



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: An Overview Before and After 9/11 Incident

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#### ABSTRACT

Historically, Afghanistan and Pakistan are the immediate neighbors with number of common similarities such as religious, cultural, geography, ethnicity and numerous others. Despite these, the relations between both countries never stayed in the cool plate. This study explores that, since the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan during 1996-2001, there were somehow better relations than the democratic government in Afghanistan. Regional and international players played their role in maintaining as well as somehow destroyed the peace of the region that highlighted number of national and international writers. They key objective of this study is to explore the Pakistan-Afghanistan military, political and social relations and its consequences on both state. This study is based on the analytical approaches and used the primary and secondary sources that explored the number of hidden issues between the both countries. Both countries are suggested to enhance ties through diplomatic ways instead of clashes.

**KEYWORDS** Afghanistan, Diplomatic, Militancy, Military, Pakistan

#### Introduction

Throughout the entirety of their history together, Pakistan and Afghanistan have had a relationship that is plagued with difficulties and fraught with tension. This is the case even though they are neighbors. The nature of the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan underwent a profound transformation after the Taliban government in Afghanistan was deposed in the year 2001. Pakistan and Afghanistan have a long history together, and much of that history has been marked by hostile interactions between the two countries. In 2001, when the government of the Taliban was overthrown, the situation in Pakistan began to deteriorate and became increasingly dangerous (Ali & Safdar, 2020). On the other side, Afghanistan has leveled allegations against Pakistan, claiming that country provides support to the Taliban and shelter to the organization's leadership (Razvi, 1979).

#### Historical Background of Pak-Afghan Relationship

The shared histories, cultures, and geographic locations of Pakistan and Afghanistan have had a significant impact on the dynamics of the relationship that exists between the two countries. The Durand Line, which was built by the British in 1893 and now serves as the international boundary between the two countries, spans a distance of 2,640 kilometers. On the other hand, the boundary between the two countries has been a

source of contention for well over a hundred years now, and it has only gotten worse over time. In this volume, we will investigate the history of Pakistan and Afghanistan's relationship by concentrating on the significant inflection points and events that have played a role in contributing to the formation of its current status. Specifically, we will look at how the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 contributed to the current state of affairs. There has been a rise in the degree of hostility that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan as a direct result of the Durand Line's existence. Sir Mortimer Durand, a British official, was the one who drew the line that established the frontier between British India and Afghanistan. This line served as the boundary between British India and Afghanistan. In 1893, the contract was signed by Abdur Rahman Khan, who was serving as the Ruler of Afghanistan at the time, and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, who was serving as the foreign minister of British India at the time. A number of territorial disputes as well as ethnic tensions have arisen between the two countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a direct consequence of Afghanistan's reluctance to recognize the Durand Line as a formal boundary as a demarcation of the border between the two countries. The Pashtun people, who make up the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, are presently dispersed across both Pakistan and Afghanistan as a direct result of the Durand Line. As a direct result of this situation, Afghanistan has begun asserting jurisdictional claims in an area that is officially recognized as being part of Pakistan (Muzaffar, Nawab, & Yaseen, 2021; Durani & Khan, 2002).

The Afghan War, which began in 1979, and the Soviet incursion that followed were two significant factors that contributed to the dramatic deterioration of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Soviet incursion also played a role in this issue. During their struggle against the control of the Soviet Union, the Afghan Mujahideen received support from a number of countries, including Pakistan, the United States of America, and Saudi Arabia. The Mujahideen were able to launch their attacks from inside Pakistan due to Pakistan's provision of both military and logistical assistance. Because of the war in Afghanistan, millions of people were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in the neighboring country of Pakistan. This was done in the hopes of finding a better life there. The social, economic, and security challenges that were brought on by the refugee catastrophe are still difficult for Pakistan to overcome, and the country is still fighting an uphill struggle to recover from them. The rise of the Taliban during the 1990s in Afghanistan and Pakistan had a substantial influence on the nature of the relationship that exists between the two countries. The Taliban were able to rapidly rise to power in Afghanistan after gaining control of Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul in 1996 and installing themselves as the new rulers of the country. This allowed them to consolidate their hold on power in the country. Both in order to serve as a strategic partner against India and in order to bring about stability in Afghanistan, Pakistan supplied assistance to the Taliban. This was done in order to bring about the desired result. Afghanistan and the rest of the international community have accused Pakistan of providing help and assistance to the Taliban as a result of Pakistan's support for the Taliban organization (Imran & Islam, 2021).

On the other hand, Pakistan viewed the Taliban as a means to maintain their foothold in Afghanistan and prevent an anti-Pakistan administration from taking control there. This was the justification that Pakistan used for its backing of the Taliban. The beginning of the changes that have taken place in the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan can be traced back to the events that took place on September 11, 2001, when the United States began an invasion of Afghanistan. These events marked the beginning of the changes that have taken place. In reaction to criticism from the United States, Pakistan has refrained from providing assistance to the Taliban and has instead joined an international coalition to combat terrorism. The inclusion of Pakistan in the anti-terror

cooperation that was led by the United States of America had a significant and far-reaching effect on the surrounding area. Terrorist organizations such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda initiated attacks on the neighboring countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a direct consequence of the conflict, which contributed to the increased level of violence and instability in the region (Akhtar, 2008).

### **Political and Diplomatic Ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

The political and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan can be characterized as both cooperative and tense at the same time. This dichotomy is the most accurate way to characterize the nature of their connection. The historical, racial, and philosophical ties that bind the two nations together stretch back millennia. These ties have been passed down from generation to generation. On the other hand, the relationship between these two countries has been impacted by international conflicts and events such as the Cold War, the conquest of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, and the War on Terrorism. Following the overthrow of the Taliban dictatorship in Afghanistan, Pakistan was a significant contributor to the process of establishing a new government in that nation. Pakistan recognized the newly installed government in Afghanistan, and the country offered the new Afghan government both financial and political assistance. Pakistan also supplied Afghanistan with diplomatic support. The two nations worked together to strengthen the economic and commercial ties that bind them by signing a number of agreements intended to achieve this end (Weinbaum & Harder, 2008).

Besides, the problem of terrorism that occurs across national borders has served to foster an atmosphere of distrust and tension in the relationship between the two countries. The presence of militant organizations along the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan is one of the most significant obstacles that stand in the way of the development of peaceful relations between the two countries. The recent string of lethal attacks that have taken place in both Pakistan and Afghanistan has contributed to an escalation in the tensions that exist between the two countries. Each nation has accused the other of providing assistance to various terrorist organizations. Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of providing a safe haven for the Taliban and other militant groups, while Pakistan has accused Afghanistan of not doing enough to stop attacks by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) across the border. Over the course of the last few years, there have been a number of encouraging breakthroughs in terms of political and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is despite the fact that there have been a number of challenging obstacles to overcome (Rana, 2009).

Pakistan and Afghanistan have been working together to improve their economic relations in addition to their joint efforts to battle terrorism and maintain national security. These efforts have been going on for some time. A commitment to engage in a number of infrastructure projects in Afghanistan has been made by Pakistan. One of these projects is the construction of a railway line between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In addition, Pakistan and Afghanistan have recently struck a number of agreements that are intended to increase the volume of commercial activity that takes place between the two countries. In spite of these positive developments, Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to have tenuous international and governmental relations with one another (Nagra, Mustafa & Imran, 2019).

### **Military Cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

Cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the military sphere has been a challenging endeavor that is frequently fraught with tension. The porous and lengthy

border that separates the two countries has been a source of friction and conflict over the course of their relationship. Insurgent organizations have used the frontier to access both countries and launch attacks, and Pakistan and Afghanistan have both blamed the other for providing support to the insurgents. Pakistan and Afghanistan both share responsibility for the situation. It is no longer possible for the militaries of the two countries to collaborate, particularly on the matter of border security. One of the most significant challenges that have been presented to the military cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the presence of militant organizations along the border between the two countries. Tensions have increased between Pakistan and Afghanistan as a result of several deadly assaults that have occurred in both countries (Nagra, Mustafa & Imran, 2019).

Despite the challenges, Pakistan and Afghanistan have been able to make some headway in their military collaboration. The militaries of the two countries have participated in joint exercises in order to further bolster the bonds of friendship between them and to ensure each other's safety. Through the signing of a bilateral security agreement, the two countries were able to further their collaboration in the fight against terrorism and the protection of their borders. The agreement included provisions to boost cooperation in gathering information and performing border patrols, and these provisions were included. Both of these countries' administrations have worked together to assist in the facilitation of peace talks between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. In spite of this, the level of military cooperation that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan is still unreliable. It will be difficult to establish a relationship that is more stable and peaceful between the two countries as long as the problem of terrorism across national borders continues to exist. It is impossible to find a solution to the problem of militant groups along the border without first building up greater confidence and working more closely together between the armed forces of the two countries (Weinbaum, 1991).

The involvement of third-party states is another factor that makes military cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan more difficult to achieve. These two countries, along with a number of other states, including Iran, India, and China, which all have strong interests in the region, share borders with a number of other states. As a consequence of this, regional powers have frequently used Afghanistan as a battleground for their own purposes, further exacerbating the conflicts that already existed between Pakistan and Afghanistan. To this end, the United States has been of critical assistance in easing Pakistan and Afghanistan's transition into working together on their respective militaries. As a direct consequence of the war on terrorism led by the United States, Pakistan initially supported the Taliban but has since joined the coalition headed by the United States to combat terrorism. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have been recipients of significant military assistance from the United States, which was provided with the intention of enhancing the overall state of security in the region (Maass, 1999).

### **Economic and Tourism Relationship**

In the context of their commercial dealings, Pakistan and Afghanistan have engaged in both cooperative and competitive activities before and after 9/11. The lengthy frontier that separates the two countries has been beneficial to economic and commercial activity, but it has also created challenges for border control and safety. Both countries have developed a greater appreciation for the value of strengthening their economic ties during the Taliban era, and as a direct consequence, they have taken steps to increase their cooperation in the economic sphere in order to reflect this newfound appreciation. The potential for Pakistan and Afghanistan to engage in commercial activity with one another is a significant element that is encouraging economic cooperation between the two countries. Because it is landlocked and has only limited access to the ocean, Afghanistan is

forced to place a substantial amount of reliance on the commercial and economic activity of its neighbours. Afghanistan relies on Pakistan as a significant trading partner because Pakistan is the only country that can connect the landlocked nation to the shore of the Arabian Sea. The potential for commerce has been hampered by a number of factors, some of which are an inadequate infrastructure, concerns about security, and political instability. In spite of these challenges, Pakistan and Afghanistan have been able to make some headway in their economic collaboration over the said era. The negotiations between the two nations have resulted in the signing of a number of bilateral trade agreements, the purpose of which is to reduce trade obstacles and increase economic cooperation. The Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry has made a significant contribution to the expansion of trade between the two countries by establishing a platform within which businesses from both nations are able to communicate with one another and collaborate (Hanif, 2018).

To the benefit of both countries' industries, Pakistan and Afghanistan might be able to collaborate in the field of energy production. Afghanistan is rich in oil, gas, and minerals; however, the country does not have the infrastructure necessary to generate or utilise these resources. Despite this, Pakistan's energy industry is quite advanced, and the country possesses significant knowledge in the exploration and production of oil and gas. Therefore, there is potential for the two countries to collaborate in the field of energy, which would be advantageous for the growth and development of both economies. There is space for improvement in our economic partnership, but first we need to triumph over a number of significant challenges. The issue of protection presents a significant roadblock. Many businesses have made the decision to forego opportunities in Afghanistan because the country is in such a precarious state as a direct consequence of the war. Pakistan and Afghanistan are having a difficult time maintaining the safety of their shared frontier and ensuring the protection of the people and goods that are moving back and forth across the region as a result of the activities of militant groups (Zingel, 2014).

Tourists from all over the world flock to Afghanistan to see its many historical landmarks and places, which are collectively referred to as the country's cultural attractions. Due to the abundance of fascinating and one-of-a-kind sights and experiences that Pakistan has to offer, the country also has a lot of potential as a tourism destination. Because of this, collaboration between the two countries in the tourism business might be beneficial to the economic development and advancement of both countries. However, the expansion of the tourist industry in both countries has been hampered by a number of obstacles, including political unrest, fears regarding personal safety, and a dearth of necessary physical infrastructure. Over the past few years, in an attempt to alleviate the negative effects of these issues, both countries have increased their spending on tourism and infrastructure projects (Baloch & Rehman, 2015).

### **Security Concerns**

The relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan before and after the Taliban era shuffled a lot. Since, the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan during 1996, the relations between both states went excellent and security ties became strong as well, however, after the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan resulted in a significant deterioration of the security situation in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a consequence of the power vacuum that was created as a direct result of the Taliban's defeat, rival groups battled for control and stoked tensions all throughout the region. This instability posed a significant risk to not only Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also to the remainder of the region as a whole. The significant increase in terrorist activity in the region following the fall of the Taliban posed a significant threat to national security. In Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and the

Taliban continued their activities, carrying out attacks against both Afghan and international forces. As a direct consequence of this uncertainty, the number of terrorist attacks that took place in Pakistan increased. Both countries' economies suffered as a direct consequence of this conflict, which not only led to loss of life and destruction of property, but also slowed economic development. A significant vulnerability existed along the Durand Line, which demarcates the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a result of the porous nature of the border, it was difficult for security forces to maintain law and order in the region. This made it possible for militants to travel freely back and forth between countries (Janjua, 2009). This, in turn, contributed to the escalation of multinational dangers like smuggling and international terrorism, which posed a risk to the security of both countries. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have taken a number of measures to resolve the various security concerns that have been raised. The Afghan government, along with the assistance of its international partners, has been working to bolster the capabilities of the country's armed forces. The establishment of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, both of which have made substantial contributions to the overall level of security throughout the country, were essential steps in the implementation of this process. But obstacles in the form of misconduct and a lack of resources have made these efforts difficult to accomplish. The government of Pakistan has begun conducting military operations against militant organizations based in the tribal regions in order to address the country's ongoing security concerns.

Although these actions were successful in disrupting the operations of militant organizations, they have also resulted in the mass displacement of people and violations of human rights. As part of the government's attempt to bolster the safety of the border, new checkpoints at the border have been constructed, and additional security personnel have been placed in position. In addition, the importance of regional collaboration in addressing security concerns cannot be overstated. Pakistan and Afghanistan have been working to strengthen their ties and improve their communication in order to better address the common security concerns that they both face. One illustration of this would be the establishment of a Joint Peace and Security Commission for the purpose of easing communication and fostering cooperation on matters pertaining to matters of national security. In addition, the two countries have worked together to strengthen the control of their borders and to increase information exchange (Khan, 2017).

Despite these efforts, however, security concerns continue to be one of the most significant obstacles facing both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Cross-border attacks and smuggling continue to be a challenge for security forces, adding to the already tense atmosphere in border regions. Factors such as the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the rise of terrorist organizations like ISIS-K are two examples of the factors that have contributed to the continuation of threats to regional security. After the Taliban regime was overthrown, a significant cause for concern regarding Afghanistan's national security was the subsequent strengthening of terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Even though these groups had been removed from power as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan headed by the United States, they were still very much alive and posed a threat to the stability of the region. To be more specific, the Taliban did not stop launching attacks against Afghan and international forces, and they did not stop capturing territory. As a consequence of the expansion of these terrorist organizations, Pakistan is now facing a significant challenge posed by terrorism. The Taliban and other groups carried out attacks on a variety of public institutions, including schools, hospitals, and marketplaces. As a direct consequence of these attacks, a great number of lives were lost, and a great number of structures were leveled, all of which hampered the progress and development of the economy of the country. As a response to this danger, Pakistan launched military operations against militant groups in the tribal regions that are located close to the border

with Afghanistan in the country. These measures were carried out to prevent the organizations in question from carrying out their plans and to restore peace to the region (Khalid & Roy, 2016).

### **Impact of Pak-Afghan Relationship on Regional Stability**

The relationship that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan has had a bearing on the state of regional security over the course of a lengthy period of time. Both countries can be found in a volatile region of the globe, which is characterized by frequent instances of conflict and political unrest. Pakistan and Afghanistan's relationship has been influenced by a variety of factors, including historical connections, political and economic interests, and security concerns, to name just a few of these factors. The nature of their connection as well as the safety of the area around them has been substantially altered as a direct result of these factors. One of the most noticeable effects that the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has had on the security of the surrounding region is the spread of conflict and volatility caused by the situation between those two countries (Muzaffar, Yaseen, & Afzal, 2021; Umar, Jan, Rab & Ramzan, 2022). Discontent and instability in one nation can easily spread to others in the neighborhood if it is not addressed. The conflict in Afghanistan is just one illustration of how this circumstance has disrupted the peace and security of the areas that are in its immediate vicinity. Because of the conflict, millions of Afghans have been forced to flee their homes, and many of them have found refuge in the neighboring country of Pakistan. The influx of refugees has placed a significant strain on Pakistan's resources, which has had a negative impact on the country's societal and financial stability as a result of the influx. The refugee crisis has exacerbated the tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with Pakistan claiming that Afghanistan is not doing enough to manage the problem despite Pakistan's accusations that Afghanistan is not doing enough. Another factor that has contributed to the destabilization of the Pakistani-Afghan relationship is the participation of actors from outside the region in the conflict that is taking place there. The conditions in Pakistan and Afghanistan have each garnered the attention of the United States, China, and Russia respectively. These countries' top officials have been very active in shaping international relations in order to advance their own political and economic interests. This has frequently led to a conflict with multiple fronts and an unstable regional landscape, both of which have been caused by a broad variety of players. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have pointed the finger at outside actors for the lack of confidence that has resulted from the accusations that they have made against one another of providing support to terrorist organizations and safe havens for militant groups. It has been difficult to achieve sustainable peace and stability in the region because of the absence of trust that exists between the two countries (Mairaj-ul-Hamid, 2017).

### **External Powers**

Third parties, specifically the United States and India, who have both played a significant role in this process, have had a significant influence on the complexities of the relationship that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This influence has been particularly significant in recent years. Since the Taliban's overthrow in 2001, outside powers have wielded an increasing amount of influence over the region's politics and security. This trend began shortly after the collapse of the Taliban. The United States of America and India, in particular, each play a significant role in this relationship. This report will analyze the various ways in which their presence has altered the ties that already exist between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as what those changes mean for the general peace and security of the region as a whole. The United States has been a significant player in the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan ever since the 1980s, when it first began providing support to the Mujahideen in their battle against Soviet forces in

Afghanistan. Since the Taliban regime fell in 2001, the United States has made substantial contributions towards the rehabilitation and stabilization of Afghanistan (Iqbal, 2011). These contributions have been made in the years following the fall of the Taliban regime. The United States of America has committed tens of billions of dollars and kept a sizeable military footprint in Afghanistan. Additionally, they have spent a significant amount of money on humanitarian aid and initiatives to rebuild the country. Along with a number of other nations, the United States of America has made a contribution to the ongoing effort in Afghanistan to foster an environment of peace and concord. The talks between the United States of America and the Taliban have been held in an attempt to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict through diplomatic means. Previously, the United States of America has put pressure on Pakistan to do more to combat terrorism in the region, specifically by encouraging Pakistan to crack down on militant groups that are located on its soil. This has been done in an effort to get Pakistan to cooperate with the United States of America's efforts. The United States' endeavors have been primarily centered on this particular goal. A source of contention between Pakistan and the United States has been the involvement of the United States in the governance and security of Afghanistan. Pakistan claims that the United States is unfairly accusing it for the conflict in Afghanistan, despite Pakistan's efforts to address the issue of terrorism. This is despite the fact that Pakistan has been making efforts to address the issue. In spite of the reality that Pakistan has already taken action to address the problem, Pakistan continues to make its claims (Zaidi, 2011).

India has also played a significant role in the interaction that has taken place between Pakistan and Afghanistan ever since the Taliban were removed from power. These interactions have taken place since the Taliban were removed from power. India has provided significant financial assistance and assistance with the country's development in an effort to increase the scope of its influence in Afghanistan. This effort is part of India's broader strategy to expand its sphere of influence in Afghanistan. India has also taken part in efforts to boost regional safety. One example of this is the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, which was initiated to improve the ability of nations in the region to communicate with one another and develop a common comprehension of one another's perspectives. India has taken part in this process. Pakistan has been extremely critical of India's position in Afghanistan, accusing India of using the country as a springboard for anti-Pakistani actions and claiming that India is using Afghanistan as a springboard for these actions (Muzaffar, Khan, & Yaseen 2019; D'Souza, 2007).

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is presently under work, is an example of China's efforts to extend its economic and political influence in the region, which will cost multiple billions of dollars. Throughout the course of the endeavor, Pakistan and India have been at odds with one another over a number of issues, including India's opposition to the project and allegations that China is attempting to encircle India. India's opposition to the project is one of the primary sources of tension between the two countries (Ali, Nadeem & Aslam, 2023).

## **Conclusion**

The relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have a long history with the same cultural, geographic, religious, social and border sharing matchup. Although numerous similarities emerged between both the states, but always have mistrusts and decorations between them. Their relations changed time to time and government to government that showed the various negative and positive consequences on the both countries.



This study thoroughly shed light on the diplomatic, economic, military, political and social relations between both countries. This research highlights the Pakistan and Afghanistan relations before and after the emergence of War on Terror in Afghanistan and consequences on Pakistan Afghanistan and how the both countries paid its prices.

Before the emergence in Afghanistan Pakistan supported Afghan mujahedeen against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan later in establishing their government in Kabul during 1996. Therefore, political, economic, social and military relations enhanced between both the states during the said era, however, soon after the emergence of WOR these relations gone well to worst. Since the emergence of WOT, Pakistan stand with the US cause in Afghanistan and allowed US to establish their bases here, hence, as a revenge terrorists started retaliations against the Pakistan that was very big consequences. Along with number of other issues, external factors such as USA, India and other hidden players also played their role in establishing as well as some negative role in destroying the peace of the region.

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