



## Historical Perspective – Dynamics of Trust and Mistrust in Fluctuating Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

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### Abstract

After independence from British, Pakistan inherited territorial dispute with Afghanistan. Demarcation of Durand Line became the leading factor in fluctuating relations between the two neighbours. This paper deals with the dynamics of Pakistan - Afghanistan's oscillating relations through the prism of historical perspective. Pakistan always desired to have cordial relations with Afghanistan because of its foreign policy to maintain cordial relations with Muslim countries. In this article, a brief account of Russian Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 has also been discussed along with how socially, militarily, and economically this invasion has shaped the environments and national security of Pakistan. This article also argues the Indian factor that is the main cause in sour relations between the two neighbours by focusing on the Indian objectives in Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, Afghanistan, Dynamics of Trust and Mistrust, Fluctuating Bilateral Relations

### 1. Introduction

No country in the world shares as much as Pakistan and Afghanistan in terms of religion, language, culture, geography, space, and especially social value. Even among political thinkers, these two countries are equally important to global and regional players because of their position in Asia. The strategic interests of regional and world powers and the war on terror, according to some, create distrust between the two countries whose relations can be described as difficult (Macmunn, 1977, p. 219)

Since the beginning of Pakistan, Afghanistan has kept an aggressive attitude towards its neighbours, and Pakistan had to tolerate this because neighbours cannot be changed. The reason for the dissatisfaction with Afghanistan is mostly the Durand Line and the Pakhtoonistan problem. These issues are based on Afghan aspirations to regain control of Khyber Pakhtun Khawa (KPK), the Northwest Frontier Province, and other areas that briefly came under Ahmad Shah Abdali's control. In 1940s, when it was obvious that the British are leaving the sub-continent, the Afghan government made a demand that entire Pathan province (including up to the Indus) be returned to Afghan rule or that Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa (KPK) become independent power. (Caroe, 2004, p. 436).

Afghanistan has declared itself unilaterally a supporter for creation of "Pakhtoonistan". The justification behind the Pakhtoonistan is, as India was divided between Hindus and Muslims, so with same relevance; there must be more divisions to provide the Pakhtoos with their homeland as well. Those who oppose the proposal forget that Pakistan is not created on ethnicity, but on religion, culture, history, and economic considerations. The outcome of the referendum on the future of NWFP, in which 289,244 votes were in favour and 2,874 against, clearly exhibit the expectations of the people living in the province. Without exception, tribal people said that they are part of Pakistan and want to have good relations with Pakistan like the British. In September 1947, Afghanistan was the only state of the globe that opposed Pakistan's membership in UN (Hameed, 1981, p. 35).

For ease of understanding the issues and coherence of the events, Pakistan – Afghanistan relations have been divided into eight parts. The division would help in developing better insight of the events in a chronological manner that shaped the relations to its present position.

Part -1: Tumultuous Beginning of Bilateral Journey (1947-1963)

Part -2: Detent in Pakistan- Afghanistan Relations (1963-73)

Part -3: Reversal of Rapprochement (1974-1978)

Part - 4: War against Soviet Invasion (1979-1992)

Part - 5: Emergence of Taliban & Pakistan's Support to Rejuvenate Peace & Stability

Part - 6: Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations after 9/11

Part - 7: Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations after Taliban Takeover in 2021

Part - 8: Indian Factor as an Impediment in Pakistan Afghanistan Relations

### Part -1: Tumultuous Beginning of Bilateral Journey (1947-1963)

This phase marked the start of a strained relationship between the two sides, which began with the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 and lasted until 1963. Pakistan has been fighting against all odds for the survival of a free and

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independent state since its foundation. Pakistan already has a hostile state in the east and cannot have another threatening state in the west. Only good relations with Afghanistan can help Pakistan survive the nightmare that is catching up between two Eastern and Western neighbours. But Kabul's refusal to recognize the Durand Line as a legal international border and its claim on Pakhtoonistan was annoying from the outset. Afghanistan is the only state that opposed Pakistan's accession to UN, and Pakistan's recognition is based on provisions granting self-determination to those living in the Northwest Frontier Province. (Hameed, 1981, p. 41).

Afghanistan's effort to deny Pakistan's admission to UN by casting her vote against Pakistan was due to Pakhtoonistan's issue and so called mal-treatment towards Pathans in Pakistan. Afghan media and radio launched a campaign to force Pakistan to accept its claims on Pakhtoonistan. Despite being disappointed with the role played by Afghanistan, Pakistan has been open and expressed its willingness to develop relations with it. In this backdrop on May 1, 1948, Mr. I.I Chundrigar was chosen as the ambassador and then sent to Afghanistan followed by a delegation headed by Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar to symbolise Pakistan at the Jashin e Azadi celebrations in Afghanistan (Rabani, Pakistan Affairs, 2006, p. 343).

Pakistan's attitude of respect for faith and tribal culture was rewarded by the Loya Jirga, announcing their loyalty to Pakistan against India (Curmally, 2009, p. 63). Instead, peace talks, including Afghanistan's withdrawal of the vote against the United Nations membership and the exchange of ambassadors between the two states in 1948, did little to get the two neighbours together. Instead, Afghan Loya Jirga added fuel to the fire in June 1949 by declaring its rejection of the Durand Line and voiding all previous accords regarding the Durand Line. Tensions flared in 1950 when King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan made a speech against Pakistan at a ceremony in Kabul. Afghanistan Air Force distributed leaflets against Pakistan as well (Rizvi, 1971, pp. 156-157).

The Afghanistan government did not stop there; it went one step further and established the Pakhtoon Parliament in the tribal regions of Pakistan. In 1950-51, regular troops of Afghanistan crossed the Pakistani border to create a Pakhtoon revolt in the Pakistani tribes suppressed by Pakistani security forces. Resultantly, both countries withdrew their ambassadors for sometimes until they could be resettled. In 1951, Afghan citizen Said Akbar Khan Babrakzai killed Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, worsening already fragile relations (Curmally, 2009, p. 64). It is widely believed that the Afghan government at that time was involved in the October 1951 murder of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. Later, Pakistan accepted the Afghan government's denial of the annihilation (Dupree, 2012, p. 493).

A recent US State Department document has confirmed that the US had planned to kill the Pakistani Prime Minister with the help of the Afghan government. As a result, Zahir Shah's government was to obtain the support of the USA on Pakhtoonistan issue (Affairs, 2015). In 1952, the Afghan authorities distributed a "Tract" in that Balochistan of Pakistan was revealed as part of Afghanistan. This "Tract" had seriously affected Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, and relations between the two countries fell to their lowest level. In 1953, Sardar Daud, who supported the Pakhtoonistan movement, became Prime Minister of Afghanistan (Omran, 2009, pp. 23-44).

Pakistan Kabul relations reached a fundamental level during the Cold War as Pakistan entered into SEATO and CENTO pacts for defence in 1954 and 1955 (Kux, 2001, p. 70). Also, on November 22, 1954, Pakistan reorganized its administration in the centre, uniting the entire west part of the country as "West Pakistan Province" and eastern territory as "East Pakistan Province". Afghan government resisted the decision to integrate the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), sparking massive protests inside and outside Afghanistan. The Pakistan's embassy in Kabul was barred, the consulate in the cities of Kandahar and Jalalabad were physically attacked and the flag of Pakistan was molested (Ahmad, 1996, p. 88).

Resultantly, Afghan Consulate in Peshawar was attacked, and the Pakistani officials put ban on Afghan supplies. Pakistan-Afghanistan relations took a new direction in November 1955, when Moscow reacted sharply to Pakistan's accession to SEATO and CENTO. Communist leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin visited India and Afghanistan. They supported the New Delhi's invasion of Kashmir, and in Afghanistan they declared Moscow's support for the Afghans' claim of Pakhtoonistan and pledged \$ 100 million in financial and army assistance (Kux, 2001, p. 78). Realizing Afghanistan is likely to fall into the hands of the Soviets, the USA along with world powers such as Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia tried to improve relations amongst these two neighbours (Rabani, Pakistan Affairs, 4th edition, 2006, p. 344).

During 1956 and 1957, Pakistani President Iskander Mirza and Prime Minister Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy made a visit to Afghanistan to reconcile and improve the relations. Afghanistan ruler King Zahir Shah and Prime Minister Sardar Daoud Khan made these visits in 1958 and 1959 respectively to reciprocate. Leaders from both sides decided to set political problems as the most important ones and agreed to explore the US strategy considering establishing the transit zone in Karachi, facilitating Afghan trade, Improvement of roads and railway infrastructure on the border between Chaman and Landikotal and warehouse arrangements in Afghanistan. The construction cost of the arrangements was approximately US \$30 million and provided by USA. Pakistan agreed to build across border railway near Quetta but declined to build the one near Peshawar. The hesitant Pakistan, acceding to US pressure in September 1962 decided

“unwillingly” to deliberate about the placing of Afghan “tentacles” across the border and a meeting of both countries’ foreign ministers in New York. In the meantime, Iran’s effective arbitration helped both countries to sign 1963 Tehran Accord. (Kux, 2001, p. 124).

### **Part-2: Detent in Pakistan - Afghanistan Relations (1963-73)**

In 1963, due to signing of Tehran Accord relations again became friendly between both the neighbours. Both countries took numerous measures to enhance bilateral trade and trust. Both countries agreed to open the borders and work jointly in resolving the issues and the reason was that Sardar Daud had resigned in 1963. The relations between the two countries had improved to the point that during Pakistan’s 1965 war with India, Afghanistan openly favoured Pakistan. Afghan Government undoubtedly informed that they will stay out of this war and Pakistan must not have worries regarding the protection of its western border (Keddi, 1966, pp. 23-40).

After Iran’s successful arbitration, both countries agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations, open the close borders, and recommence trade and business activities. The revival of mutual relations and the opening of trade route was a relief to the miserable economic situation of Afghanistan. The onus of responsibility to sever Pakistan –Afghanistan relations was laid on the Prime Minister Sardar Daud. Resultantly, King Zahir Shah received a warm welcome when he visited Pakistan in 1968. Pakistan’s Finance Minister Muzafar Ali Khan, reciprocated King Zahir Shah’s visit, to discover to increase trade and economic cooperation (Hussain R. , 2002).

Islamabad pronouncement to disperse one unit decision not only led to more warmth in Pakistan - Afghanistan relations but also paved way for expansion in economic collaboration and mutual understanding. Afghanistan’s neutral attitude displayed during the 1971 Pakistan war with India had put a positive impact on the thinking of Pakistani authorities (Rizvi, 1971, p. 163).

In 1971, President Zulfikar Bhutto had a historic visit of Afghanistan to increase bilateral relations. This was Zulfikar Bhutto’s first visit to any country as President. First lady Begum Nusrat Bhutto also had a visit to Afghanistan where she inked numerous agreements of economic cooperation (Anjum, 2019, p. 48).

Sardar Daud returned to power in 1973 again by overthrowing King Zahir Shah, who was then in Italy for his treatment. This development negatively affected Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Pakistani officials believed that Sardar Daud could rekindle the insurgency in Pakistan as he arranged shelter for Marree and Bugti rebels in Afghanistan to use them against Pakistan. He also gave a kick start to secessionist movements in Pakistan with the assistance of Soviets. Thus, nationalist movements started in Pakistan and Sardar Daud also sent intimidating messages saying that now Afghanistan should take back Pakhtoonistan as it is “the lost land” of Afghanistan (Khan, 1961, pp. 492-500).

Sardar Daud government confronted three coup attempts which he assumed that these attempts were supported by Pakistan. In 1973, Afghanistan with the support of Soviet Union began to re-support secessionist movements in Pakistan as Pakistan always made Afghanistan liable for supporting secessionist movements in Pakistan. There was also a perception that Pakistan is having mal-treatment with Pashtuns about their due rights (Ahmad N. , 2011, pp. 56-70).

### **Part-3: Reversal of Rapprochement (1974-1978)**

The relations between the two countries were at a stage to overcome the past history of distrust when Sardar Daud, dismissed King Zahir Shah with the support of leftists and in alliance of Soviets. These elements were largely from the Parcham Wing (led by Babrak Karmal) of the Communist People’s Democratic Party (PDP). There were lot of misunderstandings amongst the two neighbours, so in 1974, Afghanistan declined to join Islamic Summit Conference held in Pakistan. (Rahman, 2012).

Again in 1976, exchange of high-level visits took place between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Sardar Daud. These two visits had greatly affected relations of Pakistan-Afghanistan. During this visit, Afghan side decided to accept Durand Line as Afghanistan – Pakistan border. On the other, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto decided to free leadership of National Awami Party, who were imprisoned for their involvement in Pakhtoonistan movements. Therefore, the two countries started the reconciliation process and in 1976, Pakistan sent its musical and cultural troupe to celebrate Afghanistan’s national day. Nonetheless, this compromise was stalled again with the overthrow of Bhutto in 1977 and overthrow of Sardar Daud in Afghanistan by Communist forces in Saur Revolution in 1978. Sardar Daud abolished the monarchy and established a republic under his presidency (Calvocoressi, 2001, p. 571).

Supporting Sardar Daud’s struggle, Pro-Soviet elements in civilian and military gained influence in state policy, and it was believed that the Daud’s comeback would once again give momentum to Pakhtoon and Balochi separatist movements. It happened when hideouts to the Marree and Bugti rebels in 70s were provided by Afghanistan. Iran also disliked Daud’s help for Baloch insurgents as it could provide impetus to Iran’s inactive Baloch population as well. (Hussain K. , 2005, pp. 22-23).

In 1977, Daud sought help from Iran and persecuted both wings of the PDP while getting away from communist elements. However, the opportunity was lost with the removal of Bhutto in Pakistan, and removal of Daud government

in April 1978. Afghanistan was led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) which appointed Noor Mohammed Taraki as President, Hafiz Ullah Amin as Prime Minister, and Babrak Karmal as deputy Prime Minister. The country name was also changed as the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) (Pasha, 1989, pp. 12-16). In December 1978, PDPA signed a friendship treaty with Soviet Union. In 1979, Hafizullah Amin launched another coup to overthrow his own government, assassinated Taraki, and became President. In the last days of 1979, Moscow found Hafizullah Amin less obedient killed him and appointed Babrak Karmal as the new President (Calvocoressi, 2001, p. 573).

#### **Part-4: War against Soviet Invasion (1979-1992)**

On 27 December 1979, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan created a critical situation for Pakistan as Red Army was coming critically close to the Khyber Pass, a traditional gateway to South Asia from the North. In Islamabad this was taken as a planned move than helping the puppet. The incursion coincided with the post-revolutionary chaos in Iran, uprising in Balochistan and persistent instability in Pakistan. Thus, the Soviet army occupation of Afghanistan posed a danger to the security of Pakistan, Iran, and the Persian Gulf equally. Pakistan faced this challenge; how to tactically face and keep an ideologically antagonistic superpower present on its doorstep. Three options were available to Pakistan to handle the situation in Afghanistan: take it as the fait accompli, or provide help to fighters opposing the invasion, or convince the international community to put political pressure on Soviet Union (Sattar A. , Afghanistan: Past, Present and Future, From Jihad to Civil War, 1997). ”

Down fall of Shah of Iran had already damaged the sense of regional insecurity of United States; therefore, they professed Soviet invasion as a geo-strategic threat not only to Pakistan but also to the US interests. Evaluating the likely consequences, USA decided to strengthen its regional security, hence; on May 4, 1980 President Carter stated “US will supply military equipment, food and other support to Pakistan to protect its independence and national security against the threat from the North” (Kux, 2001, p. 247).

In 1981, the US Government of President Reagan recognized the exigency of the situation and increased monetary and military aid to \$ 3.2 billion in 5 years plan. Provision of arms, ammunition, and equipment to the Mujahideen was done through Pakistan. The principal recipient of the assistance was Gulbaddin Hekmatyar who was a trustworthy and reliable resistance force. Russian President Gorbachev visited India in November 1986 called for political settlement of Afghan conflict to ensure its sovereignty and nonalignment. This realization in Moscow gave way to negotiation and Pakistan began arbitration for the departure of the Soviet forces. Finally, on 14 April 1988 Pakistan and Afghanistan signed the Peace Agreement in Geneva, with both superpowers as its co-guarantors. The main points of the agreement were (Ahmad S. , 1996, p. 88):

- Within nine months all Soviets forces to leave Afghanistan, and half of them in first three months.
- Agreement imposed a ban on trans-border activities.
- One-year moratorium on arms deliveries was decided. However, the superpowers reserved the right to supply arms to their ‘allies’ in case of any violation of the one-year moratorium.

The agreement failed to provide any provision for establishment of interim government in Afghanistan after the withdrawal. After Soviet troops left Afghanistan on approved timetable, a civil war erupted that ruined the remains of Kabul and surrounding. The withdrawing forces of Soviet Union left behind essential arms, and ammunition which helped in improved staying power of Dr. Najeeb Ullah Government (Gascigne, 2001).

The collapse of Soviet Union also led to the fall of Najeeb Ullah government in 1992 and instituting the Interim Government of Sibghatullah Mojadedi. Pakistan’s power sharing proposal under Peshawar agreement failed as President Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Defence minister Ahmad Shah Masood, tried to keep GulBadin HikmatYar out of government. This power play led to another civil war on ethnical lines. Rabbani got re-elected as President in June 1994, instead of complying with the terms of Peshawar Accord and therefore continued his authority illegally (Suleman, 2004, pp. 34-45).

Pakistan accused Rabbani of betraying the Peshawar accord and fostering good relations with India to the disadvantage of Pakistan’s interests. During and after the Soviet occupation, the extraordinary love demonstrated for Pakistan disappeared and Pakistan’s citizens were called agents of enemy. The situation got so bad that in July 1994 Pakistan Embassy in Kabul and Pak- Afghan border was closed. Unexpectedly, from the ruins left by war lords in Southern Afghanistan Taliban emerged, hence this emergence of Taliban provided Pakistan with an option to replace Rabani (Seth, 2009).

#### **Part-5: Emergence of Taliban and Pakistan’s Support to Rejuvenate Peace and Stability**

The emergence of Taliban soon became a reality, grew into a powerful force that was to be considered. Looking to revitalize peace and stability in war affected country; Pakistan saw an opportunity to materialize its long-awaited desire to have peace and stability in Afghanistan—a compulsory condition for voluntary return of more than 3 million Afghan

refugees. In September 1994, protracted conflicts and crimes led by the Afghan Mujahideen leaders, the Tehreek – i-Islami Taliban Afghanistan appeared in Kandhar and initiated as a new movement to pursue following points (Matinuddin, 1999, p. 26):

- Disarming all war lords/ militias through coercion or persuasion.
- Enforcing Islamic laws to restore peace and social order in areas under their control.
- Protect the veracity and Islamic character of Afghanistan.

With occasional setbacks in parts of Afghanistan, Taliban eventually took control of 27 provinces by May 1997. India provided all possible support to Rabani and Ahmad Shah Masood who had differences with Pakistan on Taliban issue. India also managed in deceptively convincing Iran that Pakistan's support to Taliban is with the purpose of isolating / containing Iran on the behest of USA. Convergence of Iranian and Indian interests in Afghanistan, Taliban became the common enemy. Whereas India was also afraid of from the Taliban's possible help to Kashmiri freedom fighters thus liked to help Rabani and Masood in preventing Taliban's control of Afghanistan (Seth, 2009, p. 56).

When Taliban established the government in Afghanistan, Pakistan unequivocally acknowledged Taliban government as it was the first time that pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan was established, and it had no links with India. Pakistan provided US \$6 million to Afghanistan in 1998 and extended financial and technical support to reconstruct Chaman-Kandhar-Herat- Kushka highway (Matinuddin, 1999, p. 128).

Pakistan also tried to convince Taliban to have a multi-ethnic coalition government, however, Taliban rejected to have alliance with Northern Alliance as coalition partner. Taliban succumbing to Pakistan's political pressure looked towards Usama Bin Laden for financial assistance. Taliban permitted Usama to dwell in Afghanistan and in return provided men and material support to Taliban in their military campaign in the North (Seth, 2009, p. 63).

While Pakistan's funding for the Taliban was hinging upon its national priorities and goals, Pakistan was also trying to get the Taliban closer to the opposition. Persuaded by the UN and influenced by Pakistan, the Taliban consented to have meeting with anti-Taliban groups in Ashkabad from 10-14 March 1999 to discuss the peace, dissolution, and overall government planning process in Afghanistan. Negotiations failed without any positive results for further progress. On October 15, 1999, the UN adopted resolution 1267 asking the Taliban to handover Osama bin Laden, and due to failure, the United Nations imposed sanctions on November 14, 1999 (UNO, 15th October 1999).

Pakistan's stance with regards to Taliban's recognition did not change even during President Musharraf era. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stressed many times that Pakistan would continue to follow the idea of a multi-ethnic government in Afghanistan (Sattar, March 13, 2000). At Tehran in June 2000, Pakistan's Foreign Minister during ECO Ministerial conference affirmed that Pakistan supports every peace proposal led by OIC or by the UN. Pakistan will endorse any solution for peace that is acceptable to Afghans (News, May 21, 2000).

Meanwhile, US exerted pressure on Pakistan to end its support for Taliban because of their involvement in human rights and women's rights violation. Pakistan began to isolate itself from Taliban and negotiated several times with United States and Taliban to resolve Afghanistan conflict peacefully but failed to succeed. After these meetings, Pakistan stopped supporting Taliban. Till this time United States had good opinion about Taliban but situation changed after 9/11 attacks (Mukerjee, 2005, pp. 301-312).

The changed situation brought American's authority under violent attack and Osama Bin Laden, was stated as master mind of this activity. United States demanded from Afghanistan, to hand over Osama or face the penalty. Upon Taliban's refusal, United States decided to invade Afghanistan, kill / apprehend Osama bin Laden and destroy all training camps, and giving authority to the Northern Alliance (Musharraf, 2006, p. 200).

#### **Part 6: Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations after 9/11**

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 manifested a new era of Pakistan's foreign policy especially Pakistan's Afghan policy. Pakistan was at a crossroad when President George W. Bush announced that there would be no distinction between the perpetrators of attacks and harbours. On October 7, 2001, Pakistan decided to support the international coalition and afforded intelligence, flight corridor and bases for logistic support and recovery to international coalition forces (Musharraf, 2006, p. 201).

Pakistan did its best to avoid likely war and mediated between US and the Taliban. George Tenet, former head of CIA claimed that Pakistan assisted in organizing meetings between Robert Grenier, (CIA boss) and Mullah Akhter Mohammed Osmani, Taliban leader to arrive on a peaceful way out. Allegedly, Pakistan's Intelligence chief met Taliban leader Mullah Omar in Kandahar on 17 September 2001, and pursued him to repatriate bin Laden to avoid dire consequences of US attack. The attack was successful in eliminating the training camps, however, most of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters fled to the bordering countries. Within couple of months, the Taliban were overpowered, and Kabul fell on 13 November, 2001 (Tenet, 2007, pp. 182-183).

The decline of Taliban paved the way for the foreigners to interfere in Afghanistan to safeguard their interests. After the fall of Kabul, selected Tribal chiefs were called by the UN at Bonn (Germany) famously known as Bonn Conference to

determine Afghan interim government under Hamid Karazi for half a year mandate. President Musharraf visited Afghanistan in April 2002 to renew bilateral relations and announced 100 million dollars assistance for restoration of infrastructure in Afghanistan. Pakistan extended maximum help to organize presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2004 and September 2005. President Musharraf was the first country head to visit Afghanistan after the successful Afghan elections (Musharraf, 2006, pp. 204-207).

The Bonn Conference ignored the leading tribal leaders while assigning political responsibilities in forthcoming setup of Afghanistan. This anomaly abetted in aggravating the Afghan insurgency as Pakistan being the main stakeholder was kept out of the entire process. On the other side, India was afforded with the opportunity to enhance its strategic interests against Pakistan through its covert activities in Balochistan. More than a dozen Indian Consulates on Pak-Afghan border were the security concerns of Pakistan and source of friction between both countries. These Consulates were involved in Anti-Pakistan activities including supply of weapons and money into Balochistan and KPK. During this period, bilateral relations were on the lowest web and President Karazai threatened to order its forces to cross Durand Line and attack on Pakistan (Siddique, 2008).

In 2008, Hamid Karazai was invited to witness oath taking ceremony of Asif Ali Zardari, as Pakistan's President. A host of efforts were made to increase bilateral relations, thus, in 2010; Memorandum of Understanding on Afghanistan-Pakistan transit trade was signed. Both countries also decided to increase cooperation in railway sector and establish a road link from Pakistan to Central Asian states via Afghanistan. Pakistan approved 2000 scholarships to Afghanistan students with the purpose to build mutual trust and enhance people to people contacts (Cordesman, 2012).

In 2011, relations of the two countries were becoming cordial but turned stressed in February 2011, due to couple of conflicts in Gurbuz District between Afghanistan and Pakistan killing 2 Pakistani and 19 Afghan soldiers. On May 2, 2011, relations became tense when United States conducted a raid and killed Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan (Hussein, 2015, pp. 22-31).

In 2014, when coalition forces announced to leave Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani desired to enhance its relations with Pakistan by describing contours of his foreign policy during Beijing conference that Afghanistan have formed its foreign policy that has five circles and Pakistan is placed in first and India in forth circle. This was a very pleasant statement and relations of both countries started blossoming as political leadership of both countries visited each other's country (Synovitz, 2006). Pakistan also provided financial support worth US \$2 million for infrastructure development in Afghanistan. However, December 2014 terrorist's attack on Army Public School in Peshawar worsened the developing relations (Shah S. A., 2019).

In 2016, despite taking more initiatives by Pakistan to enhance relations and providing US \$500 million financial support to Afghanistan for improvement in infrastructure. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani refused this help by declaring Pakistan's involvement in terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. For example, two suicide attacks on Afghan parliament in 2017 resulted in hundreds of deaths. In the absence of investigation and evidence, Afghanistan blamed Pakistan at the outset (Rasmussen, 2017).

### **Part - 7: Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations after Taliban Takeover in 2021**

Since the Taliban takeover in mid-August 2021, Pakistan has urged world powers to work with Afghanistan's leadership to stabilise war-torn country. The previous Kabul regime (President Ashraf Ghani) visibly failed to sustain itself even backing him with billions of dollars would have only delayed his downfall. Historically, Afghans are averse to foreign occupations; therefore, military solution to the conflict was not in favour of US. This was the reason that Pakistan has advocated for a comprehensive diplomatic settlement ever since the "Bonn process" (Yusuf M. , 2021).

The swift down fall of President Ghani's administration had proved that the reasons for failure of Afghan government were not of Pakistan's making but corruption, bad governance, refusal of Afghans to support their government and the decision of Afghan National Army not to fight against the return of Taliban. Unlike 1990s, the Taliban showed their interest in sustained commitment with the world. Therefore, Pakistan led diplomatic initiatives with Afghanistan to discuss the way forward. Disengagement of Pakistan from Afghanistan was not the alternative as both countries have about 2650 kilometres long border and ethnic ties which goes back to centuries. These cultural and communal links force Pakistan to make efforts for peace in Afghanistan in order to avoid risk of instability spilling over into Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan is not in a position to host more refugees, who may be forced into Pakistan by another wave of crisis in Afghanistan (Group, 2022).

Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistan for trade, transit and livelihoods of Afghan people being landlocked. Afghanistan's geographical location could become advantageous by transforming it into a transit hub for connecting with Central Asian shores. This connectivity is not the only key to Pakistan's geo-economics idea but also matches up with the US driven regional vision of setting up economic linkages between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan (Yusuf M. , 2021).

Pakistan's efforts to protect its border and prevent the entry of refugees and border crossing by Pakistani militants based in Afghanistan, was already a matter of concern. Taliban's denial to cut off their ties with Pakistani counterparts

(Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan), was of even more serious concern to Islamabad. Despite such differences, Pakistan continued to provide necessary assistance to Afghanistan as following: -

- Pakistan helped on humanitarian grounds even due to resource constraints and kept the air and road avenues open, along with land routes, for international agencies, non-governmental organisations, and donors (Group, 2022).
- Ended the forcible repatriation of newly arrived Afghan refugees (Group, 2022).
- Keeping own security interests in mind refrained endorsing Taliban's restrictions on women's rights (Group, 2022).
- Significant policy changes were announced after Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Kabul on 9 October 2022 (Hashim, 2021).
- Pakistan to ease travel and trade restrictions and provide more than \$28m humanitarian aid (overall 5 billion) to Afghanistan.
- On 9 October 2022, Pakistan dispatched 345 tonnes of food items to Afghanistan as humanitarian aid, consisting of flour, rice, sugar, oil and pulses, was provided under the Pak Afghan Cooperation Forum (PACF).
- Introduced an e-visa facility for Afghan visitors to Pakistan to streamline the visa application process with no visa fee.
- Afghan medical care or medical emergency cases to be granted visas on arrival.
- Border crossing timings increased, and the trade corridor made operational for 24 hours per day (Zafar, 2021).
- Dropped duties on the import of Afghan fresh fruits and vegetables, and formed a working group to examine where duties could be reduced or removed on other commodities (Zafar, 2021).
- Afghan businessmen were allowed to get visas on arrival for 30 days (Hashim, 2021).

### **Part - 8: Indian Factor as an Impediment in Pakistan – Afghanistan Relations**

Pakistan has always been uncomfortable with India's political activities in Afghanistan. Although India is not contiguous to Afghanistan, yet strategically and monetarily Afghanistan is of supreme importance for her. Furthermore, India's interest in Afghanistan is not only precisely to Pakistan but also has geo-economic and geo-political increase in the region (Diam, 2012, p. 51).

Due to its geographical position, Afghanistan has been the focal point of India's regional policy. But its geo-political importance and potential hostility to Pakistan surpassed all other aspects. Apart from the desire to put Pakistan into its two-front problem, few of Indian objectives precisely against Pakistan in Afghanistan are (Ahmad S. , 1996):-

- Provide support to Afghan adversaries of Pakistan to counter- balance Pakistan's help to Kashmiri freedom fighters and other rebellions in India. India had been fuelling and supporting Afghanistan's denial to accept the Durand Line, the colonial-era border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- India, desires that both neighbours should not reach to consensus to resolve their disputes amicably. India understands that, if both these Muslim neighbour countries are permitted to work together, then they may agree on consensus solution of the problems of infiltration, drug trafficking, Durand Line, repatriation of refugees etc.
- India had been dreaming to replace Pakistan as the America's strategic ally in its Global War on Terrorism. Indian presence in Afghanistan and its absolute support to America provided her the opportunity in realization of her long-drawn dream of sweeping out Pakistani influence in the region.

### **2. An Overview of India's Afghan Policy**

Afghanistan had been the focal point of India's regional policy due to its contiguity to Pakistan, and its potential as competitor from the West. Since the basis of India's foreign policy was maintaining good relations with Afghanistan, it evolved the "Friendship Treaty" in 1950 to increase Indian power and inked various agreements to endorse bilateral cooperation to further alienate Pakistan. In 1979, after Soviet invasion, India redoubled its energies to consolidate its relations with Afghanistan India cooperated in various industrial, irrigation, and hydroelectric projects (Hasan, 2010, p. 87).

Historically, Pakistan and India had competing agenda in Afghanistan. Pakistan contemplates India's influence in Afghanistan as her double envelopment tactics, and cause of fuelling Pashtun separatism in Pakistan. On the other side, India considers Afghanistan as a significant geo-political partner and gateway to Central Asia, therefore friendly Afghanistan could disallow vital strategic depth to Pakistan and present another front to disperse Pakistan's military resources to fight on two fronts (Brain, 2011, p. 2).

During the period of cold war, India was involved at the back of each and every misunderstanding between the two countries and during post-cold war America aligned itself with India. Both had synchronised their plan of divide and rule to fulfil their imperialistic designs. They worked together to control Afghanistan to manage access to the Central Asian

oil and gas resources. They had also been planning to weaken Pakistan's territorial integrity, create political and economic instability (Cheema, 2007):-

As a prologue to regaining misplaced power in Afghanistan and forestall Pakistan's assistance to the government of Taliban, India forged close links with Northern Alliance. In these environments, Pakistan could not permit any regional or global actor particularly India, to gain predominance authority in Afghanistan. Pakistan's authorities were convinced that its interest in Afghanistan is vital however Pakistan is being marginalized by India's increasing political, military, and economic links with Afghanistan and USA (Pant, 2010).

The overthrow of Taliban after 11 September 2001 changed the balance of power in favour of India. Having government of its own choice, India came to a position where its interests in Afghanistan could easily be pursued. Instead of addressing Pakistan's apprehensions over the covert actions of Indian consulates against Pakistan, Karzai government blamed Pakistan of harbouring terrorists and encouraging trans-border infiltration (Iqbal, 2008).

Propagation of Pakistan opposing scenarios from Afghan land still continues which is a serious challenge for the security of Pakistan and Pak-Afghanistan relations. In these precarious environments, Pakistan had to stay ready for any kind of situation on the other side of the border so as to be able to adjust consequently (Chandra, 2007). Therefore, there had to be a recognition of the problems and thus, is in the benefit of two nations to have cordial relations coupled with trust, respect for sovereignty and territorial veracity so as to encourage political stability, economic prosperity, and cohesion in the region. Therefore, normal relations between Pakistan-Afghanistan are the only way forward to have peace and stability in both states (Yaqoob, 2006).

### 3. Analytical Review of the Paper

Pakistan Afghanistan relations are mired due to various issues between both the states. There are certain areas of friction with Afghanistan such as legacy of mistrust, lingering dispute of Durand Line, influence of external players on the political leadership of Afghanistan specially the India, return of Afghan refugees, issues related to Afghan Transit Trade vis-a-vis smuggling and the activities of Al-Qaida terrorists; However, there are many areas of convergence as well like Religious, Cultural and Linguistic linkages, Economic Inter-Dependency, Security Interests, Convergence of State policy to eliminate religious fanaticism and terrorism and Bilateral Trade. Details of these areas are as follows:-

- Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoy close cordial relations due to strong historical, religious, cultural, and traditional bondage. Former Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto highlighted the importance of Afghanistan for Pakistan when he acknowledged that if we are asked to choose one out of all the countries of Asia and Africa then for its significance Afghanistan would in all probability top the list.
- Countries having close, cordial relations generally benefit from a large quantity of bilateral trade with the neighbourhood keeping in front the size, human resource and financial capacity of these countries. There are numerous cases of bilateral and multilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that provide assistance to have such relations. FTAs among neighbours are usually used to reduce profit margins by dropping taxes and other barricades. Trade and flow of resources are important features in determining international relations. Accordingly, Pakistan signed Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATT) in 1965. Albeit, both countries remained engaged in trade out of requirement, there is an acute insecurity in trade relations. Pakistan and Afghanistan's economic inter-dependence cannot be over emphasised as Afghan Transit Trade through Pakistan is the lifeline for Afghan economy. Trade with Central Asian Republics through Afghanistan is an old and long-awaited dream of Pakistan that must be explored.
- From 1990 onwards, Pakistan desired to have access to energy resources of Central Asian countries, including Afghanistan. The two important energy projects, TUTAP and TAPI present enough proof that the addition of a third party can change the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. To look for of energy resources, Pakistan has even shown eagerness to work together with Afghanistan and India. TAPI, project aims to supply natural gas to both India and Pakistan from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to bring prosperity in the region.
- CPEC is one of the major opportunities to bring the neglected region in mainstream. Pakistan desires to link CPEC with CAR through Afghanistan. The route should pass through Chaman and Torkhan borders. This trade route will not only enhance the job opportunities, legal trade options and business for the locals but will also be beneficial for development and economic progress of both the countries. The trade potential of this route which connects Gawadar to landlocked countries is enormous. It will automatically subdue illegal trade, smuggling and drugs trafficking. Pakistan is already initiating the projects that would supplement the CPEC with enhanced road connectivity – such as, the Torkham–Jalalabad and Peshawar–Torkham roads.
- Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was contested and repelled through Afghan determination and Pakistan's backing. Pakistan accommodated millions of Afghan refugees during this period and provided



continuous moral support to Afghan fighters. At present, mistrust among Afghanistan and Pakistan prevails on the problem of terrorism and counter terrorism. Both blame each other of cross-border terrorism, and it is a main aspect hampering their cooperation in security milieu. Despite the trust deficit overwhelming the mutual relations among the two countries positive developments are also there. However, cooperation in counter terrorism exhibited some possibilities through various agreements but such initiatives have been victim to mutual mistrust related to trans-border terrorism. There is a need to address this mistrust and cooperate on security matters with each other for better relationship.

- Both countries have complete agreement as a state policy to exterminate religious fanaticism and terrorism from the soils of their countries.
- Since independence, legacy of mistrust and hostilities amongst the two nations prevails as Afghanistan tried to deny the entry to the UN by casting vote against Pakistan in 1947. Although Afghanistan withdrew from her stance of negative vote; however, this specific incident had a very deep-rooted effects on Pakistan - Afghanistan relations and many more such incidents were also the cause of mistrust irrespective which country instigated.
- Afghan People very openly and Afghan authorities off the record contexts still question the legality of this international border. This is one of the main reasons that happening of small scale border skirmishes between security forces is a routine affair.
- Illegal Cross Border Movement from Afghanistan into Pakistan is the most destructive aspect of our lose control over the Durand line. This long border has countless crossing places; the rugged terrain further makes it more difficult to implement border control measures. Apart from the economic aspects, this illegal movement into Pakistan has caused a major threat to the national security of Pakistan. Pakistan is subjected daily to terrorism and other forms of security challenges. Acts of terrorism / illegal border crossings occur throughout Pakistan and are exacerbated by its proximity to volatile events in Afghanistan which “spill-over” into Pakistan.
- Due to precarious situation persisting in Afghanistan, a large Afghan refugee populace stays on Pakistan’s soil thus putting a huge burden on already brittle economy of Pakistan.

#### 4. Conclusion

Historically Pakistan Afghanistan relations have had the component of persistent mutual suspicion and mistrust. Pakistan along with other countries of the world desires peace and political stability in Afghanistan. A huge population of Afghan refugees living in length and breadth of Pakistan has serious impact and dire consequences on the prevailing internal instability in Pakistan.

Pakistan has long and difficult borders with uneasy neighbours. Our Western Border is porous in nature due to which it is violated by local tribes, smugglers, and Terrorists / anti state elements. As a result, Pakistan’s economy suffers, national security is compromised and at the same time international image of Pakistan gets tarnished.

There are many problems (drug trafficking, refugee’s crisis, terrorist’s cross border infiltration and recognition of Durand Line as a permanent border between both the countries) which need immediate actions to find out solution of these issues. There is a need to establish a mechanism to eradicate distrust so as to overcome the unsettled issues and improve their bilateral trade and exploit the similarities that both have.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are two conjoined twins. However, their relations are hostage to a legacy of mistrust. This article adds to the prevailing dynamics of Afghanistan–Pakistan relations with the lens of comparative analysis of collaboration / trust through bilateral and multi-party opportunities, while mistrust is liable for the lack of bilateral cooperation in economic and security issues.

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