Chapter 4

Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations: the Post-Taliban Period

4.1 Introduction

The chapter would study the changing dynamics of Afghan-Pakistan relationship and underline the historical complexities in their relationship despite certain commonalities like religion. It would study the major challenges, claims, and blames in their bilateral relationship. The study would also examine how Pakistan shifted its Afghan policy after the September 2001 incidents, and how India emerges as a concern and a factor in this “new” policy.

Afghanistan and Pakistan relations can be examined through three different phases. Each phase has marked by an alteration in their geopolitical orientation. The first phase started after Pakistan’s inception as a sovereign state in 1947 and lasted till the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. The phase was dominated by the issues like the Durand Line and the issue of Pashtunistan that spoiled their relationship. This was a troubled and strained period in their relationship.

The second phase (1979-2001) started from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 and lasted till at the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001. This phase, however, is divided into three sub-phases. The first sub-phase has started with the Soviet intervention in 1979 and ended with the signing of the Geneva Accord in 1988. The second has started with the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1988 and lasted till at the demise of the Najibullah’s government in April 1992. The third phase has started with the Taliban’s acquired power after the demise of the communist government and ended with the fall down of the Taliban regime in 2001. This part of the study focuses on the rise of religious militancy and extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan, its antecedents, and its linkages with the Afghan Jihad. During this phase, Pakistan supported mujahedeen groups to contain the Soviet Union threats. This phase, however, has seen the rise of fundamentalism and radical Islam in the sub-region.
The third phase started after 2001 and it continues. There was a paradigm shift in Pakistan policy after the downfall of the Taliban government. Pakistan decided to cooperate with the USA-led NATO forces’ response to the terror attacks on 11 September 2001. From being an ardent supporter of the Taliban during the war against the Soviets, Pakistan now joined hands with the USA-led NATO forces in its agenda “War on Terror”.

India’s neighbourhood to the west, Afghanistan and Pakistan, are considered as one of the most volatile regions in the world. Both are neighbouring states in South Asia. They have been associated in various ways for many years. Both have a vast geo-strategic importance as they provided access to the energy rich CARs via the Indian Ocean. The regional and international players seek to dominate the region and seize control of immense energy resources. One of the leading scholars, Stephen Philip Cohen has argued that “any comprehensive policy toward Pakistan must also address Pakistan’s relationship with Afghanistan” (2006: 194). He has further argued that these two countries “have a long-standing and complex relationship, which took an astounding turn when American forces removed the Taliban government with Pakistan’s reluctant assistance” (ibid).

Indeed, their relations have remained estranged despite of sharing several things in common like religion, history, geography, and ethnic groups. They have never succeeded in establishing cordial bilateral ties free of apprehensions. Their relations have been the victim of conflicting interests. Subsequently, they have been very complex due to antagonism and mistrust, ideological and political values, and above all the domestic politics of both states. Their tense relationship remains as one of the most serious challenges not only in the sub-region but in the subcontinent.

A history of hostility and discontinuities in relations began shortly after Pakistan’s creation in 1947. Since then on, both states have interfered in each other’s internal affairs. There are conflicts along borders between the two states. Afghanistan was the only country in the world that voted against Pakistan’s inclusion in the UNO. On 31 December 1947, the Afghan representative to the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Hosyan, said:
This unhappy circumstance is due to the fact we do recognise the old NWFP as Part Pakistan so long as the people of the NWFP have not been given as opportunity free from any of influence to determine for themselves, whether they wish be independent or to become a part of Pakistan (cited in Jalazai 2003: 210).

This has been the crux of the trouble between the two. Moreover, political changes in Pakistan and Afghanistan have always affected their ties in general and South Asia in particular. Apart from the historical disputes regarding the demarcation of borders, new issues have been emerged in their relationship after the USA-led military intrusion in Afghanistan. The hostile attitude of both the countries have continued and put their policy makers into a real doldrums. Adam Roberts has argued that “Granted the indissoluble connection between Afghanistan and Pakistan, any policy in respect of the one has to be framed in light of its effects on the other” (2009: 52).

However, the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not quite parallel. They are unequal in economic status and different in their total ethnic composition and constitutional makeup. Geopoliticians such as Halford Mackinder argued that geography is destiny, and throughout its history, Pakistan has been stoutly influenced by its geographic location at the juncture of South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. Pakistan is a far more complex country, with a population seven times larger than Afghanistan. Its institutions of governance are feeble but not destroyed. It has a strong military. It is more urbanised than Afghanistan. Besides, it has a long tradition of religious movements and parties. The country has a total population of 175 million, making fifth largest country in the world. It has six ethnic major groups that constitute 94 percent of its population: “Punjabi (44.68 percent); Pashtun (15.42 percent); Sindhi (14.01 percent); Sariaki (8.38 percent); Muhagirs (7.57 percent); Baloch (4 percent) and others (6. 28 percent)” (Caldwell 2011: 33). Since its inception, it has to face two hostile neighbouring countries, i.e., Afghanistan and India, with which the country shares more than two third (2/3rd) of its boundaries.

Analogous to Pakistan, Afghanistan’s geographic location has strongly influenced its history. One of the reputed historians of the 20th century, Arnold Toynbee (1961) has argued that “Afghanistan has been deluged with history and been devastated by it” (cited in Caldwell 2011: 33). In ancient times, many believed that the region was the centre of
the world. Muhammad Iqbal has called Afghanistan as “the heart of Asia” and Lord Curzon has pointed that it is “the cockpit of Asia” (Rashid 2001: 7).

The major ethnic groups that constitutes the majority of the country’s population: “Pashtun (42 percent); Tajik (27 percent); Hazara (9 percent); Uzbek (9 percent); Aimak (4 percent); Turkmen (3 percent); Baloch (2 percent); and others (4 percent)” (Caldwell 2011: 36). These ethnic groups are distributed geographically. The country has witnessed every kind of conflict – international intervention, proxy war, civil war, and War on Terrorism. Given its geographical position, the country’s war has never been confined to its territory. It has spilled over to its adjacent states, particularly Pakistan’s tribal areas neighbouring to its territorial boundary. Indeed, the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan relationship is not only imperative for security, prosperity, and peace for themselves and the sub-region but for the whole region.

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a long border. Strategically, Afghanistan is considered as one of Pakistan’s most vital and permanent neighbour. Its location makes it very critical. General David Petraeus has correctly pointed out that “One can’t adequately address the challenges in Afghanistan without adding Pakistan into the equation” (2009: 48).

4.2 Phase First: Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations, 1947-1979

This phase would discuss Afghanistan-Pakistan relationships till the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It would try to examine what were the major problems that troubled their ties? The number of factors began to impinge their relationship. These included demand for Independent Pashtunistan, the Durand Line, terrorism factor, and the growing India-Afghanistan ties. However, this section would study the two serious problems – Pashtunistan and the Durand Line – they have been the major reason of hostile relations between the two countries.

After Pakistan’s independence, its leaders were passionate to establish friendly ties with Afghanistan being an Islamic state in its neighbourhood. Pakistan has always looked towards its neighbouring country Afghanistan as a potential partner in the whole region. On 3 December 1947, Mohd Ali Jina expressed his aspiration that the ties
between Afghanistan and Pakistan may be of greatest benefit and everlasting friendship (Dar 1986). Since 1947, both the countries have been engaged in regular diplomatic consultation. The first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, offered to dialogue with the Afghan government, “all matters of common interest relating to border areas, such as economic educational and moral uplift of the people on both sides of the borders” (cited in Mehdi 1991:115).

Islamabad’s anxieties in Afghanistan are two-folded: First, an Afghan regime friendly with New Delhi would always be a threat to Islamabad; and, Second, the Afghan claims over Pashtun majority territories of Pakistan (Khan 2007). Afghanistan claimed that the British Empire had illicitly occupied and later integrated into present day Pakistan. Intermittently between 1947 and 1990, Afghan regimes did support and patronize left wing Pashtun nationalist and autonomist parties in Balochistan and the NWFP, who wanted to make an Afghanistan-centred “Greater Pashtunistan” (Rashid 2011; Chatterjee 2013). Because of their hostile relations, all Afghan governments sided with India between 1947 and 1989. The military cooperation among the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, and India was also a major concern for Pakistan. Robert Jervis has been given the theoretical explanation of the phenomenon:

When there are believed to be tight linkages between domestic and foreign policy or between the domestic policies of two states the quest for security may drive states to interfere pre-emptively in the domestic politics of others in order to provide an ideological buffer zone (1978: 168).

The deadly tribal attacks took place across the boundary from Kabul in 1950 and 1951. That led to border skirmishes, bombing of Afghan villages by Pakistani planes and severance of diplomatic ties. Moreover, a blockade by Islamabad on import of oil supplies to Kabul caused severe adversity for this landlocked state. Afghanistan was heavily dependent on Pakistan’s port of Karachi for import and export goods. The Soviet Union offered a trade accord in 1950 that “provided for the exchange of Soviet oil for Afghan wool and cotton” (Haqqani 2005: 164). Afghanistan immediately accepted it.

Afghanistan-Pakistan relations were reached very low during the leadership of Sardar Daoud in Afghanistan (1953-1963). During 1950-55, small-scale Afghan subversion into the tribal areas prompted Islamabad to proclaim its intent to consolidate
its authority among the tribal of the Afghan frontier. Pakistan officially proclaimed a highly controversial administrative measure known as the One Unit Plan. This plan envisaged the merger of the western provinces of Balochistan, Punjab, NWFP, and Sind into a sole administrative unit named West Pakistan. This produced a diplomatic tension that resulted in the withdrawal of ambassadors by the two sides. Daoud’s government has condemned this malicious plan. It has argued that this is the “first step towards an eventual liquidation of Pashtun autonomy in Pakistan” (Qassem 2009: 46).

In March 1955, an angry mob in Kabul wrecked the Pakistani Embassy. Other mobs vandalised the Pakistani consulates in Qandahar and Jalalabad. While in Pakistan a mob ransacked the Afghan consulate in Peshawar. As a result, their trade and diplomatic ties were severed in 1955. They were very close of a full-scale war. However, they agreed for arbitration which was submitted by an international commission consisting of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. Few months later, Kabul convened a Loya Jirga of 360 persons which collectively supported the regime’s demand for a plebiscite in the Pashtun regions of Pakistan. Pakistan propagated a false propaganda through radio that weather Pashtuns in Afghanistan would be allowed to join an independent Pashtunistan (Dupree 1980).

The borders were closed for few months. In 1955, the then Afghan Foreign Minister, Mohammad Naim, took an initiative to reinstate the bilateral ties in a formal flag hoisting ceremony over Islamabad’s Embassy in Kabul. In 1959, he visited Islamabad for bilateral talks which eased their tension and tried to fortify their bilateral relations.

In 1956, the then Pakistani President Iskander Mirza paid a visit to Kabul in order to ease the strained ties and King Zahir Shah reciprocated in 1958. It has been argued that a tentative arrangement governing transit and trade services for Afghan imports did break the ice, but mutual suspicions continued to simmer in the background. The then military ruler of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, who made another endeavour to enhance ties with Kabul in 1959-60, but a curious historical nugget dropped into a dialogue with the then Afghan Foreign Minister, Sardar Naim, hardly helped matters: “If the old conquests were to be
our guide, then Pakistan should have more interests in the future of Pathans living in Afghanistan” (Khan 1967: 175-76).

Both the states have adopted various and diverse steps to enhance their relationship, including the establishment of a direct radio connection between Karachi and Kabul, the commencement of air service, and they signed the transit trade agreement in May 1958. The agreement has given a right to Kabul to import duty-free goods through Karachi. However, their relations again took downturn after the change of government in Pakistan.

4.2.1 Joining into the Cold War Politics

Pakistan made an alliance with the USA in the 1950s and 1960s against communist expansionism. In 1953, General Ayub Khan, commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army, made a commitment to the USA Assistant Secretary of State Henry Byroad: “Our army can be your army if you want us” (cited in Kux 2001: 57). It signed the Mutual Defense Agreement with the USA in 1954 and became its partner in Asia. Instantaneously thereafter, it also became a member of the USA-sponsored organisations, i.e., the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The country has also provided a surveillance base to the USA at Bada Ber near Peshawar. Moreover, the USA was looking an alliance with Islamabad chose to avoid Afghanistan and “inadvertently pushed Afghanistan towards rapprochement with the USSR” (Roberts 2004: 165). Afghanistan, however, came under the huge influence of India and the Soviet Union.

The Cold War politics also did complexity in Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship. Pakistan was relatively close to the USA, while Afghanistan and India were closer to the Soviet Union. The era has provided the context in which Kabul’s antagonism against Islamabad, its disenchantment with the USA, and its diplomatic failure to win the support of the Muslim countries on the issue of Pashtunistan brew to move it towards the Soviet Union. The Cold War politics severely impacted on their ties.

It has been argued that the hostility between Afghanistan and Pakistan led Kabul to move away from the Muslim world and the West which generally supported Pakistan.
Thus, Afghanistan has developed deep ties with the Soviet Union and India during the 1950s and 1960s. They have signed many agreements regarding trade and transit. The Soviets were the largest foreign donors to Kabul. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union was becoming increasingly involved in Afghan politics. Indeed, the Soviet Union-Afghanistan-India nexus also became one of the major irritants in establishing friendly ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

4.2.2 A Brief Abatement of Tension

Yet their relations were continued to be troubled by the dilemma over Pashtunistan. Their relations were soured further in 1962 following border clashes as Afghanistan laid a major claim to larger parts of Balochistan and the NWFP. Afghanistan has proclaimed in 1960 that “it wouldn’t extend the resident permits of the Pakistani nationals in Afghanistan anymore” (Qassem 2009: 47).

In 1960-61, both countries got entangled into such an intense clash over the Khyber boarder that they completely severed all diplomatic ties with each other. On 15 August 1961, Islamabad has announced that it wanted to close its consulates in Qandahar and Jalalabad. It also ordered the shutdown of Afghanistan’s consulates and trade missions in Parachinar, Quetta, and Peshawar. On 30 August 1961, Afghanistan has reacted very strongly by giving Islamabad one week to withdraw its decision or face a severance of diplomatic ties. The breakdown of their relations had shattering Afghanistan’s economy. It had badly hurt its long-term objectives of industrial development, inflation, and shortages became a serious problem. It also did huge loss of the 1961 fruit crops. Its economy suffered stern depression. The blockade harshly affected the Pashtun trucking companies in Pakistan as well (Qassem 2009).

Moreover, in the early 1960s, Islamabad’s intelligence organisations “were encouraging Pakistan’s Islamist political groups to pursue a forward policy of seeking ideological allies in Afghanistan” (Haqqani 2005: 167). At the same time, Pakistan’s Jamiat-e-Islami\textsuperscript{15} served as both mentor and model for a number of Islamist scholars and

\textsuperscript{15} Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, a socio-political philosopher, formed this Islamic political movement in British India in 1941. He was an ardent supporter of separate homeland for Muslims during the freedom
leaders of Afghanistan. Its founder in Afghanistan, Burhanuddin Rabbani, who was a professor of theology at Kabul University, played an important role in resistance against Daoud’s secular orientation and questioned communist influence in the country.

In late 1961, Daoud’s government ordered for military mobilisation which brought the two states to the brink of a major war. Their relations reached at the lowest point, the possibility of a general war emerged from the military attacks and interventions, economic retaliations, and propaganda campaigns (Weinbaum 1994). Eventually Shah of Iran brokered a detente between the two countries in 1963 that held for ten years. Daoud resigned in 1963. On 28 May 1963, after a long twenty-two months disruption of transit they reached an agreement to recommence diplomatic, consular, and commercial ties. Following years, the Pakistani President Ayub Khan paid a visit to Kabul in 1964 and then again in 1966. Aslam Siddiqi, an official with Pakistan’s Bureau of National Reconstruction, made an argument in 1960 that “toward the West, Pakistan can have depth in defence” (1960: 53) and Iran and Afghanistan could provide ‘strategic depth’ in Islamabad’s defence against its main rival India.

Two weeks after Daoud’s resignation, King Zahir Shah formed a committee to write a new constitution. A new constitution had been written by the spring of 1964. The king convened a Loya Jirga a meeting of the members of the Supreme Court, the Senate, the National Assembly, and the constitutional commissions. On 20 September 1964, the new constitution was signed by 452 members of the Loya Jirga. Zahir Shah’s government tried to normalise ties with Islamabad by de-emphasising the Pashtunistan issue.

4.2.3 Mutual Intervention

In the early 1970s, Pakistan had an elected regime under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Initially, he had begun to share power with the provincial governments in the NWFP and Balochistan. Although within few months of the initiation of the “power-struggle. He wanted to make it an “Islamic state”. The organisation’s literature has been translated into many languages and “their arguments were particularly effective in mobilising Islamist networks in several countries” (Haqqani 2005: 171). The group highlighted the communist oppression in the world. It has been argued that the Muslim majority areas of the Central Asian region attracted towards this organisation. In the 1960s, this group has established strong ties with other Islamist organisations in most parts of the Muslim world. Afghanistan was among the states to receive Pashto and Persian translations of Maudui’s writings.
sharing arrangement”, he had received information from the ISI regarding National Awami Party’s (NAP) plan for a mutiny in Balochistan against the federal government.

The federal government sacked the NAP-led provincial government of Balochistan. NAP was banned and its leaders along with thousand of its followers were incarcerated. While the Pakhtun Nationalist Party in alliance with Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) under the leadership of Maulana Mufti Mehmud of JUI ruled in the NWFP resigned in protest. That had produced the armed resistance in parts of Balochistan and the NWFP. Pakistan has lost 3,300 hundred soldiers in this long counterinsurgency operation. Around 5,300 hundred Baloch people lost their lives. The Pakistani operation lasted for four years (Haqqani 2005). The domestic politics of Pakistan, however, took a dramatic turn.

4.2.4 Daoud’s Republic

The demise of the monarchy in Afghanistan in 1973 and the seizure of power by Sardar Mohammed Daoud Khan reignited Pakistan’s concerns and saw the revival of the Pashtunistan issue. He has assumed a hard-line approach on the Durand Line. The newly elected President Daoud, who harboured those leftist Baloch and Pashtun revolutionaries who in the 1970s were in conflict with Bhutto’s policies. He was supported by the Soviet-trained army officers. Daoud’s government had strongly supported the resistance movement.

He also grew very close to the Shah of Iran, a staunch western ally, receiving a ten year aid commitment from Iran worth $2 million. The gradual rise of the communists since the emergence of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1965 also alerted religious circles. Daoud’s government had started promoting the idea of Pashtunistan in Pakistan’s tribal lands in an effort to spark a crisis and spoil Afghanistan-Pakistan ties. Pakistan responded very tactically. In order to counter the Pashtun movement, Pakistan has supported some religious leaders of Afghanistan, who was against Daoud’s policies of modernisation and secular values. Some leaders were welcomed and harboured in Peshawar as well. This led a strong alliance between religious extremist and Pakistan (Khan 2007).
In 1973, the then inspector general of the Frontier Corps in the NWFP, Naseerullah Khan Babar, played a major role in organising and grooming anti-Daoud Afghan resistance forces. Therefore, they fought a low-intensity proxy war between 1973 and 1977. Daoud gave a substantial support and encourage Baloch insurgents in Pakistan, while Islamabad supported and sponsored the Afghan fundamentalists in Peshawar.

On 11 August 1974, Kabul has registered a strong objection in the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul about the alleged violate of country’s airspace by Pakistani aircrafts. In the same year, another major development triggered an exodus of Baloch refugees across the boundary into Qandahar. On 7 September 1974, Afghanistan’s government sent a letter to the General Secretary of the UNO condemning the Pakistani use of the military against the Balochi freedom fighters. They also requested the UNO to interfere in this matter. While on 1 October 1974, Islamabad has also sent a letter to the UNO rejecting Kabul’s claims and blames and accused Daoud of interfering in the internal matters of Pakistan. Again in December 1974, Pakistan sent another letter to the UNO and complained about Daoud’s interference in the internal matters of the country. The then Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Wahid Abdullah, in one of his interviews argued that the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier as “illegal and artificial” (Qassem 2009). This period saw a steep decline in their ties.

In the mid-1970s, Islamabad began to intervene directly in Afghanistan’s domestic affairs. When Daoud ordered to arrest rebels, they fled to Pakistan along with their key supporters. After Daoud’s coup, Islamabad received Afghan rebels. Among them, Abdul Rab Rasul, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Jalaluddin Haqqani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Yunus Khalis, Sayyaf, and Ahmed Shah Massoud were prominent. They have received extensive training and supplies from Pakistan. It has been estimated that Pakistan trained around 5,000 dissidents in secret army camps between 1973 and 1977.

It has been argued that the ISI, the USA Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the secret service of the Shah of Iran were running secret operation in Afghanistan, making the country a ground for the Cold War competitions and intrigue. As Selig Harrison argued, “As factionalism, corruption, and political uncertainty grew, externally backed forces began to jockey for position in preparation for the power struggle expected
to follow the elderly Daoud’s death” (1995: 15). Pakistan used religious sentiments that played a major role in Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet intervention and also meld the Pashtun tribe across the boundary.

The uprising against the Daoud regime occurred on 21 July 1975 in the Panjshir area north of Kabul. The rebellion was put down after a few days, and many of its supporters were captured. Daoud has directly accused Islamabad of fomenting the insurgency. The surviving rebels took sanctuary in Peshawar, where they were allowed to organise their disciples and open offices. In Pakistan, the radical Islamists enjoyed support from Bhutto’s regime, the religious parties, and the military. The Afghan rebels could also count on Saudi Arabian sources for money (Weinbaum 1994).

However, in 1975 Daoud’s government tried to normalise the relations with Pakistan because he wanted to reduce his dependence on the Soviet Union and the PDPA. In 1976, Afghanistan has witnessed drastic earthquakes and flooding which caused huge sufferings of the common masses. Pakistan seized the opportunity to show goodwill and sympathy towards the Afghan people. It sent a huge aid package to the Afghan people. The Afghanistan government welcomed it and proclaimed it as a positive step. They also invited the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto to visit Afghanistan.

Moreover, the friendly relations were continued under the Zia-ul-Haq regime. He brought a military coup and overthrew Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in July 1977. On 10 October 1977, he visited Afghanistan and held an effective negotiation with Daoud. The Pakistani President invited Daoud to visit Pakistan. On 4 March 1977, Daoud visited Pakistan. On his return to Kabul, he argued that “we fully understood each other’s points of view and realised the extent of our common destinies...We fully appreciate that in this unstable world our friendship and brotherhood constitutes a prerequisite to our two countries’ progress and prosperity” (Qassem 2009: 52). He laid crackdown on the PDPA leaders and workers. He also apprised Pashtun and Baloch insurgents from Pakistan that Kabul would no longer be their sanctuary (Haqqani 2005). Although the issue of Pashtunistan remained unsolved, that again engendered friendship and goodwill environment between the two countries.
On 27 April 1978, Daoud was killed in a military coup in collaboration with the PDPA. This brought PDPA in power and its main leader Noor Mohammed Taraki became Afghan President. On 30 April 1978, the Soviet Union became the first country to recognise the new regime in Afghanistan. However, he had also pursued the same policies. The USA began to worry about the communist regime in Afghanistan. Amin murdered Taraki and took power in November 1979 “riding roughshod over tradition and tribal and ethnic autonomy” (Blum 1995: 342).

Within few months after the new regime, over 30 major agreements were signed by Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. These agreements were worth more than the USA $14 billion. These were augmented by 25 more accords with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) states. The number of the Soviet advisors increased to seven hundred in June and two thousand in November 1979. The Soviet Union influenced significantly on the Afghan military forces, they took a vital part in the planning and implementation of the military and security operations (Qassem 2009).

On 5 April 1978, the then Afghan President Nour Mohammad Taraki and the Soviet Union leader Leonid Brezhnev signed a 20-year cooperation and friendship accord in Moscow. Article 4 of the accord stipulated that the parties “shall consult with each other and take by agreement appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence, and territorial integrity of the two countries” (cited in Millar 1984: 490). This accord has justified the Soviet Union’s occupation of Afghanistan in the subsequent years.

4.3 Major Challenges in Afghanistan-Pakistan Relationship Between 1947 and 1990

Many aspects were affected Afghanistan-Pakistan ties between 1947 and the late 1970s. Due to the acrimonious nature of their ties, border skirmishes took place, violent protests

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16 This was formed in 1949 and given the economic and political disarray at that time. It was headed by the Soviet Union. It comprises the states of the Eastern Bloc including Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. It has been argued that the Soviet Union’s intention was to dominate the smaller states in the region. However, the declared reason of this organisation was to facilitate associate states “to exchange economic experiences, extend technical aid to one another, and to render mutual assistance with respect to raw materials, foodstuffs, machines, equipment, etc” (Schiavone 1981: 51). It has been demised in 1991.
erupted, air strikes were carried out within Afghanistan, and there were threats of a major scale war. In addition, the promotion of Pashtun ethno-nationalism by Afghanistan was dominated theme between 1950 and the late 1970s. This has largely defined the shape of their relationship.

4.3.1 *The Durand Line and Pashtunistan Factor in Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations*

This section would study how and why did this Durand line come into existence? What role has it played in Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship? During the 19th century, the Soviet Union and British Empires fought for influence, power, and control in this region in what came to be known as the “Great Game” of proxy and espionage wars. Both the Empires had encountered ferocious struggle from Muslim tribes described by Arnold Toynbee, the British historian, as “anti-barbarian” (1954: 20).

In order to end the military confrontation with each other, the Empires recognised Afghanistan as a buffer state. In 1893, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan of Afghanistan and Mortimer Durand negotiated a partially 2,560 km long boundary, which came to be known as the Durand Line. This has divided the Pashtun tribe living in the region. The Pashtun population “on both sides of the Line, share an ancient and cultural identity dating back at least to the ‘Pakti’ kingdom mentioned writings of Herodotus and possibly earlier” (Harrison 1986: 285). They were divided between the NWFP and Balochistan. They didn’t even enjoy the status of a full province under the British raj. According to Jerry Roberts, “whether viewed from the perspective of regional economies, ethnography, or basic geography, the line seems illogical” (2003: 29).

The British established the boundary line in such areas they considered strategically vital to safeguard its Empire in the Indian subcontinent from any prospective Russian penetration. This has generated ant-British sentiments and reactions before the partition of the subcontinent, and, in later years, animosity directed towards Pakistan. This has also led to the emergence of the Pashtun movement in the region. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (known as “Frontier Gandhi”) led the movement and later his son Wali Khan. The British had rejected the demand of the creation of an independent state of “Pashtunistan” proposed by Abdul Gaffar Khan. The demand of independent state has
failed to generate international backing as well. They didn’t receive any support from the international community (Haqqani 2005).

British have persistently claimed that its agreements with Kabul remained legitimate for the legal successor country – Pakistan. However, Afghanistan renounced the Durand Line agreement with the British in 1944. Afghan government put a major claim to both Balochistan and the NWFP. It did extensive support and promotes the demand for independent Pashtunistan, made by the Pashtun nationalists of NWFP on the eve of the division of the subcontinent. The Pashtun people always tried to sustain cultural and ethnic unity across the boundary. Indeed, Daoud once argued 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” (cited in Khan 2000: 185).

4.2 The Durand Line

In July 1949, Afghanistan’s parliament had stated that, “it does not recognise that imaginary Durand or any similar line” (Griffiths 1981: 66-67). In addition, it had also rejected all the agreements of the 19th century, concluded them null and void. As Owen Bennett Joness has argued “Ever Since partition, Kabul has argued that the Durand Line was never meant to be an international boundary and has complained that it deprived Afghanistan of territory that historically has been under its control” (2002: 137). The boundary area between Pakistan and Afghanistan has remained problematic and controversial down to the present day. This dispute has poisoned their ties. It has remained a perennial factor in their relationship.

One of the leading scholars on the subject, Amin Saikal has argued that “having a common history, cultural and racial ties, the people and Government of Afghanistan want the Pashtunistan issue, a remnant of colonial days and which is the only political difference between Afghanistan and Pakistan” (2004: 171). He has added that to be solved this complex dispute through any peaceful means so that the inhabitants of this region “may be given the right to self-determination” (ibid). Due to their hostile relationship, the Soviet Union and India were hurriedly to enlarge their influence in Afghanistan. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 has considerably altered the nature and direction of the Pashtunistan movement. The intervention has provided a great opportunity to Pakistan to organise the Afghan rebel groups and assisted them to set up their headquarters in Peshawar.

However, the persistent increase in border skirmishes between Pakistan and Afghanistan prompted Karzai government to reiterate an old Afghan policy on 5 May 2013 that would never recognise the Durand Line. Immediately, Pakistan and the USA governments condemned the Afghan government’s stance (Saikal 2014). Overall, Islamabad was able to sustain the status quo on both the complicated issues, Pashtunistan and the Durand Line.

4.4 Phase Two: Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations, 1979-2001

This phase is divided into three sub-sections. The first offers specific influences of the era between 1979 and 1988. The second examines the period between 1988 and 1992. The
third section would examine the period between the demise of the communist government in 1992 and the overthrow of the Taliban rule in 2001.


On 24 December 1979, when the Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan, the nature of the regional politics completely altered. They sent around 7,5000 troops to replace Hafizullah Amin with Babrak Karmal. The occupation didn’t pose only a direct threat on Afghanistan and the sub-region but also to the whole region. Some scholars, commentators, and analysts have argued that the occupation as the climax of a long-held ambition of the Soviet Union to gain access to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf (Klass 1987).

The Soviet occupation altered the whole geopolitical situation in the region. This has brought dramatic changes in Afghanistan-Pakistan ties. It provided a huge opportunity for Islamabad to wage an “offensive policy” against the Soviet expansionism. The occupation posed serious challenges for Islamabad’s national security. So, the interests of Islamabad converged here. It was intensively involved in the Afghan war.

Given New Delhi’s close relationship with the Soviet and Afghanistan, and the troubled and strained relations of Islamabad and Kabul, Islamabad had an apprehension that the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan might prompt Afghanistan and India to coordinate plans for military operation against Pakistan. They were also apprehensive that Kabul and New Delhi might support Pashtun, Baloch, and Sindhi separatists in Pakistan (Ahady 1994). William Casey, the then CIA director, who explored Islamabad’s threat of the Indian peril:

I talked with Zia about the Soviets’ threat to Pakistan’s northern and southern borders but Zia was ambitious to protect his eastern (neighbouring India) border. He needed practical help and a guarantee against the Indian threat which we provided and used Pakistan as the pipeline for Afghan ‘Mujahedeen’ to erode Soviet power (cited in Schweizer 1996: 153).

Prior to the Soviet occupation, Afghanistan had appeared largely as a political irritant for Islamabad, an indignant, and a petulant neighbour. Pakistan had three major alternatives to response the Soviet invasion. These were as: First, to oppose the intervention verbally without getting engage in any fight; Second, to appease the Soviet
Union; and, Third, to reject the intervention and support the Afghan Jihad (Weinbaum 1994; Schweizer 1996).

For its security concerns, Pakistan chose the third option. This option dictated the geopolitical orientation of the region. Pakistan vehemently criticised the Soviet occupation. It became a front line state against the Soviet aggression and communist expansionism. It has also raised the issue on international forums as well as Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). The domestic, regional, and international considerations were largely influenced Pakistan’s decision to fight against the Soviet communism. The country has played a major role in the Soviet war and after the collapse of the Marxist government in Kabul. Before the Soviet occupation, Islamabad had “already effective Islamic radicals under its control which would lead the Jihad” (Rashid 2001: 85).

During this phase, Pakistan was deeply involved in Kabul’s internal affairs. It was, however, conditioned by various factors. These were included: First, the long-established hostility between these two states; a real fear of the Soviet control in Afghanistan; Second, the conservatism of Zia-ul-Ha’s government, who had promoted the idea of Jihad against the Soviet Union as a religious fight throughout the 1980s, thereby fostering revival and consolidation of the ideology of Jihadism; and, Third, in the 1970s and 1980s, new strategic concepts were developed by the Pakistan military, which were based on ‘strategic depth’ (Setas 2013).

Zia-ul-Haq, who was the main proponent of the USA-Pakistan cooperation, explicated his reasons and aspirations in collaborating with the USA in the following words: “Our main and prime objectives are to keep out the Soviet Union and Afghanistan in the north and to safeguard the safety and security of Pakistan from India in the east” (cited in Hilali 2002: 294). He also added that “Afghans are fighting the war for Pakistan. We must support them. American interest has been regenerated because of Afghanistan. Let us cash in on this” (cited in Hussain 2005: 115).

In the 1970s, Islamabad supported and encouraged Afghan Islamists, who belonged to the ‘Ikhwan’ and toiled for an Islamic revolt in the country. Pakistan approached to the USA and other western countries for money and other assistance.
However, at the time of the Soviet intervention, its diplomatic ties with the USA were at a low point. The occupation resumed the bilateral relationship between the USA and Pakistan. The Saudi Arabia and the USA were fully supported to Islamabad and became its main donors. It gave an opportunity for Pakistan to fortify its links with the USA, which allocated a total of over $7 billion in economic and military aid for Islamabad. The USA had also provided modernisation programmes included better communication and warning systems, tanks, armoured personnel carriers and anti-tank missiles.

Pakistan, however, had substantial reasons to fear the Soviet troops. The Soviet Union had been quite hostile to Pakistan for joining the USA security alliances in the 1950s. They had supported Islamabad’s rival India during the 1971 war and emerged as its main source of modern weapons and defence technology. In addition, it had three major interests. These included: First, complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan; Second, the right to “self-determination” for the Afghan people; and, Third, the dominance of the Islamist groups within the country and establish a foothold there to become an actor in deciding the country’s future.

So, the mujahedeen groups were invited religious radicals from other Muslim countries to fight the ‘infidels’. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), as well as parts of NWFP, harboured these fundamentalists, offered them training facilities, and became convenient launch pads for terror attacks. It has been estimated that between 1982 and 1992, 35,000 Muslim rebels from forty-three states came to Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight against the Soviet troops. In this process, Islamabad has channelled huge weapons and funds to diverse factions in Afghanistan, who were deemed friendlier.

There were seven major mujahedeen recognised groups in the country. These were: Hizbe Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar), Jamiat Islami (Burhanuddin Rabbani), Afghan National Liberation Front (Mujadidi), National Islamic Front (Gillani), Ittehad-e-Islami (Sayyaf), Islamic Revolutionary Movement (Nabi Muhammadi), and Hizbe Islami (Khalis). Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were the major beneficiaries of Pakistan support. Because “ISI officials seemed to be more impressed with the
frequent ruthlessness of Hekmatyar’s leaders than with the scope of their fighting or accomplishments against Soviet and Kabul government troops” (Weinbaum 1994: 34).

While the Soviet military approach for containment of mujahedeen fight in Afghanistan drew heavily on their accumulated experience in dealing with the fight in the Central Asian region during the 1920s and 1930s. It was involved: First, segregating the struggle from rest of the world by cutting supply line; Second, to eradicate the struggle through direct military operations and exterminate of its leaders; and, Third, depriving the local support of the struggle by implementing “scorched earth policies” leading to depopulation of the country (Bodansky 1987: 229-277).

Both the mujahedeen and the Soviet Union fought the war in a violent and nasty manner. In 1979, the Soviet Union bombed on the Herat city and did a huge damage. During the period, they used land mines between 5 million and 10 million throughout Afghanistan. Between 1979 and 1999 it is estimated that “400,000 Afghans were killed and around 400,000 injured from mine explosions” (Caldwell 2011).

The ISI and CIA have fully cooperated in supporting, coordinating, recruiting, training, and supporting the mujahedeen resistance against the Soviet troops. The USA has committed $4-5 billion between 1980 and 1992 to assist the mujahedeen groups. The total aid provided by the USA, Saudi Arabia and other states amounted more than $10 billion (Rashid 2001; Cooley 2002). However, Pakistan has witnessed a cash infusion into the state because of the war to the tune of the USA $ 3.2 billion over a period of six years (1981-87), and then another USA $4.02 billion after 1987 (Talbot 2005: 249). Islamabad became the fourth biggest recipient of the USA bilateral military aid in 1985, behind only Israel, Egypt and Turkey.

The Jihad slogans were a major tool to recruit, motivated, and committed fighters. The idea of Jihad was employed as an important strategy, and the land of the Pashtuns became a platform from which to wage a battle between capitalism and communism (Abbas 2014). On the border sides both states “maintained a balance of power tensions by paying off Pashtun tribes to retain their loyalties” (Rashid 2011: 313). Both the countries were economically linked at the same time. The ties between Afghanistan’s
eastern provinces and Pakistan’s NWFP were bound to remain. The people-to-people contacts also remained well during the era.

4.4.2 The Geneva Accords and Withdrawal of the Soviet Union

When the Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan, it again emerged into the international limelight and only faced a vicious Afghan “freedom struggle”. The Soviet Union withdrew in 1988 after an accord was signed at Geneva on 14 April 1988. The Accord is officially known as the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan. It involved four vital elements. These were included: First, non-interference and non-involvement in the domestic affairs of one another between Pakistan and Afghanistan; Second, a declaration by the USA and the Soviet Union governments as the guarantors of the Accord; Third, the return of the Afghan refugees from Pakistan; and, Fourth, “Accord on the interrelationships for the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan”, witnessed by the Soviet Union and the USA (Maley 1989: 12-25; Cordovez and Harrison 1995: 389-397). The mujahedeen groups had never been part of it. As a result, they rejected this and termed it “fraud” and “unacceptable”. However, most of the provisions in the Accord were never implemented.

On 15 February 1989, the last Red Army Units crossed the Termez Bridge from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan and ended the Afghan-Soviet war. The Soviet Union had been in this country for nine years and fifty days, which had resulted huge expenses for both the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. Mikhail Gorbachev has argued in his memoirs that:

If one recalls how many lives this war cost us, how many young people were crippled for life, and the loss and sufferings of the Afghan people, one can understand the explosion of hope that came from the promise to end this conflict that had brought shame on our nation (1995: 249).

It has been estimated that 14,453 Soviet troops died, 53,753 were injured, and 415,932 suffered serious illness. In 1990, the then Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Eduard Shevardnadze, has stated that the war had cost 60 billion Soviet rubles, equal to $96 billion (Caldwell 2011). The Afghan government from 1979 to 1986 under Babrak Karmal had received military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union, including one hundred thousand military troops.
In the 1980s, the nature of Afghan-Pakistan ties proffers an empirical substantiation of the Constructivist theory of International Politics, arguing that “ideational structures” are important as the “material structures” in elucidating the dynamics of world politics. However, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and china’s assistance fortified Pakistan’s strategic, economic, and military capabilities in the region; these in turn altered the “ideational structure” and “self-image” of the Pakistani leaders in ties to Kabul. They used Islamic slogans to wage a violent battle against the Soviet army and its communism. The objectives of Pakistan’s foreign policy became more ambitious. Its leaders became determined to dominate and influence Kabul to neutralise its irredentist claims and alter it into a friendly and supporter against main opponent India (Qassem 2009).

4.4.3 Second: From the Geneva Accord to the Demise of the PDPA Regime

Despite have the Geneva Accord, Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship witnessed little progress. Few months after the accord, Kabul had lodged more than eighty-five official protests against Islamabad’s violations of the agreement with the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP). Islamabad’s intervention and support to the mujahedeen factions didn’t stop. Pakistan persistently pursued same strategies and policies that denied any compromise between Najibullah’s regime and the mujahedeen factions. They wanted to install mujahedeen-led regime in Afghanistan that it assumed would be closely linked to Islamabad. Islamabad had used the mujahedeen political leadership to shape events in Afghanistan.

However, the domestic political changes in Pakistan didn’t usher any change in its policy towards Afghanistan. It has been argued that the post-Zia civilian regimes of Benazir and Nawaz Sharif “tended to follow the general parameters on Afghanistan laid down by the military. The Army retained the pivotal influence on the formulation of important domestic and Foreign Policy agendas” (Hussain 2005: 171). Pakistan has deep interests in Afghanistan. Once the Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan, Zia-ul-Haq has argued that “We have earned the right to have a friendly regime there”. He further said that “We took serious risks as a front-line state, and we will not permit a
return to the pre-war situation, marked by a large Indian and Soviet influence and Afghan claims on our own territory” (cited in Cordovez and Harrison 1995: 92; Coll 2005: 175).

Without the Soviet Union support, Najibullah has tried to strengthen his authority of the regime by resorting ethno-politics which eventually proved politically counter-productive. Most of the non-PDPA members were expelled. He declared state of emergence and suspended civil rights. In early 1992, he had re-shuffled some of the senior Uzbek and Tajik army commanders in Northern Province and replaced them with loyal Pashtun officials from adjacent Southern Province of Khost, Paktika, and Paktya. He tried to undermine the power of some generals, particularly Uzbek Lieutenant-General Abdul Rashid Dostum but they defied his authority. Ahmad Shah Massoud, who founded an Islamic civil-military organisation in the northeast, helped the rebel officers to fight against Najibullah’s regime (Qassem 2009).

In January 1987, Najibullah’s government has declared the Soviet-formulated policy of national reconciliation, which included power sharing arrangement in the national regime with other political parties, cease-fire, amnesty for thousands of political prisoners and official recognition of the local control exercised by field commanders of the resistance. The Loya Jirga had accepted the new constitution in November 1987 that altered the country’s name back to the Republic of Afghanistan. The constitution also provided elections to the parliament. However, it has argued that the new constitution was drafted by the Soviet advisers (Rubin 2002).

When the PDPA held its second congress in June 1990, it had changed its name to the Watan (Homeland) party. There it renounced socialism, Marxism, and one-party rule; and proclaimed support for democracy, Islam, and market economy. The Soviet Union continued its help to Najibullah’s regime including fuel, food, money and arms. In 1990, they supplied “54 military airplanes, 380 tanks, 865 armoured personnel carriers, 608 anti-aircrafts guns, 150 R-17 rocket launchers and thousands of tunnels of fuel” (Rubin 2002: 149). However, as the state experienced a rising fiscal crisis, ethnic and factional differences grew within the party and within the regime. In the post-Najibullah scenario, ethno-nationalism has emerged as a sever menace to Afghan unity.
Perez de Cuellar, the former Secretary General of the UNO, made an attempt in May 1991 to achieve a comprehensive political settlement in this country, but his efforts proved inadequate. A few months later the UNO and the Russians intensifying the pressure on Najibullah’s rule and on 18 March 1992 he agreed to step down.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops and demise of the Najibullah’s regime in 1992, the then Afghanistan’s President, Sibghatullah Mojaddeddi paid a visit to Islamabad and proclaimed that “the Durand Line is the official border between Pakistan and Afghanistan but unofficially there is no border between the two countries” (cited in Hilali 2002: 296). Karamatullah Mossa Qazi, who was then the Afghan Charge d’Affairs in Pakistan, also proclaimed that “the Pakhtunistan issue would never be raised with Pakistan because nation and country played an important role in the Afghan Jihad” (ibid).

The nature of Afghanistan-Pakistan ties was transformed ideationally and materially. Islamabad became hugely influential in Afghanistan. In addition, the demise of the Soviet Union gave rise to a “profitable ‘New Great Game’ of gas and oil to which Central Asia today is an even larger complex quagmire of competing interests” (Rashid 2001: 145). This has generated a competition among the main players such as the USA, China, and Russia; regional actors like Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran; and the Central Asian countries themselves (ibid).

4.4.4 Third: Civil War and the Taliban Regime

The phase would examine the civil war in Afghanistan and Islamabad’s role. It would study the impact of the ideational transformation of Pakistan’s leaders and military and their clientelist ties with the mujahedeen groups and the Taliban regime. Indeed, the mujahedeen groups ousted the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, but they totally failed to bring peace, security, stability, prosperity, and political reformations in the war-raged state. However, they were internally divided along religious, ethnic, and geographical locations. This has created hostilities among the mujahedeen groups.

In 1991, the major development in Afghanistan appeared with the coalition of non-Pashtun parties known as Shura-e-Nazar. This was dominated by the Tajik and Panjshiris leaders and rallied around Ahmad Massoud. However, Pakistan had
apprehension about this development because they saw it Iranian encouragement and as a potential-counter to the Islamabad-supported factions of Yunus Khalis and Hekmatyar. Pakistan viewed the coalition could potential challenge Pakistan’s interests. This prejudice led deterioration of Afghanistan-Pakistan ties and contributed to ethnic enmity in Afghanistan (Khan 2011).

After the disintegration of Soviet Union, the USA had turned its back on Islamabad, and abandoned Afghanistan, which had served the major interests of the West at a critical juncture in the Cold War era. Both the USA and Russia suspended military aid to their factions in Afghanistan at the end of 1991. Russia had also closed its shipments of fuel and food. Both the nations also proclaimed support for the establishment of the UNO-sponsored interim government that would replace Naibullah’s regime. By supporting various mujahedeen factions, including the Taliban, Islamabad has tried to redress its insecurity relative to Delhi, create a corridor for trade with newly CARs, and curb the Pashtun nationalism.

In 1992, Pakistan has played a substantial role in bringing Kabul out of the leadership vacuum. At that time, mujahedeen groups had their eyes on Kabul and there was a fearness of a cruel war. The struggle for power among the mujahedeen factions, particularly Ahmad Shah Massoud and Hekmatyar has started in early 1992. Pakistan negotiated among six mujahedeen groups and averted the tension in 1992. On 22 April 1992, these groups had signed the Peshawar Accord, which provided a framework for an interim government of mujahedeen. The groups agreed to form a Transnational Council headed by Sibghatullah Mojaddadi, including Massoud in to the government. At the same time, Pakistan has strengthened its footsteps in Afghanistan. They also advised those who remained outside to join the council.

The Pakistani government was in favour of this Accord and backed the militant factions based in Pakistan. The then Foreign Minister of Pakistan proclaimed full political and diplomatic assistance to the Transnational Council. Later on Pakistan’s Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has visited Kabul on an invitation by Mojaddadi. The Pakistani government supplied food to Kabul, and Nawaz Sharif pledged an aid package worth the USA $20 million.
However, as Soviet forces withdrew, Afghan civil war escalated. The withdrawal has diminished the military pressure on the militant groups. They failed to develop an agreeable power-sharing arrangement that led to a bizarre crisis. The country plunged into a prolonged civil war in which millions of Afghans died or were uprooted and took refuge in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. The country became more fragmented and divided internally. Almost, every town and city came under the control of a local warlord. This in turn incited people to incline towards their particular religious and ethnic identities. It became a major impediment for good governance and normalcy in Afghanistan. The country has never been a peaceful throughout its existence because of trans-ethnic population, geopolitical location, and rivalry among its neighbours.

Afghanistan was effectively fragmented without a central legitimate authority. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan made several endeavours to bring about the cessation of animosities among the mujahedeen groups. In March 1993, the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif invited Rabbani and Hekmatyar factions to Islamabad for talks. Though this led to a new accord, in which Hekmatyar, who was left out of any office in the Geneva Accord, was designated as new Prime Minister of the country. The tenure of President Rabbani’s was extended by eighteenth month in this new accord. The other popular rebel Massoud was given defence portfolio.

Saudi Arabia invited all the Afghan leaders to gather at Ka’aba Mecca for a solemn oath. There, on the holy Quran, they committed themselves to reconciliation, peace, and welfare of Afghanistan. The Islamabad Accord reads that the president and the prime minister were to decide the cabinet in consultation with each other and other mujahedeen leaders. Hekmatyar’s objection to Massoud’s keeping the defence minister’s portfolio became a point of contestation. This led to the breakdown of the Islamabad accord. The hostility continued after the internal fight. The country remained divided, ungoverned and mired in conflict. The Hekmatyar-Massoud rivalry presaged the ethnic division between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns (Khan 2011).

Hekmatyar has proclaimed that the new regime was not a real mujahedeen government, but a vehicle for the power-sharing arrangement with communists. He continued to be supported by Islamabad and was well connected with the top layers of
Pakistan’s intelligence and military officials. Between May and August 1992, he had bombarded Kabul with missiles. According to the UNO, during the period over 18,000 civilians were killed. Thousands of people got injured. Food materials in Kabul were becoming scarce, shops were closed and thousands of people were fleeing the devastated city in all directions. At the end of the year, around 5,000 people died (Rubbin 1995).

In the late 1993, Pakistan has showed little interest towards Afghanistan because of an indigenous agitation in Kashmir. The Kashmiri movement had turned very brutal in reaction to early mishandling of the situation by the Indian authorities. In the mid-1990s, the violence reached at climax, actively assisted by militant elements from the Pakistan side. For Benazir, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, “it carried for greater relevance than the seemingly intractable internecine strife in Afghanistan” (Khan 2011: 51). At the time, there was no major move by the Pakistani officials to push for reconciliation inside Afghanistan or a cessation to animosities to bring about a cease-fire.

The abysmal failure of the militant factions to bring peace, prosperity, stability to this war-ravaged country and lost a major opportunity to rebuild the state. As Afghanistan was ignored by the USA and those who had supported Afghan Jihad against the Soviet intervention in the country, the outcome was the worst form of bloodshed among the militant factions. This has led to the emergence of a movement known as the Taliban, a Pashtun organisation.

4.4.5 *The Rise and Demise of the Taliban*

Taliban (a plural of Talib, a student, literally means “seekers of knowledge”) with rudimentary Islamic credentials, were products of local Deobandi madrasas located in the NWFP and other provinces of Pakistan, especially after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. They are ethnic Pashtuns followers of the Sunni version of Islam. A large number of them had fought against the Soviet Union. They were quite familiar with the use of weapons including missiles and tanks. The jihad in Afghanistan had provided the environment for the growth of madrasas in NWFP and its adjoining areas. Afghan youths, who were refugees in Pakistan, grew up receiving education supported by Muslim charities, particularly by Gulf countries. During the 1980s, President Zia’s policy
of Islamisation had grown thousands of new madrasas in the country. They welcomed Afghan students (Khan 2011). Their influence throughout Pakistan augmented proportionately. The education they had received in madrasas based on rigid, narrow, and orthodox interpretation of Islam. It has been argued that the most people in the Taliban belonged to areas that were underdeveloped and mistreated by the state.

By the mid-1990s, discontent was on the rise throughout Afghanistan, but Helmand and Qandahar areas were tormented the most because these areas were not controlled by any major warlord who could maintain any resemblance of stability and order. These two areas became the venue for the emergence of the Taliban movement. Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, a close friend of Mullah Mohammad Umar, has argued that the decision to launch the Taliban movement was made at a meeting in a mosque in 1994. It was held under the leadership of Mullah Abdul Rauf Akhund, a well-known Taliban commander in the early days. It was attended by 33 colleagues. The meeting decided to “seek the support of other Mujahedeen and Taliban and together with them we would clear the streets of the rouge commanders and checkpoints” (Zaeef 2010: 62). They choose Mullah Umar as the leader of the Taliban. He took leadership at a time when disorder, disillusionment, and violence had overtaken Afghanistan. He had played a significant role in Qandahar in cleaning up the disorder created by the local warlords. He had received the title of Amir-Ul-Momineen (Commander of the faithful).

In October 1994, they captured Spin Boldak in southern Afghanistan and a month later over Qandahar. Within two years, they had controlled most parts of Afghanistan. The local people encouraged and supported them and greeted the new leaders, who appeared to bring stability, peace, and prosperity to the state. The USA had also welcomed the Taliban as the “third force”, hoping for a return of normalcy in this country (Musharraf 2006: 211). They viewed it as anti-Iranian and as “cleansing traditional force that would unite Pashtuns and create a new basis for peace” (Coll 2005: 299). The rise of the Taliban provided hope of an enhancement in security. The ISI began supporting and encouraging the new ascendant group. For Pakistan, various economic and geopolitical factors were also involved. Islamabad’s was seeking to enlarge its trade links with the
CARs. For that it needed the road link through Afghanistan. It has been argued that the stability in Afghanistan was very much in Islamabad’s economic interests.

4.4.6 Expansion of the Taliban Control

Soon after taking control of Qandahar in 1994, they scored a series of significant victories and swept through Paktia, Zabul, Uruzgan, and Paktika, where they met little confrontation. They undermined Hekmatyar’s party and he was forced to flee east. They have received tremendous support from Pakistan. Thousands of madrasas students from the NWFP and its adjoined areas joined the Taliban ranks. They built a nexus with another militant organisation, i.e., Al-Qaeda to strengthen its grip on the authority and influence and overcome the opposition factions particularly the Northern Alliances.

They evicted some areas of Kabul in 1995. Kabul had been under the tenuous control of Ahmad Shah Massoud and was the scene of a ferocious rivalry engaging forces of Abdul Rashid Dostum, Gulbuddin, Hazaras under Mazari and Massoud. Massoud, however, made an alliance with the Taliban. In defending Herat in 1995, the Taliban found allies in the notorious warlord Karim Khalili of the Shia Hizb-e-Wahdat and Rashid Dostum. The resistance became severe only when the Taliban entered into non-Pashtun areas, where they faced hard fight and even armed reversals. In September 1996, the Taliban captured Hekmatyar’s last-remaining arms depots and occupied Jalalabad, which also had a large supply of weapons (Barfield 2010; Khan 2011; Abbas 2014).

Several major events had occurred in Afghanistan by the end of 1996. These included: First, the Taliban controlled Kabul and 70 percent of Afghanistan; Second, Osam Bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan and formed his Al Qaeda training camps; and, Third, Massoud broke the alliance and retreated to his native Panjshir Valley. After that he became the main leader of the Northern Alliance group. The country was divided into two jurisdictions; the Taliban recognised by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan; and the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA) recognised by the UNO and supported by India, Russia, Iran, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This division has entailed fundamental structural changes to the basic character of the Afghan polity.
So, the Taliban formed a new government in Kabul, led by Mullah Rabbani as president and as head of a six-member interim shura. It was entirely dominated by mullahs. The Shura implemented a callous account of Sharia Law that was already implemented in the Taliban-controlled areas and sought international recognition. They claimed to eliminate linguistic, regional, and racial discriminations. They stated that their objectives included the set up of ‘pure Islamic state’, enforcement of the Sharia Laws, enforcement of the hijab (veil) for women, appointment of pious Muslims to government jobs, altering the school system to certify that students be filled with knowledge of Quran and Sunnah, and formation of a spiritual Amir bil Maroof wa Nahi al Munkir (promote virtue, forbid vice) and police (Khan 2011). They enforced a ban to all types of entertainment, music and trimmed birds. They didn’t allow women in public places, implemented a harsh code of hijab, barred their education, and seclusion.

Slaughter of civilians, extensive repression of various ethnic factions, scorched-earth policies, encouraging the drug mafia and courting several violent organisations could hardly point to the existence of stability, prosperity, and peace. Thomas Barfield has explained quite succinctly: “Taliban religious ideology was a crude mixture of Salafi Islam and Pashtunwali, the cultural code of the Pashtuns. Their religious interpretations were often idiosyncratic and tend to dress local custom in the guise of religion” (2010: 261). He has further argued that they were antagonistic “to Sufism as well as the veneration of saints and shrines – elements that were deeply embedded in the popular Islam of Afghanistan” (ibid).

In 1994, the then Interior Minister of Pakistan Naseerullah Khan Babar argued that the Taliban were our boys, which became the foundation for the major claim that the Taliban were the creation of Pakistan. The ISI certainly helped the Taliban to built alliances that were significant for its survival and growth. In addition, the ISI instructed the provincial governments of the NWPF and Balochistan to certify that no anti-Taliban activities were allowed in their regions. Pakistan played a substantial role to shut up those who spoke out and denounced this dangerous game. The real extent of Islamabad’s help for the Taliban movement can be measured from a declassified the USA secret document on 16 January 1997. It reads: “Pakistan aid to the Taliban is more significant and
probably less malign than most imagine” (Abbas 2014: 68). Indeed, Pakistan’s diplomatic and political help was significant. They also play an “overbearing role in planning and even executing Taliban political and diplomatic initiatives” (ibid). It has been argued that without Islamabad’s support the movement couldn’t have survived.

The Taliban-led government in Afghanistan provided ‘strategic depth’ for Pakistan in case of competition with its main opponent India. During that time, India was denied access. Islamabad had also benefitted militant camps in the country that trained rebels for Kashmir. The country was also able to reverse the major concern of Pashtunistan and neutralise the risks emerging from the western border. Only three countries – the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia – formed diplomatic ties with the Taliban regime. Though Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had severed relations very soon mainly because of the Osama issue. This put the regime in a complex position because its stability as a state remained heavily dependent on foreign donors. Now it reduced largely on Pakistan.

4.5 Phase Third: Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations, 2001-Present

This section would study complex relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan since c. 2001. It would also study the major factors that impact on their relations.

4.5.1 Changes Triggered by the September 2001 Attacks

The terror attacks on 11 September 2001 had radically altered the political landscape of the world. It has altered international sentiments as well. Terrorism has emerged as a great menace to international security and peace. The terror incidents had also deteriorated the security environment of the sub-region. This has proved to be a turning point for Afghanistan. The Taliban regime denied to handover Osma Bin Laden to the USA. The regime was overthrown as a result of the USA-led NATO attacks in October 2001. In November 2001, the Taliban regime completely collapsed. In December 2001, a new interim government was formed under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. This was included many Afghan factions in a power-sharing arrangement.
This has sent convulsion effects on Afghanistan-Pakistan ties. Although this incident has provided a great opportunity to both the states to reconsider their policies to each other and to renew their diplomatic and political relation. On 13 September 2001, the then USA’s Secretary of State Colin Powell has conveyed a list of seven demands to Musharraf. The major points asked Islamabad’s consent for logistical assistance, such as “blanket over flight and landing rights”; “territorial access”, including “use of ports, air bases, and strategic locations on the borders” to conduct army actions against “perpetrators of terrorism and those who harbor them”; “the use of Pakistani airspace for possible military” operation inside Afghanistan; “intelligence sharing”; “agreement to cut off all fuel supplies to the Taliban” and interdict recruits and supplies that could assist the Taliban’s offensive capability (Musharraf 2006: 204-5; Khan 2011).

On 14 September 2001, Musharraf had corps commanders’ meeting to discuss the situation and the USA demand. Soon after the meeting, he has proclaimed Islamabad’s acceptance of all the seven demands and Pakistan would “expand full cooperation to the international community in its fight against terrorism without involving its forces in any action beyond its geographical boundaries” (Fani 2005: 55). Pakistan did a U-turn on its policy towards Afghanistan. Islamabad has joined the USA-led NATO forces against its former friend, the Taliban, to protect its national interest. This decision marked a paradigm shift in Pakistan’s policy towards the Taliban in post-September 2001 era.

In his endeavor to take the country into confidence, President Pervez Musharraf has spelled out Islamabad’s four major anxieties that had significantly contributed towards the “policy formulation” at that critical stage of Pakistan’s history. These were: First, the issue of Kashmir; Second, country’s security; Third, renewal of the country’s economy; and, Fourth, protect of strategic nuclear and missile assets. In addition, Islamabad did the cooperation for economic, political, and strategic gains. Its immediate goal was to evacuate its intelligence and military personnel from the northern provinces of Afghanistan.
4.5.2 *The Bonn Agreement*

Soon after the end of the Taliban rule, an interim government was set up under the Bonn Agreement - a roadmap for democracy, stability, and peace in Afghanistan - which was signed by twenty-two notably Afghans on 5 December 2001 at Bonn, Germany. It was formed for an initial period of six months under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. The agreement was also stipulated that a provisional government appointed by a Loya Jirga would take over for two years, during which a new constitution would be written. It was to appoint a Transitional Authority and a constitutional Jirga to prepare the constitution and to hold free and fair elections within two years. External interferences and interventions and the absence of independent state set up has deprived the powers of the Jirga. It has formed Hamid Karzai as the head of the state for another two years.

The agreement gave sweeping authority to the UNO to guide the interim council. It also called for establishing the UNO-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)\(^ {17} \) to assist the new government to take the process forward. On 7 December 2001, the Security Council endorsed the Bonn Agreement. The UNO Security Council also set up United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in March 2002 to assist the Bonn process. The major objectives of this resolution were included: First, it was formed to provide strategic and political advice for the enforcement of the process; Second, to promote human rights and recovery and reconstruction efforts; and, Third, to assist to formulate a development strategy and a drug-control strategy.

It was unfolded according to the prescribed timelines. In June 2002, the former King convened and inaugurated the Loya Jirga. It met after 23 years in pursuance of the Bonn Agreement. With the approval of the new constitution, the Afghan people were allowed to take participation in the parliamentary polls. On 4 November 2003, the new constitution was unveiled for public comments and in January 2004 it was approved by

\(^{17}\) On 20 December 2001, the UN Security Council Resolution authorised the set up ISAF for the war-torn country Afghanistan. It was consisted mainly of USA and NATO personnel, with some Australians. It was the first NATO mission outside the European theatre. Originally, its fundamental role was to assist the Afghan interim government by maintaining effective security and stability in and around the Afghan capital, Kabul and develop new Afghan security personnel to protect Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorist organisation. After few months, its role has been expanded to cover the whole country.
Loya Jirga. In October 2004, elections for the president were held as scheduled, with Hamid Karzai sweeping 21 of the 34 provinces. He was nominated to head the transitional arrangement. Holding of parliamentary polls was one of the fundamental provisions of the Bonn Agreement (Khan 2011).

For its part, Islamabad had no option but to acquiesce in the Bonn decisions. Musharraf formally welcomed the agreement and the Bonn process. It has been argued that Pakistan was deeply concerned over Pashtun under-representation and Northern Alliance dominance in the new administration in Kabul. The Pashtuns in Pakistan were passionately speaking against the interim government and considered Karzai as an American puppet. Some of the members of the Karzai government heavily criticised Pakistan’s role in the USA-led NATO “War on Terror” and accuse Islamabad of interfering in internal matters of Afghanistan.

On the ground, Afghanistan remained fragmented and under the control of warlords. Central control is also weak. September 2005 saw the formal end of the Bonn process with the completion of the provincial and parliamentary elections, but Afghanistan was far from being stable. In south and southeast Afghanistan, several areas are disturbed and worried with gradual rebirth of the Taliban and their insurgent activities. They are also operated from across the border areas of Pakistan, where they enjoyed support and sympathy. The USA NATO-led intervention in Afghanistan pushed the Taliban and Al Qaeda elements into these areas. The security situation in Afghanistan has started to deteriorate since 2005. Islamabad has blamed the failure of the reconciliation process in Afghanistan. It has also proclaimed that the country became the victim of this unsettled situation in Afghanistan (Khan 2011).

Afghanistan and Pakistan have been engaged in regular diplomatic talks since the interim council was created in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s ties with the Hamid Karzai’s government have generally been cordial. Islamabad has rehabilitated the Torkham-Jalalabad road, and contributed $100 million dollars towards Afghan reconstruction, soon after President Karzai took over. It has been estimated that one million Afghan refugees continue to live in Pakistan, and many more have poured into Pakistan (Zaidi 2006).
In February 2002, the then Afghan President Hamid Karzai paid an official trip to Pakistan. The trip was important as it laid the foundation of revitalised bilateral ties between the two countries. In April 2002, the then Pakistani President Musharraf visited Kabul. During his visit, he has announced $100 aid to Afghanistan to meet the challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction in this war-torn country. President Karzai sought Islamabad’s assistance for the peaceful conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2004 and September 2005 respectively. There was an apprehension of sever threats across the border to interrupt the election process. Islamabad has assured Kabul of its full cooperation to peacekeeping in the country. It has also deployed around 80,000 military personnel along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Soon after the completion of the presidential elections, Musharraf became the first head of the country to visited Kabul.

The bitter exchanges and mutual recreations persistently spoil the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the last years of Pervez Musharraf also saw the heightened militant activity by Pakistan-based fundamentalists, the Tehrik-i- Taliban Pakistan18, Al Qaeda and local militants, who have been challenging writ of the government since 2004, targeting the army and pro-government personnel in the FATA region (ibid). When Pakistan faced harsh criticisms in the western media in 2005 and 2006, its officials believed that the Kabul government was planting these stories to malign Pakistan’s image. In July 2005, the then Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz visited Afghanistan. In a joint conference, Afghan President Hamid Karzai spoke how infiltrators from Pakistan come to Afghanistan to torch and demolish schools, and deprive Afghan children of education. Since 2005, there were significant rise in suicide bombings inside Afghanistan that indicated revival of the extremist faction in the country.

18 It was formed in December 2007. Its major objectives included: First, enforce Sharia law; Second, close down all the checkpoints in FATA and ceased army actions in Swat and Waziristan; Third, unite against the USA-led NATO army in Afghanistan and wage a defensive Jihad against the Pakistani military; release Abdul Aziz, who was Lal Masjid cleric; and, no more negotiations with the government on any future peace deals (see Abbas 2014).
4.5.3 The Idea of the Grand Joint Jirga

On 30 September 2006, the then USA President George W. Bush tried to reduce the tension by inviting the two presidents. Karzai blamed Islamabad for providing sanctuary to the insurgent groups and asked the international community to act, while Musharraf targeted the Afghan government for failing to improve security and stability within the country and trying to throw the blame onto Pakistan. Although Karzai proposed the idea of joint grand Jirga and Musharraf agreed on it. They also agreed that the first session of the grand Jirga would be held in Kabul and the second in Islamabad, and both sessions were to be attended by the two presidents.

The grand Jirga started taking shape in early in 2007. The rationale was to improve the bilateral relations and to fight the forces of terrorism and extremism that affects both the countries. It convened on 9-12 August 2007, with over five hundred members from each side gathered. From Pakistan the representation was mostly from NWFP. Instead of Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz co-chaired the inauguration session with Karzai. They decided to constitute a permanent smaller Jirga of fifty members, twenty-five from each side, to “pursue a process of dialogue for peace and reconciliation with the opponents (mukhalifeen)” (Khan 2011: 133).

The idea of the grand Jirga was thrown into limbo, particularly because of the most Pakistani members of the commission and the ruling party lost the February 2008 elections. It was followed by Musharraf’s resignation in August (ibid). Hamid Karzai met Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad on the morning of her assassination and proclaimed that Afghanistan and Pakistan could effectively confront the challenges of terrorism and extremism through joint efforts.

Though the commission didn’t prevent the terrorist activities and avert other issues. Since then on, the crisis is deepening in Afghanistan. Poor governance of Karzai and his successors were also a major factor in giving a new lease of life to the extremist elements. The Taliban and other groups have indeed benefited largely from the limited presence of the NATO personnel in rural Afghanistan, particularly in the Pashtun dominated regions before 2007 (Abbas 2014).
During the Musharraf’s rule, the major political priorities of Islamabad’s policy towards Afghanistan were included: First, achieving peace, stability, and security in the Afghan-Pakistan border regions; Second, ensuring fair political representation of Pashtuns in the Afghan government, Third, ensuring that the land of Afghanistan was not used to fuel insecurity and insurgency in NWFP and Balochistan; and, Fourth, securing Islamabad’s ambitions vis-à-vis Delhi’s increasing military, economics and political interests in Afghanistan.

4.5.4  Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations Post-2008

The change of regime in Pakistan in 2008 ushered in a thaw in relationship between the two states. Afghanistan has professed friendship with Islamabad, but continuously accuses Islamabad of supporting and encouraging extremist elements in Afghanistan. However, the thaw in their relationship remains superficial. Their ties had seen another blow of renewed violence. The formation of TTP in Pakistan, the Taliban revival and rising of insurgency in both the countries have again generated tensions and concerns between the two nations. Violations of borders and incursion by the USA-led NATO forces and Afghan army, cross-border attacks by the TTP further deteriorated their relations. They are accusing each other of interfering in their internal affairs. From 2007 to 2012, around 261 border violations were reported. The year 2013 saw dramatic rise of cross-border terror incidents. It has been reported that around 732 attacks were carried by the extremists in 2013.

In December 2008, the former President of the USA Barack Obama has argued that “We can’t continue to look at Afghanistan in isolation. We have to see it as part of a regional problem that includes Pakistan, includes India, includes Kashmir, includes Iran” (cited in Jaffrelot 2016: 233). He has also chosen the veteran diplomat Richard Holbrooke as a special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. On 29 March 2009, he has unveiled his “Af-Pak” strategy. The major objective of this strategy was also included to eliminate Taliban and its extremist allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to make this region a peaceful and stabile. The Obama administration has carried a violent struggle against the Taliban and its allies to ensure security, peace, and economic development in
the country. Though they have been unable to control the insurgency and the Taliban and its allies have continued to inflict damage using destructive weapons. Under international pressure and rising terrorist elements within Pakistan, on 7 May 2009 the then Pakistani Prime Minister ordered the army to take action against the terrorists in Swat Valley and its adjoining areas.

In September 2010, the former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai has established a High Peace Council to embark on talks with the Taliban. In June 2011, both he and the then USA Defence Secretary Robert Gates have divulged that opening talks had begun. However, Islamabad has disapproval the peace process and claimed that it was not part in the early efforts. Pakistan was very critical of this initiative. Consequently, the death of 24 Pakistani troops in Salala in late November led it to withdraw from the December 2011 Bonn Conference. There relations reached again at the lowest point.

In order to reduce the tension and repair the bilateral relationship, the former army General Ashfaq Kayani visited Afghanistan in November 2012 to sign an accord to enhance border security. On 5 February 2013, both the states agreed to a structured interaction, establishing a hotline between their respective intelligence and military departments. This has seen as a positive development for both countries future.

4.5.6 Afghanistan-Pakistan Relationship Post-2014

The chance of improved their relationship took place in September 2014 when Ashraf Ghani became the Afghanistan’s President. In order to ease the tension, the then Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain has attended the oath taking ceremony of the new Afghan President. Ashraf Ghani has exemplified sturdy commitment to friendly ties between the two neighbours. His visit to Pakistan in November 2014 guaranteed close relations and strong bilateral ties between the two countries. He has adopted rapprochement policy towards Islamabad. He thought that peace as the major prerequisite to bringing economic and political stability in Afghanistan, which he considered was not feasible without building strong ties with Islamabad.
On 15 June 2014, Pakistan has launched a military operation Zarb-e-Azab (Sharp and Cutting Strike) on the rash of terrorist groups in North Waziristan along Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The then Lt. General Asif Bajwa has said that around 3,500 terrorists had been killed in the operation. From Pakistan’s side, it is doing much to deal with the terrorist groups. But from Afghanistan’s perspective, Pakistan doesn’t deal strictly with the terrorist groups that find safe heaven within its borders. The Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has said in August 2015 that “Pakistan still remains a venue and ground for gatherings from which mercenaries send us messages of war” (Putz 2016). In April 2016, he again reiterated that the terrorists who carried terror attacks in Afghanistan “are being hosted and aided from the territory of Pakistan” (ibid). Both the countries blamed one another. This conundrum is persistent to cause rifts between the two nations and averts peace, stability, progress, and security in the region.

The USA-led NATO forces expressed its intention to end military resistance at the end of 2014 and withdrawal military from Afghanistan by the end of 2016. This has again provided more challenges and opportunities for Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. Since 2014, both countries have shifted their approaches towards each other. On his two-day visit in Pakistan, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has said on 15 November 2014 in Islamabad that the “partnership with Pakistan is an important pillar of Afghanistan’s foreign policy” (The Dawn, 15 November 2014: 1). He further added that “Pakistan and Afghanistan have overcome obstacles of 13 years in three days” (ibid).

They have renewed their bilateral cooperation and added that both nations desired stability, peace and security. Pakistan reacted very diplomatically. Nawaz Sharif has argued that since the new government came into power in Afghanistan “relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been undergoing qualitative transformation” (Syed 2016: 1). He has further argued that both states “recognise the historic opportunity to work together and build a stronger relationship based on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, marked by mutual trust, understanding and close cooperation” (ibid). On 16 November 2014, both states “re-affirmed their resolve at the highest level to transform bilateral ties and build a relationship marked by close cooperation on the political and security planes and a strong economic foundation” (ibid).
On 29 December 2014, an Afghan delegation of sixteen officials visited Pakistan. They met Pakistani delegation including Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad. Both sides have showed strong commitment to root out radical and terror elements and enhanced bilateral cooperation on various fields. The development in their relationship resulted in an unprecedented augment of military to military cooperation between the two states. Pakistan has received six Afghan military cadets to give them extensive training in Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) at Kakul.

The Pakistani Military General Raheel Sharif has visited Afghanistan in February 2015, where he met Afghan civil and military leaders. Both the states agreed to encourage and support to each other in the fight against terrorism and “not to allow the use of their own respective soil against each other” (Maqsood 2016: 2). In July 2015, peace talks were also held between the Afghan government and Taliban after consistent attempts by Pakistan. These talks were regarded as a main breakthrough for building confidence between the two sides. This gave a new hope of resolving the issues and concerns between the two sides. The Chinese and the USA officials attended the talks as observers. Both Afghan and Pakistani officials informed that the talks were initiated in a positive and cordial atmosphere. They agreed upon meeting again.

In May 2015, a memorandum of understanding was signed in Kabul between the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) and ISI for cooperation in counter-terrorism operations. Major General Asim Bajwa has said: “MoU signed by ISI and NDS includes intelligence sharing, complementary and coordinated intel operations on respective sides” (Syed 2015: 1). This has received harsh criticisms in Afghanistan. The former President Hamid Karzai publicly accused Ghani’s government of treason for signing this intelligence accord.

Moreover, Nawaz Sharif and Ashraf Ghani met at the sidelines of the Paris Climate Change Conference in November 2015. The Pakistani Prime Minister has invited Ashraf Ghani to visit Pakistan to attend the Heart of Asia Conference. He has expressed firm resolve to work with Islamabad and enhance peaceful ties. In December 2015, he visited Islamabad to attend the fifth Heart of Asia Conference. This has been regarded as
a major development towards enhancing relations between the two states. A Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG)\textsuperscript{19} was also announced at the sidelines of the conference, involving Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the USA. The conference gave Afghanistan and Pakistan a new opportunity to resolve their issues and differences.

However, the current situations in both the countries are worse than it has been since 2001. There was a positive atmosphere of friendly and trust-building ties between the two sides until the death of Mullah Omar in July 2015. This has not only derailed the peace process between the Taliban and the Afghan government, but also prompted the Taliban to increase their terror attacks in “Af-Pak” region.

On 4 December 2016, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani not only harshly criticised Islamabad but also rejected its aid of $500 million at the Sixth Heart of Asia Conference in Amritsar, India. He has argued that “We thank Pakistan for their pledges of USD 500 million for reconstruction of Afghanistan. This fund Mr Aziz could very well be used to contain extremists because without peace any amount of assistance will not meet the needs of our people” (The Indian Express, 4 December 2016). The situation in both the nations is very complex and uncertain.

The mutual pledges made by them, including prevent interfering in each other’s internal affairs, and enhancing border security and counter-terrorism efforts, couldn’t be fully realised. The major reasons for this: escalating Taliban attacks after the death of Mullah Omar. The Ghani’s policy of peace and reconciliation with the Taliban and Islamabad has failed. The Karzai government also did a major mistake that they never took serious steps to negotiations with the Taliban and its allies. The increasing terror attacks in both the countries make the condition worse in the region. The Taliban resistance has intensified in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, militancy has increased largely. So

\textsuperscript{19}This group opened a new chapter in the ongoing search for stability, peace, and progress for Afghanistan. On 11 January 2016, the first meeting of this group was held in Islamabad. The major objective of this meeting was to bring again the Afghan Taliban on the negotiation table to end a long war in the country. Their second meeting was held in Kabul on 18 January 2016. The third meeting was held in Islamabad on 6 February 2016. The fourth meeting was held on 23 February at Kabul. On 18 May 2016, the fifth meeting was held in Islamabad, they reiterated that peace talks remain the only viable alternative for peaceful settlement. They also reiterated to use their respective influences and leverages. This group has failed to resolve the issues and improve the condition in Afghanistan. They also failed to bring the Taliban on the negotiating table. The Taliban publicly denied taking any participation in the peace talks.
in both countries, extremist elements have increased, including attacks and suicide bombings on the state apparatus. Over the years, the border has proved the major source of friction between the two neighbours. Recently, they have also closed the borders as well.

In addition, the Afghan approach titled The Peace Process Roadmap to 2015 emphasised an “Afghan-led” and “Afghan-owned” process that would guarantee the freedoms and liberties of all Afghans. However, the Afghan government is frequently failing to provide progress in justice, police, governance, and so on and so forth. The people in affected areas do not become attached to the regime. They have become increasingly disconnected and alienated from the government. So, there is a growing distance between the people and the government. So, corruption, drug-trafficking, poverty, ethnic-conflict are serious obstructions to development and peace in Afghanistan.

4.6 Challenges in Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations

Apart from the Durand Line and Pashtunistan issue, there are several other problems persistently to embitter their relationship. These are:

4.6.1 Terrorism and Cross-Border Infiltration

The cross-border infiltration and terrorism became a major concern for policy matters between the two states. Since Islamabad has proclaimed its help to the USA-led NATO forces against “War on Terror”, the country has faced an increase in terrorist activities within its own territory. Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents had crossed the border and harboured in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The Pakistan government has launched an army operation to hunt them down. However, the operation caused extensive anger among the militant groups, and, as a result, violent activities increased. This has led to a volatile situation in the region. Bomb blasts, shelling, and firing incidents are routine in the “Af-Pak” region. Their relations have been gradually improving, but the element of uncertainty still exists as the security situation along the border remains fragile.
In 2003, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the USA have set up a Tripartite Commission to curb the terrorist threats. Originally, it was composed of military officers of these three states. It seeks to promote better understanding about the security situation in Afghanistan, particularly, in the realm of border security. The major goal of this Commission was to build confidence between Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, it has also faced severe challenges. The Commission has failed to reduce discord between the two states. It has also failed to diminish the terrorist activities and any contribution towards stability and peace in the region.

4.6.2 Opium Production and Drug Trafficking

Afghanistan’s drug industry poses a major threat not only to Pakistan but other states as well. The country’s opium is largely transported through Pakistan and the CARs. The poppy cultivation didn’t reduce much even in the Taliban era, which banned poppy cultivation in the country. Following their rule, there has been an alarming growth in poppy cultivation. Soon after Karzai taking the headship of the country, he declared a “Jihad against poppy”, arguing that rising opium cultivation is against Islamic values and will destroy the country. On 12 October 2005, the then Afghan President Hamid Karzai said in a news conference with the USA Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that “the question of drugs ... is one that will determine Afghanistan’s future.... If we fail, we will fail as a state eventually and we will fall back in the hands of terrorism” (U.S. Department of State, 12 October 2005).

It has been argued that in the 1980s Afghan refugees introduced drug culture in Pakistan. The trans-border drug trade has also undermined Islamabad’s authority and funded corruption. In 2002, both the countries agreed to fortify cooperation in the field of intelligence sharing to restrain drug trafficking.

The USA, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have also formed a Counter-narcotics Working Group to facilitate discussion among the three states on the issue of narcotics. However, these mechanisms were failed to curb the menace. Pakistan and Iran became the home to thousands of people of heroine and opium addicts. This makes regional insecurity and instability and also poses a serious health threat. On 12 June 2007, officials
of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan met in Vienna with the facilitation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to talk the existing menaces, national and regional counter-narcotic strategies, and ways of enhancing regional and bilateral partnerships. They also agreed to adopt major steps and mechanisms to enhance border management. The agreement sent a very strong message on their aspiration to work together. They agreed to focus not only on drug trafficking, but on all elements of the drug economy: “stopping the diversion and smuggling of precursor chemicals used to make drugs; locating and destroying drug labs; tackling corruption which facilitates the drug business; and halting the laundering of drug money” (UNODC 2009: 3).

On 6 May 2008, they had another meeting in Tehran. They agreed to strengthen counter-narcotic initiatives, information sharing, and to plan joint operations. Since then, they are continuously having meeting regarding this issue, although, they failed to avert this menace yet. It is rising swiftly.

4.6.3 Refugees

The issue of refugees has been a daunting task for Afghanistan and its neighbours, especially, Pakistan and Iran. The latter two countries have been the major hosts of the Afghan refugees. The continuous influx of Afghan refugees has created various socio-economic security issues for them. Before the September 2001 terror attack, both states were hosting around four million Afghan refugees. During the USA-led NATO intervention, it rose to above five million in Pakistan and around two in Iran. The migration of Afghan refugees to Pakistan has begun in the wake of Saur uprising in 1979. It was believed that they will return to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban government. Instead, they kept coming to these countries, particularly, Pakistan due to economic adversities and the persistent threat posed by the warring factions in Afghanistan.

In the early 1980s, Afghan refugees in Pakistan were provided military training and harsh version of the Quranic education to fight against the Soviet troops. Since the late 1980s, the “Kalashnikov culture” prevailed in the various parts of Pakistan because of the presence of the Afghan refugees. In March 2003, an agreement was signed in
Brussels, Belgium by Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to repatriate Afghan refugees in Pakistan. It has been argued that the Commission for the first time has set up a formal process for resolving the problem of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. They have repatriated some refugees.

However, they have failed in a complete repatriation yet, because of the unstable situation in Afghanistan. The revival of the Taliban also became a substantial factor to the unwillingness of refugees to return back to the country. This has generated severe consequences for Pakistan in a number of sectors. The Pakistan’s economy has also seen as being adversely affected. The refugees are a cause of grave deforestation in Pakistan’s Hazar, Dir, and Chitral regions, as they sought firewood for heating and cooking. They have using free recourses of these regions, and virtually altered the landscape of the NWFP and Balochistan. The deforestation process has persistently caused large-scale destruction, disruption of communication, and landslides. This issue has also increased unemployment, corruption, and disorder in the Pakistani society.

4.6.4 Trade and Transit

The renewed political and diplomatic ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan after 2001 provided a significant base for improved economic relations as well. The economic ties between these two states have long been a source of both strength and friction. In August 2004, while visiting Pakistan, Hamid Karzai stated, “Afghanistan will be open for trade with Pakistan, and Afghanistan will be open for transit activity from Pakistan, through Afghanistan, to the Central Asians” (cited in Kumar 2008: 225). Despite the Chahbahar port and other trade routes, Afghanistan is still largely dependent on Pakistan for trade transit.

The Afghan government lays constant accusations against Islamabad’s policy on transit trade, particularly in two fields. These are: First, permission of Afghan trucks to and from Pakistani ports for transportation of the country’s transit goods; and Second, overland trade with India. Joint working groups have been made time and time to streamline procedures to remove obstructions. However, they have been unable to offer solutions that satisfied the Afghanistan (Khan 2011). Although since 2001 the bilateral
trade has been increase. In 2002, both states established the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC) that provided a big opportunity for both to enhance their trade links. Subsequently, substantial steps were undertaken by these two states to boost their economic cooperation.

The Pakistani government has formed the Afghan Trade and Development Cell (ATDC) in 1995. The major reason of this Cell was to facilitate a trade route with the CARs. However, due to unstable geopolitical circumstances and financial limitations, this route couldn’t develop and it mainly concentrated on Afghanistan. Its major objectives included: First, to regulate trade links with the CARs and Afghanistan; Second, to build up communication infrastructure in Afghanistan; Third, to coordinate and regulate Afghan trade and transit; and, Fourth, to coordinate humanitarian help to Afghanistan and sustain links with all factions there. It has been revived in 2001 and coordinates and implements many projects (Sultana 2011).

In July 2005, the Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz visited Afghanistan, where both states signed an Investment Protection Treaty, which was meant to enhance bilateral trade and investor confidence. They agreed to set up a Pak-Afghan Joint Customs Committee to look into trade and transit concerns.

Pakistan has provided 60.246 million dollars for big and small projects in war-ravaged Afghanistan during 2005-06. In 2006, the Torkham-Jalalabad road was completed. They have completed many other projects in this war-torn country. These included the Chaman train route to Spinboldak and the construction of the parallel Torkham-Jalalabad route. The Pakistani government has also declared scholarships for Afghan students in teaching, fine arts, nursing, veterinary sciences, technical education, and agriculture in Pakistan’s institutions. It gives training more than two hundred officials in diverse fields such as judiciary, diplomacy, counter-narcotics and law enforcement. Islamabad has also gifted 45 ambulances, 110 buses and 200 trucks to Afghanistan.

They have restored the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) which was signed in 1965. They agreed on endorsing investment, opening of Pakistani banks’
branches in Afghanistan. They also agreed to build a railway route between Chaman and Kandahar and Chaman and Spinboldak as well as open another trade route through Waziristan. Islamabad has declared the opening of new ten points to facilitate transit trade and agreed to open nine custom stations along the border.

On 18 July 2010, the then Afghan Commerce Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady and his Pakistani counterpart Makhdoom Amin Fahim in the presence of the USA Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signed a Note for the Record in which Islamabad agreed to allow Afghan trucks to carry Afghan transit goods through Karachi and Wagah. At Wagah, Afghan trucks could transfer cargo onto Indian trucks and carry Pakistan goods on their return trip. Pakistan would export its goods to the CARs, Turkey, and Iran through the Afghan territory. This has replaced Afghan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). This has received harsh criticisms in Pakistan and the argument was that it was done under the USA dictation to benefit India.

At the end of the 2009, the Pakistani administration has completed a range of projects in education, communication, and, health fields at a total cost of 87.02 million dollars. Their trade was growing till 2012. Since then on, it has declining and has gone as low $1.5 million in 2015 and going down further in 2016 and 2017. There are a number of issues in their economic relationships as well. These included absence of uniform tariffs in both the states, smuggling of goods from each other, and expansion of negative items list. Both states need to implement such mechanisms to curtail the negative impact of the transit trade on their economies.

4.6.5 Energy Resources

As the world economy moves very swiftly, a new component has entered, i.e., the energy equation. The CARs have rich energy resources and it attracted the whole world. Geopolitical considerations are becoming vital in determining the transport routes for gas and oil through pipelines.

The world’s largest deposit of natural gas is in Turkmenistan. It has been highlighted by the United States Energy Information Agency that the country reserves of 101 trillion cubic feet. Although the country is a landlocked and it is very difficult for it
to reach the world market. Pakistan has taken the lead to establish its trade links with the CARs. It has favoured the establishment of gas pipeline across “Af-Pak” region. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan signed an accord on 27 December 2002 to construct a gas pipe line. The tripartite agreement lays 1,400 kilometres gas pipeline from Daulatabad gas areas in Turkmenistan to Multan in Pakistan. It has been argued that this would consolidate ties between Islamabad and the CARs. It would also give Pakistan a substantial degree of political influence in this region.

4.6.6 The Indian Factor

Another dimension to the existing tension is the growing India’s presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan is very apprehensive with India’s involvement in Afghanistan and has endeavoured to set up an “Af-Pak” alliance to protect itself. From its Independence till today, India has supported whatever government in power in Afghanistan except the Taliban regime (1996-2001). India has donated huge amount of money to Afghanistan, which Islamabad has assumed is to construct an anti-Pakistan government. The India-Pakistan hostility and mutual distrust continues to exacerbate the security situation in this sub-region. They are strategic rivals in Afghanistan since 1947. Both are playing the blame game. They are trying to encircle one another not only in Afghanistan but in the entire region. Both remain security threat to each another. This threat perception has also generated arms race between them.

Islamabad often blames India for supporting anti-state element in the province of Balochistan, and India frequently blames Pakistan for repeated terror attacks targeting its embassy in Kabul and its consulates in the south of Afghanistan. India “has aimed to counter Islamabad’s treatment of Afghanistan as a source of ‘strategic depth’ and leverage against India” (Saikal 2014: 148). Their enmity lies at the heart of both states’ policy towards Afghanistan doesn’t bode well for prospects for peace, stability, security in the sub-region.

After the withdrawal of USA-led NATO forces from Afghanistan, India’s main concern is that Pakistan would support and facilitate a Taliban-Pashtun movement, one that will eject Indians from the country. A former French diplomat and a leading
expertise in South Asia, Frédéric Grare, argued that “whatever India does in Afghanistan is a ploy against Pakistan, be it economic investment, infrastructure, or any related matter” (2010: 21). He has further argued that Islamabad has ensured that New Delhi’s “interests would be blocked whenever and wherever possible. It has refused, for example, to give India and Afghanistan transit rights to trade goods across Pakistan” (ibid). On 27 July 2003, Islamabad has officially proclaimed its deep concerns about the India’s presence and its activities along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

In addition, the inception of the CARs from the Soviet Union in the early 1990s has offered an attractive region for economic and diplomatic advances by both South Asia’s nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. They see the region as offering a great opportunity to advance their domestic and regional interests. Both are locked in a bitter competition over security agreements, trade agreements, and influence in the region.

To wind up the chapter, the preceding sections have tried to provide an overview of developments relating to Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship since 1947. This study has also explored the roots and nature of extremist groups and their rise in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the region. Both the states form one of the two poles of the ‘arc of crisis’ covering South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, with Iraq and Palestine forming the other pole (Khan 2011). The geopolitical realities have considerably altered after 2001. More actors and new players have also taken centre stage with new realities.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are the major players in the region, with substantial demographic strength. Their destinies are so intertwined that they impact on each other. Political instability or economic stagnation in either Afghanistan or Pakistan is bound to have a substantial effect on the other state. They have direct interests in each other. Indeed, their geographic contiguity remains the root cause of their conflict and competition. So, their interactions, sometimes hostile and competitive, constantly define the security dynamics of South Asia. They are considered the most fragile places and unstable states in the world. The major reason behind this, they are the most vulnerable terrorist elements, economic collapse, and political changes.
Yet the relationship is vitiated by mistrust, old issues and rising extremism. Pakistan has remained moored in Afghanistan since the Soviet occupation and engineering its political shape. After the September 2001 attacks on the USA, Islamabad has altered its policy towards Afghanistan. It became a frontline state to fight against “War on Terror”. For Islamabad, an accommodation between Kabul and the Taliban would ease the pressure and also re-establish its influence in Afghanistan to balance the inroads made by India there. Until Afghanistan and Pakistan focus on resolving their issues and problems, the notion of stability and peace seems very complex.

In addition, the mutual problems and issues between New Delhi and Islamabad have had an aggravating impact on Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship as well. Both viewed Afghanistan as a zero-sum game. Unless both try to undermine each other’s role, they have the potential to make substantial contributions to development, security, peace, and stability not only of Afghanistan but the entire region.