

---

## **PAKISTAN FOLLOWS INDIAN FOOT-STEPS WITH ITS OWN 'ACT EAST POLICY'**

22.03.2019

---

Eurasian Times (23 March 2019)

Pakistans Act East Policy commenced with Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad arriving in Islamabad for a three-day official visit to Pakistan. Mohamad is visiting Pakistan at the invitation of PM r Imran Khan and will attend the Pakistan Day parade as the chief guest.

Mohamad, who is accompanied by a high-level delegation, was received at the Nur Khan airbase by Prime Minister Khan, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Planning and Development Minister Khusro Bakhtiar.

In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Muhammad Faisal said the focus of Mohamads visit was on improving economic, trade, investment and defence. The visit, he added, would advance the brotherly and friendly relations between Malaysia and Pakistan.

The visit largely aimed at enhancing business-to-business contacts and using them for Pakistans outreach to ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Razak Dawood, Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, told a press conference in Islamabad.

During the visit, he said, businessmen from the two countries would sign \$800 million worth of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in the areas of telecommunication, technology, automobiles and halal food.

### **Pakistans Act East Policy**

Dawood said Pakistan wanted to increase its outreach to the far-eastern countries through Malaysia because the country looked to change its China-centric economic policies. We believe Malaysia will be an opening for us to the ASEAN countries, he said.

Dawood, who had been critical of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in past, told a press conference hours before arrival of Mahathir Mohamad that the time had come for Pakistan to look towards other Asian nations.

Pakistan was China-centric during past five years and there was China, China and China in everything, Dawood said, adding that China had helped Pakistan address bottlenecks in power and infrastructure sectors but we have to learn how to keep relations with other countries as well. He, however, acknowledged that Pakistan hugely benefited from the Chinese investment.

Dawood said that Pakistan wanted to use connections of the Malaysian businessmen to get access to ASEAN. In return, the adviser said, Malaysia would get access to the Central Asian states via

Pakistan. Our policy is to reach out to Far East Asia through Malaysia, he added.

ASEAN is a market of 651 million people with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$3 trillion and a high human capital development index, according to the Board of Investment. Statistics of State Bank of Pakistan showed that Pakistan received \$1.6 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) during July-February period of the current fiscal year and 55% of it came only from China alone.

Dawood said that there was a hope that CPEC would supplement the FDI in Pakistan but due to a preferential treatment given to the Chinese investors, the investment from other countries declined massively in the past five years.

When asked about Prime Minister Mohamads decision to cancel some of the Chinese projects due to their high cost, Dawood said that every country had its own dynamics and cancellation of Chinese investment deals by Malaysia does not mean that Pakistan will also follow the suit.

<https://eurasianimes.com/pakistan-follows-indian-foot-steps-with-its-own-act-east-policy/>

---

Kaynak/Source: