



## US-Pakistan reattachment

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This article is based on **“The change triangle”** that appeared in The Indian Express on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019. It talks about the impact of US-Pakistan reattachment on India’s interest.

The recent US President Donald Trump's meeting with his Pakistani counterpart, Imran Khan, has led to the United State quietly replacing its threat of sanctions against Pakistan with renewed engagement.

The US wants to withdraw from Afghanistan and finalize a “peace” deal with the Taliban, citing the role that Pakistan can play to finalize this deal due to its geopolitical advantage. This is the reason for a complete reversal in the USA's Pakistan policy.

This is being dubbed as a major diplomatic victory of Pakistan and it will affect South Asia as a region and especially India.

### Highlights of US-Pakistan reattachment

- A \$6-billion **International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout for Pakistan:**
  - The US, despite enjoying veto power over IMF decisions, has agreed to grant bail to Pakistan’s faltering economy.
  - This decision of US, to support the bailout to Pakistan, is despite the fact that US's refusal to bail out would have, perhaps, compelled Pakistan to curb terrorism (as Pakistan still continues to shield state-nurtured terrorist outfits).
  - On the contrary, USA unblocked \$1.2 billion aid to Pakistan.
- The US **designation of the leading Baloch separatist group as “terrorist” outfit**
  - The Taliban, despite countless attacks on US forces, is still absent from the US terrorism lists.
  - Yet, to appease Pakistan, the USA listed the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) as “terrorist”.
  - The action provides Pakistan international legitimacy to come hard on the Balochistan movement.

- The US's **re-hyphenation of India with Pakistan**- as the USA offered to mediate the Kashmir conflict.
  - Pakistan has continued its policy of “internationalisation” of the Kashmir issue, with a view for reversing J&K’s accession to India, and has used every global forum to criticise India’s “illegal occupation” of Kashmir.
  - Reacting to this, India has reiterated its longstanding position that there is no room for mediation in Kashmir or on any other India-Pakistan issue.

All outstanding matters between the two countries would be resolved through bilateral dialogue — but only when Pakistan ends cross-border terrorism in India.
  - The framework for **bilateral resolution** of problems between India and Pakistan was written into the 1972 **Simla Agreement** and reiterated 27 years later in the **Lahore Declaration**.

## Impact on India

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- **India left out from Afghanistan's peace process:** India has been literally ousted in Afghanistan “peace settlement” process, as the Afghan peace process is being discussed by four players comprising China, the US, Russia and Pakistan, ignoring India's stakes in Afghanistan.
- **India-US tariff tussle:** The US has accused India of not opening the Indian economy enough for American trade and has threatened to clamp new tariffs on Indian exports to America.
  - The USA also **withdrew the GSP preference from India**.
  - New **sanctions on Iran** have affected Indian trade with Iran.
  - Subsequently, India had to reduce its allocation to the deep-sea port (**Chabahar Port**) by two-thirds: From Rs 150 crore to Rs 45 crore. This might affect the country’s energy security.

## Way Forward

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- India must realize two things:
  - Geography of Pakistan is its greatest asset (as Pakistan borders middle east, central Asia and Indian ocean).
    - Pakistan cannot be isolated as all the great powers will have their stakes in the Pakistan geopolitical location.
    - India should make efforts to normalize relations with Pakistan as now there will be more coherence in Pakistan's approach.
    - Kartarpur corridor can be a step in the right direction.
  - The USA retains Pakistan as its “major non-NATO ally” and refuses to hold Pakistan’s military to account for exporting terrorism.
    - Narrow geopolitical interests guiding America’s Pakistan policy will likely continue to affect India's interests.
- America’s Pakistan policy validates the Karl Marx saying -“History repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce”. In this context, India must reassess its strategic convergence with the US and follow a pragmatic foreign policy.

### ***Drishti Input***

USA's pursuit of withdrawal from Afghanistan and finalize a “peace” deal with the Taliban, has led to US-Pakistan reattachment. Discuss the impact of America’s U-turn on Pakistan policy on India’s interest.