

Russia-China-Pakistan Economic and Strategic Relations: Russia's Ambassador To China Strongly Hinted At Moscow's Interest In N-CPEC+

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Global Research, April 20, 2019

Region: [Asia](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

The Russian Ambassador to China's latest statement of intent to pursue the integration of Beijing's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) with the Moscow-led economic and security structures in Central Asia strongly hints at the Eurasian Great Power's interest in N-CPEC+ as the most viable way for bringing this about.

The [Russian-Pakistani Strategic Partnership](#) might soon enter a qualitatively new phase if the Russian Ambassador to China's [latest statement](#) is anything to go by. His Excellency Ambassador Andrey Denisov said that Russia intends to pursue the integration of Beijing's [Belt & Road Initiative](#) (BRI) with the Moscow-led economic and security structures in Central Asia, which strongly hints at his country's interest in N-CPEC+ as the most viable way for bringing this about. This aforementioned initiative refers to the [global pivot state's](#) northern branch route to the Central Asian Republics that might also one day include the [RuPak Railway proposal](#) via Afghanistan as well, which could altogether connect Russia to the [Afro-Asian Ocean](#) through China's flagship series of BRI megaprojects in Pakistan collectively referred to as [CPEC](#). For reasons of political sensitivity pertaining to its parallel strategic partnership with India, Russia can't openly endorse CPEC but can still nevertheless participate in it so long as it clothes its efforts in [non-CPEC language](#) about integrating the Eurasian Economic Union (EAO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) with BRI like the Ambassador just did.

Important groundwork is already being made on this front at the policymaking level after three interconnected events that recently took place between Russia and Pakistan. Mr. Oleg Barabanov - a programme director at the Valdai Club (Russia's most prestigious think tank), a professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO, which is run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and a professor at the Russian Academy of Sciences - confirmed Russia's "[Return to South Asia](#)" in the wake of the [Pulwama incident](#) and subsequent "[surgical strike](#)" fiasco by the [rogue state of India](#) in a [thought-provoking piece](#) that he published at his influential think tank in early March. This was soon thereafter followed up by Pakistan's Strategic Vision Institute hosting a conference on bilateral relations with Russia where Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua [unveiled a seven-point roadmap](#) for taking ties to the next level, which evidently made progress a lot faster than most observers could have expected after the President of Pakistan's National Defence University just [shared his views](#) on bilateral relations at the Valdai Club last week.

Quite clearly, Russia has surmounted its "[deep state](#)" divisions over South Asia despite public optics to the contrary by the increasingly desperate Indophile faction, unafraid to move forward with its newfound strategic partnership with Pakistan because it understands

the game-changing significance of this relationship in regards to its broader return to the region. It would therefore be very symbolic if Russian President Putin met with Pakistani Prime Minister Khan on the sidelines of next week's [Belt & Road Initiative Forum](#) in China to casually discuss this and other aspects of their countries' strategic partnership with one another, but even if that doesn't happen, there's no doubt that Ambassador Denisov's latest statement broadly framed how both leaders envision their relations developing in the future. What all of this portends is that Russia will very likely succeed in its centuries-long mission to reach the warm waters of the Afro-Asian Ocean, but in an historic twist, it'll do so peacefully and with the active assistance of its Chinese and Pakistani partners in the new [Multipolar Trilateral](#) as it simultaneously makes progress on the [Golden Ring](#) geopolitical project that they're all a part of.

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This article was originally published on [Eurasia Future](#).

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