

PM Imran Khan's visit to the US and what it means for overseas Pakistanis: YEF Analysis

On his first visit to Washington, Prime Minister Imran Khan is burdened with the vital task of mending its relations with the US and restore the financial aid lost due to mistrust and the difficulty in fighting prejudice and bigotry.

Pakistan was suspended from a military aid by the US worth of \$300m when Trump accused the country of not doing enough to fight extremism. Pakistan has also been on the Financial Action Task Force list for being apparently unwilling in fighting money laundering and corruption, a listing that cost the economy a loss of \$10bn, according to some analysts. The US has also put Pakistan on a watch list for failing to reduce religious extremism and for not protecting religious minorities.

It is true that Khan's leverage will be limited, especially due to the recent arrest of Hafiz Saeed in Pakistan, which, according to several US and Indian officials is not a coincidence- *'US officials responded with scepticism to Saeed's arrest, noting that he had been arrested seven times since 2001, when it suited Islamabad politically. "That is why we, again, are very clear-eyed when we see him arrested," a US official said. "He has been released – arrested and released in the past."*

However, apart from having a significant importance from political point of view, this tour has been making waves of excitement among the Overseas Pakistanis as they see a ray of hope in their leader to make a huge improvement in the state of the country. They remain hopeful that with Mr. Khan at helm, a day will come that they will return to their home country to serve their motherland.

Overseas Pakistanis are the backbone of the Pakistan and make important contributions in development of the country. They send remittance to their loved ones in huge numbers thus playing a vital role in economic development of the country. According to an estimate, these remittances make up 5 percent of the total GDP of Pakistan. They also help in conveying a better image of the country throughout the world by acting as responsible ambassadors.

They create employment opportunities for the people of Pakistan by investing in industries, physical capital, business, infrastructure, the housing sector, to name a few. Moreover, overseas Pakistanis help in investing in Human capital as well. There are huge number of entrepreneurs, skilled workers and others who are serving in their host countries. They have acquired high quality skills and played

a huge role in helping countries to make technological advancements in various fields. In this way they are not only a source of pride for Pakistan but, if conditions prevail, they can also use the same in helping in progress of the country. Overseas Pakistanis also contribute to the social development of the country by investing in health, education and other social infrastructure.

Realizing the worth of the potential contributions of overseas Pakistanis, Prime Minister Imran Khan, along with his delegation, met several top Pakistani-American businessmen and professionals to convince them to make investments in various fields in order to support and help improve the ailing conditions of the economy. Not only were this, but opportunities in trade and investment also discussed. Imran Khan briefed them on the measures taken by the current government to promote ease of doing business in Pakistan. He emphasized the role that overseas Pakistanis can play in bridging the gap between the two communities and policy makers of the respective countries. The potential investors praised the improved security situation of Pakistan. They also expressed their excitement over business investment opportunities available in Pakistan in various sectors particularly energy, tourism etc.

In a nutshell, Overseas Pakistanis are an asset for the country. Their role in supporting the development of Pakistan is second to none. Meeting with top businessmen in an important tour as this one is a testament to the government's continuous efforts as it strives towards a better Pakistan. One can surely be hopeful that as the conditions improve in the country, overseas Pakistanis will definitely play a greater role towards the progress of the country in the near future.

Bridging the Gap Between
Youth and Policy Makers