

**“Regime Change in Afghanistan and its Political Implications: A
Case Study of Pakistan”**



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Abstract

This research work was conducted on title “*Regime Change in Afghanistan and its Political Implications: A Case Study of Pakistan*”. The collapse of the Afghan state has thus been a four-decade-long cycle. In that time, five regimes have been overthrown and replaced. Each of these new administrations preserved the organized political institutions that define the modern Afghan state. Additionally, the government collapsed because the populace questioned its legitimacy. The primary goals of Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan are to improve relations between the two countries' citizens, to increase trade and transit links, to work together to bring peace to Afghanistan, to stay out of each other's internal affairs, and to prevent either country from using its territory against the other. Pakistan's policy of assisting terrorists is currently backfiring because it incites a significant number of its own citizens to religious fervor. The same ideological link that has helped Pakistan control the Taliban in Afghanistan has also contributed to the radicalization of Islam in Pakistan. Following the Taliban's assumption of power in Afghanistan, there have been discussions and assessments that raise concerns about the potential security consequences for neighbouring and regional nations. The decline in Afghanistan-Pakistan ties, namely the Taliban-Pakistan relations, after the American withdrawal in August 2021 also attributed to the institutionalization process undertaken by the Taliban as they transitioned from a non-state violent player to a state actor. During the Taliban's struggle for power in Afghanistan as a terrorist opposition, it received support from Pakistan. However, after the Taliban gained control, its objectives and priorities shifted. From a pragmatic standpoint, the Taliban saw that due to the challenging economic conditions in their country, it would be more advantageous for them to seek support from India, a stronger and more stable nation than their Muslim neighbor Pakistan, who is their enemy.

Keywords: Regime, Afghanistan, Change, Taliban, power, political, stability, Government

CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Pakistan has advocated for international governments to engage in collaboration with the newly established authorities in Afghanistan after the Taliban's assumption of power in mid-August 2021, with the aim of fostering stability in this region plagued by violence. The organization has provided assurances of neutrality in relation to these requests. Nevertheless, it is important to critically evaluate Pakistan's claims of direct involvement, since they may be subject to significant exaggeration, given Pakistan's extensive track record of interference in Afghanistan and longstanding support for the Taliban over the course of many decades¹.

Afghanistan is a geographically landlocked country situated in the south-central region of Asia, characterized by its diverse ethnic composition. The country in question is characterized by complete isolation and has a history of political unrest, making it one of the most unexplored regions on the planet. Pakistan constitutes the eastern and southern boundaries of the nation, while Iran demarcates its western boundary. The northern border of the country is shared with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Located at the terminus of the elongated and slender Wakhan Corridor, in the remote northeastern region, Afghanistan furthermore shares a limited border with Xinjiang, China. The construction of Afghanistan's present boundaries throughout history was influenced by a struggle between imperial Britain and tsarist Russia, which was famously referred to as the "Great Game" by Rudyard Kipling². The nation's sovereignty and traditions are under peril from unwelcome alien influences. The presence of competition among

¹ Jhon, S, and K. Micheal. 2022. "Once again Taliban in Afghanistan ." *J.Int.Politics* 253

²Qureshi, K. 2021. "Taliban and Pakistan." *Journal of National Politics* 53.

foreign powers has sometimes facilitated the nation's ability to derive advantages from their benevolence. It has often been subjected to mistreatment by them. For almost a century, Afghanistan functioned as a conventional buffer state, strategically positioned between the British and Czarist empires. The struggle in question was to territorial and demographic disputes between the Russian and British Empires, driven by the objective of attaining political hegemony, ensuring security, and exerting authority³. The Great Game, as it was often referred as, consisted of three distinct stages. The primary objective of the "Great Game" included the Russian empire's pursuit of territorial expansion into the regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia, hence generating apprehension within the British Empire in India. A further interpretation of the concept was the exercise of hegemonic control over a certain geographical area, with the ultimate objective being imperial rule⁴.

Only a limited number of countries in the globe, such as Afghanistan, exhibit the phenomenon where the geographical features significantly influence the historical events, political dynamics, and societal characteristics of its people⁵. The geostrategic significance of Afghanistan's mountain passes and topography stems from its location at the crossroads of South Asia and Central Asia, as well as its proximity to the Arabian Sea and Iran⁶. In contemporary times, Afghanistan has been embroiled in wars driven by political ideologies and the pursuit of commercial power. During the latter part of the 20th century, Afghanistan saw the profound impact of civil conflict, exacerbated by the invasion and subsequent occupation by the Soviet Union from 1979 to 1989. Afghanistan finds itself at a critical juncture in its uncertain trajectory,

³ Kurečić, S. 2022. "The Last American Soldier To Leave Afghanistan." *NPR*. August 30. Accessed April 17, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/30/1032683828/the-last-american-soldier-to-leave-afghanistan> .

⁴Javaid, U. 2021. "Analyzing the Dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: Past and Present." *South Asian Studies* 31(3).

⁵Antunes, Sandrina, and Isabel Camisão. 2018. "Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory." 5.

⁶Basit, Abdul. 2022. "New kid on the block." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis* 19 8–12.

heavily dependent on its neighbouring countries. The process of nation-building necessitates engaging in productive interactions with neighbouring countries. The potential for Afghanistan's growth is significantly impacted by the foreign policies of its neighbouring states, particularly in light of the withdrawal of US military forces from the country, the resurgence of great power dynamics in the region, and the present state of uncertainty and complexity surrounding Afghanistan's future⁷. Over the course of history, Afghanistan has acquired the moniker "Graveyard of Empires" because to the historical setbacks experienced by Alexander the Great and Great Britain, whose ambitions for territorial expansion in the Hindu Kush region were ultimately unsuccessful. The enumeration of losses may be extended to include the Soviet Union. Despite making significant attempts to maintain a presence in Afghanistan, it became necessary for the occupying force to retreat in defeat⁸.

Hence, it is unsurprising that the assumption of power by the Taliban in the Afghan government has had an impact on not just the indigenous population but also on those outside the local context. However, the global community continues to grapple with the profound political ramifications resulting from their swift military triumph. In contrast, neighbouring countries of Afghanistan are anticipating that the ensuing instability would contribute to the realization of their geopolitical objectives, either by means of proxies or by the establishment of a friendly government in Kabul. The individuals in question are engaging in a strategic approach of hedging their bets and implementing measures to protect their borders.

⁷Dodge, A. (2011). Islam and Constitutionalism in Afghanistan. *Journal of Persianate Studies*, [online] 5(2), pp.205–243. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1163/18747167-12341244> [Accessed 4 Jan. 2023].

⁸Dawn, 2016. Strategiskt riktigt att lämna Afghanistan. *Svenska Dagbladet*. [online] 31 Aug. Available at: <https://www.svd.se/strategiskt-riktigt-att-lamna-afghanistan> [Accessed 25 March. 2023].

During this period, Afghan political and military elites are adapting their political affiliations to regional and international actors in reaction to the evolving political landscape⁹.

As in the past, the majority of political experts believed that the Taliban were popular because the government was failing, people were angry about corruption and favoritism, and economic prospects were dismal. Additionally, political analysts have predicted that the government of Ashraf Ghani will fall prior to his departure on August 31, 2021¹⁰. Because images from across the country depicted Afghan troops quickly surrendering to the Taliban, many foreign experts questioned the capability of the United States and its allies to construct armies (Connah 2021). The experts also discussed how the disintegration of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) was not the result of technical issues but rather political ones. Because these soldiers believed they had nothing left to fight for, no amount of technological or organizational support could have kept them in the battle¹¹. The collapse of the Afghan state has thus been a four-decade-long cycle. In that time, five regimes have been overthrown and replaced. Each of these new administrations preserved the organized political institutions that define the modern Afghan state. Additionally, the government collapsed because the populace questioned its legitimacy¹².

⁹Nazish, Gul 2018. *Overwhelming majority backs US withdrawal from Afghanistan: poll*. [online] The Hill. Available at: <https://thehill.com/hilltv/what-americas-thinking/-us-withdrawal-from-afghanistan> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2023].

¹⁰Hanafi, S. 2022. "Framing Arab socio-political space: state governmentality, governance and non-institutional protestation." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 3(2), 148- 162.

¹¹Javaid, U. 2021. "Analyzing the Dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: Past and Present." *South Asian Studies* 31(3).

¹²Creighton, N, and K. Fisher. 2022. "20 years of US military aid to Afghanistan." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. April 10. Accessed Nat 15, 2023. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2021/20-years-us-military-aid-afghanistan>.

The primary goals of Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan are to improve relations between the two countries' citizens, to increase trade and transit links, to work together to bring peace to Afghanistan, to stay out of each other's internal affairs, and to prevent either country from using its territory against the other¹³. Pakistan's foreign policy places a great deal of emphasis on establishing strong ties of cooperation with Afghanistan, which are crucial for achieving the goal of a "peaceful region." According to Hussain and Latif (2016), Pakistan is still endeavoring to develop a cordial relationship with Afghanistan on the basis of a shared respect for authority and territorial integrity¹⁴.

1.2 War for World Order among Great Powers

The field of international politics undergoes constant alteration as a result of the strategic rivalry between the Great Powers. The establishment of coalitions, the presence of ineffective international institutions, the ongoing fight for independent nationhood, the ascent and decline of major powers, and the chaotic character of global politics have all contributed to shifts in world affairs. The nature of global order is defined by two key features of the international system: the structure, which refers to the distribution of capabilities among international players, and the process, which guides the interactions between international actors and societies in the world order. In the realist viewpoint, world order pertains to the arrangement of power and relationships within the realm of international politics. This structure is analyzed based on the allocation of power among states. Power in international relations may be derived from military, economic, or political sources.

¹³Antunes, Sandrina, and Isabel Camisão. 2018. "Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory." 5.

¹⁴ Hussain, S, and M.I Latif. 2016. "Issues and challenges in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations after 9/11." *South Asian Studies* 27, No. 1.

However, it is important to note that not all nations possess an equal amount of power in the anarchical international system. The allocation of power among nations in the international power structure leads to fluctuations in their relative strength, resulting in changes to the character of the global order. Following significant wars, the distribution of power changed as a consequence of the emergence and decline of strategic rivals, leading to the replacement of the pre-war power structure with a new global order after the conflict.

The Taliban emerged from the chaos of the civil war in Afghanistan and gained authority by offering security to tired individuals affected by the conflict. Conversely, their tyrannical measures resulted in heightened impoverishment, widespread violations of human rights, ethnic subjugation, targeted killings, and continuous influx of refugees into Pakistan, Iran, and other neighbouring states. Following the overthrow of the Taliban regime in late 2001 due to the US-led war on terrorism, the security situation significantly deteriorated. Since 2014, the quality of life has improved for some Afghans; yet, almost half of the population continues to live below the poverty threshold. A significant number of individuals have been internally displaced as a result of the violence, while around three million individuals have chosen to stay in Pakistan and Iran¹⁵.

Significantly, under this evolving global paradigm, prominent nations such as the United States, Russia, China, and India are extending their sphere of influence to remote regions, like Afghanistan, where all these big powers have significant interests. The transition from a unipolar global order to a multipolar one has sparked a competition for resource domination in Asia, often known as the New Great Game in the Central Asian area, according to several commentators. This innovative game has elevated the strategic importance of Afghanistan in the evolving global

¹⁵ Ashley Jackson, —The Cost of War, Afghan Experiences of Conflict, 1978 – 2009, 3.

hierarchy. The key participants in the ongoing geopolitical competition, commonly referred to as the "new great game," include the United States, Russia, China, Europe, the Central Asian countries neighbouring Afghanistan, the Gulf States, India, and Pakistan. These actors are vying for influence in Afghanistan with the aim of gaining access to its abundant natural resources, asserting control over vital transportation routes, exploiting the resources of Central Asia, and safeguarding other strategic interests. Afghanistan is considered a crucial player in the modern geopolitical competition, known as the "new great game," because of its strategic position along the path of the new silk route. Afghanistan's strategic relevance has been heightened in the calculations of major countries, both now and in the future. This is particularly significant due to the ongoing pursuit of oil and gas resources in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea¹⁶.

In September 2017, President Trump's approach to Afghanistan highlighted the significance of Afghanistan in global politics and redefined the American stance on the Afghan issue. He emphasized that the United States would persist in combating terrorism in Afghanistan and would deploy additional troops. Furthermore, he made a significant decision by instructing the initiation of talks between the United States and the Taliban. In addition, he explicitly identified India and Pakistan as the most worrisome nations for Afghanistan. Afghanistan, which proved to be a crucial geostrategic acquisition for the United States due to its connection to three strategically key geographical areas. The United States may use Afghanistan's land as a strategic base to maintain its influence in the South and Central Asian areas, with the aim of limiting or at the very least monitoring the impact of China and Russia in the area. In addition, New Delhi regards Afghanistan as a very significant nation for the advancement of its foreign and strategic policy goals.

¹⁶ Younkyoo Kim and Fabio Indeo, "The new great game in central Asia post 2014: The US —New Silk Road strategy and Sino-Russian rivalry." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46, no. 2 (2019): 275-286.

India has been making efforts to expand its ties with Kabul in order to further its economic and geopolitical interests, secure access to the Central Asian commercial markets, and primarily to monitor Pakistan. In order to achieve these goals, Kabul and New Delhi established their strategic alliance in 2011. Pakistan recognizes the significant strategic value of Afghanistan. China is contemplating Afghanistan as part of its "March West" plan, focusing on significant economic interests while minimizing military engagement. The Russian objective is to counterbalance the US presence in Afghanistan and prevent the infiltration of extremist and criminal organizations from Afghanistan into the Central Asian States¹⁷.

International institutions, organizations, and regimes, which are non-state players, have the potential to significantly impact the future of Afghanistan by aiding the governing class in Kabul in addressing internal challenges such as education and poverty. International organizations have the potential to contribute positively to Afghanistan's development by working together with the local government. Western liberal democracies, such as Canada and the European Union (EU), are actively involved in providing extensive social support to rescue, stabilize, and democratize Afghanistan. They are taking on prominent roles in local peace-making, peace-building, and stabilization efforts by employing a comprehensive approach. Afghanistan was undergoing a period of social, political, and economic transformation at that time. The nation has limited opportunities for progress in the political, social, and economic domains. At the social level, the effort of reconstructing the country is now underway, leading to advancements in women's education and healthcare facilities. Politically, Afghanistan achieved a

¹⁷ Shisheng Hu, Raffaello Pantucci and Ravi Sawhney, —A Roadmap for Sino-Indian Co-operation in Afghanistan, *Royal United Services Institute*, July 2014, 1-15. https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201407_op_sino-indian_co-operation.pdf

significant milestone in September 2014 by successfully transitioning authority from Hamid Karzai to Ashraf Ghani, marking the country's first peaceful transfer of democratic power.

The prevailing perception is that the popularity of the Afghan Taliban had diminished as a result of the elections and the peaceful transition of power in Kabul. Moreover, the increased involvement of women in the presidential election and political sphere is a positive advancement. On the economic front, Afghanistan has launched many new development projects and received foreign investment in its mining sector. China has invested in the Mes Aynak project, while India has invested in the Hajigak iron ores¹⁸.

1.3 Policies of Major Powers for emerging world order

The policies of dominant nations may significantly influence the formation of a nascent global structure, which will be a crucial determinant of their interactions with Afghanistan. Afghanistan may be seen as a strategic battleground in terms of both economics and geopolitics, where several nations are vying to secure their own interests. Additionally, international institutions and organizations are actively involved in performing their designated roles in the region. Afghanistan is a geopolitical area where the desires, sense of self, and reputation of both governmental and non-governmental entities will compel them to take action. Afghanistan's strategic importance as a buffer zone between Central and South Asia, with the involvement of regional and international players, is crucial in the evolving global geopolitical landscape. Afghanistan will also exemplify the structural and procedural aspects of the new global order. Hence, the internal stability of Afghanistan is intricately connected to the evolving global order,

¹⁸ Zhao Hong, —China's Afghan Policy: The Forming of The "March West" Strategy?, *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2013): 15.

which has the potential to provide significant long-term ramifications for Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban's military victory in Afghanistan has provided Pakistanis with additional incentive to implement sharia law.

The Pakistani government has substantial cause for concern due to the possibility that the Afghan Taliban will commence an attack across the Durand Line. Pakistan's policy of assisting terrorists is currently backfiring because it incites a significant number of its own citizens to religious fervor¹⁹. The same ideological link that has helped Pakistan control the Taliban in Afghanistan has also contributed to the radicalization of Islam in Pakistan. Now, in contrast to the past, Islamist and terrorist groups are more concerned with pressuring the Pakistani government to prove that the country is Islamic than with fighting India²⁰.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

In recent centuries, Afghanistan has emerged as a significant political territory. This location is a focal point of global competition and has become intertwined with the geopolitical maneuvering of the 19th century known as the Great Game, despite its lack of relevance to current international affairs. The geostrategic importance of Afghanistan continues to be crucial, despite its notable position in global affairs²¹. In the current century, Afghanistan's geopolitical significance has risen due to its function as a pathway for the transportation of Central Asian crude oil and natural gas to the worldwide market. Additionally, its strategic placement between Iran, India, China, and Russia has contributed to

¹⁹ Allard Wagemaker, —Rescuing Afghanistan? Small Western Liberal Democracies and Multinational Intervention, *Austrian Armed Forces*. 2019, 45-86.

²⁰ Hu Shisheng, Raffaello Pantucci, and Ravi Sawhney. "A Roadmap for Sino-Indian Cooperation in Afghanistan." *Contemporary International Relations* 24 (2019).

²¹ Qureshi, K. 2021. "Taliban and Pakistan." *Journal of National Politics* 53.

its increased importance. In order to safeguard political, military, and socioeconomic interests and engage in a novel strategic competition, it is imperative to uphold Afghanistan's position as the linchpin of Central Asia and adjacent areas.

Pakistan, an adjacent country, played a pivotal role in the process of achieving reconciliation in Afghanistan. The Pakistani authorities have made efforts to engage Taliban leaders in peace talks on several occasions. It was anticipated by Pakistan that the Taliban would provide a favorable and amicable reply. Furthermore, the Taliban have expressed the possibility of decreased compliance with directives from Pakistan in the event of their ascension to power in Afghanistan. After the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban government has posed unforeseen challenges for Pakistan. The present study aims to examine the reluctance of the Taliban to exhibit any inclination towards Pakistan owing to its unfavorable reputation in Afghanistan. During the period of US occupation in Afghanistan, Pakistan's presence has significantly diminished. Pakistan is no longer considered a primary nation in the United States' efforts to combat terrorism. Pakistan has undertaken noteworthy diplomatic endeavors to mitigate discord and inconsistencies in its association with the United States, commencing from August 2021. Pakistan encounters several challenges in Afghanistan concerning security dynamics, geopolitics, mistrust, and strategic interests.

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

This research work was conducted with following objectives:

1. To explore the hidden and unseen factors behind US withdrawal from Afghanistan.
2. To explore the regional implication of regime change in Afghanistan.
3. To analyze the political and security threats and challenges for Pakistan after regime change in Afghanistan.

1.6 Research Questions:

- Which factors lead towards US withdrawal from Afghanistan?
- What is the influence of regime change in Afghanistan on regional politics?
- What are security and political threats and challenges for Pakistan after regime change in Afghanistan?

1.7 Hypothesis:

Apart from that Pakistan as an adjacent country played a pivotal role in the process of achieving reconciliation in Afghanistan, regime change in Afghanistan created issues in Pakistan's political, economic, social and security aspects.

1.8 Justification of the Study:

The current geopolitical paradigm appears to be substantiated anew, affording each participant the chance to establish themselves as consequential global powers within this intricate "chessboard"²². All parties seek to exert control over the region abundant in hydrocarbons and natural gas. Hence, the

²² Majidi, T. 2021. *Ghani Says Peace Talks Will Start Within Weeks*. Political, Kabul: Tolo News.

manner in which the United States handles this pivotal two-way association could potentially ascertain its strategic flexibility in the times to come. Pakistan is keen on re-establishing cordial relations with Afghanistan. Pakistan has played a prominent role in providing support to the Taliban on a global scale. The policymakers of India are currently facing uncertainty regarding their response to the changing geopolitical landscape of Afghanistan, which is currently under the leadership of the Taliban. India's disengagement from Afghanistan can be attributed to a dearth of coherent policy. The primary concern of New Delhi regarding terrorism is rooted in the potential for Afghanistan's geography to serve as a hub for extremist activities, drug trafficking, terrorist financing, and related illicit pursuits.

The objective of the research is to discern the challenges faced by Pakistan subsequent to the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan and the impasse in Pak-Afghan diplomatic ties. The present study aims to investigate potential courses of action in the event of further deterioration in the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This analysis is intended to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the concerns at hand. The proposed contribution has the potential to expand the current body of knowledge on the conflict in Afghanistan and the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Subsequent studies could potentially focus on novel domains. Furthermore, it is imperative that this research delves into the fundamental factors that led to the shift in power in Afghanistan and the subsequent impact on the nation's core region, which has once again become a focal point in the geopolitical strategies of major global players. The aforementioned statement implies that a reassessment of the diplomatic and military preferences of the region will be required.

1.9 Research Gap:

The potential exploitation of Afghanistan's and Central Asia's natural resources by Russia and China has prompted the United States to prioritize the maintenance of its influence in the

region as a means of safeguarding its regional interests. The regime change in Afghanistan, on behalf of China involvement, Afghanistan prioritizes friendly policy towards Pakistan. While on the other hand Russia, Iran and India as a component of their enduring strategy. This research endeavor involves a comprehensive study of select pertinent books and papers in order to address the research inquiries. Upon thorough examination, it was found that the literature most closely connected to the subject matter failed to adequately answer the research inquiries or provide a viable resolution. The literature has discovered gaps and loopholes, therefore providing a foundation for further investigation into the chosen subject matter. During this research work the researcher will briefly fulfill all loopholes and gaps related to regime change in Afghanistan and its political implications on Pakistan.

CHAPTER: 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

Kurečić explained that the strategic location of Eurasia has a significant impact on the current global landscape. The global impact of its geo-economic and geostrategic importance is far-reaching. The United States, Russia, and China, recognized as significant global powers, are engaged in a competitive dynamic driven by the attraction and interconnectivity of the adjacent regions of Central Asia. The significant military and economic importance of Central Asia has piqued the interest of major nations. The region is primarily focused on the economic value of its significant oil and gas fields, as well as the Caspian Sea²³.

It has been asserted that dominant factions have often engaged in hostilities resembling warfare, despite the absence of a formal declaration of war, as a means of attaining vital economic and military goals. Mackinder's work in 1904, titled "The Geographical Pivot of History," featured an accompanying map known as Mackinder's Pivot Map, which was utilized to demonstrate the area's importance²⁴. As per Jim Nicole's account, a number of academics and governmental authorities expressed significant apprehension regarding the geopolitical standing of the United States in the Eurasian region²⁵. As per their statement, the concealed aims of the United States in Central Asia surpass the scope of counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan.

²³Azzezah, Kanji. 2021. "Framing Muslims in the "War on Terror": Representations of Ideological Violence by Muslim versus Non-Muslim Perpetrators." *Journal of Canadian National News Media, Religions* 9(9), 274;

²⁴Hamdy, N, and E.H. Gomaa. 2022. "Framing the Egyptian uprising in Arabic language newspapers and social media." *Journal of Communication* 62(2), 195-211.

²⁵Kurečić, S. 2022. "The Last American Soldier To Leave Afghanistan." *NPR*. August 30. Accessed April 17, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/30/1032683828/the-last-american-soldier-to-leave-afghanistan> .

The manifestation of this phenomenon was observed subsequent to the United States' discontinuation of collaborative efforts with its counterparts, opting instead to engage in direct communication with governments in the central Asian region²⁶.

Throughout recorded history, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been characterized by acrimony, owing to a range of factors. The belief that close proximity is undesirable has been a longstanding one for them. In the past, there existed political differences between them with regards to their common border, leading to a perception of each other as opponents. Pakistan, with a pressing desire for peace and security in Afghanistan, perceived a chance to actualize a longstanding aspiration for peace²⁷. There has been a repatriation of Afghan refugees to their country of origin. The emergence of a new group called the Tehreek-i-Islami-Taliban in and around Kandahar occurred in September of 1994. In certain regions, Afghanistan emerged as a novel movement to be pursued. The internal conflicts and unethical actions of the Afghan Mujahedeen leadership were met with disapproval by the populace²⁸.

The emergence of the Taliban as a complex and formidable entity was swift, marked by rapid acceleration, and necessitated significant attention. Pakistan expressed concerns that the ongoing civil conflict in Afghanistan may potentially spill over into its borders²⁹. On November 5, 1994, the security forces of Kandahar were defeated by the Taliban despite the efforts of Chaman and Kandahar. Upon the Taliban's takeover of Kandahar, various high-ranking government officials and local factions aligned themselves with the group. Apart from the

²⁶Ghani, S. 2022. "Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory." *J.Int.Relations* 35.

²⁷Grare, F. 2022. "The evolution of sectarian conflicts in Pakistan and ever changing face of Islamic violence." *South Asia* 30 (1), 127 – 144

²⁸Nicole, P. 2022. "Biden deserves blame for the debacle in Afghanistan." *CNN*. March 23. Accessed April 30, 2023. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/12/opinions/afghanistan-president-biden-debacle-bergen/index.html> .

²⁹Cohen, Stephen, and Pervaiz,Iqbal. Cheema. 2021. *Four crises and a peace process: American engagement in South Asia*. Washington, D.C., USA: Brookings Institution Press.

commercial amenities, the Pakistani administration extended nearly \$6 million in direct aid to the Taliban in 1998³⁰.

It is a widely held belief among Afghans that the majority of nations were governed by New Delhi or Kabul, rather than Islamabad. The individual holds the belief that the enduring proximity of Afghanistan and India over time has contributed to the development of their amicable relations. According to Basit (2022), Pakistan's suspicions have been heightened due to the claims made by the Afghans, leading them to believe that India and Afghanistan are seeking to cause harm to Pakistan³¹.

Pakistan and Afghanistan exhibit a significant degree of distrust and hostility towards each other. Since 1947, there has been a state of hostility between the two nations, resulting in mutual interference in each other's affairs, thereby impeding the development of trust between them. The undefined Durand Line border and Afghan endorsement of the "Pushtunistan" matter have been historical factors that have resulted in a stalemate, influencing the foreign policies of both nations (Basuchoudhary and Shughart 2022). The fluctuating discourse surrounding the Pushtunistan movement and the Durand Line claims has had an impact on Pakistan's perspective of Afghanistan.

The Afghan government officials raised both matters with the aim of persuading Pakistan to modify its stance and confer them with greater jurisdiction. Hence, Pakistan made efforts to disrupt the region in order to impede the Pushtunistan movement and address the inefficacy of the Durand line. The matter of delineating borders has been a persistent challenge for

³⁰Haqani, H. 2021. *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*. Lahore: Vanguard Books.

³¹Gaines, M.Jane. 2021. "The production of outrage: The Iraq War and the radical documentary tradition, framework." *The Journal of Cinema and Media* 48 No. 2, 36-7.

Afghanistan, as noted by Fair and Jones (2021). This phenomenon can be attributed to the high level of concern exhibited by both the governing authorities and the general public regarding the matter at hand³². Hence, Afghanistan's assertion regarding the legal ownership of the land was significantly overstated. Despite the fact that Kabul's steadfast endorsement of the matter resulted in a weakening of the city, it also led to a heightened level of economic and political reliance on the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's invasion was prompted by this event in 1979³³.

Pakistan has played a crucial role in supporting the Afghan peace process, which includes organizing many rounds of talks between the United States and the Taliban. In November 2021, after the withdrawal of US and NATO troops, Pakistan extended an invitation to the temporary Foreign Minister of the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan. Pakistan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs' recent visit to Afghanistan demonstrates Islamabad's dedication to fostering a stable and harmonious relationship with its neighboring country (Inglehart 2021). Furthermore, Pakistan has endeavored to enhance cultural and educational relations between the two nations. This include the establishment of medical and educational facilities, as well as the implementation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Educational Exchange Programme, which facilitates the enrollment of students from both nations in each other's institutions (Kapur 2022).

Pakistan has actively sought to enhance its security cooperation with Afghanistan, shown by the visit of a group headed by General Faiz Hameed Gul to Kabul in September 2021. The purpose of these security conversations was to enhance mutual comprehension and trust between the two nations, as well as bolster their collaborative efforts in countering terrorism. Regrettably, the current intensification at the Chaman border signifies the most strained period in Afghan-

³²Azzezah, Kanji. 2021. "Framing Muslims in the "War on Terror": Representations of Ideological Violence by Muslim versus Non-Muslim Perpetrators." *Journal of Canadian National News Media, Religions* 9(9), 274;.

³³Basit, Abdul. 2022. "New kid on the block." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis* 19 8–12.

Pakistan relations after the exit of the United States in 2021. In general, Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan has mostly aimed at fostering peace and stability in the area. Pakistan has endeavored to establish connections between the two nations and cultivate a productive relationship that would be advantageous for both parties (Keohane and Nye 2021).

Pakistani officials are concerned about the security situation in Afghanistan, where the Taliban has established a government after the departure of US and other foreign soldiers in 2021. Islamabad is especially worried about the potential infiltration of terrorists from a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban, who may carry out deadly attacks inside the country. Over the course of the last twenty years, Pakistan has seen a significant loss of life due to acts of violence perpetrated by individuals associated with the Islamic faith. According to a high-ranking Pakistani official, the upcoming two to three months are of utmost importance. The official expressed concern about a rise in militant assaults along the Afghan-Pakistani border. This apprehension arises from the Taliban's attempt to exploit the void created by the disintegration of Afghan forces and the collapse of the Western-supported government (Esaiasson and Gilljam 2022).

Afghanistan and Pakistan have had an extremely difficult relationship. When the UN was established in 1947, only Afghanistan refused to recognize Pakistan as a sovereign state and voted against the nation's admission. Afghans still do not recognize the Durand Line as an international border; it dates back to the colonial era. Due to the porous nature of the border, both sides accuse one another of inciting terrorist organizations to target innocent people on the opposite side. In an effort to reduce the frequency of terrorist attacks, Pakistan's border security has lately been enhanced. Afghans assert that Pakistan has close ties to the Taliban and wonder

why the government hasn't applied pressure to Pakistan based on these connections. Pakistan disputes its claim to such power (Manzoor, 2021).

Approximately 20 years after being ousted by US forces, the Taliban have restored control of Afghanistan fears that they would violate human rights, ignore fundamental services, and enforce canons. In particular, Kabul, the Afghan capital, had fallen under the Taliban's hands. In August 2021, the capital. In response to such a 2020 peace accord with the Taliban, the US withdrew its last soldiers from Afghanistan as the Taliban started their quick attack. Observers believe the Taliban would keep tight control despite their promises to defend the rights of women and minority groups and to pardon anybody who helped US operations. The company is currently facing significant difficulties in providing Afghans with safety, health care, and profitability in the workplace (Maizland, 2021).

Following the establishment of an interim government in Afghanistan, the Taliban have made an effort to improve ties with neighbors' including China, Pakistan, and Russia. Both foreign firms and governments have been encouraged to continue doing business in Afghanistan thanks to their efforts. However, neither the United States nor any other Western nation has officially acknowledged the Taliban as the country's administration or made clear how they plan to cooperate with them(Lewis 2021).

As stated by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, "[the Taliban's cabinet] will be judged by its actions." China's assistance to Afghanistan, according to Policymakers, will only be given if the Taliban stop their terrorism-related actions in the area. Pakistan has strong ties with the Taliban but refuses to recognize their rule despite this(Malkasian 2021). The Taliban's long-standing support from Pakistan does not mean that country is indifferent with Kabul's conquest.

Pakistanis have endured a lot of hardship over the years as a result of operating over the Afghan border are Islamist terrorist groups. Pakistan has a stake in seeing the new Kabul government take action against Al Qaeda and the regional Islamic State offshoot, ISIS-K. Pakistan has a stake in the Taliban taking strong action to stop Afghanistan from becoming an ungoverned area. The refugee crisis is Pakistan's other main concern. Due to its shattered economy, the country cannot afford to welcome any more Afghan refugees, of which there are currently almost three million as a result of previous battles(Qureshi 2021).

Agarwal conducted a comprehensive analysis of the collaboration between Pakistan and the United States during the Reagan Administration. The book explores the reasons for Pakistan's engagement in the war in an Asian country, as well as the help provided by the US to counter Soviet recklessness. Pakistan played a pivotal role in providing assistance to the Afghan Freedom Fighters, serving as the primary conduit for aid. Furthermore, Pakistan allowed the use of its military facilities to launch operations against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This research elucidates the outcomes of the conflict on Asian Nation and its intricate connection to its domestic politics. Moreover, it emphasizes the nation's position as a crucial participant in global alliances, opposing coercion. It also contends that General Pervez Musharraf guided Pakistan towards a progressive, rational, and democratic society.

Utley has examined the significant impacts of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on major powers and their foreign policies, as well as their perspectives over the course of the next decade. The study also explores the endeavors of states and international organizations to cooperate in addressing the various levels and types of international security threats posed by terrorism. The book analyses the extent of global responses to the 9/11 incident. To assess its durability over time, analyze the risks it presents, and weigh their recommendations for global security in

conjunction with international collaborative efforts to address challenges. The book explores the perspectives of the world's main countries and international organizations towards international terrorism and its perpetrators. It examines their interpretations and reactions, and how they have evolved over the course of the 10-year battle³⁴. (Utley, 2016)

Javaid. A. has discussed the recurring uncertainty between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which has been emphasized in prominent works by many scholars. This is despite the fact that both nations share social, cultural, and religious heritage, as well as geographical proximity. The presence of political dynasties in Afghanistan has perpetuated a deep-seated animosity towards the subcontinent, resulting in foreign policy of both nations being heavily influenced by external powers. The situation for the two states is also complicated by the involvement of both superpowers and regional forces. Pakistan's resolute commitment to eradicating religious extremist organizations, along with its ongoing efforts in the rebuilding of Afghanistan, instills a promising feeling of optimism not just among regional stakeholders but also on a global scale. This article examines the chronological progression of relations between the two countries, from the colonial period to the post-9/11 era. It also analyses the current situation in the area, considering the many opportunities for mutual advancement and collaboration between the two nations³⁵.

Krause. J discussed the occurrence of a significant strategic shift in the region including Pakistan and Afghanistan. This book explores the concept of strategic transformation, allowing readers to envision potential future situations and analyze different policies. The fundamental aspect of the Western strategic strategy to handling regional conflicts worldwide is evaluated with particular emphasis on the Pak-Afghanistan area. The book discusses the Western strategic

³⁴Fair, Christine, and Seth. Jones. 2021. "Pakistan's War Within." *Survival* Vol. 51, No. 6,.

³⁵Majidi, T. 2021. *Ghani Says Peace Talks Will Start Within Weeks*. Political, Kabul: Tolo News.

concerns on the management of political events in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are considered to be the world's most unstable area. Following the departure of ISAF by 2014, the attention shifts towards the overall changes in the political landscape. It independently analyses the cases of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Furthermore, it examines endeavors to segregate varied outcomes in a broader domain³⁶.

Price discussed the initiatives centered on the Pak-Afghan border that have caused annoyance to Pakistan. Pakistan has accused India of being responsible for these covert operations. India is making significant investments in Afghanistan, both financially and socially. The influence of Indian Deobandi literature is impacting the religious educational institutions in Afghanistan. Pakistan perceives the acquisition of the Jalalabad and Chahbahar road as a strategic move aimed at eliminating its influence over Afghanistan as a transit route. This development is of concern to Pakistan because to India's significant connections with Afghanistan. The Indian investment in Afghanistan raises concerns and apprehensions for Pakistan.

Rashid. A has provided a highly anticipated update on the likely results and risks facing the United States after the death of Bin Laden and as Operation Continuing Freedom loses momentum. These updates were given by world-renowned specialists on the socio-political circumstances in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Rashid, a vibrant and independent journalist with 30 years of dedication to his profession, provides critical inquiries and knowledgeable insights into the U.S ties with the problematic area and its future³⁷.

³⁶Agarwal, A. (2015). The United States and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971: A Critical Inquiry. *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, 28(2), 21-42.

³⁷Utley. (2016). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2005: A concise History*. Oxford Press.

Taj F. has said that since the 9/11 attacks, the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan have gained significant attention. This terrain has significant importance for several stakeholders. It serves as a catalyst for military operations in Afghanistan, a crucial territory for Pakistan, a base for the hostile partner Al-Qaeda, and a site of exceptional cultural heritage. The current state of affairs in FATA has significant implications for both global and domestic unity. It is now more crucial than ever to comprehend the local populace and their tangible circumstances. The book unveils the heroic armed and non-violent resistance of the indigenous population in FATA against the Taliban and Al-Qaida. This text documents the true disadvantages of the high-profile studies on FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) conducted by several regional professionals who have faced criticism from the tribesmen. The media and other world elites have disregarded the tribals' opposition to the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Regrettably, their efforts have not received the necessary level of exposure to the global audience. It is imperative that the global community becomes aware of the tribe's defiance. It is crucial for individuals to be aware of this information in order to choose allies and enemies in the global battle against terrorism. This book is essential for anybody interested in understanding the activities of the tribes and gaining insight into the current situation in the FATA, which has been labelled as the world's most dangerous location by the United States. It is a must-read for anyone seeking to stay informed³⁸.

Shahid Javed Burki analyzed that President Obama made a campaign pledge to eliminate Osama bin Laden. However, an Al-Qaida strategist claims that bin Laden has already been deceased for a significant period of time. This book provides an introduction to the new leaders

³⁸Javid, U. (2016). War on Terror Partnership: Problems and Prospects for Pakistan. *Journal of Political Studies*, vol.20(1), 51-66

of Al-Qaida who are responsible for the recent assaults. Syed Saleem Shahzad dedicated his life to exposing the protocols and inner workings of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban as an investigative journalist. He has engaged with high-ranking leaders in both groups, as well as inside the ISI, Pakistan's intelligence agency. Javed Burki's efforts to reveal the challenges presented by extremism to Pakistan's stability were commended by Hillary Clinton, the United States Secretary of State. This book elucidates broader aspects of both organizations and offers a critical analysis of significant terrorist incidents, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Shahzad was abducted and killed in Pakistan in May 2011, shortly after writing an essay suggesting that members of the Pakistani navy had conspired with Al-Qaeda in an attack on a naval air station. This book serves as a testament to his courageous journalism and meticulous analytical approach. This will provide global pursuers with a valuable introduction to a new stage of the continuous battle against terrorism, which poses a danger to lives in several countries³⁹.

Smith, A. I., said that Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan has consistently been tumultuous and alienated since Pakistan achieved independence in 1947. Afghanistan was the only country to dissent from its involvement in the United Nations. Kabul argued that the Pakhtun and Baluch people residing in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) next to Afghanistan were denied the right to self-determination, and these territories were forcibly incorporated into Pakistan. This led to the emergence of the Pakhtunistan problem. However, Afghanistan's support for Pakhtunistan was lukewarm due to its lack of interest in incorporating its own Pashtun population into a unified new province including both Afghan and

³⁹Krause, J. (2014). *Afghanistan, Pakistan and Strategic Change: Adjusting Western regional policy*. London: Routledge.

Pakistani Pashtun territories. Kabul argued that the Durand Line boundary was established under duress at the height of the British Empire, presenting an additional concern⁴⁰.

Armitage, Berger & Markey outlined a compelling rationale for taking action in response to the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Currently, however, the United States has embarked on a distinct and somewhat more ambitious endeavor in Afghanistan that impacts, and is impacted by, the intricate political dynamics of Pakistan and its border areas. The justification for such an endeavor is uncertain given the premiums in the United States. Furthermore, the likelihood of the endeavor's success remains uncertain. The objective of this task force was to identify and understand the United States' interests and objectives in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They examined the current policy, assessed the effectiveness of different initiatives, and put forward recommendations for future strategic approaches.

The task group expresses a cautious endorsement of President Obama's approach to addressing the area, which involves providing assistance to Pakistan, increasing the number of military soldiers in Afghanistan to over one hundred thousand, and committing to gradually reducing those numbers starting in July 2011. Nevertheless, the task force also highlights many possible concerns with the approach, including Pakistan's reluctance to address the presence and backing of hazardous terrorist organizations, fragile governmental institutions, contentious ties with India, and possession of nuclear weapons. The task team proposes easing trade restrictions on Pakistani textile exports, aiding in the swift recovery from the floods, continuing discussions on nuclear matters, and enhancing the military's capacity to combat terrorists in the battle zone. In Afghanistan, the task force acknowledges that the Obama administration needs to devise strategies to tackle the government's fragility, corruption, and political fragmentation. They must

⁴⁰Rashid, A. (2019). *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan*. Istanbul: Penguin.

also establish the guidelines for negotiations with the Taliban, enhance both the quantity and quality of Afghan security forces, and promote economic development in Afghanistan while reducing drug production⁴¹.

Colebatch has proposed a definitive approach for the United States and its allies to follow in Afghanistan. Military efforts alone are insufficient to address the political landscape in Afghanistan. Solely relying on it is insufficient to eliminate global jihadism. There is a growing consensus that Pakistan serves as a sanctuary for important al-Qaida leaders. Additionally, it is facing attacks by insurgents who identify themselves as Taliban and are deeply involved in this struggle. This book examines crucial aspects of the predicament that the United States confronts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. This collection represents a diverse range of political perspectives and strategic recommendations. There is a prevailing lack of faith about the ease of the future course of action; a consistent need exists for logical reasoning and well-informed choices⁴².

Haqqani has analyzed that all of Pakistan's strategic attempts in post-9/11 Afghanistan were rendered ineffective, as the growing influence of India further exacerbated the situation. When the United States launched an operation on Afghanistan and successfully overthrew the Taliban Regime, it had a significant impact on the political and security situation in Pakistan, resulting in territorial changes. When the United States eliminated the Northern partnership government, which was a competitor of the pro-Pakistan Taliban regime, it altered the situation for Pakistan. This resulted in the emergence of a pro-India regime in the area, along with the creation of other pro-India groups.

⁴¹ Taj, F. (2020). *Taliban and Anti-Taliban*. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

⁴²Shahid Javed Burki, I. A. (2019). *Pakistan at Seventy: A handbook on developments in economics, politics and society* (illustrated ed.). Islamabad: Taylor & Francis.

As the prospects of a pro-Pakistan administration in Afghanistan diminished, Pakistan found itself engaged in a two-front conflict. The protracted effort of Pakistan culminated in disillusionment⁴³.

Tariq conducted an analysis. Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, carried out by terrorists trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Pakistan is now undergoing a series of upheavals. The authority that was previously aligned with the Taliban and al-Qaeda promptly relinquished their support, and the United States was reluctantly allowed to combat these tyrants from Pakistani territory. The ISI underwent a makeover and subsequently had its charter on Afghanistan legally reassessed. Similarly, the state was obligated to take action against the Jihadi organizations that it had supported for more than twenty years. Regarding the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan was publicly pressured by the international community to moderate its stance. Amidst these advancements, doing an independent evaluation of Pakistan's area seems beneficial. This book presents the perspective of observers in New Delhi about these advances. The volume explores several questions, such as the extent to which the strategy changes have affected the ground situation or if they have merely resulted in superficial changes. It also examines the role of the well-known ISI, the future of Jihadi organizations, and the Indo-Pak relations. Additionally, it delves into the future prospects of Pakistan as a viable nation-state⁴⁴.

Usman, T., and Khan P. provide a comprehensive and concise analysis of the events that have occurred in Afghanistan over the last two decades in their inquiry. Goodson begins by examining the many factors that contributed to the inability to establish a stable state, including

⁴³Smith, M. (2017). Terrorism before and after 9/11 – a more dangerous world? 4(4).

⁴⁴Armitage, R. L., Berger, S. R., & merkey, D. S. (2020). *U.S. Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan*. Council of Foreign Relations. New York: Council of Foreign Relations.

ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and religious divisions, as well as the destructive impact of the conflict. He discusses the catastrophic impact on the country, where around 2 million individuals perished and roughly 6 million people were forced to migrate to Pakistan, resulting in a complete economic collapse⁴⁵.

Adaju's work explores the role and function of a major power, namely America, in India. The author of this book provides extensive information that is widely acclaimed by 90% of Indians regarding Vajpayee's decision to withdraw from nuclear testing as the President of India. This decision prompted an immediate response from President Clinton of the United States, who expressed alarm and disapproval of India's nuclear testing. The President of the united governments withdrew from the agreements with India, so violating the comprehensive Test Ban pact, which was ratified by 149 governments. Additionally, 185 states joined the non-proliferation pact in 1970. Despite the fact that neither Pakistan nor India has agreed to become a member of these accords. While the whole of the book does not directly address the five-year function of great power in India, several chapters have been used to supplement my study. This book will be useful and beneficial for completing my research job⁴⁶.

Ahmad and his colleagues assert that this book is really beneficial and indispensable for the completion of my research task. In this book, the author elucidates the pivotal role played by the positions and relationships of the major powers in East Asia throughout history, which continue to be vital in the present. What sets the present time apart from the Cold War period is the rising prominence of new emerging powers, which are playing a greater role in economic, regional, and political affairs. While the 3rd and 4th chapters of this book are significant for the

⁴⁵H.K.Colebatch. (2018). *Handbook on Policy, Process and Governing*. Australia: Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁴⁶Haqayni, H. (2019). Pakistan's Terrorism Dilemma. *Asias Studies*, 351-361.

research work that will be utilized in this thesis, it does not cover all the required aspects of the suggested subject⁴⁷.

In their book, Ahmad and Naseem Begum state that there are certain regions in South Asia where India shares borders with six other states, namely Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Maldives. These countries together form the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Afghanistan has recently shown interest in joining the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). India is widely seen as the dominant authority in South Asia due to several factors such as its diverse range of resources, population size, cultural influence, and historical significance. However, the leadership of India in the area is not obviously traditional. While the 3rd and 4th chapters of this book are significant for the research work that will be utilized in this thesis, it does not completely cover all the needed components of the suggested subject. However, this book is still considered essential⁴⁸.

Ahmad examines the challenge faced by India in effectively balancing the development of industrial methods with conflicting factors. China aims to isolate India by strengthening its strong ties with neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan, and by seeking support from Russia. China also intends to align with Western powers and increase cooperation with Japan and the USA. Hence, this guide would be advantageous and informative for comprehending the intricacies of this study subject⁴⁹.

Akins asserts that throughout Southeast Asia, the medium and small-sized governments have seen significant shifts in their geopolitical landscape due to the culmination of China's rise

⁴⁷Tariq, M., Khan, A., & Khan, B. (2019). Pakistan's Security Dilemma with Afghanistan and India. *Global Political Review, IV(IV)*, 70-77.

⁴⁸Usman, T., & Khan, M. M. (2017). Pak-Afghan Relations (2001-2017):A Prisoner's Dilemma Analysis. *Strategic Studies, 22(1)*, 1-17.

⁴⁹Adaki, O. (2020, June 17). Yemeni tribal leader joins AQAP. *Long War Journal*.

and the end of the Cold War. There has been a vigorous debate over the last decade on whether these states will align themselves alongside or align themselves with China, and how their interactions with the other major power in the region would change. This book lacks sufficient material, however its first and second chapters provide data that is useful for doing a comparative examination of the constitution.

Asal said that the dispute between the contrasting approaches of individual betting and collective betting is accurately reflected in the Southeast Asian nations' reluctance to align themselves with either China or the United States. However, this study delves further into the outcomes of experiential learning, which elucidates the underlying theoretical concepts behind this avoidance strategy. It has been found that instead of just adopting planned or time-buying strategies, the Southeast Asian governments have actively attempted to influence the establishment of a new regional order. Hence, this guide would be advantageous and informative for comprehending the intricacies of this study issue⁵⁰.

Ashraf clarified that the author has limited access to journalists who possess knowledge regarding Afghanistan. She was present throughout the Russian dissolution in the 1990s. She saw the first proliferation of imported extremist Islam, which caused significant local hardships. Following the events of 9/11, the Taliban were forced to retreat from the northern and southern regions of Afghanistan by the North Alliance, with assistance from U.S Special Forces. This intensified the conflict, causing the Taliban's adversaries to seek refuge in Pakistan, where she promptly arrived. She is aware of the devastating impact that the conflict has had on Afghanistan and the potential harm it may have to Pakistan, including its deceitful intelligence services and leadership. This book provides a thorough analysis of a war initiated by America against an

⁵⁰Ahmad, S., Bakht, M., & Hassan, S. (2019). Pakistan's Internal Security Dilemma: Strategic Dimension. *Global Social Sciences Review, I(II)*, 1-17.

enemy it lacked understanding of and failed to effectively engage. It also includes compelling personal narratives of conflicts and betrayals, as well as intimate portrayals of ordinary Afghan individuals who were unwillingly trapped in the war for over ten years⁵¹.

Babar elucidated that the United States had been carrying out covert activities of a limited scope in Afghanistan prior to the occurrence of 9/11. Several of these operations were conducted in collaboration with Pakistan's Intelligence Agency (I.S.I), whereas the majority were carried out without their agreement and in opposition to their interests. While the US was attempting to suppress and eliminate extremism within its borders, a covert and highly classified division of the Pakistani intelligence agency, known as "Directorate S," was clandestinely training, equipping, and seeking to legitimize the Taliban. This was done with the aim of bolstering and expanding Pakistan's influence in the country. The United States and Pakistan were on a collision course when the U.S. sent forces in Afghanistan, along with fifty-nine other nations, to eliminate the Taliban and Al-Qaida after the events of 9/11. Today, it is widely acknowledged that the war in Afghanistan suffered significant setbacks as a result of the Pentagon's excessive pride, resource depletion, corruption, and the provocation produced throughout the Muslim world by the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Coll confirms it clearly that more than anything because United States failed to halt the intents and reasons of "Directorate S" created by I.S.I, the war in Afghanistan was doomed. The operation spanned over a decade throughout the administrations of both Bush and Obama, involving several intelligence agencies from various nations, major political and military personalities, a range of contradictory methods and plans, and a tumultuous series of events of significant historical significance. It included not just a visible confrontation with

⁵¹Ahmed, S. N., & Begum, S. (2021). Historical Perspective of Political and Constitutional Development in Pakistan. *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 20(2), 77-89.

weapons, but also a concealed conflict involving secrets, ideas, and covert aggression. Undoubtedly, it was a profound decline of an American Tragedy⁵².

Cerria is an exceptionally authentic guide, which will greatly contribute to the study at hand. The study provides a high calibre of data. Politically, India's stance on nuclear authority sets it apart from its neighbor Pakistan. Unlike Pakistan, India has not been a proponent of nuclear proliferation due to its established democratic system and its internal struggle against terrorism. This has earned India recognition and support from both the United States and European countries. However, this book is inadequate and it also fell short in accurately conveying the core concept of the suggested subject. This study provides partially advantageous information, rather than a comprehensive presentation. While this book may not be entirely relevant, several sections provide valuable insights for the thesis⁵³.

Beydoun suggests that the American government should provide funds to Pakistan as a result of the détente between the Soviet Union and the United States in the 1960s. From a rare perspective, it is evident that Pakistan and the relationship with the US were consistently reliable, with a shared objective of combating communism. It observes the outcomes of the détente, the conflicts between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, and the increasing importance of India under the presidency of American President Kennedy. This book is very essential as it provides comprehensive information on the recommended study project. While the 3rd and 8th chapters of this book are significant for the research work that will be employed in this thesis, it does not

⁵²Ahsan. (2019). Why did the United States Invade Iraq in 2003. *Security Studies*, 10(3), 1-36.

⁵³Akins, J. (2019). *The Terrorism Trap: The Hidden Impact of America ap: The Hidden Impact of America's War on Terror*. Tennessee: University of Tennessee.

entirely cover all the needed components of the suggested subject. However, this book is still considered essential⁵⁴.

Cheema asserts that both the Soviet Union and India have the potential to oppose some extra factors in the region and, from India's perspective, contribute to the maintenance of tranquilly, security, peace, and balance in the area. This book is really beneficial and indispensable for my study endeavors. Additionally, this guide is quite authentic and will much aid in the context of this research. This authentic guide will be really helpful in this study endeavor⁵⁵.

Colebatch and Hoppe argue that the perceived threat posed by the American and Pakistan military alliance, as well as the China-Pakistan-America dynamic, was significantly reduced due to the Indo-Soviet relationship. From India's perspective, this alliance was not only a result of violent circumstances, but rather a strategic measure to deter future acts of violence. However, both China and Pakistan were naturally skeptical and unhappy about it. This paper lacks sufficient information but offers data that is beneficial for this thesis⁵⁶.

Estrada & Khan argue that while America appears skeptical of this association, India views it as a means of safeguarding itself from the unpredictable and ever-changing security perspectives of these powers. It allows India to protect itself from the repercussions of their actions in pursuit of their own strategic interests. For the Soviets, these alliances with the second most important Asian country and the largest non-aligned country served to avoid fragmentation

⁵⁴Asal, V. K. (2018). Carrots, Sticks, and Insurgent Targeting of Civilians. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 0(0), 1-26.

⁵⁵Ashraf, S. (2018). *Pakistan's Afghan Dilemma: Seeking that Elusive Sense of Security*. Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies.

⁵⁶Babar, S. F. (2017). Terrorism in Pakistan and Its Impact on Foreign Investment. *Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 1(1), 61-83.

in Asia, enhance security, and attract more members to the non-aligned group worldwide. The offer information partly contributes to the helpfulness of the data in this investigation⁵⁷.

In his work, Babar asserts that India was mostly seen as a destitute and emerging nation with little prominence in the global economic sphere, particularly in the political arena. India has emerged as a promising and dynamic promise in the recent decade. The author of this book examines how India's emerging economic prominence in Asia and globally is reshaping its identity and consciousness, ultimately leading to a new place in the world. The author of this book also examines the motivations and advantages or interests that guide India's foreign policy, as well as the plans and strategies it has adopted that have the potential to shape the global order. India, a prominent country in South Asia, has been striving to enhance its global standing by securing recognition from both the European Union and the United Nations via their respective strategic partnerships with India. This book is very essential as it provides comprehensive information on the recommended study project. While the book is important, it does not completely address all the necessary aspects of the suggested subject. However, the second and fourth chapters are useful for the research work that will be used in this thesis⁵⁸.

Malik discusses the role and function of a major global power, namely the United States, in India. The author of this book provides extensive information that is widely acclaimed by 90% of Indians regarding Vajpayee's decision to withdraw from nuclear activities as the President of India. This prompted an immediate response from President Clinton of the United States, who expressed alarm and disapproval of India's nuclear testing. The President of the united governments withdrew from the agreements with India, so violating the comprehensive Test Ban

⁵⁷Cerria, P. C. (2021). *The Prolonged Religious Wave of Terrorism*. Washington: Georgetown University.

⁵⁸Beydoun, K. (2018). *American Islam phobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

pact, which was ratified by 149 governments. Additionally, 185 states joined the non-proliferation pact in 1970. Despite the fact that neither Pakistan nor India has agreed to become a member of these accords. While the whole book does not directly address the five-year function of great power in India, I have used several chapters from this book to supplement my study. This book will be useful and beneficial for the completion of my research assignment⁵⁹.

In this book, Mubashra elucidates the pivotal roles, positions, and relationships that have consistently shaped the discourse in East Asia throughout history. These factors continue to hold significant relevance today and are poised to become even more crucial in the future, as suggested by current trends. What is different today compared to the Cold War period is that economic, regional, and political interactions are increasingly conducted by emerging countries, who are becoming more influential. While the 3rd and 4th chapters of this book are significant for the research work that will be utilized in this thesis, it does not cover all the required aspects of the suggested subject. However, it is still necessary to include this book in the study⁶⁰.

In this work, Smith examines the challenge faced by India's middle class in developing effective methods of production while dealing with conflicting factors. China aims to isolate India by strengthening its strong alliances with neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan, and by seeking support from Russia. China also intends to align itself with Western powers and increase cooperation with Japan and the USA. Hence, this guide would be advantageous and informative for comprehending the intricacies of this study subject⁶¹.

⁵⁹Cheema, P. I. (2016). *The Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistans security Dilemma*. California: The Regents of the University of California.

⁶⁰Colebatch, M., & Hoppe, R. (2018). *Handbook on Policy, Process and Governing*. Australia: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

⁶¹Estrada, M. A., & Khan, A. (2020). *The Evolution and Perspectives of the Terrorism Academic Research*. Kohat: Project: The past, Present, and Future of the Economic Analysis

Bruce examines how ASEAN will address the escalating rivalry of major powers inside its own sub-region, focusing on the issue of geopolitical stability. Hence, this book would be advantageous and valuable in comprehending the intricacies of this study subject. This research study examines ASEAN's position in the context of three significant bilateral relationships between key powers in Asia, namely the United States and China, Japan and China, and India and China. The authors argue that ASEAN's influence, albeit limited in terms of biological reach and its impact on real security challenges, is significant due to Asian geopolitics. This book is very essential as it provides comprehensive information on the recommended study project. While the book is important, it does not completely address all the necessary aspects of the suggested subject. However, the second and fourth chapters are useful for the research work that will be used in this thesis⁶².

Cerria serves as an authentic and very advantageous guide for this inquiry. Following discussions among the five nuclear powers, including all permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, regarding measures to punish India and prevent Pakistan from pursuing its own nuclear programme, the top officials of Pakistan were successfully advancing with their own nuclear strategies. This book will serve as an invaluable and essential resource for the organization of my research project. This book lacks sufficient material, however its second and fifth chapters provide data that is useful for doing a comparative examination of the constitution⁶³.

Cheema P. I. plays a vital role in this study, providing valuable assistance. East Asia is a significant component of the global system and is not immune to global events. However, it must

⁶²Babar, S. F. (2017). Terrorism in Pakistan and Its Impact on Foreign Investment. *Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 1(1), 61-83.

⁶³Malik, A. R. (2021). The Salala incident: implications for the Pakistan-United States ties. *Journal Of Strategic Studies*, 45-60.

be noted that local multilateralism is still in its early stages and its future remains uncertain. An in-depth analysis of the ongoing political, security, and economic developments in the region would provide valuable insights on the current global governance of East Asia. Hence, this tutorial would be helpful for comprehending the intricacies of this study issue. This book lacks sufficient information, while some chapters do include material that is useful for comparative examination of the constitution (Cheema P. I., 2016).

Tariq, Khan, & Khan assert that there are some crucial characteristics of the global transformations being seen that have influence on international affairs. Geo-economics, in contrast to the previous focus on geopolitics, has emerged prominently as a significant factor in the ongoing conflict. Any authority, whatever of its size, can no longer ignore the significant role that economic factors play in influencing and shaping interactions with other governments. The first chapter provides introductory material that is particularly pertinent to the thesis. This guide would provide advantages to this study, while it does not include the whole of the suggested research⁶⁴.

Qazi asserts that due to its strategically advantageous population and geographical location, the Indian subcontinent has always been a focal point in the power struggles of major nations. During the course of events, the Cold War rivalries between the two major global powers extended into South Asia. The Soviet Union and USA have competed with each other to gain influence in the South Asian area. Pakistan and India strategically use the competition between superpowers to their advantage in shaping their international ties with other countries. This handbook is a valuable resource that contains pertinent information for this study. Some important parts include the 3rd chapter, which contains statistics on the hierarchical organization

⁶⁴Mubashra, S. (2018). *The Impact of Counter-terrorism Effectiveness of Economic Growth of Pakistan*. Lahore College for Women University, Lahore. Lahore Pakistan: Munich Personal RePEc Archive.

of major powers in India and Pakistan. Hence, this guide would be helpful for comprehending the intricacies of this study subject⁶⁵.

In his book, Shahid Javed asserts that India displays a submissive stance towards other countries due to its various vulnerabilities. This is evident in the approach of Indian policy makers, who prioritize addressing South Asian issues within the region rather than seeking global solutions that involve international actors. The only exception is Pakistan, where India acknowledges the United States' efforts in undermining the Pakistanis' stability and willingness to use terrorism as a military tactic. This handbook is a valuable resource that contains pertinent information for this study. Some chapters are pertinent. Hence, this guide would be helpful for comprehending the intricacies of this study subject⁶⁶.

Karim provides facts of exceptional quality on this study. Politically, India's nuclear authority has not been a source of nuclear proliferation like its neighbor Pakistan. This is due to India's established democratic system and its efforts to combat terrorism, which have earned it recognition and support from both the United States and European countries. However, this book is insufficient and it also fell short in accurately conveying the genuine concept of the suggested subject. This study provides knowledge that is somewhat advantageous, rather than entirely useful. While this book may not be entirely relevant, several sections provide valuable insights for the thesis⁶⁷.

In this article, Khan asserts that India's ability to establish a prominent global position in terms of security, politics, and economics relies on the development of international regimes and

⁶⁵Smith, M., & M.Zeigler, S. (2017). Terrorism before and after 9/11 – a more dangerous world. *Research and Politics*, 4(4), 50-64.

⁶⁶Bruce, G. (2020). Definition of Terrorism Social and Political Effects. *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol.15(2), 26-30.

⁶⁷Cerria, P. C. (2017). *The Prolonged Religious Wave of Terrorism*. Washington: Georgetown University

structures, as well as domestic stability and economic growth. The offered data partially offers valuable information in this study, but does not fully encompass the notion. This study provides knowledge that is somewhat advantageous, rather than entirely useful. This study lacks overall relevance, while several sections provide valuable insights pertaining to the subject⁶⁸.

Ashraf discusses the developments of the fourth high-speed road towards fostering a fundamental comprehension between the bilateral ties of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Additionally, he highlights the potential for a change in the sequence of military takeovers that have marred Pakistan's democracy. The individual serving as the Assistant of Pakistan for South Asia and Near Eastern Affairs in the National Security Council the offered data partially offers valuable information in this study, however it does not fully encompass the notion. This study provides knowledge that is somewhat advantageous, rather than totally useful. While this book may not be entirely relevant, several sections provide valuable insights for the thesis⁶⁹.

Tariq and others assert that the 4th of July is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable and significant events in the diplomatic history of the United States, particularly in terms of its dynamic nature. President Clinton engaged in one of the most delicate diplomatic endeavors of any administration, successfully convincing Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan to withdraw Pakistani-supported armed forces from a dispute with India that had the potential to escalate into a nuclear conflict between the world's two most recent nuclear powers⁷⁰.

Usman & Khan discuss the fact that Afghanistan and Pakistan have been among the primary recipients of US foreign assistance, both historically and in recent years. These states play a crucial role in ensuring the security and welfare of the United States in the global oil

⁶⁸Tariq, M., Khan, A., & Khan, B. (2019). Pakistan's Security Dilemma with Afghanistan and India. *Global Political Review, IV(IV)*, 70-77.

⁶⁹Qazi, M. S. (2019). *Pakistan's Afghanistan Dilemma: Friend or Foe?* New York: Asian Studies.

⁷⁰Shahid Javed Burki, I. A. (2019). *Pakistan at Seventy: A handbook on developments in economics, politics and society* (illustrated ed.). Islamabad: Taylor & Francis.

industry. American assistance to Pakistan has fluctuated during the last sixty-five years. The United States has provided significant military and economic assistance to bolster Pakistan's armed forces and support its civilian administrations. Following the 9/11 tragedy, the United States expanded its economic support and aid to Pakistan due to Pakistan's significant involvement in the battle against terrorism in Afghanistan. The report is really beneficial and vital for my research endeavor⁷¹.

Agarwal states in his paper that there was a shift in the American attitude towards Pakistan during the 1960s due to détente between the Soviet Union and the United States. From a rare perspective, it is evident that Pakistan and the relationship with the US were consistently reliable, with a shared objective of combating communism. It observes the outcomes of the détente, the conflicts between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, and the increasing importance of India under the tenure of American President Kennedy. This book is very essential as it provides comprehensive information on the recommended study project. This is a comprehensive manual on the relevant field of study. While the 3rd and 8th chapters of this book are significant for the research work that will be employed in this thesis, it does not entirely cover all the needed components of the suggested subject. However, this book is still considered essential⁷².

Ghulam Ali asserts that the issue of instability and inconsistency in stability has been a persistent feature in the crises of twin Peaks, as discussed in the Stimson Centre Report. This catastrophe occurred as a result of an attack carried out by Islamic radicals on the Indian parliament building, leading to a prolonged ten-month dispute in which the Pakistani and Indian

⁷¹Karim, M. (2018). World Powers Rivalry in Afghanistan and Its Effects on Pakistan. *The Dialogue*, XII(3), 247-264.

⁷²Khan, H. U. (2019). Pakistan-Russia Relations and the Changing Paradigm. *Journal of Political Studies*, 26(1), 217-227.

armies were strongly committed to engaging in combat. Amidst this struggle, another significant terrorist made a deliberate move towards targeting the families of Indian troops stationed at the front line. This book lacks sufficient material, but, its first and second chapters have data that is beneficial for this thesis assignment⁷³. Katzman H. U asserts that the Soviet Union and India may oppose some further equations in the region, with India advocating for the maintenance of tranquilly, security, peace, and balance in the area. Additionally, this work is very authentic and provides significant advantages in relation to this investigation. This material is really beneficial and vital for my study endeavor⁷⁴.

Raiz asserts that the perceived threat posed by the American and Pakistan military alliance, as well as the China-Pakistan and America dynamic, was significantly reduced due to the Indo-Soviet relationship. From India's perspective, this alliance was not only a result of violence, but rather a strategic measure to deter future acts of violence. However, it is inevitable that both China and Pakistan were skeptical and unhappy about it. This book lacks sufficient material, but, its 3rd and 5th chapters have relevant data that is beneficial for this thesis assignment. This handbook is very authentic and will really benefit your studies in this area⁷⁵.

The authors of this guide are Katzman, McInnis, and Thomas. America seems hesitant about this affiliation, but for India, it provides a secure starting point among the uncertainties and frequent shifts in security views of these countries. It allows India to protect itself from the repercussions of their actions while pursuing its own strategic interests. For the Soviets, these alliances with the second most important Asian country and the largest non-aligned country served to avoid fragmentation in Asia, enhance security, and attract more members to the non-

⁷³Ashraf, S. (2018). *Pakistan's Afghan Dilemma: Seeking that Elusive Sense of Security*. Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies.

⁷⁴Haqayni, H. (2019). Pakistan's Terrorism Dilemma. *Asia's Studies*, 351-361.

⁷⁵Tariq, M., Khan, A., & Khan, B. (2019). Pakistan's Security Dilemma with Afghanistan and India. *Global Political Review*, IV(IV), 70-77.

aligned group worldwide. The offer information partly contributes to the helpfulness of the data in this investigation⁷⁶.

The content written by Estrada and Khan in this book is really valuable for this study endeavor. The author asserts that as the United Nations approaches its seventieth anniversary, the world is experiencing one of the most severe and significant global security crises in recent history. This crisis poses a challenge to the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in addressing these issues. Over the last four years, crises in Libya, Ukraine, and Syria have sparked a challenging and intricate dynamic in international relations, significantly impacting decision-making processes within security committees over many contentious issues. The inability to effectively address the growing social turmoil in Syria has had significant consequences, including the spill-over of war into Iraq and the emergence of the Islamic State as a new threat to stability in the region and beyond. The offered data partially offers valuable insights in this study, albeit it does not include the whole notion⁷⁷.

In this study, Cheema examines the distinct aspects of the subversion in Kashmir, which has become one of the most perilous issues not only in South Asia but also globally. The significance of this matter is such that it should be carefully considered as a conflict in its own right. Therefore, the significance of the group's inference is crucial to remain implicit. The paper examines the specific development of the sub-difference in Kashmir, which is distinct from the larger interstate difference between Pakistan and India. While this article is important, it does not

⁷⁶Utely, R. E. (2016). *9/11 Ten Years After: Perspectives and Problems*. New York: Routledge.

⁷⁷Ghulam Ali, E. H. (2020). *Perspectives on Contemporary Pakistan: Governance, Development and Environment* (illustrated ed.). UK: Taylor & Francis Group.

completely address all the necessary aspects of the suggested subject. However, there are some significant issues that will be used in this thesis⁷⁸.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Afghanistan is situated at the center of Asia, as described in geopolitical literature. This positioning has the potential to impact the security interests of significant global powers and neighbouring countries, potentially leading to changes in the trajectory of international politics. Despite the potential threat to regional and global peace and stability posed by unrest in the region, a stable and peaceful Afghanistan has the potential to become a significant player in global politics and demonstrate concern for the natural resources of the Eurasian continent. Regarding this matter, Mearsheimer makes a bold assertion that the competition among great powers persists. In organizations and projects, three different visions regarding conflict or divergence have emerged over time⁷⁹. The traditional vision, which predominated from the late 19th century to the middle of the 1940s, assumed that conflict was bad, always had an unenthusiastic collision, and guided people to refuse in presentation as the conflict level increased. Conflicts and divergence must therefore be avoided at all costs.

According to this vision, conflict or divergence is closely related to conditions like violence, devastation, and irrationality. Suppressing, eliminating, or reducing conflict is the standard response to it⁸⁰. A demanding or dictatorial approach was commonly used by the executive to release the plan of some collision, conflict, or divergence. Even while this step towards was occasionally successful, it was seldom successful since they are hidden, the

⁷⁸Khan, H. U. (2019). Pakistan-Russia Relations and the Changing Paradigm. *Journal of Political Studies*, 26(1), 217-227.

⁷⁹Katzman, K., McInnis, K. J., & Thomas, C. (2020). *U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy*. England: Congressional Research Service.

⁸⁰Katzman, K., McInnis, K. J., & Thomas, C. (2020). *U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy*. England: Congressional Research Service.

underlying causes cannot be identified, and the potentially positive aspect of conflict cannot be seen⁸¹.

There are three main categories of disagreements. Conflicts based on the work cycle, Despite differences in religion, politics, ethnicity, and culture, as well as differences in financial progress and impact, the global community struts with infrequent impulsiveness and harmony condemning terrorist attacks and deciding to work together not only to carry the perpetrators to integrity but also to prevent and eliminate terrorism. After two weeks, the United States was able to have a more detailed, action-oriented stance on implementing global processes to combat terrorism through a UN Counter Terrorism Group espoused in the UN Security Council⁸².

The practise of being able to recognize and handle disagreement thoughtfully, quietly, and professionally is conflict management. Divergences in business are a common part of the workplace, thus it is important that there exist people who understand them and know how to make decisions about them. This is more important than ever in the market today⁸³. Everyone is determined to show the company how pricey they are. The study emphasizes on the significance of positive and fruitful connections between the two nations for regional prosperity and peace as well as to combat terrorism. Via conflict management theory this dissertation will help decision-makers comprehend the crucial role that Pakistan-Afghanistan relations played during the Taliban regime for world peace and political stability. The study for regional peace and prosperity is focused on the cooperation and trust-building initiatives between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

⁸¹Estrada, M. A., & Khan, A. (2020). *The Evolution and Perspectives of the Terrorism Academic Research*. Kohat: Project: The past, Present, and Future of the Economic Analysis

⁸²Cheema, P. I. (2016). *The Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistans security Dilemma*. California: The Regents of the University of California.

⁸³Qureshi, K. 2021. "Taliban and Pakistan." *Journal of National Politics* 53.

In order to break the misunderstanding among Taliban and Pakistan and build trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan, this study emphasizes the key conflicts brought on by mistrust following the anti-Taliban activities in Pakistan and border areas.

CHAPTER: 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section comprises of methodology and data collection that was implemented during this research work. Further details regarding methodology are mentioned in below:

3.1 Research Design:

To gain research objectives i.e. to “Analyze the political and security threats and challenges for Pakistan after regime change in Afghanistan” this research endeavor is characterized as descriptive and was utilized empirical and analytical techniques. The narrative provided a descriptive account of the facts based on primary sources.

3.2 Data Collection Method:

During this research work the researcher used both sources of data collection i.e. primary and secondary data sources. The study employed the empirical approach, utilizing unstructured interviews and questionnaires as data primary collection tools. The participants includes scholars, diplomats, academicians, and journalists. The analytical approach was employed to compare the ages and sages of the Great Game and assess diverse interpretations regarding the matter, as well as uncover factual information pertaining to state survival.

3.3 Secondary Data:

The secondary data is utilized via available literature, related books, scholarly articles, books, journal writings, newspapers and official reports from university library. The books / data that are unavailable in university library, the researcher accessed to other libraries and online sources.

3.4 Research Approach:

The chosen research topic is intriguing as it centers on empirical theories and places particular emphasis on the interconnections between theory and practise. The research employed diverse analytical techniques and theoretical frameworks. Consequently, the aforementioned work offers an all-encompassing, easily navigable, and multifaceted elucidation of the doctrinal approach towards comprehending issues pertaining to women's human rights, alongside an array of other subject matters. The research employed unstructured interviews with a range of participants including scholars, practitioners, and experts from Afghanistan. In addition, it is recommended to pose open-ended inquiries pertaining to the history, philosophy, and strategy of the organization.

3.5 Research Ethics:

Additionally, inquiring about past challenges and successes, as well as the organization's future aspirations, may prove beneficial. The utilization of the analytical method of constant comparison has been chosen to ensure the integrity of the research. This study aims to analyze the historical and current situation in Afghanistan, specifically from the perspective of domestic actors. The focus was on the ideational and relational approach of Afghanistan towards great powers and regional actors, who have significant influence on the country's domestic politics, peace, and reconciliation. However, the study is evaluated using empirical evidence in the analysis to determine whether any coefficient of determination can be identified in the research.

3.6 Data Analysis:

The data analysis procedure that followed in this research is analyzing qualitative and descriptive analysis. The data was gathered via interview schedule according to research objectives and research questions.

CHAPTER: 4

REGIME CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS ON PAKISTAN

4.1 Introduction

Despite the remarkable and unparalleled events that occurred after the Taliban's seizure of Afghanistan in August 2021, the international attention gradually turned away from the country. Due to the conflict in Ukraine and several other global concerns, Afghans are vying for the attention of the world community and media coverage of the numerous problems occurring in Afghanistan. Prior to the Taliban's assumption of power in August 2021, Afghans were already grappling with a range of hardships, including unemployment, migration and displacement, natural calamities, inadequate governance, and infrastructure difficulties. One However, the significant regression of significant achievements made in the last two decades due to the Taliban's resurgence should not be understated.

Afghanistan, being a nation without any coastline, serves as a connecting point for several areas like South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, and the broader Middle East. The turmoil in Afghanistan has significant worldwide importance and has far-reaching consequences for the security, economic, and geopolitical situations in various areas. In order for Afghanistan to advance and effectively tackle its many problems, it is crucial to consider the involvement of the neighbouring areas and their respective interests. Simultaneously, the departure of the United Nations and NATO from Afghanistan has left a vacuum that presents prospects for several entities, including nations, armed groups, and non-state organizations.

The absence of a clearly defined and aggressive approach to policymaking by Western nations, headed by the United States, does not imply that other parties will not take advantage of the opportunity in Afghanistan. The July US drone attack in downtown Kabul, which resulted in the death of Ayman Al Zawahiri, brought attention to the intricate relationships between different factions of the Taliban and international entities engaged in terrorism. If the Taliban does not successfully transition from being an insurgent force to a political and governing party, it is quite probable that such connections will incite and proliferate.

Is there a phenomenon of "Winner's Remorse" in Pakistan? In September 2021, after the Taliban's successful assertion of victory and reinstatement of authority in Afghanistan, a nationwide survey in Pakistan revealed that 55 percent of Pakistanis expressed satisfaction with the governance of the Taliban in Afghanistan⁸⁴. The largest level of support was seen in metropolitan areas and among the elderly population. One possible explanation for this phenomena is the widespread populist narratives that facilitated the rise of Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, to assume leadership in the civilian government. Khan, who was removed from power after his defeat in a no-confidence vote in April 2022, had consistently voiced opposition to the "War on Terror".

His rhetoric against the United States galvanized a significant portion of Pakistani society, extending beyond only the Islamist factions. Khan said that the Taliban, having captured the Arg Presidential Palace in Kabul, had successfully liberated themselves from subjugation. In December 2021, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan attempted to rationalize the Taliban's

⁸⁴Antunes, Sandrina, and Isabel Camisão. 2018. "Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory." 5.

prohibition on girls' education by asserting that "human rights and women's rights vary across different societies"⁸⁵. His comments elicited a rapid and negative response, especially from Malala Yousufzai, who originates from a Pashtun area in Pakistan. The Taliban's resurgence in power was met with jubilation by the enduring supporters of the organization inside the inner echelons of Pakistan's security establishment, notably the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the primary intelligence agency of the nation. Within a week of the Taliban seizing control of Afghanistan, Faiz Hameed, the head of the ISI at the time, paid a visit to the opulent Kabul Serena Hotel, dressed informally and enjoying a cup of tea.

This comment served both as a display of confidence and as a symbolic confirmation of the Pakistani security establishment's control over the Taliban. However, the Taliban's triumph in Afghanistan undoubtedly boosts the confidence of Pakistani Islamist groups and Sunni religious clergy, whose capacity to rally large numbers of people in urban areas is unquestionable⁸⁶. Many of these clerics have influential positions in overseeing the extensive network of unregistered religious institutions in Pakistan, known as madrasahs. Although the Taliban has acted as a mediator between the Pakistani government and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), there is little evidence to suggest that their control of Afghanistan has resulted in any significant progress in addressing Pakistan's security, economic, and geopolitical challenges.

Although the fundamental procedures and the nature of Pakistan's interactions with the Taliban are expected to stay the same, Khan's removal from office signifies that the Taliban's de facto government has lost a significant public supporter in its pursuit of regional and worldwide acknowledgment. Taliban commanders, especially those belonging to the Haqqani group but also

⁸⁵Hamdy, N, and E.H. Goma. 2022. "Framing the Egyptian uprising in Arabic language newspapers and social media." *Journal of Communication* 62(2), 195-211.

⁸⁶Hussain, S, and M.I Latif. 2016. "Issues and challenges in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations after 9/11." *South Asian Studies* 27, No. 1.

other factions, retain strong connections with Pakistan to facilitate their own and their families' movement, economic pursuits, and living arrangements in prominent Pakistani urban centers. Nevertheless, the Taliban administration finds it undesirable to be seen as a pawn of the Pakistani security establishment due to the negative impact it would have on their image. Starting in late 2021, Taliban militants stationed at Afghanistan's borders have engaged in conflicts with Pakistani border and military troops along the Durand Line. Since Pakistan's formation in 1947, Afghan administrations have consistently contested the Durand Line as the official border, despite its worldwide recognition as such. In the 1990s, the Taliban had a similar perspective towards the Durand Line⁸⁷.

Since regaining control, the Taliban has made many efforts to obstruct Pakistan's construction of a barrier at the Durand Line. Despite Pakistan's attempts to minimize these instances, the conflict has significantly contributed to the decline of mutual goodwill and confidence between the various governments of both nations over the previous several decades. The Durand Line tensions serve as a symbolic tool for the Taliban to present itself as a seemingly nationalist group that opposes Pakistan. However, these conflicts also heighten concerns within Pakistan, where a long-standing anti-India sentiment significantly influences border security matters with Afghanistan. Recently, the Taliban government increased the cost of exporting coal to Pakistan, causing dissatisfaction among businessmen and officials in Islamabad.

The Taliban's decision to increase revenues was influenced by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement that importing inexpensive coal from Afghanistan using local

⁸⁷Reus-Smit , Christian, and Duncan Snidal. 2008. "Realism." Aug. <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/219322.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199219322-e-7>

Pakistani currency would help save Pakistan's diminishing foreign reserves. The Taliban is expected to continue in following a similar strategy, making choices that prioritize their own survival even if it means sacrificing their relationship with supporters like as Pakistan. Analysts interviewed for this research emphasized that Pakistan is strongly desirous of a peaceful resolution in Afghanistan, which aligns with Pakistan's broader aspirations in South Asia. These analysts also observed that Pakistani policymakers are well aware of the humanitarian and security challenges that would arise if the US were to withdraw, placing a significant burden on Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan.

Pakistan's endorsement of a tyrannical Taliban government is detrimental to the existing Pakistani authorities, particularly in terms of instilling confidence in foreign financial institutions. Pakistan is now experiencing a significant rise in inflation and an economic turmoil, resulting in a severe crisis in the cost of life. This understanding of the harm to one's image somewhat elucidates why Pakistan has refrained from recognizing the Taliban government, particularly due to concerns from local Islamist factions. Despite Pakistan's continued operation of a functioning embassy in Kabul, its hosting of Taliban leaders in Islamabad, and its role as a conduit for the Taliban's communication with China and other nations, this situation persists. Pakistan saw a surge in assaults by the TTP after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, with regards to security matters.

In early 2022, there was an expected 80% rise compared to the same time in the previous year⁸⁸. Over an extended period, the Pakistani authorities and media organizations attributed responsibility to the previous Afghan administrations for aiding the TTP, also referred to as the

⁸⁸Anne Gearan and Missy Ryan, "As the Last American Forces Prepare to Leave Afghanistan, Biden Says the Country's Fate Is in Its Own Hands," Washington Post, June 25, 2021, NNWhttps://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-ghani-afghanistan/2021/06/25/78cc2d86-d5df-11eb-ae54-515e2f63d37d_story.html

Pakistani Taliban. Nevertheless, the TTP's comeback since August 2021 highlights the enduring connection between the Taliban and the TTP, which goes beyond mere personal relationships and involves the exchange of strategies and control over land on both sides of the Durand Line. In June 2022, sources from Kabul indicated that the Taliban had acted as intermediaries between Pakistan and the TTP, resulting in a mutually agreed "indefinite" truce. The nature of the concessions offered by Pakistan to the TTP and the potential for the TTP to use discussions as a strategic pause for regrouping, similar to the Taliban's actions during the Doha Process with the previous Afghan government, remain uncertain⁸⁹. The recent floods in Pakistan are expected to exacerbate the country's socioeconomic woes. The floods, which have submerged extensive areas of Pakistan, serve to emphasize the influence of climate change on South Asia. The potential security and political ramifications are expected to be significant as well.

4.2 Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: Towards a New Horizon

The people of Pakistan and Afghanistan have a complex and extensive interconnection that affects almost every aspect of their lives. For millennia, the people of the two nations have engaged with each other in many ways, including via their geopolitical positioning, bilateral commerce, and collaboration in addressing shared difficulties. This contact has varied from clearly beneficial interdependence supported by strong collaboration to very detrimental interdependence characterized by open animosity. However, divergent historical and political backgrounds, unresolved territorial disputes, and mutual distrust have prevented them from establishing amicable ties as neighbors'. The strategic interdependence, including both good and

⁸⁹ Eleanor Watson and David Martin, "Biden Announces U.S. Military Mission in Afghanistan Will End August 31," CBS News, July 9, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-afghanistan-troop-withdrawal-2021-07-08/>.

bad aspects, has been particularly pronounced in the last four decades. During this period, the state of peace or its absence in one nation consistently impacted the other⁹⁰.

In Pakistan, there is a growing agreement that a peaceful, stable, and successful Afghanistan is necessary in order to establish a fresh constructive interdependence of peace and economic growth. Due to the profound wounds caused by four decades of internal conflict, the path of recovery and reconciliation will be challenging. Nevertheless, the people of Afghanistan are compelled to transcend the conflict in order to establish a sense of harmonious cohabitation.

It is imperative for them to acknowledge that the use of force, the shedding of blood, and engaging in armed conflict have only resulted in severe destruction, impoverishment, and suffering inside their nation. Pakistan must really collaborate with the people of Afghanistan in their endeavor to achieve peace and stability in their nation. An essential and collaborative bilateral relationship is thus crucial in achieving the always elusive peace between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The leadership of both nations should be guided by a vision of strategic interdependence, rather than being focused on narrow and short-sighted self-interest. Is it possible for them to have a shared objective and achieve success⁹¹.

This analysis explores the essential elements necessary to establish a long-lasting connection between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This analysis considers potential outcomes of the current peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and examines the necessary policy choices for Pakistan to secure favorable outcomes for both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

⁹⁰“PM on Education,” Dawn, December 22, 2021, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1665123>

⁹¹“Religious Parties Hail Afghan Taliban’s Reconciliation Policy,” Dawn, August 17, 2021, “Rel”<https://www.dawn.com/news/1641051>; Islamic Emirate Afg (@ TalibanUpdates), “Special and pleasant meeting between the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mr. Amir Khan Muttaqi with the Amir of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan Mr. Maulana Fazlur Rehman Sahib,” Twitter, December 18, 2021, 9:33 p.m., <https://twitter.com/TalibanUpdates/status/1472409645373399042?s=20&t=7v5GNFy1GWgvkLSe95Hzqg>.

Throughout a significant portion of history, starting with the Aryan invasions six thousand years ago and continuing with Alexander's leadership of his Macedonian army to India via Afghanistan, the nation has served as a passage for both invaders and migrants to the regions that now make up Pakistan and India. Following the emergence of Islam, a significant number of Afghans adopted the religion, and Islam has remained a shared connection between the Afghan people and those of Pakistan up to the present day⁹². Today, the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have strong connections in terms of their historical, cultural, religious, linguistic, and economic exchanges, which create a strategic interdependence between them. The interconnected relationships have strengthened practical collaboration to some extent, but have also caused conflict and animosity. Effectively overseeing the bilateral relationship by capitalizing on shared interests and resolving any areas of disagreement. Three significant events in recent history have had a tremendous influence on the area and the strategic interdependence between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The second pivotal moment occurred following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 on the World Trade Centre Twin Towers and Pentagon. This event triggered a surge of anger among Americans towards Afghanistan, as they believed that the 9/11 attacks and previous acts of terrorism against the US were orchestrated by Al Qaeda, an organization based in Afghanistan. Due to the Global War on Terror, Pakistan became a target of terrorists from both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Between 2004 and 2014, Pakistan saw a severe series of terrorist attacks, mostly orchestrated by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which prompted Pakistan to initiate a

⁹² Asfandyar Mir, et al., "Afghanistan-Pakistan Dispute Heats Up," United States Institute of Peace, January 12, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/01/afghanistan-pakistan-border-dispute-heats>

large-scale military campaign in 2014 known as Zarb-e-Azab in the tribal regions of the country⁹³.

In 2018, the US made a significant decision to embark on a peace process aimed at reconciling with the Taliban. This decision came after a prolonged period of intense fighting that lasted eighteen years and resulted in substantial financial costs for the Americans, the loss of thousands of American lives, and the inability to prevent the Taliban from gaining significant power and influence in various regions of Afghanistan. The choice for the US to engage in direct negotiations with the Taliban, a group that has been widely acknowledged as a terrorist organization, was undoubtedly a challenging one. Likewise, the Taliban also seemed to have adopted a more adaptable approach, maybe seeing that their ability to seize complete control of Afghanistan was diminishing and that they might achieve more via negotiation rather than only relying on military force⁹⁴.

The Afghan government in Kabul expressed unease with the US-Taliban peace negotiations, since they granted legitimacy to the Taliban as a political interlocutor rather than labelling them as a terrorist organization. On February 29, 2020, the US and the Taliban overcame obstacles and resistance to sign a peace deal. This agreement marked the beginning of an intra-Afghan discussion, aimed at establishing enduring peace in Afghanistan. Reluctantly, the Afghan government consented to participate in this dialogue. One hundred twenty-one Pakistan promptly embraced this change in US strategy, which veered away from a military resolution, and made efforts to support the peace process in every possible manner. Notably, Pakistan played a crucial role in getting the Taliban to the negotiation table. The fourth and most

⁹³Charlotte Greenfield, "Afghanistan Lifts Coal Prices as Exports to Neighbouring Pakistan Boom," Reuters, July 6, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/afghanistan-conflict-coal-idUSL4N2YN2MF>.

⁹⁴Madiha Afzal, "Pakistan's Ambivalent Approach Toward a Resurgent Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan," Brookings, February 11, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/11/pakistans-ambivalent-approach-toward-a-resurgent-tehrik-e-taliban-pakistan/>.

recent pivotal event took place in August 2021 when the US soldiers withdrew from Afghanistan and departed safely⁹⁵.

4.3 Pakistan's Efforts for Peace and Reconciliation in Afghanistan

Pakistan has been the most severely affected nation by the violence in Afghanistan. Pakistan is increasingly seeing that it is in its own interest to have a peaceful, stable, independent, and wealthy Afghanistan. In Pakistan, the 'strategic depth' argument has failed to garner any support. There is now no inclination or desire within the political sphere to show favoritism towards any particular group or individuals in Afghanistan⁹⁶. Currently, there is a deliberate endeavor to keep amicable relations with all groups in Afghanistan. Due to its significant interests, Pakistan aggressively endeavored to promote stability and aid the execution of the peace process to prevent the accord from collapsing.

Pakistan plays a crucial role in the current Afghan peace process. Pakistan and Afghanistan have a lengthy border, as well as ethnic and geographical connections. The key aspect is to the historical connections between Pakistan's military establishment and the Taliban. Pakistan's strong connections with the Taliban are positioning it as a significant participant in the current peace negotiations. Pakistan's rulers are actively endeavoring to establish peace in Afghanistan⁹⁷. Major states also see Pakistan as a significant actor capable of persuading the Taliban to engage in peace negotiations. America and its allies in Afghanistan have abandoned the prospect of achieving a military resolution in Afghanistan. Currently, the peace process is the

⁹⁵Aamir Latif, "Afghan Taliban Confirm Pakistan-TTP 'Indefinite' Cease-Fire," Anadolu Agency, June 18, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/afghan-talibanconfirm-pakistan-ttp-indefinite-cease-fire/2616980>.

⁹⁶ Syed Ali Zia Jaffery, Negotiating with the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, Atlantic Council, June 10, 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/southasiasource/negotiating-with-the-tehreek-i-taliban-pakistan-ttp-is-a-bad-idea/>.

⁹⁷ Natasha Turak, "China's Rumored Ambitions to Dive into Afghanistan Are Overstated and Unrealistic, Experts Say," CNBC, September 9, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/09/chinas-rumored-aims-to-dive-into-afghanistan-are-exaggerated-experts.html>.

primary aspiration for all the parties involved in Afghanistan. Pakistan has always supported peace endeavors in Afghanistan⁹⁸.

Pakistan has emphasized the need of engaging in direct negotiations with the Taliban insurgents. Pakistan has repeatedly insisted on offering incentives to the Taliban insurgents in order to encourage their return to the negotiating table for peace negotiations. Pakistan consistently endorsed a pragmatic, adaptable, and achievable strategy for achieving peace in Afghanistan (Dawn News, 2016). Pakistan has consistently been accused of maintaining strong connections with Taliban commanders, and it is believed that Islamabad has the ability to influence these officials in the direction of engaging in peace negotiations. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the religious parties of Pakistan have strong affiliations with Taliban commanders. During the Soviet invasion, Pakistan extended financial support, supplied weaponry, and offered training to them. The bulk of Taliban fighters are from Pashtun-dominated regions of Pakistan and have received their education from Islamic institutions in the country.

4.4 Taliban Takeover and Aftermath

When the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in August 2021, Afghans as well as the international community anticipated that the Taliban would adopt such policies that take the country towards durable peace and stability after a prolonged conflict. Though the Taliban had fought a long insurgency, they had also been engaged in an internationally sponsored peace process in Doha. While the peace process did not yield an intra-Afghan political settlement, the spirit of Doha accord of 29 February 2020 premised on commitments for an inclusive political

⁹⁸ Borzou Daragahi, Afghanistan: Where US-Iranian Interests May Yet Intersect, Atlantic Council, May 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/AC-Talibans-IB-v4.pdf>.

framework, respect for fundamental rights of Afghans and not letting Afghan soil to be used by terrorist groups⁹⁹.

With this context, the Taliban takeover of the country was peaceful and without any large-scale violence or fighting. Both the US and the Taliban have continued to accuse each other of violating the Doha agreement. As large sections of Afghan society had manifested strong resentment against the Taliban's regime in the 1990s, many expected that in their second stint they would be more responsive to the aspirations of their people. This optimism survived for a few months. An Afghan interim government was instituted on 7 September 2021 with an exclusive Taliban cabinet, which despite additions and changes is hitherto exclusively comprised of the Taliban leaders. There were, however, some indications that gradually progress would be made on devising a new constitutional framework, which could pave the way for making the system more anticipatory and inclusive. The focus of the new government was on consolidating their control and strengthening security as for the first time in more than past forty years a government had entire Afghan territory under its writ¹⁰⁰.

Following the takeover, Afghan Taliban leadership's decision of offering general amnesty sent positive messaging in Afghanistan and to the outside world. In the next few weeks, while isolated incidents of targeting political opponents and the officials of the past regime were witnessed, there were no gross or systematic human rights violations. The life in Afghan towns and villages was running normally. The access to all parts of country had been secured. The schools and educational institutions were open for both boys and girls. Although some checks

⁹⁹ Antonio Giustozzi, "Alliances Were Key to the Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan," Newlines Institute, September 9, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/afghanistan/alliances-were-key-to-the-taliban-takeover-of-afghanistan/>.

¹⁰⁰ Samuel Ramani, "Russia and the Taliban: Potential Partners?" RUSI, September 14, 2021, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russiaand-taliban-prospective-partners>.

and restrictions were imposed on the media, the news and entertainment channels continued their transmissions during the initial months after the Taliban takeover¹⁰¹.

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations were also showing signs of better coordination. In order to craft consensus among neighbors on the developments in Afghanistan, Pakistan hosted an online conference of the foreign ministers of the neighboring countries. At Pakistan's initiative, special envoys of China, Russia and Pakistan visited Kabul and had interaction with the Afghan prime minister and other senior leaders urging them to take steps for making the structures more inclusive. Pakistan's foreign minister visited Kabul with a large delegation for progress on issues of mutual interest and concern with a view to strengthen bilateral cooperation. Apart from humanitarian assistance of Rs 5 billion, Pakistan exempted Afghan exports to Pakistan from all taxes and duties giving a space to Afghan economy while facing international sanctions and freezing of Afghan assets by the US¹⁰².

In November 2021, Afghan foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi visited Islamabad for bilateral consultations as well as meeting of the Troika Plus involving the US, China, Russia and Pakistan. This was the first formal contact between a US high official and the Taliban following the change of government in Afghanistan. The issues of inclusivity, human rights, counterterrorism, and Afghanistan's frozen assets were discussed during the meeting. Later, Pakistan hosted an extra-ordinary session of the OIC countries on humanitarian situation in

¹⁰¹ Osborn, "Russia Says Kabul Seems Safer under Taliban than It Was under Ghani," Reuters, August 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/usafghanistan-conflict-russia-idAFKBN2FH2AB>.

¹⁰² Kamal Joshi, "Russia May Attend Taliban's Govt Formation Ceremony if It's Inclusive": FM Sergey Lavrov," Republic World, September 6, 2021, <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/russia-may-attend-talibans-govt-formation-ceremony-if-its-inclusive-fm-sergey-lavrov.html>.

Afghanistan which was attended by Afghan foreign minister providing an opportunity for his interaction with a large number of foreign ministers of leading Muslim countries¹⁰³.

By the end of 2021, with the hope that continued interaction with Afghan interim government would help move Afghanistan towards further normalization, many donor countries such as Germany, Norway, Japan and international organizations including the EU, World Bank and Asian Development Bank were considering re-opening of diplomatic missions in Kabul at Ambassadorial level. Had that trend continued, the third meeting of foreign ministers of neighboring countries, which was scheduled to take place in China in March 2022, was expected to consider substantive ways of widening interaction with the Afghan interim government. This could have yielded two dividends for the neighboring countries: (i) progress towards emergence of a strong Afghan state countering threats posed by global and regional terrorist groups including Daesh, Al-Qaeda, TTP, ETIM and IMU, and (ii) opening up the region for east-west and north-south connectivity within and through Afghanistan, which has remained choked for past fifty years due to prevalence of conflict, warfare and terrorism in that country. This indeed could become a win-win scenario for the entire region, but Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular would have been the major beneficiaries¹⁰⁴.

4.5 The Continuing Stalemate

However, by the beginning of the year 2022 the developments were seemingly taking a negative turn. Since then, a series of actions by the Afghan interim government has dampened

¹⁰³ Ayaz Gul, "Russia Says 'Inclusive' Afghan Government Key to Recognizing Taliban," VOA News, June 15, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-saysinclusive-afghan-government-key-to-recognizing-taliban-/6618812.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Nayanima Basu, "India Reopens Embassy in Kabul, Sends 'Technical Team' with Relief Material for Afghanistan," Print, June 23, 2022, <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/india-reopens-embassy-in-kabul-sends-technical-team-with-relief-material-for-afghanistan/1009400/>.

the air of optimism and impeded the progress towards lasting stability and normalization in Afghanistan. The reports and speculations about aggravating divisions within Taliban ranks primarily driven by ideological considerations have continued to grow with time. Gradually the decision-making in Afghan interim government and the Taliban Shura became dominated by a group of religious hardliners¹⁰⁵. During the past one-and-a-half-year rule of the Taliban, three key areas widening the gulf with the people of Afghanistan and the international partners includes (a) inclusive government and political framework; (b) human rights and fundamental freedoms; and (c) counterterrorism. Lack of progress in these areas is one of the key reasons, but not the only one, that has continued to adversely affect engagement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The developments in Afghanistan relating to these areas need objective analysis¹⁰⁶.

4.5.1 Inclusive government and political framework

During first few months after the takeover, the Taliban circles had relayed an impression that they understood the need for drafting a new constitution to cater for Afghanistan's ground realities. However, it gradually seemed to have disappeared from the Taliban's priority list and their main focus shifted to consolidating their control and political hold on the instruments of power in Afghanistan. Even a Jirga that the Taliban convened in Kabul from 30 June to 2 July 2022, which Taliban Amir Hibatullah also attended, turned out to be a gathering of religious scholars closer to the Taliban perspective endorsing an ideological approach on governance; it

¹⁰⁵ Asfandyar Mir, "After the Taliban Takeover: Pakistan's TTP problem," United States Institute of Peace, January 19, 2022, <<https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/01/after-talibans-takeover-pakistans-ttp-problem>>

¹⁰⁶ Abdul Sayed, "The evolution and future of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan," Carnegie Endowment, December 2021, <<https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/12/21/evolution-and-future-of-tehrik-e-taliban-pakistan-pub-86051>>

was not a traditional Loya Jirga for garnering political consensus as practiced in Afghan and Pashtun tribal culture¹⁰⁷.

Taliban's stance on inclusivity is that it is an internal political issue and cannot be dictated by other countries. They contend that Afghanistan like other countries should determine its own political structures. In their view, their government was removed through foreign military intervention, and they have fought for twenty years for liberation of their country and for restoration of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They further claim that their government is inclusive with many key positions in the cabinet and the government institutions held by non-Pashtun Afghans (although all of them are Taliban)¹⁰⁸.

This Taliban perspective surely has implications for relations with the neighboring Pakistan. The Taliban cannot continue to deny the historical fact that Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country requiring a framework providing opportunity for participation of all its ethnic minorities and political parties. Commonly held perception in Afghanistan as well as worldwide not only alienates Afghanistan's non-Pashtuns from Pakistan but also affects latter's interaction with the world at large. Pakistan's interests to strengthen relations with Afghanistan would be better served if the government in Afghanistan broadens its participatory framework¹⁰⁹.

4.5.2 Human rights and fundamental freedoms

A series of defiant actions in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms have tarnished the political image of the Taliban and has caused suffering to Afghans. Banning girls to

¹⁰⁷ Ayaz Gul, "The Islamic State group claims attack on Pakistan's top diplomat in Afghanistan," VoA, December 3, 2022, <<https://www.voanews.com/a/islamic-state-group-claims-attack-on-pakistan-s-top-diplomat-in-afghanistan-/6861496.html>>

¹⁰⁸ Amina Khan, "Pak-Afghan border: A case study of border management," Institute of Strategic Studies, 2017, <https://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2-SS_Amina_Khan_No-3_2017.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Adnan Amir, "Afghan transit a game changer for Gwadar Port," The Interpreter, January 31, 2020, <<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/afghan-transit-game-changer-gwadar-port>>

go to high schools in March 2022 became the most damaging decision internally as well as externally. Later in December 2022, another decision preventing women from attending Universities further aggravated the situation and sparked widespread global criticism of the Taliban's ideology and governance. The Afghan interim government also imposed harsh restrictions on the media channels and journalists affecting the coverage of developments in Afghanistan and resulting in the outflow of trained professional journalists from the country.

These restrictions have led many donors and humanitarian organizations to further curtail their operations in Afghanistan¹¹⁰. Unfortunately, Pakistan's efforts to convince the Taliban during past one and a half year to adopt an approach of moderation in handling such matters affecting lives of the Afghan nations have not been fruitful. With the two societies so closely inter-twined, many apprehend that continued regressive policies in Afghanistan can cause problems in Pakistan's social and economic progress as in Pakistan girl-child enrollment as well as women's access to various professions is on a positive trajectory. Many Afghans blame Pakistan for the rigid approach of Taliban on human rights particularly relating to women¹¹¹.

4.5.3 Counterterrorism

The emergence of fault-lines in the areas of security and terrorism have further complicated the Afghan situation as well as relations with Pakistan. The terrorist groups including Al-Qaeda, Daesh, TTP, ETIM and IMU have continued to find space and support networks in Afghanistan during past two decades or even more. Major global powers as well as neighboring countries continue to have concerns over the perceived ambiguities in Afghan

¹¹⁰Sophia Nina Burna-Asefi, "The trans-Afghan railway line: back on track," The Diplomat, July 26, 2022, <<https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/the-trans-afghan-railway-line-back-on-track>>

¹¹¹ Aamaj News (2022). "Afghan-Indian relations would not be influenced by other countries' inter-rivalry: Stanekzai". 03/06/2022. <https://aamajnews24.com/stanikzai-india-afg/>

interim government's policies for actions against various terrorist groups on Afghan soil. While the Afghan security forces have been undertaking stringent operations against Daesh hideouts killing several key commanders and fighters on a regular basis, the cooperation with neighbors including Pakistan, China, Central Asia and Iran with regard to specific terrorist groups of their concern has many issues¹¹².

The TTP is considered as an existential security threat in Pakistan. After military operations (Zarb-e-Azb in 2014, and Raddul Fassad started in 2017), the formal structures of TTP were dismantled inside Pakistan and their commanders and fighters were forced to go into sleeper mode in Pakistan while also shifting their assets to neighboring provinces in eastern Afghanistan. Consequently, the level of TTP-sponsored violence in Pakistan registered significant decline for some time. Independent analyses have assessed that despite successes in these operations, there were signs of complacency shown by the state in comprehensively dealing with kinetic, political, and socio-economic dimensions of the counterterrorism and counter-extremism efforts in Pakistan¹¹³.

A general perception in Pakistan was that after the Taliban takeover systemic cooperation between the security and intelligence institutions of the two countries would be helpful in completely eliminating the cross-border threat of the TTP. Immediately after formation of the Afghan interim government, Islamabad started messaging with Kabul for decisive actions against the TTP leaders and commanders based in Afghanistan. On the advice of the Afghan Taliban leadership and with their facilitation, Pakistan's security officials held several rounds of talks

¹¹² Ahmed, M. (2023). "What's behind the Pakistani Taliban's insurgency?", AP. 31/01/2023. <https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-organized-crime-taliban-pakistan-peshawar2e8847a3735fb910b7a3cca53da721f4>

¹¹³ Ahmed, R. & Younus, U. (2023). With No Help from Kabul, Pakistan Faces the TTP Threat, New Lines Institute.

with the TTP commanders in Kabul during the summer of 2022, but the process remained resultless as the TTP not only continued to insist upon imposing Shariah rule and its armed presence in certain areas but was also uncompromising on the demand for the reversal of ex-FATA's merger into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa¹¹⁴.

In view of the acute divergence between Pakistan's expectations and TTP's demands, in November 2022 the TTP announced to end the ceasefire and resume full scale violence in Pakistan thus suspending the dialogue. While gearing for a renewed and full-fledged counterterrorism effort, Pakistan felt betrayed that the Afghan interim government had not only turned a blind eye to the presence of the TTP commanders on the Afghan soil but also ignored the 'support networks' that the TTP was using for carrying out terrorist activities in Pakistan. The statistics tend to show that the TTP-sponsored violence in Pakistan has shown a two-fold surge since the establishment of an Afghan Taliban government in Kabul¹¹⁵.

The TTP offers a complex challenge and many of the interpretations and explanations of the two sides on this subject are quite varying, and often clashing with each other¹¹⁶.

- There has been a contested debate on whether the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Taliban are ideologically the same or have significant differences. The view that they are like the two

¹¹⁴ Ainsworth, D. (2023). "After the ban on women workers, what next for NGOs in Afghanistan?", Devex, 30/01/2023. <https://www.devex.com/news/after-the-ban-onwomen-workers-what-next-for-ngos-in-afghanistan-104754>

¹¹⁵ Al-Jazeera. (2023). "Torkham border crossing between Afghanistan, Pakistan closed". 20/02/2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/20/main-afghan-pakistani-bordercrossing-closed-gunfire-reported>

¹¹⁶ Ayalon, A. Raz, I, G. and Amiel, B. (2022). The United States Withdrawal from Afghanistan after Two Decades of a Global War on Terrorism, Strategic Assessment, 25(1), 34-56.

sides of the same coin has been becoming a dominant thought in Pakistan's security apparatus in recent years¹¹⁷.

This view cannot be dismissed as Taliban's founding *emir* Mullah Omer in his lifetime had made efforts to remove differences among TTP leaders and the commanders like Hafiz Gul Bahadar in North Waziristan and Mullah Nazir in South Waziristan who at that time were not part of the TTP. Mullah Omer had announced a *shura* comprising all Taliban factions and a representative of Afghan Taliban deputy Mullah Sirajuddin Haqqani. Since then, the TTP has not only been practically supporting the Afghan Taliban's insurgency but its leader also publicly announced allegiance to the Afghan Taliban's current Amir Hibatullah Akhundzada¹¹⁸.

- TTP is using tactics of militancy and violence which in many ways are similar to those used by the Taliban in Afghanistan during the US and NATO military presence, including the practice of appointing shadow governors of provinces and instituting a centralized training system for the members.
- At political level, however, views vary from the need for an exclusive military approach against TTP to the vitality of a political approach for permanently ending this conflict. In general, the ruling Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and its allied parties do not favor dialogue with the TTP while Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) professes an approach that does not rule out the possibility of talks with the TTP, if needed.
- The Afghan Taliban while avoiding any comments on the ideological harmony with the TTP contend that these are Pakistani refugees living in Afghanistan and Pakistani authorities need

¹¹⁷Fazl-e-Haider, S. (2022), Al-Zawahiri's Killing Raises Tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Terrorism Monitor Volume, 20(20).

¹¹⁸ Gul, A. (2022A). "Taliban Claim US Drones Use Pakistan Airspace to Invade Afghanistan", VOA. 28/08/2022. <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-claim-us-drones-use-pakistanairspace-to-invade-afghanistan-/6719892.html>

to talk to them to address their concerns and enable them to go back to Pakistan. However, at times particularly after some major terrorist incidents in Pakistan the Afghan interim government itself contradicts its stance by denying the TTP's presence on the Afghan soil¹¹⁹.

- Pakistan and Afghanistan also have differing perceptions about possible solutions of the TTP threat to Pakistan. Pakistan expects Afghan side to take tough measures against the TTP commanders based in Afghanistan. The Afghan security institutions are reluctant to adopt a military approach partly because of their close linkages with the TTP leaders and partly to avoid pushing the TTP towards Daesh or other anti-Afghan Taliban outfits. The Afghan Taliban leaders in their engagement with Pakistan have continued to underline the need for more time and patience for addressing this challenge. Other proposals being explored also include relocation of the TTP commanders and their families to places in Afghanistan away from Pakistan's border, but these issues so far remain unsettled¹²⁰.

4.6 Dynamics of Bilateral Engagement

The prevalence of conflict, warfare, and militancy in Afghanistan for over past four decades has deeply affected the course of state-to-state engagement between the two countries. During this period, the bilateral political relations have been influenced by security considerations dominated by military and intelligence channels. This phenomenon has continued to overshadow the role of political channels as well as mutually dependent people to people and tribal ties. Successive Afghan governments during the presence of the US and NATO forces in

¹¹⁹ Gul, A. (2022B). "Fresh Border Clashes Between Pakistan, Afghanistan's Taliban", VOA. 15/12/2022. <https://www.voanews.com/a/fresh-border-clashes-between-pakistanafghanistan-s-taliban-/6878079.html> Hofmann,

¹²⁰ Human Rights Watch, (2022). "Afghanistan: Economic Roots of the Humanitarian Crisis", 01/03/2022. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/01/afghanistan-economic-roots-humanitarian-crisis>

Afghanistan had continued to emphasize the need for Pakistan to deal with the Afghan state and not the

Non-state actors (i.e. Afghan Taliban). Consequently, the bilateral engagement remained tense and manifested first in scuffles between the Pervez Musharraf regime and Afghan president Hamid Karzai, and later in the tirades of President Ashraf Ghani against Pakistani state particularly military establishment. This state of affairs prevented any result-oriented practical cooperation between the two sides despite establishment of a comprehensive institutional framework of APAPPS (Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity) in 2018.[20]

The dynamics did not change even after the Taliban resumed power in Afghanistan in August 2021. The Taliban actually took little time in assuming the established position of the Afghan state. In fact, in their official stance on many issues *viz a viz* Pakistan such as border fencing, the TTP, movement of people and trade and transit modalities, the Taliban have been even more vociferous than their predecessor governments. This obviously has been a source of great surprise and should be taken as a reality check by policymakers in Pakistan. Over the past twenty months under the Taliban's interim government, the political exchanges between the two countries have gradually almost completely dried up. There are no regular institutional contacts. The Afghan interim government has not shown any interest in reviving or reviewing the APAPPS mechanism or evolving an alternative for it. The Joint Coordination Committee has not been able to devise amicable ways for discussing and addressing cross-border issues in an effective manner¹²¹.

¹²¹ Hussain, A. (2022). "Afghanistan blames border clash on Pakistan's bid to build post", AlJazeera. 15/09/2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/15/afghanistan-blamesborder-clash-on-pakistans-bid-to-build-post>

Apparently, there is no appetite for expediting revision of APTTA and moving forth regional transit arrangements for trade and transit between Central Asia and Pakistan. The volume of bilateral trade and the share of Pakistan's ports in the Afghan transit trade has continued to consistently decline in recent years. The import of Afghanistan's coal and other minerals for industrial use has also been facing serious bottlenecks. Despite huge economic complementarity between the two countries the quantum of actual commercial exchanges has remained quite limited. The difficulties in properly comprehending and addressing each other's legitimate interests and concerns have progressively led to a visible decline in practical engagement¹²². The productive political exchanges at ministerial level are almost absent. There is a visible descent in diplomatic engagement. Since the Taliban takeover the Afghan embassy remains at Charge d'Affaires level. After an attack on Pakistan's Charge d'Affaires (Cd'A) on 2 December at the Embassy compound in Kabul claimed by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K), the level of representation in Pakistan's mission in Kabul is also now at a lower level. These developments have relayed a negative messaging about the overall bilateral relations which should be concerning for both countries as most of the neighbors of Afghanistan and important regional countries have ensured political and diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan despite the ensuing challenges¹²³.

The statements coming from the latest visit of a Pakistan delegation led by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and senior intelligence and civilian officials on 22 February 2023 to Kabul indicated reiteration of strong messaging of respective positions. It appeared that

¹²² Idrees, M. and Naazer, M, A. (2022), The dynamics of Pak-Afghan relations: an analysis of (mis)trust between the two countries from 2001-2018, *Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences*, 3(1), 525-539.

¹²³ Kaul, A. (2022). "In Afghanistan, Taliban Damage Border Fence Erected By Pakistan Army Along Durand Line", *Republicworld*. 26/01/2022. <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/in-afghanistantaliban-damage-border-fence-erected-by-pakistan-army-along-durand-linearticleshow.html>

Pakistan's singular focus was on action against the TTP while the Taliban emphasized its focus on enhancing movements of people, trade and economic cooperation. However, just a week later Pakistan's experienced Special Envoy Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq after serving for almost three years has relinquished his post¹²⁴.

One of the important indicators of the widening mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the constantly declining image and goodwill for Pakistan in Afghanistan. While on the one hand Pakistan's hospitality for hosting millions of Afghans on its soil for past several decades is deeply appreciated by all Afghans, at the same time Pakistan's state institutions come under serious criticism. This trend has continued to exacerbate even after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 and there is need for an objective introspection for a course correction on both sides¹²⁵.

4.7 Challenges to Pakistan after Regime Change in Afghanistan

Despite the state level frictions, a fair degree of connectivity had existed between Afghanistan and Pakistan prior to "Jihad" years. The tribal people living on both sides used to cross the border on a daily basis without much documentation under a system of easement rights. There was regular flow of public and private traffic between Peshawar and Kabul. The independent studies indicated that as late as 2010 thousands of people crossed border for socio-economic needs without any restrictions. In recent decades, the movements of people and trade

¹²⁴ Khan, I, A. (2023). "TTP 'major thorn' in ties between Islamabad, Kabul", DAWN. 08/01/2023. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1730526>

¹²⁵ Khan, T. (2022). "TTP extends ceasefire until May 30 as talks continue in Afghanistan", DAWN. 18/05/2023. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1690288/ttp-extends-ceasefire-untilmay-30-as-talks-continue-in-afghanistan>

between the two countries have continued to become more difficult due to increasing militarization of the border.

The lack of bilateral engagement and prevailing mutual mistrust are impeding progress on the larger agenda of trans-Afghan connectivity which can be a game-changer for the regional integration. The opportunities on 2,600 km long Pakistan-Afghanistan border for opening several new trade, transit and transport corridors in the region have been identified in recent years but remain unattended and unutilized. Pakistan's ports of Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar connecting with Afghanistan, China, Central Asian countries, Iran and Eurasia can revolutionize the existing poor regional connectivity networks only if facilitative procedures are instituted. So far, the vital needs for modernization of the border crossings have remained subdued due to a combination of counterterrorism considerations and corrupt mafias making fortunes through smuggling of goods, money laundering and human and drug trafficking¹²⁶.

The long years of war have prevented development of infrastructure linking Afghanistan with its neighbors. However, in recent years Afghanistan has already established railways in its north with Uzbekistan (Hairatan-Mazar-e- Sharif) Turkmenistan (Kushka-Torghundi) and Iran (Khaf-Herat). The transportation of cargo from China via Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan route and from Turkey through Iran and Turkmenistan route are now operational. While on the one hand Afghanistan has plans to build north-south and east-west railway linkages on Afghan territory, building Quetta-Kandahar and Peshawar-Jalalabad railways will be important for attracting Central Asian trade through South Asian ports. The trans-Afghan trilateral railway[35] project

¹²⁶Khan, W, S. (2023). "As Pakistan confronts the Taliban, Washington backs Islamabad — kind of", GZERO. 09/01/2023. <https://www.gzeromedia.com/as-pakistan-confronts-the-taliban-washington-backs-islamabad-kind-of>

linking Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan has shown signs of renewed enthusiasm, but the momentum would depend on how the challenges of security, political interaction and funding are dealt with by the three countries¹²⁷.

Pakistan is currently facing severe economic and energy crises and needs early progress on mega-energy projects through Afghanistan such as TAPI gas pipeline, CASA-1000 and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) electricity transmission line. Peaceful Afghanistan provides avenues for transporting LPG supplies from Central Asia to Pakistan by road through Afghanistan, but the two countries have not yet paid serious attention to exploring this option. These connectivity projects can accrue economic activity and prosperity for both Afghanistan and Pakistan¹²⁸.

Apart from the gaps in Pakistan-Afghanistan engagement, a number of other factors also play a crucial role in scuttling the efforts for achieving concrete progress on projects of regional connectivity through Afghanistan. These are narrated below¹²⁹.

- First, the regressive environment in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover has continued to put hurdles in evolving an inclusive political framework. As a result, restrictions on girls' education and women access to work have led to economic sanctions and international isolation of Afghanistan. Suspension of transactions with Afghan banks and travel restrictions on senior Taliban ministers and leaders is also hindering connectivity initiatives.

¹²⁷ H. (2023). "training invite for Taliban diplomats, a clarification in Delhi follows", Hindustan Times, 13/03/2023. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/ontraining-invite-for-taliban-diplomats-a-clarification-in-delhi-follows101678721862032.html>

¹²⁸ Raz, I, G. (2023). "Pakistan's economic crisis endangers the world – opinion", The Jerusalem Post. 01/03/2023. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-732994>

¹²⁹ Reuters. (2022). Indian officials meet Taliban in Kabul in first visit since U.S. exit. 02/06/2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indian-officials-visit-kabul-first-talibanmeet-since-us-left-2022-06-02/>

- Secondly, the growing US-China tensions and competition for global supremacy is expected to continue to prevent consensus building on the way forward on engagement with the Afghan interim government. China's quest in the previous years for extending CPEC to Afghanistan as an arm of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was effectively resisted by previous Afghan governments. China's major projects in Afghanistan including Ainak Copper mining in Logar and Amu Darya oil exploration projects have also not moved forward in a significant way.
- Thirdly, following the conflict in Ukraine, Afghanistan and this region has receded in the strategic priorities of the US and Europe. There are indications that Ukraine conflict is likely to prolong making it difficult for Western donors to make investments in the mega connectivity projects in Afghanistan.
- Lastly, serious challenges remain to regional consensus on Afghanistan. India as a major regional country and also a member of Quad remains wary of any increase in China's space in Afghanistan. India and Pakistan also continue to fail to reconcile their perspectives for peace, stability and connectivity in Afghanistan. Russia remains extremely cautious to the prevailing environment in Afghanistan as a threat to Central Asia and itself. These and many other clashing regional dimensions continue to prevent an open approach for economic integration and connectivity through Afghanistan¹³⁰.

4.8 Pakistan, the Taliban, and the TTP

Pakistan thought that the ascent of the Afghan Taliban to power in that country would aid it in dealing with the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), another militant group that has been active in its territory since 2007. This notion was swiftly refuted, as it was discovered that the TTP's

¹³⁰ Riedel, B. (2021). Pakistan's problematic victory in Afghanistan, Brookings Institute, 24/08/2021.

activities in Pakistan are both supported and ignored by the Afghan Taliban. The TTP is an affiliate group of the Afghan Taliban, with a similar philosophy centered on the establishment of a violent coup in Pakistan to establish a halachic state (as defined by the 'Sharia'). Like the Afghan Taliban, the majority of the organization's members are Pashtuns. Following internal splits and other challenges in 2014–2015¹³¹, in 2018, the TTP reappeared and began attacking Pakistani security forces. Following the Taliban's portrayal of victory over the West following their takeover in August 2021, the TTP, along with other jihadist groups, became highly motivated and believed that a coup of such kind might also occur in Pakistan.¹³²

From August 2021 onwards, the TTP has not only multiplied its attacks but also greatly expanded the number of its operators. Between 7,000 and 10,000 TTP members are thought to be operating in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, according to the Pakistani Ministry of Interior.¹³³ Regarding Pakistan, the initial months of the Afghan Taliban's mediation of peace talks between Pakistan and the TTP resulted in the signing of temporary ceasefire agreements, fulfilling the expectations that were placed in them to oppose the TTP. On the one hand, the Taliban's apparent neutrality helped to reassure Pakistanis, but it also prevented it from abandoning the TTP.

¹³¹ Sakhi, N. (2022). The Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan and Security Paradox, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 9(3), 383–401.

¹³² Sayed, A. and Jadoon, A. (2022), Understanding Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's Unrelenting Posture. George Town University Program on Extremism. 16/08/2022.

¹³³ Shah, A. (2021). What Will Happen to Afghanistan and Pakistan's Uneasy Border?, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 13/08/2021.

Following the three sides' May 2022 sessions, an official from the Taliban stated: "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is sincerely attempting to advance the process." It is our desire that both parties will be cordial and accommodating."¹³⁴.

Under the surface, though, the Taliban's views on the TTP were different. First, Pakistan has charged the Taliban on multiple occasions of ignoring TTP assaults in Pakistan that have their roots in Afghanistan. These led to several confrontations between TTP members and Pakistani security forces in the countries' border regions, allegations back and forth between Pakistan and the Taliban, and even direct encounters involving Afghan Taliban members and Pakistani security personnel. According to the Pakistan Research Institute's 2022 Security Report, the TTP conducts a large number of operations from within Afghanistan, and occasionally the Afghan border guard troops are involved in these occurrences.

The exchange of fire and attacks in the border areas resulted in temporary closures of the border crossings between the countries, which are an essential axis in trade between the countries¹³⁵. For instance, a gunfight broke out in the Chaman district of the Pakistani province of Balochistan in December 2022, not far from the border. Pakistan temporarily stopped the area's crossing border after the incident, blaming the Taliban, who then took back the blame¹³⁶. Second, a number of reports suggested that the TTP was recruiting Afghan Taliban fighters. Prior to August 2021, the majority of Taliban agents were militants who helped bring about the

¹³⁴Summers, J., Mehta, J. and Jarenwattananon, P. (2022), "After decades of opposing the Taliban, India may be forming a relationship with them", NRP, 27/07/2022. <https://www.npr.org/2022/07/27/1113835454/taliban-india-pakistan-afghanistan-us-ttpcounterterrorism-earthquake-crisis>

¹³⁵ Natasha Turak, "China's Rumored Ambitions to Dive into Afghanistan Are Overstated and Unrealistic, Experts Say," CNBC, September 9, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/09/chinas-rumored-aims-to-dive-into-afghanistan-are-exaggerated-experts.html>.

¹³⁶Borzou Daragahi, Afghanistan: Where US-Iranian Interests May Yet Intersect, Atlantic Council, May 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/AC-Talibans-IB-v4.pdf>.

conquest of Afghanistan. Many of these activists were left jobless, disoriented, and mostly without direction once the conflict with the old Afghan security forces ended. Due to their upbringing in the shadow of the jihad and their education in madrassas, many of them were motivated by this fact to search for new challenges. For some, joining the TTP, which advances a similar agenda, fit like a glove.

For instance, a TTP agent who had previously battled with the Afghan Taliban detonated himself within a Pakistani army camp in March 2022¹³⁷. Afghanistan-Pakistan ties suffered greatly as a result of the Taliban's provision of sanctuary and failure to stop attacks by TTP members, who are mostly to blame for the majority of terrorist attacks that have occurred in Pakistan since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan. The Afghan and Pakistani Taliban's jihadist-Pashtun worldview led the Kabul authorities to back the TTP while, conversely, failing to stop security crises in Pakistan.¹³⁸

4.9 Overthrow of the Taliban from power

The commanders of the Taliban were left with few choices after the US and NATO forces invaded Afghanistan and removed the group from power. Most crucially, they were welcomed by their friends across their eastern border, especially the ISI activists who regarded them as strategically significant in the long run. Gradually, and mostly out of the public eye, Pakistan assisted the Taliban in their recuperation with the ultimate goal of enabling them to retake control of Kabul. The Taliban activists at the time might have likewise considered the Pakistanis to be devoted allies, and they might have planned to behave similarly to what was

¹³⁷ Antonio Giustozzi, "Alliances Were Key to the Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan," Newlines Institute, September 9, 2021, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/afghanistan/alliances-were-key-to-the-taliban-takeover-of-afghanistan/>.

¹³⁸ Samuel Ramani, "Russia and the Taliban: Potential Partners?" RUSI, September 14, 2021, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russiaand-taliban-prospective-partners>.

expected of them in Pakistan eventually. Afghanistan was in a terrible economic state when the Taliban received it.¹³⁹

Prior to gaining control, the United States acted as the primary source of funding for the nation's economy, which was 75% dependent on outside sources. In addition to providing financial support, the United States and the World Bank ran the Afghanistan Reconstructive Trust Fund (ARTF), which provided funds for educators, healthcare workers, and other organizations. In addition, a large number of non-governmental and human rights organizations that supported Afghanistan's population and nation were working there¹⁴⁰. Given their chosen strategy of removing women from the workforce, the Taliban recognized that, on the one hand, the situation would only get worse after gaining power and, on the other that it would only lead to a spike in the unemployment rate and subsequent international sanctions.

Because of the Taliban's opposition to foreign involvement in national affairs, the operations of those international organizations will be suspended, aid packages from other nations will be reduced (the US, for example, has frozen \$7 billion in aid), and trade with other nations will decline, all of which will negatively impact the economy. It was evident that the Taliban needed outside assistance to maintain control of the nation in addition to the disastrous mistakes they made. On one side of the barrier stood India, a nation of 1.4 billion people. By 2030, is predicted by a number of estimations to rank third in the world's power rankings, behind China and the United States. Prior to the Taliban 2.0 taking power, India managed over 500

¹³⁹ Osborn, "Russia Says Kabul Seems Safer under Taliban than It Was under Ghani," Reuters, August 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/usafghanistan-conflict-russia-idAFKBN2FH2AB>.

¹⁴⁰ Raz, I, G. (2023). "Pakistan's economic crisis endangers the world – opinion", The Jerusalem Post. 01/03/2023. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-732994>

projects in 34 provinces of Afghanistan in a variety of sectors, including energy supply, water management, education, and agriculture.

Furthermore, India conveyed its amicable demeanour and readiness to assist the Afghans in other ways like providing wheat¹⁴¹. Pakistan, which has shown itself to be politically and economically unstable over time, was on the other side of the border. The country's enormous debt to the World Monetary Fund, the deposal of its previous president, Imran Khan, in April 2020 following a vote of no confidence, and the devastating floods that struck the nation in the summer of 2022 are just a few of the many issues. India is the wise decision that will benefit the Taliban in the long run in such a geopolitical reality where they must pick between Pakistan and India¹⁴².

According to a spokeswoman for the Taliban Foreign Ministry on Twitter, Indian diplomats came in Afghanistan for the first time in early June 2022 to negotiate trade, humanitarian aid, and bilateral relations. He went on to say that without meddling in Afghanistan's domestic problems, India wishes to assist Afghanistan with a number of infrastructure projects, education, and other initiatives. According to a number of reports following the meeting, India reopened its embassy in Kabul, despite the fact that, like the rest of the world, it does not formally recognize the Taliban government. Senior representatives of the Taliban's foreign ministry were even invited to participate virtually in the esteemed Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training programme¹⁴³. Furthermore, it was stated that more

¹⁴¹ Sakhi, N. (2022). The Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan and Security Paradox, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 9(3), 383–401.

¹⁴² Sayed, A. and Jadoon, A. (2022), Understanding Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's Unrelenting Posture. George Town University Program on Extremism. 16/08/2022.

¹⁴³ Ayaz Gul, "Russia Says 'Inclusive' Afghan Government Key to Recognizing Taliban," VOA News, June 15, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-saysinclusive-afghan-government-key-to-recognizing-taliban-/6618812.html>.

than 20 Afghan cadets who started the Indian Academy's cadet programme prior to the Taliban taking power graduated in July 2022. These cadets were warmly received by the Taliban, who will probably put their skills to new use. If they were thought to be supporters of the former government, they would most likely be put in jail. Pakistanis consider the Taliban's stance to India as a serious challenge to their country's worldview, and it is a splinter in their eye¹⁴⁴.

4.10 National Sovereignty

The United States pledged to carry on its battle on international terrorism even after withdrawing its final troops from Afghanistan—just without any ground troops. It gave the first indication of this on July 30, 2022, when it used a drone to assassinate Ayman al-Zawahiri, the head of al-Qaeda at the time, in the center of Kabul. Only two days had passed since US Central Command Commander Michael Eric Korilla and Pakistan Army Chief of Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa spoke over the phone. Beyond the significance of the US taking out al-Qaeda's chief, the fact that the Taliban was shown providing support to the group's commander in defiance of the disgusting deal that led to their exit demonstrated to the world that no one can be trusted.

For their side, the Taliban accused Pakistan of helping the Americans, a claim that the Pakistanis refuted. Reports suggested that the American drone attacked from Pakistani territory in addition to the phone contact made two days prior to the strike, which might have provided the Americans with intelligence information from Pakistan. Muhammad Yaqoob, the defence minister for the Taliban, said that even before the assassination, he had warned the neighbouring

¹⁴⁴ Nayanima Basu, "India Reopens Embassy in Kabul, Sends 'Technical Team' with Relief Material for Afghanistan," Print, June 23, 2022, <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/india-reopens-embassy-in-kabul-sends-technical-team-with-relief-material-for-afghanistan/1009400/>.

countries of "bad consequences" for assisting the United States in using their territory. He also expressed his outrage at the flagrant breach of Afghanistan's territorial sovereignty. Tensions were also raised on the Pakistani side by this incident. Asim Ifikhar Ahmed, the spokesman for Islamabad's foreign minister, dismissed the Taliban's charges, calling them baseless accusations that go against the standards of responsible diplomatic behavior¹⁴⁵.

A few months prior, in April 2022, the Afghani army of Pakistan launched a series of strikes on many targets in the border regions of the provinces of Kunar and Khost, without consulting the Taliban. The Pakistanis claimed that the attack was directed towards TTP (Pakistani Taliban) militants who, they claimed, exploited Afghanistan's territory to launch attacks into Pakistan (a topic that will be covered in more detail in the following chapter). The foreign minister called the Pakistani envoy and threatened to harm him if he continued to carry out violent acts on Afghan soil following the attacks that claimed the lives of at least 37 civilians¹⁴⁶. The hostility and mistrust that exist between Pakistan and the Taliban over Afghanistan's sovereignty violations are made clear by these two occurrences. On the one hand, the death of al-Qaeda's chief served as a reminder to the Taliban that, when it came to security, it could not rely on Pakistan, so long as the country supports the US covertly and with intelligence gathering. However, it gave the Taliban the impression that Pakistan feels free to operate militarily in Afghanistan without getting its consent—at least not in an offensive that resulted in numerous civilian deaths and widespread public indignation¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁵Navbahor Imamova, "Nearly 30 Nations Engage With Taliban at Tashkent Conference", Voice of America, July 22, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/almost-30-nations-engage--taliban-at-tashkent-conference-/6676107.html>.

¹⁴⁶Andrew England and Benjamin Parkin, "Qatar Urges West to Engage with Taliban to Stem Crisis in Afghanistan," Financial Times, May 29, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/0a9f41c3-b3ab-4c2d-81a2-c7b40169683d>.

¹⁴⁷Temur Umarov, "Why Tajikistan Is Taking a Stand against the Taliban," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 26, 2021, <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/85649>.

4.11 The Durand Line

Walls and canals along the border after finishing the construction of 1,100 km of canals along the Durand Line in 2016. For the Taliban, which is primarily composed of Pashtuns who live between the two sides of the border, this is a move that weakens the group's unity and restricts their freedom of movement, even though Pakistan sought to stop drug smuggling and the entry of terrorists into the nation¹⁴⁸. The Afghan government did not recognize the boundaries, same like the Kabul regimes before Taliban 2.0, but Taliban 2.0's resistance was more aggressive. After issuing warnings, the Taliban destroyed the works barrier and the fence at multiple checkpoints. Even more, one of the Taliban leaders stationed at the border declared, "We will not tolerate any more of what (Pakistan) did in the past. The fence won't be worked on any longer¹⁴⁹ .

Some border clashes between Pakistani forces, TTP, and Taliban forces resulted in damage to the barrier in addition to protests against the Durand Line, which divides Pashtuns. Since August 2021, the Taliban's ties with Pakistan have been severely hampered by the lack of consensus on the lengthy border between the two nations. This disagreement is predicted to remain a source of tension in both the diplomatic and militancy spheres between the two nations¹⁵⁰ .

¹⁴⁸ Vinay Kaura, "Tajikistan's Evolving Relations with the Taliban 2.0," Middle East Institute, December 1, 2021, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/tajikistans-evolvingrelations-taliban-20>.

¹⁴⁹ Navbahor Imamova, "Uzbekistan Seeks to Engage Taliban without Alienating West," VOA News, May 4, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/uzbekistan-seeks-toengage-taliban-without-alienating-west/6557338.html>.

¹⁵⁰ Kelly Petillo, "Turkey's Open Door Closes: How Europe Can Better Support Syrian Refugees," European Council on Foreign Relations, May 9, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/turkeys-open-door-closes-how-europe-can-better-support-syrian-refugees>.

4.12 Pakistan Policy towards Afghanistan

Over the past two years, the Pakistani government has treaded cautiously in its depiction of the ties between the Taliban and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), despite ample evidence suggesting the Taliban's backing of the TTP, commonly known as the Pakistani Taliban, through the provision of safe havens and other forms of support. However, this stance shifted recently in 2023 when Care taken prime minister of Pakistan Kakar diverged from this diplomatic stance, acknowledging "clear evidence" of the Taliban facilitating terrorism by the TTP in certain instances. Shortly after his statement, Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, Asif Durrani, echoed Kakar's criticism of the Taliban, remarking that "peace in Afghanistan has indeed turned into a nightmare for Pakistan"¹⁵¹.

Although served as Pakistan's interim prime minister until the country holds elections, he believed to have close ties to Pakistan's military. His statement follows Pakistan's contentious decision to expel 1.7 million undocumented Afghan refugees, with over 327,000 refugees already forced to return to Afghanistan since the expulsion announcement. Moreover, Kakar's statement came amid significant TTP attacks, including a bold attempt to seize control of a border district in northern Pakistan. According Najam the statement of Anwal Ul Haq Kakar and its timing carry considerable weight, signaling not only his stance as the interim leader but also reflecting the latest policy shift spearheaded by the military, suggesting that Pakistan has grown weary of the Taliban's backing of the TTP and seeks to pressure the Taliban, at least until they reconsider their support for the TTP¹⁵².

¹⁵¹Ubaid, K. 2023. "Analyzing the Dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations after Taliban Takeover." *South Asian Studies* 31(3).

¹⁵²Najam, I. 2024. "Taliban and Pakistan." *Journal of National Politics*60.

Under this new policy approach, Pakistan has initiated a comprehensive pressure campaign to compel the Taliban to reassess and withdraw its support for the TTP. Given Pakistan's lengthy border with landlocked Afghanistan and its historical support and provision of refuge to the Taliban for nearly two decades, it possesses unique leverage over Afghan politics. The primary tactic in this strategy is Pakistan's expulsion of refugees, acknowledged by Kakar as a means to exert pressure on the Taliban. Additionally, Pakistan has curtailed economic and trade ties to inflict economic strain on the Taliban. Furthermore, Pakistan has declared that it will refrain from advocating for the Afghan Taliban's recognition at the international level, indicating a downgraded level of engagement with the Taliban, consistent with its approach since August 2021. The Taliban's backing of the TTP and Pakistan's evolving pressure campaign suggest a trajectory of sustained deterioration in the Taliban-Pakistan relationship over the long term

4.13 Pakistan Response to Afghanistan since August 2021

Pakistan's response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 has been multifaceted, reflecting its complex relationship with its western neighbor and its strategic interests in the region¹⁵³. Here are some key aspects of Pakistan's response:

i. Recognition of the Taliban Government:

Pakistan, along with some other countries, including China and Russia, initially adopted a cautious approach regarding the recognition of the Taliban government. While Pakistan did not immediately recognize the Taliban regime, it emphasized the importance of engagement and dialogue with the new Afghan leadership.

ii. Calls for Inclusive Government:

¹⁵³Basit, Abdul. "New kid on the block." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*, 2022: 19 8–12.

Pakistan consistently advocated for an inclusive government in Afghanistan that represents all ethnic groups and factions. It urged the Taliban to fulfill their commitments to inclusivity, respect for human rights, and protection of minorities, particularly women and girls.

iii. Humanitarian Assistance:

Pakistan has been actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, including food, medical supplies, and other forms of aid to address the humanitarian crisis exacerbated by conflict, displacement, and economic challenges. Pakistani authorities have facilitated the transportation of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan through land routes and airspace.

iv. Border Management:

Pakistan reinforced security measures along its border with Afghanistan to prevent illegal cross-border movement, smuggling, and infiltration of militants. It has deployed additional troops and enhanced surveillance to maintain border security and prevent spillover of instability from Afghanistan into Pakistani territory.

v. Diplomatic Engagement:

Pakistan has engaged in diplomatic efforts to support peace and stability in Afghanistan, including hosting high-level meetings with Afghan officials, regional stakeholders, and international partners. Pakistani officials have participated in various forums and conferences to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and explore diplomatic solutions to the crisis.

vi. Refugee Management:

Pakistan has expressed concerns about the potential influx of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into its territory due to the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. While reiterating its commitment to hosting Afghan refugees on humanitarian grounds, Pakistan has called for international support to manage and address the refugee crisis effectively.

vii. Counterterrorism Cooperation:

Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to counterterrorism cooperation with Afghanistan and international partners to combat terrorist threats emanating from Afghan soil. It has emphasized the importance of intelligence-sharing, border management, and coordinated efforts to prevent terrorist activities and ensure regional security.

Overall, Pakistan's response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has been guided by its interests in promoting peace, stability, and security in the region while safeguarding its own national security concerns. Pakistan continues to navigate the evolving situation in Afghanistan through diplomatic engagement, humanitarian assistance, and security cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

4.14 Threats Matrix to Pakistan

Developing a threat matrix involves identifying potential threats and assessing their likelihood and potential impact. In the case of Pakistan, considering its proximity to Afghanistan and the historical context of their relationship, here's a threat matrix outlining potential threats Pakistan faces from Afghanistan:

4.14.1 Threats:

i. Terrorism and Insurgency:

Pakistan has faced threats from various terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan, such as the Taliban, Haqqani Network, and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). These groups may launch cross-border attacks, carry out bombings, or engage in insurgency activities, leading to loss of lives and destabilization in Pakistan.

ii. Border Infiltration:

Infiltration of militants, smugglers, and illegal immigrants across the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border poses security challenges for Pakistan. This could lead to increased criminal activities, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and challenges for border security forces.

iii. Ethnic and Sectarian Tensions:

Pakistan has diverse ethnic and sectarian demographics, and conflicts in Afghanistan could exacerbate tensions among different groups within Pakistan. Ethnic Pashtuns and religious

minorities, in particular, may face marginalization or discrimination, leading to social unrest and communal violence.

iv. Refugee Crisis:

Escalation of conflicts or instability in Afghanistan could lead to a significant influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan. This could strain resources, create socio-economic challenges, and potentially harbor militants or criminal elements among the refugee population.

v. Proxy Warfare and Geopolitical Rivalries:

Pakistan and Afghanistan have been arenas for proxy warfare between regional and global powers. External actors may exploit the instability in Afghanistan to further their interests, exacerbating tensions between Pakistan and its neighbors or contributing to regional conflicts.

vi. Cross-Border Militancy and Extremism:

Militant groups in Afghanistan may seek sanctuary, training, and support networks in bordering areas of Pakistan. This could lead to the spread of extremist ideologies, recruitment of militants, and collaboration between Afghan and Pakistani militant groups, posing security threats to both countries.

4.14.2 Mitigation Strategies:

i. Strengthening Border Security:

Enhance surveillance, intelligence-sharing, and patrolling along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to prevent cross-border infiltration and illicit activities.

ii. Counterterrorism Cooperation:

Enhance cooperation with Afghan authorities, regional partners, and international organizations to combat terrorism, dismantle terrorist networks, and disrupt their funding and logistical support.

iii. Diplomatic Engagement:

Engage in dialogue and diplomacy with the Afghan government, regional stakeholders, and international partners to address common security concerns, promote stability, and support peace efforts in Afghanistan.

iv. Refugee Management:

Develop comprehensive refugee management policies, provide humanitarian assistance, and work with the international community to address the needs of Afghan refugees while ensuring border security and socio-economic stability in host communities.

v. Conflict Resolution:

Support inclusive political processes, reconciliation efforts, and intra-Afghan dialogue to resolve internal conflicts, address grievances, and promote stability and peace in Afghanistan, which would contribute to regional security.

vi. Socio-Economic Development:

Invest in socio-economic development, infrastructure, and governance in border regions to address root causes of instability, mitigate grievances, and foster community resilience against extremism and violence.

By understanding and addressing these threats through proactive measures and strategic cooperation, Pakistan can mitigate risks and contribute to regional peace and stability.

CHAPTER: 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

Pakistan cannot profit from its advantageous geostrategic location while dealing with unfriendly neighbors, yet the security of its Northern Western Frontier and Balochistan is in grave jeopardy. In Afghanistan, Pakistan will lose strategic depth, and the demoted Pakistan will be unable to use Afghanistan to connect Central Asia. Indian military training for Afghan troops may exacerbate competition between Kabul and Islamabad, posing a military danger to Pakistan on its western frontier. Water conflict is another important issue for Pakistan as a result of the Indo-Afghan connection. The Kabul River is a large river that originates in Afghanistan and runs through Pakistan. Afghanistan is also a country with a water shortage, which it hopes to alleviate by building hydroelectric projects and diverting water to its major rivers to irrigate its arid land.

The Kabul River has a total annual flow of 16.5 million acre feet, of which 8.5 million acre feet flows into Pakistan as the Chitral River. However, due of Indian crookedness, Afghanistan plans to construct 12 dams to redirect the flow of the Kabul River. This is an attempt to exacerbate Islamabad-Kabul relations. Pakistan is the river's first upper riparian country. Pakistan has the option of building a dam across the Chitral River, depriving Afghanistan of more than half of the water it receives from the Kabul River. Following the departure of US soldiers, the Afghan Taliban's assumption of power in the nation has raised concerns in neighbouring Pakistan over potential security consequences. This blog article examines the potential impact of the situation in Afghanistan on the security landscape in Pakistan. Afghanistan has seen upheaval since its involvement in the 'Cold War' between the

erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States. The US' entry in Afghanistan in 2001 initiated the longest conflict in the history of the country. Subsequently, the nation has been unable to attain political stability, rendering it an unattainable goal regardless of the conditions.

Following the Taliban's assumption of power in Afghanistan, there have been discussions and assessments that raise concerns about the potential security consequences for neighbouring and regional nations. Approximately twenty years ago, the United States launched a military intervention in Afghanistan as a retaliatory measure after the 9/11 attacks orchestrated by Al-Qaeda militants, who had used Afghanistan as their operational headquarters. For a period of twenty years, American soldiers, in collaboration with their NATO partners, were stationed in Afghanistan, engaging in combat against Al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. Nevertheless, the United States swiftly diverged from its initial objectives and proceeded to disseminate its political and ideological sway not just inside Afghanistan but also throughout the broader region.

It attempted to build a centralised democracy via military operations. Afghanistan quickly became a focal point for efforts to protect women's rights and promote education as a means of addressing the country's challenges. To what extent did the United States achieve stability throughout its extended two-decade engagement in Afghanistan? Conversely, neighbouring nations of Afghanistan are closely monitoring the situation, not just with regards to security, but also in relation to their own national interests. Pakistan has mostly borne the burden of instability in Afghanistan among all the neighbouring nations.

In the era known as the 'cold war', Islamabad assisted the United States in implementing a policy to remove the Soviets from Afghanistan. This assistance involved training the Mujahideen, with the support of the US, and sending them to Afghanistan. However, over time, Islamabad became a target of the former Mujahideen and subsequently the Tehreek-e-Taliban

Pakistan (TTP), an armed Islamist group located along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The TTP's objective is to overthrow the Pakistani government. The majority of its members now operate inside the borders of Afghanistan, while not being affiliated with the Afghan Taliban.

The decline in Afghanistan-Pakistan ties, namely the Taliban-Pakistan relations, after the American pullout in August 2021 may be attributed to the institutionalization process undertaken by the Taliban as they transitioned from a non-state violent player to a state actor. During the Taliban's struggle for power in Afghanistan as a terrorist opposition, it received support from Pakistan. However, after the Taliban gained control, its objectives and priorities shifted. From a pragmatic standpoint, the Taliban saw that due to the challenging economic conditions in their country, it would be more advantageous for them to seek support from India, a stronger and more stable nation than their Muslim neighbor Pakistan, who is their enemy.

In addition, India has no inclination to meddle in the internal matters of the Taliban. Simultaneously, Pakistan sometimes saw Afghanistan as its "proxy" and transgressed Afghanistan's sovereignty by launching attacks on the country without the Taliban's cooperation. As the Taliban underwent institutionalization, it persisted in adhering to its ethnic-religious ideology and provided assistance to the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) in their conflict against the Pakistani government. The provision of this assistance led to strained relations between Kabul and Islamabad, resulting in the exchange of allegations, clashes between militants, and brief shutdowns of the border crossings. Given this context, the ideological dispute over the Durand boundary between the nations, which divides the Pashtun minority, has exacerbated tensions and resulted in border fence incidents.

Despite the Taliban's control over Afghanistan, Pakistan maintains a preference for an inclusive political resolution that encompasses all ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Pakistan firmly believes that the problem at hand cannot be resolved via military means. Conversely, it is probable that Pakistan would eventually acknowledge and develop relations with a government run by the Taliban, on the condition that they prevent any kind of terrorism against Pakistan, including the use of their territory by groups like the TTP. If the Taliban-led government is acknowledged, there is a possibility that the Taliban may be less inclined to help India's attempts to engage in proxy conflicts in Pakistan by using its territory, as a reciprocal arrangement.

However, Pakistan and other regional powers, including China, would only acknowledge Afghanistan if they cease the practice of permitting foreign militants and terrorists. The idea of non-interference is a fundamental aspect of the Doha deal, which was endorsed by the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan's apprehensions over potential security ramifications arising from the volatile situation in Afghanistan are well-founded, and Islamabad seems to be making preparations to address the overflow consequences inside its own security sphere. Islamabad is determined to avoid any circumstances that may jeopardize the hard-won peace it attained via a protracted and violent battle against terrorism inside its borders. This is the rationale for its inability to adopt a "stay-away" approach. According to Touqir Hussain, a former Pakistani ambassador, Pakistan may believe that it is advantageous to distance itself from the Afghan crisis. However, it is inevitable that the Afghan conflict would have an impact on Pakistan.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are provided, as are the policy implications for Afghanistan-Pakistan connections. This includes Pakistani authorities, as well as wider audiences involved in the bilateral relationship. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, many of this advice were derived directly

from discussions with people who had lived there for years. A big task lies ahead in putting all of these ideas into action. In the past, such measures have failed. Political will and local factors will determine their success. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the Afghan-Pakistani conflict, but if conditions allow, each of the recommendations marks a step in the right direction. As long as stability continues to deteriorate, this advice may no longer be valid. Even in tough times, those latent links could open the door to future Afghan and regional stability if they can be maintained.

They establish familiarity, put ideas to the test, and keep channels of communication open. They should include Afghans and Pakistanis from various backgrounds and sectors to ensure that a varied variety of opinions are included, particularly those from border areas that are most directly affected by bilateral tensions. Although track 2 discussions have the greatest impact when performed in conjunction with track 1 discussion, they can assist sustain ties even when formal contacts are not available. Representatives from the Pashtun community should be included. Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line speak the same language and have similar cultures, which makes it easier to build confidence. Concerns over Pashtun nationalism among Pakistan's security establishment may restrict the good impact of including such voices in negotiations.

5.2.1 Concentrate on bilateral issues:

Negotiations that do not directly include Pakistan's regional competition with India are more likely to produce outcomes, notwithstanding their difficulties Discussed are the effects of climate change on everyone, the narcotics trade, and the status, prospective regularisation, and future return of Afghan refugees to Pakistan Prioritize topics that don't instantly breach either state's sovereignty or security concerns in the initial discussions. These negotiations could pave

the way for the return of some refugees and the regularization of others, as well as drug interdiction coordination and cross-border climate mitigation collaboration. Such negotiations are also more likely to succeed if they are held in a more stable environment.

5.2.2 Consider the following options for border management:

A third rail in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, the Durand Line, according to traditional wisdom is a conversation killer. Due to Pakistani border fencing and FATA's reintegration into Pakistani society, some Afghans recognized that the border is now a reality on the ground. Afghanistan is faced with other issues and maintains its irredentist claims solely as leverage against its more powerful neighbour and for internal political consumption. Both sides would benefit if Afghanistan acknowledged the Durand Line in a private, de facto manner in exchange for Pakistan's commitments to minimize its backing of proxies and enable transit, as well as work toward a lessening of border tensions. Given the sensitivity of this topic, it is best explored if an opening for dialogue develops rather than in the context of greater instability.

5.2.3 Establish a regular system of military-to-military contact:

Tactical consultations, on the other hand, have dominated bilateral security coordination to date. Most border incidents will result in a meeting, not a formal one, say experts. Because the Durand Line is so important for both sides' security, Afghanistan's security forces are unable to match Pakistan's troop deployment along the Durand Line. Even if they become more difficult to maintain as instabilities develop, these dialogues provide a critical path for dispute resolution and crisis de-escalation in case of an emergency.

5.2.4 Intensify intelligence-sharing efforts

Intelligence exchange has been limited due to the mistrust between the two sides' intelligence services. Even though a proposed intelligence memorandum of agreement in 2015 sparked controversy, the November 2020 Joint Vision Document called for "reenergizing" intelligence sharing on "adversaries of peace."

APAPPS calls for both sides to build Ground Coordination Centers along the border to facilitate intelligence exchange. However, if instability increases, such exchanges will become more difficult. However, they could provide an opportunity to discuss mutual challenges, like the Islamic State-Khorasan Province.

5.2.5 Using Domestic Policy to Show Good Trust:

Because of Pakistan's treatment of its Pashtun community along the Durand Line, many in Afghanistan who support Pashtun nationalism are enraged, and Pakistan's sincerity in bilateral outreach is questioned. Islamabad should desist from such heavy-handed measures, given that this dynamic is detrimental to Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, and that the repression of Pashtun rights in Pakistan is troubling on its own and could foment instability. For the same reason, any unreasonable limitations on entering Afghan refugees should also be avoided.

Pakistan, on the other hand, considers the Afghan government's support for groups such as the PTM as a destabilizing intrusion into its domestic affairs. The Afghan leadership should refrain from making such comments notwithstanding their domestic political utility if they want to strengthen bilateral relations. If the security situation deteriorates more, these ideas will be increasingly difficult to put into practice, regardless of relative stability.

5.2.6 Assist in post-conflict reconstruction:

The Pashtun-dominated parts of Pakistan, such as Swat and the old FATA, have seen instability, but local politicians and members of civil society have learnt how to deal with it. This group of individuals could share experiences learned with their Afghan counterparts on issues such as radicalization and reintegration of DEs, as well as changes in the security sector and land use, and other governance changes as Afghanistan strives to recover from decades of violence such an initiative would be timely if relative quiet prevailed.

5.2.7 Consolidate momentum by implementing confidence-boosting initiatives

Additionally, both sides should think about implementing CBMs in tandem with these more sensitive sessions to build trust and increase demand for future involvement. An impressive list of initiatives has already been produced by the Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, which is a promising effort that has fostered effective working connections on a bilateral basis. 92 In the face of rising conflict, they should be maintained as much as possible in order to keep lines of communication open, notwithstanding their difficulties.

Trade frictions between the two countries must be reduced, and access to third-country markets should be made easier. Decreased fees and paperwork beyond APTTA requirements would be a good first step. This could be accomplished by agreeing to minimize unilateral border closures and to use the APTTA notifications process in the event that one is necessary. Taliban's recent seizure of Afghanistan's Chaman border crossing has hampered bilateral trade for now, but it's no less crucial for coordi's growth in the long run.

5.2.8 People-to-people exchanges:

If Pakistan wants to improve visa facilitation, it can expand visa-on-arrival processing, distribute electronic radar cards to Pashtun border towns, and offer additional scholarships to Afghan students, among other things. As the situation improves, Afghans may have a limited need to travel to Pakistan. If the two countries were to conduct cricket matches, they would be able to expand the scope of sport diplomacy. Cross-border religious engagements and performances by Afghan and Pakistani artists could also help DE securitize the connection.

5.2.9 Exercises involving the military and security:

As well as renewing its invitation to Afghan service members to attend its academies and staff colleges, Pakistan's military might further boost prospects for regular interservice cooperation through training exercises. Police and border security officials (especially the Frontier Corps) who have been

involved in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations for years in the erstwhile FATA could be involved.

5.2.10 Encouragement from the United States and other parties without encroachment

As a result, the United States and other third parties should encourage Afghanistan and Pakistan to engage in bilateral dialogue, without intervening or creating a dynamic where one or both countries participate solely to score international points. When conversations slow down or an unrelated event threatens progress, this outside interest can help keep the engagement on track by providing a sense of continuity. It is important for third parties to be patient and understand that discussions on long-standing problems will require a lot of time and only work if both sides participate freely and in their own interests.

5.2.11 Press for India-Pakistan dialogue on Afghanistan:

Backchannel communications between India and Pakistan might be revived, allowing both sides to engage in a fruitful quiet debate about their respective roles in Afghanistan. Rather than a bridge to better relations, this question is likely to cause friction between Islamabad and New Delhi, making efforts to avert future confrontation all the more important. However, a private description of mutually accepted parameters for future involvement could reduce stress and give a channel for inevitable conflicts to be addressed in private.

5.2.12 Explore options to verify commitments:

Given the persistent mistrust between the two sides, the United States or another third party could function as a guarantee of commitments established during negotiations. These responsibilities, however, come with their own set of challenges that could force the United States to arbitrate conflicts that would be better addressed bilaterally if they were defined correctly. US intelligence and diplomatic skills allow it to function as a neutral clearinghouse for information between the two sides in limited circumstances, while also shaping expectations

about the extent of its involvement in those situations. These functions may be housed under the United Nations, which would increase their perceived importance. United States and other parties should focus on five issues in particular to prevent tensions from complicating or closing bilateral ties.

5.2.13 Bilateral Breakdown

It's a distraction from the issue at hand when both Afghanistan and Pakistan have an immediate interest in preventing escalation of the conflict. To avoid the recent rupture from hurting attempts to negotiate a resolution, the United States and third parties should exert strong pressure on leaders in both capitals.

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