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When Stability Is Lacking

The United Arab Emirates are expanding their cooperation with Russia at an accelerated pace, viewing this as a way to stabilize their position in the circumstances of aggravated regional uncertainties.

Over the latest few years the relations of Russia and the United Arab Emirates have been developing at a remarkably brisk pace. These relations, as emphasized by Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, are going through qualitative changes. He made this statement at a recent meeting, the fourth over the last two years, with Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Forum in Minsk.

Dictate Unacceptable

It is noteworthy that the Emirates have launched the process of active partnership building with Russia across all spheres at a

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time, when Washington and the overall West are relentlessly ramping up their pressure on Moscow. The UAE, despite discontent and pressure from the USA and their allies, not only abstained from joining the actions of the West, violating all international norms, but are even cautiously trying to reduce their dependence on Washington.

One of the decisions, made by the leadership of the Emirates to improve its multi-vector policy, has turned out to be quite insightful and saved Abu Dhabi from getting involved in the armed conflict between the USA and Israel on one side and Iran on the other side. This is about the refusal of the UAE to permit US Air Force airplanes and UAVs, based at the Ad-Dhafra airbase in the territory of the Emirates, to conduct strikes on Yemen and Iraq. Washington was notified of the decision last year, and the Pentagon had to transfer the airbase to Qatar.

The story unraveled as follows: American bombers, carrying buster bunker bombs, took off from the airbase and struck several Iranian nuclear sites. Tehran responded with a missile strike on an American base in Qatar, essentially, located in the country's territory. This is how Abu Dhabi had avoided a grave international dilemma – they managed to stay out of the armed conflict with Iran.

"President Trump is playing with fire in the region, which is already ablaze, — says Yelena Suponina, a renowned Russian political scientist. – The USA are finishing off the system of international relations, established after the Second World War. Amidst this alarming background, Russia and its partners, particularly ones from the EAEU, are becoming an example of economic stability and predictability, integrity and fairness, and finally, strategic certainty for many states".

Forcing into submission is actually the only thing Washington can offer to its partners. The menu options are limited to only which force will be used, whether military, which is no longer absolute and exclusive today, or economic one – tariffs and sanctions. By the way, Washington's punishment and enforcement capabilities in the economic sphere are also dwindling. China's economy has already surpassed the American one by a few indicators. An international settlement system, independent from the West, is taking shape. We could go on naming those areas which are out of Washington's control today.

Disregard for the interests of sovereign states, demonstrated by the US many a time, and its propensity for interference push states in many regions to diversify their external relations, speaking in terms of economy, to hedge their risks. Moreover, interference by the USA has never led to any stabilization anywhere. Issues in Libya, Iraq, Syria have only gotten more acute. Iran has managed to keep the situation under control for now, but the crisis in its relations with the West isn't settled.

"Risks of going into the World War Three have been tied to the USA much too often over the latest years, - Yelena Suponina

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continued with her narrative. – Many people forget that back in April 2018, during the first term of Donald Trump in office, the risk of igniting a world war due to Washington's actions in the Middle East had grown significantly. This happened when the Americans struck defenseless Syria with Tomahawk missiles and other weapons. Just as is the case with Iran, the pretext for the attack was bogus".

This is why even those states that have been regarded as supporters of the USA, particularly, the UAE, are calling upon Russia and international organizations outside of the American sphere of influence, seeking to ensure actual stability and security by establishing a multipolar world, reinforcing principles of equality and mutual respect.

Obvious Choice

It was major destabilization of international affairs in a whole number of regions, including the Middle East, that became the primary motive for Abu Dhabi to expand its ties with Russia. The Emirates view Moscow as an important international policy and economy player, capable of stabilizing the situation.

Today the cooperation of the UAE and Russia is reaching out to more new areas. Over a very brief period, the relations between the two countries, according to the Russian President, have reached up to a level, where it is possible to influence both regional and global processes. Abu Dhabi and Moscow are actively cooperating at various international forums, including the BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, the UN, and are holding similar views on many important issues.

In other areas, the relations of the two countries also demonstrate high and positive dynamics. The turnover between the countries has grown by six times over the last five years, going over $11 billion last year, and the Emirates have become a most important trading partner of Russia in the Arab world.

According to the Russian Direct Investment Fund, in 2024 investors from the UAE invested $17 billion into the Russian economy. Investments from the Emirates and the Fund's own investments in Russia have contributed to more than 60 infrastructure, industrial, energy, mineral mining and processing, petrochemistry, telecom and high-tech projects, creating more than 500 thousand jobs.

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The Russian investments in the UAE economy have reached up to $25 billion. Russian money takes part in achieving the goals of the so-called “fourth industrial revolution”, with the key goal of reducing the crude oil share in the economic balance of the Emirates, raising the weight of the industry and primarily, high technologies.

Moscow – Promising Partner

Last year the capital city of the Russian Federation accounted for more than 30% of the total turnover of goods between Russia and the UAE. Abu Dhabi views Moscow as an important high-tech partner in achieving goals of the “fourth industrial revolution”, since the Russian megalopolis leads Russia in digitalization and high technologies. Owing to its digital solutions, the Russian capital has made it to the top -10 smartest cities of G20 and BRICS.

There are 46 technoparks (the second place in the world), three innovation clusters and more than 150 co-working spaces in Moscow. “Moscow Digital Twin”, a 3D model of the city, used in urban planning, has been a major technology achievement.

What is also important, the city has created an environment favorable for doing business. The national investment climate rating has put Moscow, raising $250 billion of foreign investment into its projects, to the top position over the latest six years.

The UAE are looking to use the experience and opportunities of Moscow. During recent meetings of Abu Dhabi representatives with top Moscow officials the parties discussed, in particular, participation of Moscow companies in the development of Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media Zone free economic zones, the DIFC global financial center.

In its turn, the UAE are displaying heightened interest in participation in investment projects in the Technopolis Moscow Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Today there are several inter-industry clusters operating in the zone and demonstrating impressive achievements. The most prominent industries include microelectronics and photonics, pharmaceuticals, electric cars and unmanned aerial systems.

The Moscow SEZ is recognized as a most attractive investment platform in Russia. There are over 220 high-tech companies, operating in the zone.

At the AIM Congress 2025 conference and exhibition in Abu Dhabi, Moscow won three prestigious awards at once: the Foreign

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Direct Investment Award – for successful attraction of foreign investments (“Delimobile” project), the Future Cities Award – for the development of the Technopolis Moscow Special Economic Zone, and the Global Manufacturing Award 2025 for the contribution into implementation of the Industry Cluster Development Strategy. By the way, in accordance with the program, by 2030 Moscow will set up at least 13 industrial clusters.

Along with the overall cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, Moscow is developing cooperation with individual emirates of the union as well. Particularly, a memorandum of understanding has been executed recently by Moscow and the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah. The parties intend to exchange knowledge and advanced practices in high technologies, trade, implement investment projects etc.

Zone of Stability

The execution of an open-ended agreement between the UAE and the EAEU to establish a free trade zone has been yet another landmark event of great significance for bilateral relations as well. The average duty rate to be levied by the Emirates on products, imported into the country from the EAEU, will be reduced from the current 5% down to 0,6%. Customs liberalization will apply to 86% of goods or 98% of the volume of the total exports of the Union to the Emirates.

The Eurasian Union countries will be able to save about $260 million per year on import duties. The Russian business, including Moscow, will count for $150 million of this amount. According to Maxim Reshetnikov, head of the Ministry of Economy of the RF, 97% of Russian deliveries will be totally exempted from duties, and zero duty rates will be used for 1% under tariff quotas.

In the opinion of Nonna Kagramanian, deputy chairman of Business Russia non-governmental organization, the agreement of the EAEU with the UAE could provide additional 15–20% of trade turnover growth. “And this is happening when a part of the world is rocked by the tariff war, unleashed by Washington, global trade and the financial system are destabilized. There are obvious differences in the principles and approaches of a developing new multipolar world and those of the outgoing unipolar one”, - Kagramanian emphasized.

Considering the fact that higher rates of cooperation between Russia and the UAE are a rather new thing, many experts and analysts say that this start promises new impressive achievements. “Cooperation between the two countries is quite modest as

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compared to what it could become. There are many areas where both parties are only making their first steps, – says Igor Yushkov, expert of the National Energy Security Fund and of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation. – For instance, Arabs have strong positions in the oil sector. This is where we have achieved significant results. And they would require assistance in the natural gas sector. They are also interested in the Russian peaceful nuclear energy and hydrogen technologies, including hydrogen production equipment, space and many other fields. Generally, we have lots of areas for development".

Alexander Chertkov

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