

EURASIA DIGEST

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Russia Rejected US Conditions for Talks

The Kremlin, on 2 December, [rejected](#) U.S. President Joe Biden's condition that Russian troops fully withdraw from Ukraine before he speaks with President Vladimir Putin. The Kremlin has also said that it had [not received](#) any proposals from Kyiv to halt fighting in Ukraine during the upcoming holiday period. Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron has said that he would speak again to President Putin after his trip to Washington and warned against "cutting-off" the Russian leader.

Russia to Ban Oil Exports to Countries Implementing Price Cap

On 27 December, Russia issued a [decree](#) to ban oil sales to countries and companies complying with a price cap agreed upon by Western nations. The decree will come into effect from 1 February 2023. However, the ban can be lifted in individual cases based on a "special decision" by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Meanwhile, Gazprom's gas exports to [Europe](#) have dropped by almost 50% in 2022. However, Russia has been able to compensate for Europe's import cuts through higher energy prices which have resulted in a 30% budget revenue growth from oil and gas sales from January to October 2022. Russia has also [inaugurated](#) the Kovykta natural gas field in eastern Siberia which will allow it to increase its gas exports to China.

Russia Sourced Technology Worth US\$ 2.6 Billion

Russia has [sourced](#) at least US\$ 2.6 billion in computer components and electronics in the months since falling under Western technology sanctions. Semiconductors and other technology arrived in Russia between

April and October 31 via Estonia, Hong Kong and Turkey.

Russia Called for 'Diplomatic' Solution to Kosovo Tensions

The Kremlin, on December 12, [called](#) for a "diplomatic" resolution to a recent flare-up in tensions in Kosovo, following attacks targeting the police. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that Russia stands for "ensuring that all the rights of the Serbs are guaranteed". With historically close ties, Serbia is a key partner of Russia amidst its growing isolation.

Armenia Questioned Russian Peacekeeping Role in Karabakh

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan questioned the role of Russian peacekeepers in [Nagorno-Karabakh](#) as he discussed a blockade of the breakaway region with President Vladimir Putin. Since mid-December, Azerbaijani activists have been blocking the Lachin corridor, the only road between Armenia and Karabakh, to protest what they claim is illegal mining. As a result of the blockade, 1,20,000 people are running short of food, medicines and fuel. Pashinyan said that despite it being Moscow's responsibility, "the Lachin corridor is not under the control of Russian peacekeepers".

Russia, Turkey and Syria Defence Ministers Met for First Talks Since 2011

The defence ministers of Russia, Turkey and Syria met in [Moscow](#) on 29 December. This was the first such meeting since the civil war broke out in Syria in 2011. The talks took place against the backdrop of repeated threats by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to launch a military offensive in northern Syria against Kurdish

groups. The Russian Defence Ministry stated that the three defence ministers discussed "ways to resolve the Syrian crisis, the problem of refugees, and joint efforts to combat extremist groups in Syria".

First India-Central Asia NSA Meeting

On 6 December, the first India-Central Asia National Security Advisers/Secretaries [meet](#) took place in New Delhi. The main focus of the meeting was on tackling terrorism and discussing the situation in Afghanistan. There was also an emphasis on the importance of the Chabahar Port for trade and connectivity. The delegation agreed to hold the next meeting in Kazakhstan in 2023. The meeting took place against the backdrop of the five Central Asian nations celebrating their 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties with India.

Tajik President Visited Pakistan

On 14 December, Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon [visited](#) Pakistan. He met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with the leaders exchanging views on strengthening bilateral cooperation. The Tajik President emphasised on mutual interests, which he termed being an important factor for regional peace and stability. Prior to the visit, on 2 December 2022, Tajikistan had [provided](#) humanitarian aid to Pakistan amounting to 5000 tons. This was the second round of humanitarian aid sent to Pakistan, the first being in September 2022 when Pakistan faced severe floods.

Kazakh President Visited Uzbekistan

Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held talks with his [Uzbek](#) counterpart on 21 December. The two leaders discussed steps to further strengthen

their strategic partnership and cooperation in political, economic, trade and cultural spheres. These two countries are the biggest trade partners in Central Asia, amounting to US\$ 5 billion in 2022.

Tokyo Hosted Japan-Central Asia Foreign Ministers Meeting

On 24 December, Tokyo [hosted](#) the Japan-Central Asia Foreign Ministers meeting, where all five Central Asian foreign ministers met with their Japanese counterpart Hayashi Yoshimasa. The Japanese Foreign Minister highlighted the role of Central Asian countries in strengthening the international order. The ministers agreed to secure supply chains for economic benefits apart from boosting people-to-people exchanges. The security situation in Afghanistan also featured in the discussions.

US to Send Patriot Air-Defence Systems to Ukraine

The US has [agreed](#) to send Patriot air defence missiles to Ukraine. The Patriot Missiles system is a part of the latest US aid package of US\$ 1.85 billion and is the most advanced surface-to-air missile system that the West has provided Kyiv. It is intended to help Ukraine defend against the missile and drone attacks from Russia that have targeted its [energy infrastructure](#).

No Confidence Vote Toppled the Slovak Government

Slovakia's administration, led by the [OLANO](#) party and Prime Minister Eduard Heger, lost a no-confidence motion on December 15. 78 of the 120 MPs present in the parliament voted in favour of the no confidence motion. The coalition will continue to govern until a snap election is called.