

The Russia-India Cruise Missile S-400 Deal: Will the Threat of U.S. CATSA Sanctions Make Delhi Say Bye-Bye to the “Brahmos” Project with Moscow?

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CATSA) Directed against India?

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

Global Research, April 24, 2018

Region: [Asia](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)
Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Militarization and WMD](#)

The joint supersonic cruise missile cooperation between India and Russia is endangered by the US' wielding of CAATSA sanctions against New Delhi, and there's a chance that this groundbreaking partnership might end sooner than later unless the South Asian state continues to downgrade its other military cooperation with Moscow.

[Reuters](#) released a shocking but nevertheless unsurprising report earlier today quoting experts and unnamed sources who allege that the US' [CAATSA sanction threats](#) are responsible for delaying the [Russian-Indian S-400 deal](#) that was first agreed to in late 2016. The author warned earlier in the month in his article about the “[OPCW Vote & South Asia: Why Pakistan Backed Russia But India Abstained](#)” that New Delhi's refusal to openly support Moscow in this international body foreboded very negatively for the future of their military partnership because it proved that the South Asian state is very susceptible to American pressure nowadays.

These words of caution were just confirmed by the respected outlet, and the revelation that Washington is wielding CAATSA as an asymmetrical weapon for damaging Moscow's most profitable military relationship implies that it might have also played a role in India's recent [decision to scrap](#) the multibillion-dollar Fifth-Generational Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) project that it was involved in with Russia for years already.



Now that the S-400 deal is reportedly in the crosshairs too, it's very probable that their joint supersonic cruise missile cooperation is as well. The [Brahmos](#) project is the signature achievement of the long-standing Russian-Indian military partnership and is regarded as having produced the fastest missile of its type in the world. Unfortunately, its [Russian](#)

[partner](#) NPO Mashinostroyeniya was [sanctioned](#) by the Obama Administration in 2014 and is therefore subject to CAATSA's punitive restrictions, that is, however, unless India can "earn" the "exemption" that it's supposedly lobbying for. According to one of the experts that Reuters interviewed, "one way to avoid secondary sanctions would be if the U.S. determines that India is reducing its dependence on Russian arms", which it evidently has been because the outlet cited the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's publication from last month that said that "Russian hardware represented 62 percent of the country's total weapons imports during the past five years, compared with 79 percent in 2008-2012."

Even though Russian-Indian military cooperation is declining as New Delhi "diversifies" its traditional imports with new American, "Israeli", and French wares as part of its "multi-alignment" policy, this may not be enough to "earn" the US' "mercantile mercy", especially considering that Trump is known to be a ruthless businessman who is reputed to enjoy crushing his competitors. If the US feels emboldened by India succumbing to what might have been CAATSA pressure by backtracking on its erstwhile FGFA deal with Russia and now getting second thoughts about the S-400, then it might not think twice about dealing a "death blow" to Russian-Indian military relations by refusing to issue an "exemption" to the country, therefore forcing it to also discontinue its production of the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile and possibly enter into a nasty trade dispute with Moscow over ownership of its remaining munitions. This could also have profound regional military implications because India might not feel bound by its previous agreement to seek Russia's approval for exporting the Brahmos.

While it's difficult to ever know exactly what the Trump Administration is planning, and thus it's entirely possible that India might "earn" its "exemption" and subsequently be "allowed" to purchase the S-400s and continue its Brahmos cooperation with Russia, the distrust that the FGFA deal's scrapping may have produced in Moscow might have convinced the Great Power of the necessity in accelerating its [developing military partnership](#) with New Delhi's rivals in Islamabad. It's "coincidental", to say the least, that the [Pakistani National Security Advisor was in Moscow](#) meeting with his counterpart just days after the FGFA deal with India was abandoned and right before the Reuters report about how America's CAATSA pressure might thwart the S-400 deal was released, clearly signifying that Russia regards Pakistan as one of many [non-traditional partners](#) in compensating for the US' strategic "poaching" of historic ones like India. This [New Cold War](#) "rebalancing" of sorts is still unfolding, but it's nevertheless [geopolitically promising](#) and is occurring independently of US-Indian relations.

To conclude with some closing comments about the Brahmos topic of this analysis, it's unclear whether any CAATSA pressure has been put on India to discontinue its cooperation with Russia in this respect, but it can confidently be conjectured that this already is or will soon likely be the case given that the US is already going after its newfound "[100-year-long](#)" strategic partner for seriously considering the purchase of S-400s. The US' phased plan is to first interfere with all forthcoming Russian-Indian military deals and then continue leaning on New Delhi to progressively disengage from its existing cooperating with Moscow, after which Washington hopes that the South Asian state will begin to incrementally adopt Western (American, "Israeli", French) wares to replace its former Soviet-Russian ones. This is a long-running process that has only just begun and will still take at least a decade to fully play out, but given the current dynamics, one can expect that the Brahmos might soon than later appear on the chopping block.

*

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

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Andrew Korybko](#), Global Research, 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Andrew Korybko](#)

About the author:

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca