

INDO-PAKISTAN ZERO-SUM RIVALRY AND AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

History shows that Pakistan and India have been vying for power in Afghanistan and they have been locked in a zero-sum struggle there since the inception of both the countries in 1947. Pakistan's losses in Afghanistan are considered India's victory and vice versa. The animosity between the two adversaries has manifested itself in a competition on the soil of Afghanistan for having a political clout, reminiscent of the competition and rivalry between the Tsarist Russia and then its successor, the Communist Russia, and the British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively, and generally known as the "Great Game." The antagonism between Pakistan and India has been so strong and deep that both the countries lose no opportunity to checkmate each other on the Afghan soil. This paper is aimed at looking into the factors of Indo-Pak rivalry in Afghanistan. It will also shed light on Indo-Afghan relations in historical perspective and India's geo-political and geo-strategic interests in Afghanistan. Besides, the paper will also address the questions that what are the interests of Pakistan and India in Afghanistan and what are the implications of Indo-Pak rivalry in Afghanistan for the region and world at large.

Key words: Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Islamists, Taliban, Kashmir.

Introduction

The prophesy of the British Indian Viceroy Lord Curzon proves very appropriate that, "*Turkistan, Afghanistan, Transcaspia, Persia.... are the pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a game for the dominance of the world.*"¹ Certainly India and Pakistan did not have any such ambitions for the dominance of the world

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but they surely tried, since independence in 1947, to use Afghanistan to fulfil their interests in the region such as to maximize their own interests and minimize the other's. "Afghanistan has been a prize that Pakistan and India have fought over directly and indirectly for decades".² History shows that both the countries have been vying for power in Afghanistan and have been locked in a zero-sum struggle there since their inception in 1947. Pakistan's losses in Afghanistan have been considered India's victory and *vice versa*. The animosity between the two adversaries manifested itself in the competition on the soil of Afghanistan for having a political clout, reminiscent of the competition and rivalry between the Tsarist Russia and then its successor, the Communist Russia, and the British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries — generally known as the "Great Game." Accordingly, the antagonism between Pakistan and India has been so strong and deep that Pakistan's relations with other countries usually impinge upon its relations with India. For India, Afghanistan is an important geo-political constraint on Pakistan.³ Pakistan wants to avoid being sandwiched between two hostile nations on its eastern and western borders. Both India and Afghanistan have disputes with Pakistan. Afghanistan, a smaller country, has never accepted its border with Pakistan known as the Durand Line. Similarly, nuclearized but conventionally weak Pakistan has had a dispute with India over Kashmir. Both the Durand Line and the Kashmir disputes have been colonial legacies. Moreover, both Pakistan and India have supported different groups in Afghanistan. India acknowledged the pro-Moscow regime of People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), while Pakistan supported the Islamists better known as Mujahideen in history. Same is the case of Taliban and the United Front often referred to, as Northern Alliance.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US Pentagon and World Trade Centre, both the nations did not stop with their hostilities to each other and more often than not they have had divergent interests in Afghanistan much to the detriment of the latter. Pakistan has often objected to Indian activism in Afghanistan. Indian consulates in the border region of Pakistan have been one of the issues between Indo-Pakistan relations.

¹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search For Peace in Afghanistan From Buffer State to Failed State* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), preface.

² Robert D. Kaplan, "Behind the Indian Embassy Bombing", <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/08/behind-the-indian-embassy-bombing/306949/>>.

³ Qadar Bakhsh Baloch, Abdul Hafeez Khan Niazi, "Indian Encroachment in Afghanistan: A New Imperialism in the Making", *the Dialogue*, Volume 16, III, Number 1, 22.

Indo-Afghan Convergence of Interests: The Odyssey of Relations

According to Sardar Paniker, the architect of Indian foreign policy, Burma (Myanmar), Afghanistan, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos constituted an outer ring or secondary area of strategic importance to India. Any interference by a foreign power in the affairs of these countries would be considered as much a threat to India's security as an interference in Nepal.⁴ Afghanistan the "heart" and "cockpit" of Asia⁵ though shares no common borders with India, yet India considers Afghanistan and Central Asia as part of its "extended neighbourhood"⁶ and dates back its historical ties to ancient times.⁷ Afghanistan's importance for India is clear from Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks about India's relations with Afghanistan:

Ever since India's independence, we have grown closer to each other, for a variety of reasons. The long memory of our past was there, and the moment it was possible to renew them, we renewed them. And then came mutual interest...which is a powerful factor.⁸

Both India and Afghanistan are important to each other for many reasons. Afghanistan is important to India because it is not only an entrance to resource-rich Central Asian States, but also ensure that it favours or at least remains neutral in its conflict with Pakistan. Both India and Afghanistan have disputes with Pakistan. The issue of Kashmir between Pakistan and India and the issues of Durand Line and Pakhtunistan between Afghanistan and Pakistan have led to the convergence of interests and the forging of amicable relations between Afghanistan and India. India has supported Afghanistan on the question of both Durand Line and Pakhtunistan.⁹ India and Afghanistan established formal diplomatic and political ties on January 4, 1950 by signing first friendship treaty. India allowed Pakhtunistan *Jirga* to be held in Delhi¹⁰ and the Afghan emissary Sardar Najibullah Khan made an anti-Pakistan

⁴ Mushtaq Ahmad, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy* (Karachi; Space Publishers, 1967), 9-10.

⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (I.B. Taurus Publishers, 2000), 7.

⁶ Aly Zaman, "India's Increased Involvement in Afghanistan and Central Asia Implications for Pakistan", *IPRI Journal*, Vol. III, No 2 (Summer, 2003), 7 9.

⁷ Lokesh Chandra "Afghanistan and India: Historico-Cultural Perspective" ed., K.Warikoo, *The Afghanistan Crises Issue and Perspective*, 2-10.

⁸ Baloch, Niazi, "Indian Encroachment in Afghanistan...", 22, 17.

⁹ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 491.

¹⁰ Ian Stephen, *Pakistan: Old country/New Nation* (England: Penguins Books Ltd, 1964), 265.

speech on May 27, 1951.¹¹ Pak-Afghan relations remained hostage to the issue of Pakhtunistan until the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.¹²

India successfully exploited the dictum that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend'. The Indo-Afghan nexus created a nightmarish situation for Pakistan. Closer ties between the two states put Pakistan "in the jaws of a nutcracker."¹³ By supporting Afghanistan on the Durand Line and Pakhtunistan issues India wanted to engage Pakistan on its western border so that the latter could not concentrate on its eastern border with India.

Indo-Afghan bond further strengthened when Afghanistan voted against Pakistan's membership in the UN on September 30, 1947 on Pakhtunistan issue.¹⁴ Because of that "historical-cum-political reasons" Pakistan did everything to counteract Indian intervention in Afghanistan and keep a lid on the thorny issue of Pakhtunistan".¹⁵ In the 1960s Indo-Afghan relations strengthened due to events such as the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 and the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. The security threat from China and growing Pak-China friendship enhanced Afghanistan's importance for India.¹⁶ So deep was the commonality of interests between Afghanistan and India that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had once warned the Pakistani Chief of the Army Staff that "Pakistan should be prepared for a twin attack from Afghanistan and India."¹⁷

Since 1947, India and Afghanistan enjoyed friendly when relations except for a short period of time during the Mujahedeen era as India supported Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan in 1979.¹⁸ In the initial stage, the Mujahedeen government had supported Pakistan on the question of the Kashmiris right to self-determination. Even Ahmed Shah Massoud was once quoted as saying "India has disappointed Afghans by following a wrong course in the past".¹⁹ India's interest received a setback, however, it showed its resilience and established good relations with the *Ustaz*

¹¹ Muhammad Qaiser Janjua, *In The Shadow of The Durand Line: Security, Stability, And The Future Of Pakistan And Afghanistan*. Unpublished Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, <<http://bosun.nps.edu/uhtbin/hyperion-image.exe/05jun%5FHussain.pdf>>, 42.

¹² Shahid Javid, Burki, *Pakistan Fifty Years of Nationhood* (Lahore: Vanguard Books (Pvt) Ltd), 198.

¹³ Niloufer Mahdi, *Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1981 the Search for Security* (Lahore: Ferozsons (Pvt) Ltd, 1999), 13-123.

¹⁴ Khurshid Hassan, "Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations" *Asian Survey* Vol. 2, No. 7 (Sept 1962), 17.<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3023688>>accessed: 28 April 2010.

¹⁵ Yasser Latif, "The Beginning of the New Great Game," *The News International*, April 22, 2008.

¹⁶ Basharat Hussain "Indo-Afghan Relations Pre and Post-Taliban Developments" *Regional Studies*, Vol. XXII, No.3 (Summer 2004), Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, 41.

¹⁷ Mahdi, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, 123.

¹⁸ Rasul Bakhsh Rais, "Afghanistan and the Regional Powers," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No.9, (Sept 1993), 915.

¹⁹ Hussain, "Indo-Afghan Relations...", 42.

(Professor) Burhanuddin Rabbani's regime which came to power after the interim setup of Sibghatullah Mojaddedi handed over power to him in 1992. Rabbani became anti-Pakistan for its undue interference in the Afghan affairs and sought India's help to counter Islamabad²⁰ against Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and later on to Taliban. India felt, Rabbani can counter the growing influence of Pakistan in Afghanistan.²¹ During Rabbani's tenure as president there was lawlessness and disturbance in most parts of Afghanistan. It was in October 1994 that a new phenomenon known as the Taliban emerged.

The Taliban and India

During the 1990s, the continuous civil war and the rapacious activities of different warlords supported by the regional powers provided another twist to the Afghan civil war which led to the emergence of the Taliban.²² Pakistan's enmity with India and its quest to have a friendly regime in Afghanistan, in order to neutralize, if not all together eliminate, Afghanistan's irredentist claims on parts of Pakistan, played an important role in the creation of the Taliban. Pakistan's Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar called Taliban Pakistan's "boys" and conceded that they were trained by Pakistan.²³

It is often pointed out by Pakistani policymakers that in case India occupied just 140 kilometres area of Pakistan, Pakistan would be wiped out because its communications, irrigation, and industry were all concentrated within this depth. The dearth of space within Pakistan compelled it to seek "the doctrine of offensive defence" in a conventional war with India to have a friendly regime in Afghanistan.²⁴

Moreover, Afghanistan was also not only to provide a base for training the '*mujahedeen*' but was also to provide a passage, after the Soviet Union, to the newly independent Central Asia States.²⁵ Pakistan pursued an ambitious policy with regard to Afghanistan. Pakistan needed Afghanistan not only to provide training ground to the Mujahidin but also to pursue its own strategic depth policy viz-a-viz India.²⁶

²⁰ Weinbaum, Marin G., "Afghanistan and its Neighbors: An Ever Dangerous Neighborhood" *United States Institute of Peace* available at <<http://www.usip.org/publications/afghanistan-and-its-neighbors-ever-dangerous-neighborhood>>, 16.

²¹ Hussain "Indo-Afghan Relations...", 47-8.

²² Rahimullah Yousafzai, "the Taliban's years in Powers" eds., Riffat Hussain, J.N. Dixit and et.al. *The Anatomy of a Conflict Afghanistan and 9/11*(New Delhi: The Lotus Collection Roli Books, 2002), 102.

²³ "Babar admits training Taliban in 1994", *The Frontier Post*, Peshawar, September 8, 1998.

²⁴ Hussain, "War against terrorism...", 31-2.

²⁵ Arifa Noor, "The Saviors General," *News*, Islamabad, September 23, 2001.

²⁶ Zalmay Khalizad, "Afghanistan the Next Phase," *Perceptions* (Ankara), Vol.5, No.4, December 2000- February 2001, 8.

In order to bolster the Rabbani regime's strength against the rising power of the Taliban, India provided economic, military and diplomatic support to Rabbani and Massoud to enhance their capacity to withstand Taliban attacks.²⁷ A mini "great game" was now being played on the soil of Afghanistan by the regional states with Pakistan and its archrival India with their respective proxies in the competition. Pakistan has favoured the Islamists ever since the 1970s. After the Taliban got control of Kabul in September 1996, one month later Indian embassy had to be closed down.²⁸

The economic factor all the more caused India to oppose the Taliban because had they consolidated their power in Afghanistan, they would not have allowed India to extend the proposed gas pipeline like Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) from Central Asian Republics (CARs) to New Delhi. India is growing at the same time an energy deficient economy for which it is certainly looking different options and TAPI is one of them. India also supported Pakistan's rival in the Afghan conflict with a view to divert Pakistan's alleged help to the Kashmiri fighters and other insurgents in India.²⁹ Early 90's witnessed a new life in armed insurgency inside Indian occupied Kashmir which was credited to the diversion of Afghan *jihad* towards Kashmir as Pakistan was the architect of Afghan *jihad*, which stood victorious against the Soviets, and now it was the turn of Kashmir to be liberated from Indian occupation.

On the one hand, Pakistan was obsessed with a security threat from India and its continuous support to the Rabbani regime. Both were having Indo-centric and Pakistan-centric policies in Afghanistan much to the detriment of its people. Pakistan's security concerns viz-a-viz India can well be judged from the remarks of the Pakistan's Army Chief of the Staff, Ashfaq Pervaiz Kayani, that he would be the first one to admit that he was India-centric.³⁰ Pak-India proxy war in Afghanistan was raging in full when on September 11, 2001, the attacks on US World Trade Centre and Pentagon changed everything for everyone.

Pak-Afghan Relations and India after 9/11

The attacks on the US on 9/11 brought a paradigm shift in the political affairs of the world. The US told the world community in general and Pakistan in particular that there could not be any neutral in the war against terrorism.³¹ India without any delay agreed with the US demands

²⁷ *The Frontier Post*, Peshawar, July 16, 1994.

²⁸ Frederic Grare, *Pakistan and the Afghan conflict 1979-1985* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 193.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Bob Woodward, *Obama's War* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 238.

³¹ George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress following 9/11 attacks, September 20, 2001, accessed on July 2, 2010. Available at <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm>> (accessed August 9, 2010).

and unconditionally offered its intelligence data on radical Islamic terrorism along with military bases against al-Qaeda and Taliban.³² India immediately identified three air bases, Avantipur, Acampurand Jamnagar, in Jammu, Punjab and Gujarat each, in addition to unspecified port facilities, as a part of its offer for operational support to the US. India's vital national interests in Afghanistan were to contain Pakistan, safeguard India's economic interests, like trade with Central Asia and the flow of gas through the proposed gas pipeline, and prevent use of Afghan soil again as training ground against India.³³ India wanted to gain advantages out of this opportunity. However, the USA needed Pakistan's support due to its geographical proximity to Afghanistan and its previous relations with the Taliban. As soon as the US president announced to wage war against Taliban, India got the opportunity to settle score both with Pakistan and Taliban.³⁴ The Indian leadership tried its best to dissuade the US and international community from getting Pakistan's help in the fight against terror. Although the most potent factor that forced Pakistan to join war on terror was the US threat but the Indian reaction was not the least factor that prompted Pakistan to work for the destruction of Taliban and reverse its decade long policy.³⁵ The Indian leadership urged that the UN Resolution 1373 should also be applied to Pakistan as there are groups fighting in Kashmir at the behest of Pakistan in conjunction and support from al-Qaeda.³⁶

By joining the war on terror Pakistan turned the table on Indian policymakers. However, India in the ultimate analyses succeeded in shifting the world focus from Kashmir and also weakened the stance of Pakistan over Kashmir. Since 9/11, Kashmir's freedom struggle is seen only through the prism of terrorism: "...India... equated the Kashmiri's struggle for self-determination to terrorist activity, supported by Pakistan."³⁷

India based its premise on the point that Pakistan is part of the problem and it should be kept out of the war on terror. The US campaign in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda and Taliban was a defining moment both for Pakistan and India. It created new strategic opportunities as well as

³² Raju G.G. Thomas, "In the Middle Ground" ed. Mary Buckley and Rick Fawn, *Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11, Afghanistan and Beyond* (London: Rutledge, 2003), 202.

³³ Samay Ram, *The New Afghanistan: Pawn of America*, (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2004), 159.

³⁴ Zafar Habib, "Pakistan's Afghan Policy in the 1990s: Strategic Imperatives, Institutional Dilemmas and Systemic Constrains," Unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University (Islamabad: 2003), 160.

³⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*, (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 219.

³⁶ Nasim Zahra, "Anatomy of two Responses" *The News*, December 27, 2001.

³⁷ Tayyeb Siddiqui, "Why Kashmir is No More Issue," *Dawn*, Islamabad, January 24, 2010.

burdens for both. But the changes proved more advantageous to India than Pakistan.³⁸

Post-Taliban Afghanistan and India

The fall of Taliban was a "strategic debacle" for Pakistan, the new Afghan leaders were considered by Pakistan's ISI as pro-India.³⁹ Under the new dispensation in Afghanistan that came into power under the Bonn Accords, in which an Indian-educated Hamid Karzai from the Durrani branch of the Popalzia (Pakhtun) tribe, only added to Pakistan's "paranoia."⁴⁰ The anti-Taliban and India friendly forces got powerful portfolios such as foreign affairs, interior ministry and defence in the new setup. "India's... fortunes improved in Kabul as Islamabad's [Pakistan], influence touched a nadir."⁴¹ Indo-Afghan relations continued to improve after the fall of the Taliban and the interim administration assumed formal control. Within a short span of time five Afghan dignitaries visited India which speaks volumes about the clout India got in the post-Taliban setup.⁴²

India has also scored economic gains and is seeking for its products a lucrative market in Afghanistan. The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) established its cell in Kabul on March 1, 2002. The CII held a 'Made-in-India' show in Kabul in September 2002, to introduce the Indian products in Afghanistan. The show was a success, as it was visited by 25,000 persons including 8,000 businessmen. An Indo-Afghan Business Forum (IABF) was also established to link the business communities of Afghanistan and India.⁴³ The Indian investors showed interest in setting up medical and industrial units worth \$2.5 million. Half of the 170 participating companies appointed dealers, agents and distributors for their products.⁴⁴ Encouraged by the trade fair India and Afghanistan signed the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)⁴⁵ to boost two-way trade as Afghan President Karzai sought enhanced Indian assistance in the ongoing reconstruction efforts in the war-ravaged Afghanistan. This gives tariff concession to Afghan goods.⁴⁶ The PTA covered import of dry fruits, fruits and some other commodities from Afghanistan. According to Afghan

³⁸ Rodney Jones, "the US War on Terrorism; Religious Radicalism and Nuclear Confrontation in South Asia," *South Asian Academic Paper* 8.x.

³⁹ Rashid, "Descent into Chaos...", 87.

⁴⁰ William Maley, *Rescuing Afghanistan* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), 109.

⁴¹ Sudha Ramachandran, "Now it's another war in Afghanistan," *The Statesman*, July 10, 2008.

⁴² Kadwai, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: the Resurgent Role India and Iran" ed. Ahmar, *The Challenge of Rebuilding Afghanistan*, 204; Hussain "Indo-Afghan Relations Pre and Post-Taliban Developments", 46.

⁴³ Hussain "Indo-Afghan Relations ...," 47-8.

⁴⁴ Kadwai, "Rebuilding Afghanistan...", 205.

⁴⁵ Pattanaik, "Indian Interests In Afghanistan: Opportunities And Challenges."

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Commerce Minister Mustafa Kazmi, "India is the best market for exporting Afghan goods".⁴⁷ The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) formulated a list of 30 Indian companies for undertaking big projects in Afghanistan. Bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan reached \$358 million for the fiscal year April 2007 to March 2008.

Due to Pak-India mistrust Pakistan refused to provide transit facility to Indian goods going to Afghanistan. Pakistan allows the transit of Afghan goods to India over its territory but not vice versa.⁴⁸

India's Strategic Objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan's Concerns

Afghanistan shares its borders with six countries namely Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, China, Iran and Pakistan. From Indian point of view each of these countries carries a high degree of importance, China and Pakistan as competitors and the rest as a means to counter them.⁴⁹ In order to enhance its manoeuvrability viz-a-viz Pakistan, India established a military base at Farkhor, an area close to the border with Afghanistan, in Tajikistan in May 2002.⁵⁰ The Indian military base at Farkhor will influence the course of events in the future.⁵¹ India's proactive role in Afghanistan was detrimental to Pakistani interests in Kabul.

Since 2001, India has committed \$1.3 billion for Afghanistan's reconstruction, becoming the sixth largest⁵² and the largest non-OECD donor to Afghanistan.⁵³ All this is done by the Indian government to win over the Afghans and establish itself as a regional power.⁵⁴ Greater role in Afghanistan would certainly provide India with the opportunity and ability to confront Pakistan with a two front scenario. The aid given to Afghanistan was divided among infrastructure repair, humanitarian assistance and institutional and human resource development.⁵⁵ The semi-military Indian Border Roads Organization (BRO) built a major highway connecting Zaranj and Delaram with the cost of \$84 million⁵⁶ on the

⁴⁷ Kadwai, "Rebuilding Afghanistan...", 206.

⁴⁸ Zahid Shahab Ahmed and Stuti Bhatnager, "Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations and the Indian factor," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 60. No. 2, April 2007.

⁴⁹ Shah, "Pakistan, India and the Post 9/11 Afghanistan", 342.

⁵⁰ Zaman, "India's increased involvement in Afghanistan and Central Asia Implications for Pakistan, 7-9.

⁵¹ Ibid; 85.

⁵² Since 2001 India today is the sixth-largest bilateral donor in Afghanistan after the United States, Britain, Japan and Germany, and World Bank. Ramachandran, "Now it's war against India in Afghanistan" *Asia Times* 9 July 2008.

⁵³ Melanie, "Indian Involvement in Afghanistan...", 20.

⁵⁴ Alam Rind, "Afghan Dimension To Pakistan-India Relations," *The Frontier Post*, April 21, 2010.

⁵⁵ Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and its Neighbors...", 16.

⁵⁶ Pattanaik, "In the Pursuit of Strategic Depth: The Changing Dynamics of Pakistan's Afghan Policy," *Afghanistan the Challenge* ed., K. Warikoo, 157.

Pakistan border in the southwestern province of Nimruz, bordering Baluchistan.⁵⁷ The Zaranj-Delaram project runs from the Iranian border to Delaram. India can unload goods at Iran's Chabahar Port and then send the shipments overland through the Zaranj-Delaram Highway and the Garland Highway to cities across Afghanistan.⁵⁸ "The explicit intent of this project is to break Pakistan's monopoly on Afghanistan's link to the outside world through the Khyber Pass..., and re-orient Afghanistan's transport, economic and strategic focus to its west."⁵⁹ Zaranj-Delaram Highway not only provides India overland access to Afghanistan which was denied to it by Pakistan but also "gains the maximum political advantage and, of course, undercuts Pakistani influence."⁶⁰ India also helped Afghanistan and gave 300 military transport vehicles to Afghan military as a part of international efforts to build a new Afghan Army. India's assistance to Afghan National Army was termed by the Afghan defence minister an excellent example of 'regional cooperation'.⁶¹ India also provided training to Afghan bureaucracy, helped in the field of civil aviation, gave 300 transport buses and provided skills to over 3,000 Afghans with carpentry, plumbing and masonry. Thousands of scholarships were given to Afghan students for study in India.⁶² Afghans were given training in the field of policing, journalism, and medicine and computer science.⁶³ India's medical mission in Kabul, Kandahar and Herat treated over three lakh patients with free medicines.⁶⁴ India trained Afghan police and diplomats and provided assistance in such areas as education, health, and telecoms. About 4,000 Indian personnel are working in Afghanistan on various projects.⁶⁵ According to Ahmed Rashid, a leading expert on Afghan affairs, it meant to "advertise India's claim to be regional economic power, ready

⁵⁷ The construction of the road was agreed to by the two sides during Karzai visit to India in March 2003; Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee announced a grant of US \$70 million for the construction of Zaranj-Delaram Road. This road would shorten the transit distance between Iranian port city Chabahar and Delaram [Afghanistan] by over 600 kilometers. Rubin and Siddique, "Resolving the Pakistan- Afghanistan Stalemate", 14; Chandra, "India and Afghanistan: Renewing Economic Relations" *Afghanistan the Challenge* ed. K. Warikoo, 184.

⁵⁸ Ramachandran, "Now it's War Against India in Afghanistan."

⁵⁹ Lee, "India Doubles Down in Afghanistan".

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Kadwai, "Rebuilding Afghanistan...", 205.

⁶² Anwar Parveen, "Indian Interests in Afghanistan," *The Frontier Post*, 16 November 2012. Chandra, "India and Afghanistan: Renewing Economic Relations," ed., K. Warikoo, *Afghanistan the Challenge*, 182.

⁶³ Kadwai, "Rebuilding Afghanistan...", 206-7.

⁶⁴ Pattanaik, "Indian interests in Afghanistan: opportunities and Challenges."

⁶⁵ "India's military cooperation with Afghanistan has been through providing help in training the Afghan army. For instance, about a hundred Afghan officers are trained each year in Indian military academies. Indian military personnel have also been taking part in teaching basic skills to the Afghan soldiers in Afghanistan". see for detail of India's assistance to Afghanistan. Chandra, "India and Afghanistan: Renewing Economic Relations" ed. K. Warikoo, *Afghanistan the Challenge*, 180-93.

to assume regional responsibilities.”⁶⁶ India through its efforts at reconstructions and capacity-building in Afghanistan had been trying to exert its “soft power” in Afghanistan.⁶⁷ The Indian government’s sustained support for Afghanistan is construed as “strategic encirclement” of Pakistan.⁶⁸ But in spite of India’s activism in every field in Afghanistan, it is constrained by geography; Pakistan’s contiguity and Islamic ties between the two people, if not at the official level.

India’s Consulates in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s Concerns

India established a number of consulates along the Pak-Afghan border. Pakistan repeatedly held that they had ‘concrete’ evidence that these consulates were being used as cover for Indian intelligence agencies to run covert operations against Pakistan, and to incite insurgency in its largest Baluchistan province⁶⁹ as well as helping the militants in Fata.⁷⁰

Pakistan accused India of setting up networks of “terrorist training camps” inside Afghanistan, including one at the Afghan military base of Qushila Jadid, north of Kabul; near Gereshk, in southern Helmand province; in the Panjshir Valley, northeast of Kabul; and at Kahak and Hassan Killies in western Nimruz province. However, India’s spokesman, Sarna, termed these charges “rubbish.”⁷¹ Pakistani journalist Rahimullah Yousafzai stated that the Indian embassy in Kabul and its consulates in Afghanistan have cultivated relations with important military commanders, who operated close to the Pakistani border.⁷² Pakistan has time and again accused India of fomenting insurgencies or “terrorist activities” in Baluchistan and Fata through its consulates along the Pak-Afghan border.⁷³ By supporting the Baloch insurgents and other terrorists, India aims to dilute and weaken Pakistan’s military strength on its eastern border.⁷⁴ Pakistan argues that

⁶⁶ Weinbaum, *Afghanistan and its Neighbors*, 16; Anwar Parveen, “Indian Interests in Afghanistan” *The Frontier Post*, 16 November 2012.

⁶⁷ Indian television, soaps and Indian films are very popular in Afghanistan. Bajoria, “India-Afghanistan Relations.”

⁶⁸ Melanie, “Indian Involvement in Afghanistan...”, 15.

⁶⁹ Grare, *Carnage Papers*, 12.

⁷⁰ Sayed Mazhar Ali Shah, “Afghanistan Ke Baharat Dost Aur Pakistan Dushman Policiaya,” *AAj* (Urdu), 21 July 2009; Muhammad Amjad, “Operation Waziristan: An Overview,” *Dawn*, April 17, 2010.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Rahimullah Yousafzai, “Pakistan’s Loss in Afghanistan is India’s Gain” *The News*, July 13, 2003.

⁷³ Ayaz Ahmed Pirzada “Pak-Afghan Relations Victim of Mistrust,” *The Frontier Post*, July 10, 2008; Ahmed Rashid, “The Afghan Conundrum” ed., Maleeha Lodhi, *Pakistan: Beyond the ‘Crises State’* (London: Hurts & Company, 2001), 316.

⁷⁴ Huma Mir, “Indo-Pakistan Talks and Afghanistan” *The Frontier Post*, 5 March 2010; Alam Rind, “Afghan Dimension To Pakistan-India Relations,” *The Frontier Post*, April 21, 2010.

India does not share a border with Afghanistan....why do (they) have such a large presence in Afghanistan?⁷⁵ Pakistan criticized India for creating an anti-Pakistan Afghanistan. These Indian consulates did not have any other role except creating trouble in Pakistan....why wouldn't the consulates be somewhere in the north facing Uzbekistan and Tajikistan?⁷⁶

However, Indian stand on these consulates is that these were operational before the civil war ensued in Afghanistan in the post-Soviet withdrawal period and were meant only to oversee the developmental works in Afghanistan and make connection with the people living in the area.⁷⁷ To allay the apprehension that Pakistan nurtures about India's presence in Afghanistan, the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, said, "India is a close friend of Afghanistan but Pakistan is a brother of Afghanistan... we are conjoined twins, there's no separation."⁷⁸

Indo-Afghan good neighbourly relations proved to be the worst scenario after the fall of the Taliban that kept India away from Pakistan's western borders.⁷⁹ There are observers who believe that Pakistan was behind the instability in Afghanistan as Pakistan would prefer "controlled instability" over US- and India-dominated stability."⁸⁰ According to Ahmad Rashid, "It is better to keep the Afghan Taliban as reserve... the Indian presence must at all cost be eliminated from Afghanistan..."⁸¹

Conclusion

Since the Pakistan and India's independence from the colonial clutches in 1947, both the countries bogged down to an unending and perennial hostility which is even fought out on the soil of Afghanistan. The main bone of contention between India and Pakistan is the core issue of Kashmir. They have fought number of wars on this issue and this might be an existential threat to millions of people as both the states possess the nuclear arsenals.

Despite a commonality of interests between Pakistan and Afghanistan, their bilateral relations have often been sour, right from the onset of Pakistan's emergence in 1947. The main reason that hurt their relations was the utopian concept of Pakhtunistan that Afghanistan supported. Afghanistan also declared the Durand Line, drawn in 1893, null and void and claiming the Pakhtunistan areas as its own. This and other

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Masood Haider, "India Creating Anti-Pakistan Afghanistan," *Dawn*, Islamabad, November 10, 2010.

⁷⁷ Pattanaik, "Indian Interests in Afghanistan: Opportunity and Challenges."

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Rubin and Siddique, "Resolving the Pakistan- Afghanistan Stalemate," 14.

⁸⁰ Melanie Hanif, "Indian Involvement in Afghanistan: Stepping Stone or Stumbling Block to Regional Hegemony?", *GIGA*, No. 98, (April 2009), 14.

⁸¹ Ahmed Rashid interview published in *The News*, Islamabad, December 13, 2009.

factors resulted in Afghanistan's tilt toward the then Soviet Union, and Pakistan leaning towards the USA. The issue also contributed to the arrival of Soviet forces in Afghanistan in December 1979.

The fallout of that interference and subsequent events are now part of Afghan and world history. However, the saga still continues. The "war on terror" by default is an extension of the acrimonious relationship between the two states. Both countries have suffered greatly due to their misguided policies in the past. Pakistan drafted and espoused the faulty theory of "strategic depth" to counter Afghanistan and Indian influence in the region. Hardly a day goes by without some suicide bombing or other untoward incident in both Pakistan and Afghanistan and potential threat to India's security.

To reach a win-win situation all three countries need to shun the Kautilian policy that the enemy of one is the friend of other. Rather, they need to embrace the concept that the enemy of one is the enemy of the other. For this they need to design a joint mechanism to defeat the common enemy, terrorism, backwardness, poverty, etc. Afghanistan must assure Pakistan that its soil will not be used by any state or organisations inimical to Pakistan's interests. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto once remarked that no two countries in the world share so much in common as Pakistan and Afghanistan, and his sagacious daughter Benazir Bhutto famously remarked that there is an Indian in every Pakistani, and a Pakistani in every Indian. So all the three countries have a lot of commonalities and share much.

The way forward will be a comprehensive approach and serious regional commitment that can only be achieved if all three countries shed their rivalries and work collectively. In the post drawdown of international forces Pakistan, India and Afghanistan must strive for a shining and bright future. All stakeholders must take the "war on terror" to a logical conclusion.

All three countries must cooperate to tackle the problem of militancy and terrorism through a cohesive strategy for the future of a peaceful South Asia, Central Asia and the entire region. Economic cooperation should increase among these three countries and other countries in the region especially China. This region has a special importance and the potential to serve as a trade nucleus for the South Asian countries and also for the energy rich Central Asia. To save the region from the scourge of poverty and militancy, the best course for Pakistan and India is to "go beyond the zero-sum mentality".

