**India and UAE join hands against terrorism**

NEW DELHI: India made a big move in its West Asia strategy on Monday, while the UAE took a decisive step away from its traditional close relationship with Pakistan to line up with India.   
  
On his first visit to Abu Dhabi, [PM Narendra Modi and Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed AI Nahyan agreed to cooperate against terrorism](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-and-UAE-join-hands-against-terrorism/articleshow/48520579.cms), radicalism and organized crime that, if followed through, could deny the likes of Dawood Ibrahim, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other terror groups from using the Emirates as a springboard against India.   
  
For the first time, reflecting changed geopolitical realities, India and the UAE agreed to "enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism operations, intelligence sharing" and control of flow of terror funds. In a breakthrough agreement, both countries will "control, regulate and share information on flow of funds that could have a bearing on radicalization activities and cooperate in interdicting illegal flows and take action against concerned individuals and organizations".   
  
More important, and one that reflects the strategic direction the UAE has chosen, a joint statement said the two nations "oppose terrorism in all forms and manifestations ... calling on all states to reject and abandon the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructures where they exist, and bring perpetrators of terrorism to justice".   
  
This is a direct reference to Pakistan's activities, particularly with reference to 26/11 accused Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, without naming it, and shows Islamabad's declining equity in what used to be its strategic backyard. Further, both countries asked all countries (read Pakistan) "to fully respect and sincerely implement their commitments to resolve disputes bilaterally and peacefully, without resorting to violence and terrorism".   
  
Modi and the Crown Prince will now meet regularly, while the national security advisers of both countries will meet every six months to take this forward.   
  
The UAE's shift is remarkable because the Emirates' sheikhs continue to have close personal relationships in Pakistan, including the country being their favourite game hunting destination. The UAE was also one of three countries which supported a Taliban government in Afghanistan in the 1990s. For decades, the UAE has been a safe transit for terror groups, organized crime and drug networks from Pakistan, Afghanistan and even India. Sources said the UAE signing on to this agreement signals a new dawn.   
  
India has abandoned its decades-old reticence regarding the Gulf and Middle East — the UAE will be the first Gulf country with whom India is talking "interoperability" for both humanitarian assistance and conflict situations, joint manufacture of defence equipment and maritime security cooperation.   
  
India's new outreach to the UAE may have repercussions in two countries — Pakistan and Iran. The UAE has a contentious relationship with Iran, while Pakistan and the UAE have been very close — the Taliban-hijacked IC-814 made a stop in Dubai after taking off from Amritsar.   
  
By upgrading the bilateral relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership", Modi plans to open different sectors of the Indian economy to investment from the UAE. India hopes to benefit from the $800 billion UAE sovereign wealth fund and the joint statement gives room for optimism.   
  
It said the UAE will "encourage the investment institutions of UAE to raise their investments in India, including through the establishment of UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund, with the aim of reaching a target of $75 billion to support investment in India's plans for rapid expansion of next generation infrastructure".   
  
The importance laid on the visit by the hosts was clear when Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived with all his five brothers to receive Modi at the airport. An additional gesture was grant of land for a Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi.