

## Journal of Strategic Policy and Global Affairs

Vol: 01, Issue: 01(2020) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58669/jspga.v01.i01.01>**Pakistan and Afghanistan: Regional Structuring and Restructuring**

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**Abstract:** Pakistan and Afghanistan have deep historical roots. They have a 2240 km long frontier, formerly known as the Durand Line, making them direct neighbors. Although Pakistan is geographically, racially, and religiously close to Afghanistan, their relationship always has ups and downs. This research will describe Pakistan and Afghanistan combat the challenging situations in their relationship. The main focus of this study is to explore the Pak-Afghan regional structuring and restructuring throughout their alliance. Moreover, this paper will highlight the events that impacted Pak-Afghan relations and the ways they resolved this issue to establish better links. In the last, a few recommendations will be discussed to improve Pakistan and Afghanistan's relationship in the future.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, Afghanistan, Regional Affairs, Historical Roots, Structuring, Restructuring.

**Introduction**

It is regrettable that ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan have resulted in a constant undercurrent of competition and rivalries rather than harmony and collaboration. Two immediate Muslim neighbors, Pakistan and Afghanistan, share a 2640-kilometer land boundary that is usually referred to as the Durand Line. Millions of individuals have traveled this corridor daily for ages, making it a valuable channel for trade and business activity. Due to its geopolitics significance and position, Afghanistan, a sparsely populated nation that acts as a link between South Asia and the Middle East, is a doorway to Central Asian states that are rich in natural resources. It provides one of the most extensive direct and cost-efficient land and sea paths for connectivity between these nations to other parts of the world. Afghanistan is particularly significant since it is close to regions with more than 50% of the world's oil reserves, including the Middle East and Central Asia. The nation borders Iran and Turkmen, the 2nd most prominent oil and gas exporters in the world, respectively. Among the most massive economic rivalries of its sort is between the network systems for gas transportation, particularly in this region where there are two of the most successful gas mines in the world. (Kahn & Than .K, 2015) Afghanistan is vital in this conflict over geopolitics (Ali & Safdar, 2020).

**Regional Statistics of Pakistan and Afghanistan**

Facts	Pakistan	Afghanistan
Area	796095 km	652,864 km
Bounded by	India Afghanistan Iran And China	Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan Pakistan, Iran and China
Population	212,228,286 (5th)	32,225,560 (44th)
Density	245.4 / (56th)	(119.1/sq mi) 174th
Capital	Islamabad	Kabul

Religion	Muslim About 96 percent Islam is official Religion	99.7% Islam
Language	Urdu and English are official language Punjabi (39%) Pashto (18%) Sindhi (15%) Balochi (3%)	Pashto 16.8 million (48%) Persian, Dari
Government	Islamic Republic, Federal Parliamentary	Islamic Republic, Unitary Presidential
Economy	1.254 trillion (23rd)	72.911 billion (96th)
Per capita	1,388 (151st)	2,024 (169th)

## Analysis of Pak-Afghan Regional Structuring and Restructuring

### Startup of Pak-Afghan Ties

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics influenced Afghanistan at the moment of Pakistan's creation in 1947. Although it initially opposed Pakistan's ideology and was against Pakistan joining the UN, it also backed the pakhtoonistan problem, which was the idea of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Afghanistan has also begun demanding a reshaping of the Durand line and the Pakistan-Afghanistan borders after refusing to discuss the formation of the Durand line. Pakistan consequently dealt with numerous issues from the other side of the Durand line. The Pakistani government demonstrated remarkable restraint and prevented the crisis from getting out of control.

### Afghanistan and Pakhtoonistan Hoax

After Pakistan's independence in 1947, Abdul Ghaffar Khan began the pakhtoonistan hoax with the help of India, the

USSR, and Afghanistan. Afghan king Zahir Shah and Sardar Daud Khan provided Ghaffar Khan with moral and financial backing to maintain this struggle live. Afghanistan's involvement in the Pakhtoonistan hoax caused a great deal of animosity between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which lasted for decades. The governor-general of Pakistan declared in 1949 that the northwestern tribal territory in the borderline is a portion of Pakistan, to which the Afghan government strenuously objected. However, Pakistan's government chose to refuse conflict. Afghanistan, however, launched a publicity operation. In response, the native community is being encouraged to stand up in revolt against Pakistan. Afghanistan also urged that tribal people be granted the ability to vote in a referendum to determine if or not they want to join Pakistan. When Pakistan created its first unit in 1955, Afghanistan erupted in a massive uprising, and the Pakistan foreign office in Kabul was assaulted. The flag of the fictional Pakhtoonistan rose over Pakistan's foreign office, and they burned the Pakistani flag. Pakistan closed its embassies in Kandhar and Jalalabad in mobs, requested an apology from Afghanistan, a promise of good behavior, and perhaps warned to respond appropriately.

### The Durand Line Conflict

As the Afghan protestors invaded Pakistan's consulates in Jalalabad and Kandhar in 1954 and 1955, respectively, ties between the two countries were at their weakest level. Additionally, in 1955, Afghanistan's assertions that the Durand Line did not define the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier led to significant hatred and hostility in the relationship (Saddique, 2011). Despite being the globally renowned boundary, Afghanistan did not recognize the Durand Line, which triggered a great deal of hatred. Numerous attempts were made to find a solution on a global scale to prevent any confrontations. Many countries, including Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and others, extended their assistance in facilitating and resolving the matter. Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to Saudi Arabia's proposal to settle their differences in 1955. Both governments welcomed Saudi Arabia's attempt to pay for the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Kabul, Saudi Arabia met with the Afghan government and offered a fresh idea for settling the conflict but all in vain. After Afghanistan refused the Saudi offer and the tribunal, Pakistan began to consider it. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan remained sour.

### The Transit Trade Agreement

In 1958, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to a Transit Trade Treaty that gave Kabul access to the Karachi port. The main components of this memorandum of understanding were: 1) There will be complete freedom of transit for Afghan commodities across Pakistan. 2) In order to assist the transit of commodities, Pakistan agreed to build a railroad line from

Chaman to the Afghan Taliban. 3) Pakistan promises to support railroad carriages to transport Afghan products. 4) Pakistan pledged to offer space for storage in Chaman, Peshawar, and Karachi for Afghan products. 5) Pakistan freed all Afghan wares from customs and excise taxes (Vaqar, 2010). Despite Pakistan's best efforts to be amicable, Afghanistan maintained its hostility toward Pakistan and violated the provisions of the Transit Contract. Afghan authorities blocked Pakistani goods trucks from entering and levied excessive charges on Pakistani transportation services.

### **The Tehran Treaty**

Iran's King Raza Shah Pehlvi served as a peacemaker and successfully persuaded both countries to reestablish diplomatic relations. This success became possible in Tehran when a deal was made between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both nations decided to reestablish foreign policy and reopen their corresponding embassies. As a result, Pakistan and Afghanistan resumed peaceful relations on May 23, 1963. After the Tehran Treaty, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan significantly changed and improved. In 1964, President Ayub Khan met with King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan to address cordial relations and the significance of Pakistan and Afghanistan's shared position in the international arena. Even after the rehabilitation deal in Tehran ended, the Afghan government began repeating the Durand line.

### **Indo-Pak War 1965**

Afghanistan's hostility toward Pakistan persisted just after the 1963 Tehran Agreement. As a result, the two countries started a new era of peaceful interactions, which persisted during the reign of King Zahir Shah. Afghanistan kept a passive attitude and didn't cause any issues for Pakistan on the Durand line during the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1965. Ayub Khan traveled to Tashkent in January 1966 after the war was over to meet with the prime minister of India to discuss settlement. He visited Kabul on the route to Tashkent and expressed his gratitude to King Zahir Shah for his assistance throughout the war. Afghanistan even backed Pakistan's position on the Kashmir dispute in a bilateral agreement.

### **Pakistan's Efforts to Foster Better Ties**

Although there was a lot of hostility between Pakistan and Afghanistan due to Sardar Daud's anti-Pakistan stance, Pakistan didn't stop and continued its struggle to fix things. Pakistan supported and sent significant financial and material support for the 1976 earthquakes in Afghanistan. Moreover, to restore normalcy along Pakistan's western border, President Zia-ul-Haq and PM Benazir Bhutto reshaped Pakistan's foreign policy into a unique trend of multilateralism and moderation. In 1976, she traveled to Kabul to promote his pro-Afghanistan foreign policy. In August 1976, Sardar Daud paid for a follow-

up tour and spoke with Prime Minister Bhutto. Both governments expanded their partnership in various areas, including business, art, and teaching. They also issued a joint statement to build harmony, normalize relations, and encourage harmonious cohabitation. All these multilateral initiatives ended the hostility and fostered cooperation and compassion on both sides.

### **USSR and Afghanistan Conflict**

The USSR started its direct involvement in Afghanistan, which had internal and external impacts on the entire world. Many countries started to struggle and held anti-USSR protests in response to this act. Many western countries, including the US, UK, Germany, France, and other western states, strongly denounced the USSR for this action. They demanded that its military units leave Afghanistan immediately, but the USSR vigorously rejected them. As a result, many migrants left for Afghanistan in 1980 and 1981. By the end of 1981, Pakistan had to take in more than 2,000,000 Afghan refugees. Over 2,298,767 Afghans had enrolled in Pakistan by September 1981, whereas more than 1.5 million had moved to Iran.

### **Pakistan's Struggle To Resolve Afghan Conflict**

Pakistan made Afghanistan the main focus of its foreign policy and devoted all political efforts to address it. Because of the hard work of Pakistan as well as other Muslim nations, the United Nations was called. A decision was approved in 1980 with 111 votes in favor and 22 votes against, asking for a peaceful outcome, the departure of the Soviet army, the restitution of Afghan sovereignty, the return of refugees, and the installation of an elective government in Afghanistan. Diego Cordovez, the UN Secretary-personal General's adviser, often escorted between the parties. The USSR asked Pakistan to recognize the Afghan government, which Pakistan rejected, and both parties decided to begin indirect talks via the UN Secretary-General. This session of UN-sponsored indirect talks involving Pakistan and Afghanistan in Geneva in August 1984 finished with little results. Gorbachov's appearance in the USSR's power centers further strengthened the USSR's stance.

### **Afghan Taliban and Pakistan**

During the military conflict in Afghanistan, a more powerful group known as the Taliban (Durani & Khan, 2009), commanded by Mullah Omer, emerged in 1995. As a neighbor, Pakistan was keenly interested in Afghanistan's stability and calm, which the Taliban had effectively achieved. Pakistan was the sole nation to recognize and develop relations with the Taliban regime. Due to Pakistan's unconditional support of the Taliban, there was a lot of hatred between Pakistan and the northern group's anti-Taliban troops. Pakistan's ties with Iran, which opposed the hardline Taliban government's anti-Iran policies, were also impacted by its dealings with the Taliban.

As years passed, the Taliban established their power over a sizable portion of Afghanistan.

### **Pakistan's Oppose Of Afghan Taliban**

Western nations have long accused the Taliban of assisting al-Qaeda and harboring terrorists. The international community also denounced the Taliban for violating women's rights and the Shia Muslim community. The Taliban regime was subject to UN Security Council censure in 2000, but Pakistan rejected them because it thought they would harm the country's impoverished citizens. UN did, however, recognize the Rabbani administration, and the US accused the Taliban of funding terrorism. The UNSC urged that the Taliban quickly halt all hostilities and hand over Osama bin Laden to the US, but the Taliban disagreed. But later on, the Pakistani government acquired significant indications that the Taliban were engaged in terrorist actions within Pakistan. Pakistan urged to stop sponsoring such operations immediately, but the Taliban refused to heed the diplomatic advice. The Taliban engaged in acts of religious terrorism against Pakistan's aim of supporting a stable government. It widened a gaping hole between the two governments.

### **The Change in Foreign Policy After 9/11**

In the wake of the terrorist invasion of the US on September 11, 2001, Pakistan must again review its stance toward Afghanistan. Pakistan's decision to give up its ten-year campaign to bring the Taliban to power in Afghanistan was the apparent initial reaction to the US demand. The Taliban era ultimately fell in the second week of December, and a fresh UN-backed legislature was installed in Afghanistan. Pakistan played a vital role in the US coalition by rejecting its support for the Taliban and offering the US a variety of aid, such as the use of military bases and airports, equipment and training, and intelligence support, among other things.

### **New Afghan and Pakistan**

After September 11, 2001, the ambiguity resolved between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and critical decisions took on Afghanistan's future administration. After that, a meeting was held under the supervision of the United Nations in Germany. The "Afghan Jirga" adopted the new constitution and re-elected Pashtoon leader Hamid Karzai to a second two-year term as president (Khan, 2020). Pakistan fully supports and legitimizes the Karzai regime, and the roots of peace are again planted in the form of Pak-Afghan better relations.

### **Recommended Policies**

#### **Direct Talks on Peace and Unity**

To sustain Pak-Afghan relations, the senior officials should directly interact with each other. A good foundation is provided by already-existing organizations, such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity

(APAPPS). Still, they have yet to be utilized much so far. Talks on less contentious subjects, like the economy, drug enforcement, and refugees, could be more tolerable if the unfavorable public sentiment renders global engagement on sensitive issues legally impossible.

### **Enhance Investment Approaches**

Islamabad may adopt regulations that enable Afghans to register Pakistani online banking system, significantly simplify the procedure for applying for investor visas, and establish cross-border strategic initiatives to guarantee advantages for both nations. Additionally, it might open up investment prospects for the population of Afghan refugees, who already run successful enterprises but encounter administrative challenges as a result of their visa status. The legal regime might also be improved in Kabul to attract investment, especially if safety conditions are favorable and foreign commerce increases the need.

### **Encourage Trading**

Both nations should seek to reduce barriers for merchants doing business in their own nations and make reaching the marketplace in other nations easier. A practical starting approach would be to remove pointless taxes and the documentation that dealers are forced to submit in addition to the APTTA obligations. Another ideal starting approach would be to reverse the limits on products crossing beyond entrance points in both nations. Both sides could also agree to restrict arbitrary frontier controls and use APTTA communication systems in the event that a closure is necessary. The recent Taliban seizure of the Afghan sector of the Chaman border area makes foreign commerce involvement considerably more difficult temporarily. However, it is still crucial for cooperation at other checkpoints.

### **Periodic Meetings and Discussions**

Frequent meetings are equally essential and might be less provocative. They increase awareness, put concepts to trial, and keep communication channels accessible to Afghans and Pakistanis from varied ethnicity and industries to guarantee that a diverse range of concerns is considered viewpoints, particularly those from border regions; conflicts in trilateral ties have a direct impact.

### **Use Updated Systems for Successful Engagement**

Pakistan and Afghanistan should explore adopting various performance measurement systems to build confidence and promote the need for future participation. However, the Pakistan-Afghanistan "Parliamentary Friendship Group" has established several initiatives. Although complex in the setting of rising tension, they should be preserved to the greatest extent feasible to retain clear lines of communication.

### Focus on New Military Training Courses

In addition to increasing opportunities for routine military-to-military cooperation through training programs and exercises, Pakistan's military might also repeat its invitation to accept Afghan service members as guests in its educational institutions. It demands the participation of Pakistani law enforcement and frontier security personnel, who know guerrilla and anti-terrorism operations due to years of operations in the old FATA.

### Collaborate To Rebuild After Conflicts

Over the past 20 years, parts of Pakistan with most of the Pashtuns, particularly Swat and the old FATA, have experienced turbulence; as a result, local authorities and civil actors have acquired expertise in different with and overcoming a variety of associated difficulties. These people could impart knowledge gained on topics like rehabilitation and reconciliation as well as a structural composite that will be necessary as Afghanistan start to rebuild from years of violence with their local competitors in Afghanistan. If relative peace were to be attained, such an effort would be appropriate, via frontline equivalents might work to handle violence in the event of rising volatility.

### Conclusion

One of Pakistan's top priority nations in terms of its foreign policy in Afghanistan. The key elements influencing Pakistan's stance on Afghanistan are geographical need, similar beliefs, and mutual purpose. The fact that it is situated along the main thoroughfares in South and Central Asia only increases its significance for Pakistan. Since gaining independence, Pakistan has worked to establish courteous, amicable, and productive relations with Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan's hesitation to cooperate, driven by domestic and foreign special interests, notably in the years following the Pak-Indo War, hindered its total growth. Pakistan has to continue to be ready for the evolving situation regarding religion and race.

Pakistan is the nation that stands to lose the most from Afghanistan's insecurity, even though no other nation desires stability and security there as much as Pakistan. The cross-border activity in weapons and drugs endangers the safety of Pakistani citizens and the official, which is another consequence of the lack of efficient sovereign power. Without getting too deeply into the history, it is vital to consider some of the circumstances surrounding the Soviet attack on Afghanistan, the Taliban government, the post-September 11 situation, security concerns, and Pak-Afghan ties. This will aid in analyzing the scenario. There are possible chances that the ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan can lead towards betterment.

Afghanistan and Pakistan can exploit the production capabilities of their standard cross-border connections while

strengthening economies and networks, the benefits of a more favorable relationship may come to exceed the hazards associated with such interaction. The two governments may create the foundation for better regional integration, economic progress, and administration by participating in b2b markets, utilizing cross-border Pashtun linkages, addressing fundamental challenges, and building momentum using performance measurement systems.

Lastly, the strategic cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan is ultimately only one part of a more comprehensive matrix of interconnected global security and political issues. Increased contact between Afghanistan and Pakistan solely can only do so much to foster peace and stability and enhance the livelihoods of those with connections across the countries' shared border. External obstacles may once more dash aims for a better mutual partnership but rather lead to ongoing, disruptive hostility. Given the tremendous obstacles in the way of bringing about peace in Afghanistan and easing decades-long hostilities between the two countries, such a result is regrettably more plausible than not.

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