



# Pakistani ambassador says he wants new chapter in relations with U.S.

Claudia Flisi  
cflisi@gmail.com

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Pakistan is writing a new chapter in its relations with the U.S., Ambassador Masood Khan told National Press Club members at a meeting at his residence on Tuesday.

Although it was an Embassy Night sponsored by the Club's International Correspondents Committee, Khan said he didn't want to meet at the embassy because the purpose of the gathering was "to get to know each other away from the workplace."

Pakistan was "working hard to resolve the problems of the past. Our objective, clear in mind, is to emerge as one of the great countries," he said. Pakistan currently has an interim government that is working to hold elections.



The Club's International Correspondents Committee had another strong turnout for an Embassy Night -- with the Sept. 5 event held at the residence of Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan (first row, middle, orange tie). **Photo:** Pakistan Embassy staff

Pakistan has a strong judiciary, a civil society, transparency, and a free media, Khan said. "Today we have media tycoons in Pakistan who have found that this is a most lucrative business."

As for the economy, which he called a top priority, "We have to get this right; it is a strategic goal," Khan said.

While Pakistan has strong ties with China, where he served as ambassador from 2008-12, Khan said the United States was his country's single largest trading partner. Pakistan exports \$8 billion to United States, \$6 billion in goods and the rest in IT and services. China was far less important as a trading partner.

He called the current state of U.S.-Pakistani relations as "on track and on an even keel." He acknowledged that relations had been fraught after the U.S. captured and killed Osama bin Laden, who was hiding out in Pakistan, and the more recent American withdrawal from Afghanistan, but "we have brought ourselves out of this."

Issues such as energy, climate change, tech surveillance, terrorism, and narcotics are currently being addressed, Khan said.

"My country wants a close association with the U.S.," he said. "We need a stable neighborhood. Stability in the Middle East, South Asia, Indo-Pacific are all of interest to us. Diplomacy plays a big role."

