

## PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS IN THE PARAMETER OF STRATEGIC DEPTH POLICY

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### ABSTRACT

This paper provides an analysis of Pakistan - Afghanistan relations since 1947 and explores major issues which have led to cold relations over decades. In this context, Pakistan's strategic depth policy is explained that why it was devised and what cost and benefits it incurred. A connection of events is built in post 9/11 scenario and current 2014 transition. It is assessed that the policy of strategic depth which is based on establishing military developments in Afghanistan for three main reasons; India, Kashmir issues and economic cooperation, actually could not fulfill its purpose. Moreover, it has created troubles for Pakistan in the form of terrorism and international pressure. Therefore, it must pursue a policy reorientation and halt the policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan to stabilize the relations.

**Keywords:** strategic depth policy, terrorism, policy reorientation

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## Introduction

Pakistan and Afghanistan have a history that has been overshadowed by a myriad of issues. Afghanistan was the only country who opposed Pakistan's entry to the United Nations, which was the start of this cold relationship. The standoff disagreement between the states is the legitimate status of a 2400km long border. Although both countries share culture, religion and language but the irony is that the hearts are strained with hatred and mistrust. This tension continued till the soviet forces entered into the sovereign territory of Afghanistan in 1979 and occupied its major cities including Kabul. Soviet oppression continued for the next nine years till the official withdrawal by the Soviet Union in February 1989 (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999).

The Soviet invasion was the most catastrophic event which changed the course of history whereas ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan were concerned. It was a catalyst for the geopolitical earthquake of 1979. It was a battle between two superpowers demarcating themselves on ideological grounds. Pakistan due to its geostrategic position became the frontline state to combat communism and destroy the soviets. Zia-ul-haq, a military dictator, found an opportunity to get legitimacy at an international level. He, overnight, became a war hero who was fighting on principle to help his brethren Muslim neighbors against godless oppressors. This war also yielded geographical, political and socio economic benefits for Pakistan (Rubin, 2000; Weinbaum, 1991a). Moreover there was danger foreseen; if the soviets succeeded in consolidating in Afghanistan it could be a probable threat that Pakistan might fell to their oppression.

This war was the perfect opportunity for Pakistan to overcome its hostile relations with Afghanistan. A high profile jihad was launched under the supervision of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's intelligence agency. The United States (US) provided the major funding and Pakistan's military trained these jihadi forces to combat Soviet forces. Finally, after a war of nine years, the Soviet forces withdrew and the United States departed as they had accomplished their goal of defeating communism, leaving problems for the war-stricken Afghanistan and its neighbor Pakistan. Soon after their departure, a civil war broke out in Afghanistan as different groups tried to gain control of Kabul, ravaging the peace of the country. Pakistan, who was still a potential supporter, agreed to accommodate 3.3 million refugees migrating from a devastated Afghanistan (Council, 2010). The Afghan war also brought the

menace of Kalashnikov culture in Pakistan. Drug trafficking and smuggling were the other main issues which emerged after this war.

The aftermath led to the origination of the notion of strategic depth. Since 1990, the concept of strategic depth is the line of conduct for our military establishment; the idea was to build an asset which could primarily be used against India. This notion has three dimensions; political, economic but primarily its military oriented. Afghanistan was to act as a backup for Pakistan in the case of an Indian invasion. Pakistan also wanted a friendly government in Kabul to solve issues such as the Durand line and Pakhtunistan (Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009; Omrani, 2009). Pakistan wanted Pashtun elements in Afghanistan to estrange them from the demand of an independent Pakhtoonistan and to sign a permanent agreement of a border line. Afghanistan was also important as it was to serve as a transit to reach the resources and markets of newly independent Central Asian Republics (CARs).

This paper basically explores the reasons behind Pakistan's obsession with the policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan. This paper analyzes the flaws in this policy which accounted for its failure. It also discusses the contemplated reversal of this policy and the current turmoil as Pakistan is presenting a picture of a failed state. Furthermore, the paper proposes certain changes in this policy which can be fruitful in the future. Pak-Afghan relations were distraught over the issue of Durand line.

The Afghan claim over Pakistani territory of Tribal areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a real thorn in the bilateral relations. Afghanistan never accepted the Durand line as a legitimate border which threatened the territorial integrity of Pakistan. The anti Pakistan policy was followed by a revanchist claim of Pashtunistan which became a blighting factor for estrangement. Pashtun nationalists demanded Pashtun majority areas of Pakistan to form an independent state. Although, a weak Afghanistan could not do much, they kept providing their moral support for this struggle. After the Afghan war it was time for Pakistan to act. They desired a compliant regime that could dampen the roots of Pashtun nationalism. Islamabad tried to garner the support of Taliban to recognize the border and stop any disturbance in the tribal belt. The Taliban agreed to resolve all the important issues including Durand line once they resumed the control over the government. But unfortunately, Taliban never signed any border agreement nor abandoned the idea of Pashtunistan when they came to power (Shane, 2009; Usher, 2007). In fact they kept fostering this idea which added much to the disappointment in Islamabad.

## Major Issues in Pakistan Afghanistan Relations

Following are the major issues in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations:

### **The Durand line**

An extremely contentious issue in Pakistan Afghanistan relations since the birth of Pakistan has been the Durand line ,the borderline between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Hasan, 1962; Rubin & Rashid, 2008).In time and time again the governments in Afghanistan have questioned the British drawn border (in 1893) between the two neighbors and this has been a major bone of contention between the two states. The porous border is the reason for such high level of refugees which have poured into Pakistan and are a major strain on the fragile economy of Pakistan. The Afghani stance is that the pre-independence agreement between British India and Afghanistan is no longer valid but Pakistan insists that the border be formal.

### **Pashtunistan**

The term literally means “Land of the Pushtuns” and the area that was referred to as Pashtunistan is today’s modern Afghanistan and KPK province of Pakistan. At the time of Pakistan-India division the Pushtuns dreamed of creating this land as a separate entity but not succeed given that the province was acceded to the new born country Pakistan. At the heart of this early dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan there is the pashtun dream to get a land for pashtun population only by creating a Greater Afghanistan (Mukerjee, 1975; O’Loughlin, Witmer, & Linke, 2010; Omrani, 2009). It is due to this phenomenon there was high mistrust among both states and this was a major factor why Afghanistan was apprehensive of Pakistan’s entry into the UN in 1948, therefore showing bitterness regarding the existence of Pakistan. It can be stated that from 1947 till 1979 the Pashtunistan issue has been a major source of mistrust and trust deficient between the two states.

### **Pakistani Policy of Interference in Afghanistan**

During the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan Pakistan decided to ally with the west and fight against the “Godless Soviets”. Young Afghan student leaders Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masoud had the ability to strike against Daud’s regime and so were sheltered by Pakistan under the Bhutto regime and this created a chain of events which led to the deteriorating relationship between the two states which are still to be mended (Weinbaum, 1991a, 1991b). Pakistan trained some 5000 Afghan dissidents in secret military camps in warfare, wireless communication and guerilla activities. Pakistan’s embassy in Kabul in 1974 was provided with a

list of 1,331 Afghans nationals and their families for monthly stipends. So basically the relationship in 1970s commenced with each country supporting the other rebels on a tit-for-tat basis which proved disastrous for both the states not just one. To destabilize the Afghan democratic government Pakistan's policy of financing non-state Islamic militants was one policy which backfired and Pakistan is still bearing the consequences (Stern, 2000). Pakistan had established Madrassas and military training camps to train and equip the Jihadis which were used against the Soviets and due to this there was bitterness between the two states.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet forces and 1988 and results of Geneva Accords results Pakistan felt proud of being able to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan. Next came the period of the **Talibans** and Pakistan continued its policy of interference in Afghanistan. Pakistan has always been fearful of Pashtunistan Nationalism and to contain it it created proxies in the shape of talibans and Mujahideens but in doing so at the time it did not realize the unintended consequences of this move which would later cause insurgency and chaos in the Pakistani region itself. Pakistan believed that the Taliban would establish a pro-Pakistani government in Afghanistan which would benefit Pakistan but this did not work out as anticipated and rather made Pakistan more insecure due to spillover effect of the Taliban culture and thus Pakistan also went through Talibanization process, the Taliban did not accept the Durand Line as the formal border and also did not give up on Pashtunistan nationalism as was idealized by Pakistan. By recognizing Taliban Pakistan isolated itself regionally and internationally. Pakistan's interventionist strategy of supporting Talibans laid negative impact on Pakistan Afghanistan relations and analysts criticize Pakistan for treating Afghanistan as if it were Pakistan's fifth province (Perlez, 2009).

### **Concept of Strategic Depth**

To define what is strategic depth one needs to understand firstly that it is a military tactic. The real meaning of the term is the distance which is maintained between the frontlines this could include industrial areas, capital cities etc. Strategic depth is a political-military term and the idea is to enhance your country's presence into another country and then use the territory and resources of that country to benefit ones country in times of warfare or conflict (Roy, 2002). The concept of strategic depth can also be analyzed as one in which state A facilitates state B in terms of territory and resources. After the cold war era the concept of strategic depth can be applied to

states by not invading them to use their territory and resources but building better relations with them (Walker, 2007).

### **Pakistan's Policy of Strategic Depth**

Pakistan's policy of having military establishments in Afghanistan to pursue its interests is called the strategic depth. It is also called "hedging strategy" or "double game" (Qazi, 2011). This is policy started after 1979 USSR invasion in Afghanistan and respective US help to defeat soviets by supporting Talibans against them. It is aimed at making Afghanistan a satellite state so that it can be used to counter India and to minimize Indian influence in bordering Afghanistan. Secondly, the aim was to have a friendly government in Afghanistan so that it would not incite Pakistani pushtoon community at borders to have nationalistic movement (Evans, 2011). Throughout 1980s and 1990s Pakistan adopted this policy and also helped the Taliban to take over control in 1996. After 9/11 things changed. A critical analysis of strategic depth policy is following:

Pakistan adopted strategic depth towards Afghanistan for three main reasons:

- Indian factor
- Kashmir issue
- Economic factor

These three rationales are analytically discussed in following discussion:

#### **Indian Factor**

Pakistan's policy of strategic depth is mainly India-centric; it revolves around Pakistan's hostility with India. Its military viewpoint is related to Pakistan's security perceptions. Military circles face two major threats; one is from non Pashtun anti-Pakistan government of National Alliance in Kabul and the other is the aggressive India (Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009; Tarzi, 2006). Pakistan could not afford to be trapped within two rival neighbors. Therefore Pakistan did its utmost to deny Indian influence in Kabul and installed their support in Pashtun circles, mainly Taliban, to establish a pro Pakistan government in 1996 (Zeb, 2006).

By blocking Indian penetration in Afghanistan, they could foster a pro-Pakistani administration in Kabul. Other than this, Afghanistan could be used as a backup base if there was a war with India. Taliban troops could be used as proxies against an Indian invasion. The humiliating defeat of the 1971 war was fresh in the minds of Pakistan's military; therefore they wanted to materialize the Afghan option in case there was a war (Haqqani, 2004). However, this thought

had a weak premise as there is no viable chance of war between the Pakistan and India. Both the states are now equipped with nuclear arsenal. In case there is a war, nuclear retaliation would be a probable option rather than using Afghanistan (Basrur, 2009).

### **Kashmir Issue**

Another aspect of military involvement in Afghanistan was to deal with the Kashmir issue. It is the major standoff issue since the partition of subcontinent and a primary reason which ignited three major wars between Pakistan and India. A military orientation of strategic depth was devised by considering Taliban as asset which can be used in the disputed area of Kashmir to bolster insurgency (Johnson & Mason, 2008; Rashid, 1999). Taliban and other jihadi elements were used as proxies to calibrate the level of extremism and violence in Indian occupied Kashmir. Other militant groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad conducted terrorist activities in India. Pakistan also used Afghan soil to facilitate training and operations by Pakistani backed militant groups which were infiltrated in Kashmir to give the Indian forces tough time (Evans, 2000; Fair, 2004). This was a successful attempt as Pakistan was able to portray that Kashmir was burning and needed international attention to find a permanent resolution.

However, soon, the Indian government figured out Pakistan's involvement in these activities and tagged Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism. Pakistan also failed on the other front as Taliban did not come up to the expectations. They claimed not be the puppets of Pakistani establishment and rather viewed Pakistan's involvement as manipulation. They always were resistant to the demands of Pakistan and avoided taking any dictation from Islamabad. Even after 9/11, Pakistan was not able to convince the Taliban to drop their support for Osama bin Laden and to hand over the leadership of Al-Qaida to American forces (Qazi, 2011).

After the events of 9/11, Taliban and leaders of Al-Qaida founded a refuge in the tribal belt of Pakistan to escape from US forces in Afghanistan. They found safe sanctuaries and started conducting terrorist activities not only against American forces but also against Pakistan. They took a plea that Pakistan should stop supporting US agenda, as they were infidel aggressors fighting Islam. Insurgent groups within Pakistan such as Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Haqqani network went out of control creating a volatile situation in North Waziristan (Bajoria & Laub, 2011). Although Pakistan banned many of these militant groups, but they are still active and are conducting underground operations. These militant groups are now working on an anti

state policy of creating havoc and chaos in Pakistan through terrorist activities. Thousands have been killed due to the terrorist attacks by these radical groups.

### **Economic Factor**

The Economic rationale of strategic depth was to enhance regional commerce and transportation links with CARs. Pakistan wanted to reap the potential economic dividends out of its geostrategic location. Afghanistan was to serve as link for Pakistan to reach Central Asian states for trade and resource extraction (Menon, 2003). By establishing an influence within Kabul, Pakistan wanted to maintain a strong grip on these trade routes. This measure would have diminished the importance of the Indian built Zaranj-Delaram road, and would undermine Indian efforts to get access to the lucrative markets of Central Asia (Blank, 2003). By augmenting cordial relations with Afghanistan they could easily box out India and Gawadar could serve as the only gateway for Afghanistan and Central Asia to trade with rest of the world. Pakistan was also interested in gaining access to the Central Asian gas. However Afghanistan did not prove to be a good transit due to the turbulence and restlessness within the state. A problem free and uninterrupted trade route was needed to extract the benefits and to fulfill Pakistan's desire to become an economic hub.

### **Benefits from Strategic Depth**

Apart from all the criticism, strategic depth did prove be beneficial for Pakistan in some cases. After Taliban took over, there was relative peace after a long civil war in Afghanistan. This development led to the repatriation of Afghan refugees who were fed on the resources of Pakistan. Around 1.2million refugees left for Afghanistan during the Taliban regime (Kronenfeld, 2008). Pak-Afghan trade rapidly increased as the friendly relation flourished. This was a time of healthy economic relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Taliban regime was also supported by Pashtun circles within Pakistan and many religious parties including a major one, Jamat-e-Islami, fully backed this policy of strategic depth.

### **International Pressure**

Pakistan was one of the three countries to recognize Taliban in 1996 and maintained its relationship even after the tragic event of 9/11 (Bajoria & Masters, 2010; Frederic Grare, 2006). This was because Pakistan never trusted National Alliance and expected the Taliban to provide strategic depth in Afghanistan. However, in the past, Taliban did not prove to be a better option and the benefits forecasted were much less than the cost incurred to Pakistan.

From the very beginning, the Taliban government lacked international support and was isolated due to its radical Islamic ideology and rigid Shariah laws. They were also accused of enforcing draconian laws and applying restrictions on education. Atrocities were inflicted upon other ethnic groups, especially Non-Muslims. They were also disliked by the international community due to their repeated human right violations and especially ill treatment towards the women.

### **Adverse Regional Implications**

This faulty notion of strategic depth made Afghan policy complete doldrums. For all the havocs created by Taliban, Pakistan became internationally pressurized and was further isolated and polarized. Pakistan's relation with its neighbors, especially Iran, worsened. Eleven Iranian diplomats were killed in Mazar-e-Sharif in 1998. Sipah-e-Sahaba, an anti Shia Pakistani militant group, backed by ISI, was also involved in the capture of Bamiyan which deteriorated Pak-Iran relations (S. P. Cohen, 2003; Frédéric Grare, 2007). Taliban blew off old Buddhist statues, creating concerns in China. Relations with US, India, Central Asia and Russia also witnessed a downturn. Russia and Central Asia were unhappy over tension in the North. The peace was highly elusive as the Taliban tried to gain control in the north of Afghanistan. They were imposing restrictions over non Pashtun population mainly Uzbeks and Hazaras leaving concerns for Central Asian Republics (CARs). India was apprehensive over insurgency in Kashmir, which carried out by the elements within Taliban. Osama-bin-laden, who was a well known terrorist, sought refuge in Afghanistan. He used Afghan soil as base to conduct terrorist activities against western powers. US put a lot of pressure on Pakistan to alienate itself from diplomatic relations with Taliban. However, with so many problems Taliban had caused, Pakistan continued to back them believing that the Taliban would soon settle down and the world will acknowledge them (Frederic Grare, 2006). But in reality this policy of strategic depth surpassed the accrued benefits.

### **Shift in the Strategic Depth Policy: Post 9/11 Analysis**

After the awful event of 9/11, Islamabad was threatened by President Bush on September 13<sup>th</sup> “if Taliban did not stop harboring al-Qaeda Pakistan will be treated like a terrorist”(Rubin, 2007). To fulfill the American demand, there was a sudden shift in the policy of strategic depth. Musharraf completely turned around by siding with the US against Taliban and Al-Qaida in the “war against terror”. Pakistan hardly had any other option because India, their hostile neighbor, had already offered America to use its air and naval bases to attack Afghanistan. It was a matter

of sovereignty, so Pakistan decided to cooperate with US and provided them with necessary bases and intelligence. Although this support manifested full commitment for US to counter Taliban and Al-Qaida but soon Pakistan was blamed for having “double standards”. Pakistan did focus on capturing and eliminating Al-Qaida, but the same rigor was not evident regarding the Taliban. They still had soft corner for Taliban as there was a lack of chemistry between Northern Alliance and Pakistan. In 2001, Pakistan was the only country who had diplomatic relations with Taliban and was about to be declared as sponsor of state terrorism (Jones, 2007; Riedel, 2008).

After the debacle of the Taliban regime, a non Pashtun government of Northern Alliance was installed in Kabul adding to the grief of Islamabad. Northern Alliance was seen as a profound strategic threat for Pakistan as previously they had links with India. Moreover, in 2002-03, few skirmishes were witnessed between Afghan forces and the Pakistan army over the border issue. The Karzai government was also in forefronts to accuse Pakistan of providing safe sanctuaries to terrorists despite the fact Pakistan had lost so much in this war. The Afghan government is also intending to build a dam on the Kunar River, without taking Pakistan on board. This action might lead to shortage of water in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pakistan also suspects that the liberation groups in Baluchistan are aided by Indian intelligence agency RAW. They are using Indian consulates in Afghanistan as a base for activities against Pakistan. India’s current investment of building infrastructure in Afghanistan has also caused much of a concern for Pakistan (Chanana, 2009).

Today Pak-Afghan relations stand at a very critical juncture. United States have planned to pull out its forces by 2014. A minimum force will be maintained to assist the Afghan government. Although Pakistani foreign minister, Hina Rabbani Khar, had publicly stated that Pakistan “would no longer pursue its policy of strategic depth” in Afghanistan but Pakistan still have an indispensable role to play. It has to fill the vacuum in the region after the US departure. There is also a danger of a civil war, as happened before, when soviet withdrew its forces in 1989.

Although, supporting Taliban did not put Pakistan in an advantageous position, but by marginalizing Afghanistan in their foreign policy, further problems might emerge. Islamabad has learnt from its mistakes that by putting all the eggs in one basket they have achieved nothing. And the policy of strategic depth has been complete shambles. But in order to maintain a permanent peace in the region, Pakistan should take on board all the stake holders, including Taliban. Northern Alliance along with Taliban leadership should combine their effort for a

sustainable reconciliation in Afghanistan. Taliban still constitute a major chunk of Afghan population so they can't be sidelined. According to Riaz Muhammad Khan, the Taliban can be held responsible to give refugee to Al-Qaida but they are not their crime partners. Terrorist activities could be a retaliation of the American oppression and current drone attacks. It's now time to convince them for negotiation and to leave confrontation in the future (Fair, 2011).

### **US Withdrawal 2014: Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan**

The post-2014 scenario poses both challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. Policy makers in Pakistan should come up with a comprehensive strategy for the future of Afghanistan. Being a major regional player, it has a privileged position to influence its decisions. Pakistan needs to give up this impression that Northern Alliance is an enemy. It needs to engage the Afghan government and all the stakeholders who play a part in the political process. Pakistan needs to launch a multi-prong effort that will facilitate the reconciliation process inside Afghanistan resulting in regional peace and stability.

A strong Pak-Afghan cooperation is required to deal with the growing concerns of cross border insurgency. There should be a combined task force with regular intelligence sharing to combat terrorism, radicalism, militancy and violence. Karzai should also address the increasing Indian role in Afghanistan, which will help to lessen the trust deficit. He should realize that Pakistan has sacrificed a lot for Afghanistan and siding with Pakistan's enemy is actually a betrayal.

Both countries have great prospects in better economic ties. They are now negotiating on a new Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement which will help to facilitate Pak-Afghan trade. TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline) is also under consideration which will fulfill the energy needs of Pakistan and earn revenues for Afghanistan in the form of transit fee (A. Cohen, Curtis, & Graham, 2008; Pandian, 2005). Land locked Afghanistan also needs Pakistan to get an access to the world markets. If both parties coordinate, huge benefits could be extracted for their faltering economies. Pakistan can earn greater fortunes by acting as an economic center for Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Taliban still remain at large today; who pose a challenge to Pakistan in post 2014 scenario and only Pakistan can play a constructive role in a durable settlement between Northern Alliance, United States and Taliban. Even Washington has increased its efforts to reach a settlement with Taliban before they leave Afghanistan (Lieven, 2002). This transformation is detrimental for the prosperity and stability of the region.

It is now time to leave confrontations and built solid and friendly relations. Dialogue process can cultivate a healthy relationship and eliminate mistrust and lack of confidence amongst the stakeholders in Kabul. It will be a start for the normalization of relations between the two states. Strong cooperation will guarantee peace, security and stability of the region and it will be beneficial for the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### Way Forward

The situation in Afghanistan is not so good, it is believed that this situation will not worsen will also not improve. As there is nothing certain about Afghanistan, the only thing that is certain is uncertainty. For Pakistan to regain healthy relations and a strong strategic depth in Afghanistan, Pakistan needs to help stabilize the Afghan crisis because since long ago Pakistan has acted as a stakeholder in Afghani politics and situation. Moreover, Pakistan has treated Afghanistan as its fifth province in events like the 1979 Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union. Moreover, Pakistan has always worked on to get a Pakistan friendly Pashtun government in Afghanistan for obvious reasons that Pakistan desired strategic depth in Afghanistan against India and Pakistan has wanted to please its Pashtun population living on Pak-Afghan border areas. In 1979 it was the Afghan Jihad then after 9/11 attacks on USA in 2001, Pakistan shifted its strategic depth policy of Afghanistan and emerged as USA's front line State in its War on Terror. Therefore, Pakistan has an important role to play in achieving peace in and with Afghanistan to recover from its failure of the strategic depth policy (Rubin & Rashid, 2008).

Firstly, Pakistan needs to operationally stop interfering in Afghanistan, and focus on its policy to help peaceful withdrawal of the NATO forces from Afghanistan and then facilitate a resolution of the Afghan crisis that is totally Afghan based and Afghan driven. Moreover, Pakistan needs to arrange a regional collaboration of South Asia that might be joined by USA, to sit together and draft out solutions for the Afghan problem which will be created once the US troops withdraw. India is working hard on Afghan reconstruction and USA is supporting India in Afghanistan to carry on its project, while Pakistan is being ignored, so Pakistan needs to work out a cooperation and collaboration program for Afghanistan to secure its interests there (Rubin & Armstrong, 2003). Furthermore, a massive diplomatic campaign is required to accomplish these goals.

Along with this, recent elections in Afghanistan shows lead taken by Abdullah Abdullah, Pakistan needs to take into confidence the new government that will form in Afghanistan and act as a moderator by making up with moderate Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns as well. In simple word

all factions involved in Afghanistan power politics should be treated well and negotiated with as well.

Finally, the way forward can be achieved through continued economic partnership between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghan goods can use Pakistan's warm water to reach the world market. Moreover, Pakistan's private sector seems enthusiastic to trade with Afghanistan. Pak-Afghan trade has increased in recent years and it worth about \$2.5 Billion. Economic partnership through a free border movement can lead towards political closeness; which is what Pakistan needs today in its case with Afghanistan.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan and Afghanistan have had fluctuating relationship. The major bone of contention in any Pak- Afghan conflict has been the Durand Line and later Osama bin Laden. However, the two States have also shared long times of peace and friendship. Pakistan had a difficult neighbor on the east so it thought that the neighbor on the West who share common religion with Pakistan can help Pakistan against India and its aggressive advances, therefore, Pakistan planned to achieve Strategic depth in Afghanistan. And to achieve that policy Pakistan wanted a pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan, for which Pakistan made favorites in that country and interfered in its affairs.

Pakistan acted in Afghan affairs as a major stakeholder; which it should not have done. It all started with the 1979 Afghanistan invasion by the Soviet Union. Pakistan submitted to the will of USA and jumped into the Afghan Jihad as if it were Pakistan's Jihad. Pakistan flooded with economic aid and military assets from USA. It became the base camp for the war going on in Afghanistan. USA used and abused Pakistan but interestingly Pakistan let USA do so. However the consequences of that support to Afghanistan were high for Pakistan. Madrassas generating terrorists opened up in every street, weapons went into hands of general public, drug trafficking, life loss of brain washed Mujahideen, Pakistan had to face refugee crisis, it gained public hatred from Afghanistan, who still blame Pakistan for breeding and sending terrorists (Jihadists) to Afghanistan. In short Pakistan gained nothing and the result of Afghan Jihad was birth of militants like Bin Laden, who killed 3000 American in 9/11 attacks and the relationship with Afghanistan were disturbed as the trust deficit increased.

Later, in 2001 once again pulling up a wrong strategy Pakistan submitted to US demands and shifted its strategic depth policy by becoming the front line Sate in USA's War on Terror (WOT)

in Afghanistan. Rejecting to support WOT was considered as strategic suicide, so the military government shifted the policy and waged the American war; which turned out to be self crucifixion for Pakistan. As Taliban, who were once Pakistan's friends turned against it, Pak-Afghan relations worsen; it suffered high economic costs of about \$35 Billion and immeasurable human life loss. Moreover, Pakistan had to pay strategic and political costs as foreign investment was scared away that left Pakistan's developmental projects undone. Furthermore, Pakistan ignored its domestic issues and kept fighting WOT, the result was spread of Taliban and other militant factions across Pakistan that are a threat peace and existence of Pakistan.

Pakistan has failed to achieve its strategic depth policy in Afghanistan. And the situation today shows no early signs of recovery in trust rebuild between the neighbors. Pakistan's involvement in Afghan jihad and later in war on terror has turned out to be a failure and loss.

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