



PAK-AFGHAN TIES: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan have existed for a long time and can be traced back to five key factors: security interest considerations, cross-border ties and connectivity, geopolitical dynamics, national sovereignty concerns, and regional and international relations. These forces will have an influence on the long-term stability prospects in Afghanistan and the surrounding area if they work together. A tight eye will be kept on the battlefield, given the possibility of escalation following the withdrawal of the US and foreign forces. As the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan deteriorates, it is possible that any remaining hopes for a negotiated settlement would be jeopardised. Once the fighting has been brought to a halt or a new administration has been established, bilateral relations will have an influence on the security, political, and economic dynamics of the region throughout the medium to long term. Having a strong relationship with Pakistan can help to promote stability and progress. However, because of the hatred on both sides, which has been heightened by the conflict, the inverse consequence is more likely. The most promising path forward for Afghanistan and Pakistan in terms of expanding their cross-border connections for the benefit of regional peace and the well-being of their populations is to acknowledge and attempt to resolve one another's security and sovereignty concerns in a peaceful and constructive manner through dialogue.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Security, Peace, Sovereignty.

Introduction

The Afghan government, Taliban, and US interests have dominated efforts to end Afghanistan's civil war. Everyone involved in the struggle wants it to end successfully.



On August 31, 2021, the US and multinational forces will leave Afghanistan. Pakistan, a country on Afghanistan's eastern border, has also played a crucial, if less visible, role. A few months after Trump asked Pakistan for help in bringing the Taliban to the table, intra-Afghan discussions began. First, this outreach illustrates Pakistan's decades-long relationship with Taliban insurgents. Pakistan has protected and aided them. Injured Taliban militants can obtain medical care in Pakistan where several top Taliban members still reside. It is Pakistan that is being blamed by the Afghan government and people, who have suffered tremendously as a result of Taliban rule in their country. Many Afghans are perplexed as to why Pakistan, despite its claims of authority, continues to retain links with the Taliban. Pakistan has likewise not done enough to stop the violence. "The issue is not peace with the Taliban," Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said in 2015. "The issue is peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan". Despite its severity, the strain on bilateral ties is not uncommon. Pakistan and Afghanistan have had a tense and often acrimonious relationship for over 70 years due to both internal and foreign factors. Both nations were linked with the US in the post-9/11 era, but Pakistan retained relations to the organisation. These instances highlight how the bilateral relationship affects future Afghan and regional stability. Internal connections and commerce are among the concerns of stakeholders. (Ahmar) These challenges will become more crucial when foreign forces withdraw and expectations for a negotiated settlement fade. Indeed, these dynamics fueled the current crisis, which has strained relations between the two countries for two decades. It's a balancing act trying to stabilise Afghanistan while also ensuring its long-term viability. Policymakers can only hope to achieve Afghan stability and a sustainable resolution in Pakistan by recognising the historical tensions and linkages. But many of these conflicts stem from systemic difficulties. Given the current context of violence, distrust, and hedges, these concerns are unlikely to be resolved soon. Not addressing them sensitively risks aggravating the issue.

The outlook for Afghanistan and the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship is dim. Instead of a negotiated settlement, a long civil war or a Taliban takeover is likely. Whatever new administration is created, it will have the same challenges as previous governments. Addressing long-standing difficulties while expanding cross-border links could lead to more stability and progress. Until one or both parties put aside their disagreements, the area will continue to suffer from distrust and serious security implications. Some argue that abandoning or strengthening Afghanistan-Pakistan relations is better for Afghanistan and the region. As they accurately point out, Pakistan is sponsoring and arming a terrorist organisation that has killed thousands and threatens to impose harsh restrictions on human rights if given enough money and military support. In order to protect its western flank from separatist threats and India's regional opponent, Pakistan could use sabotage activities to undermine any efforts to improve Afghan stability. Even if this strategy isn't



perfect, it's preferable to seek a solution that takes into account Pakistan's danger estimates. This research investigates the root reasons for acrimony in the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship and suggests avenues of communication in three possible futures. Numerous interviews in Pashto and English with Afghan and Pakistani government officials, businessmen and civil society activists, journalists and specialists from the border areas and capitals of the two countries are presented here. Various authorities and analysts from the United States and abroad have been consulted. He bases his argument on a review of important works on bilateral ties, regional stability, and the lives of people in both nations. (Leake, 2017)

An Analysis

Five repeating themes have evolved throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan's shared history, which dates back to the colonial period. There are three obstacles preventing the relationship between the two nations from developing beyond a state of cold tolerance marked by intense suspicion on both sides of the border. They give insight into prospective chances for both parties to capitalise on if relations improve in the future through cross-border interactions and connectivity as well as trade

Defence Concerns

Pakistan's perceptions of its security interests in Afghanistan are dominated by India, the country's key regional rival and neighbour. India's influence threatens to expand from Pakistan's eastern and western frontiers if Islamabad does not back-friendly administrations in Kabul and prohibit New Delhi from participating in Afghanistan. Afghanistan considers Pakistan liable for the majority of the atrocities it has experienced in recent decades as a result of Pakistan's proxy activities. Pakistan now has the opportunity to accuse its neighbours on its western border of providing material and financial support to extremists. The Afghan-supported Pashtun separatism dominated Pakistan's security issues after independence, but the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 offered a considerably bigger threat. A close friend of India, the Soviet Union also threatened Pakistan's western border. Concerns over the US and Saudi Arabian meddling led to billions of dollars in aid, weaponry, and training being sent via Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Agency (ISI). Islamabad sent a substantial portion of its resources to four fundamentalist groups in Afghanistan that it deemed pro-Pakistan in order to ensure that a pro-Pakistan force assumed control of the country. With Soviet troops leaving in 1989, Pakistan originally supported Hezb-e Islami before changing its allegiance after the Taliban came to power in the mid-1990s. Afghanistan's Taliban and Pakistan's Pakistani government had ideological differences, and India supported the Northern Alliance, a



political and military alliance opposed to Taliban control. A number of terrorists funded by Pakistan were trained in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan for operations in the Indian-administered Kashmir region, aiding Islamabad in keeping its unconventional assets intact in the face of United States pressure. Pakistan's military and ISI chose to support the Taliban in Kabul in order to acquire political power in the face of India, Russia, and Iran's refusal to accept the Taliban. Post-9/11, Bush cooperated with NATO and leaned heavily on those "who Pakistan most mistrusted," setting off Pakistan's fears of growing danger. In terms of power and resources, Pakistan gained a lot from the US-led war on terror, but it maintained to maintain ties with the Taliban and other terrorists as a defensive measure against the US. (Chaudhry, 2021)

Afghanistan's former president, Hamid Karzai, condemned Pakistan often at the height of the Taliban revolt for being involved in a proxy war against a regional rival without considering the implications for Afghanistan's security. Pakistan's unwillingness to prioritise its own security above that of its neighbour, as well as allegations of Indian and Afghan support for anti-Pakistan militants, deteriorated bilateral relations. When the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) insurgency erupted in Pakistan, Islamabad accused Kabul of harbouring militants across the Durand Line because of Pakistan's military intervention in the traditionally autonomous region, decades of support for militant infrastructure, and heavy-handed security tactics. Officials in Pakistan believe that India works with the Afghan intelligence service to undertake terrorist activities within Pakistan through its consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, respectively. Despite recent increases in Pakistani faith in internal security, the development of the TTP and the likelihood of Indian involvement in Kabul continue to feed regional security concerns and bilateral tensions. As a result, water security has grown in importance on a bilateral and regional level. (Myers, 2021)

When the Afghan government completed the India-funded Shahtoot Dam on the Kabul River in 2018, Pakistan was concerned about water shortages. New Delhi may use its clout in Kabul to limit Pakistan's water supplies during a crisis, Pakistan regards India's engagement as an additional risk. The project, according to Afghan officials, is vital to the country's ability to maintain a steady supply of power. Interviewees from Pakistan and Afghanistan, on the other hand, pointed to specific examples of successful security coordination as potential springboards for further negotiations. Others drew attention to the fact that, for example, Afghanistan remained neutral throughout Pakistan's wars with India in 1965 and 1971. Islamabad has been told by Kabul confidentially that it will not intervene along the Durand Line, enabling Pakistan more ease in sending soldiers to the present conflict. According to accounts, this is the case. According to an interviewee, Afghan authorities have recently become more conscious of Pakistan's concerns over



Indian intervention and have even attempted to engage New Delhi in the subject, but so far they have been unsuccessful. Other others think Pakistan's security establishment has lost interest in strategic depth. (Tanner, 2002)

Dynamics of Geopolitics

Third, the geopolitical dynamics of Afghanistan-strategically Pakistan's crucial area have shaped ties throughout the years. To the detriment of bilateral relations, particularly in Pashtun-majority border regions, both countries have discovered ways to use foreign participation to their benefit. The British Empire's colonial policy toward Afghanistan and what is now Pakistan left an indelible mark on the geopolitical roles and governance systems of the two nations today. Afghan Emir Abdur Rahman was compelled to sign the Durand Line agreement after the British employed an economic blockade to force him to do so after two failed Anglo-Afghan wars in the 1800s. Following the subcontinent's independence in 1947, the tribal lands dominated by Pashtuns just east of the Durand Line served as a second defence zone. Cold War alliances formed throughout the following decades as a result of competing security objectives on both sides and as a result, tensions in the bilateral relationship increased. Afghanistan's rejection of the Durand Line and support for Pashtunistan made it hard to retain strong connections with Pakistan and Pakistan's supporters. To better defend itself against the expanding Indian threat, Pakistan signed on to the Central Treaty Organization (CTO), sponsored by the United States, and the Southeast Asian Free Trade Agreement (SEAFTA).

When Kabul became concerned about this, it gave up its non-aligned position and accepted Soviet assistance, including political and financial backing for Pashtun separatist organisations. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States and Saudi Arabia provided proxies on the basis of Pakistan's backing for like-minded Islamist organisations in the area. Similarly, the 9/11 attacks moulded and responded to pre-existing Afghanistan-Pakistan links, as did the US and NATO operations in Afghanistan at the time. (Schofield, 2017) The fact that the Pakistan-backed Taliban have made it possible for al-Qaeda to operate in Afghanistan shows the worldwide significance of regional security considerations. As a hedge against the United States, Pakistan also moulded external engagement in its choice to join forces with the Taliban. Meanwhile, US sway in the area has impacted local political, economic, and security dynamics, particularly in Afghanistan. US military and civilian support to Pakistan have totalled \$34 billion since 2001, and US rebuilding assistance to Afghanistan has been \$145 billion during a similar time period. Through this tremendous infusion of cash, the Afghan economy has been profoundly transformed, while Pakistan's already formidable security



apparatus has been bolstered much more. More than 170,000 people have been murdered in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a result of the conflict.

This common experience, however, has done nothing to improve relations between the two countries. Aside from helping to destabilise the area, external parties have also helped resolve bilateral problems in the past. Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia all had a role in mediating negotiations on the Durand Line between Daoud and Bhutto in the 1970s, following an Afghan protester attack on Pakistan's embassy in Kabul in 1955. Following the end of the Soviet-Afghan War in 1989, the Soviet Union and the United States signed the Geneva Accords, which enabled the Soviet withdrawal. The pact acknowledged the importance of external powers in conflict dynamics, despite the fact that both parties violated their promises not to accept outside assistance. External pressure can be used to alleviate traditional irritants. Pakistan has been under intense FATF pressure since June 2018, when the nation was added to the FATF's list of countries subject to heightened surveillance for failing to take sufficient action against terror financing and money laundering. In the backdrop of a broader economic downturn, Pakistan's authorities have exhibited collaboration, most notably by reining in some proxy organisations. According to one responder, if Afghan security improves while Pakistan continues to face external pressure and seeks global redemption, the result might be the biggest opportunity for bilateral progress in forty years. More than a few people interviewed expressed concern that efforts to restore ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan might be motivated more by meeting US demand signals than by a genuine wish to cooperate.

In spite of the fact that these interactions are just functional, the security situation may stabilise and allow for further development to be built upon them. As a result of the removal of US soldiers and the likelihood of future budget reductions, the two parties may be forced to interact and make concessions on difficult matters. (Ahmadi and Singh, 2020)

Sovereign Concerns

Real or perceived transgressions of a country's sovereignty irritate both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Islamabad is particularly alarmed by Kabul's refusal to recognise the colonial-era Durand Line as an international boundary and its outreach to Pakistani Pashtuns who live along the line. Kabul, for its part, takes issue with Islamabad's attempts to sway policy in Kabul by supporting proxies and trying to influence the country's direction. Despite the fact that Afghan support for Pashtun secession extends back to before Pakistan was formed in 1947, such support has risen and fallen throughout the years. Kabul aided pro-Pashtunistan Pakistani leaders in the years following Pakistan's



independence. This unwillingness to acknowledge Pakistan at the United Nations increased tensions in what was then a fledgling nation. Afghan officials supported the construction of an Afghan-Pakistan-Pashtunistan confederation until at least the mid-1950s. Despite the country's ethnic, regional, and socioeconomic diversity, Afghanistan criticised Pakistan's efforts to unite as a nation. One Unit Scheme, implemented in 1954 to counterbalance East Pakistan's bigger population, resulted in unforeseen consequences for Pakistan's western half. Because it essentially united the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Pakistan proper and damaged Afghanistan's independent status, erasing provincial boundaries were perceived in Afghanistan as a threat to Pashtun sovereignty. Pakistani government construction projects along the Durand Line in the 1950s and early 1960s sparked violent confrontations and forced border closures, resulting in diplomatic difficulties. In the 1970s, Afghan President Daoud Khan and Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came close to reaching an agreement to resolve the Durand Line conflict. Daoud's desire to reduce Afghanistan's dependency on the Soviet Union, as well as Iranian efforts to negotiate improved Afghan-Pakistan ties, made things simpler. After various "natural tragedies," Pakistan's humanitarian help and accompanying suspension of "all hostile propaganda" were "extremely essential to us and... a substantial move," as Daoud remarked to Henry Kissinger in Kabul in 1976. Daoud was assassinated in 1978, therefore the deal was lost. Pakistan has taken advantage of its porous border despite its intent on formalising the Durand Line. (Weinbaum, 2006) As a result of Islamabad's growing worry over separatist threats in the wake of Bangladesh's independence in 1971, Afghan Islamist fighters were armed and trained in order to combat pro-Pashtunistan forces in Kabul. The Durand Line "maybe transgressed in the cause of regional security," Pakistan said in the 1980s when Kabul asked it to seal the border to stop mujahideen fighters from crossing. Those claims inflamed Afghans' resentment toward Pakistan, which they said was pursuing its own interests in Afghanistan at the expense of Afghan sovereignty.

Afghan leaders have always been wary of acknowledging the Durand Line as an international border for fear of internal backlash and have instead used their pronouncements against Pakistan to strengthen public sentiment. Despite Pakistan's repeated attempts to get formal recognition in the 1990s, the Taliban regime, which is supported by Pakistan, would not budge. A Pakistani human rights organisation with a base in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) received public backing from Kabul, Pakistan's officials accused Kabul of interfering in internal affairs in their own country. There is a rift in Afghan society regarding the country's support for Pashtunistan, though. Pakistan has lately fortified its border as a reaction to security threats, despite its continued use of the Durand Line to accommodate Taliban insurgents. In 2014, Islamabad aimed to protect its gains in border security by



erecting a two-tier barrier along the Afghan-Iranian border. As a result of the barrier, Afghan demonstrations and cross-border shootings have grown in certain areas, but the fence itself has decreased security in others. Also, the neighbouring FATA territory was given constitutional control by Islamabad, and it became part of a nearby province.

Despite this, Kabul's response has been muted, which is understandable given the country's numerous problems. There may be an opening for discourse on sovereignty sensitivities, such as the Durand Line issue, notwithstanding present strains in the relationship, according to interviewees. Many Afghans have accepted the border as a matter of habit rather than worry for the future. Rejecting the legitimacy of the Afghan government may have taught Afghan politicians that they will receive little foreign support. On the other hand, the Pakistani interviewee claimed that Pakistan has reduced its expectations over the previous two decades and would be more sceptical moving forward. While old traditions die hard, especially in times of war, it is worth considering the possibility of reduced sovereignty conflicts if Afghanistan becomes more secure. Realizing the costs of sovereignty infringements on both sides of the Durand Line could lead to adjustments in policy that benefit those who are most harmed by the impression of mutual danger – the communities along the line. (Trofimov and Deng, 2021)

Connectivity and Trade

Through linkages with Central Asia, the Arabian Sea and India, as well as boosting the larger bilateral relationship, trade, investment and cross-border engagement prospects may be enormously beneficial to both Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is a final theme that keeps coming up. Since both parties see economic participation as a danger, trade access has served as a means to win bilateral concessions. Despite the fact that border communities have benefitted from the illicit traffic of goods and narcotics, many would be unable to make ends meet without it. It wasn't until 1950 that bilateral economic connections really took off after a transit agreement was signed. It was superseded in 1965 by the Afghan Transit Commercial Agreement and remained in existence till 1990 when Pakistan banned trade access in an attempt to influence the continuing Rabbani government-Taliban conflict. Both parties, as well as traders from border areas, sharply reacted in opposition to the decision. In 2010, the United States and the United Nations urged and supported the two nations to negotiate the stronger Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). As a result of the agreement, counter-smuggling initiatives were put in place, and both countries committed to strengthening their customs facilities. Furthermore, they were able to share airport infrastructure, rail and road on certain routes, and Afghan commodities could be shipped one way to India through the



Wagah border crossing. When it comes down to it, though, business leaders from both sides who were interviewed agreed that the agreement was not being followed in practice.

According to those interviewed, despite the fact that certain routes in Afghanistan and Pakistan are open to trade, both countries have restricted movement to the point where traders must stop in the first major cities they reach after crossing the border, which includes Afghan cities such as Jalalabad and Kandahar, as well as Punjab and Quetta in Pakistan. As a result, Afghan traders are unable to transit via Pakistan and into India as indicated in the agreement, resulting in a difficult situation between the two nations. In addition to the documentation necessary under the APTTA, Afghan businesspeople have expressed concern about the high expenses of documentation at the port of Karachi and when crossing the international border. Both sides' traders complain of unscrupulous border officials and police, who frequently ask for money from anyone crossing the border. Another respondent claimed that because its provisions do not take into consideration the reality on the ground in the two nations, nor do they take into account wider regional issues, implementation has been so sporadic. APTTA renegotiation efforts have been delayed by Pakistan's resistance to allowing two-way trade with India, forcing multiple extensions to the present framework. (Rubin, 2009) Pakistani authorities have recently emphasised the long-delayed Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway, the Central Asia-South Asia (CASA) power transmission line and the Turkmenistan-Iran oil pipeline, which are all reliant on Afghanistan's interconnectivity. Once sanctions on Afghanistan are lifted, Pakistan stands to benefit from increased bilateral trade between Afghanistan and India via Iran. Pakistan stands to benefit from the lifting of US sanctions against Iran. When asked about Pakistan's response to Afghan businessmen' concerns, an insider with knowledge of the discussions said that Pakistan had responded by clearing a substantial cargo backup at Karachi's port and opening the Torkham border crossing to 24-hour commerce. Despite limited economic possibilities, commerce has traditionally been a lifeline for villages both on and off the Durand Line.

The trucking sector is dominated by Pashtuns from this region, and local traders frequently do not distinguish between legal and illegal trading. Seventy-one per cent of survey participants from two Afghan border towns said that "economic activity in their neighbourhood depends wholly or primarily on cross-border commerce." In the years after independence, Pakistan's industrialisation programme relied heavily on import substitution, with high tariffs incentivizing the smuggling of consumer goods across the Durand Line. Losses to Pakistan's official economy are estimated to be between \$1 billion and \$3 billion each year, yet it's critical for many border towns. Drug smuggling has long been a part of the illegal commerce between the two countries. Afghan mujahideen poppy production increased in the 1980s and 1990s, opening up new



channels for the trafficking of illegal substances. In the mid-2000s, US-led drug eradication activities reduced this source of income, notably in Afghanistan, where attempts to halt poppy growing left communities with no other viable sources of income.

Opium production has resurged since then, providing a revenue stream for the Taliban, other armed organisations, and government officials as well. Pakistan is increasingly focused on geo-economic ties with Central Asia rather than conventional geopolitical aims in order to influence global perceptions of Pakistan and its involvement in supporting the Taliban and other organisations. It's possible that greater economic interaction between Pakistan and Afghanistan might result from improved connectivity between the two countries. Trade and currency rate fluctuations have been plagued by political tensions between the two countries. Border closures are a technique Pakistan has used to press Afghanistan, which is isolated from the rest of the world, to make concessions. The majority-Pashtun commercial community suffers greatly as a result of these closures, yet profitable smuggling routes can be revived as a result. After legitimate avenues were shut down in 2017, the number of illicit transactions allegedly doubled. Due to the dominant interest in cross-border security and the influence of growing regional tensions on bilateral ties, such restrictions are projected to endure, hampering efforts to create geo-economic links under uncertain settings. According to recent reports, the Taliban have taken control of a crucial border crossing in Chaman, Afghanistan, demonstrating the strategic and economic importance of such access points. (Constantino, 2020)

Cross Broder Ties

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have traditionally relied on cross-border contacts between individuals, including the flow of refugees and linkages across the Durand Line in the case of family, business, and communal ties. When seen from Kabul and Islamabad's respective vantage points, the Pashtun population residing near the border offers both potential and peril. There is a long tradition in Pakistan of using its border region to house and train insurgent groups and keeping these communities politically marginalised. In civil and military power structures in Pakistan, those from the country's so-called settled areas are well-represented, whereas those from the border regions are underrepresented. Despite this, border residents on both sides of the border have historically moulded and fought governmental policies that impact their areas. Durand Line Pashtun and Baloch people have traditionally had close relations because of their closeness and ancestry connections. Members of border communities could freely cross the Durand Line during British and subsequently Pakistani authority.



Border crossings have been restricted as Pakistan recently implemented passport and visa restrictions along with the building of the border barrier. New limitations cut daily traffic at the Torkham border crossing from an average of 20,000 people to as low as 2,000 Afghans, according to a 2017 estimate. Pakistani officials regularly limit border crossings as a consequence of security concerns and as retaliation for Afghan protests and violence against border installations. Officials on both sides of the Durand Line dispute often settle their differences, despite Afghan government directives to avoid formal agreements for fear they may be regarded as endorsements of the Durand Line. (Rubin and Siddique, 2016) As a result, Pakistan has made steps to make travel for its residents simpler, including giving visas on arrival for medical patients and making visa applications available online for those who qualify. Although Pakistani authorities characterise them as substantial concessions, travellers are concerned about the complexity of applications for those who depend on entry to their neighbouring country and are unskilled with immigration processes. Passengers allege that police and border officials in particular on the Pakistani side seek payments in exchange for granting them passage. The movement of refugees over the border is another important factor in uniting the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The 1979 Soviet invasion displaced almost four million Afghans, flooding Pakistan and Iran. Following the US invasion of Afghanistan and the accompanying turmoil, over 1.4 million registered and unregistered Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan. Approximately 42 per cent of this population is Pakistani-born and -raised refugees, according to various estimates. They have not been able to get permanent residency in Pakistan despite Pakistan's birthright citizenship laws and are instead granted temporary permission to remain in the country with limited rights, such as access to formal education or the right to own property.

Refugees who are not registered have significantly fewer legal rights than those who are. Public opinion in Pakistan shifted against Afghan refugees in the early 2010s as a result of an upsurge in security events that officials there blamed on Afghan-based organisations. Tensions got even worse following the 2014 attack on the Peshawar Army Public School, which Pakistani authorities alleged was orchestrated from Afghanistan. There were around 140 children murdered in the attack. Many Afghan refugees were disillusioned with their adopted country after the ensuing police crackdowns on Afghan refugee settlements. The Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has suggested granting Pakistani citizenship to members of the refugee population who were born in Pakistan. However, such proposals have been met with opposition in Pakistan. In particular, cross-border mobility has allowed vast numbers of Afghans, particularly affluent members of society, to settle in Pakistan. Despite the fact that their familiarity may be advantageous in fostering bilateral relations, it has also turned into a source of contention. Many Afghans, on the other hand, blame Pakistan for the terrible treatment of refugees, and the



country's leadership are angry that their kindness has gone unnoticed for so long. (Wilkinson, 2018)

Reconsidering the Future Dynamics of the Ties

Managing the relationship in Pakistan's national interest should be a priority for the country, and it should take lessons from other nations that have managed their relations with the US in a way that safeguards its national interests. Exemplifying China's strategy towards the US was one of beneficial engagement despite the fact that it had multiple potential areas of confrontation with the US: the East China Sea, the South China Sea, Taiwan, Japan, and so on. In 2003, China and the United States had 40,000 joint enterprises worth more than \$500 billion in bilateral commerce. Over 100,000 Chinese students study at American institutions each year, making them the biggest foreign student population in the country. China was taking advantage of the fact that Europe and the United States remained the epicentres of knowledge and technology. His conclusion was that modernization implied policies aimed at furthering national interests, which had to be determined in light of rapidly changing circumstances. This is linked to the necessity of streamlining in-depth conversations on commerce and interoperability. The pledges made by Pakistan to strengthen commercial ties are commendable. Pakistan chose to open three border crossings with Afghanistan despite the raging epidemic in order to facilitate commerce. (Mukharji, 2003) The second APAPPS evaluation also revealed that both nations are open to discussing the conditions of a new Transit Trade Agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan (APTTA). According to reports, Pakistan has also recently organised an international trade and investment conference named "Pakistan-Afghanistan Commercial and Investment 2020" as part of its ongoing efforts to expand bilateral trade opportunities. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor should continue to be emphasised by Pakistan for Afghanistan (CPEC). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan will be linked to Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Afghanistan will have a real commercial outlet as a result. There is a possibility that China's desire to help stabilise and link the countries around it may bring Afghanistan and Pakistan closer together on trade and economic issues. To modify narratives and stereotypes, perception management activities must be launched, and media from both sides must be strategically involved. In order to bridge the ever-widening misperceptions gap, a more nuanced portrayal of Afghanistan and Pakistan in mainstream media will be critical. This should serve as the foundation for a formal strategic communications framework, which will go a long way toward preventing Pakistan's ties with its neighbours from being tarnished by rigorous, hazardous misinformation efforts. (Felbab-Brown, 2020)



Conclusion

The Taliban's ascension to power in Afghanistan should be seen as strong resistance against the Western invasion. Afghanistan-Pakistan ties won't be impacted only or even mostly by the Taliban-led government, which should be recognised for what it is. Afghanistan-Pakistan relations may be less affected by who joins or stays in the government and what policies they follow, even if this will be important in the short term. Whatever the situation may be, the issue of Afghan-Pakistani ties will continue to be essential, if not grow in importance. With the Taliban in charge, this relationship will enter a new phase. As well as Pakistan, Iran, China, and even some of the Central Asian nations and India will be involved in this regional conflict. It will also be written in light of the rising US-Chinese hostility as well as economic global competitiveness. Because of this, the future of bilateral relations will be greatly affected by the interactions with third parties, many of whom have a stake in the stability of the area. Growth and stability in the area will be determined by the capacity and desire of countries to collaborate across borders as much as by internal stability and peace. Kabul's new administration will require cooperation and interaction from many countries, both close and far. Although foreign support for the Taliban is doubtful, there is still a pressing need for collaboration. As far as natural resources and infrastructural development go, China appears to be most interested in Afghanistan. Western nations, on the other hand, maybe interested in opening the country's borders to former workers or otherwise endangered Afghans, and then limiting migrant patterns. In addition, Central Asian nations will want to exploit Afghanistan as a conduit for the transfer of their natural resources to Pakistan, India, and the Indian Ocean. Afghanistan might become a huge economic and political opportunity for Pakistan if it avoids substantial internal conflict and bloodshed, builds a stable and functioning state, and makes use of the possibilities for regional collaboration. When it comes to Pakistan's image, Afghanistan might become an embarrassment because of its long history of strife and war or because it chooses the path of an extreme ideology state that represses ethnic and religious minorities as well as political opponents and women. First, Pakistan might serve as a link between Afghanistan and the outside world. Second, Pakistan could face international and local backlash for its long-term backing of the Taliban.



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