



RESEARCH PAPER**Role of Pakistan in Doha Peace Accord: An Analysis**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the role of Pakistan in Afghanistan peace dialogue, bring Taliban and US to the table talks, held in Doha in 2020. Afghanistan has historically been haunted by civil wars and invasions and peace in the region has been a subject to the peace in Afghanistan. The latest peace process-initiated years ago was completed by Doha Accord held in Doha, Qatar, between US and Taliban leaders. Pakistan being a spontaneous neighbor and sharing multiple borders with Afghanistan has always been keen in a peaceful Afghanistan. In the Doha Accord Pakistan has used its influence over Taliban to bring them into the talks. This qualitative research found that the role of Pakistan negotiating peace deal among Taliban and US was significant. Pakistan has been a key ally of US and also has a prominent influence over Taliban leadership since the war against Soviet Union. Using this influence Pakistan managed to play its role in the Doha Peace Accord. However, results of the article also found that sitting government of Afghanistan was ignored in this peace process and hence a participation of all stakeholder lacked. Therefore, it is recommended that Pakistan should play its role for inter-Afghanistan peace dialogue as well to hold a prolonged peace and stability in the region.

KEYWORDS Afghanistan, Doha Accord, Pakistan, Taliban, US

Introduction

Afghanistan is a country landlocked between South, West and Central Asia. It has always been a pivot for regional and international actors for the strategic posture. According to Sargana and Sargana (2019) With the control of Taliban, other fundamentalist groups such as Al-Qaida found a safe heaven and allegedly the incident of 9/11 was operated from Afghanistan (Muzaffar, Shah, & Karamat, US Taliban Doha Accord: A Compromise, 2020). After the incident that shook United States, a new phase of instability was witnessed where US with its allied power in the region started a new operation in Afghanistan against terrorism. It was believed that with the fall of fundamentalist government peace and stability could be restored, however, the political actors and stakeholders had their own differences (Khan M. K., 2020). Pakistan shares multiple borders with Afghanistan and security concerns in Afghanistan directly create heavy heat in Pakistan. After the invasion of Afghanistan by Taliban, Pakistan has witnessed a surge in the terrorism as well (Abdullah, Shah, & Nafees, 2023).

Therefore, Pakistan's seeks peace in Afghanistan. In addition to that, role of Pakistan for the last peace process known as Doha Accord is significant. Pakistan has been a strong ally of US in war against terrorism and during this war, it has established

clandestine contacts with Taliban leadership. Additionally, some of the detained Taliban leaders by Pakistan could have been used to contact and convince Taliban for the negotiations. According to Sial (2018) in 2014, Pakistan arranged a meeting of Taliban leaders with other stakeholders of peace process at Murree.

Although, there were no significant results of this meeting, yet, in the coming years it served its purpose well and paved the way to the latest negotiations held in Doha in 2020. Therefore, this article examines the crucial role of Pakistan in the negotiation process as well as attempts to understand that why Pakistan is so keen to establish peace and stability in Afghanistan. To address these objectives a secondary method of data collection is used and qualitative research design is applied. To extract meaning information from the collected data the method of descriptive data analysis is used.

In the past forty years Afghanistan has witnessed a number of big changes posing security threats to not only its neighboring countries but also to the countries across globe. Instability and insecurity made Afghanistan vulnerable to the posture of strategic interests for global and regional states. To secure their interests in the region, for both the regional and international powers a stable and peaceful Afghanistan has been of paramount importance.

Literature Review

Due to its important geostrategic location Afghanistan has always been a center of proxy warfare for foreign actors and forces. In the last forty years Afghanistan has seen a number of big events such as collapse of the previous Afghan Empire, invasion of Soviet Union and establishment of a secular communist government as well as the triumph of Mujahedeen under leadership of Mullah Omer (Yameen, 2015). In the year of 1996, Taliban invaded Afghanistan and established a religious theocratic government establishing Sharia Law in the country. However, things turned against the Taliban government when the incident of 9/11 had shaken the world and United States if America allegedly accused Afghanistan hosting Al-Qaida leadership (Robert D. Crews, 2009). After this unfortunate incident which took hundreds of innocent lives United States directly attacked Afghanistan to demolish not only Al-Qaeda but also to topple the root causes of religious terrorism which was believed to be operated from Afghanistan against United States and its interests.

However, United States and its allies in the region did not have proper and thorough knowledge of ground, therefore, they decided to support Northern Alliance which has already been fighting a low-level war against Taliban regime. As stated by Khatri (2021), with the help of United States and its regional allies Northern Alliance finally, overthrown Taliban government and prominent political leaders such as Ashraf Ghani under the umbrella of UN (United Nations) met in 2001 in Germany (Khatri, 2021). Kazmi in an article state that, in 2004 first ever general elections were held and later on provincial and parliamentary elections were held in 2005, where Hamid Karzai was elected as the new president of Afghanistan (Kazmi, 2016).

While, an elected government started ruling Kabul, however, rural areas were never governed by the government and these areas were under the ruling of warlords. These warlords had their own benefits and problems of warlords soon started haunting government of Hamid Karzai (Durrani, Khan, Mukhtar, & Yawer, 2020). Afghanistan government and particularly Hamid Karzai made significant efforts to make a deal with these warlords and bring them into the mainstream, however, these efforts could not bring any fruitful results. Hamid Karzai also strived to bring Taliban leadership on the table talk

and give them Amnesty offering benefits, but Taliban leadership rejected these offers and argued that Hamid Karzai had no mandate and he is only a puppet president. Taliban leadership conditioned peace talks in Afghanistan with the withdrawal of all foreign troops (Yameen, 2015). On the other hand, president George W. Bush rejected peace talks with Taliban and stated that there would be no Amnesty and no talks with terrorists.

Later on, when President Barak Obama resumed the office, a policy shift towards dialogue with Taliban leadership was witnessed and he declared that United States is ready to negotiate with those who surrender and the term good Taliban was first time used for these elements. Obama administration particularly believed in the rebuilding of Afghanistan through economic development (Zaffar, 2020). Another article written by McCrisken titled as "Justifying sacrifice: Barack Obama and the selling and ending of the war in Afghanistan" suggests that new policy of United States was providing training and war technology to Afghanistan foot soldiers in order to confront Taliban warriors and weaken them. While president Bush wanted to deal with the Taliban with ultimate force, president Obama stated that it was impossible for United States to win war in Afghanistan and hence he announced that by 2011 withdrawal of American troops will end (McCrisken, 2012). President Obama's policy was clear and he wanted to withdraw American troops as well as to enhance capabilities of Afghan troops to fight with Taliban. President Obama wished a stable Afghan governed with a complete control over all the areas. During this period a number of other steps such as peace council and reconciliation process were also established to bring Taliban leadership in the dialogue process a to some extent these efforts were fruitful as well because some prominent leaders of Taliban accepted these offers.

Furthermore, these efforts were to some extent fruitful, where Qatar and Germany mediated talks among Taliban leadership and United States. These negotiations resulted in the exchange of prisoners between United States and Taliban where five leaders of Taliban were released from Guantanamo and in return Taliban released American citizens. However, these measurements were not appreciated by the Americans internally since Taliban did not guarantee that these leaders would not take part in the ongoing and hence this dialogue process was suspended in 2012 (Ullah M. U., 2023). Later on, Pakistan and other neighboring regional allies of US, using its influence over Afghan Taliban initiated another peace dialogue and met with Taliban leadership in Istanbul, Turkey to resume the peace process (Marc, 2014). Due to internal pressure Obama administration had to change its policy and stated that United States would not leave without establishing peace in the region. Khatri in the book states that again in 2014, Pakistan using its influence arranged a meeting with the top Taliban leaders in Pakistan and released a top leader of Afghan Taliban Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. While, both United States and Afghanistan government using Pakistan's influence over Taliban were trying hard to establish an agreement between Afghan Taliban and Afghanistan government before NATO force leave the country (Khatri, 2021).

Additionally, Pakistan has always been interested in a stable and peaceful Afghanistan since it shares border with the war raged country. A terrorized and instable Afghanistan would ultimately result in terrorism in Pakistan (Abdullah, Shah, & Nafees, 2023). Tribes residing at these borders freely move across both borders despite being no legal framework of crossing borders. Further, Taliban and other fundamentalist groups have been engaged with terrorist activities vandalizing Pakistan's infrastructure including China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Therefore, Pakistan had a number of solid reasons to appreciate and support peace talks in Afghanistan. Resultantly first ever peace talks between Afghan Taliban and Afghanistan government were hosted by Pakistan and held in Muree (Niaz, 2017).. However, there was no significant improvement in these

dialogues until Afghanistan government met a deal with Hizb-e-Islami in 2014 as stated by Khatri (Khatri 2021).

While, United States could not bear the losses of the war in Afghanistan and had a clear roadmap to leave the country, Taliban leadership was the major obstacle. US wanted an intra-Afghan dialogue bringing all the stakeholder on the political board. However, Usman Ullah in his article titled as "*The Decisive Role Of Pakistan In The Afghan Peace Process*" suggests that Taliban leadership rejected these offers and asked for a complete withdrawal of troops to take control of the country (Ullah M. U., 2023). At this time US decided to ask Pakistan to use its influence over Taliban and bring them on the table. Although, US believed to pressurize Taliban using force, administration of Trump believed that negotiations and talks could be more practical to establish peace in the country. Trump administration hence appointed Zalmay Khalil Zad as their special envoy to take a lead over the negotiation process. Husainpoor in an article published in 2022 and titled as "*The Role of the United States of America and the Peace Process in Afghanistan*" argued that Zalmay Khalil Zad and the administration of Trump knew that due to its clandestine contact and having leaders of Taliban in jail Pakistan had still a significant influence over Taliban to engage with them and to provide access to the top Taliban leadership (Husainpoor, 2022). Additionally, Pakistan China nexus made the role of Pakistan more significant to involve China in the peace process as well. Robin in a book written on the escalating situation of Afghanistan and titled as *Another big breakthrough regarding Afghanistan peace process* was witnessed in 2018 when America transformed its policy for Taliban and declared that it is willing to have direct dialogue with Taliban leadership (Rubin, 2020). This policy shift was the watershed moment to end the prolong war in Afghanistan and bring peace in the region. America finally met with the Taliban leadership in Doha Qatar without officials of the elected ruling government in Afghanistan in February 2020 to discuss troops withdrawal and other terms.

After years of war and instability, the war-torn Afghanistan had finally a chance to be rebuild and re-established (Department, 2020). Although Afghanistan elected government was not a part of Doha agreement between US and Afghan Taliban, yet, there was an agreement to establish an interim government in the country and pave a way to the general elections. On the other hand, elected government of Ashraf Ghani felt ignored and found no binding to the obligations given to the government in the agreement. Although, signing of the Doha accord took place in a great hype where a gigantic ceremony was held, yet, this agreement is regarded as a complete quit of Afghanistan by the United States. Yet a book written by Gordon in 2020 and titled as "*Losing the Long Game The False Promise of Regime Change in the Middle East*" suggests that this document signed by the Taliban leadership and Zalmay Khalil Zad offered confidence building measures (CBMs) in the form of prisoner release from both sides by March 2020 (Gordon, 2020). However, these prisoners were under the custody of Afghanistan ruling government which was not a part of the agreement.

Finally, after months of diplomatic struggles nine rounds of table talks between Taliban and US representator Zalmay Khalil Zad were held. This accord majorly focused on four agendas discussed and agreed among both parties (Department, 2020). These agendas included the following.

- i) Ceasefire
- ii) Withdrawal of all foreign force from Afghanistan
- iii) Inter-Afghanistan peace dialogue
- iv) Counter-terrorism measures.

Once both the parties signed the agreement it was agreed that both sides would have a ceasefire until the complete peace process is done. It was believed that a reduction in the prolonged violence and war would ultimately pave the way of intra-Afghan peace process as well as leads to a permanent ceasefire putting an end to the war. With the agreement United States of America displayed a willingness to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan within the given time frame of fourteen months. US agreed that it will reduce number of its troops from 12000 to 8000 and if Taliban agrees and meets all the terms it will finally withdraw all its troops.

Additionally, in an article titled as "*Afghan Peace Process: Prospects and Challenges*" written by Aamir Junaid, Yeldaiz Fatima Shah, and Dr. Ghulam Mustafa argued that in the Doha Accord leadership of Taliban agreed that they would resume talks with the Afghanistan ruling party to establish peace in the country (p, Shah, & Mustafa, 2021). Although, Taliban had always been rejecting direct talks with the Afghan government and accusing them to a dummy and puppet government and having no mandate to be engaged with, yet, in an article published on New York Times by a prominent leader of Taliban Sirajuddin Haqqani stated that they could talk to the sitting government in Afghanistan in order to resolve disagreements among Taliban and Afghan government (Haqqani, 2020).

Furthermore, it was also agreed that Taliban would not allow any terrorist organization to use its land and execute its operation against any country as an assurance of counter terrorism. United States engaged itself in the prolonged war of eighteen years to demolish eradicate all the elements considered to be a threat for United States itself as well as a threat to the regional interest of the United States (Husainpoor, 2022). Therefore, through this agreement United States sought to put an end to all the terrorist outfits operating from the land of Afghanistan. With this point, United States also assures its counter terrorism promises but also displayed its respect of Afghanistan's sovereignty and its support to the ruling government to protect its people from terrorism (Abdullah, Shah, & Nafees, 2023). With these terms and conditions, some other issues such as women rights, democratic political process and a peaceful dialogue between all the stakeholders in Afghanistan were also a part of the discussion in the Doha Accord.

However, the critics of this agreement argue that United States did not invite officials of the Afghanistan government and the real stakeholders in Afghanistan were ignored. While United States and its ambassador Zalmay Khalil Zad kept president Ashraf Ghani updated through all this process, yet, the complete absence of government officials in the agreement raised serious questions and increased resents of the people since they were excluded of the talks discussing their future (Gordon, 2020). This non-participation of the government is considered to be the major obstacle for intra-Afghan dialogue where administration of Ashraf Ghani completely disowned the obligations to release the prisoners of Taliban. Another significant issue emerged after the talks was that several of the small groups working under the umbrella of Taliban were ignored.

Peace in this war-torn region of Afghanistan has been of paramount importance for academic scholars and researchers as well as for the international powers. There is a wide range of literature addressing research questions regarding peace process of Afghanistan before and after the incident of 9/11. Pakistan has always been a pivot for the Afghan dialogues since it shares multiple borders with Afghanistan. After reviewing the existing literature, I found a gap in the literature particularly regarding the vested interests of Pakistan in a stable Afghanistan and the role of Pakistan establishing a bridge of negotiations between US and Taliban in the latest peace agreement held in Doha.

Conceptual Framework

Due to its geographical proximity, Afghanistan's peace process could be theoretically constructed under the theory of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). Regional Security Complex Theory was given by Buzan and Waever identifies security of a number of states having their security inter-dependent. Afghanistan is located at the center of South Asia and Middle East and it acts a buffer zone among these regions, therefore, security concerns in Afghanistan raise serious security issues in the regional states. In addition to that political instability and violence in Afghanistan attracts both the regional and international actors to execute their vested interest in the region. Additionally, being a war zone and instable Afghanistan not only invites regional actors such as Pakistan, Russia, Iran, India and China but also international actors such as United States. Therefore, to understand the entire peace process and strategic posture of US and Pakistan in Afghanistan and its impacts on the security situation in regional countries, RSCT could be helpful.

Material and Methods

Research design refers to the entire process of conducting research from data collection, determining problem, stating research questions and objectives to the method of data analysis in order to execute results. Two types of research designs are mainly used by scholars and researchers known as qualitative design and quantitative design (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Qualitative research design is based on the subjective data, while on the other hand, quantitative research design supports objective data. This study uses a qualitative design to address the research questions.

Data collection refers to the process of collecting data and information from various resources. There are two data collection methods used widely in research known as primary data collection and secondary data collection. Primary data collection allows the research to collect first hand data from original resources such as interviews, survey questionnaires and observations. While on the other hand secondary data is collected from already existing sources such as books, magazines, articles, website sources and published interviews (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). To address the research question, the researchers have followed the qualitative method viewing the topic since to collect data from primary resources require time and energy. On the other hand, there is a wide range of data already published to answer similar questions. This paper uses a descriptive method of research where the information in the sources is extracted to support results. This data is already in the written format, hence there is no need to create themes or codes or to transcribe the data.

Result and Discussion

Role of Pakistan for a political settlement between US and Taliban is significant. Pakistan since the war against terrorism has been a crucial ally for US as well as it has strong ties with the Taliban officials. Using its ties with Taliban leaders, Pakistan has managed to shore up peace dialogue in Doha Accord. This section answers both the research questions stated above.

Pakistan's interests in a peaceful Afghanistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan have not been in good relations since the independence of Pakistan and Afghanistan was the only country to vote against Pakistan in 1947. Afghanistan not only rejected the UNO resolution for Pakistan, but also resisted the succession of the Pashtun areas under the British Raj to be included in Pakistan, which is

currently the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The government in Afghanistan supported the separatist entities in KPK as well. Moreover, the unrest and war in Afghanistan caused serious security concerns for Pakistan at times. India has also exploited the situation and anti-sentiments for Pakistan in the Afghanistan (Tahir & Hussain, 2022). Therefore, to establish peace and to protect its borders, peace and stability in Afghanistan has always been a prime concern for Pakistan. The invasion of Soviet Union and the government of communist party in Afghanistan caused unrest in Afghanistan which resulted in mass migrations of Afghanis into the bordering areas of Pakistan. The huge surge of refugees into Pakistan affected the country in various ways. Firstly, for Pakistan to manage the refugees it required resources allocation. Secondly, the huge number of migration increased terrorist activities as well in the country. With the withdrawal of Soviet forces, Afghanistan went into a civil war, which resulted in more challenges for Pakistan (Tariq M. B., 2021). The newly formed Taliban government, again countered Pakistan for border issues. In addition to that, with the formation of Taliban government, terrorist activities across Pakistan expanded seeking an Islamic Emirate in Pakistan as well. Furthermore, the fundamentalist and extremist government in Afghanistan provided shelter to other terrorist groups as well such as Al-Qaeda to not only operate against Pakistan but other countries such as USA as well (Tariq, Bano, & Amir, 2021). Ultimately, with the incident of 9/11 US decided to change the fundamentalist government in Afghanistan, and Pakistan sought to support US in order to secure its own security as well as to establish an elected government in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, security of Pakistan and Afghanistan has a strong interdependence being neighborly states. Afghanistan is a landlocked region and the only access it seeks to the ocean is through Pakistan. There is a regularized agreement as well between Pakistan and Afghanistan for trade known as Pakistan under Afghan Transit Trade, however, this trade agreement has been exploited and misused by Afghanistan for human trafficking as well as drug supply and other illegal activities, causing troubles for not only security of Pakistan but also creating difficulties for Pakistan on international level (Kazmi, 2016). Both the countries share a long border of about 2500 kilo meters, which is surrounded by mountains and is hard to be managed. There are more than five exits and entrances for both the countries as well. Main entrances are Spin Boldak and Torkham, except these there are hundreds of the entry points used by people to move across the borders having social and cultural relation in Both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Tribes living at both sides of the border almost move freely. However, this freedom of movement has been exploited by fundamentalist groups which allegedly are involved in terrorist activities in the Pakistan. The incident of Army Public School (APS) in 2014 had been allegedly operated from Pakistan (Ghafur, 2018). After this incident, authorities in Pakistan raised serious concerns regarding this entry and exit points. Therefore, to protect its borders as well as its citizens, Pakistan has always been for a peaceful Afghanistan.

Pakistan's role in Doha Peace Accord

Stake of Pakistan for a peaceful Afghanistan has always been higher since escalation in Afghanistan directly impacts peace and security in Pakistan. A war-torn Afghanistan causes emboldening militant groups particularly Taliban operating against Pakistan threatens another big surge of refugees into Pakistan as well as causes drug trafficking (Hussain, Ullah, & Khilji, 2014). Therefore, during the Doha peace agreement Pakistan through its allies in the Afghanistan Taliban sought to engage both US and Taliban in a political settlement in order to bring peace in Afghanistan. Pakistani engagement in Afghanistan persisted after the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989 and the war of independence that followed, despite unsuccessful attempts to broker political agreements between opposing mujahideen factions. However, Pakistan chose to support

hand-picked Afghan proxies, so the promises to assist Afghans in finding a peaceful solution—such as following the Soviet withdrawal—were merely rhetoric. The primarily Pashtun Hizb-e Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, were initially Pakistan's preferred Afghan allies (Khan & Bakar, 2023). Pakistan has requested that the Taliban be included in discussions on Afghanistan's constitutional and political reforms as early as the Bonn conference in 2001, which created a plan for the country after the invasion (Marc, 2014). Pakistani politicians were now confronted with the task of bringing the Taliban back from the cold, knowing full well that any route for their return to power would require international legitimacy. Ten years after the Obama administration signaled its intention to withdraw from Afghanistan and its willingness to engage in dialogue with the Taliban, Pakistan's persistent efforts to convince the United States to allow the Taliban to participate in mainstream politics seemed to be paying off (Ghafur, 2018). The first direct formal discussions between the Taliban and representatives of the Afghan government, including the deputy foreign minister, took place in Murree, Pakistan, on July 7, 2015; Chinese and American representatives were also in attendance. The Afghan presidential palace revealed that Taliban commander Mullah Omar had passed away two years prior, supposedly in a Pakistani hospital, leading to the cancellation of a second round that was set for July 31 (Ali, 2022).

Predictions about how the peace process would benefit Pakistan were shortly confirmed. Zalmay Khalilzad visited Islamabad in October 2018, one month after he was named the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation (Hanif, Butt, & Ashraf, 2021). During his visit, Pakistan freed Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a Taliban co-founder and former Mullah Omar's deputy, who had been held in Karachi since 2010 after he allegedly contacted Hamid Karzai's government without Pakistan's approval. Because of his position within the Taliban shura, Baradar's presence provided the political office a sense of gravity that it had not had before. Understanding that the military leadership of Pakistan has a major influence in formulating policies, the U.S. Because its longtime Taliban supporter can utilize the negotiations as a path to power with international legitimacy and the corresponding financial backing, Pakistan has backed the Afghan peace process. When the Trump administration started pursuing a political settlement in Afghanistan as the United States prepared to withdraw troops from the country, it saw an opportunity to push for its favored option—the Taliban's inclusion in power-sharing agreements (Abdullah, Shah, & Nafees, 2023). Washington recognized Islamabad's contribution to the U.S.-Taliban agreement in February 2020 and the ensuing peace negotiations, sometimes referred to as the intra-Afghan talks.

Pakistan's military leadership and Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government have emphasized time and again that only a political settlement can put an end to the conflict in Afghanistan since intra-Afghan talks began in Doha, Qatar on September 12, 2020. They have also always denied supporting any party to the conflict while pledging support for a peace process driven by Afghanistan (Hanif, Butt, & Ashraf, 2021). However, Islamabad has a direct role in the intra-Afghan conflict and a significant stake because the Taliban's top armed forces and political power is located in Pakistan. The Taliban's refuge provided by Pakistan further feeds suspicion of Pakistan's motives in Afghan opposition and governing circles. It is in Pakistan's best interest to convince the Taliban shura to end the impasse in the peace negotiations by lowering the level of violence and tempering calls for Islamic, most likely Sunni Deobandi, rule, even if it means applying pressure (Khatri, 2021). Pakistani military authorities are very concerned that prolonged stalled negotiations could worsen relations between Islamabad and Washington and increase tensions with Kabul.

China, Pakistan's most important international ally, is also likely to favor Islamabad's efforts to achieve a more stable result rather than a Taliban win followed by a move for monopolistic control. A failing peace effort might lead to a full-scale civil war in Afghanistan and a large-scale refugee crisis in Pakistan (Ali, 2022). Top political and government officials in Pakistan praised the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement signed on February 29, 2020, and said, in Prime Minister Khan's words, that Pakistan "will play its role" in making sure it "holds and succeeds." The agreement gave the Taliban a clear deadline for the withdrawal of Western troops in exchange for promises to cut off relations with terrorist organizations, including al-Qaeda, and to start talks on a political solution to the conflict (Ullah, Gul, & Zaib, 2023). The potential for a political solution that would strengthen Pakistan's dominance over Afghanistan by favoring its Taliban partner was what gave the agreement significance for Pakistan. The United States was also anticipated to benefit from Pakistan's facilitation. Therefore, to assist the negotiation process between Taliban and US for Doha agreement, role of Pakistan was of paramount importance. It did not only brought both parties to a political settlement, but also enhanced US interests in Pakistan.

Conclusion

From the last four decades Afghanistan has been a home to violence and instability due the rift in its internal politics. The country witnessed a number of big events from Soviet invasion and establishment of a secular communist state to the invasion of fundamentalist actors of Taliban. Although, peace in Afghanistan has been a pivot of the foreign policy of both the regional and international powers, yet, for the last four decades civil war and insecurity have been haunting the country. The current peace process was established during the era of president George W. Bush and after that it has witnessed several of the ups and downs. However, when president Barak Obama took control of the office there was a policy shift and US sought to have conclude a peaceful solution without using force against Taliban. The Doha Peace Agreement was held in Doha between Taliban and US government. Although, it lacked the participation of the government officials of Afghanistan, yet, it paved a way towards peaceful Afghanistan.

Pakistan has always sought a stable Afghanistan for several reasons. It shares a long border spread over mountains with multiple entrance points which is used for movement across both countries. Also due to political instability in Afghanistan, a large number of refugees migrated into Pakistan which ultimately resulted in more terrorist activities. Therefore, civil war in Pakistan causes security concerns for Pakistan. Additionally, role of Pakistan in the current peace dialogue held in Doha is significant. Pakistan used its influence and ties with Taliban for a political settlement between Taliban and US.

Recommendations

The peace process in Afghanistan lacked participation of all the stakeholders such as the government of that time in Afghanistan as well as major political parties, which is an obstacle to obtain long lasting peace in the region. Also, the war-torn Afghanistan requires to be rebuilt and reconstructed. Afghanistan has been a safe haven for terrorist outfits for past thirty years, therefore, it is important for the Taliban government to not allow any fundamentalist group operate in Afghanistan. Based on these assumptions there are a few recommendations as well for a prolonged peace and stability in Afghanistan listed below.

- Pakistan should support a democratic process for the transfer of power in Afghanistan which includes all the stakeholder.

- It is important to reconstruct Afghanistan both politically and financially. Therefore, both Pakistan and US should allow funds for the current Taliban administration in Afghanistan.
- Pakistan should emphasize on the current Taliban administration not to allow terrorist outfits to perform terrorist activities against Pakistan using Afghanistan's land.

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