated GCC foes worryingly suggests that it might soon betray Russia in response to the possible imposition of CAATSA sanctions over the S-400s and militarily pivot towards the Eurasian Great Power's Western competitors instead. The writing was on the wall the entire time in both instances, though the Indophile "deep state" faction in both Iran and Russia misled their leaderships because they were unprofessionally naive and truly believed the assurances made by their Indian counterparts (in the "best-case" scenario), but it's now becoming obvious that New Delhi was deceiving both of them all along by disguising its clandestine unipolar actions with public multipolar rhetoric.

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