

Post 9/11 Dimensions of Pak-Afghan Relations

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Abstract

Afghanistan has assumed a paramount leverage on and pivotal position in the Central and South Asian region due to its undeniably geo-political uniqueness. In this region Pakistan being the immediate bordering country get immediate fall out of any turmoil within Afghanistan. The three decades long war in Afghanistan has changed entirely the internal and external security parameters and paradigm in Pakistan. Since 9/11 Pakistan role in the war on terror has been unflinching, nonetheless, the losses in terms of human lives and material suffered by her during this long period have exceeded the gains. The questions related to Taliban and reconciliation process, Afghan refugees, transit trade and Pakistan-Afghanistan border have dominated public discourses, narratives and therefore, relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. All these issues have dimensions in the realm of Pakistan's foreign and security policies, economy and internal stability. These problems are interlinked and have therefore, locked the relations in a vicious cycle. At this stage, managing these irritants shrewdly and gradually building the kind of mutual trust that would allow empathy to develop on both sides would be a good option. Scarlet thread in Pak-Afghan relationship is to have a friendly Afghanistan or at least, a neutral Afghanistan. It will not only stabilize Pakistan's internal situation but in future enable Pakistan and India work together to improve bilateral relations. Pakistan's interests would be best served by adopting policies grounded in the existing realities and determining priorities within that realm. Influence can be sustained or built through soft power, mutual cooperation and an outlook that would strengthen areas of convergence. Diplomacy through media should be minimized. Border management issues have great significance. Once Pakistan has physically and politically established its writ over the international borders, situation could incrementally tilt in Pakistan's favour, though, this is, presently, a tricky issue.

Key Words: National Interests, Security, Diplomacy, Negotiation, Peace.

Introduction

Pakistan and Afghanistan are intertwined, whose sphere of relations is inclusive not only of neighborhood but encircling the longest border, same ideology, Pashtun ethnicity. Besides the protracted war in Afghanistan, most probably the Jihad against communist forces of Soviet in which Pakistan's soil sorted out freedom fighters to exonerate Afghanistan from ruthless clutches of the

Soviet. Afghanistan is connected with Pakistan in such a way that stability in Pakistan cannot prevail in case of insecurity inside Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan is paramount for Pakistan national interest. Pakistan is dependent on Afghanistan for channeling its access to not only Central Asian Republics but cordial strategic and economic relations with China are also possible only due to stable Afghanistan.¹ Moreover, the bilateral relations can take a significant turn by mutual cooperation regarding Gwadar sea Port, Durand Line and Pashtun issue. Furthermore, this ambit encompassed the regional interests and reservations of Pakistan against India while keeping balance of power notion in consideration, and is apprehensive about Iran's for her instigation of Shia militia in Baluchistan.² Friendly and stable Afghanistan provides depth to Pakistan against India.³

Dimensions in Pak-Afghan Relations

Pakistan and Afghanistan's interests are multiple and revolve around following aspects;

1. As Neighbor to secure National Interests

Pakistan's stability is pervasively interlaced to Afghanistan because the ongoing turmoil across the western border has infested militancy and extremism inside Pakistan. Trans- border clientelism is the main obstacle in restoring peace and security in many countries like Pakistan, Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan and Iran.⁴ Ethnic nationalism, ethnic strife and further its exploitation by the major powers have been the essence of regional geopolitics. Main reason of Pakistan insecurity is infiltration of militants across Durand Line. Pakistan has long border with Afghanistan, which is not well-managed and people sometimes move without visa. Some of that movement is healthy while other are unhealthy so the situation in Afghanistan has direct effect on Pakistan.⁵ For example people after Swat operation were flee to Afghanistan and Pakistan government of PPP repeatedly asked Afghanistan to handed them over.⁶ Therefore Pakistan has always asked neighboring countries to play their role in this regard by fixing intelligence devices, deployment of military check posts on the Afghan side of Durand line so as to curb militant's infiltration.⁷

Pakistan is apprehensive of the US goals in Afghanistan which are not only limited to Afghanistan but through Obama 'Af-Pak strategy' has taken Pakistan in its folds as well. One of US main aim seems to watch Pakistan nukes and nuclear proliferation which are the only survival tools against India.⁸ Moreover, Pakistan is suspicious about the US motives in Afghanistan of building stable government which could ever favorable to Pakistan or at least not hostile to Pakistan's

¹ (Retd) Col. ZahurulHaq, interview with Author. 20th August 2013.

² Larry Hanaur, India's and Pakistan's strategies in Afghanistan. RAND corporation. 2012.

³ Amjad Amin, Councilor, Interview with author, Islamabad. 28th July 2013.

⁴ Amin Saikal. Afghan Ethnic Strife. International Institute of Strategic Studies. Survival, Vol. 40, No 2, Summer 1998.

⁵ Hina Rabbani Khar. Interview with Author. 1st December, 2013.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ http://www.mofa.gov.pk/press_Release/2008/july/PR_208_08.htm]; "Stopping Terrorist" News (Karachi) June 10,2008.

⁸ Vanda Felbab-Brown. Security and Politics in Pre-Transition Afghanistan. Brookings, May 9,2012.

interests. Contemplating historical political set ups in Afghanistan, the Taliban government has served Pakistan's cause to the utmost but now due to intricate transformations it can only be damp squib. Furthermore, on the horns of a dilemma Pakistan is to comply with any of government coming to the forefront. The US is headstrong about her deep politics in Afghanistan and the obvious manifestation in this regard is the presence of troops beyond the exit.⁹

Pakistan is unflinching for having cordial and peaceful relations with Afghanistan. But Afghan Taliban's infiltration across Durand Line into Pakistan has ratcheted the parameter of stable bilateral relations by escalating militancy in tribal areas. This intricate security situation has been troubling to the country and demand exigency because resultantly it has doubted Pakistan's role in war on terror. Pakistan has been accused by the US on more than one ground that ISI is backing, nourishing and harboring Taliban as according to Ahmad Rashid, Pakistan assisted Taliban with military and political aid envisaged that they would concede and legitimize Durand Line as boundary, which is capable of dismantling Pakistani state. Contrary to Pakistan's expectation Taliban inflamed Pashtun nationalism by giving religious tinge to nationalism.¹⁰

If a realistic look is taken of Pakistan and Afghanistan relations, then it come to the surface that Pakistan and Afghanistan relations have been remained murky due to various reasons, among which Pashtunistan has been one of main troubling aspect since long. On Afghan side, Pashtunistan nationalism is based on argument that Pakistan's Pashtun are integral part of Afghanistan, furthermore Baluchistan being an outlet of Afghanistan to the Indian Ocean is inevitable to merge with. Due to these factors Afghanistan had refuted the validity of 1947 referendum and its foreign policy till 1980s revolved around Pashtunistan.¹¹ The Afghanistan since long had been trying to change the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to greater extent. According to Lord Curzon, frontiers are sort of tension for all foreign offices in social and civilized world. It is a base on which matter of war and peace or life and death hinged on.¹² There are myriad example of it, like Kashmir between Pakistan and India, tussle on Abkhazia between Russia and Georgia, NagoroKarabagh has endangered terms of Armenia and Azerbhajian, border tussle of China and India, dispute of Combodia and Thailand and most critical of all is Durand Line between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan is averse to the Afghanistan claim on Pashtun inhabitants of Pakistan.¹³ In order to settle the issue of Pashtunistan, Pakistan wants client state in Afghanistan because this grave issue can bifurcate Pakistan on the basis of ethnic strife.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ahmad Rashid. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, New Haven, Cann: Yale University Press 2010. p. 187.

¹¹ Ahmad ShayeQassem, Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations: Border Controversies as Counter terrorist Impediments. Australian Journal of International Affairs, 09 March, 2007. p. 72.

¹² G.N. Curzon, Frontiers, Romanes Lecture, Oxford, 1907.p. 1.

¹³ Ahmad Rashid, Taliban: Militants, Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, New Haven Cann: Yale University Press, 2010, p. 87.

¹⁴ Marving. Weinbaum and Janathan B. Harder. Pakistan'S Afghanistan Policies and Their Consequences. Contemporary South Asia. Vol. 16.No. 1. 2008. p. 28.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have common religion, culture, customs and traditions but to the great dismay the superpower involvement in both minor states has upset the apple cart. Undoubtedly, in Pakistan the non-state actors with their external patrons have trembled national security with exacerbated extremism and sectarianism which are the direct fall out of Afghanistan turmoil. Pakistan's foreign policy in war on terror decades is on head on not only for regional stability and peace but is neutralizing the immediate threats and leverages in Afghanistan from India.¹⁵ Whereas, the US is also dependent on Pakistan's role for degrading the momentum of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks

2. To Counter Indian Influence

India has envisaged Afghanistan pivotal significance in its foreign policy after 1990s at the demise of bipolar world structure. Both countries had instigated friendship treaty in 1950 with good pace of diplomatic terms. Her enhanced cordial relations with Afghanistan after 9/11 and special turn of relations have come to the forefront in October 2011 with signing of strategic partnership agreements. Basically, India carves to be most dominant power and player in South Asia and within Indian Ocean basin, to cater for its strategic interests and to grapple with all hurdles in this regard.¹⁶ India is farsightedly investing in Afghanistan in order to foster her nexus with Afghanistan, which could make it powerful stake holder at the exit and beyond 2014.¹⁷ She is Afghanistan fifth largest bilateral donor, who has ventured so many infrastructure related construction projects.¹⁸ Moreover, she is contributing in development of Afghanistan and training Afghan integral security forces. Wherein India has disbursed more than \$2 billion in Afghanistan and has strategic ties with Afghanistan, therefore Afghanistan looks up to India for her development.¹⁹

There are three reasons for India investment in Afghanistan; firstly India wants to come out of Pakistan centric approach and to stretch her sphere beyond Pakistan to Central Asia and South East Asia. Afghanistan is channel for India's trade with Central Asia which will boost Indian market. Secondly, India has regional security threats and considerations. There are Militants groups such as Lashkar e Tayyiba, HUJI who have training camps on Afghanistan soil, are detrimental to both Afghanistan and India interests. The basic motive behind India presence in Afghanistan is close observance of Pakistan activities, whereby Pakistan as hobson choice has flourished close ties with Haqqani Network, Lashkar e Tayyiba and other groups in order to counter India leverage in Afghanistan. Thirdly, emerging India domestic security threats are alarming, as extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan is creating troubles for India as well. These Islamic militants groups

¹⁵ Ayesha Siddiq. Pakistan counterinsurgency strategy: Separating Friends From Enemies. The Washington Quarterly, Routledge, 16 December, 2010.

¹⁶ C. Christine Fair. Under the Shrinking US Security Umbrella: India's End Game in Afghanistan. The Washington Quarterly, Taylor and Francis. 22 March, 2011. p. 180.

¹⁷ Director (Retd) ISI, Ghazanfar.interview with Author.Op.cit.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ AftabSherpao, Former Interior Minister, Interview with Author. Op.cit.

recruit Indian Muslims,²⁰ with whom they work in cooperation and arouse their anti-Indian sentiments which are perilous to domestic security on long run, this lead to suppression of Muslim in India.²¹ Resultantly, propensity to rampage has mutilated internal security.

India has always remained averse to Taliban regime and sided along Iran, Tajikistan and Russia to Northern Alliance because Taliban are considered closely allied to Pakistan. As far as India role in Afghanistan is concerned then it can pose challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy because both India and Afghanistan are boisterous to Pakistan throughout the history. Southern and South Eastern Afghanistan is known to the Pashtun dominating areas, these appears to be a majority of Pro-Pakistan population, whereas presence of considerable number of Indian consulates on Af-Pak border indicates a certain degree of Indian interests with availability of some liberty of action. India sought proactive statecraft and pro-Indian lobbies in Afghanistan and has been succeeded to the great extent in this regard. It has flourished diplomatic missions in strategically significant areas which are maximizing Indian influence at the expense of Pakistan.²²

Apparently, Washington had its own priorities for this region as part of its China-driven larger Asian agenda and its ongoing post-9/11 Central Asia-focused 'great game' in pursuit of its worldwide political and economic power. In 2005, it signed a long-term multi-billion dollar military pact with India to keep its military industry running. It also entered into a country-specific discriminatory nuclear deal with India introducing an ominous dimension to the already volatile and unstable security environment of the region. Delhi is covetous to access Central Asia energy market and for an effective trade, transportation and infrastructure in Afghanistan. As China is nightmarish for US in this region but dominant role of India will curtail China influence in South and Central Asia which is desired by US and Delhi.²³

In 2012 Leon Panetta eulogized India role in Afghanistan economic and commercial sectors and Delhi assistance in training of integral Afghanistan armed forces. India pivotal role in Afghanistan's security could sideline Pakistan role in war on terror. Furthermore, Afghanistan agreements with Russia and Central Asia for logistical support would relegate Pakistan to background. General Mccrystal in 2009 expressed his apprehension about India hegemonic role that it could ignite Pakistan and as an aftermath violence would be escalated inside Afghanistan and India by Pakistan.²⁴

Pakistan was on tenterhooks by Karzai visit to India in 2011 for contracting strategic ties because it will enhance Indian influence in Afghanistan. It is doubted

²⁰ Christine Fair. Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen an Assessment, Asia Policy, 9 (January 2010) pp.101-119.

²¹ Christophe Jeffrelot, Abhinav Bharat, The Malagaon Blast and Hindu Nationalism: Resisting and Emulating Islamists Terrorism, Economic and Political Weekly, 14, No 36 (September 4, 2010) pp 51-58.

²²Safdar Hussain, Issues and Challenges in Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations after 9/11. South Asian Studies.Vol 27. No1. January-June 2012. p. 93.

²³Harsh V. Pant. India in Afghanistan: A Test Case for a Rising Power. Contemporary South Asia. Vol 18. No 2. 2010. p. 147.

²⁴ Larry. India and Pakistan, 2012.Op.cit. p. 23.

that in order to balance the power of region, in retaliation of India covert activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan province Baluchistan, hence Pakistan will come to grips by allowing Jehadi and Taliban groups Lashkar-e Tayyiba, Jammata-udDawa, and Tahrik-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan for instigating instability in both India and Afghanistan.²⁵

On the other hand, Indian hegemonic status in Afghanistan is strategic defeat to Pakistan.²⁶ India had reopened embassy in Kabul soon after Taliban was toppled. It has also opened four consulate offices in major Afghan cities of Qandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat and Jalalabad. Prior to that there were none of consular offices.

There are various reservation that Pakistan is misusing the US aid and has emboldened Taliban. As Pakistan is alleged on the ground of cutting-off the US aid to Afghanistan and supported attack on US forces by militants. Moreover, that Pakistan has applied US military aid on eastern border instead to curb militants in North West.²⁷ To cap it all, that Islamabad has tempered with peace process of Taliban and the US by capitulating those persons who were willing to participate in it because it can go for a burton to her own interests.²⁸

Pakistan has doubted Indian consulates at Qandahar and Jalalabad that these are not for commercial purposes but are used by Indian intelligence agency, Research and Analytical Wing (RAW) for covert activities inside Pakistan. India has established its consulates on multi ethnic basis as two consulates in Pashtun region (Jalalabad, Quetta) and two in non-Pashtun (Mazar-e-sharif and Herat). Her reconstruction projects in Pashtun belt are pertinent to erase the label of anti-Pashtun from her. India has same position and standpoint as that of Afghanistan on all violent activities and treatment of militants. Both are high handed about Pakistan and set her responsible for all these insurgency rather than to contemplate the real root cause.²⁹ There is mistrust between Pakistan and India and both are accusing each other.

Pakistan alleged Indian complicity in flourishing militants networks in Afghanistan various areas especially near Gereshk, in southern Helmand province; at army basis of Qushila Jadid, in the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul; northeast of Kabul; and at Kahak and Hassan Killies in western Nimruz province.³⁰ Mushahid Hussain, Former Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs stated in July 2006 that RAW had been involved in 600 Baluchi training inside Afghanistan and is igniting radicalism in Baluchistan. Moreover he emphasized on Afghanistan covert agency inter-linkage with RAW.³¹ India is said to be providing funding to

²⁵Alam Payind, Inside Afghanistan 23 Years After the Soviet Withdrawal, Journal of Asian and African Studies, 2013.

²⁶Commander International Security Assistance Force and US Force Afghanistan COMISAF's Initial Assessment, Memorandum to Security of Defence Robert Gates. August 30, 2009. pp. 2-11.

²⁷Larry. India Pakistan Strategies in Afghanistan. Op.cit. p. 23.

²⁸Thomas Rutting. The Taliban Arrest Wave in Pakistan. Reasserting Strategic Depth? CTC Sentinel, Vol 3, No 3, March 2010, pp. 5-6.

²⁹Ahmad Qaseem Shayeq, Afghanistan's Political Stability: A Dream Unrealised. England: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2009. p. 158.

³⁰Grare Frederic. Pakistan Afghanistan Relations in the Post 9/11 Era. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, South Asia Project, Number 72, October 2006.

³¹Ibid.

Baluch dissident groups for exerting pressure on Pakistan.³² India is utilizing consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, cities closer to the border, in order to instigate anti-Pakistan feelings in Baluchistan and FATA.³³ Her interference and involvement in Baluchistan is a formidable threat. There is RAW, CIA, MOSSAD combined center in Mazari Sharif which is very active in Baluchistan and had operated in Swat. This alliance is still playing in North and South Waziristan. It has been clearly manifested from the weapons recovered at Swat operation, which were labeled as 'Made in Banaras'.³⁴ Pakistan military considered India role in Baluchistan's turmoil which needs to be taken at exigency.³⁵ On the other hand there are reservations from India side that Lashkar e Tayyiba (LeT) is working in Kashmir in order to counter India there and considered it insidious.³⁶ There have been resentment that militant groups are sided with Pakistan military as expert on military affairs Ayesha Siddiqas has depicted that Jaish e Muhammad (JeM) has linkages with Pakistan army which is working against India. JeM is aboded in Karachi, where they have relaxed living. Mullah Abdul Baradar was captured from Karachi in 2010.³⁷ So if these grounds are to be contemplated than it is evident that militants are easing military cause, however, there is no concrete justification in this regard.

Pakistan is reinforcing the statements of security personnel that Pakistan is under strategic challenges by foreign powers who have conspired to decay Pakistan. Afghanistan is on cordial terms with India and is tying agreements, the decision for it has been taken in October 2011, and the ensuing May 2012 U.S.-Afghanistan tie-up, is apprehensive for Pakistan. Indian presence in Afghanistan is contributing towards internal situation of Pakistan. Pakistan cannot beat India in Afghanistan, it can just raise the costs of India active role in Afghanistan due to its geo-strategic location. Denial of ground transit to India is one step in this regard.³⁸

As Afghanistan is landlocked and India has no direct transit route to Afghanistan, the more she has at her disposal in this regard comprised three airlines Indian Airline, Ariana Airlines, the Kam Air.³⁹ So what Pakistan can do is to block the transit route in order to impede the trade. Pakistan, by blocking two way India-Afghan trade has allowed the commodities of Afghanistan through her territory to south while refuted the same facility to India to access north.⁴⁰ No doubt, Pakistan wants bilateral favorable trade relations with India for which MFN status has been granted to India but blocking the transit trade to her is only due to reason that Indian enhanced influence in Afghanistan is despicable to Pakistan's national

³²Hasan Askari Rizvi, Defence Analyst, Interview with Author.Op.cit.

³³Howard B. Schaffer and B. Teresita C. Schaffer. How Pakistan Negotiates With The United States: Riding The Roller Coaster. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute Of Peace. 2011. p. 20.

³⁴Brig. Ghazanfar interview with Author.Op.cit.

³⁵Musharraf.India Supporting Militancy in Baluchistan. The Express Tribune, October 10, 2010.

³⁶YahyaMujahid, Interview with Ayesha Siddiq, Islamabad, October 10, 2010.

³⁷Ayesha Pakistan Counterinsurgency.Op.cit. p. 155.

³⁸ Allow Transit to Afghanistan, India Asks Pakistan. Pakistan Tribune, 24 January, 2007.

³⁹Qaseem.Afghanistan Political Stability.Op.cit. p. 158.

⁴⁰PranabMukerjee. External Affairs Minister, Speech at Research And Information System for Developing Countries and South Asia Centre for Policy Studies Conferences, Economic Cooperation in SAARC: SAFTA and Beyond. New Delhi. March 19, 2007.

interests.⁴¹ Islamabad objective is to prevent India from strengthening its strategic interests in Afghanistan, and to establish pro-Pakistan political set up in Afghanistan.⁴² There is no doubt, that Indian presence in Afghanistan creates problems of many kinds in Pakistan. If India is hostile on Kashmir border, how can it be friendly on Afghanistan border?

Pakistan can adopt following policy options to counter India in Afghanistan. It can impede Afghanistan export to India through Pakistan, can abort pipeline construction project among Turkamanistan, Afghanistan and India, to foster bilateral pipeline project with Iran, further to invigorate military, commercial, infrastructure development with China and to the most constraining will be blocking the US convoy.⁴³ Pakistan can render diplomatic offensive against Indian presence. Media campaign can be launched to expose India's sinister designs in Afghanistan. Pressure on the Kabul government to control Indian activities can also be helpful. Furthermore, in case India deploys military forces in Afghanistan then Pakistan should have security options ready to deal with it.⁴⁴

For any regional approach, India-Pakistan equation must be kept straight. The US must not ignore Pakistan's legitimate concerns about India's role in the region especially its overbearing strategic ascendancy in the region and its unprecedented leverage in Afghanistan with serious nuisance potential against Pakistan's security interests. It is already involved in fueling subversion and instability in our tribal areas and Balochistan.

Any policies that create strategic imbalances in the region and fuel an arms race between the two nuclear-capable neighbours with an escalatory effect on their military budgets and arsenals are no service to the peoples of the region. The risk of a Pakistan-India proxy war in Afghanistan is fraught with perilous implications for regional and global peace, and must be averted at all cost.⁴⁵

However there can be positive side of the picture as well. According to some of military officers and diplomats, Indian presence in Afghanistan poses no challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy. In case of any ill will against India, Pakistan should submit reservations along evidences to the United Nations and to the India so that can be justified.⁴⁶ Afghanistan is known as a grave yard for super powers. India is too small a fly if it engages itself in Afghanistan. It shouldn't make any difference to Pakistan.⁴⁷ India is assisting in reconstruction of Afghanistan and has contributed to Afghanistan's development more than Pakistan.⁴⁸ India is biggest donor to Afghanistan which have civilization linkages and relations with Afghanistan.

⁴¹Rodriguez and Mark Magnier. Pakistan, India Take another Cautious Step Forward, Los Angeles Times, November 7, 2011.

⁴² Ben Arnoldy. How the Afghanistan War Became Tangled in India Vs Pakistan Rivalry, Christine Science Monitor, January 20, 2011.

⁴³Christine Pakistan India Strategies.Op.cit. p. 25.

⁴⁴Brig (Retd) Nadir Mir.Interview with Author.Op.cit.

⁴⁵Shamshad Ahmad. Interview with Author.Op.cit.

⁴⁶ Brig. AsadMunir, Interview with Author. Op.cit.

⁴⁷Brig (Retd) Mahmud Shah. Interview with Author, 9th September 2013.

⁴⁸Hasan.Interview with Author.Op.cit.

Afghanistan is a sovereign country so it can better decide about its interests. Pakistan can only ask that Afghanistan soil should not be used against any regional stake-holder.⁴⁹

In the current Afghan scenario the US is supporting Indian presence in Afghanistan to keep Pakistan under pressure, at the same time, however, the US is nudging India to improve its relations with Pakistan because in the ultimate analysis it has its own interests to pursue, which are its priority and that requires Pakistan's optimal cooperation.⁵⁰ Indian presence in Afghanistan will continue partly because it wants to encircle Pakistan to achieve its goals and partly because the US would like to keep Pakistan under check and pressure. It will, however, not create serious problems for Pakistan.⁵¹ India and Pakistan need to talk about the future of Afghanistan and the region and to make sure that the region is embedded in a shared economic framework. The Pakistani military will have to cease viewing Afghanistan only through security lense and accept that India will have some role in Afghanistan's future.⁵²

The quest of knowing Pakistan's aims inside Afghanistan begins with ISI/Pakistan Army. India is grappling for countering Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan through antagonist Afghan leadership, rival ethnic groups in Afghanistan, hindering Pakistan's access to Afghanistan and CARs and above all providing platform in Afghanistan for India from where fissiparous trends and movements inside Pakistan be supported. Pakistan is having reservation about Indian complicity in supporting separatists groups in Balochistan comprised Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Baloch Resistant Army (BRA).⁵³ Pakistan's army/ISI interests inside Afghanistan is also connected with supply of regional energy.⁵⁴

3. China factor in Indian Perspective

Pakistan was backdoor to China during its year of isolation, a linkage for Mao and Nixon and during cold war it worked a frontline state in Chinese struggle with Soviet Union. Sino-Pak axis stretched back to 1950s when Pakistan conferred official recognition to isolated communist China during this time Pakistan wholeheartedly welcomed China. Pakistan-China trade was approximately US \$ 83.8 million in 1952 double than that of Pak-India. Bandung conference (1955) laid proper base of Sino-Pak relations.⁵⁵ Sino-Pak axis is directed mainly by China's wish to connect India to South Asia and having friendship of Muslim

⁴⁹Rustam Shah Mohmand, Former Ambassador. Interview with Author.Op.cit.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵²Harsh V.Pant.Interview with Author.Op.cit.

⁵³ Frederic Grare. Balochistan: The State Versus the Nation, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2013.

⁵⁴ Charles Ebinger. Energy and Security in South Asia (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2011). RafeelKndyoti. Pipeline s: Flowing Oil and Crude Politics (London: I. B. Tawris, 2012).

⁵⁵ A.H. Syed. China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale (Karachi9: Oxford University Press, 1974) p. 54.

neighbor and tumultuous Xinjiang region which in turn make Pakistan pivotal.⁵⁶ The debacle of Pakistan led China and Pakistan to become apprehensive of Indian supremacy and security consideration rendered to the establishment of defense relation.

Recently Pakistan is a gateway for Beijing to become global power from regional one because the envisaged ports, roads, railways and pipelines which channel gas fields and oil of Middle East to East Asia are situated in Pakistan. Pakistani coastline is of strategic significance to Chinese take off as a naval power stretching from Indian Ocean to Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf.

China presence in Afghanistan is to serve her national interests, which encompassed mining contracts in Afghanistan, economic activities and to deter from strategic relations such as weapons supply.⁵⁷ China sought narrow than broader interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan because of rising extremism and terrorism in both countries. Due to these narrow interests, Chinese workers have security threats in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, wherein both minor states are grappling with the US egregious designs and cannot secure Chinese interests at the costs of the US.⁵⁸

It is the utmost preference of China to take Pakistan and Afghanistan peace and stability head on in order to restore peaceful atmosphere in her Northwest province, where Chinese minority, the Uighur are of prime concern to Beijing. Because in that province, besides supply of weapons, militants and drugs, Pan ideological Pan-Islamic Jihadi groups are also exacerbating the security of Xianjiang and has activated pro-independence. China is with firm conviction that militants trained in FATA and Afghanistan East and Southern part are assaulting china.⁵⁹ These militants are associated with across the border Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Turkamenistan Islamic party (TIP) East Turkamenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) which are striving for an Islamic state in East Turkamenistan in Xianjiang.⁶⁰ Keeping these threats in consideration, China is trying to develop economic relations with Afghanistan as in Afghanistan China metallurgical construction groups have contributed \$3.2 billion Aynak Copper Mine investment in Eastern province of Logar, holding as much as third of China Coal Reserves.⁶¹ China has supplied substantial aid to Afghanistan as \$150 million in 2002⁶² and \$75 million from 2009⁶³ Gwadar energy transshipment route if once

⁵⁶ M. Ehsan Ahrari. China, Pakistan and the Taliban Syndrom, Asian Survey, Volume 40, No. 4 (2000) pp. 666-668.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Andrew Small. China's Caution on Afghanistan-Pakistan. The Washington Quarterly, Routledge. 24 June, 2010.

⁵⁹ Interviews by Andrew Small in Beijing in July 2009 and Islamabad in August 2009.

⁶⁰ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Journal of Turkistan Islamic Party Urges Jihad in China, Terrorism Monitor 7, no 9 (April 10, 2009)

⁶¹ Andrew. China Caution. Op.cit. p. 3.

⁶² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People Republic of China Official of the Foreign Ministry Briefs the Resident Journalists in Briefing about the visit of Afghanistan Interim Government Chairman Karzai, January 30, 2002.

get connected to expanded Karakoram Highway (KKH) then it can be utilized for naval purpose. China has started projects in Afghanistan, it has Ainak project and project on Amu Darya from where gas is to be exploited.⁶⁴China is covetous for access to Central Asian Republics and especially Kazakhstan where china have 22% oil reserves.⁶⁵

As consider the US response on China's leverage in Afghanistan and Pakistan, then the US is comfortable with Chinese contribution to the region such as investment, civilian capacity and aid in Northern distribution network for NATO-Led ISAF. There is consideration that China can play a pivotal role in bringing Pakistan to the point of rendering headway in subjugating insurgency emanating from western border rather than confined only to India and eastern border. But this notion of the US has gone awry due to Chinese negligence. It is palpable that China can exercise leverage by asking Pakistan to settle militancy and extremist threats, which have been arise from Central and South Asia. Pakistan will concede with it hence these threats are detrimental to both Pakistan and China internal security.

By taking comparison of the US and China foreign policies it is evident that China has different strategy than that of the US. She know better that Pakistan and Afghanistan's trained groups are hitting China and pose threat to China security but the latter individually consult Pakistan military and other Islamic parties to curb these elements. Historically, China have contracted agreements with Taliban before 9/11 to deter militants and Uighur training on Afghanistan soil. China contemplated that the US objective in invading Afghanistan is not counterterrorism but is geopolitical because the US sought energy and mineral resources of the region and furthermore to counter China.⁶⁶ As regarding the role of the US in Pakistan, China is desperately envisaging her curtailing leverage in trade aspects because the US and India would impede China's way either by weakening Baluchistan stronghold in Indian Ocean or by capturing Pakistan's nukes. In order to undermine India influence in South Asia, China is working on nuclear related programs with Pakistan, as Chashma III and IV plants are to be realized in coming time.⁶⁷China is so cautious about her interests as when militancy in Swat and Buner was alarming, China was apprehensive that may it not stretch to the Karakuran Highway (KKH), due to this fear China disbursed economic and military aid to Pakistan military to conclude this Operation successfully.

China is hungry for natural resources. Pakistan should cooperate with China because its natural resources are exploited in China. Pakistan will provide transit route for carrying it to china and Pakistan can assist in setting up natural resource

⁶³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People Republic of China Foreign Ministry WuDawei Attends International Conference on Afghanistan. April 1, 2009.

⁶⁴Brig. Ghazanfar interview with Author.Op.cit.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid. p. 9.

⁶⁷ Geoff Dyer. Farhan Bokhari and James Lament, China to Build Reactors in Pakistan. Financial Times, April 28, 2010. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/o/cf731b28-52d2-11df-a192-00144feab4pa.html>

extraction industries as well.⁶⁸The huge investment in Afghanistan has been carried out by China in order to be fully benefited by Afghanistan natural resources as Chirtian Le Miere, Jane's Intelligence Review editor stated China is very interested in Cheap resources of neighbouring country and is already with lion investment \$3.5 billion the project of Aynak, fields of copper which is situated in the province of Logar.

Glen Howard and Russell stated in January, 2012, The China Brief of institute of Jamestown that china is actively engaged in Wakhan strip which have so much strategic significance, in 2009 some infrastructure mobilization in that area has been undertaken. This infrastructure comprised 75 kilometers road which stretched up to 10 kilometer from Afghanistan-China border. Chinese ministry of defense has constructed this road which is so crucial for carrying military concerned equipment to frontiers guards of China. Moreover a depot has been built by China in order to ameliorate quality of food items for police.⁶⁹

China does have its own regional and global concerns and is not oblivious of the challenges resulting from the US-led uni-polarity or its 'pivotal' ascendancy in Asian regions. For this purpose the establishment of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was a step towards creating a regional bloc to withstand American ascendancy in this region.⁷⁰ Chinese economy is already nightmare for the US because the US economy has come to the shutdown.

Sino-Pak relations are devoid of any collision of interests and issues. There is no any trend of overriding hence exists negligible chance of mutual doubts where suspicion cause hurdles as happened in China relations with India and its Pacific neighbours. Although China has reapproached relations with India but ensured comparatively higher and better plans in relations with Pakistan. However these relaxed relations with China should not be taken as complacent which can hampered establishing of cooperation and inter-state relationships. China has supported Pakistan's observer position in SCO while Pakistan has assisted China for having observer status in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

China is deemed very significant to Pakistan in the backdrop of west withdrawal from Afghanistan. Sino-Pak relations have witnessed various low and high as Beijing transition from Maoism to market economy, shifting cross currents of these two countries terms with India enhanced Islamic militancy in the region. India's increasing economic development and strengthened terms with Washington has caused Beijing closer ties with Pakistan and the back up the latter against rising India. In case of instability in Chinanorth-western province of Xinjiang led her to rely on Pakistan forces rather to yield in tense relationship.

US containment of China policy, Indian aspirations to emerge as regional power coupled with economic benefits of GKEC increases the Geo strategic importance

⁶⁸Tasneem Noorani, Former Interior Minister. Interview with Author, 20th September 2013.

⁶⁹Brig. Ghazanfar, Interview with Author. Op.cit.

⁷⁰Shamshad, interview with Author. Op.cit.

of Pakistan manifold. China's major energy need is presently met through coal energy, which is not an environment friendly source. There is pressing demand from the western world that China's energy consumption should shift to more environment friendly energy resources. To access oil resources of Gulf and African Countries, China needs to develop a shorter link to these countries. The shortest route available is through Pakistan.

China's Sea Lines of Communication are vulnerable to presence of western and especially American Naval fleets and naval bases in Indian as well as Pacific Ocean. Here, America has developed close ties with many pacific region states allowing her to dominate these SLOCs. In case of any future conflict between China and western countries, this vulnerability may cost China heavily. There exists a deep concern among the Chinese think tanks to address this issue. Development of Gawadar-Kashghar Economic Corridor may offer China solution to her concerns.

China will have entry to warm waters of Indian Ocean through Pakistan as opposed to utilizing long SLOCs of East China Sea with impedance from India. For import and export with the Middle East countries, China is dependent on its maritime route connected its eastern part with the Middle East region passing through Indian ocean which is 10,000 kilometer long and has a direct threat from India. This corridor will provide shortest and safe route and will reduce the distance from 10,000 kilometers to 2500 kilometers only. The KGEC will provide China with the shortest route of 2500 km to gulf states, whereas the ports in Eastern China provide a route of 4500 km and additional distance of 10,000 km from the energy corridor of Strait of Hormuz.⁷¹

There is advantageous move by China that is "Look West Policy" that will result in major developments in Asia's future. China is opened to sea only from one side that is the east of country and landlocked from other three sides. Therefore, Chinese then Premier Zhu Rongji highlighted the idea that opening up the west of country and developing it will generate trade and tourism.⁷² In this background China's main aim is to develop its relatively backward region in particular Xinjiang which is restive as a consequences. This corridor will not only bring peace and stability but also use of this province for the purpose to gets more energy and trade transaction with rich central Asian.

Currently China is getting 60 % of energy from its coal, which is having serious environmental hazards. Therefore in future energy mix will change, to meet its energy China is looking towards Middle East Oil resources, thus this corridor will provide excellent oil import route.

⁷¹ Amir Sheikh. Academia.edu Website 2014.

http://www.academia.edu/7483117/individ_Amir_Shaikh_Individual_Research_Paper_heikh.

⁷²ShahidJavaid Bukhari. China's 'Look-West-Policy: A New Link with Pakistan. Research Paper, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore: National University of Singapore.

With the revival of “New Silk Route” the Chinese leaders are formulating their domestic as well as foreign economic and trade plans.⁷³ KGEC will provide China with access to Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf from where 60% of energy needs are being met. Chinese president Xi Jinping has announced \$ 46 billion for CPEC, it was contemplated as ‘game changer for the region’. There are three main hurdles as firstly provincial resentment in Pakistan as there is lack of domestic unanimity as PML-N supported it and KP and Balochistan reservation were as they considered this route as indispensable for economic benefits of deprived provinces as KP, Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan. The status of Gilgit Baltistan is also a hurdle as Pakistan claims that it has semi-autonomous control over (Azad) Kashmir is not convincing for Chinese authorities. Islamabad is thinking over giving GB as constitutional status of Pakistan’s fifth province. There are security vulnerabilities as well as Pakistan’s trembled security is hindrance for CPEC.⁷⁴

4. Economic interests

Economic relations are contemplated paramount to flourish amicable bilateral relations. As regard Pakistan’s economic relations with Afghanistan, then Pakistan is successful in keeping bilateral trade ties with Afghanistan and is currently key trade partner of Kabul. Pakistan is main export and second import partner of Afghanistan.⁷⁵

The bilateral trade of Pakistan Afghanistan was enhanced from \$ 169.9 million in 2000-01 to \$ 1.24 billion in 2007-08 and further to approximately \$ 1.75 billion at recent.⁷⁶

Afghanistan is coveted to act as transit gateway for hydrocarbon resources export from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India project Trans-Afghan Pipeline (TAP) first concluded in tripartite agreement between Taliban, Pakistan and Turkmenistan in April 1999. If this agreement successfully operated then it would run across Herat and Qandahar to connect Daulatabad and Qandahar gas fields to the port of Karachi.⁷⁷ There are other projects awaiting to transfer electric power from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan via North Eastern Afghanistan provinces.⁷⁸ In 2006 October, a MoU was signed between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan for transit of 1,000 MW/PA electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan.⁷⁹

The project comprised Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) Pipeline 1,000 mile with cost of \$7.6 billion would carry 33 billion cubic meters per year of Turkmenistan gas generating \$1.4 billion per year in

⁷³Szczudlik, Justyna Tatar. China’s New Silk Road Diplomacy. Policy Paper, Poland: The Polish Institute of International Affairs. 2013.

⁷⁴Fisher Doris and Andreas Oberheitmann. China in Zeichen von Globalisierung und Entwicklung. Berlin: Dunker and Humblot Berlin. 2002.

⁷⁵Weinbaum and Harder. Pakistan’s Afghanistan Policies. Op.cit. p. 57.

⁷⁶Jinnah Institute, Annual Report 2010-11. Islamabad.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸ANDS Vol.1.p. 85.

⁷⁹Mustafa Basharat, MoU on Electricity Supply to Pakistan Signed, Pajwok Afghanistan News 31, October 2006.

transit fee for Afghanistan.⁸⁰ India and Pakistan would receive 14 bcm/y each 1.5 % of India total annual energy consumption and Pakistan 15%. It required stability in Afghanistan as pipeline would certainly passed through Afghanistan. So both Pakistan and India should work to ensure stable Afghanistan.⁸¹ Pakistan is grappling for energy projects due to power deficit. TAPI with 1,680 KM pipeline and design capacity of 3.2 billion cubic feet of natural gas per annum from Turk through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India.

Pakistan's electricity demand will be triple in 2050 hence if resources are not be allocated appropriately then energy crisis will enhance and accordingly TAPI pipeline can diminish Pakistan's energy dearth and to yield an opportunity for Pakistan for exporting gas from across the Gwadar port which will boost the economy. Furthermore, it will ameliorate Pakistan's relations with CARs as the project pose security challenge as it passes through sensitive areas hence it must be handled cautiously by contemplating cross border and intra-border issues.

Afghanistan's turmoil is exacerbating the concerns regarding TAPI project and the Taliban offensive is also making hurdles as portion of pipeline pass through Afghanistan. Another obstacle is Indo-Pak rivalry which is aggravated with Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) coming into power. However there happened few positive developments as exchanges of security advisors and external affairs minister SushmaSawaraj's visited Islamabad.⁸² TAPI is very significant for India due to immense homegrown energy requirement. India has great influence in Afghanistan hence passing of gas through Afghanistan will not be a political challenge. TAPI guarantee economic integration for the whole region whereas India and Pakistan will work collectively for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has spent \$300 million in assisting Afghanistan which are mostly for roads and railway construction to connect Pakistan with energy corridor of Central Asia. Islamabad and Kabul signed Afghan-Pakistan transit trade agreement (APTTA) in which Afghanistan would allow Pakistan commodities to transit en route to Central Asia on way to Indian market.⁸³

Afghanistan's internal security situation will deter foreign investment. However, Pakistan already has strong economic relations with Afghanistan, bilateral trade, smuggling, transit trade and linkages between the tribal and other people in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These linkages will keep these two countries close to each other despite the periodic complaints they will have against each other from time to time. Despite some strains and periodic problems their bilateral trade will expand.⁸⁴

Pakistan economic interests are not fully realized as the first reason is Afghanistan's turmoil and second reason is anti-Pakistan lobby which is to impede

⁸⁰Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline, South Asia Key Project, PetroMinPipliner, April-June 2011 pp. 7-8.

⁸¹ Sharma Raghav, India and Afghanistan: Charting the Future, New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Special Report 69, April 2009, p. 2.

⁸² Muhammad DaimFazil. Diplomacy of the TAPI Gas Pipeline Project.South Asian Voices. December 29, 2015.

⁸³Harsh V. Pant. India's Changing Role: The Afghan Conflict, Middle East Quarterly Vol 18. No 2. Spring 2011.

⁸⁴ Hasan Askari Rizvi, Interview with Author. Op.cit.

such developmental grounds. However in the mentioned era 2008-13 the PPP government had economic cooperation with Afghanistan. According to former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar APTTA Transit Trade agreement was revised in their government due to huge requirements.⁸⁵

Pak-Afghan trade has been enhanced from 40 million dollar to 1 billion dollar in ten year time which has significant effect for both states development.⁸⁶

5. Defence interests

Pakistan and Afghanistan relations have remained boisterous most of the time, nonetheless that both are immediate neighbors with 2240 km long border known as Durand Line. Inadvertently, Pakistan has been suffered and is still bearing the brunt from this western border. Trans-border infiltration has mutilated Pakistan security from the last decade due to which military operations are continued in FATA agencies. In order to end these across border movements, Pakistan interior ministry has put forward border fencing option in 2006 but that was not acceptable to the Afghan counterparts.

Pakistan's defence interests in Afghanistan are not fulfilled. In fact security threats emerged in the mentioned era as military operations in swat, Waziristan and AngoorAdda are the product of infiltration from Afghanistan. Pakistan's defence interests can be served only when Pakistan defence industry would be operating in Afghanistan and military training would be ensured. Furthermore, the Turmoil in Afghanistan has negative effects for Pakistan internal security.⁸⁷

Areas of Focus and Policy Options

1. Peaceful Afghanistan under Afghan led initiatives.

In order to settle Afghan turmoil, there should be Afghan led initiatives. The Afghan government should select representatives as channel for reconciliation with Afghan Taliban in order to ensure harmonious relations. Constitution clauses should be peacefully negotiated by all internal stake holders of Afghanistan. As regards Afghan integral forces, ANSF role must be strengthened in general and ANA to be effective in particular so that to tackle security without foreign forces assistance. Undoubtedly, the gruesome situation of Afghanistan has horrendous consequences for the region. The foremost requirement is the exit of foreign troops, then on national level the chaos actors should be brought on the same page. The realistic solution of Afghanistan problem is to induce these elements for becoming part and parcel of government within constitutional measures. Moreover, neutral foreign policy should be adopted towards its neighboring countries, an effective administration, and strong diplomatic relations with economically strong countries are viable policy options for Afghanistan. An ethnic strife has undermined any headway in both political and military aspects hence an intra-Afghan dialogue should be arranged that brings together various ethnic groups like the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras and anti-Taliban or at least moderate

⁸⁵Hina Rabbani Khar, Interview with Author, 1st December 2013.

⁸⁶Mills, Greg and Mclay, Ewen. A Path to Peace in Afghanistan: Revitalizing Linkage in Development, Diplomacy and Security, Orbis, Fall, 2011. pp. 600-612.

⁸⁷HinaKhar, Interview with author. Op.cit.

Pakhtuns to agree on power-sharing arrangements and changes in the constitutional structure.⁸⁸

2. Role of Pakistan in rebuilding Afghanistan

Pakistan staunchly advocates Afghanistan led initiative because only stable Afghanistan can serve Pakistan's interests and escape her from two frontline hostile borders. Pashtun must be given due representation in Afghan political set up. For Pakistan, Afghanistan is the most important country because Pakistan has been adversely affected by Afghanistan's turmoil more than, Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, US, EU. According to Pakistan former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar, their government has ensured Afghanistan that Pakistan is part of solution not part of problem.⁸⁹

Pakistan has absorbed large number of Afghanis and has facilitated them with all amenities of life. Furthermore, she has issued great number of visa to Afghanis than other nations and allowed all ethnic groups to abode here. At some time there were 5.5 million Afghan refugees resided in Pakistan. Both countries are interconnected while keeping economic and geographical proximity in mind. Both countries should not permit outsider power to operate offensively from their soil. Both should work bilaterally for trade, transit, agriculture, industry, energy, water, health and culture. Both should bury the hatchet and to utilize present for peaceful setup in both countries. As regard Pakistan political role in Afghanistan then Pakistan should cultivate relations with whosoever is in power in Kabul and stay away from direct involvement in Afghan politics. Pakistan has no other option rather than to be neutral in Afghanistan issue and with no favorite group there.⁹⁰In the post withdrawal scenario three main factors will determine future PakAfghan relations; firstly, the advent of China as major actor in the game plan of the region will serve as a counterweight to the presence of India and the US. Secondly, the geo-strategic location of Pakistan makes it indispensable for Afghanistan. Thirdly, Gwader port will serve as the nearest trade terminal for Afghanistan. In view of these hard facts, Pakistan will become essential for Afghanistan. Development of good relations will be in the interest of both countries.

3. Safe guard Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan

Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan can be best served if it stretched beyond security to bilateral trade, energy and reconstruction projects. As the Gwader Port develops it will serve not only Afghanistan but the entire Central Asian Republics. As such it is Afghanistan's stability that is dependent on Pakistan. With the completion of Gwader-Kashger railway line, a Pak-China joint project is presently under construction, Pakistan will not have to depend on Afghanistan for its contacts with CARs and China. Karakoram Highway is being upgraded for the same reason. It will be a golden opportunity for Pakistan to pursue an independent foreign policy in the region keeping in view its strategic location. Almost all countries of the region will be dependent on Pakistan for establishing social, political and economic relations with the rest of the world. Pakistan will be able to

⁸⁸Najmuddin A Sheikh, Is a Rethink Under Way, 6th March 2012

⁸⁹Hina Rabbani Khar. Interview with Author. 1st December, 2013.

⁹⁰ Khalid Pervaiz, Additional Chief Secretary KPK, Interview with Author.

reach European markets in exchange for the trade opportunities it will provide to them for CARs.

4. Access to CARs through safe and peaceful Afghanistan

Pakistan has no common border with CARs hence it depends on a stable Afghanistan for having a safe transit route. Tajikistan is most significant for Pakistan from strategic point of view. Wakhan which is an area in far northeastern Afghanistan a vital linkage of Afghanistan with China, can be an easy connection between Pakistan and Tajikistan. But Afghanistan's imbroglio has hampered trade through this area and economic interests have also been in doldrums. Afghanistan can be a conduit of oil and gas to Central Asia and Iran. This advantage can be reaped by Pakistan and CARs through a stable Afghanistan. Pakistan is of pivotal value due to deep sea port in Gwadar. If Baluchistan remained stable in security terms then it's an important channel to expansion of economic ties and cooperation with Central Asia and Pakistan would be an energy corridor for the region. Pakistan's relations with CARs need to be developed further. The huge Central Asian land mass should be linked to Gwadar via Afghanistan.

5. Mitigating effects on internal situation of Pakistan

Afghanistan imbroglio has trembled Pakistan's tribal areas security. This whole region, including Afghanistan, has been in turmoil for the last three decades. After the foreign forces withdrawal there is bound to be chaos and uncertainty if intra-Afghan dialogues are not succeeded. If a vacuum is created as result of the withdrawal there will be a number of players who will jump into the arena to gain control of the country. There will be a conflict between the Taliban, the Northern Alliance, elements of the Indo-PAK proxy war, which is ongoing, and between Daesh, Taliban and the remaining US forces based in Afghanistan. This will result in a civil war with a likelihood of breakup of Afghanistan and the present situation will further deteriorate. There will be a spillover effect of this crisis on Pakistan. Peace in Afghanistan means peace in Pakistan and a possible civil war in Afghanistan which is mostly means more trouble in Pakistan. In case of fall out there will further Afghan refugees to Pakistan, Afghan Taliban will infiltrate to Pakistan in order to fight here. People will perpetrate in Pakistan and then will be sheltered in Afghanistan. Pakistan can no longer afford such horrendous challenge to persist any more so peace talks is the only viable policy option in this regard. Dialogues should be undertaken within specified timeframe, then future strategy should be based on its outcome. A lot of patience, maturity and sincerity will be required on both sides i.e., Afghan Taliban and Kabul government. If hard positions are adopted on both sides then will be no chance of negotiations.

Conclusion:

Pakistan's stability is interconnected with that of Afghanistan. Afghanistan's turmoil has affected Pakistan's internal security, economy and foreign policy. Recently, our foreign policy is 'Afghan centric', where fallout from western border has triggered militancy and extremism in Pakistan. There is strategic stalemate and Pakistan interests in Afghanistan have transformed into

challenges which need to be grappled at exigency. The incomprehensive skepticism has halted various developmental aspects. Both minor states of Pakistan and Afghanistan have common problem of militancy and insurgency with is a palpable gnaw and can be fissiparous to their state structure.