

Report on

**U.S. – Iran
Peace Deal:
Pakistan’s
Mediatory Role**

evolved through Roundtable Discussion
June 22, 2026



Contents

About CLAS	2
Mission	2
Aims	2
About Roundtable	4
Guest Speakers	5
Comments & Thoughts.....	6
A Glance at Roundtable.....	17



About CLAS

The Centre for Law and Security (CLAS) is a non-partisan policy research institution that aims to define the future of national security in Pakistan. We bring fresh ideas and highest quality scholarship to critical international law, foreign policy and national security challenges facing Pakistan. The Centre convene scholars to develop new policy ideas that advance Pakistan's interests in the international community and shape the national debate. The Centre in its work follows a distinct set out values – academic quality, research independence, academic integrity, innovative thinking, and empowerment.

The Centre is an independent interdisciplinary institute dedicated to preserving and promoting country's national security in a challenging 21st century environment. We exist to help policymakers form decisions based on accurate and sound information by providing expert research services and systematic analysis on legal issues that arise in connection with maintenance and development of national security policies and international law questions through a multilateral and multi-dimensional approach.

Mission

To preserve and promote country's national security through education, research and discussion for awareness and better legislation

Aims

To guide policymakers and raise public awareness on vital national security issues

The Centre aims to promote a comprehensive understanding of legal narrative among relevant stakeholders to facilitate the development of a cohesive stance on key issues related to national security. We are dedicated to promoting understanding on legal issues of national interest and creating awareness through our work. We strive for our work to serve as a resource for government officials, defence leaders, judiciary, lawyers, policy makers, media personnel, academics, civil society members, private sector individuals, and interested citizens to better understand the evolving landscape of international law that affects foreign policy and national security choices facing Pakistan, start a conversation and assists in fostering strategic expertise in Pakistan through dialogue, research and contribution to the public debate.



Work

To bridge the gap between theory and practice in a challenging and fast-paced environment on national security issues that carry national as well as international implications

The Center's work focuses on a critical examination of long-standing and emerging issues of national security and international law through a multilateral and multi-dimensional approach to assist policymakers and strategic and defense leadership make informed decisions. Our core activity is the promotion and understanding of law and creating awareness through our publications, workshops, conferences, publications and media productions, and social outreach initiatives. The Centre aims to promote national security as a core area of faculty and graduate research; sponsoring events aimed at encouraging awareness and promotion of legal positions; and engaging productively with local, regional, national, and international organizations through collaborations and publications. We strive to train high qualified students and graduates in legal research and policy development. serves as a point of contact and information for the interested public.



About Roundtable

The Centre for Law and Security (CLAS), in collaboration with The Millennium Universal College (TMUC), organized a roundtable conference titled, “U.S.–Iran War: Pakistan’s Mediatory role” on June 22, 2026.

Pakistan has recently demonstrated a remarkable diplomatic achievement by facilitating a significant peace agreement between the United States and Iran, two longstanding rivals whose confrontation had posed serious risks to regional stability, global trade, energy security and international peace for over three months. Pakistan's successful mediation has attracted widespread international attention. However, it builds upon a historical precedent of facilitating dialogue between rival states. Pakistan has previously played important diplomatic roles in facilitating dialogue between major powers, most notably the U.S.-China rapprochement in the early 1970s, the 1989 Geneva Accords, the Doha Talks between U.S. - Afghanistan and Saudi - Iran Rapprochement in 2023 alongside China.

The discussion at Roundtable aimed to assess the nature, scope and significance of Pakistan’s role in securing this diplomatic breakthrough, with a particular focus on how its mediation efforts have been perceived by the international community. It examined the diplomatic strategy, negotiation framework and strategic approach employed by Pakistan in facilitating dialogue and bringing both parties to the negotiating table. The session also explored the key lessons emerging from this experience that can help strengthen Pakistan’s future role as a credible mediator in regional and international conflicts. Furthermore, it analyzed the potential short-term and long-term diplomatic, political, economic and strategic dividends that Pakistan may derive from successfully facilitating this landmark agreement.



Chair of the Session



Ambassador Masood Khan – President CLAS

Moderator



Mr. Rehman Azhar – Executive Director CLAS

Guest Speakers



Dr. Bilal Zubair – Director Research, CISS



Aiza Azam – Director Strategic Affairs StrafAsia Pakistan



Zunaira Azhar – Anchorperson @ Express 24/7



Syeda Maureen Zaidi – HoD Laws, TMUC



Syed Basim Raza – AD Research NIPS



Arhama Siddiqua – Research Fellow, ISSI



Hannan Hussain – Research Officer, IRS



Hamdan Khan – Research Associate, SVI



Comments & Thoughts

The roundtable session was chaired by Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, President CLAS, while the discussion was contributed by Ms. Aiza Azam (Director Strategic Affairs – StrafAsia Pakistan), Ms. Zunaira Azhar (anchorpersion), Dr. Bilal Zubair (Director Centre for International Strategic Studies), Mr. Hamdan Khan (Research Associate, Strategic Vision Institute), Ms. Maureen Zaidi (HOD Laws – The Millennium Universal College), Mr. Hannan Hussain (Research Officer, Institute of Regional Studies), Ms. Arhama Siddiqua (Research Fello, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad) and Syed Basim Raza (Assistant Director Research, NUST Institute of Policy Studies), and moderated by Executive Director CLAS, Mr. Rehman Azhar.

Mr. Rehman Azhar, Executive Director CLAS, welcomed the distinguished speakers, participants, and guests, and introduced the Centre for Law and Security (CLAS) as an independent think tank committed to promoting informed dialogue on issues of national security, foreign policy, law, governance, and regional and international affairs. He highlighted CLAS's vision of fostering evidence-based policy discourse and bridging the gap between academia, policymakers, practitioners, and the wider public. He noted that the Centre regularly organizes seminars, roundtable discussions, webinars, conferences, and research initiatives to encourage constructive debate on contemporary strategic challenges and policy developments. Emphasizing the importance of intellectual engagement, he reaffirmed CLAS's commitment to contributing meaningful policy recommendations and creating a platform where experts and stakeholders can exchange ideas to support informed decision-making and promote regional peace, stability, and sustainable development.

Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, President Centre for Law and Security (CLAS), made the following remarks in an opening statement:

“On 28 February this year, Israel convinced the US Administration led by President Trump that Iran was about to build and test its nuclear weapons in the next few weeks if it was not stopped. He also convinced President Trump that a joint attack by the US and Iran would not only destroy Iran’s alleged nuclear capability but also lead to a regime change after massive decapitation of the top tier ideological, military, political, and military leadership. There were thus four core issues: the regime change, destruction of Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, obliteration of Iran’s missile capability, and dismantlement of Iran’s regional alliance – called the axis of resistance. When the US and Israel prosecuted the war, three concomitant issues emerged: the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the retaliation against the Gulf states by Iran, and Israel’s occupation of South Lebanon and brutalisation of its people.

Pakistan, right after the beginning of the war, started its shuttle and communication diplomacy by



contacting regional countries as well as Iran and the US. Pakistan started this process primarily in its own interest because of the war's adverse impact on its fragile economy and security. But another strong impetus for this endeavour was to save the region from the scourge of war.

Second, another important tool in Pakistan's diplomatic repertoire was to build regional consensus behind its diplomatic and increasingly mediatory role. Towards the end of March, Pakistan convened in Islamabad a meeting of Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia; and immediately thereafter, it enlisted the support of China in the form of a five-point communique that called for a ceasefire, dialogue, freedom of navigation, and diplomacy within the parameters of the UN Charter and international law.

Third, the most crucial part was to win and maintain the trust of the US and Iran, and do a balancing act, with finesse and dexterity, between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf countries. The interpersonal chemistry between President Trump and Vice President J. D. Vance with Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was a vital ingredient in this process.

Fourth, it was a Herculean task for Pakistani mediators to keep operating on shifting sands and moving targets in Tehran and Washington. On the one hand, the two sides indulged in public warmongering and grandstanding but kept the door for diplomacy open. Every time Pakistan brokered a deal by bridging their differences, the warring parties would unravel them. Many a time, Pakistan had to start from scratch all over again. While all others lost hope amidst fears of a resumption of a full-scale war, Pakistan's backchannel kept working.

Fifth, demonstrating extraordinary ingenuity against the heaviest odds, Pakistan managed a ceasefire, hosted the first round of direct, face-to-face talks in Islamabad between the US and Iran, and the finalisation of the final draft of the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by President Trump and President Pezeshkian. These were three watersheds.

Sixth, Pakistan could not influence the behaviour of Israel because it does not recognise the state. It therefore relied on the US to bring Tel Aviv. That goal is still elusive.

Seventh, when after the signing of the MOU, the implementation phase entered into choppy waters with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Pakistan's diplomacy became active and steered the emerging crisis back to engagement at the Lucerne Lake Summit. In this effort, it was actively assisted by Qatar, which is playing the dual role of a mediator and negotiator of Gulf Security.

This substantiates the postulate that Pakistan will continue to remain a mediator in the Middle East but also a stakeholder in its security. Pakistan has signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement with Saudi Arabia. Qatar, Turkey, and Egypt have evinced interest in a similar arrangement. May epithets have been used for Pakistan, including a net regional security provider and regional



stabiliser.

The immediate dividends for Pakistan are closer ties with Iran in the form of import of electricity and oil from Iran, completion of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, consolidating the Karachi-Qasim-Gwadar Ports-Chaman-Taftan trade corridor that emerged during the recent war, building complementarity between Gwadar and Chahbahar. In addition, a stand-alone objective should be to build it as a major port of the Arabian Gulf. From the Gulf region, we should seek concessions on oil and gas prices, freight, and insurance on energy consignments. Pakistan's role in maritime security in the Persian, Oman, and Aden Gulf as well as the broader Arabian Region will increase.

The US-Iran MOU, if implemented faithfully, will be transformative in shaping a new security and economic architecture in which the Gulf nations and Iran would become interdependent stakeholders for the reconstruction of the war-torn countries. And Pakistan, because of its historical ties with the region and the newfound strategic and diplomatic avatar, will have a pivotal role both politically and economically.”

Dr. Bilal Zubair highlighted Pakistan's evolving regional and geopolitical role. He highlighted Pakistan's position within shifting regional alignments, especially in relation to Middle Eastern politics and broader international politics. He mentioned Iran-related developments. He emphasized that Pakistan's approach has generally been shaped by neutrality and strategic restraint, which has helped maintain its diplomatic balance. Dr. Bilal Zubair explained that Pakistan's neutrality has, at times, strengthened its geopolitical relevance, positioning the country as an important intermediary in regional affairs. He noted that while Pakistan may not always have been a dominant economic power, its geographical and strategic location gives it significant influence. He also discussed Pakistan's role in the Middle East between states like Iran and Saudi Arabia, describing Pakistan as a potential bridge in regional diplomacy. He referred to Pakistan's relations with countries like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and other regional actors, noting that many of these states view Pakistan as a strategically important partner. In this context, he highlighted Pakistan's participation in regional security frameworks and its importance in maintaining bilateral relations with many countries.

Another key point in the discussion was energy security, where he referred to Pakistan's growing needs in terms of energy supply, humanitarian concerns, and trust-building with international partners. He suggested that energy cooperation and infrastructure development could play a major role in Pakistan's future stability. He emphasized that Pakistan's geographic position could make it central to future energy export routes and regional connectivity projects. He added that Pakistan could secure potential investment opportunities, including pipeline projects and infrastructure development. Additionally, it was suggested that foreign investment interest in Pakistan could increase if stability and trust continue to improve. Finally, he mentioned key infrastructure points such as Karachi Port and Port Qasim, highlighting their importance in trade and economic



development. He concluded by stressing that Pakistan's future depends on strengthening infrastructure, improving governance, and building trust both domestically and internationally.

Ms. Aiza Azam began her discussion with the argument that Pakistan's role in recent Middle Eastern developments was not purely accidental or circumstantial. Rather, it appears to have been the result of deliberate diplomatic efforts and a consistent foreign policy approach. Pakistan positioned itself as a responsible actor capable of communicating with multiple sides during a period of regional tension. She highlighted Pakistan's relations with a number of important regional states, including Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. These relationships enabled Pakistan to maintain dialogue with different stakeholders and potentially contribute to diplomatic engagement. Pakistan's civilian leadership also played a role in strengthening the country's diplomatic outreach and international credibility.

The conflict between Iran and the U.S. provided an avenue for regional actors to mediate and maintain communication channels between the stark rivals. Pakistan strengthened its diplomatic outlook and took further measures to facilitate dialogue where possible. In doing so, Pakistan attempted to project itself as a facilitator rather than a partisan actor in the dispute. The speaker also suggested that Pakistan conveyed a positive impression to the UAE and other regional partners. At the same time, Pakistan maintained communication with major capitals, such as Washington, Tehran, and Beijing. This demonstrated consistency in Pakistan's foreign policy and its willingness to engage constructively with different powers despite their competing interests. Through diplomacy, Pakistan has attempted to communicate its image as a responsible state that values dialogue and stability. She argued that Pakistan's diplomatic engagement reflects a positive and strategic role in regional affairs. The country's actions indicate an intention to contribute to stability, maintain balanced relationships, and enhance its standing as a constructive diplomatic actor.

Mr. Hamdan Khan argued that Pakistan's improved international standing did not begin with this conflict. The developments started after the Pakistan–India conflict. He stated that the world witnessed a state, with comparatively less conventional power defeated India, which began changing perceptions. According to him, this was followed by a series of meetings and diplomatic engagements, including invitations extended to Pakistan's military leadership by the United States government. He emphasized that this should not be viewed solely as military diplomacy, but rather as Pakistan's diplomacy as a whole. On the civilian front, he noted that Ishaq Dar was seen receiving leaders and delegations from various countries on multiple occasions. He added that Pakistan's diplomacy was recognized by the EU Foreign Policy Chief, who referred to Pakistan as an important regional actor.

Mr. Khan stated that Pakistan's diplomatic strategy involved continuous visits by Pakistan's leadership to Iran, regular communication with the United States, engagement with regional countries, and efforts to develop consensus among them. He considered the inclusion of regional



countries to be a significant aspect of Pakistan's mediation mission between Iran and the United States. Regarding China's role, he stated that China possesses considerable economic and diplomatic leverage over Iran. According to him, engaging China was a smart diplomatic move, as Iran is more likely to be receptive to Chinese influence.

Discussing the lessons learned from the conflict, Mr. Khan stated that this episode reflects the important diplomatic role Pakistan can play in an emerging multipolar world order. He emphasized that neutrality is essential for successful mediation. According to him, when a country becomes directly involved in a conflict, mediation becomes more difficult. Pakistan remained neutral, did not become a party to the conflict, and was therefore able to play its role effectively. He stated that the key lesson is to continue pursuing a policy of neutrality rather than choosing sides.

Regarding Pakistan's status as a middle power, Mr. Hamdan stated that Pakistan fulfills many of the criteria associated with a middle power. While acknowledging that Pakistan's economy is not comparable to those of Germany, Japan, or major European states, he argued that the country possesses significant diplomatic potential. He expressed hope that, after addressing economic challenges, Pakistan could further strengthen its international position.

Discussing the short-term and long-term outcomes of the conflict, he identified a reduction in fuel prices as an immediate outcome. He emphasized that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts were not motivated solely by national interests but were undertaken for a broader global cause. According to him, the conflict had global implications and affected many countries directly and indirectly. Regarding long-term opportunities, he stated that the reintegration of Iran into the global economy could open significant opportunities for Pakistan, particularly in the energy sector and regional connectivity. He referred to potential links with Russia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye, and stated that the gradual removal of sanctions on Iran could become a major game-changer.

As a final point, Mr. Hamdan stated that Pakistan has faced difficult times since the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan. He argued that the recent mediation effort provides an opportunity to institutionalize Pakistan's diplomatic engagement with Western countries. Referring to visits by senior European officials and acknowledgements by US leadership, he stated that Pakistan now has an opportunity to transform this diplomatic success into an institutionalized framework that can facilitate economic cooperation as well as cooperation in other sectors.

Mr. Hannan Hameed was asked to shed light on the fact that Pakistan had previously been seen as a security state only. Could Pakistan's role as a mediator during this deal change the image of Pakistan into a more peaceful and reputable state? He responded with an optimistic view, stating that he sees Pakistan's image changing in the international arena. He added that Pakistan has now learned the art of balancing bilateral and multilateral relations. Mr. Hannan also advocated this statement by referring to the official visits to the Gulf countries by the state representatives. He also added that this was a result of a conscious and a continuous effort by Pakistan. Furthermore, during



the mediation role, Pakistan had proximity with all the stakeholders in the Middle East and beyond, which resulted in the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. He also added that Pakistan could potentially become a transit hub in the coming days.

Ms. Zunaira Azhar emphasized that Pakistan must approach these challenges facing Pakistan amid the evolving geopolitical landscape with confidence and strategic clarity. She noted that Pakistan has faced difficult international circumstances in the past and has demonstrated resilience even during periods when many doubted its ability to navigate complex regional and global dynamics. According to her, national strength is not determined solely by military or economic power; it is also reflected in a nation's ability to endure challenges and maintain stability.

Ms. Zunaira observed that the conventional wisdom surrounding West Asia is undergoing significant change. Political realities in the region are evolving, and countries are increasingly reassessing their priorities in light of shifting economic and security considerations. She stressed that one of the most important assets any country can possess is the trust of its people. The legitimacy and effectiveness of a political system ultimately depend on whether citizens believe in their institutions and have confidence in national leadership. Historical experience demonstrates that countries are judged not only by their military capabilities but also by their governance, economic performance, and the degree of public trust they command.

She further argued that many leaders have come to recognize the importance of addressing regional tensions through peaceful means rather than prolonged confrontation. In recent years, economic considerations have become a major driving force behind foreign policy decisions. States are increasingly prioritizing trade, investment, and economic stability, recognizing that sustainable development is closely linked to regional peace and cooperation. Ms. Azhar suggested that many significant international developments initially emerge from moral or humanitarian concerns before gradually becoming broader political and economic issues that shape global agendas.

Discussing Pakistan's future course, Ms. Zunaira maintained that the country should not become overly preoccupied with balancing competing global powers. Instead, Pakistan should focus on identifying opportunities created by geopolitical shifts and pursue policies that advance its own national interests. She emphasized the importance of pragmatic diplomacy, economic growth, and constructive engagement with all relevant international actors. By maintaining a clear focus on its strategic objectives and continuing to strengthen its domestic foundations, Pakistan can successfully navigate the challenges of an increasingly complex international environment.

Ms. Arhama Siddiqua stated that since President Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, Iran has focused on strengthening relations with other countries, including Russia. During President Raisi's period, Iran also approached African countries and attempted to bypass sanctions by working with countries such as China, Russia, and Pakistan. Regarding India's relations with Iran,



she stated that Iran and India had close relations. She noted that during her visit to Iran, many products available there were made in India, which reflected Iran's closer trade ties with India than with Pakistan. However, she argued that during the US–Iran war, Pakistan was the only country that openly supported Iran, and Iran took notice of that. She further stated that neighbours cannot ignore one another; therefore, Pakistan cannot ignore Iran, nor can Iran ignore Pakistan.

Referring to the 28 February conflict, she stated that Pakistan's Foreign Ministry openly condemned the attacks, and the Iranian side took notice of Pakistan's position. She further stated that during President Pezeshkian's tenure, there has been a visible inclination on both sides towards improving Pakistan–Iran relations, particularly on the trade front. As an example, she highlighted that during the Islamabad talks, Pakistan opened the Iran–Pakistan transit route despite criticism from those who argued that Pakistan was in the US camp or was not a trustworthy partner. She noted that the first shipment to Uzbekistan was sent through this route, while goods were also transited to Iran through Port Qasim and Gwadar. Ms. Arhama further stated that once Iranians are shown trust, they do not forget it easily, and this is what Pakistan did.

Following the Pakistan–India conflict, Pakistan emerged as a responsible nation. She argued that what followed was a diplomatic masterclass, as Pakistan engaged with various leaders and countries, including Russia and the Gulf states. She further noted that even when there were hurdles during talks involving the UAE, Pakistan's response remained responsible, and it did not lash out at the UAE. As a result, Pakistan emerged as a responsible actor from 2025 onward and continued to build upon this image through its diplomatic efforts. She stated that Pakistan was the only country that maintained access to China, Iran, Russia, and the United States simultaneously. However, she cautioned that every diplomatic opportunity has an expiry period. Therefore, Pakistan must build upon its diplomatic achievements and convert them into sustainable economic relationships.

Referring to a point raised earlier by Ambassador Masood Khan, Ms. Siddiqua discussed the Aramco Memorandum of Understanding signed during the Saudi Crown Prince's visit to Pakistan in 2019. She noted that the agreement was never properly followed up, and now that Saudi Arabia has again shown interest in it, Pakistan should actively pursue the project. With specific reference to Iran, she emphasized the importance of finalizing the Iran–Pakistan (IP) Gas Pipeline agreement, which was signed in 2009. She observed that Iran could have taken Pakistan to international courts over delays in the project; however, political and diplomatic channels prevented the issue from escalating. She further referred to the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Switzerland, which calls for reconstruction and development. Miss Arhama stated that Pakistan should seek to benefit from the opportunities arising from this agreement.

Syed Basim Raza, Assistant Director Research, NIPS talked about whether chances exist of improved Pakistan-India bilateral relationship. He observed that India had previously prioritized neutrality, but during the current regime, India has resorted to a populist approach. This populist



approach by the Modi regime is promoting anti Muslim Sentiments. This is evident as the policies are “Narrow Hawkish Policies that are primarily focused on Anti-Muslim sentiments. All the institutions of the Indian state, including the military and bureaucracy, are based on an anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistani idea. The Indian media has played an important role in changing the public discourse in India to be on the same lines as the government’s stance. He concluded by saying there is a little chance of positive change from the Indian side towards Pakistan. He also added that the relationship between India and Pakistan needs a reset, but he does not see that happening as long as there is the BJP government in India.

Ms. Maureen Zaidi, Head of Department Laws, TMUC stated that, from an internal point of view as a Pakistani, she grew up in a country that was deeply involved in conflicts. Pakistan was entangled in the War on Terror, which, although not identical to the current situation, represented a significant phase in the country's history. During that period, Pakistan was widely perceived as a facilitator in the war. She further stated that, over time, Pakistan has faced multiple conflicts, including tensions with India and Afghanistan, and more recently, the Iran–US conflict, which could have escalated further. She noted that the general sentiment within Pakistan during the recent situation was positive, and that both the public and leadership remained aligned and not divided.

Ms. Zaidi also observed that globally there was a strong desire for peace on humanitarian grounds, particularly in light of previous conflicts such as the Israel–Palestine situation, which raised awareness regarding civilian lives and damage caused by war. She stated that Pakistan made an institutional effort during this period, with all institutions and organs of the state contributing collectively. She expressed that during a global crisis, Pakistan itself was already struggling, yet there was awareness that the wider world could also be pushed into turmoil.

She further stated that this was an important time for Pakistan to focus on economic integration and bilateral trade. She referred to existing treaties and agreements, including the Iran gas pipeline project, and emphasized that Pakistan should also focus on unlocking blocked revenues and attracting foreign investment into the country. She concluded that Pakistan is a well-established nation, grounded in its systems, but currently facing economic requirements and obligations, including engagement with the IMF, which need to be managed alongside diplomatic priorities.

Following this, ED CLAS Mr. Rehman Azhar made his observations before inviting the President CLAS for the concluding address which includes while Pakistan seeks to maintain cordial relations with all its neighbors including Iran, Afghanistan, India, and China, it must move beyond merely pursuing good relations and focus on earning their confidence through consistent and credible diplomacy. Reflecting on Pakistan's recent mediatory role, he emphasized that the goodwill and international confidence generated through this diplomatic success should not remain short-lived. Instead, it should serve as a foundation for strengthening Pakistan's long-term diplomatic standing and, more importantly, instilling confidence among the Pakistani people in their country's



diplomatic capabilities, military strength, and national potential. He stressed that Pakistan has earned considerable respect internationally, but this reputation must also be recognized and valued domestically. Mr. Azhar further noted that Pakistan cannot expect the international community to view the country more positively than Pakistanis view themselves. Building national confidence, therefore, is essential to sustaining the country's global image.

Summing up his observations as a moderator, he observed that the world now perceives Pakistan through a different lens following its successful mediation efforts, particularly in the context of the Gulf region and U.S. engagement. He emphasized that Pakistan's future foreign policy choices will be critical in determining whether this diplomatic momentum can be translated into a lasting and influential regional role.

In his **concluding remarks, the President Centre for Law and Security (CLAS)**, Ambassador Masood Khan, lauded the panelists for their insightful, substantive, and intellectually rigorous contributions, describing the discussion as timely and of exceptional quality. He thanked the distinguished participants, researchers, practitioners, and guests for enriching the dialogue through their diverse perspectives on Pakistan's evolving diplomatic role in the Middle East.

Ambassador Khan observed that Pakistan was no longer merely reacting to regional developments but had transitioned to a proactive diplomatic posture. He maintained that Pakistan should be viewed as an emerging middle power, capable of shaping regional outcomes through principled diplomacy, strategic engagement, and consensus-building. He urged policymakers, scholars, and the wider public to overcome the culture of excessive pessimism surrounding Pakistan and instead recognise the unprecedented strategic opportunities now before the country.

Recalling the origins of Pakistan's mediation efforts, Ambassador Khan stated that the diplomatic initiative began through discreet engagement between Pakistan and the United States, eventually evolving into a broad-based international effort that enjoyed support from regional and global stakeholders, including China, Russia, European partners, Canada, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. He emphasised that Pakistan had successfully integrated bilateral, regional, and multilateral diplomacy into a coherent strategy that ultimately contributed to facilitating dialogue between Washington and Tehran.

He underscored that the mediation initiative represented the collective endeavour of the Pakistani state rather than any single institution. While acknowledging the pivotal contribution of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Ambassador Khan noted that the close coordination between the civilian and military leadership, coupled with discreet diplomacy and sustained political engagement, had enabled Pakistan to earn the confidence of both parties and play an effective mediatory role.



Highlighting the broader strategic significance of these developments, Ambassador Khan remarked that Pakistan had transformed from being perceived internationally as a marginalised state into a pivotal regional actor. He described this diplomatic achievement as one of the most extensive and consequential foreign policy engagements undertaken by Pakistan since the Second World War, adding that the country's growing credibility had positioned it as a regional stabiliser and an emerging provider of security and diplomatic solutions.

Ambassador Khan further observed that the existing international order was undergoing profound transformation, creating new opportunities for emerging middle powers. He argued that Pakistan must complement its diplomatic gains with sustained economic growth, stronger institutions, and technological advancement, stressing that durable international influence ultimately rests upon economic strength.

Referring to the Gulf region, he noted that a new regional security and economic architecture was beginning to emerge following the US-Iran understanding. If implemented faithfully, he said, the agreement could fundamentally reshape regional politics by fostering greater interdependence among Gulf states and Iran, while creating new avenues for Pakistan's political, economic, and strategic engagement.

Concluding the session, Ambassador Khan expressed confidence that Pakistan possessed the diplomatic capacity, strategic vision, and international goodwill to play an increasingly constructive role in promoting regional peace, stability, and cooperation. He thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and reaffirmed CLAS's commitment to providing an inclusive platform for informed strategic discourse on issues of national and international importance.

A Glance at Roundtable





