# Relations

## West-Russia

* **Policy of Revival and Reassertion**
  + Defend its erstwhile USSR sphere of influence (Eastern Europe, central asia, middle east Baltics, asia-pacific)
  + Using military power to increase its significance on global stage; economically weak due to sanctions
  + Hotspots: Ukraine, Belarus, Syria, etc.
* **Kazakhstan** 
  + motives of Russia: Former soviet republic; Russian speaking population; part of motherland; its sphere of influence
  + unlike other soviet republics: **BRI** importance; can’t antagonize China; trade shifted to yuan (rubble value decreased)
  + lesson for west: CSTO’s deployment in Kazakhstan shows that Russia is equal to the US, has its own NATO, and has the ability to expand its influence into large neighbouring countries
* **Ukraine**
  + Former soviet republic, rightfully belongs to Rodina, the motherland
  + Historical significance: Kyiv capital of modern Rus
  + Causes of war:
    - Result of overreach by both parties
    - NATO continued its expansion in post-soviet space in despite of promise made by Bush admin with Gorbachev in return for withdrawal of Soviet forces from East Germany
    - In 1998, George F. Kennan, the long-time diplomat and historian of US-Soviet relations, was prescient and pessimistic. “I think [NATO expansion] is the beginning of a new Cold War,” he said. “I think the Russians will gradually react quite adversely and it will affect their policies. I think it is a tragic mistake.”
    - In 2008, US President George W. Bush’s administration called for Ukraine to be invited to join NATO
    - Russia’s overreach lies in its 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 annexation of Crimea and occupation of Ukraine’s industrial heartland in Donetsk and Luhansk
  + Purpose of Russian invasion
    - demonstrate to Ukraine and other Eastern European states that the NATO and US commitments to them are actually quite weak
  + Russian demands
    - include ‘ironclad guarantees’ that Ukraine and no other former Soviet republic will become NATO member.
    - That NATO will vacate positions taken after 1997.
    - And the US will wind up its deployment in Europe including nuclear missiles.
  + Ukraine Joining NATO Solution
    - France and Germany maintain their longstanding threat to veto any such bid for membership, Ukrainian and NATO officials have both reiterated that the choice to join lies with Ukraine.
    - US supports but forgets its own Monroe Doctrine
    - Austria and Finland option: both secured their independence and future prosperity by not joining NATO, as that would have provoked Soviet ire. Ukraine today should show the same prudence.
    - NATO would foreswear enlargement into Ukraine, provided that Russia respects Ukraine’s sovereignty and that Ukraine respects Russian security interests
* **Sanctions**
  + Swift, against Russian oligarchs wealth in safe heavens, Russia’s tilt towards China
* **Germany**
  + Regardless of how often Germans and Russians have been at each other’s throats, the enduring reflex goes back to Bismarck, who famously told the country in the middle: “Never cut the link to St. Petersburg.”
  + Energy dependence**:** Russia is Europe’s number one supplier of both crude oil and natural gas.
  + Europe's most divisive energy project, Nord Stream 2 is designed by Russian energy giant Gazprom to double the amount of gas flowing from Russia straight to Germany, bypassing traditional transit nation Ukraine.
  + Washington has for years lobbied Berlin not to increase its energy dependence on Russia.
* **Cyber Warfare**
  + Russian meddling in US elections, Russian malwares attacking govt agencies, discussed in Geneva meeting
  + Propaganda warfare during Ukraine conflict
* **Why Russia problem for west?**
  + declining powers are often the most dangerous ones
  + Austria-Hungary, that started World War I by declaring war on Serbia (Graham Allison’s book: Destined for War)
  + Gas war against Central and eastern European countries
  + Migration crisis along Belarus’s borders with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland
  + Growing arms sales: in Africa top weapon supplier; in the middle east

## Pak-Russia

* **Russia’s foreign policy towards South Asia**
* Historically, the South Asian region remained under the strict surveillance of the Soviet policy-making apparatus. During the 19th century, a tussle between Russian and British empires emerged, which was dubbed as Great Game, in which Britain sought influence in Central Asia to buffer the crown jewel of its empire, i.e., British India. The Russian empire could not assert its dominance in the region due to the strong footprints of the British empire. During the 1970s, another attempt was made to gain a dominant role in South Asia, which resulted in the Soviet-Afghan war followed by the disintegration of the USSR. However, Russia’s strive to redefine its interest in the region became apparent in the post-Cold War era, specifically, post-9/11.
* Traditionally, Russia has been maintaining friendly relations with India, and most of the time, India remained the epicenter of its foreign policy towards South Asia. However, a strategic shift was observed in the aftermath of the 2014-Ukrainian Crisis, when Russia inclined more towards China for its political support and economic cooperation. Today, Russia’s South Asia policy can be seen as a multi-vectored strategy to meet changing geopolitical realities in the region. The significant aspects of existing Russian foreign policy towards South Asia include seeking peace in Afghanistan, securing energy (gas pipelines) and trade routes passing through the region, and gaining access to warm waters. Afghanistan, therefore, remains a strategically important country for Russians as it provides strategic space to access warm waters in the South through CPEC. Kremlin administration, once hostile towards Kabul, is now keen on reaching a peaceful solution in Afghanistan to reduce instability and in security in the region. Such a major shift in Russian foreign policy is also linked to its Central Asia policy aimed at isolating the US in the Eurasian region.
* Russia has adopted multilateralism as a foreign policy instrument to increase its strategic and economic outreach. In this regard, the Eurasian Economic Union and Shanghai Cooperation Organization have been integral. Also, Russia has joined hands with China on its Silk and Road initiative by reiterating its support to BRI and CPEC. Similarly, Pakistan-Russia relations have seen an upwards trend in the last couple of years. Russia has moved away from defining its relations with Pakistan based upon its relationship with India. Both countries have signed various bilateral agreements and conducted military exercises. Today, Russia is actively engaged with the regional states to counter the US-led western influence in the region, while promoting multilateralism in the international system. However, Russia’s economic and political limitations have made it difficult to maintain its active presence throughout the region.
* Cold War; Pak in US camp
* The first thaw in their relationship was witnessed with mutually exchanged visits of Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Fradkov, and the then President of Pakistan, Pervaiz Musharraf, in 2003.
* Subsequently, both countries started moving towards a strategic partnership amid changing geopolitical and geostrategic environment at regional and international level.
* The Russian Defense Minister’s visit to Pakistan in 2014, marked a new era of friendship between Moscow and Islamabad. During the visit, the first-ever military deal was signed through which Russia committed to selling Mi-35 gunship helicopters to Pakistan.
* Despite the horrors of the past, both countries have ground of convergences in South Asia, such as bringing peace in Afghanistan, curbing the menace of terrorism and extremism, and working for better economic ties
* 2014: Russia lifted its embargo on selling defense equipment to Pakistan.
* Pakistan-Russia joint military exercises Druzba are enhancing their strategic partnership. Pakistan also participated in the war games, Tsentr (2019) and Kavkaz (2020) held in Russia.
* Kremlin believes that Pakistan can play an important role in the region as the country has an edge due to its geographical location.
* Under SCO-RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure), Russia seeks Pakistan’s expertise from its successful campaigns against terrorism and extremism in the region, such as Zarb-e-Azb and Rad-ul-Fassad military operations
* The inclusion of Pakistan as a permanent member in SCO also signals the significance of growing reliance and partnership. The economic, trade, technology, and energy cooperation between Moscow and Islamabad is becoming a priority for both countries.
* PM’s visit to Russia despite West’s warning and Pak’s neutrality over the Ukraine conflict