

Russia-Pakistan Relations in the Wake of Coup against Imran Khan

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (BBZ) Visits Moscow

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It's of course in Pakistan's objective national interests that it successfully clinches comprehensive economic and energy deals with Russia in order to relieve the pressure upon it caused by the cascading crises of the past year, but it's also bittersweet that this is only just happening now. Had it occurred almost a year ago after former Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit, then those aforementioned crises might never have transpired, or at least not as intensely as they did when it came to the economic and financial ones.

[“Russian-Pakistani Economic & Energy Cooperation Just Took A Great Leap Forward”](#) in mid-January after the latest intergovernmental commission between these two non-traditional partners saw them agree to comprehensively expand related ties between them.

This was followed shortly thereafter by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto visiting Moscow this week, almost one year after former Prime Minister Imran Khan (IK) did.

The two trips evoked a sense of déjà vu since they both concerned economic and energy cooperation, which each respective representative agreed to further expand with their Russian hosts. The difference between them, however, is the context in which they occurred as well as the outcome for each of them personally. IK coincidentally visited on the exact same day as Russia launched its [ongoing special operation](#) in Ukraine and Pakistan's ties with the US were noticeably tense at the time.

He was swiftly deposed in early April through a [US-orchestrated but superficially “democratic” post-modern coup](#) that many suspect was supervised by former Chief Of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Ties with Russia were informally frozen while those with the US improved, at least rhetorically. Pakistan then descended into the post-modern dictatorship where [it remains today](#) amidst the [global systemic transition to multipolarity](#) chaotically accelerating towards uncertain ends.

Between then and now, cascading economic, financial, political, and security crises hit Pakistan, the roots of which predated last April's post-modern coup in some sense (at least insofar as the interconnected economic and financial ones) but were indisputably exacerbated by it. The failure of IK's replacements to clinch the preferential energy deal that he was negotiating with Russia, obviously due to US pressure, further worsened the hardships imposed upon average Pakistanis.

Nevertheless, Pakistan officially remained neutral in the [New Cold War](#) over the direction of the earlier mentioned global systemic transition between the US-led West's [Golden Billion](#) and the jointly [BRICS](#)- & [SCO](#)-led [Global South](#) of which Russia is a part by refusing to condemn Moscow at the UN. The appointment of new COAS Asim Munir in late November coincided with Pakistan seriously resuming its economic and energy talks with Russia that were unofficially frozen for the most part since last April.

It was in the run-up to that changing of the guard that the "official narrative" about Russian energy imports that was artificially manufactured by the post-modern coup regime after IK's ouster [began to change](#). Instead of continually to counterfactually insist that Pakistan couldn't process Russian oil, they now predicted that a major energy deal could help resolve their country's crisis. The US catalyzed this reversal by [officially reassuring](#) Pakistan in mid-October that such purchases aren't sanctionable.

Washington [reaffirmed](#) this stance immediately prior to BBZ's trip to Moscow, which can be interpreted as having [given the greenlight](#) for Pakistan to purchase Russian resources, unlike its previously presumed hostility to this course of action in the run-up to IK's visit almost a year ago. What appears to have changed is that the US realized that Pakistan's reliable access to discounted Russian resources is required to help keep its imported post-modern coup regime in power there.

In the last months of IK's tenure, the US regarded such reliable access as a valve from rising domestic pressure brought about by Pakistan's impending economic and financial crises at the time, which it subsequently sought to weaponize in the court of public perception to justify its post-modern coup. After having sabotaged those talks through his ouster, which were unofficially frozen in the aftermath, everything went into free fall.

On the one hand, this disastrous outcome served to enable the US to [reassert its declining unipolar hegemony](#) over the Pakistani state by making related relief such as that from the IMF or Russian energy deals dependent on America's approval. On the other hand, however, it inadvertently contributed to the large-scale but purely peaceful protests led by IK after average Pakistanis realized that his replacements are incapable of improving the economy like they promised (and was why they claimed to oust him).

In such a situation, the most pragmatic recourse from the perspective of the US' grand strategic interests was to greenlight the resumption of Pakistani-Russian energy talks in the hope that its restored regional proxy state could relieve some of the self-inflicted economic and financial pressure. Failure to do so could prompt further protests, which in turn might only be able to be put down with brutal force that would thus risk fully discrediting the post-modern coup regime in the eyes of the Western public.

It was therefore within this newfound context that BBZ visited Moscow almost a year after IK did and for the very same reason as that ousted leader, hence the *déjà vu* that keen

observers are experiencing. The outcome of their respective trips is completely different though since the US approved BBZ's energy talks with Russia while disapproving of IK's, which is why the former isn't at risk of being ousted like the latter ultimately was.

It's of course in Pakistan's objective national interests that it successfully clinches comprehensive economic and energy deals with Russia in order to relieve the pressure upon it caused by the cascading crises of the past year, but it's also bittersweet that this is only just happening now. Had it occurred almost a year ago after IK's visit, then those aforementioned crises might never have transpired, or at least not as intensely as they did when it came to the economic and financial ones.

The takeaway is that the damage inflicted upon Pakistan by the US-orchestrated but superficially "democratic" post-modern coup that many suspect COAS Bajwa oversaw against IK as punishment for his [independent foreign policy](#) was completely unnecessary and could have been avoided. The indisputable consequence is that this country is now altogether much weaker than it was a year ago, which confirms that those who overthrew him truly harmed Pakistan's objective national interests.

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