

Conference Report



Islamabad
Policy Institute
Supporting Dialogue for Peace & Development

Pakistan - US Relations: The Way Forward

July 16, 2019

Islamabad

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INTRODUCTION

The troubled relationship between Pakistan and the United States is set to enter a new phase when Prime Minister Imran Khan visits Washington from July 21 – 23 for a meeting with President Donald Trump.

The ties look to have come a long way since Trump administration operationalized its strategy for Afghanistan and the South Asian region in August 2017, which was particularly coercive towards Pakistan. In pursuance of that policy not only all assistance for Pakistan was ended, but Islamabad was also subjected to arm twisting at the Financial Action Task Force (with US support).

The transformation that we are currently seeing from wild accusation of 'lies and deceit' against Pakistan and allegedly swindling billions in aid (from US) to first President Trump requesting for help with peace in Afghanistan and now an invitation for PM Imran Khan for a visit to White House is by no means a result of a fundamental shift in the dynamics of the relationship. This has happened simply because Trump administration has belatedly realized the futility of its approach and is now intending to extricate itself from Afghanistan for which it needs unequivocal Pakistani support.

Pakistan has always supported a peaceful and political settlement of the Afghan conflict. Therefore, the facilitation, by Pakistan, of the efforts for a peace process in Afghanistan is a natural outcome of its long followed policy on the Afghan war.

Nevertheless, the meeting does provide an opportunity to the leaders of both countries to reassess the trajectory of their relations at least over the past decade and see for themselves what suits their interest – certainly cooperation and not confrontation. This is perhaps the only basis of the hope that is

surrounding the imminent summit.

Pakistan must use this occasion to see if it could get some help for resuscitating its ailing economy in the shape of trade concessions and addressing its regional security concerns.

Islamabad Policy Institute, in view of this important development, organized a daylong conference on July 16, 2019 for appraising the state of ties and exploring what could be potentially achieved from the meeting. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was the keynote speaker at the event, whereas leading experts deliberated on the diplomatic, regional, military, and trade/economic aspects of the ties.

The Conference provided an opportunity to the government to listen to the experts and also articulate its own perspective towards the emerging trends in this critical but difficult relationship in order to improve it further for the mutual benefit of both countries. This Conference further looked into global and regional developments and the emerging challenges that both countries could face while moving towards a prospective closer engagement in future.

This report on the proceedings of the Conference includes the speeches of Executive Director IPI Prof Sajjad Bokhari and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and summary of the presentations made by Former Secretary National Security Division Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq, who also presided over the working session, Former Foreign Secretary Ambassador Aizaz Chaudhry, Former Defense Secretary Lt Gen (Retd) Asif Yasin Malik, and Chief Executive Officer JS Global Capital Mr Kamran Nasir. IPI recommendations for a more fruitful Pak-US cooperation are given at the end of this report.

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ISLAMABAD POLICY INSTITUTE
Prof. SYED SAJJAD BOKHARI**

His Excellency
Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Sb

Excellencies

Distinguished panelists for today's seminar

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of Islamabad Policy Institute (IPI). We are grateful to you for accepting our invitation to attend this Seminar on Pakistan – US Relations.

The theme of the Seminar 'Pakistan – United States Relations: The Way Forward' has been chosen after careful deliberation to reflect the fact that there have been fundamental changes to both the nature and the dynamics of this relationship. We, therefore, intend to contribute to the discussion on building a more cooperative relationship.

As you may have noticed from today's program that His Excellency Mr Qureshi's keynote would be followed by presentations by experts on the various dimensions of the relationship, which would not only help us understand the current state of the relationship, but also better comprehend Prime Minister Imran Khan's upcoming visit to the United States, which we believe would be very important for re-setting this relationship.

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States has a long history. We have remained allies for over five decades. But, we also had a few rough patches in between. Without going into historical details, I'll briefly



touch upon last couple of years. The relationship had been in a difficult phase in recent years. Differences peaked after Trump administration announced its conditions-based Afghanistan strategy in August 2017. It employed coercive tools against Pakistan and inhibited meaningful engagement between the two countries.

Subsequent developments including New Year Tweet in 2018 by President Trump; suspension of aid and military assistance and training further deepened the trust deficit between both countries. Additionally, Washington applied financial coercive measures including increasing pressure via Financial Action Task Force (FATF). At its core were strategic divergences over Afghanistan and deepening Indo-US defence cooperation.

The change in US approach towards Pakistan followed a shift in its strategy on Afghanistan, when President Trump formally sought Pakistan's help in facilitating a dialogue with Taliban. Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf government responded positively to the request and not only Pakistan facilitated the initiation of the dialogue and subsequently maintained a strong liaison with the process, but also called

for a reduction of violence by all sides and took active steps needed to help the process.

We must not forget that it has been Pakistan's consistent position that there was no military solution to the conflict and that the only sustainable path to peace in Afghanistan was through dialogue. Other major stakeholders, however, took their time arriving at this conclusion. We note that significant progress towards a political settlement of the Afghan conflict has been made and there is now greater hope for peace than ever before.

The general perception preceding the prime minister's visit to US is also that Mr Imran Khan has been invited by Trump Administration to seek his assistance in taking the progress achieved so far to its logical conclusion.

This is very much understandable. We, however, believe that there are several other potential areas that may help to put the ties on an even keel including cooperation for reconstruction in Afghanistan and rehabilitation of its economy, collaboration on regional connectivity projects, making combined efforts for eliminating Daesh from the region, and investment opportunities for US businessmen in Pakistan. Similarly, the two sides can work together on regional peace and strategic stability issues.

The White House Statement on the visit was particularly encouraging because it showed that the agenda for the visit was much more broad-based than the public perception.

We at IPI believe that for a meaningful shift in this very important relationship, the United States would have to review its Indo-Pacific Strategy. Pakistan is in no way opposed to Indo-US relations, but Pakistan's regional security concerns too are genuine and need to

be addressed. Similarly, the United States instead of seeing China-Pakistan relations, particularly, CPEC as a challenge needs to view it as opportunity that has the potential to address Pakistan's long-running economic challenges and also be a contributor to regional development.

It is important that Pakistan and the United States must immediately revive the Strategic Dialogue as a first step towards a larger process of trust building and cooperation. The bottom line, however, remains that both sides must recommit to principles of mutual respect and finding common ground on issues of mutual interest.

Today we are privileged to have Foreign Minister Qureshi and number of other leading experts to deliberate on these aspects. We are deeply appreciative of them for finding time in their busy schedules to participate in this seminar. We welcome free and frank exchanges in all our discussions, regardless of whether the expressed views are at variance with those of our Institute. It is only with an open, wholehearted approach that a Conference like this will be truly useful in enabling us to improve our knowledge and understanding of critical national and regional issues.

I thank you all.

**KEY NOTE BY FOREIGN MINISTER
MAKHDOOM SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI
Pakistan US Relations: The Way Forward**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Assalam-o-Alaikum,

I am very happy to be here amid friends and familiar faces.

Let me begin by congratulating the organizers, especially the IPI, for convening this session on Pak-U.S. relations. Gathering the foreign policy, defence, economic and financial experts together in the run-up to the Prime Minister's visit to Washington deserves appreciation.

As a politician, who has served both in the government and the opposition for a long time, I fully appreciate the relevance and significance of such initiatives. These platforms provide opportunity for candid exchange to touch upon more complex subjects.

I would like to share a few personal thoughts on the subject in a rather informal manner.

You would agree that Pakistan's relations with the United States have always figured prominently in our foreign policy architecture. This has been a long-standing, consequential and wide-ranging relationship, encompassing the domains of economic cooperation; trade; energy; education, science and technology; defence cooperation, law enforcement; as well as security and strategic stability.

Admittedly, there have been ups and downs in our bilateral ties with the United States. But if seen from a broader spectrum, this relationship has been mutually beneficial during periods of active cooperation. The inverse proposition is also true.

We can, therefore, conclude that a constructive and cooperative approach is the



best option for the two countries to realize the common objectives of peace and security in the region and bring prosperity to the people of South Asia. To give you an oft quoted example, the extra-ordinary achievements during the 1980s and post 9/11 success against the common enemy of terrorism. This all became possible through the close and dynamic cooperation between the two countries.

Since the assumption of the Government of Imran Khan in August 2018, we have seen a gradual warming up in the relations again. U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo's visit to Pakistan last September presented an opportunity to bring back the momentum in the relationship.

Secretary Pompeo conveyed the U.S. desire for "resetting" the relationship. He held a meaningful dialogue with the leadership and sought Pakistan's support for reconciliation in Afghanistan.

My return visit to Washington in October last year helped to further build on the discussions held in Islamabad. I had useful and productive discussions with Secretary Pompeo and NSA Bolton. My interactions on the Capitol Hill helped to share Pakistan's foreign and

domestic policy priorities. The U.S. Senators and Congressmen were receptive.

I also had an address at the USIP in order to reach out to the wider circle of opinion makers in Washington. My conversation with the media was aimed at building Pakistan's narrative and countering propaganda. Overall, the visit enabled us to re-connect with Washington and lay foundation for the forthcoming visit of the Prime Minister.

The visit of Senator Lindsey Graham to Pakistan in January 2019, whom I also met in Washington, further built up and generated the momentum for leadership interaction between the two countries. He also contributed to enhancement of bilateral trade ties.

Now President Trump has invited the Prime Minister to the White House. We see this invitation as acknowledgment of the inherent importance of the relationship for both sides.

Preparing for this important visit, I would like to highlight the following objectives that we wish to achieve from the visit:

First and foremost, we believe that moving forward with a constructive and positive approach is in the best interest of both Pakistan and the U.S. It would, therefore, be appropriate to work for broader engagement from Afghanistan to bilateral economic and trade cooperation to peace and stability in South Asia.

Secondly, we are mindful of the U.S. priorities regarding Afghanistan. Pakistan has welcomed President Trump's far-sighted decision to pursue a political solution in Afghanistan, which in fact was an endorsement of our own position espoused for a long time.

Pakistan has been facilitating the US-Taliban talks in good faith, underscoring that it remains a "shared responsibility". We have also engaged closely with US Special

Representative on Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad.

Pakistan's engagement to promote intra-Afghan dialogue and regional consensus in support of Afghan peace process are acknowledged by relevant stakeholders. The joint statement of the recently concluded meeting in Beijing, welcomed Pakistan efforts in the peace process. My earlier visits to China, Iran, Russia, Afghanistan, Qatar and UAE were part of our efforts to help build regional consensus and garner support for Afghan reconciliation.

In the context of intra-Afghan dialogue, there was an Afghan Peace Conference in Bhuban last month where representatives of all Afghan political parties participated.

The visit of President Ashraf Ghani to Islamabad in June was another expression of Pakistan's commitment to build mutual trust, strengthen bilateral ties and continue our constructive and supportive role in the peace process.

The convergence in Pakistan and U.S. policies on Afghanistan has rekindled the hope for resolution of the protracted Afghan conflict that has only brought misery and despondency to the region. Pakistan has borne the brunt of this war in terms of socio-economic costs and we continue to host millions of Afghan refugees who deserve to return to their homeland with honour and dignity.

We wish a secure and stable Afghanistan, at peace with itself and with its neighbours. A peaceful neighbourhood is vital for realizing our government's socio-economic development agenda.

Thirdly, We see a great potential to deepen and broaden our economic engagement with the U.S. Historically, U.S. has been Pakistan's

important development, trade and investment partner. United States is Pakistan's second largest export market, after EU, accounting for nearly 16% per cent of our total exports.

During the financial year 2018-19, the total trade between Pakistan and the U.S. amounted to U.S. \$ 6.627 billion. The U.S. is also among the major foreign investors in Pakistan with over US\$ 1.5 billion worth of investments.

We are looking forward to explore ways and means enhance this economic and trade cooperation to the mutual benefit of the two countries. Engagement in areas such as economy and finance, energy, science and technology as well as agriculture has the potential to intensifying a long-term economic growth, stability and human development in consonance with the vision of "Naya Pakistan". Fourthly, Prime Minister also wishes to highlight his vision for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia. The United States has important stakes in peace and security in this region and hence has always been an active player whenever tensions have escalated

between Pakistan and India. Recently, the U.S. contribution was helpful in defusing the tensions post Pulwama. We hope that leadership of the two countries in Washington can agree on the imperative of resuming a sustained and result-oriented dialogue between Pakistan and India aimed at peacefully resolving all disputes, including the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir.

Finally, as we embark upon the first summit-level engagement with the U.S., we are confident that this visit will help in ushering in an era of stability and prosperity in South Asia and the broader region. In this common objective, both Pakistan and United States will be the joint beneficiaries.

I wish you all a productive session.
Thank you.

Pak-U.S. Relations: Cooperation for Afghan Peace

Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq

Former Federal Secretary National Security Division & Former Ambassador to Afghanistan

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

- Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the United States is pivoted on two aspects – Afghanistan and economy.
 - President Trump likes to be seen as an out of box thinker and a deal maker. He carries a reputation of not listening to the American 'deep state', which is good for Pakistan. But, at the same time it would be dangerous if he is rubbed the wrong way. The prime minister is, therefore, advised to be very careful during the visit. He should seek to build a rapport with President Trump.
 - Pakistan should cautiously see the progress towards peace in Afghanistan because historically the warring sides there have not abided by their commitments. Moreover, the war economy that has created a new elite in Afghan society has little interest in peace. These beneficiaries of the war economy would impede the implementation of any peace deal.
 - Pakistan has to proactively support peace initiatives because peace in Afghanistan is in its interest. Pakistan has suffered a lot due to war in Afghanistan.
 - Pakistan government should caution Trump Administration against precipitous withdrawal, which would not only be destabilizing for Afghanistan and Pakistan, but for the entire region. Therefore, an organized withdrawal has to be advocated.
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- The post-peace political dispensation in Afghanistan should be inclusive representing all ethnicities and groups. Dominance of a single group would undermine the prospects of peace and a new bloodshed could start. It must, nevertheless, be remembered that power sharing is an alien concept in Afghanistan. Making the different groups to share power would, therefore, be an uphill task.
 - Territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be ensured. Although there is no imminent threat of division of Afghanistan, but Pakistan should actively discount any effort by any of the stakeholders to divide the country because there have been few suggestions at different levels in the past about division of Afghanistan.
 - Involvement of international community in Afghanistan and their support for Afghan economy should continue. It is difficult for Afghan economy to stand on its own because economic institutions and corporate sector is virtually non-existent there. Ninety three percent of Afghan government expenses are currently met through foreign assistance.

Afghans may have traditionally remained opposed to foreign presence in their country, but at the same time foreign money is always welcome there.

- A regional consensus for peace in

Afghanistan needs to be promoted. All regional and extra-regional countries should end their interference in Afghanistan. Peace in Afghanistan without such a regional consensus is not possible.

Pak-U.S. Relations: The Diplomatic Dimension

Ambassador Aizaz Chaudhry

Former Foreign Secretary

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

- US, under its concept of deterrence in a unipolar world, believes that it must have unmatched power on the world stage. Therefore, the world is at the cusp of a new cold war between the United States and China. Meanwhile, Russia too is resurgent under President Putin; Europe, because of internal issues, appears on the sidelines; and Middle East is embroiled in turmoil. Trade wars are challenging the concept of free trade. Meanwhile, President Trump's unique style of governance through Twitter has created uncertainty and unpredictability.
- US has deepened its strategic partnership with India under its Indo-Pacific Strategy, whereas it sees Pakistan through five lenses – Afghanistan, China, India, Counter-Terrorism, and Nuclear Weapons.
- Pak – US Relations have gone down several notches since Washington abandoned the bilateral Strategic Dialogue almost four years ago. The relationship, therefore, has to be rebuilt from a very low mark. In this regard rebuilding of mutual trust and respect is crucial. Development of personal rapport between PM Imran Khan and President Trump would be very important in this regard. President Trump follows his instincts more than the briefs he receives from his bureaucracy. He would, therefore, be



interested in seeing a different picture. PM Khan needs to show him the side of Pakistan that the US government official briefs usually do not reflect.

- Afghanistan is likely to dominate the discussions in US in view of Washington's new found interest in a peaceful and political settlement of the long running dispute. There has been progress towards a political process, but implementing a ceasefire would be a challenge. Pakistan's role in Afghan peace process has been acknowledged and there is also a realization that Pakistani security concerns need to be addressed.
- India's belligerent attitude towards Pakistan, use of Afghan soil for sabotage in Pakistan, and massive human rights abuses in Occupied Kashmir need to be highlighted. The government must urge US to play its role for resumption of Pak-India dialogue and stopping the Indian brutalities in Occupied Kashmir.
- The US leadership should be asked to contribute to strategic stability in South Asia.
- It needs to be made clear to Trump Administration that coercion, especially through economic and

financial means like Financial Action Task Force, does not work. Therefore, cooperative ties need to be forged to address the issues in the relationship.

- American leaders need to be unequivocally told that Pakistan's relations with China are not at the expense of ties with US.
- With regards to US stand-off with Iran, US leaders should be conveyed that war would have devastating consequences for the whole region. Therefore, Pakistan does not support military confrontation in the region. US needs

to be advised that contentious issues should be resolved through dialogue.

- Bilateral engagement should be made more broad-based. Therefore, instead of occasional visits, a structured bilateral dialogue covering the various aspects of relations should be revived.
- Corporate America should be invited to invest in Pakistan. Islamabad remains interested in close economic relations with US.

**Pak-U.S. Relations:
The Military to Military Cooperation Element**

Lt Gen (Retd) Asif Yasin Malik
Former Defense Secretary

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

- The future direction of Pak – US military cooperation has to be informed by the history of this relationship.
- External relations are always driven by national interest. The pattern of Pak-US relationship has, therefore, followed US interests in the region. Uncertainty has been the hallmark of these ties.
- The most favourable period for Pakistan in this relationship was the decade of sanctions in 1990s, which from a security perspective, allowed Pakistan to develop its indigenous capacity and diversify the sources for acquisition of military hardware.
- There is nothing to write home about Pak-US military to military relations. They have nothing to offer to us, which we cannot buy from any other country in the world. The whole world is now orientating towards multi-dimensional military relations eg Turkey going for S-400 systems from Russia.
- Pakistan needs to follow an independent military policy in consonance with the political leadership of the country and its political policy. The civilian and military leaderships cannot be following different paths.
- Pakistan should continue the process of indigenization of national defense industry. The policy governing external acquisition of arms should be open and



diverse instead of being restricted to one country, one bloc, or one source.

- Military to military relations should not be the driver of bilateral relationship with US. If that happens, Pakistan would remain vulnerable to US blackmail.
- Pakistan military should engage in exercises with all countries, whether in the West or in the East, where possibilities exist.
- Diverse military engagement would give greater space to operate without being labelled as part of one bloc or the other.
- Pakistan's foreign policy should be economy based rather than security driven as strong economy is guarantor of national security.

Pak-U.S. Relations: The Economic, Trade & Investment Dimensions

Mr. Kamran Nasir
Chief Executive Officer
JS Global Capital Ltd

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

- Economic growth in FY19 stood at 3.3% which is expected to fall to 2.4% in FY20. The slowdown is widespread. Sharp Rupee devaluation & interest rate hikes have taken their toll.
 - Structural reforms define the current state of affairs. Documentation of the economy & optimizing tax collection through prudent fiscal management is now the main focus.
 - A US\$6bn IMF program has been approved with US\$1bn already received. The credibility that comes with an IMF program will allow us to more effectively address our financing needs.
 - Focus has now shifted from an unsustainable import led growth to a more sustainable model of export enhancement for local industries.
 - If we are to **enhance trade** ties with our global partners, *underlying structural issues* will need to be rectified. These issues include:
 - o Lack of direction in economic policies
 - o Unsustainable import-led growth
 - o Large undocumented economy
 - o Underdeveloped social sector
 - o Weak institutions and poor governance
 - o Lack of accountability
 - o Rent-seeking culture
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- Investment is a prerequisite of trade and Pakistan is rapidly becoming nothing less than the ideal place for it. USA can play a critical role in enhancing economic ties by way of investment in key sectors such as Energy, Logistics, Agriculture, Tourism and Technology.
 - Pakistan's strengths need to be showcased.
 - Many of multinationals operating in Pakistan, some of which are headquartered in US, have recorded phenomenal growth here (in Pakistan) over the past decade as compared with their global growth rates.
 - Nestle with US\$450mn investment in milk value chain; Coca Cola with US\$380mn in expansion; Unilever parent buying out minority (c.24%) for US\$530mn and separately investing US\$150mn for increasing capacity; Friesland Campina (NL) acquiring 51% of Engro Foods for approx. US\$442mn; Lotte (S. Korea) buying substantial share in Pepsi Lahore bottler; Arcelik of Turkey acquiring Dawlance Appliances for US\$250mn; and ExxonMobil making significant investments in LNG terminal & offshore drilling, are some of major examples of recent foreign investment in Pakistan.

- Pakistan and USA have long shared a strong bond given their **common values on regional peace and economic prosperity**. While the two countries have worked tirelessly in curbing terrorism and enhancing economic ties, there is vast untapped potential that could open **floodgates of mutual benefits**.
- USA has given Pakistan ~US\$33bn in aid since 9/11. Conversely, Pakistan has lost over **70,000 lives**, including civilians and security personnel. Dr. Hafeez Pasha estimates that Pakistan's economy has lost ~US\$252bn in the war against terrorism.
- Pakistan armed forces, through their highly successful **Zarb-e-Azb** operation, have restored the much desired peace in the terror-infested regions of the country.
- Home to the largest stock exchange of the world, industries and services sectors, USA (with an estimated GDP of US\$21 trillion) has a strong presence on the global stage.
- US is Pakistan second largest bilateral trading partner.
- Growing remittances (from US) reflective of strong diaspora base in US.
- Special Economic Zones are an opportunity for USA investors. Several incentives are being given to investors investing in SEZs, which include:
 - o One-time exemption from custom-duties and taxes on import of plant and machinery.
 - o Income tax exemption of 10 years if production commenced by 30th June 2020 .
 - o Income tax exemption of 5 years if production commenced after 30th June 2020.
- o Gas, electricity and other utilities provided at the zero-point of SEZ.
- o Captive power generation is also allowed in SEZ.
- Pakistan making business environment easier for trade partners, which has also been acknowledged by the World Bank.
- CPEC opens opportunities for the world. US should see CPEC as an opportunity and not as a challenge and American technology is already being used in CPEC projects.
- There several opportunities for US investment in energy sector especially in improvement of the distribution networks.
- Water management presents another great investment opportunity.
- US companies can help in building Pakistan's logistics capabilities.
- Similarly, there are investment opportunities in agriculture, value chains, tourism, and technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Diplomatic Relations:

- Prime Minister Imran Khan should use his meeting with President Donald Trump to build confidence and erase the lingering mistrust and concerns. It would be challenge for the Prime Minister to convince POTUS that the challenging bilateral relationship is worth working on and cooperation is mutually beneficial.
- The meeting should lead to revival of a high level strategic dialogue on bilateral and regional issues between US Secretary of State and Pakistan's Foreign Minister. The absence of such a dialogue has been a major impediment in managing challenges in the relations during past few years.
- PM Imran Khan must call for denial of support and safe havens to terrorist groups of Pakistani origin by other countries in the neighbourhood, as well as, in the West.

Trade and Economic Relations:

- Prime Minister Imran should not seek aid. He rather needs to aim for trade and should forcefully encourage Corporate America to invest in Pakistan citing the success story of multinationals operating here (in Pakistan) and the improved business and regulatory environment. Corporate America, if they invest in Pakistan, could become Pakistan's strongest lobby/advocates in DC.
- There are huge investment opportunities here in Pakistan for US businesses in energy, supply chain, logistics, agriculture, technology, and tourism sectors.
- Greater access to US markets should be sought. US may be requested for a preferential market access arrangement similar to European Union's GSP+ facility.

Military Cooperation/Security:

- Pakistan's regional security concerns need to be urgently addressed.
- US needs to undertake visible steps to

dispel the perception that it treats Pakistan as a disposable ally.

- US must play a proactive role in resolution of disputes between Pakistan and India that are at the heart of the instability in South Asia. While doing so it must remain a fair and honest broker.

- The fight against extremism and terrorism is still far from over. Although, these issues may have gone down on US priorities, but for sustained action against violent extremism and terrorism, Washington must continue its counter-terrorism support for Pakistan.

Strategic Stability:

- The U.S. must reduce the overload of its Indo-Pacific strategy on Pakistan by not allowing India to vertically proliferate both in conventional and strategic (space, nuclear, missile etc) domains.
- US may move for rescinding 2008 Nuclear Suppliers Group Waiver for India to buy nuclear technology or provide a similar one to Pakistan.

India:

- The US should encourage India to resume bilateral dialogue with Pakistan and move towards resolving outstanding disputes.
- US may influence India to stop stirring trouble for Pakistan by waging terrorism/hybrid warfare through Afghanistan and infiltrating State actors like Commander Kulbushan Jadhav.
- Prime Minister Imran Khan should sensitize the US leadership about the Indian brutalities in Occupied Kashmir and ask them to pressure India to end the human rights violations there, which have now been documented and acknowledged by UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights for the second consecutive year.

Regional Issues/Cooperation:

- Pakistan may reassure US of its

continued and full support for taking forward the initiative for peace in Afghanistan, which it (Pakistan) is already facilitating. However, at the same time the US leaders may be realistically cautioned about the potential challenges in implementing any eventual peace deal.

- US may be cautioned against precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan with or without a deal because such an eventuality may destabilize the entire region.
- Assured economic support to rebuild and rehabilitate Afghanistan for at least 20 years must be emphasized.
- Pakistan can also assure the US that it would like to maintain a balance in its relationship with both US and China.
- There should be a categorical rejection by Islamabad of any 'containment of China' as it reflects an outmoded Cold War Mentality that goes against the ground reality of the emerging 'Asian Century' of corridors and connectivity.
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) may be seen by US as an opportunity rather than a threat. US companies are already benefitting from CPEC projects as major energy and infrastructure projects are using American technology and hardware.
- PM Imran Khan could offer Pakistan's help in trust building between China and US.

We cannot afford to be the epicenter of another Cold War. It may seem ambitious but Pakistan has done it before and there are instances where a relatively smaller country had contributed to reducing tensions between bigger countries.

- US may be asked to return to and respect JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal) and avoid escalating crisis with Iran, as the latter has rights and obligations under NPT. Pakistan doesn't want a war in its neighbourhood as it wants progress not regression in the most populous regions of the world.

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