



## Russia-Pakistan Security Cooperation

**OE Watch Commentary:** After the governments of Pakistan and Russia established a security cooperation partnership several years ago, there were questions about what it would include, particularly since the Russian government could damage its relations with India depending on the level of cooperation with Pakistan. The accompanying excerpted article reports on a recent joint military exercise of Russian and Pakistani forces and it provides a look at how this security cooperation partnership continues to take shape.

The article comes from *The Frontier Post*, an independent English-language newspaper in Pakistan, and it reports how Russian “personnel of the Southern Military District arrived in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan aboard an Il-76 military transport plane to participate in the Friendship 2020 joint Russian-Pakistani drills” and that the Russian contingent included “over 70 servicemen of the special operations company of the Southern Military District’s 49th combined arms army.” The article also mentions how the exercise (also known as Druzhba-2020) will take place “at the Pakistani Army’s Tarbela special operations training ground and on the territory of the National Counterterrorism Center in Pabbi” and that the “Russian-Pakistani military drills have been held annually since 2016 alternately in each of the countries.”



*Jump Training from helicopters of the service members of Russia and Pakistan at the exercise “Friendship-2016”.*

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Тренировка\\_по\\_десантированию\\_из\\_вертолетов\\_военнослужащих\\_России\\_и\\_Пакистана\\_на\\_учении\\_«Дружба-2016»\\_\(4\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Тренировка_по_десантированию_из_вертолетов_военнослужащих_России_и_Пакистана_на_учении_«Дружба-2016»_(4).jpg), CC BY 4.0

In July 2019, the Russian government notably declined a deal from Pakistan for the purchase of a large order of a new Kalashnikov variant. There were reports that the deal did not go through because of pressure from the Indian government; however, Pakistan did acquire several Mi-35 attack helicopters from Russia in 2017. According to the article, “in September, a contingent of the Pakistani armed forces participated in the opening ceremony of the multinational military exercise titled ‘Kavkaz-2020’ in Astrakhan, Russia.” The Indian government declined to participate in Kavkaz-2020, supposedly because of Pakistan’s involvement. Outside of the lone acquisition of helicopters in 2017, the latest exercise shows how far Russia-Pakistan security cooperation partnership extends. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

***“Previously in September, a contingent of the Pakistani armed forces participated in the opening ceremony of the multinational military exercise titled “Kavkaz-2020” in Astrakhan, Russia”***

**Source:** Bilal Afridi, “Russian commandos arrive in Pakistan for joint drills,” *The Frontier Post*, 5 November 2020.

<https://thefrontierpost.com/ispr-russian-forces-arrive-in-pakistan-for-fifth-joint-military-drill/>

*...The official press statement remarked that, “The personnel of the Southern Military District arrived in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan aboard an Il-76 military transport plane for participating in the Friendship 2020 joint Russian-Pakistani drills. The international drills involve over 70 servicemen of the special operations company of the Southern Military District’s 49th combined arms army, and also officers of the command headquarters.”*

*...the drills will run at the Pakistani Army’s Tarbela special operations training ground and on the territory of the National Counterterrorism Center in Pabbi. In addition to this, the personnel from both countries will exchange experience and practice inter-operability in accomplishing a broad range of missions, in particular, eliminating illegal armed formations and conducting reconnaissance and search measures employing aircraft and technical reconnaissance capabilities...*

*The exercise was aimed at sharing both armies experiences in counter terrorism domain, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release... Friendship joint Russian-Pakistani military drills have been held annually since 2016 alternately in each of the countries, the Russian press office underscored. Previously in September, a contingent of the Pakistani armed forces participated in the opening ceremony of the multinational military exercise titled “Kavkaz-2020” in Astrakhan, Russia.*