CHAPTER V

REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN SOUTH-WEST ASIA - WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PAKHTOONISTAN ISSUE

This chapter places focus on the nature of bilateral conflicts and their impact on regional ambience with special reference to Pakhtoonistan issue in the context of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and India. The partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 and the consequent British withdrawal from the region had placed greater challenges to its geopolitical complexion. Prior to the partition, both Iran and Afghanistan were geographically contiguous to India. The emergence of Pakistan in the aftermath of partition was instrumental in envisaging geopolitical developments which changed the course of relations in the region. Thus the present chapter will examine the nature of inter-state conflicts - Indo-Pakistan conflict, Afghan-Iran conflict and Afghan-Pakistan conflict, from 1947 till the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

(A) INDO-PAKISTAN CONFLICTS

Since the partitioning of Indian sub-continent in 1947 which led to the emergence of India and Pakistan as two independent sovereign countries, the relations between India and Pakistan have been marked by mutual recrimination, distrust, suspicion and discord. On the
eve of partition, the leaders of India and Pakistan expressed the hope that both countries would live in peace and cordiality. In a message to the press on 15 August 1947, India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, said, "I want to say to all nations of the world including our neighbouring country (Pakistan) that we stand for peace and friendship with them". 1 In a similar vein, Mohammed Ali Jinnah also emphasized, "We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial relations with our immediate neighbour (India) and with the world at large". 2

The friction between India and Pakistan had been due to many factors, mainly the old and recurrent Hindu-Muslim antagonism, problems created by the colossal problem of refugee rehabilitation, disputes concerning division of Indian assets and share of river waters from India to Pakistani territory. These problems were progressively resolved. However, the Kashmir dispute still remains an apple of discord, specially in the psyche of Pakistan. Since Partition both India and Pakistan

have fought three wars -- 1947-48, September 1965 and December 1971. Of these three wars especially 1947-48 and September 1965 have been fought over Kashmir. The 1947-48 war ended with UN intervention when the ceasefire line was engisaged. Pakistan's collaboration with the tribals during 1947-48 war was acknowledged by late president Ayub when he declared at a public meeting in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, in December 1960: "Thus began the problem of Kashmir, where the Muslims were fighting for freedom. Naturally we in Pakistan went to their aid."³

The subsequent period was marked by the escalation of cold war hotly chased by the super powers and the Indian sub-continent was haunted by its own kind of cold war which stemmed from hostilities between New Delhi and Islamabad. During the closing period of 1940s, India on its part made attempts to assuage the misgivings of Pakistan about "threat" from India. As early as in December 1949, Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru made offer of "no-war pact" to Pakistan. As a Pakistani

In December 1949, Mr. Nehru proposed to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan that he should join him in signing a declaration to the effect that India and Pakistan would not go to war against each other and would settle all differences between them by the recognized peaceful methods of negotiation, mediation and arbitration. (4)

Pakistan's reply to Nehru's offer was that peace between India and Pakistan could be assured not by declaration, "but by an actual settlement of outstanding disputes with them... It was not sufficient to declare in general terms that the two governments should settle all their disputes through negotiations, mediation and arbitration. They must be actually settled, and for that a definite and binding procedure laid down." (5) Since then India has reiterated the offers of "no war pact" to Pakistan a number of times and Pakistan has shown intransigence by putting the settlement of Kashmir as a precondition. (6)

The strained relation between India and Pakistan during 1950s made the Indian sub-continent vulnerable to super power rivalry and brought the cold war close to


5. Ibid., pp. 195-96.

India's doorstep. This process was further accentuated when Pakistan expressed its willingness to join the military alliances sponsored and patronized by the United States and other Western powers.

The conclusion of the Second World War envisaged the emergence of United States and Soviet Union as two rival contenders to fill up the "power vacuum" having been created as a sequel to the decline of traditional colonial powers like the Britain, Germany, Italy and France etc. Both Washington and Moscow started winning over newly independent countries to their respective "sphere of influence". The United States under Truman Doctrine had declared the global containment of communism as the main plank of its foreign policy. Consequently it forged North Atalantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and searched for similar alliances in other parts of the globe to hook the countries geographically proximate to Soviet Union and China. The Soviet Union also responded

7. The US President Henry S. Truman said: "I believed that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures". For details see Louis W. Koeing (ed.), The Truman Administration: Its Principles and Practice (New York, 1956), pp. 296-301. Also see, Alexander Deconde, A History of American Foreign Policy (New York), 1963), pp. 659-73.

India was reluctant to join hands with either super power in the wake of the cold war. Even prior to the attainment of independence, the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru had declared on 7 September 1946: "We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale." This policy of keeping away from the power politics of military alliances patronized by super powers became the cornerstone of India's foreign policy when the latter attained independence on 15 August 1947. This policy latter gained the connotation of the policy of non-alignment.

While India pursued the policy of non-alignment whereas Pakistan showed anxiety to align itself with the Western powers especially the United States with a view to gain economic and military superiority over India. As early as on 21 November 1953, John Callahan, New York Times correspondent reported from Karachi: "Pakistan is

more inclined to build her military strength as a bargaining factor in dealing with India on the Kashmir issue than as a defence against other countries including the Soviet Union. On 19 May 1954, Pakistan signed the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with the United States. It was a precursor to Pakistan's joining Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

The year 1965 witnessed eruption of hostilities twice between India and Pakistan. The first phase occurred in April 1965 in Kutch area. This "mini war" was sparked off by a minor border dispute in an area separating West Pakistan (Sind Province) from the state of Gujarat in India. On 9 April 1965 Pakistan launched an attack on India in that area. India also retaliated. However the dispute was finally settled by international arbitration - 3,200 square miles of the disputed territory being awarded to India and 350 square miles to Pakistan.

Thus April 1965, however, proved to be only a dress rehearsal for the larger Indo-Pak conflict which followed in early September 1965. On 1 September 1965, Pakistan launched a major attack in Chamb sector of Jammu in India. India also retaliated. The sequence of events and other evidence suggest that "it was Pakistan which was seeking a military confrontation with India". 13

G.W. Chaudhary, a Pakistani scholar has also observed: "The mini Indo-Pakistani battle over the marshy lands in the Rann of Kutch in the spring of 1965 gave the Pakistani armed forces a false sense of superiority, and memories of India's military defeats by the Chinese in 1962 were still fresh. Under these 'unfavourable circumstances' a group of the ruling elite - Bhutto being the most enthusiastic among them - felt that a policy of confrontation with India over Kashmir might be fruitful". 14 The Tashkent agreement facilitated by the good offices of Soviet Union ended the hostilities between India and Pakistan.


The third Indo-Pakistan war which occurred in December 1971 had far reaching consequences for the Indian sub-continent. It resulted in the dismemberment of eastern wing of Pakistan leading to the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent country. The war lasted barely for two weeks. The resultant impact of the war was strategically advantageous for India. By 16 December 1971, the Pakistani Army of 90,000 in Bangladesh had surrendered to Indian Army in Dhaka.15 In the western sector, India had wrested 2,750 square miles of Pakistani territory as compared to 50 square miles of Indian territory under Pakistan's occupation.16 The super power response to these developments both in the United Nations and outside, the psychological pressure on India, first by the movement of the Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal and then the massive vote in the General Assembly in favour of a US-inspired resolution calling upon both India and Pakistan to cease-fire and effect withdrawal to their respective territories18 and

16. Ibid.
17. For details about US role during that period, see Vinod Gupta, Anderson Papers: A Study of Nixon's Blackmail (Delhi, 1972).
18. For details see, K.P. Misra, The UN Role in Indo-Pakistan Conflict 1971 (Delhi, 1973).
The Soviet support to India's stand recalled the stance of the super powers vis-a-vis India and Pakistan during the cold war period. The war left a truncated Pakistan humiliated by a defeat and India emerged as a dominant power of South Asia. The Soviet influence also increased in the region. The changed circumstances in the aftermath of the December war posed new challenges and provided fresh opportunities both for India and Pakistan.

**The Kashmir Dispute**

Before analysing the Simla Agreement which ended the December 1971 war between India and Pakistan and other developments affecting the relations between New Delhi and Islamabad, it deems essential to briefly analyse the Kashmir dispute. The dispute over Kashmir has been a constant source of conflict between India and Pakistan. As the late Pakistani President Mohammed Ayub Khan believed that, "Kashmir is keeping the two countries apart and unless this is settled we shall remain apart. So long as we remain apart, the solution of our problems stands in danger of being nullified." 19

Situated in the north of the Indian sub-continent, the present state of Jammu and Kashmir has immense strategic significance. Having Pakistan in the west, Afghanistan to the north-west, Soviet Union to the North, and People's Republic of China and Tibet to the north-east, Kashmir lies in the heart of Asia.20

Gulab Singh of Hindu Dogra Clan, who was already in possession of Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan purchased the Kashmir Valley in 1846 from the British and established the state of Jammu and Kashmir.21 Following the termination of British rule in India on 15 August 1947, the 560 princely states, including Jammu and Kashmir were given the option either to accede to India or Pakistan. This discretion, however, was qualified by geographic contiguity, religious composition and the wishes of the people. While addressing the Constituent Assembly on 25 November 1947 Nehru said that following the lapse of the British Paramountcy on 15 August 1947, Kashmir did not accede to either dominion. He further added:

We were of course vitally interested in the decision that the State would take. Kashmir,

20. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
because of her geographical position with her frontiers with three countries -- the Soviet Union, China and Afghanistan is intimately connected with the security and international contacts of India. Economically also Kashmir is intimately related to India. The caravan trade routes from Central Asia to India pass through the Kashmir State. (22)

In August 1947, the then Maharaja of Kashmir offered to negotiate a "standstill agreement" both with India and Pakistan. India declined to do so while Pakistan signed a stand-still agreement with Kashmir under which Pakistan had assumed responsibility for carrying on communication and supply functions for Kashmir. Soon after this, Pakistan, with a view to impress the Maharaja with the urgency of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, imposed a blockade on the supply of essential goods to Kashmir. 23 Jawaharlal Nehru also acknowledged: "We learnt later that serious external pressure was being applied on Kashmir by the Pakistan authorities refusing to send to Kashmir supplies vital to the needs of the people". 24 In the wake


24. CAD, n. 22, col. 593.
of non-availability of essential goods, there arose a well-organized rioting in Poonch area where the state troops comprising mainly Hindus took harsh action against the Muslim dominated population. These disturbances soon acquired communal overtones and spread to other parts of Kashmir along the Indo-Pakistan border, the tribesmen living on Pakistan side of the border assisted by regular forces of Pakistan attacked Kashmir. The Maharaja of Kashmir asked the Indian Government for help which the latter agreed to oblige in case Maharaja formally accepted the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. However in October 1947 the instrument of Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India was signed. Lord Mountbatten, then Governor-General of independent India wrote to Maharaja of Kashmir: "...It is my government's wish that as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and its soil cleared of the invaders, the question of the state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people". Similar stance was reiterated by Jawaharlal Nehru when he said:

....We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people.


That pledge we have given and the Maharaja supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established, to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people and we shall accept that verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster offer. (27)

While the Indian leaders were giving commitment to decide the accession of Kashmir after ascertaining the wishes of the people of the state, the Indian troops had succeeded in pushing back the tribal raiders. In the spring of 1948, regular Pakistani troops moved again into Kashmir. It was at this stage that the de facto division of Kashmir was envisaged.

In the wake of Pakistani invasion in Kashmir, there started trilateral negotiations between India, Pakistan and UK to resolve the Kashmir crisis but no amicable settlement could be reached. On 1 January 1948, India complained to the UN Security Council accusing Pakistan of supporting the tribal invaders and called upon Pakistan to cease giving support to the invaders.28

27. Ibid.

India further said that Pakistan's assistance to the tribal invaders constituted an "act of aggression against India". Pakistan in its reply on 15 January 1948 while refuting India's allegations, charged that the accession of Kashmir to India was obtained through fraud and violence.

Pakistan also demanded the complete withdrawal of the Indian forces from Kashmir followed by a plebiscite. Consequently Security Council adopted a resolution on 20 January 1948 which led to the appointment of a UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). The UNCIP was entrusted the task of making on the spot assessment and to mediate between India and Pakistan. After making assessment of the contemporary situation, the UNCIP submitted its recommendations in three parts on 13 August 1948. The first part dealt with a truce agreement provided that after the Pakistani army had completely been withdrawn from Kashmir, India would

9. Ibid., pp. 142-43.
11. Ibid.
begin to withdraw the bulk of its forces in stages in consultations with and approval of the Commission and that India would maintain such forces, in agreement with the Commission, as were necessary for the maintenance of law and order in the state. The third recommended the holding of plebiscite after the first two parts were implemented.  

Both India and Pakistan attached some reservations to the recommendations of the UNCIP. Despite its failure to implement all the provisions as envisaged in its recommendations, the UNCIP was successful in effecting a ceasefire which went into effect on 1 January 1949 which left about two-thirds of Kashmir under Indian control and the rest remained under Pakistani control. The area of Kashmir under Pakistan came to be known as Pakistani occupied Kashmir or Azad Kashmir. While the UNCIP continued unsuccessfully between 1948-1953 and 1957-1958, its efforts to find a negotiated settlement of Kashmir problem, both India and Pakistan tried to "integrate" their part of Kashmir into their own territory. When in 1951, the elections were held in Kashmir for a Constituent Assembly, to which all the seats were

34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
won by Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference, India claimed that the elections manifested the verdict of Kashmiri people to remain with India. In November 1956, Jammu and Kashmir was declared as an integral part of India and the state was provided a special status under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The Indian move was criticized by Pakistan as well as by the UN.36

The Indo-Pakistan war of September 1965 was fought on the Kashmir's borders too. However the ceasefire effected after the war did not provide any decision advantageous to either India or Pakistan with regard to Kashmir. At the time of conclusion of the Tashkent agreement in January 1966, Pakistan expected that Kashmir issue would also be incorporated during the negotiations.37 However, India was opposed to any discussion on Kashmir and in this regard the then Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, before leaving for Tashkent, had said that "Kashmir is an integral part of India and would not be discussed at the proposed Tashkent meeting".38

38. Times of India (New Delhi), 26 December 1965.
expected the Tashkent meeting to be limited to the drafting of agreements to deal with the stabilization of the ceasefire line, resumption of diplomatic relations, restoration of communications, exchange of prisoners and cessation of hostile propaganda etc."39

The final Tashkent agreement signed between India and Pakistan did not envisage any change with regard to Kashmir and the ceasefire restored the pre-war position. The situation in Kashmir and its role in Indo-Pakistan relations changed very little from the Tashkent meeting in 1966 until the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, which led to the establishment of Bangladesh.40 The Pakistani army had surrendered on 16 December 1971 in Dhaka while ceasefire in Kashmir was agreed on 17 December 1971. This was followed by the signing of the Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan in July 1972.41

The Simla Agreement was significant with regard to Kashmir issue. The ceasefire line agreed to in 1949 had


41. For text of Simla Agreement see Satish Kumar, *Documents on India’s Foreign Policy 1972* (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 147-49.
ceased to exist after the hostilities of 1971 and a new Line of Actual Control was asserted as it existed on 17 December 1971. Under para IV(II) of the agreement, the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as agreed to between India and Pakistan under Simla Agreement got India 345 square miles and Pakistan got 59 square miles of the territory. Under the new agreement Pakistan had to withdraw from Thatuchak and Lippa Valley posts which provided India a logistic advantage vis-a-vis Pakistan.42

The successful conclusion of Simla Agreement and Agreement on LAC indicated that bilateralism was finally accepted as the best course for settling disputes and the UN observers were kept out of the negotiations. It also confirmed India's thesis that the entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir belonged to India and that the territories recovered in a war would not be handed back to Pakistan.43

The Simla Agreement had paved way for sorting out outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan through

peaceful negotiations between the two countries without the interference of any third country. However, Kashmir issue has remained the major irritant between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan during Bhutto's period (1972 - June 1977) and again under President Zia-ul-Haq has off and on raised the Kashmir issue as an irritant in normalising relations between the two countries. However, Pakistan's ambitious nuclear programme has dominated the scene relegating the Kashmir to a secondary place. Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan, enabled Pakistan to receive massive economic and military assistance from the United States. The induction of sophisticated US arms into Pakistan has been viewed by India as portending ominous threat to India's security. These aspects would be analysed in succeeding sixth chapter. It is suffice here to say that in the wake of past hostilities between India and Pakistan, especially on Kashmir issue, the potential for new dangers are still deeply embedded unless both countries show restraint.

(B) Pakistan - Afghan Conflicts

Since the establishment of Pakistan as a sovereign and independent country following the withdrawal of
British from the Indian subcontinent in August 1947, the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have remained strained mainly on the issue of Pakhtoonistan. Besides, One-Unit Plan and Dir issue have also been instrumental in envisaging "cool off" stage between Islamabad and Kabul. Before analysing Pakhtoonistan as the main irritant between Pakistan and Afghanistan, an analysis of One-Unit Plan and Dir issue is presented below.

One Unit Plan

The Government of Pakistan pleading that since Pakistan was established on ideological basis, hence the entire area of West Pakistan could be united into one unit instead of being divided into small provincial units. On 30 September 1955, the bill entitled One-Unit West Pakistan was passed and it came into force on 14 October 1955. M.R. Kayani, a Muslim League member from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) declared in the Assembly that once the One-Unit Bill was


passed, it would improve Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, because it would put an end to the uncertain conditions regarding the establishment of Pakhtoonistan.46

The Pakistan's move to create One-Unit West Pakistan by issuing an ordinance on 27 March 1955 evoked widespread resentment and holding of demonstrations in Kabul.47 The Government of Afghanistan saw in this Pakistani action, a grave threat to Afghans' move for a free Pakhtoonistan and consequently lodged a strong protest with Islamabad.48 On 30 March 1955, the violent Afghan demonstrators attacked the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul causing damages and tore the Pakistani flag.49 There were counter protests in Karachi and other towns of Pakistan.50 On 1 April 1955, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammed Ali, said that the Afghan rulers were greatly mistaken if they thought that they could "browbeat" Pakistan by threats and hostile demonstrations" and called the Afghan demand for Pakhtoonistan as "a

46. Ibid., vol. 1, no. 50, 21 September 1955, p.1011.
47. Kabul Times, 30 March 1955.
stunt". However, Kabul refused to allow Pakistan to re-hoist its flag over the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul but promised to compensate for the damage caused to Pakistan's Kabul Embassy. Islamabad rejected the offer and on 2 April 1955 alerted its troops. There occurred armed hostilities on Pak-Afghan borders and Islamabad regarded it as the result of Afghan incursions into Pakistan's territory, while Kabul reported it as a fight between Pakhtoons and the Pakistani forces. However, the situation took a serious turn when on 2 May 1955 Pakistan asked Kabul to close down its consulates in various cities of Pakistan "as a first step against the Afghan government". On 6 May 1955 Pakistan warned Kabul if its decision to break diplomatic relations, closure of border followed by imposition of economic sanctions if full and proper compensation was not made by 15 May 1955 for the damage caused to the Pak diplomatic mission in Kabul. While reacting to Pak move, the then prime

51. Ibid.
56. *Asian Recorder*, vol. 1, no. 18 (1955)
Minister of Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Daud said that it was just a manoeuvre to divert public opinion from the basic issue of Pakhtoonistan. Pakistan also sharply reacted when Afghanistan ordered general mobilisation.

In the wake of deteriorating relations between Islamabad and Kabul, some Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Turkey appealed to both countries to sort out their differences through peaceful means. While responding to their moves, Kabul agreed to postpone its demand for negotiations on Pakhtoonistan for the time being but demanded the reopening of its consulates in Pakistan immediately. However, Pakistan did not agree to concede to the Afghan demands.

Despite the initial failure of Saudi Arabian and Egyptian efforts for envisaging an approachment between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey continued their mediatory efforts. Its resultant impact was that Afghanistan lifted the state of emergency and ordered demobilization. It was on 9 September 1955 that

57. Ibid.
Pakistan Government in an announcement said that both Islamabad and Kabul had agreed to the principle on which the flag dispute would be solved. Thus the dispute came to an end with the re-hoisting of Pakistan and Afghanistan flags in Kabul and Peshawar respectively.

The Dir Issue

The Dir issue was another potent domestic variable which wielded tremendous influence on Pak-Afghan relations. Situated between Chitral and the tribal territory of Bajaur in the NWFP area, Dir is strategically located on Pak-Afghan border. It includes the rich valley of Adinzai and between it and Swat on the east is a natural boundary which was demarcated by Sir John Maffey. The British Government had recognized the significance of small states situated on the frontiers between Afghanistan and British India. Lord Lytton had told the rulers of these small bordering states that the British Government was anxious to maintain their independence and thus did not recognize the claim of Afghan Amir to their allegiance. Lord Lytton also accorded recognition to

60. Dawn, 10 September 1955.
Rahamatullah, the ruler of Dir and also assisted him to become the principal chief in the countries north of the Peshawar frontier.

In the wake of the British withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent, Pakistan Government wanted to bring a change in the administrative and political set up of Dir but it refrained from doing so for some years following Pakistan's independence, but after the enactment of One-Unit West Pakistan plan, the state of Dir was merged with West Pakistan "as a special area" in 1955 despite the strong opposition of the ruler of Dir.\(^\text{63}\) The ruler of Dir showed his reluctance to cooperate with the Government of Pakistan which led to his removal in September 1960.\(^\text{64}\)

The Dir development took place at a time when the Pak-Afghan relations had already been deteriorated on the issue of Pakhtoonistan especially during the latter half of 1960. In early October 1960, Pakistan claimed that Afghan troops had infiltrated in Bajaur area of Pakistan.\(^\text{65}\)

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64. Ibid., p. 197.

The Afghan government while denying Pakistan's allegations, further asserted that the latter was making "a false propaganda to cover up its military occupation of Malakand, Shabgudar, Chakdara and other military strategic areas in the Pakhtoon region." Pakistan used this situation as a ploy to arrest the ruler of Dir and his son on 8 October 1960 on the charge of "double dealings".

The then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Qadir justified his government's action in removing the ruler of Dir and his son and asserted that Pakistan took the action after "careful appraisal of many accusations of double-dealings" brought against the two rulers by the people and the leaders of the tribal areas. Pakistan also alleged that in view of the ruler of Dir's disenchantment with Pakistan, Kabul provided large sums of money to Dir's ruler and his son for buying their friendship and paving the way for the use of Dir territory as a base for anti-Pakistan activities. According to J.W. Spain, in

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67. Wilcox, n. 63, p. 84.
the tribal fight between the Khan of Khar who was assisted by Pakistan and the ruler of Dir who was supported by Kabul, the Khar forces emerged victorious and Pakistan by utilizing the opportunity deposed the ruler of Dir and occupied the territory which had never been administered by Pakistan before.\textsuperscript{70}

This incident influenced the pattern of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations which had already touched the lowest ebb. During the latter half of 1960, there had been recurring incidents of border skirmishes between Afghanistan and Pakistan and both countries traded charges against each other. In March, 1961, Kabul Radio in its broadcasts accused Pakistan of carrying military operations along the Afghan-Pakistan border.\textsuperscript{71} A large scale fighting broke out in May 1961 between Afghan and Pakistani forces in the Bajaur area. On 21 May 1961, the Pakistan Air Force planes went into action on the plea that the Afghan forces had attacked two Pakistani posts at Miskinai and Sangpura and the operations were described as successful.\textsuperscript{72} Pakistan's explanation for carrying out those bombing


\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Keesing's Contemporary Archives}, n. 66, p. 18172.
operations was that it wanted to curb Afghanistan's "anti-Pakistan activities forthwith" and that its Air Force had bombed the areas well within the Pakistan side of the Durand Line. 73

Thus these violent incidents further augmented the tense relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. By August, 1961, the relations between Kabul and Islamabad had deteriorated so much that Pakistan announced the closure of its consulates in Kandhar and Jalalabad and asked Kabul to do the same by 6 September 1961. 74 Pakistan had brought out a White Paper 75 in August 1961 as these developments in which Afghanistan was accused of harrassing the Pakistan's diplomats in Kabul and it was further alleged that the Afghan consulates and trade agencies in Pakistan were being used for anti-Pakistan activities. However, Kabul while denying these charges further alleged that Pakistan Government was unnecessarily causing harrassment to Afghan diplomatic personnel posted in Pakistan. 76 On 30 August 1961 Kabul in an official note handed over to Pakistan Government indicated that

73. Ibid.
74. Dawn, 24 August 1961
75. For full text of the White Paper, see Pakistan News (London), vol.6, no.3, September 1961, pp.5-7.
the Pak move to close down Afghan Consulates in that country would undermine the diplomatic relations between the two countries. 77 Pakistan's refusal to rescind its decision led to the severance of diplomatic relations between the two countries on 6 September 1961 and trade transit between the two countries was also snapped. 78

These developments were followed by trading of charges and counter-charges between Kabul and Islamabad. On 27 September 1961, the Afghan Foreign Minister, Mohammed Naim alleged that Pakistan's unilateral decision to close down Afghan Consulates was in violation of a right which Kabul had enjoyed since centuries. 79 The Afghan Foreign Minister further added that by doing so Pakistan wanted to pressurize Afghanistan economically to compel it to abandon the demand for Pakhtoonistan. 80 The deterioration in Pak-Afghan relations was viewed seriously by the United States which perhaps perceived augmentation in Soviet influence in the region if the situation was allowed to linger on. Consequently

77. Kabul Times, 31 August 1961


80. Ibid.
Washington offered to use its good offices in envisaging a Pak-Afghan rapprochement. However, Pakistan criticized the US offer. A US goodwill mission headed by Livingston T. Merchant visited Pakistan in October 1961 to help Pakistan and Afghanistan to restore normalization of relations. But Pakistan refused to oblige. However, Pakistan opened its border with Afghanistan temporarily for one month to allow the transit of American goods for Afghanistan. Following the closure of Pak-Afghan borders, the transit facilities for Afghan goods was also stopped which caused severe strains on Afghan economy. Consequently Kabul had to conclude a five year transit agreement with Iran in April 1962. The then Shah of Iran who had been forging close relations with the Muslim countries, persuaded both Kabul and Islamabad to restore normalcy in the region. Consequently he visited Pakistan and Afghanistan in July 1962. Though Iran could not succeed immediately in persuading both countries to normalize their relations, it did pave way for holding negotiations. However, Daud's abdication enabled fruitful

83. Ibid., 20 April 1962.
negotiations and an agreement was signed on 28 May 1963 at Tehran between Kabul and Islamabad which provided for the restoration of diplomatic relations and re-establishment of the Afghan consulates at Peshawar and Quetta.  

Thus it is evident from the above analysis that the Dir issue became an irritant in Pak-Afghan relations which led to diplomatic rupture.

The Issue of Pakhtoonistan

The issue of Pakhtoonistan constitutes the most important factor in affecting relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakhtoonistan is an area inhabited by the Pushtu-speaking people. The Pushtu speaking population inhabit areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to Afghan sources, the two provinces of Pakistan – North-West Frontier and Baluchistan comprise as parts of Pakhtoonistan.

The genesis of the Pakhtoon problem can be traced back to eighteenth century and the subsequent Anglo-

85. Ibid., 30 May 1963.

86. Pakhtoonistan is also called pushtunistan. We are using the term "Pakhtoonistan" for the purpose of present study.

Russian rivalry. A detailed analysis of the Anglo-Russian rivalry has been made in the preceding Chapter II and reference to it in this chapter will be confined to Pakhtoon issue. Afghanistan is an ancient country but it was in 1747 that Ahmad Shah Abdali founded a strong independent kingdom of Afghanistan. By 1765 Ahmad Shah had consolidated his empire which included the present North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Kashmir as well.

The period following the death of Ahmad Shah in 1773 was marked by internal struggle for power within the ruling elite in Afghanistan. By that time the British had entrenched themselves well by incorporating many parts of India under their empire which extended upto river Sutlej. Besides, the rise of Sikh power in Punjab under Ranjit Singh was also a recurring phenomenon during that period. The defeat of Afghan ruler, Dost Mohammed, in 1837 at the hands of Ranjit Singh, led to incorporation of certain eastern Afghan territory into

88. He is also called Ahmed Shah Durrani.


Ranjit Singh's empire. 91 During this period, Persia 92 (Iran) and Russia 93 were also evincing interests in India and Central Asia. The British perceived a threat to their empire in India in the wake of Persian and Russian advances in the region. Thus with a view to safeguard the Indian empire from Persia and Russia, the British wanted to develop close relations with Afghanistan. In the wake of Sikh-Afghan hostilities, the then Viceroy of India Lord Auckland sent a mission to Kabul under Captain Burnes. The Burnes mission was overtly of commercial nature but had also in view the task of checkmating the advances of Persia and Russia 94 and the restoration of peace between Afghanistan and Ranjit Singh. 95

However, the Burnes mission was met with no success. The empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh extended in the northwest upto the east of Khyber Pass. 96 The death of Ranjit Singh led to the disintegration of Sikh empire in 1849

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92. Prior to 1935, Iran was called Persia.

93. The official name of Russia was changed to Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union in 1925.

94. Aitchison, n. 91, p. 204.

95. National Archives of India (NAI), Secretary Macnaghtan to Captain Burnes, 16 May 1837, *Parliamentary Papers*, vol. XXV, 1839.

96. Fraser-Tytler, n. 90, p. 71.
and the British incorporated Ranjit Singh's empire. Thus British India came into direct contact with Afghanistan. It is worth mentioning here that by 1850, the borders between British India and Afghanistan were not clearly defined. As already mentioned in the preceding chapter (chapter II), the question of boundary settlement between British India and Afghanistan was taken up in 1893 when Kabul was forced to accept the British mission under Sir Mortimer Durand. After prolonged negotiations, Durand succeeded in concluding an agreement with the King of Afghanistan on 12 November 1893 which took the form of a treaty between the two countries.

Under the treaty, Afghanistan reluctantly agreed to give up control of all districts south of the Indus river. The Afghan ruler was allowed to retain Asmar, Kunar and Birmal Valley and he was also given permission to import munitions of war. The Afghan ruler in return

97. Ibid., p. 185.
98. NAI, For. Department, Sec. F. No. 37-80, May 1893, No. 62.
99. For text of the treaty see, Aitchison, no. 91, pp. 255-257.
100. Ibid., p. 213.
promised not to advance or interfere in Chitral, Bajaur and Swat and relinquished his claim to Chagai, Dawar and Waziristan.\textsuperscript{101} Thus the border agreement concluded between Afghanistan and British India was along the Durand Line.

The task of demarcation of frontiers between British India and Afghanistan, as envisaged in the November 1893 agreement, was carried out for the most part by joint boundary commissions of the two countries during 1894-1896, except a small portion remaining undemarcated in the vicinity of Mohmand and the Khyber.\textsuperscript{102}

The Durand agreement was certainly profitable and advantageous for the British while Afghanistan, as it became known later, was at a loss. The British while gaining control over strategic areas, also earned "good-will and friendship" of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{103} The Durand agreement instead of solving the border problem, introduced more complications for Afghanistan. The tribes inhabiting the areas, which had come under British rule after the demarcation, were opposed to the idea of

\begin{itemize}
  \item 101. Ibid., p. 219.
  \item 102. Ibid.
  \item 103. NAI, For Dept. Sec. F. Nos. 71-158, December, 1893, No. 154.
\end{itemize}
delimitation of the boundary and regarded it as an interference with their independence. When the map demarcating the boundary line was sent by the British in 1896 to the King of Afghanistan the latter protested against it by pointing out many discrepancies but the British insisted that the frontier drawn on the map was final and Kabul was bound to follow it. The intransigence shown by the British led to large-scale uprising on the frontier areas in 1897. 

Under these circumstances, the Durand agreement came under severe criticism. According to Fraser-Tytler, the Durand agreement presented a concrete symbol of compromise and it was "the manifestation of a policy which, whatever its merits, was not carried out to its logical conclusions". He regarded it illogical from the standpoint of ethnography, strategy and geography as it cut across the people, splitting the nation in two and


106. Fraser-Tytler, n. 90, p. 188.
even divided the tribes. According to C.C. Davies, the Durand agreement was forced on Afghanistan and the new boundary line was not based on sound topographical data, "for during the process of demarcation it was discovered that certain places, marked on Durand map, did not exist on the actual ground. Many ethnic absurdities were perpetrated... The worst blunder of all was the arrangement by which the boundary cut the Mohmand tribal area into two separate parts." 108

However, the Afghan King Abdur Rahman was reluctant to forefeit his country's independence to the British and repeatedly reiterated that he never considered any Pakhtoon area to be permanently ceded to the British. 109 The King protested against the demarcation of the Indo-Afghan boundary and asked the British to return the Pakhtoon areas to Afghanistan. 110 Though the British did not comply with Afghan request yet Kabul remained steadfast in its determination to get the pakhtoon areas back. The subsequent rulers of Afghanistan nursed the feeling that

107. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
the British had imposed the Durand agreement on Afghanistan against its wishes. Following the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 under which Russia acknowledged that Afghanistan was outside the Russian sphere of influence, the British also agreed not to occupy or annex any part of Afghanistan. Thus Afghanistan had become a buffer state between Russia and British India.

But the Afghan King Habibullah straightaway rejected the 1907 convention because Afghanistan was not consulted either by Britain or by Russia. In 1909, King Habibullah suggested the British to appoint a joint commission for resolving various differences between the frontier subjects of the two countries. But there was no British response and then came the First World War. During the war period Afghanistan maintained a policy of strict neutrality. In the wake of King Habibullah's assassination in February 1919, Amanullah became the King of Afghanistan who immediately proclaimed Afghanistan's independence in both internal and external relations. King Amanullah urged the British to hold negotiations

111. For the text of 1907 convention between Britain and Russia, see Aitchison, n. 91, vol. XIII, Part I, pp. 119-125.
112. Ibid., Part II, p. 222.
113. Ibid., p. 223.
between the representatives of Afghanistan and British India to settle the frontier question.\textsuperscript{114} The protracted negotiations which continued for about a couple of years resulted in the conclusion of an Anglo-Afghan Treaty on 21 November 1921\textsuperscript{115} but as regards the Durand Line agreement the \textit{status quo} remained.

However, the British recognized Afghanistan to be "officially free and independent in its internal and external affairs."\textsuperscript{116} However, Fraser-Tytler is of the view that the Anglo-Afghan treaty of 1921 would not have been signed without some reference to or admission of Afghan interests in the welfare of the tribes on the Indian side of the Durand Line which gave a certain legal basis to Afghan interference across the line.\textsuperscript{117} Thus the stalemate between Afghanistan and the British India continued over the Durand agreement during Nadir Shah's


\textsuperscript{115} For text of Treaty see, Aitchison, n. 91, pp. 288-296.

\textsuperscript{116} Adamec, n. 105, p. 160.

\textsuperscript{117} Fraser-Tytler, n. 90, p. 262.
regime. Afghanistan remained steadfast to its demand for the inclusion of the Pakhtoon areas on the Indian side of the Durand Line into Afghanistan. The Pushto-speaking people inhabiting the Indian side of the Durand Line remained opposed to the British rule and there were occasional uprisings in the region which the British suppressed by using armed forces.

With the British India, the national struggle for freedom had reached its zenith by the onset of 1930s. The process of negotiations between the Indian leaders and the British Government was keenly watched in Kabul. During the Round Table Conferences of 1931-1932 Kabul informed London of its right to be consulted in the matter with regard to the future of the frontier states. When Cripps Mission visited India, the Afghan government again approached the British authorities but the latter informed the former that the time was not ripe for raising such questions but at the same time Kabul was assured that its opinion would be sought at the appropriate time.

While these developments were going on, the wave of freedom movement had also swept across the Pakhtoon

118. Ibid., p. 265.

areas in the Indian side of the Durand Line which have become to be known as North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). The freedom movement gathered further impetus under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Frontier Gandhi. The organizations like Anjuman-i-Islahi-Afghani which worked for the social and educational improvement of the Pakhtoons in the NWFP "had among its ranks those who envisaged, though vaguely the reunion of the Frontier Province with Afghanistan". In 1929, another organization, Afghan Jirgah, also known as Khudai Khidmatgars or Red Shirt Corps was established in Peshawar by Ghaffar Khan. The Jirgah remained popular with the Pakhtoons until the outbreak of communal riots between Hindus and Muslims in early 1947. These riots dealt a severe blow to the popularity of the Jirgah and the Muslims gained considerable support in the region.

On the other hand, following the conclusion of the Second World War, the negotiations between the Indian

120. The NWFP was established in 1901 by the British Government.
121. Zalmay Khalizad, n. 40, p. 137.
122. Ibid., p. 138.
leaders and the British government had taken further strides with regard to the transfer of power. At this juncture Kabul again approached the British Government with the request that the frontier areas be given the option of either joining Afghanistan or become independent. But the British rejected the Afghan plea. When the partition plan of the Indian subcontinent was presented by the British in June 1947 and Indian National Congress and the Muslim League agreed to it, Ghaffar Khan tried to persuade Gandhi and other Congress leaders that the partition proposal should be amended "on the basis of Pakistan and a free Pakhtoon state." Though Congress had agreed to such a proposal—but Muslim League opposed it. Consequently, the British Government also rejected the proposal for a free Pakhtoon state and decided to hold "referendum" in the area to ascertain the views of the people whether they desired to join Pakistan or India. When the referendum was held, the Khudai Khidmatgars boycotted the referendum. However the "referendum" was held under the auspices of British authorities. Of those who voted, the overwhelming number of 2,96,370 (99 per cent) favoured Pakistan and only 2,974 voted for India. Thus

124. Ibid., p. 273.
following the partition of the sub-continent in August 1947, the NWFP area became part of Pakistan which happened to share common borders with Afghanistan.

It is the Pakhtoon issue which has been the major irritant between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the inception of the former as an independent and sovereign country. Both countries have laid claims and counter-claims which are analysed in the following pages.

The Afghan Stand

Afghanistan's claim to Pakhtoonistan is based on ethnic, linguistic, cultural, geographical and historical factors. The Afghan government has contended that Kabul was forced to accept the Durand agreement under duress as the then Afghan King Amir Abdur Rahman was faced with several internal and external constraints while negotiating with the British. Thus any international agreement concluded under duress becomes invalid. Under Article 52 of the Vienna convention, "a treaty is void if its conclusion has been procured by the threat or use of force in violation of the principles of international law." 127

The term "force" includes economic and political pressures too. Thus the Afghan sources claim that since the Durand agreement was obtained under duress hence it is void. 128 Sardar Mohammad Daud said on 28 April 1974 that the British did a wrong many years ago and "we have been fighting to rectify it. Until that is done the struggle will continue." 129

As has been described in the preceding pages, the decision about the NWFP was left undecided until the referendum at the time of partition of the subcontinent. Kabul had made it clear at that time its reluctance to accept the outcome of the "referendum" as a valid means to tackle the problem. 130 Besides, Kabul also claims that the British decision to hold referendum was unilateral and majority of the people boycotted it which renders the so-called "referendum" a "farce." 131 Pakistan's plea of referendum as the valid basis for NWFP's merger with Pakistan has been refuted by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who

128. Ibid.
129. The Times (London), 30 April 1974.
131. UN Doc. A/PV. 1690, 16 October 1968, pp. 15-16.
said on 1 September 1967 that he strongly repudiated Pakistan's claim of holding a referendum in the area before the creation of Pakistan. He further added: "... the farce of referendum was staged by the British government: first, on issue we are not interested in; second, based on limited franchise; third, rigging of votes and fourth non-participation by majority of Pakhtoons." Afghanistan also called the referendum held under British auspices as a fraud and a sham.

The issue of Pakhtoonistan had been the main determinant of Afghan foreign policy towards Pakistan. This was manifested when Pakistan, after attaining independence, applied for the membership of the United Nations, Afghanistan voted against its admission. The Afghan representative, Husain Aziz said in the General Assembly:

We cannot recognize the North-West Frontier as part of Pakistan so long as people of the North-West Frontier have not been given an opportunity free from any kind of influence - and I repeat, free from any kind of influence - to determine for themselves whether they wish to be independent or to become a part of Pakistan.(134)

132. Cited in Afghan representative's speech before the UN General Assembly, see UN Doc. A/PV.1692, 11 October 1968, p. 27.
133. Ibid.
However, since the mid-1950s, official Afghan statements had tended to emphasize self-determination for the Pakhtoons east of the Durand Line.\(^{135}\) In early 1953, the then Afghan Ambassador to India, Najibullah Khan had reiterated Afghan support for the Pakhtoons: "The Pakhtoons are Afghans and it was quite natural that they should expect Afghanistan to support their cause. The Government and people of Afghanistan pledge their support to Pakhtoons. In doing so Afghanistan is fulfilling not only a natural duty but also helping the cause of justice and peace."\(^{136}\) Afghanistan made it clear that its support for the Pakhtoons could not be interpreted that Kabul had any territorial designs over Pakistan.\(^{137}\)

Afghanistan had been watching the developments in the NWFP with keen interest. Kabul never refrained from expressing its concern as and when Pakistan used force over the Pakhtoons in the NWFP region. Afghan reaction to Pakistan's One-Unit Plan and on Dir issue, as analysed in the preceding pages, was in keeping with its support


\(^{136}\) Afghanistan, vol. VIII, no. 3, July-September 1953, p. 45.

\(^{137}\) UN Doc. A/PV. 1690, 10 October 1968, p. 16.
for the Pakhtoons. Afghanistan also rejected the contention of Pakistan that religion was the basis of the Pakhtoon's incorporation into Pakistan because the latter was not purely an Islamic state. While referring to the basic contradiction in Pakistan's contention, A.R. Pazhwak, Afghan representative to the UN, told the General Assembly on 10 October 1968 that Pakistan was applying "double standards" by demanding plebiscite in Kashmir and denying the same to the Pakhtoons.

The Afghan espousal of the Pakhtoon cause was also governed by strategic and defence reasons. Kabul contended that Pakhtoonistan lay along the Afghan borders hence it was of strategic significance for the defence of Afghanistan. Any development in that region would warrant potential security implications for Kabul. This argument seems tenable in view of the strategic and land-locked location of Afghanistan.

Pakistan's move to dismiss the elected governments led by the National Awami Party (NAP) in the NWFP and Baluchistan in February 1973 was severely criticised by

2. See n. 136, pp. 15-16.
When in 1975, the Bhutto government in Pakistan, imposed ban on the activities of the NAP, Kabul deplored Islamabad for such a move. These developments had been instrumental in envisaging estrangement of relations between Kabul and Islamabad. However during 1976, the then President of Afghanistan, Sardar Daud had started giving a turn to Afghan foreign policy by forging close relations with the neighbouring and Islamic countries. Similar pursuit was made by Pakistan's Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto. According to Zalmay Khalilzad, both Pakistan and Afghanistan had come to a close settlement of the issue in March 1977. The deal was believed to have included amnesty for the NAP leaders and trade and transit facilities for Afghanistan through Karachi. However, before the deal could materialise, Bhutto's government was replaced in Pakistan by Zia-ul-Haq in July 1977 and Daud's Government was overthrown in a coup in April 1978 in Kabul.

The new government led by People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) which assumed power after

142. Ibid., 4 November 1975.
144. Ibid., p. 142.
April 1978 coup or Saur Revolution also supported the cause of the Pakhtoons and Baluchis for their right to self-determination.\(^\text{145}\) The Babrak Karmal's government, which assumed power on 28 December 1979, concomitantly with the Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan, also reiterated its support to the Pakhtoons' right to self-determination.\(^\text{146}\) The new Afghan leader, and Secretary General of the Central Committee of the PDPA, Najib in an interview with Mushahid Hussain Sayed, editor-in-chief of The Muslim, a daily published from Pakistan said in July 1986 that "in view of long, traditional, cultural, religious, linguistic, historical etc., relations existing between us and our Pashtoon and Baluch brothers, we have persistently expressed our solidarity with them and will continue to do so."\(^\text{147}\)

Thus it is clear from the analysis so far that Afghan support for Pakhtoons on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line is based on historical, ethnic, religious and cultural factors. Afghanistan regards the Durand Line as

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146. Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 30 December 1979.
void because it was obtained by the British under duress. Besides, Afghanistan has been demanding the right of self-determination for the Pakhtoons living in the NWFP. Despite the changes of regimes in Kabul, there has been no basic change in Afghan stand on Pakhtoonistan.

The Stand of Pakistan

Pakistan regards the Durand agreement signed in November 1893 as a valid international boundary agreement and argues that this fact has been "accepted by successive governments in Kabul." In Pakistan's view the conclusion of the Durand agreement had terminated Afghan sovereignty over the territory and the people east of the Durand Line. Thus, Pakistan as a successor state to the British empire, inherited all the treaties and agreement entered into by the predecessor government and thus enjoys full sovereignty over the territory and its people. Pakistan also rejected Afghan argument that the Durand agreement was imposed on Afghanistan under duress. Though Sir Percy Sykes has argued that the Durand agreement was not signed under duress and equally the Afghans did not

148. For details of the Pakistan representative's speech in General Assembly, see UN Doc. A/PV.2263, (9 October 1974), pp. 112-117.
demonstrate their friendship towards the British immediately after concluding the agreement. However, this argument seems untenable because the then Afghan King, Abdur Rahman, had protested to the British in 1897 when the map containing the demarcated areas was sent to the King. This aspect has already been analysed in the preceding pages.

In Pakistan's view, the Durand agreement was confirmed by the later rulers of Afghanistan in 1905, 1919, 1921 and 1930 thus accepting and confirming the validity of Durand Line. Pakistan sources also contended that Afghanistan cannot repudiate an old treaty under the norms of international law simply because it was inherited by a new state - Pakistan.

With regard to the Afghan argument of self-determination, Islamabad had expressed the view that this question was foreclosed after the referendum was held in the NWFP under British auspices in which the people overwhelmingly voted in favour of Pakistan. On 18 July

154. UN Doc. A/PV.1690, 10 October 1968, p. 15.
1974 the then Home Minister of Pakistan, Abdul Qaiyum Khan told the National Assembly that it was a fact of history that in that referendum the people of the Frontier voted for Pakistan and wondered "how can that decision of the people be challenged?"\footnote{155} According to a Pakistani scholar, M.A. Chaudhari, as the Pakhtoons living in NWFP had so far never expressed their desire either to be independent or to join Afghanistan, made it clear that Kabul was unnecessarily exercised over the issue.\footnote{156} Pakistan has also rejected Afghan plea that the tribal areas in the east of Durand Line had been incorporated against the wishes of the people. According to Pakistan, the people of these tribal areas had given their expressed consent to remain in Pakistan through special Jirgahs (tribal councils).\footnote{157} With a view to support its claim, Pakistan has cited the authority of Sir Cunningham, the then Governor of NWFP, who had said that in November 1947 the tribal Jirgahs had pledged to him (Cunningham) their solemn assurances and confirmed by written agreements that they wished to remain with Pakistan.\footnote{158}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[156] M.A. Chaudhari, n. 126, p. 496.
\item[157] Pakistan Times, 30 December 1949.
\item[158] Cited in Ibid., 22 May 1974.
\end{footnotes}
Besides these contentions, Pakistan finds an ambiguity and vagueness in Afghan concept of Pakhtoonistan. On 18 July 1974, Pakistan's Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs, Aziz Ahmad, said that Kabul had been telling different things at different times during all these years. According to a Pakistani scholar, I.H. Barqui, Afghan demand for Pakhtoonistan was a "hypothetical state" because in certain cases reference was made to the entire NWFP, in others to merely the tribal areas and still in some cases to the entire region west of the Indus river. However, Leon B. Poullada has tried to pinpoint the cause of ambiguity in Afghan stand on Pakhtoonistan. According to him such an ambiguity became more sharp because of the contradiction between the official Afghan stand and the arguments echoed by unofficial protagonists.

Apart from these arguments, Pakistan regarded Afghan tactics of raking up Pakhtoon issue time and again


as being the byproduct of Afghanistan's internal political dynamics rather than derivative of any rational approach. Pakistan also alleged that Kabul's strategy in raising the bogey of Pakhtoonistan issue was designed to gain international publicity and divert the domestic public attention. In Pakistan's view, since Pakhtoons being a traditional tribe, had exerted a position of dominance and influence over the other tribal groups, hence no government in Kabul could take the risk of alienating the Pakhtoons. Thus it was but natural for the Pakhtoon dominated government in Kabul to raise the bogey of Pakhtoonistan.

Thus it is evident from the above analysis that Pakistan regards the Durand Line as a valid international boundary between Kabul and Islamabad. It also rejects Afghan claims to Pakhtoonistan on traditional historical, ethnic, cultural and even on linguistic basis.


In view of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the continued presence of massive Soviet armed forces on Afghan soil and the presence of over 2.5 million Afghan refugees in NWFP, the global context of Pakhtoon problem has undergone a decisive change. Majority of the Afghan refugees now living in Pakistan are Pakhtoons. Since the present government in Kabul is more seized of the fluid situation within the country and the Afghan Mujahideen have been engaged in the resistance movement against the Soviet occupation forces from the Pakistan side of the Pakistan-Afghan border, the Pakhtoon problem is relegated to a secondary place. Once the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is vacated, and the independent and non-aligned status of Afghanistan is restored, the possibility of the revival of Pakhtoon issue as a major irritant between Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be ruled out. Such an eventuality would be fraught with ominous dangers jeopardizing the regional peace and stability.

The Baluchistan Dispute

The Baluch problem is a potential regional problem which can threaten the regional peace and stability. This problem involves Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Strategically located, Baluchistan stretches across a vast expanse of Western Pakistan, eastern Iran and southern
Afghanistan. It also covers more than 900 miles of the Arabian sea coast line, including the northern shores of the Strait of Hormaz. Of the 5 million Baluch tribesmen, 3.65 million live in Pakistan, one million in Iran and an estimated 90,000 are native to the border areas of southern Afghanistan.

Like Pakhtoonistan, the Baluch issue has also affected Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. In the case of Pakistani Baluchistan, "the Afghans have traditionally looked at the Baluch as the extension of the Pakhtoonistan question". The explosive potentials of Baluch problem have assumed added dimensions in view of colonial legacies, Baluch political dynamics within Pakistan, Afghan internal and external politics and also by the existence of ethnic Baluchs in the contiguous areas of Iran and thus by international and regional politics of Iran.

The genesis of Pakistan-Afghan differences over Baluch issue can be traced back to the first Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1841). The British influence was brought to


165. Ibid.

166. Zalmay Khalilzad, n. 40, p. 147.
bear indirect through tribal chiefs and by 1970 the direct British control had been extended to the north-eastern area of Baluchistan under the forward policy. The Kalat principality was also reduced to a dependent status. Thus gradually the British authority was asserted over the Baluch areas but the people were greatly exercised over this development, and they started opposing the alien rule.

The Baluch opposition to British rule had started gaining momentum in an organized way by the beginning of the 1920s. According to Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, majority of the educated Baluch youth during the 1920s regarded Soviet objectives as progressive which could serve the Baluch cause by hastening the end of British rule thus setting the stage for Baluch independence. Though the pro-Soviet stance of some young Baluchis could not be instrumental in the establishment of a communist party in the area yet it could have accelerated the movement that led to the emergence of an organized nationalist movement in Baluchistan.

The onset of 1930s was marked by the establishment of various Baluch political organizations and appearance of Baluch newspapers which provided further impetus to the movement for independent Baluchistan. The prominent among the Baluch political organizations were the Kalat State National Party and the Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Baluchistan (Organisation for the Unity of Baluchistan). In 1932, the Secretary-General of the Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Baluchistan, while espousing the cause of independent Baluchistan, said:

I have presented an ideology... to form an independent Muslim government in this country... I want to see a constitutional government in Baluchistan which is purely Islamic and independent in all aspects. This is just as I cannot like the fact that Baluchistan remains under the slavery of Hindus, I am also opposed to my country wearing the enslaving chains of the colonising Europeans. (169)

In August 1933, Anjuman's weekly newspaper, Al-Baluch published a map depicting an independent Greater Baluchistan comprising the Baluch areas of Iran, Kalat, Baluch principalities of British India, Dera Ghazi Khan and the province of Sind. (170) The Kalat National Party


founded in 1935 advocated for an "independent and unified Baluchistan" and demanded the restoration of Baluch principalities of Kharan, Makran and Las Bela to Kalat. However, the party was outlawed in 1939 by the British.

In the wake of developments leading to the transfer of power by the British in the India subcontinent, the Baluch leaders had to decide either to seek independence or to accede to Pakistan or some intermediate status such as a confederal relationship with Pakistan. However, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, the then ruler of Kalat, was in favour of complete independence. He further argued that under the provisions of the 1876 treaty which permitted the British to occupy Baluchistan, the British had promised to "respect the sovereignty and independence of Kalat." Thus the legal status of Kalat was different from those of other princely states of the subcontinent. In a memorandum submitted to the Cripps Mission in March 1946, the ruler of Kalat said that following the British departure from the subcontinent, Kalat would become independent as it was prior to the treaty of 1876. The memorandum further

172. Yar Khan, n. 167, p. 293.
173. Ibid., p. 294.
Kalat will become fully sovereign and independent in respect to both internal and external affairs, and will be free to conclude treaties with any government or state... The Khan, his government, and his people can never agree to Kalat being included in any form of Indian Union. The Khan and his government will, however, always be glad to enter into an alliance with any government which succeeds the British government in India on the basis of the strictest reciprocity. (174)

Following the partition of Indian subcontinent leading to the emergence of Pakistan and India as two independent and sovereign countries on 14th and 15th August 1947 respectively, the princely states were given the option either to cede to Pakistan or India. The province of Baluchistan ceded to Pakistan but the ruler of Kalat declared complete independence on 15th August 1947. Pakistan rejected the plea of Kalat's ruler and forcibly annexed it in early 1948. (176)

Under the One Unit Plan, Pakistan integrated Kalat along with Baluchistan and in 1969, President Yahya Khan abolished the single unit system and Baluchistan province was established. During the elections held in 1970, the

174. Ibid., pp. 294-296.
175. Ibid., p. 299.
176. For details see, Wayne Wilcose, Pakistan: Consolidation of a Nation, (New York, 1963), pp. 75-76.
protagonists of "autonomous Baluchistan" gained impressive victories under National Awami Party (NAP). In April 1972, the NAP along with Jamait-e-Islami formed the government in Baluchistan. This period was marked by relations between the provincial government and the federal government in Islamabad on issues pertaining to more autonomy for the region. The NAP led government was dismissed in February 1973.

There had been open as well as underground resistance against Pakistan in Baluchistan ever since 1948. There have been frequent incidents of armed hostilities between the Baluch nationalists and Pakistan armed forces. Between 1973-1976, when Mohammad Daud seized power in Kabul, some Baluch underground groups especially Baluch People's Liberation Front (BPLF) had set up training camps on Pak-Afghan border. However by 1976, when Daud regime made efforts to normalize relations with Pakistan, the Afghan support for Baluch resistance groups was stopped.


Following the advent of Saur Revolution in Afghanistan, in April 1978, Kabul's support for Baluch resistance groups, especially BPLF was revived. In early 1979, Afghanistan declared Baluch a separate nationality and recognised BPLF.179

Under the circumstances, the nature of Baluch problem coupled with the issue of Pakhtoonistan can be exploited by Kabul at the instance of Soviet Union to create complications for Pakistan. This aspect is dealt in details in the succeeding sixth chapter. It is suffice here to say that the Baluch conflict, if exacerbated, can jeopardize the peace and stability in south-west Asia.

The Iran-Afghan Relations

The relations between Iran and Afghanistan are passing through a critical phase. The advent of Khomeini regime in Tehran in 1979 was preceded by the emergence of Saur Revolution in Kabul and since then there has been a marked deterioration in relations between the two countries.

Prior to 1978, the Iran-Afghan relations have varied between hostility and friendship. Both countries are geographically contiguous and share a common border

about 960 kms. Both have shared historical and cultural ties for centuries. However, the dispute over the Helmand river water has remained the major irritant between the two countries. The Helmand river originates in Afghanistan and Iran's apprehensions have been that increased Afghan irrigation projects could deprive the latter's portion of the Sistan region of Helmand's water. 180

It was during the nineteenth century that the dispute over the Helmand river assumed serious dimensions between the two countries and still continues to be a major irritant. Both Tehran and Kabul have resolved their bilateral border and other problems in the past by concluding various agreements especially in 1872, 1888-89 and 1905. 181 Following the accession to throne of Reza Shah in Iran and King Amanullah in Afghanistan, the relations between the two countries registered improvement. On 22 June 1921, both countries concluded a treaty of friendship and neutrality. 182 Besides, the two countries were also


signatories to the Sa’dabad Non-Aggression and Cooperation Pact along with Iraq and Turkey, which has been analysed in detail in the subsequent chapter.

Both countries also made efforts to resolve the dispute over Helmand river. In 1902, the Helmand dispute was referred to the British for arbitration and the latter awarded one-third of the Helmand water from Kamal Khan Dam down to Iran. However, this award was rejected by Iran as unfair. In 1938, another attempt was made to negotiate on Helmand dispute and both countries had agreed to share the Helmand water below the Kamal Khan Dam on an equal basis. But the issue remained unresolved because of Afghan reluctance to ratify the agreement.

During 1960s, the relations between the two countries were normalized especially in 1962 when Iran provided transit facilities to Afghanistan. Tehran offered discounts in railroad freight rates for Afghan goods passing through Iranian territory. During the beginning of 1970s both countries reached an agreement on the Helmand water dispute but the Daud government in Kabul refused to support the

agreement sometime in 1974.185 During 1976, when President Daud started forging close relations with the neighbouring and Islamic countries, the relations between Tehran and Kabul also improved especially when Shah of Iran offered his good offices to envisage rapprochement between Pakistan and Afghanistan.186 Iran also promised to provide economic assistance worth $2 billion to Afghanistan but could not materialise as by April 1978 when Daud regime in Kabul was overthrown.

The advent of Saur Revolution and the assumption of power in Kabul by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) resulted in the deterioration of relations between Iran and Afghanistan. By the beginning of 1979, the situation in Iran also became tense following demonstrations against the Shah of Iran. The PDPA government in Kabul reportedly rendered moral support to Shah's opponents.187 There were even reports of training camps for

Shah's opponents in Afghanistan. Tehran also alleged that almost 200 armed men were caught crossing into Iran from Afghanistan in January 1979. Following the fall of Shah of Iran in February 1979 and the turmoil within Iran, the Iranian economy was severely hit which resulted in the fall in revenue remittances by the Afghan workers working in Iran. According to estimates, the Afghan workers were remitting between 1.2 million and 1.4 million US dollars daily to Afghanistan.

During early March 1979, there erupted an uprising in Herat against the PDPA government. On 18 March the Afghan government blamed Iran for instigating the trouble in Herat especially referring to Iran's decision to expel 7,000 Afghan citizens: "In fact these were not citizens of Afghanistan, but were Iranian soldiers in disguise... about 4,000 managed to settle in Herat city and its vicinity in the name of Afghan citizens with the help of the Consulate of Iran and organized disorders there."

188. Ibid.
However, during early part of 1980s, the Afghan criticism of Iran decreased. The reason for this decreased hostility to Iran might have been governed by the Soviet fear that this would only weaken the position of groups sympathetic to it, in particular the Tudeh party. Since 1983, the Tudeh and other leftist groups have been the targets of severe criticism in Iran. The Afghan criticism of Iran has been revived. This stance is evident from the literature brought out by Afghan foreign Ministry. Since September 1980, Iran is also embroiled neck-deep in the Gulf war with Iraq. Hence there exists a "Cold War" between Iran and Afghanistan. The Helmand river dispute is relegated to the background but still remains a potential source that can trigger conflict between Tehran and Kabul. This, then, portends ominous threats to regional security.


193. For details see, Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, White Book: The role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Undeclared War Against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (Kabul, 1986). Also see, Freidoon, Reactionary Rulers of Iran in Undeclared War Against DRA (Kabul, 1986).
Another potential source of conflict in South-West region is the ongoing war between Iran and Iraq. Since September 1980, Tehran and Baghdad have been engulfed in the flames of war. The Iran-Iraq came on the heels when the Islamic revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini had completed over a year in Iran after overthrowing the Shah of Iran, Reza Shah Pahalavi in February 1979. Iran-Iraq war involved certain basic disputes between the two countries. Before we analyse the strategic implications of Iran-Iraq war for regional peace and security, it is necessary to analyse in brief, the dispute over Shatt-al-Arab which is the main irritant between the two countries.

The Shatt-al-Arab Dispute

The Shatt-al-Arab waterway is formed by the confluence of Tigris and Euphrates rivers of Iraq with that of the Karein river of Iran. Stretching for 120 kms before emptying into the Gulf, it has been the focal point of the intermittently activated dispute between Iran and Iraq over the demarcation of their common border. The controversy over Shatt-al-Arab dates back to the days of

Ottoman Empire of which Iraq then formed a part. The efforts of demarcating the boundary between the Ottoman and Iran Empires as early as in the middle of the nineteenth century, under the treaty of Erzerum signed in 1847. Under Article 2 of this treaty, the Ottoman Empire formally recognized "the unrestricted sovereignty" of Iranian government on the eastern banks of the Shatt-al-Arab with Iranian vessels to have the right to navigate freely. However the treaty of Erzerum proved only a partial solution to that problem.

The demarcation commission, as envisaged in the treaty, began its work in 1850 but could not accomplish much.

Following the discovery of oil in Iran, the British developed significant economic and strategic stakes in southern Iran and in the areas around Shatt-al-Arab. Following the conclusion of Constantinople Protocol of 1913 between the Ottoman Empire and British government


and Iran, the thalweg line became the boundary in the Shatt-al-Arab for a four mile stretch opposite Abadan. 197 A boundary delimitation commission was established in 1913 to demarcate the new frontier. But in the wake of the outbreak of First World War (in which Ottomans fought against the British), the Commission failed to accomplish its task. The Ottomans did not ratify the treaty. The fall of Ottoman Empire after the First World War brought Iraq under the British mandate.

During the inter-war period Iran raised the question before the League of Nations. Iraq claimed de jure control over the entire Shatt-al-Arab while Iranians claimed that the thalweg line should form the basis of the river boundary. The Iranian navy gradually disregarded the Iraqi claim that sparked off small incidents. 198 Because of the war situation, the League of Nations was preoccupied with the war and failed to solve the dispute. Subsequently in 1937, the Sa'dabad Pact concluded between Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan, the question of Iran-

197. Edmonds, n. 195, p. 150.

Iraq boundary, including the Shatt-al-Arab, was also discussed. This agreement reviewed the thalweg line as a basis of the boundary opposite Abadan but Iraq claimed sovereignty over the rest of the river up to the low water mark on the Iranian shore. However both sides were not satisfied and in the meanwhile second world war had broken out. After the war was over, Iran again started complaining that 70 per cent of the dues were collected from vessels going to Iran and yet only 40 per cent of that amount was spent on pilotage, navigational aids etc. and the rest of the money was spent on improving port facilities in Iraq.

Following the overthrow of monarchy in Iraq in July 1958, the new Iraqi government claimed full claim over the Shatt-al-Arab. Iran responded by arguing that Iraq had failed to conclude the convention for the joint administration of the Shatt-al-Arab as envisaged in the 1937 treaty. Tehran reiterated its old demand for drawing the boundary on the basis of the thalweg line. This

199. For details see, J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East (New Jersey, 1956).


difference of opinion led to tension between the two countries but serious military confrontation was avoided. The change of government in Baghdad in February 1963 revived the hope for the settlement of dispute over Shatt-al-Arab. The negotiations between the two countries lasted until July 1968 without any substantial agreement when there was another coup in Iraq. The new Iraqi regime claimed the whole of the Shatt-al-Arab as Iraqi territory. Baghdad demanded that vessels carrying the Iranian flag should lower flag before entering the Shatt-al-Arab and that there should be no Iranian naval personnel on board the ships. These developments triggered off crisis between the two countries over Shatt-al-Arab in April-May 1969. On 19 April 1969, the Iranian government declared the 1937 treaty as null and void. The Shah of Iran said in 1969:

With regard to Shatt-al-Arab, as you are aware that after 32 years of patience and forbearance, we have terminated the treaty of 1937, a treaty which was the legacy of the colonial policy which even the other party to the engagements had never respected. However, we had declared our readiness to conclude a just and equitable treaty in this connection with our neighbour based on the principle of international equality of rights.202

In July 1970, Iraq offered to refer the question to the International Court of Justice but Iran rejected that

offer. The question remained unsettled till March 1975 when both countries concluded an agreement at Algiers which included the following main provisions:

(i) Agreement to delimit their land frontier on the basis of the protocol of Constantinople of 1913 and the verbal accord of 1914;

(ii) To demarcate the Shatt-al-Arab waterways' boundary on the thalweg line;

(iii) To "re-establish security and mutual confidence along their common frontiers" and undertake to exercise a strict and effective control with the aim of finally putting an end to "all infiltrations of a subversive character from either side;

(iv) To pledge of both countries to regard the provisions negotiated at Algiers as indivisible elements of a comprehensive settlement such that a breach of any one would be considered a violation of the spirit of the Algiers Agreement. (203)

It was followed by the conclusion of the Baghdad Treaty on 13 June 1975 which codified the provisions of the Algiers Agreement. This paved the way for peaceful settlement of other issues like Kurdish problem and land boundary dispute between Iran and Iraq. Since the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement, the relations between the two countries improved.

203 Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1975, p.27053.
Following the overthrow of Shah of Iran by Khoméni in February 1979, in Tehran, Iran was plunged into internal turmoil. Iran being predominantly a Shiite country and the emergence of religious leadership was perceived as a threat by the ruling Ba'ath Party in Iraq which had more than 40 per cent of the population being Shiite. The outbreak of armed hostilities between Iran and Iraq in September 1980 and continue to pose a serious threat to global peace and security especially in southwest Asia. The protracted Iran-Iraq hostilities has divided the Arab World. Iran has got sympathizers in Syria and Libya while the other Arab countries especially Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have expressed their support for Iraq. The Khomeini regime in Iran is viewed as the champion of "Islamic fundamentalism" by most of the Arab countries. Despite the calls given by the United Nations, Non-alignment Summit Conferences, Organization of Islamic Countries, Arab League and other international forums the way for ending hostilities between the Iran and Iraq still continues. Such a fluid situation is vulnerable to super power rivalry.
The above analysis makes it abundantly clear that the South-West Asia is faced with serious interstate conflicts which have all the ingredients of assuming could regional and global dimensions. Either it be Indo-Pakistan or Pak-Afghan or Afghan-Iran or Iran-Iraq conflict. But all are prone to conflagrate into serious war thus posing threat to peace and security. There is no exaggeration in saying that South-West Asia is the most volatile and politically unstable region in the contemporary global politics. It is problematic to have peace and stability.