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## Examining Islamabad's Growing Influence Network in Washington

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The Government of Pakistan nominated the United States (U.S.) President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize in June 2025. This followed Trump's claim that he brokered the ceasefire that ended the clash between India and Pakistan in May.<sup>1</sup> The clash was sparked by the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22, 2025 and involved a series of airstrikes conducted by India on May 07 against nine terror sites across Pakistan's Punjab province and PoJK (Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir).<sup>2</sup> Following Pakistan's retaliation, India moved up the escalation ladder on May 10 and struck 11 airbases in Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> New Delhi denies Trump's claim and has stated that an understanding between India and Pakistan to bilaterally stop all military action was reached after the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of Pakistan called his Indian counterpart.<sup>4</sup> Trump's claim suggests greater concern regarding India and Pakistan's hostilities than he displayed in the days following the terror attack, when he told reporters "...they'll get it figured out", referring to two nuclear powers.<sup>5</sup> Islamabad has contradicted New Delhi's statement by supporting Trump's claim as part of a push towards warmer relations with Washington. Concurrently, Pakistan is making efforts to build strategic cooperation with the U.S. across several domains, with notable gains in the critical minerals sector.<sup>6</sup> Its Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, bore witness to the signing of an MoU between Pakistan's military-led Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) and U.S. Strategic Metals (USSM) in early September. He also visited Washington in late September with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, who has made multiple trips to the U.S. capital independent of Sharif.<sup>7</sup> A day after their visit, Sharif asserted Trump's claim of brokering peace between India and Pakistan in a speech delivered at the 80<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). He referred to Trump as a "Man of Peace" and reaffirmed the Nobel Peace Prize nomination.<sup>8</sup>

The notable upswing in Islamabad and Washington's relationship in 2025 began following the commencement of Trump's second term in office on January 20. The ongoing *bonhomie* signals a crucial shift in the U.S. President's stance on Pakistan since his first term (2017-2021). In 2018, Trump criticised Islamabad for harbouring terrorism and offering Washington nothing but "lies and deceit" in his first *tweet* of the new year.<sup>9</sup> Subsequently, the U.S. suspended military aid to Pakistan, which had been decreasing gradually since 2011 amid straining ties between the nations.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence of the growing proximity between Islamabad and Washington, both sides have reaffirmed their counterterrorism partnership, which U.S. military officials have described as "phenomenal".<sup>11</sup> Washington's Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) also initiated a USD 686 million upgrade package for Islamabad's F-16 fighter fleet in early December, which is aimed at supporting U.S. national security objectives.<sup>12</sup>

Islamabad is using various channels to seek its strategic interests in Washington, among which its renewed U.S.-based lobbying efforts in 2025 stand out. In April and May, it added USD 600,000 per month across six new lobbying firms.<sup>13</sup> There are over 13,000 lobbyists registered in the U.S., who are contracted by state and non-state actors from across the world to influence Washington's foreign policy. Their parent firms often leverage personal connections to achieve the terms of their contracts. Islamabad's latest lobbying acquisitions warrant particularly close attention for New Delhi, as they hold ties with the Trump administration, the U.S. defence sector, and U.S. policymakers. If New Delhi's lobbying efforts lose parity with Islamabad's, its long-term interests in Washington's USD 4.4 billion influence economy may be adversely affected.<sup>14</sup>

### Tracing Islamabad's Lobbying Efforts in Washington

**Table 1: Pakistan's U.S.-Based Lobbying Investments in 2025**

Name of Firm	Month of Contract	Monthly Net Payout	Key Leadership / Firm Background
Orchid Advisors LLC	April 2025	USD 125,000	Weapons R&D
Squire Patton Boggs LLP	April 2025	USD 125,000	Trump administration
Seiden Law LLP	April 2025	USD 125,000	Trump administration
Javelin Advisors LLC	April 2025	USD 50,000	Trump administration
Conscience Point Consulting Inc.	May 2025	USD 25,000	U.S. financial policymaking
Qorvis LLC	May 2025	USD 150,000	Strategic communications

**Source:** Created by the author based on information collected from O'Dwyers, June 06, 2025, JD Supra, January 07, 2025, Global Witness, August 06, 2025, Squire Patton Boggs, Hindustan Times, August 14, 2025, Javelin Advisors, The Sunday Guardian, July 10, 2025 and Legistorm.

Islamabad's newly contracted lobbying firms include Orchid Advisers LLC and its subcontractor Squire Patton Boggs LLP, Seiden Law LLP and its subcontractors Javelin Advisors LLC and Conscience Point Consulting Inc., and Qorvis LLC. These organisations are the latest additions to Islamabad's lobbying roster in the U.S., while others, such as Team Eagle Consulting LLC, have been working with Islamabad for longer and have aided in securing various benefits for it. Team Eagle was awarded a USD 1.5 million contract with the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) to bolster Foreign Direct Investment into Pakistan and assist with grassroots organising within

Pakistan's diaspora in the U.S. During the Bush administration, Team Eagle also worked with the Government of Pakistan to strengthen economic and military relations with the U.S. and helped Pakistan secure a USD 3 billion aid package.<sup>15</sup>

### **1. Orchid Advisors LLC**

At USD 250,000, nearly half of Islamabad's latest monthly investments on lobbying in the U.S. are spent on retaining Orchid Advisors, who signed on to a six-month long representation agreement with the Government of Pakistan on April 08, 2025. As per the agreement, the firm shall "provide a team of experts in both Washington and New York to serve as (Pakistan's) trusted advisors to further Pakistani commercial, business and security interests."<sup>16</sup> The firm is directing its advocacy efforts at the White House, along with the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and the International Finance Corporation, which is the World Bank's private sector arm.<sup>17</sup> Orchid is closely involved in the defence sector and helps firearms manufacturers sell their products. Its co-founder and CEO, Jon Rydberg, has handled the R&D management of tactical weaponry for companies such as Lockheed Martin and Boeing.<sup>18</sup> Notably, Lockheed has been picked as the main contractor for the new F-16 upgrade package.<sup>19</sup>

### **2. Squire Patton Boggs LLP**

Orchid Advisors' subcontractor, Squire Patton Boggs, is drawing half its monthly payment from the Government of Pakistan. It grants Islamabad access to three key avenues to seek U.S. support through its links to the Trump administration, U.S. military leadership and the U.S. arms sector.<sup>20</sup> Everett Eissenstat—a Partner at the legal firm—was Trump's economic advisor during his first term (2017-2021), when he served as Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs and Deputy Director of the National Economic Council.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the firm's Senior Advisor Mark Esper served as U.S. Secretary of the Army from November 2017 to June 2019 and as U.S. Secretary of Defense from June 2019 to November 2020. He is a U.S. Army veteran and has also worked as Vice President, Government Relations at Raytheon Co.<sup>22</sup>

### **3. Seiden Law LLP**

Seiden Law inked a USD 200,000 per month contract with the Government of Pakistan in April to facilitate stronger cooperation between Islamabad and Washington in rare earth mineral mining. In July, Seiden also helped broker a trade agreement, reducing a 30 per cent tariff hike placed on Pakistan by Trump in April to 19 per cent. The law firm is closely associated with the Trump administration through its founder, Robert W. Seiden, who has spent time as a private investigator for Trump.<sup>23</sup> Notably, the firm's founder specialises in "creative use of the law to achieve his client's

objectives”, as Seiden’s website states. Seiden’s experience could play a role in removing legal restrictions that hinder Islamabad’s strategic interests in Washington.<sup>24</sup>

#### **4. Javelin Advisors LLC**

Javelin Advisors is a subcontractor to Seiden, and is paid USD 50,000 per month by the law firm to provide strategic and advisory services to Islamabad. It was founded by Keith Schiller, George A. Sorial, and Seiden Law’s Robert W. Seiden. Schiller and Sorial are both Trump alumni, with Schiller having served as Trump’s bodyguard and Director of Oval Office Operations, while Sorial was The Trump Organisation’s Executive Vice President and Counsel.<sup>25</sup> Javelin Advisors references its proximity to the Trump administration on its website through the slogan “Founded by Insiders. Defined by Access”, placed over an image of the White House.

#### **5. Conscience Point Consulting Inc.**

Conscience Point Consulting is another Seiden subcontractor earning USD 25,000 per month from it.<sup>26</sup> It was founded by a former Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Nathaniel Wienecke, who has also served as Vice President of Global Government Relations at JPMorgan Chase & Co.<sup>27</sup>

#### **6. Qorvis LLC**

The latest in the series of Pakistan’s newly contracted lobbying firms is Qorvis, which is a specialist in strategic communications. It was awarded a USD 150,000 per month contract by Islamabad on May 30, for a total payout of USD 1.8 million. As per the agreement, Qorvis will “craft Pakistan’s overarching narrative, reflecting its gracious culture, the aspirations and indomitable spirit of its people, and its bright undeniable future, manifesting in its rapidly transforming economy and incorporating Pakistan’s proud history and rich legacy.” The firm shall also “apprehend and help counter misinformation and disinformation, especially targeting state institutions, e.g., armed and security forces and judiciary via credible messaging tailored to platforms and audiences.”<sup>28</sup> Qorvis’s services could blur narratives that harm Islamabad’s interests, such as conversations around its human rights abuses and its sustained support for terrorism.

### **Conclusion**

Lobbying firms are one of the critical elements of Islamabad’s influence network in Washington. Pakistan’s latest engagement with them has played a role in building its current ties with the Trump administration and also supported its efforts to renew military support from Washington. These are concerning developments, as they would invariably embolden Islamabad, which may likely feel empowered to retain its policy of terrorism against India. While Islamabad’s forthcoming air assets

are intended to support U.S. interests, renewed U.S. military support could also enable another misadventure against India. It remains to be seen whether Pakistan can sustain gains from their Washington-based lobbying investments. Islamabad and Washington share a history of mutual mistrust, and their current status quo may prove to be short-lived as the change in perception that Islamabad seeks might be unsustainable without a change in actual strategy.

## Notes:

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<sup>3</sup> "IAF severely damaged 11 Pak airbases in May 8–10 military strikes — Nur Khan, Sargodha, Skardu among key targets," *The Economic Times*, May 10, 2025, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-pakistan-ceasefire-iaf-strikes-11-pakistani-airbases-inflicts-severe-damage-targets-include-nur-khan-sargodha-and-skardu/articleshow/121060642.cms?from=mdr>. Accessed on September 26, 2025.

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Mission Pakistan, U.S. Embassy & Consulates In Pakistan, "U.S. Strategic Metals Signs MOU on Critical Minerals in Pakistan," September 08, 2025, <https://pk.usembassy.gov/u-s-strategic-metals-signs-mou-on-critical-minerals-in-pakistan/>. Accessed on October 05, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> "Shehbaz Sharif To Meet Trump Next Week, Asim Munir To Tag Along: Report," *NDTV*, September 16, 2025, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/pakistan-news-shehbaz-sharif-to-meet-donald-trump-next-week-asim-munir-to-tag-along-report-9286299>. Accessed on September 21, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "His Excellency Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Prime Minister," September 26, 2025, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/80/pakistan>. Accessed on October 26, 2025.

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<sup>10</sup> "Aid to Pakistan by the Numbers," Center for Global Development, 2013, <https://www.cgdev.org/page/aid-pakistan-numbers>. Accessed on November 04, 2025; "Pakistan: US suspends \$800m of military aid," *BBC*, July 10, 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-14099402>. Accessed on November 04, 2025.

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