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### Experts Advise U.S. To Focus On Relationship With Pakistan's People

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By Annie Berman-Talk Radio News Service

A panel of experts at the Cato Institute said that a key step in strengthening the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. is to convince the Pakistani people to favor the United States.

"We face a huge obstacle of not really understanding each other and definitely not trusting each other," said Wendy Chamberlin, the former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan and President of the Middle East Institute. "We need to help that Pakistanis put human safety and security first, this means a significant investment in local police, community police, because that is where people are protected and through local police you have the better [intelligence] for the kind of insurgencies we are facing."

According to Chamberlin, peaceful relations between the US and Pakistan could be impeded by a number of other risks including shaky military relations, the role of religion, deadly drone attacks, and a history of miscommunication.

Mukhtar Kahn, an analyst at the Jamestown Foundation, described the Pakistani population as a strong, civil society.

"There is a strong middle class. Pakistan has a population of 170 million people, and around 60 million people are the middle class. Most of them are against the Taliban," said Khan.

"One of the most important things is that Pakistan has a very vibrant media these days. Pakistan has more than 50 independent TV channels...[people] are debating everyday...People are participating in those debates," Khan added.

In order to improve relations between the U.S. and Pakistan, Kahn suggested increasing public diplomacy, cultural exchange programs, and strategic communication among the Pakistani people regarding the threat of the Taliban.

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