

US-Russia Negotiations on Ukraine: Chances, Hurdles and the Way Forward.

Introduction:

The Russia-Ukraine war, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, has become one of the most dangerous conflicts of the 21st century - it has caused thousands of deaths, massive displacement, and a global economic crisis. The war has also revived Cold war-style rivalry between the United States and Russia. Many countries, including Pakistan, are deeply concerned about its impacts. The question arises: can US-Russia negotiations end this war? The answer is complicated. While dialogue remains the only path to peace.

Chances of Success:

At present, the chances of a full political settlement b/w the US and Russia are limited. Both sides view the conflict in existential terms. Russia wants to secure its influence and territory, while the US wants to ensure Ukraine's sovereignty and deter Russian aggression. However, there are chances of partial agreements on humanitarian aid, prisoner

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Swaps, and temporary ceasefire. Such small steps may reduce tensions and build confidence for larger talks in the future.

Hurdles in Negotiations:

Territorial Disputes:

Russia demands recognition of areas it has annexed, while Ukraine and the US firmly reject any loss of Ukrainian sovereignty.

NATO and Security Concerns:

Ukraine seeks NATO protection or strong security guarantees. Russia, on the other hand, views NATO expansion as a direct threat.

Lack of trust:

Both sides accuse each other of breaking past agreements, such as the Minsk Accords. Without trust, even new deals risk collapse.

Domestic Political Pressures:

In the US, leaders cannot appear weak against Moscow. In Russia, President Putin cannot afford to show retreat to his domestic audience.

Sanctions and Rivalry:

Western sanctions aim to weaken Russia, while Moscow uses its energy exports and alliances with China and others to

resist pressure- This great-power competition extends the war beyond Ukraine-

Practical Recommendations:

Diplomatic Efforts:

Various diplomatic efforts, including the Alaska summit b/w Trump and Putin in August 2025, aimed to explore a ceasefire or peace deal - Discussions have focused on possible "Land swaps" and security guarantees, but Ukraine has consistently refused to cede territory without proper legal and security guarantees-

peace talks:

Direct meeting b/w Russia and Ukraine, possibly mediated by neutral countries or international organization, can create a platform for dialogue and compromise-

International Mediation:

Countries like the US, EU nations, or the UN can act as neutral mediators to guide negotiations and suggest fair solutions-

Security Guarantees for Ukraine.

if NATO membership is not possible, alternative security arrangements should be designed, such as legally binding

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pacts or UN-monitored demilitarized zones-

Ceasefires:

Temporary pauses in fighting allow both sides to discuss solutions without ongoing violence. Short-term truces can build trust for longer-term agreements-

Conclusion:

The Ukraine war remain a serious threat to global peace, economic stability, and nuclear security. A grand settlement between the US and the Russia is unlikely in the short run due to conflicting goals and mistrust. However, through step-by-step agreements, credible security agreements, and active mediation, the path to peace can gradually be build.

Pakistan Devasting Floods- Reasons and Policy option:

Introduction:

"When disasters strike, it is too late to build walls. They must be build before the storm"- Kofi Annan-

Pakistan has been repeatedly struck

by devastating floods, especially the historic 2022 floods which affected over 33 million people and caused economic losses than 30\$ billion. Killed 1739 lives. These floods highlighted the country's fragile infrastructure, weak planning and high climate vulnerability.

Reasons for Devastating Floods:

1 Climate change and Glacial Melt:

Pakistan has 7,200 glaciers, the highest outside the polar regions. Rising temperature are accelerating glacial melt and increasing flood risk. In 2022, monsoon rainfall was 3 times the national 30-years average, and in Sindh, it was 466% higher than normal (UN OCHA report).

2 Urbanization and Poor Drainage:

Cities like Karachi and Lahore face Urban flooding due to poor drainage and unregulated construction on flood plains. A study by Pakistan Engineering Council (2021) showed 50% of drainage channels in major cities are encroached or clogged.

3 Weak river and dam management:

River embankments are outdated. Many

canals and barrages were built during the colonial period and are now weak-siltation in Tarbela and Mangla dams reduce their water-holding capacity, making floods harder to control-

Policy recommendations:

1. Early warning and Quick response:
 - Upgrade Pakistan Meteorological Department with modern forecasting system-
 - Use SMS and mobile alerts for real time warning, as Bangladesh successfully does-
2. Climate- Resilient infrastructure:
 - Rebuild houses with flood-resistant designs-
 - Invest in modern drainage for cities like Karachi to reduce urban flooding-
3. River and Dam management:
 - Dredge Indus river regularly and repair embankments-
 - Build small dams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan for water storage and flood control-
4. International Climate Finance:
 - Pakistan contributes less than 1% of global emissions but ranks 8th most climate-vulnerable country - (Germanwatch 2021)

- Demand funds from the loss and damage fund agreed at Cop27 to rebuild infrastructure and communities-

Conclusion:

"Disaster are natural, they are the result of human failure to act"- UNDRR

The 2022 floods exposed Pakistan's climate vulnerability and governance failure- with rising global temperatures, such disasters will become more frequent. Pakistan must urgently invest in climate adaptation, infrastructure reforms and forest restoration, while pressing the international community for climate justice- Only then can flood be transformed from a cycle of tragedy into a manageable risk-