**A possible strategic alliance**

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| After the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, new equations of the world order are being drawn and global alignments have been changing. The Kremlin’s positioning in global affairs led to a geopolitical and geostrategic conversion of its foreign policy. It follows multilateralism with active outreach in different parts of the world with respect to supremacy, responsibility, and ambitions for international peace and stability. |

Moscow launched various campaigns through active engagements with the world’s larger economies and countries with geo-strategic pivotal standing, such as China, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan for evolving bilateral relations with these countries in its desire to re-establish its strategic dominance over the sphere of global politics in recent times.

Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Russian Federation were first developed on May 1st, 1948. However, the relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union and then with Russia is marked by many ups and downs.

Earlier, there were numerous distressing issues that even alienated both countries for some time, averting them from managing to have amiable relations based on mutual interests and benefits. Divergent to that, Russia helped Pakistan build its steel mills in Bhutto’s era by providing technical assistance.

Nonetheless, a true diplomatic relationship is always preferred because of geographical proximity, historical linkages and common developmental interests. In the long run, Islamabad needs to step-up its diplomatic ties to extract the maximum for itself through an alliance with the Kremlin. For years, the US has been influencing Pakistan’s internal affairs, but it’s now high time for Pakistan to realise that this strategy has not worked.

Now, PM Imran Khan is about to visit Moscow for a meeting, though some international relations analysts are saying that this is an ill-timed visit as the US and Russia are locked in a bitter logjam since the Cold War over Ukraine.

Many European state leaders just visited Moscow; why is it not an ill-timed move for them? Both Russia and China have a strong desire to reduce US influence in South Asia as it has done nothing for bringing peace in the region. Furthermore, both these countries see that peace and prosperity cannot be brought about without bringing Pakistan on board.

Pakistan and Russia have adopted a proactive approach regarding economic cooperation, specifically in the energy sector. Russia expressed his support for Pakistan’s membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as well.

Following this, there were meetings between Pakistani dignitaries and Russian counterparts on the sidelines of the SCO summit in July 2015. It is a well-known fact that Russia is a major stakeholder in the Afghan conflict, like other states in the region. Pakistan, the immediate neighbour of Afghanistan, also has interest in peace in Afghanistan. Both countries have played a major role in bringing the Taliban to the table and together, they can put an end to the Afghan misery with effective measures.

This relation of new friends can be effective to manage the energy crisis in Pakistan as well. In order to further strengthen ties, Pakistan and Russia still need to fill in the gaps, for instance, the joint working groups on counter-terrorism, strategic stability, and economic cooperation should be revitalised. Moreover, cultural diplomacy should be promoted between the two countries. Pakistani-Russian relations could also further develop with cooperation in all sectors and results will be much more optimistic and nurturing.