

Russia's Iranian Energy Deal Killed Four Birds with One Stone

Russia's gargantuan \$30 billion energy deal with Iran simultaneously accomplished four objectives that are central to the grand strategic goals behind Moscow's "Ummah Pivot".

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Rosneft chief executive Igor Sechin [announced](#) that his company signed a roadmap to invest the mind-numbingly large sum of \$30 billion in the Iranian energy sector following his and President Putin's visit to the Islamic Republic to hold three-way talks with Azerbaijan. This masterstroke of [energy diplomacy](#) wouldn't have been possible had it not been for Trump scaring Western investors away from Iran and pushing the country closer towards Russia as a result, which totally reversed the [intended dynamic](#) of the Obama Administration that sought to reorient Iran in the opposite direction through the multiple concessions that it offered up through the summer 2015 nuclear deal. Russia's foreign policy "[progressives](#)" are indeed making rapid progress in advancing their 21st-century grand strategic goal of positioning Moscow as the supreme balancing force in the Eurasian supercontinent, and this is in turn accelerating the global transition to a [Multipolar World Order](#).

In order to appreciate just how profoundly significant of a geostrategic move Moscow made this week, one needs to look no further than the four objectives that were immediately advanced through the Russian-Iranian energy roadmap:

Unveiling A Trans-Azeri Pipeline

Russia intends to build a [trans-Azeri pipeline to Iran](#), which will not only strengthen bilateral Russian-Iranian relations and their trilateral expansion with Azerbaijan, but also importantly demonstrates the success of the recent Russian-Azeri rapprochement over the past year. Moscow [views](#) Baku as an integrationist in the sense that it's facilitating Russia and China's supercontinental goal of linking the landmass closer together, while traditional Russian "ally" Armenia is seen as a Western-leaning obstructionist that's suddenly become a wayward partner.

It shouldn't be interpreted as coincidental that this new energy-driven milestone in Russian-Azeri relations occurred just weeks before the [planned signing](#) of Armenia's "Comprehensive And Enhanced New Agreement" with the EU. The dichotomy of Azerbaijan moving closer to Russia at precisely the same moment that Armenia drifts towards the West is expected to have serious implications for the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process because it suggests that Moscow might more solidly support Baku's preferred solution to this conflict in line with international law while the West (influenced to a strong degree by the [powerful US-based Armenian lobby](#)) might back Yerevan's continued occupation of the region.

Starting The South Asian Stream

The other important outcome of this trilateral summit is that Russia also announced that it intends to build a tristate pipeline between Iran, Pakistan, and India, which the author [recently remarked](#) might signify that Russia has been successful in getting India to downscale its support for Baloch terrorism against Pakistan due to New Delhi's newfound self-interest in this transnational region's stability because of "South Asian Stream". If successful with this strategy, then Moscow could prove that it's indeed the only balancing force capable of sustaining stability in the Mideast-South Asian pivot region because of the influence that Russia is still capable of wielding in "moderating" the pro-Western pivot that India's embarked on in recent years.



Trilateral meeting of Vladimir Putin, President of Iran Hassan Rouhani and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in Tehran, Nov 1, 2017 (PHOTO: KREMLIN.RU)

Neutralizing Iran As A European Competitor

In line with the abovementioned strategy that the Obama Administration had for gently co-opting Iran and its "moderate"-led government into the Western fold, a [large part of the vision](#) had to do with using Western investments to eventually transform the country into a formidable competitor to Russia in the European marketplace. That entire blueprint has now been neutralized because of Trump's aggression against the Islamic Republic and the "rescue mission" that Russian energy investments are now engaged in to "save" the Iranian economy from the US' anti-Iranian bullying of its Western partners (despite the President's [public denial](#) thereof) and what appear to be impending sectoral sanctions against its resource sector. Under these circumstances, which are setting into motion reformatted years-long strategies by all sides, it's all but impossible for the US to ever "guide" Iran in the direction of becoming a serious competitor to Russia's marketplace position in Europe, thereby averting this scenario.

Reassuring Tehran About The Russian-Saudi Rapprochement

Finally, Iran had every reason to be concerned about the [Russian-Saudi rapprochement](#) if its decision makers viewed it from a "zero-sum" Neo-Realist angle, even though Moscow's intent behind it had always been about forging a win-win solution for retaining state-to-state peace in the Mideast, but all of those fears were put to rest after the announcement about Rosneft's \$30 billion energy investment plans in the Islamic Republic. Tehran can now rest assured that Moscow isn't "selling out" to the Saudis, but is indeed truly trying to balance the complex interstate relations of the Mideast, hence the very successful outcome of President Putin's visit to Iran in proving just how successful Russia's "Ummah Pivot" is shaping out to be.

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