

## **RUSSIA'S CHANGING POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH ASIA: OPTIONS FOR PAKISTAN**

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### **Abstract**

Foreign Policy is something not tangible and reflected by deeds and agreements between states. Recent deeds and agreements between Russia and Pakistan as well as research confirm that there is an obvious change in Russia's policy of South Asian Region in favor of Pakistan. Russia recognizes Pakistan's importance for peaceful political settlement in Afghanistan and linking Eurasian Union with South Asia, Indian Ocean and beyond. Russia has stopped viewing India as a counter weight to China in the region. Rift between Russia and American led West has intensified in post-Crimea period and the USA-India strategic partnership is yet another factor responsible for Russia's changed approach towards South Asia. So changes in Russia's policy goals along with changes in international and regional orientations caused shift in Russia's policy towards South Asia. In contemporary regional geo-political environment, Pakistan needs to take positive and correct course of action through diversification of foreign relations, importantly by having close relations with Russian Federation as response to Russia's shifted policy and tilt towards Pakistan. It will enhance Pakistan's bargaining power in international dealings.

**Keywords:** Russia, Pakistan, South Asia, Afghanistan, China, Regional Geopolitics, USA

### **Introduction**

During the Tsarist and Soviet eras the foreign policy of Russia was framed and implemented by highly centralized and authoritarian state. During the Tsarist period foreign policy in Russia confined to imperial court while in Soviet era Communist Party played the central role (Donaldson 2014, 122). In post-Soviet era, Constitution of the Russian Federation gives

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