

No more American F-16s for Pakistan, will fly Jordanian jets instead

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Islamabad: Pakistan has closed the chapter of acquiring eight F-16s from the US and will now opt for Jordan-owned F-16 fighter jets, foreign secretary Aizaz Chaudhry said today amid strains in bilateral ties over the scuttling of the deal and a US drone strike on its soil.

American F-16s

Mr Chaudhry, briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Foreign Policy, said "the US seemed to be satisfied with Pakistan's decision."

"The chapter of receiving F-16 fighter jets from the US has been closed. Pakistan will now opt for Jordan-owned F-16 fighter jets," he said.

Mr Choudhry said one of the reasons for "strained relations with the US was Pakistan's close ties with China."

"Pakistan cannot cooperate with the US on some issues. One of these issues is its sovereignty," he said.

He said that strained relations with the US were nothing new for Pakistan.

Condemning the US policy on the war on terror he said, "The US has spent 16 years fighting the war on terror. If only it had given six years to the peace process things would have been different."

The Pakistan-US ties strained after Congressional restriction on financing of F-16 fighter jets in Foreign Military Financing programme, due to which Pakistan could not buy the jets.

The relationship further suffered when the US carried out a drone strike in Balochistan, killing Afghan Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour, which was termed by Pakistani leadership as a violation of the country's sovereignty.

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