**US-Pakistan: A Rollercoaster Ride**

**Pakistan’s relations with the US are not perfect but still indispen-sable for protecting the core national interests of both countries.**

[Sher Ali Bukhari](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/sher-ali-bukhari)

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US-Pakistan relations can be de­fined in the best possible way as a marriage of convenience. Since the inception of Pakistan, the country has faced a full spec­trum of strategic, political, and economic challenges, mainly because of the un­even partition of India and the hostile attitude of the newly born Indian state. Furthermore, that was the era of the Cold War, where our ear­ly leadership sought to set an alliance with the US to meet the security and economic challenges of the country.

PM Liaquat Ali Khan visited UAS on 3rd May 1950 and set the tone for the future of US-Pakistan relations. Mov­ing forward, Pakistan became a natu­ral partner of the US while inking the Mutual Defense Treaty (1954), SEATO (1954) and CENTO (1955) that yield­ed to modernizing defense capabili­ties of Pakistan’s army to deter Indi­an threat, though these pacts aimed at thwarting Soviet aggression. Mean­while, economic, agricultural and large infrastructural sectors- dams, roads and bridges- were booming due to American investment in Pakistan.

[PM Shehbaz to chair federal cabinet meeting today](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2024/pm-shehbaz-to-chair-federal-cabinet-meeting-today)

However, this early romance end­ed during the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 - where the US betrayed its ally at a critical juncture. Relations remained frosty during the 1970s. Nevertheless, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) became the prin­cipal reason for improving US-Paki­stan relations during the 1980s. Once the US had completed its strategic goal of destroying the evil empire of the So­viet Union, cooperation between US-Pakistan became limited and once again Pakistan entered into hot waters of US sanctions against Pakistan’s nu­clear missile program.

Again, the 9/11 attacks and the US invasion of Afghanistan provided the last opportunity to establish full-fledged relations between Pakistan and the US against the War on Ter­ror. During two decades of WOT, Pak­istan lost more than 80,000 lives and $ 130 billion in economic loss while the soft image of the country was bad­ly tarnished. Once again, Pakistan-US relations have become a full cycle of love and animosity. To understand a clear trajectory of US-Pakistan rela­tions in 2024 and beyond, we have to comprehend the chronological cycle of US-Pakistan relations. This tells us two things: The security-centric nature of relations and low public trust.

[COAS Asim Munir, Saudi Crown Prince vow to strengthen defence cooperation](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2024/coas-asim-munir-saudi-crown-prince-vow-to-strengthen-defence-cooperation)

However, Pakistan must realize that relations with the US are indispens­able, despite the Pakistan-China en­tente. The US is the market of largest exports of Pakistan, which stands at $ 7 billion. The US is also a net provider of critical hardware for Pakistan’s de­fense capabilities. Pakistan’s remov­al from the grey list of FATF is large­ly because of US support. Meanwhile, US support is indispensable in provid­ing another $ 6 billion IMF bailout to Pakistan, which is essential for the eco­nomic stability of Pakistan. Further­more, US leverage to Pakistan can pro­tect the core interests of the country vis-à-vis Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Observers note that US-Pakistan re­lations have witnessed warmness in its relations since 2022 when Paki­stan’s top political and military lead­ership paid official visits to the US. This helped to restore normalcy in the relations of both countries. Ex­perts viewed that the US’s positive gesture is the need of the hour for ad­dressing amounting security and eco­nomic challenges of Pakistan as the country has witnessed a 60 increase in terrorist attacks and near escaped economic default.

[IHC rejects plea seeking immediate removal of Nawaz Sharif's picture from Ramazan ration bag](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2024/ihc-rejects-plea-seeking-immediate-removal-of-nawaz-sharif-s-picture-from-ramazan-ration-bag)

In the present scenario, there is a need to transform and revitalize US-Pakistan relations. First, Pakistan-US should maintain full cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism and intelligence sharing to address the growing threat of terrorism from Af­ghanistan. At the same time, both countries should come up with a comprehensive plan among region­al players and the international com­munity to stabilize Afghanistan to nip the evil in the bud of terrorism.

Second, Pakistan should do away from the security-centric nature of US-Pakistan relations. The country should foster its economic trade and invest­ment ties with the US. Both countries can benefit from each other in the ex­ports of IT as Pakistan’s potential tal­ent in IT and software could treasure hunt of Silicon Valley of the US.

Third, both countries should main­tain a full level of cooperation in the field of the agricultural sector as both countries enjoyed agricultural coop­eration since the 1950s. Pakistan has been facing an acute sense of food inse­curity and US cooperation can iron out in achieving food security in Pakistan.

[Donald Lu expresses concerns over election irregularities in Pakistan](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2024/donald-lu-expresses-concerns-over-election-irregularities-in-pakistan)

Fourth, Educational and cultural ex­change between both countries will be able to improve relations between US-Pakistan. Pakistani Americans are a vi­brant community of the US which can act as a bridge for maintaining people-to-people relations while the Fulbright Scholarship Program and academic cooperation will yield comprehensive relationships between both countries.

Last but not least, the US still enjoys the status of a superpower, so its sup­port is vital for protecting the core re­gional interests of Pakistan. For exam­ple, Pakistan’s stance on Kashmir will strengthen greatly with the support of the US while its continual support is also required for binding India to­wards Indus Water Treaty (1960).

Finally, experts argued that US-Pak­istan can be transformed into com­prehensive relations provided that Pakistan maintains high diplomatic engagement with the US while opting for a non-aligned foreign policy to­wards the US and China to protect its core national interests. Meanwhile, despite growing US-India relations against the backdrop of China, there is still an open window of US-Pak­istan relations in the ever-evolving regional and global landscape: Pak­istan’s relations with the US are not perfect but still indispensable nature for protecting the core national inter­ests of both countries.

[Sindh's most development initiatives now pivot on PPP mode](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2024/sindh-s-most-development-initiatives-now-pivot-on-ppp-mode)

**Sher Ali Bukhari**
The writer is a UET alumni with keen interest in Pakistan’s foreign policy.