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## Pakistan Honours US CENTCOM Chief for Counterterror Efforts

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Pakistan has conferred one of its highest military honours, the Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military), on General Michael E. Kurilla, Commander of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), in recognition of his role in enhancing defence cooperation and regional security.

The prestigious award was presented by President Asif Ali Zardari at a formal ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr (the President's official residence) during General Kurilla's official visit to

Pakistan on July 26, 2025. As part of the state protocol, General Kurilla was accorded a Tri-Services Guard of Honour, underscoring the importance of his visit to Islamabad.

According to an official statement from Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and coverage by Radio Pakistan, the award acknowledges General Kurilla's "outstanding contributions to regional security" and his "dedicated efforts in strengthening strategic defence ties" between the armed forces of Pakistan and the United States. In particular, Pakistani officials highlighted Kurilla's support in deepening counterterrorism cooperation, an area of shared interest given ongoing regional threats.

General Kurilla's visit included meetings with senior Pakistani leadership, including Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, where both sides reaffirmed their commitment to collaborative security efforts. The visit also coincided with the Regional Chiefs of Defence Conference, attended by senior military officials from various Central and South Asian countries, including U.S. representatives. Discussions reportedly focused on the evolving security landscape, border management, and the fight against terrorism.

The Pakistani government has framed this high-level engagement as part of its broader diplomatic push to reinforce defence partnerships amid shifting regional dynamics. In previous public remarks, General Kurilla referred to Pakistan as a "phenomenal partner in the counter-terrorism world," a sentiment seen by Islamabad as validation of its efforts to combat extremism and maintain regional stability.

The award is seen as symbolic of warming military relations between Pakistan and the United States, despite periodic challenges in the broader bilateral relationship. Defence analysts note that engagements like this signal a continued mutual interest in maintaining operational coordination in areas such as border security, intelligence sharing, and regional threat assessment.

The Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) is awarded to both Pakistani and foreign military leaders for exceptional service and is one of Pakistan's highest military distinctions.