

Why Washington Has Turned to Pakistan—and What It Means for India

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In the summer and fall of 2025, Washington’s decision-makers faced an urgent question: which partners could act immediately and deliver tangible results? This focus on short-term capability, rather than potential or size, has brought Pakistan back into the spotlight of U.S. foreign policy. Its importance today is tied not to historical ties, but to what it is prepared to deliver. [Recent](#) high-level meetings and agreements provide evidence of this shift, signaling a new calculus in Washington’s regional approach.

The Main Reason Behind Trump’s Foreign Policy Shift

The main reason for the U.S. foreign policy pivot toward Pakistan is neither ideology nor historic friendship, but Pakistan’s current capacity to deliver on Washington’s key objectives—security, resources, and political flexibility. This “capacity to deliver” consists of three dimensions on which Washington is counting today.

The first is the operational-security dimension, involving intelligence and operational cooperation that yields measurable results, such as counterterrorism cooperation and mediation in Afghanistan. The second is strategic and economic resources, referring to access to energy, minerals, or contracts supporting U.S. industrial and defense initiatives, including mineral promises and economic or crypto agreements. The third is diplomatic and tactical flexibility, characterized by Pakistan’s [readiness](#) to make quick deals, assume regional roles, and engage in de-escalation aligned with Washington’s interests—something India is less willing to do. In short, Washington seeks a “measurable partner,” not merely an “ideal strategic ally,” and Pakistan is offering that measurable partnership.

Why Didn’t India Become Dependable?

To understand why the U.S. is stepping back from India, it is essential to distinguish between two types of capability: long-term capacity—such as market size, population, and economic strength—and immediate ability to cooperate, meaning willingness to align with U.S. interests. While India’s long-term potential is undeniable, several factors have eroded Washington’s trust in its short-term reliability.

New Delhi’s independent economic and energy behavior, including [continued](#) purchases of discounted Russian oil and increasingly protectionist trade policies, has been interpreted in Washington as undermining U.S. economic interests, prompting tariff responses and weakening strategic trust. In addition, tactical asynchrony on regional and international issues has made India reluctant to reach quick agreements with Washington or bear domestic political costs of alignment.

As a result, India's behavior has become, in Washington's view, "predictably resistant." When a partner's cooperation becomes constrained, the U.S. tends to look elsewhere—even if the alternative is smaller or less prominent globally.

How Did Pakistan Build a "Deliverable" Status?

Pakistan actively crafted a "delivery package" [combining](#) tangible security cooperation, fresh economic offers, and regional coordination—the formula Washington sought.

On the security front, [reports](#) point to growing counterterrorism cooperation and structured dialogue between the U.S. and Pakistan, signaling that Islamabad can play an immediate operational and intelligence role. Economically, Pakistan has presented [proposals](#) tied to vital minerals, energy projects, and partnerships involving firms linked to Washington's business circles. These offers, coupled with access to strategic resources and investment contracts, have added significant political value.

Regionally, Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and participation in recent arrangements—such as the [defense pact](#) with Saudi Arabia—have further positioned Islamabad as a pragmatic actor in Washington's calculus.

The Role of Leadership Style in Washington: Trump's Transnationalism

The trajectory of U.S. foreign policy is closely tied to leadership style. The Trump administration embodies a distinctly transactional approach—offering rewards for cooperation and swift punishment for actions undermining American interests.

This style has reshaped Washington's behavior in three ways. First, speed has become paramount: quick deals and visible short-term results matter more than long-term strategies. Second, deliverability is the new standard: Washington prioritizes what a partner can provide immediately rather than who might remain loyal in the future. Third, domestic politics and business networks, including figures linked to Trump's inner circle, have made decision-making more interest-driven and risk-prone. [Reports](#) of business ties close to the White House have reinforced this perception.

The Costs and Risks of This Shift

Washington's tilt toward Pakistan may follow the logic of "deliverability," but it carries risks that should not be overlooked. Partnering with a nuclear-armed state facing internal instability exacerbates security vulnerabilities, especially amid discussions of Saudi-Pakistan defense arrangements. India is unlikely to remain neutral; it could lean further toward China or reinforce strategic autonomy, both weakening U.S. influence in Asia. Moreover, privileging Islamabad risks alienating regional and Middle Eastern allies, opening the door to new bloc formations complicating U.S. strategy.

These risks are structural. For Pakistan, the gamble is also dangerous: entanglement in U.S.-China rivalry may deepen domestic fragility rather than strengthen its position.

The Messages of the Shift for Key Players

Washington's pivot sends clear signals to New Delhi and Islamabad. For India, the first is the need to make foreign policy more operational—demonstrating tangible results in areas Washington prioritizes, from technology supply chains to selective security cooperation. The second is using multilateral channels to reduce risks while carefully addressing costs of diverging from Washington.

For Pakistan, two messages stand out: if it seeks to move from being merely “deliverable” to becoming a “responsible partner,” transparency on nuclear issues and guarantees of internal political stability are essential. Pakistan must also channel its leverage into structural investments—through institutional building and resource legislation—to reduce dependence on transactional deals.

Conclusion: A Warning and an Opportunity

Washington's pivot to Pakistan reflects a key principle in contemporary geopolitics: in fluid, high-pressure environments, actors able to deliver short-term results gain advantage—but this edge is not lasting without transparency, accountability, and risk management. For observers, the story is clear: today, the U.S. seeks tangible results; Pakistan provides them; if India cannot—or chooses not to—adapt to “practical deliverability,” it must be prepared to bear strategic costs. Washington's choice signals that in the current era, those who can act immediately hold significance.

If India fails to show greater flexibility in trade, energy, and geopolitical alignment, years of diplomatic investment in its relationship with the U.S. could be seriously undermined.

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