

“New Scramble for Africa”: The UAE Will Help India “Multi-Align” Against China in Africa

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The announcement that the UAE and India signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly invest in Africa will see Dubai greatly assisting New Delhi in its grand strategy of “multi-aligning” against China there, though Russia could play a stabilizing role by “balancing” many of the various actors engaged in this modern-day “Scramble for Africa”.

“Scramble For Africa”

The modern-day “Scramble for Africa” has been ongoing for quite a while, but it had hitherto mostly been [between the US and China](#) until the past year or so, with these two Great Powers encroaching in their own ways in the continental-wide “sphere of influence” that France has historically staked out as its own. Since then, America’s GCC allies – chief among them the UAE – have established themselves as the [diplomatic kingpins](#) in the strategic Horn of Africa region, coming on the heels of their Turkish competitor’s comprehensive [strategic push](#) all throughout the landmass. Concurrent with this, Russia surreptitiously returned to the continent via the unlikely route of its [UN-approved military assistance mission](#) in the Central African Republic, while the US’ Indian and Japanese allies have attempted to expand their reach in this part of the world through the “[Asia-Africa Growth Corridor](#)” (AAGC).

Consolidating The American “Camp”

While this many independently moving parts might make it seem like the “scramble” for Africa’s resources, markets, and strategic location is utterly chaotic and at risk of causing a kinetic conflict between the various players involved, the fact of the matter is that a stabilizing convergence of sorts is presently ongoing whereby a vague system of “bipolarity” is poised to set in across the continent, albeit one where Russia could play a crucial role in “balancing” between both “camps”. This “consolidation process” was indirectly set into motion once the GCC and the Indo-Japanese members of the anti-China “Quad” began to actively probe opportunities in Africa, which aligned with the tacit strategic desire of the US to involve as many of its allies as possible there as it seeks to eventually assemble an economic coalition to challenge China’s dominant presence.

The [announcement](#) that the UAE and India just signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly invest in Africa is the first tangible step to formally linking together the US’ disparate allies, with the possibility now emerging of the UAE – and by extension, the entire GCC – becoming part of the AAGC. It would be natural for the US to endorse this union at a convenient time in the future and ‘bless’ it with support through the so-called “[BUILD Act](#)”, as well as encourage France to jump on board this emerging multilateral “containment” platform by providing investment and security services given its historic hegemony in the

continent. The reasons why the UAE is siding with India's AAGC and not China's [Belt & Road Initiative](#) (BRI) in Africa are manifold, but they basically boil down to three main ones.

Building The Two “Blocs”

The first is that the UAE is a solid American ally that's positioning itself to [replace](#) its “big brother” Saudi Arabia as the GCC hegemon, so it has an interest in cooperating with the US' grand strategic schemes anywhere in the world. Secondly, there are concerns - whether legitimate or not - that [CPEC](#)'s Gwadar terminal port might one day overshadow Dubai and make it economically redundant, hence the most immediate self-interested motivation that the Emirates has to “multi-align” against BRI in Africa. And thirdly, as an added incentive (not that it actually needed one), the UAE will never forget how Pakistan refused to become militarily involved in the War on Yemen, which deprived the coalition of the country's world-class anti-insurgency experience that could have been a game-changer and averted the current quagmire that's draining the GCC's blood, treasure, and international reputation.

Bearing all of these considerations in mind, it's a no-brainer why the UAE wanted to partner with India instead of China in Africa and therefore catalyze the US' envisaged “consolidation process” there, which could have far-reaching long-term ramifications as the [New Cold War](#) heats up and this continental theater [becomes all the more important](#). The natural response would be for China to facilitate its Pakistani partner's entrance into this competition by helping it transform its [Sea Lines Of Communication](#) (SLOC) between Gwadar and several BRI-built (or -linked) East African ports into multilateral economic partnerships, with Islamabad then reaching out to its Ankara ally to [include Turkey](#) into this developing win-win framework. Only through such a means can China stand any chance at sustainably competing with its American-aligned rivals given the [intensifying infowar](#) being waged [against its investments](#) in Africa.

Russia's “Balancing” Role In Midwifing A “Renaissance 2.0”

Accepting that the American-backed “bloc” is much further along to fruition than the Chinese one, but that these two “camps” are nevertheless in the midst of forming in Africa, it's relevant to discuss the role that Russia could play in all of this. As it stands, Russia is endeavoring to become the 21st-century's [supreme “balancing” force](#) in Afro-Eurasia, to which end it's clinching a variety of strategic partnerships with competing pairs of countries, which pertinently includes the GCC & Turkey, India & Pakistan, and Japan & China. Russia's uniquely neutral position enables it to conceivably serve as a bridge for bringing together these rival states, seeing as how it's the common denominator between them. In principle, Russia could join both the AAGC and BRI's African initiatives as an equal strategic partner, though provided that certain criteria are first met in order to allow this to happen.

For example, Russia needs to sign a peace treaty with Japan before formally joining the AAGC in the future, though this could greatly be facilitated by [courting Japanese investments](#) in the [Far East](#) and then advancing the proposal for a so-called “[Northern Islands Socio-Economic Condominium](#)” over the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin, and Hokkaido. Concerning the Chinese angle, Russia is proving its worth as a no-nonsense security provider in Africa capable of [exporting](#) its “[mercenary](#)”-driven “Democratic Security” model all throughout the continent and especially in BRI partner states, thereby fulfilling the demand that Beijing has for ensuring that Washington's [Hybrid Warschemes](#) don't offset its investment projects there. If Russia can succeed in simultaneously joining the AAGC and

BRI through these means, then it could encourage the “[China-India-Plus-One](#)” model to be applied all across Africa in linking these two global initiatives, sidelining the US and France, and midwifing a “[Renaissance 2.0](#)”.

Concluding Thoughts

The UAE’s decision to team up with India and develop third-party African states is a major move that’s bound to have an enormous impact on the course of the New Cold War in the continent, especially in regards to catalyzing the consolidation of a larger American-aligned anti-Chinese “containment” “camp” there. This might actually be more of a stabilizing development than a destabilizing one, however, so long as China seizes the moment to assemble its own economic coalition with Pakistan and Turkey, therefore creating a bipolar system of sorts for managing African affairs. Russia’s role in all of this is to “balance” between the two “blocs” in order to broker the ultimate convergence between them, one that would take advantage of its strategic partnerships with each party apart from the US and France in order to create a sustainable win-win platform for incorporating Africa into the emerging Multipolar World Order.

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