**Discord leaks**

[Malik Muhammad Ashraf](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/malik-muhammad-ashraf)

May 05, 2023

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

Reportedly among the trove of US secrets leaked online through the Discord Messaging Platform and published by Washington Post there is also a discussion between Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Minister for foreign affairs Hina Rabbani Khar in which she advocated discarding the policy of maintaining a ‘middle ground’ between China and the United States. She also reiterated that Pakistan should avoid appeasing the West and that the country’s desire to maintain a strategic partnership with the US would sacrifice the full benefits of its original strategic partnership with the long-term friendly nation China. An assistant of the Prime Minister who was also part of the discussion reportedly advised the Prime Minister that supporting the UN resolution on the Ukraine-Russian war could jeopardize Pakistan’s trade and energy deals with Russia and would give the impression of a change in Pakistan’s position. These leaks apart from Pakistan also provide a peek into the private calculations of India, Brazil and Egypt, as they attempt to straddle allegiances in an era when America is no longer the world’s unchallenged superpower. My considered view is that what the minister of state and assistant of the Prime Ministers said in their conversation is absolutely justified in view of the checkered history of our relations with the US since the early fifties. Perhaps a brief look at those relations is pertinent to advance the argument.

[PTI’s Mian Aslam Iqbal booked in mobile snatching case](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/pti-s-mian-aslam-iqbal-booked-in-mobile-snatching-case)

The US has been an unfriendly ally as it never exhibited respect for our sovereignty or helped us out of adverse situations like a friend. It used Pakistan as a pawn on the chess board to advance its own global interests. Our relations with the US always have been of transactional nature designed to serve US interests. We joined alliances like SEATO and CENTO in the mid-fifties against a neighbouring Super Power; an ill-advised move that has caused incalculable harm to us. The US almost jeopardized our security by flying a U2 spy plane over Russian territory from a base near Peshawar without the knowledge of the government; it helped India to start its nuclear programme which eventually enabled her to explode a nuclear device in 1974; it refused to help Pakistan when India attacked Pakistan in 1965 and put an embargo on the shipment of military hardware and spares to its ally; its sixth fleet never turned up to save the dismemberment of Pakistan when India attacked former East Pakistan; it fiercely opposed our nuclear programme and used sanctions to prevent Pakistan from pursuing the nuclear path; it used Pakistan against USSR in Afghanistan and at the end of the war left it in the lurch to face the consequences.

[Pakistan reports 29 coronavirus cases, one death in 24 hours](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/pakistan-reports-29-coronavirus-cases-one-death-in-24-hours)

Our coerced participation in the war on terror as a front-line state also tells the same story of high-handedness by the mighty. The US persistently looked askance at Pakistan’s commitment to the war on terror and accused it of double-dealing. The Raymond Davis episode, the Salala attack, the Operation to take out Osama Bin Laden and continued drone attacks on our soil were ranting testimonies of this bitter reality. The US is also trying for a permanent seat for India in the Security Council and propping it as a regional superpower to realize the objective of its ‘contain China Policy’. The US and its allies have shown criminal indifference to what is happening in IIOJ&K. The US and India are also on one page to thwart CPEC which they perceive as a threat to their interests. The signing of a nuclear deal with India by the US and subsequently by the UK and France in complete disregard to the NPT clauses forbidding any such deal as well as facilitating NSG waiver for India are moves inimical to the interests of Pakistan. China has been a great support to Pakistan in the domain of economic development, and its defence capability and providing financial help at crucial times when it badly needed those funds to stabilize its economy. It has been a staunch supporter of the Kashmir cause. CPEC is yet another initiative to boost economic prosperity in this region, particularly Pakistan.

[President, PM condole demise of ARY’s Salman Iqbal’s daughter](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/president-pm-condole-demise-of-ary-s-salman-iqbal-s-daughter)

The foregoing facts and the changed geo-political situation in our region as well as the emerging global scenario do dictate the change in Pakistan’s policy and tilt toward China as suggested by the state minister for foreign affairs. The reality that Pakistan’s security, its strategic interests and economic prosperity are inextricably linked to the region where it belongs also pleads for the same approach. But the dilemma is that though for now, the US has not opposed the import of cheap oil from Russia by Pakistan but it would not be in the interest of Pakistan to leave the middle ground till the time the country becomes economically strong enough to spurn the help of the West and USA in the multiple social and economic areas like the GSP status given to it by EU. I think Pakistan must continue with its policy of middle ground for now taking a cue from the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement by India and Egypt at the beginning of the cold war. India by pursuing that policy benefited both from the USA and the former USSR.