

Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations Post 2014: Impacts on Pakistan's Security

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Abstract

Two developments are significant in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations in 2014. One, UN and US mandate for stationing of troops in Afghanistan ended in 2014 (Although US had kept small number of troops (20,000) in Afghanistan after that which is to withdraw by 2017). Second, Hamid Karzai, who has been vocal critic of Pakistani security establishment and in later years of US policies too, was to step down as president of Afghanistan after his second and constitutionally last term expired. The elections that brought new President Ashraf Ghani to power also are critical important to reset Pakistan Afghanistan Relations. The paper is an attempt to analyze the impacts of these two and associated developments on the security of Pakistani State. The fundamental premises of the paper is that the variables that affected Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations adversely are being reduced and thus provide a rare chance in last three decades for a mutually beneficial and trust based relationship.

Key Words: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Security, Taliban, United States

Introduction

Afghanistan, the graveyard of empires, has been a perplexing issue in world politics for centuries. An inhospitable nation towards foreign invaders and most hospitable culture for guests has dominantly affected international politics. The battlefield for classical great game has set a new stage for emerging dynamics of New Great Game. Pakistan here remains the most concerned actor as she inherited many issues vital for its survival with her inception, one of those is Afghanistan. Since 1947, the strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and Afghan support for 'Pakhtoonistan' remained major foreign policy challenge for Pakistan. Pakistan also tried to find some solutions to Indian threat in Afghanistan which borrowed Pakistan its greater involvement in this country. 9/11 gave new turn to world history and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, brings new challenges for the world generally and Pakistan specifically. This research paper endeavors to highlight these challenges and some opportunities bringing policy options for Pakistan.

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Literature Review

Pakistan's foreign policy and historical analysis" by S. M. Burke and Lawrence Ziringgave a detailed account of frictions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The history takes us back to 1893 when Durand line was demarcated By Sir Mortimer Durand and Amir AbdurRehman. This pact was to be inherited by both states according to international law. So the objection of Afghanistan now over Durand line becomes bleak. Afghanistan was the only state which opposed Pakistan's membership in United Nations. Afghanistan's diplomatic and political support for Pakhtoonistan further deteriorated relations. Before partition of Sub-continent, Afghanistan asked for partition of Pakhtoon land up to river Indus but this demand was bitterly rejected by British Queen. History does not give any evidence of such union of Pakhtoon land areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ghaffar Khan, the proponent of Pakhtoon autonomy in Pakistan also rejected this idea.

"Anatomy of Afghan conflict" gives an overview of history of Afghanistan which brought it to present state of conflict. Reasons, dynamics and implications of rise of Taliban are discussed in detail. Dr. Riffat Hussain in chapter eight recalls the events since 1979, after soviet invasion in Afghanistan, and gives an historical account of Pakistan's involvement in the conflict. The Afghan history after soviet invasion brings Pakistan into the scene. Pakistan was wary of Soviet expansion in east and threats from India were enough to persuade Pakistan to take part in this war. Pakistan supported Afghan Mujahidden during the war becoming US ally and afterwards extended massive support to Taliban. Pakistan was the first country accepting Taliban government in Afghanistan in 1996. This episode earned Pakistan 'Taliban ally' image and continues till date.

Ahmed Rashid in his book "Descent into chaos: The United States and failure of Nation building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia", published in 2008, alarms against the spread of extremism in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia which he calls 'the region'. He is particularly concerned about Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Central Asia. The author sees a gloomy picture in Afghanistan post 2014 and its regional implications. The power game within Afghanistan to control government after NATO withdrawal is point of concern. This book peeps into history of Afghanistan after 9/11 and considers the spread and power attainment of ex-mujahideen and evolution of Al-Qaeda.

Seth Jones in his book "Graveyard of empires" makes a critical analysis of United States policy in Afghanistan and blames Donald Rumsfeld for re-emergence of Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The invasion on Iraq

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diverted all resources and attention from Afghanistan creating a vacuum. This less attention also left room for development of sanctuaries in Pakistan. He also criticizes allocation of less troops and resources which earned United States mistrust among Afghan people.

Ahmad Rashid is a leading analyst on Afghanistan and Pakistan. In his latest book "Pakistan on the Brink: Future of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the West", he critically analyses the current situation of the region and particularly Pakistan's internal condition. Economically the state is not stable and the leadership has never deliberated to improve living standard of masses. For this both military and civilian leadership are responsible. The policy is definitely being run by military in Pakistan and particularly policy on Afghanistan. Any fall out in Afghanistan is going to add problems of Pakistan. Yet he agrees that despite of all this Pakistan is not a failed state. He further criticizes President Obama for gambling on Karzai in 2009 but that gamble failed and he is still in office. These all realities paint a gloomy picture of Afghanistan and its massive impact of Pakistan after 2014.

Asmatullah Khan Wazir in his research paper "Withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan and its implications for Pakistan-Challenges and a way forward" develops a link between Afghan security post 2014 and Pakistan security. The researcher is particularly concerned about FATA after US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is a group of militants loosely connected, devoid of any single leadership as compared to Afghan Taliban. They have logistic and financial support from Afghanistan and after US withdrawal they will have more space and freedom of action. Additionally, Pakistan is already concerned about Indian presence in Afghanistan and its interference in Baluchistan. These factors are major challenges for Pakistan after US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Khalid Iqbal in his article "Afghanistan sans foreign troops: options for Pakistan" weighs options for Pakistan after US withdrawal from Afghanistan. American advocacy of Afghan National Army is a flawed opinion. The operational and technical capabilities of this army are not that much reliable. Desertion rate is high and the ethnic composition of this army quite high. This situation poses serious security threats to Pakistan. War on Terror has devastated Pakistan's security already and the upcoming Baloch insurgent tendencies are to become serious threat for Pakistan. Additionally American decision on residual troops is pending and the decision on their immunity is also in pipeline. Pakistan's role in Afghan reconciliation process is inevitable but Pakistan has to support 'Afghan owned and Afghan led' process.

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Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Samee Ozair Khan, and Naheed S, Goraya in their article "Post 2014- Afghanistan" try to assess the problems in today's Afghanistan which will emerge after 2014 and their regional implications. This situation will have a two-fold impact on Pakistan. Firstly, it will be affected by any fall out in Afghanistan directly. Secondly, the regional implications will also have impact on Pakistan since it is the direct and one of the major stakeholders in Afghanistan. In case of insurgency erupting in Afghanistan, the main actor in such case would be Taliban. Pakistan being influence on Taliban will bear the brunt. The situation in Afghanistan delineates a gloomy picture due to security reasons, lack of developed institutions and governance, corruption and drug trafficking.

The research paper "Withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan (Endgame): Issues and challenges for Pakistan" by Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwardi discerns the challenges for Pakistan as soon as United States withdraw its troops from the current battlefield. The target in Afghanistan was to curb the terrorism posing threat to United States of America. After killing of Osama Bin Laden, United States has achieved its goal and it is now safe from any future threat from Afghanistan. They are leaving to set their home right according to President Obama. Pakistan will be the target of any situation arising in Afghanistan. According to the researcher, insurgency in Afghanistan is inevitable due to Taliban's designs and this will have a direct impact on Pakistan.

Afghanistan is graveyard of empires and once again a superpower is turning its back on this land. This is the general discourse today while the withdrawal of NATO forces is ahead by the end of this year. United States invaded Afghanistan to dismantle the Taliban and Al-Qaeda nexus to save United States from any further attack like 9/11 and save American people. After that any such attack could not be carried out on American soil. Yet the mishandling of matters in Afghanistan increased the area of action for Al-Qaeda. The upcoming years will bring challenges for Pakistan particularly and the region specially. Pakistan's close links with Taliban can earn it benefits but it may also cost heavily as it is now paying the price.

Background

Since inception Afghanistan had been an open sore for Pakistan. The Afghan support for Pakhtoonistan and rivalry towards Pakistan drew major attention from Pakistani politics. Soviet support for PAKHTUN issue increased Russian influence in Afghanistan. Pak-Afghan trade reached at halt. Landlocked Afghanistan and USSR signed trade agreement. With this Soviet influence in Afghanistan increased. Afghanistan started a campaign for PAKHTUNISTAN.

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In history there is no reference of such free piece of land which Afghanistan advocated. The purpose behind this was a route through tribal areas and Baluchistan to sea. Afghanistan always objected Durand line and refused to accept it as legitimate border between Afghanistan and Pakistan though it was drawn with British government on Afghan request. Legally it was well settled that it was to be inherited by state absorbing this territory. All Afghan claims for Pakhtun unity were barren of any historical, geographical and legal grounds. Mere language could not become uniting factor. (Burke & ZIRING, year: page)

After the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan Pakistan found a chance to get involved in Afghanistan. Pakistan was majorly motivated by its policy of 'strategic depth' against India and also to stop Soviet expansion eastwards. The western interest in this war gave Pakistan immense economic and military benefit. Pakistan was able to grasp influence in Kabul and later all over Afghanistan through its support for Mujahideen and later Taliban. Pakistan sold its position well. After Soviet evacuation, all governments in Pakistan succeeding Zia paid special attention to Afghanistan. The purpose was to restore strategic depth and avoid any adverse fall out in Afghanistan. (Hussain, 2008: pg)

9/11 changed the world political stage and global center of attention was Afghanistan once again. The US and allied attack, although, dismantled Taliban in Afghanistan but they found support and sanctuary in Pakistan. Although Pakistan had been supporting Taliban immensely, Osama Bin Laden was enough to create difficult situation for Pakistan (Khalid, 2013: pg). US-Afghan rivalry post 9/11 revolved around Osama Bin Laden. This situation deteriorated Pakistan's image internationally and Pakistan is tagged as safe haven for terrorists ignoring its efforts in War on Terror. Later, Killing of Osama in Abbotabad started a new story for Pakistan full of allegations and pressures. India was able to benefit most out of this weaker Pakistani position.

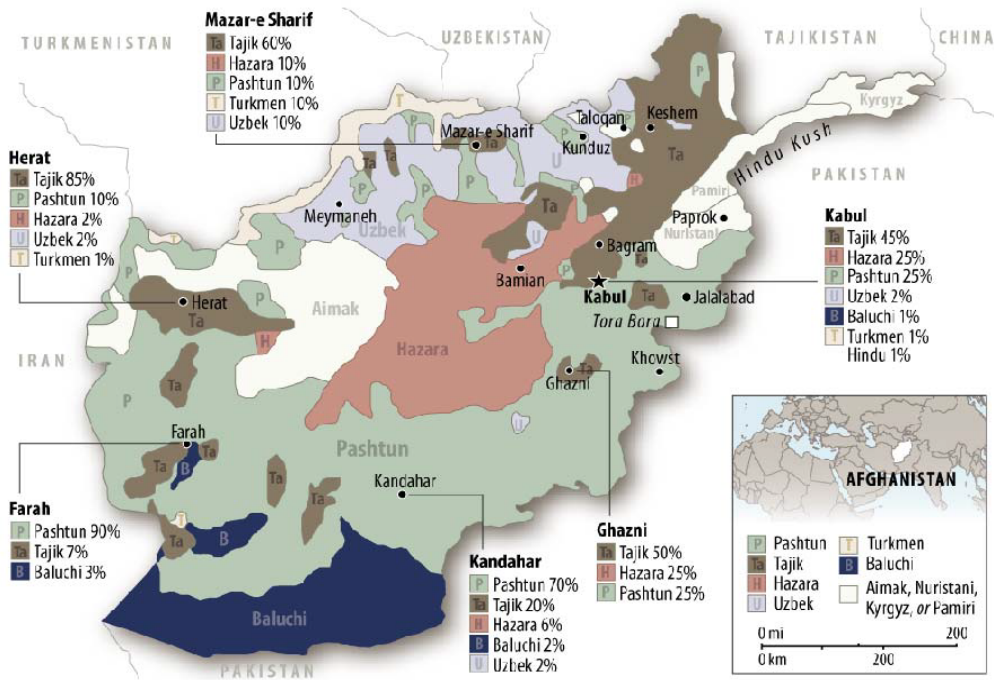
Current dynamics of Afghanistan security

Afghanistan is entering a new phase of its troubled history. Presidential elections are ahead in Afghanistan in April. 2014, and by the end of 2014, NATO forces are seeking complete draw down. A small number of American troops are planned to stay behind but it is still undecided that what number will be agreed upon. The Bilateral Security Agreement, which will decide immunity for residual US troops in Afghanistan is in pipeline till date. Without this agreement United States is not ready to leave its any soldier back in Afghanistan. (Mikser, 2012: 5)

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The Afghan society has a war torn tribal culture. In recent history it has witnessed a bloody civil war succeeding US evacuation from the region followed by Soviet disintegration. The war lords and tribes' agreement on any recipe for share in politics is a least likely scenario. The ethnic composition in Afghanistan is complex. The dominance of anyone ethnic group invites opposition of other ethnicities wary of their rights and influence. The glaring example is Northern Alliance against Taliban (Katzman, 2013: 3)

Figure 1:



Source: 2003 National Geographic Society. <http://www.afghan-network.net/maps/Afghanistan-Map.pdf>. Adapted

The present Karzai government is dominated by Northern Alliance and any political settlement without Taliban is impossible. Still any formula for political settlement in Afghanistan is far to reach any conclusion but one can discern plausibly that US efforts are to take all groups on board. The dominant Pashtuns cannot be ignored but the command cannot be handed over to them completely. The major stance of all foreign actors in Afghanistan today is a solution which is 'Afghan owned and Afghan led' indicating a total internal setup by Afghanis themselves with only foreign assistance in security,

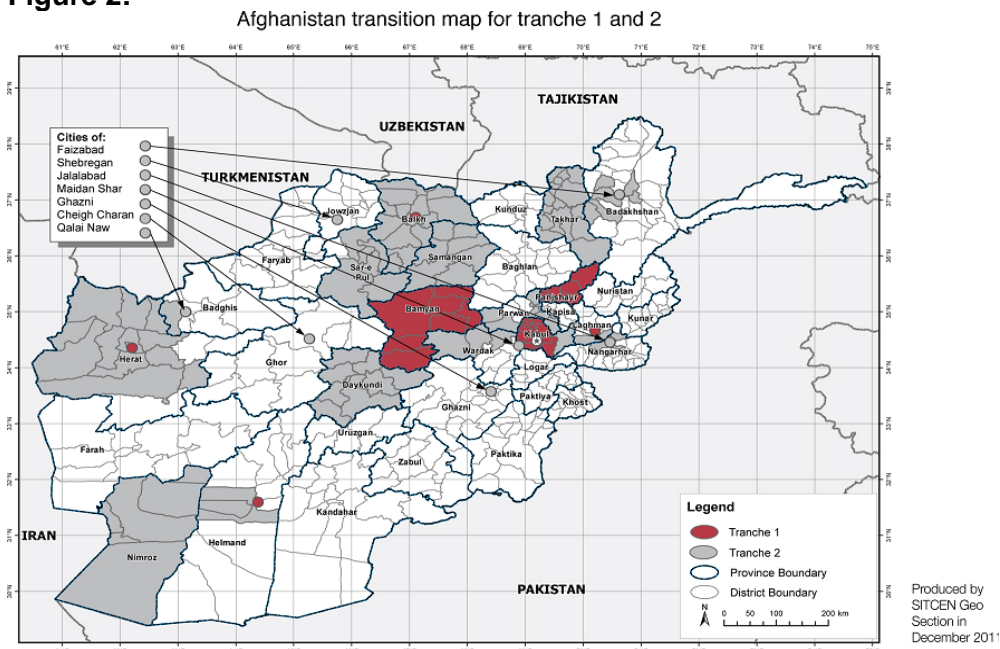
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economy and governance. Afghan security is vital for the world generally and for the region specifically being direct beneficiaries of this situation.

The Afghan National Security Force is point of focus currently. The Afghan National army and Police are ready to take command as soon as the gradual withdrawal of NATO/ISAF troops reaches its last stages. But there is a perplexing question of the effectiveness of these troops. The plan shows that ANSF's growth is arranged to be 352,000 by October, 2012. The number of ANA would be 195,000 and that of ANP would be 157,000. Currently these forces conduct 90% of their operations with jointly with coalition forces and for 40% of their operations they depend on coalition forces' advises and assistance. The estimated budget of ANSF at Chicago Summit is \$4.1 billion which is still not promised to be borne completely by coalition forces. (Mickser, 2012: 7)

The operational capability and competency of ANSF cannot be relied upon. The force comprises of troops from different ethnicities. The Afghan Police is specially indulged in corruption and narcotics. A third of entire force is to be replaced every year due to desertions(Iqbal, 2012: pg). After leaving the forces their exposure to militant society worsens the situation. The sophisticated training and planning makes them more valuable for their tribe. Additionally the 'green on blue' attacks are a source of constant trouble for coalition forces (Mickser, 2013: 7). High number of Taliban recruited in ANSF now carries out such activities causing heavy loss to ISAF. These realities draw a gloomy picture of Afghan security post 2014.

Figure 2:



Source: NATO Secretary General's Annual Report, January 2012.

This figure sheds light on the mechanism of withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan. The residual forces are speculated to be maximum 3,000 to 9,000. Pentagon deems it important to leave behind at least 15,000 to 20,000 forces (Iqbal, 2013: 5). But this presence is subject to any mutual agreement over immunity for residual forces which is yet to be decided. USA has agreed for long term economic assistance in Enduring Partnership Agreement (Katzman, 2013: 58). But that entirely depends on favorable security environment.

Political scenario in Afghanistan post 2014

Afghanistan is heading towards a new episode. Following the withdrawal of foreign troops the form of political setup in Kabul is a burning question and also it is highly suspected whether another civil war may erupt. Karzai government is enjoying control in and around Afghanistan only and the rest of country is in highly volatile situation being burnt by insurgency. Poor governance of this government has crippled it outside Kabul (Tellis&Peral, 2011: 25). Ultimately the government is to be run by the Afghans as the

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foreign troops are about to leave. The mandate of coalition forces was to restrict Al-Qaeda.

“United States goal in Afghanistan is to deny safe haven to al Qaeda and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan government. The strategic concept for the United States, along with our international partners and the Afghans, is to degrade the Taliban insurgency while building sufficient Afghan capacity to secure and govern their country, creating conditions for the United States to begin reducing its forces by July 2011 [...] This approach is not fully resourced counterinsurgency or nation building, but a narrower approach tied more tightly to the core goal of disrupting, dismantling and eventually defeating al Qaeda and preventing al Qaeda’s return to safe haven in Afghanistan or Pakistan” (White House “Terms Sheet” for Afghanistan Pakistan Strategy, 29 November 2009; Woodward, 2010).

The much advocated ‘Afghan owned and Afghan led’ peace process depends on pain staking of Afghans primarily but the role of Pakistan and Afghanistan is of critical importance. The idea behind this notion is delegation of power to Afghans with a suitable and proper power sharing formula so they are responsible for their government themselves. But the US economic assistance is of vital importance for situation post 2014 (Oskarson, 2013: 3). According to a report of Toby Dodge of International Institute of Strategic Studies the Afghan central government has only one way out. That is which was being followed prior to 1979 that federation reaches out to all regions to get them politically engaged in order to avoid any defection and strong opposition to centers (Oskarson, 2013: 2).

Afghanistan post 2014: Role of Pakistan

Since 1979, Pakistan is perpetually involved in Afghanistan. Although its Afghan policy is primarily driven by Indian threat, yet it also endeavored to counter Afghan support for Pakhtun issue. Pakistan has been enjoying deep influence in Afghanistan since that time but its major support base is in Taliban. It has always ignored other ethnic groups and particularly Northern Alliance which is dominant in Kabul today. Northern Alliance enjoyed wide support of India and Afghanistan. Indian support towards Northern Alliance further added to bitter relations with Pakistan. It certainly affected Pakistan’s relations with other states of the region as Iran is also a supporter of Northern Alliance and particularly emphasizes on Shia population of Afghanistan. Similarly, Central Asian Republics have ethnic affinities and rivalries in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s support for one particular group brings foreign policy challenges for Pakistan.

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Since Pakistan openly supported Afghan Mujahideen during Afghan-Soviet war with generous help of USA and Saudi Arabia, it had developed deep rooted links with them and this relationship was inherited by succeeding group 'Taliban'. Even entering into war on terror Pakistan remained stick to its policy of supporting only this group. The challenges of the current decade revealed certain secrets to Pakistan. 'Strategic shift' in policy towards Afghanistan revealed transformed approach in Pakistani elite to bring about a political setup as a solution for Afghanistan which may ease problems for Pakistan. Pakistan started contacts with Northern Alliance which was a very rare event as it was being done first time in decades (Yusuf, 2013: 19). But it clearly showed and proved Pakistani practical and actual support for 'Afghan owned and Afghan led' post 2014 setup.

The decision of 'strategic shift' had been taken in 2006 but Pakistan started advocating it in 2012 and its practical implication is seen in this year by steps taken in Islamabad for Afghan reconciliation (Yusuf, 2013: 17). In October, 2012 representatives of High Peace council visited Islamabad and urged Pakistani support for Afghan reconciliation (Wazir, 2012: 93). Kabul government knows that without Pakistan they would be unable to bring Taliban on table of talks which is vital for any solution in Afghanistan. The major financial stakeholder in Kabul today is Northern Alliance owing to its huge investments (Wazir, 2012: 93). They want their financial security by forgetting previous enmity and in return Pakistan wants to end its isolation by having contacts with all Afghan stakeholders.

The major step was taken by Pakistan by releasing Taliban leadership. Although, initially medium level commanders were released yet it had undertaken to release important Taliban leaders also (Mazhar, Khan, Goraya 2013: 70). Mullah Baradar was a key to many problems in negotiations in Afghanistan. Though he is still in Pakistani custody but by keeping him under watch in Karachi Pakistani government is definitely playing its card to assert itself considerably in Afghan peace process. Taliban is the major and most potential element which may disrupt peace in Afghanistan. Now a 'contact group' has been setup to give safe passage to Taliban delegates involved in dialogue (UNSC Resolution 2082, 2012). So, Afghanistan itself is looking towards Pakistan for using its influence on Taliban.

Pakistan has showed seriousness in this process which is also clear by its efforts practically done. High Peace Council requested Pakistan to release Taliban leadership. Pakistan acted upon this and started releasing them gradually. Pakistan also called conference of Ulema to find a solution for upcoming challenges in Afghanistan. Pakistani Army Chief and Foreign Minister, both were present at Brussels conference in December, 2012. It

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projected Pakistani eagerness to be relevant and required in Afghan reconciliation process. This is globally accepted that Pakistan is the most important actor in Afghanistan issue and they want Pakistan to keep playing its part. For this it is has been given EU Autonomous Trade Preferences (Mazhar, Khan, Goraya, 2013: 70).

Afghanistan has signed Strategic Agreements with India and USA. Now Pakistan is emphasizing to sign similar agreement with Afghanistan to keep itself equally relevant after coalition forces withdrawal in Afghanistan. Pakistan wants to open new avenues to safeguard its foreign policy and to bring itself out of isolation. Regional countries want a peaceful Afghanistan for their security and economy. Peaceful Afghanistan can become a very fruitful trade corridor. In case of civil war whole region will be in same condition as it remained during last decade. Currently, Russia, China and India are involved in Afghanistan with huge investments. Pakistan will be direct beneficiary or aggrieved of Afghan situation post 2014.

Afghanistan post 2014: Security implications for Pakistan

The word peace, used for Afghanistan, is not used in absolute terms rather relative. The memories of civil war erupting in Afghanistan after US withdrawal following Soviet disintegration are fresh in international politics. Western World does not want another Islamic Emirate of Mullah Omer over there. This situation can only be averted if a successful reconciliation process brings all Afghans to Kabul and give them share in prospective government. But one question remains there that have Taliban left their dream of Emirate? The raising of flag of Islamic Emirate on Doha Office gives a different view. Any situation in Afghanistan will bring about same results for Pakistan.

Pakistan is particularly concerned about insurgencies in its tribal areas along Afghan border in KPK and Baluchistan. In FATA, the security concern is TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan). This group has rivalries within and is without any single leadership. This threat will surge with US withdrawal and it is most likely that Pakistan will have to pour in more force in this belt. Separatist movements of Baluchistan and their external support through Afghanistan is another security issue. Pakistan has been mentioning its reservations on Indian support for insurgencies in its border areas. Although, it is believed that with US withdrawal this support will decrease but the potential and connections of these terrorist outfits will keep on daunting security agencies (Wazir, 2012: 94-96).

Afghan High Peace Council gave "Peace Process Roadmap to 2015" in 2012 as their vision for reconciliation process. It encompasses some idealistic

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approach. It requires respect of Afghan constitution, emphasizes on human rights specially women's rights and disarming armed groups by dialogue (FRC, 2012). This vision seems to be unachievable in totality. Taliban seem to be strongest actor and they remain stick to their agenda. This will directly affect security situation in FATA. The terrorist network in FATA is loosely connected with each other but they have links all over the country. Pakistan already badly hit by it badly might not be able to absorb another terror wave.

There are divergent views on the form of government, security, trade and investment conditions in Afghanistan after 2014. Present government in Kabul is Northern Alliance dominated and it will strive to keep its influence. Southern Afghanistan is already under wave of Pashtun insurgency. Most likely, Pashtuns will endeavor to achieve maximum control in Kabul though with a comparatively lenient shade of their Islamic Emirate. Afghanistan is already divided in warlord fiefdoms and this condition may prevail. There are also prospects of reconciliation, reconstruction and emergence of Emirate (Lejin, 2013 :2). Thus, the prospects of insecurity and instability dominate.

The negative impacts on Pakistani security are plausible on policy making elite and it has been taking serious steps since 2012 specially. Afghan refugees have found shelter in Pakistan for long. But for last few years Pakistan had been working out their return to back home. With withdrawal approaching close, Afghan population has started its influx into Pakistan (Dawn, 1st Jan, 2014). Pakistan has clearly given its policy direction to respond this and Ambassador to United States, Jalil Abbas Jilani, stated that Pakistan deemed complete withdrawal of coalition forces. It wants some troops back to sustain security.

Pakistan is engaging Afghanistan the way he has not done earlier to have control on security somehow. Pakistan invested \$300 million in various projects in health, education and infrastructure. Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement is another effort to help strengthening Afghan economy (Gul, 2012: 13-15). Afghan Transit Trade Agreement allows transit of Afghan goods to India from Pakistan through Wagah border but does not allow Indian goods to reach Afghan Border through this route. This can be attributed to Pakistani security concerns towards India. It has allowed passage for Afghan goods to help Afghan economy. By permitting Pakistani routes for Indian trade Pakistan clearly shows its discontent for India-Afghanistan relations.

United States has developed immensely strong intelligence and surveillance capability in the region after working with Afghan and Pakistani intelligence. This they can maintain also after leaving this region. The surveillance strategy has poured billions of dollars in the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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This will erupt a chaotic war for money in this area particularly when United States is also considering 'zero option' i-e, US is also considering leaving zero troops in Afghanistan. They did not leave any combatant soldier in Iraq too and they state that merely diplomatic presence is serving their purpose and has saved Iraq becoming Iranian puppet (Iqbal, 2012: 7-8).

Pakistan is left with few options in Afghanistan. It has to play its role in stability of Afghanistan in any case to avoid further militancy within Pakistani border. Already Pakistan has lost \$70-80 billion in economy and about 50,000 of its civilians. Only ISI lost its 350 men (Iqbal, 2012: 7). Prospective conflict in Afghanistan, which seems imminent, is going to inflict major injury to the state. The actions by Pakistan in few previous months delineate a better picture of state policy to secure its own territory. Pakistan is and will be most relevant actor in Afghanistan. The events there are going to cost a heavy price or it can pay us a good reward.

Afghanistan post 2014-Regional security and Foreign Policy compulsions for Pakistan

South Asia is one of the most important regions on the planet. It has been neglected yet but now and onwards it is going to be focus of global concentration. The region inhabits about half of global population and witnesses major conflicts. Four nuclear states in this part of Earth compete for their national interests and security concerns. These realities make it a volatile region. United States policy of focus on South East Asia and checking China also makes this part relevant. By the end of 2014, with withdrawal of foreign troops regional states will face a challenging situation due to uncertainty in Afghanistan. Pakistan has to respond concomitantly to eschew another period of isolation.

India

India sees Afghanistan a potential ally to counter Pakistan and aims at hitting Pakistan's 'Strategic Depth' policy. It maintained relations with Northern Alliance and exploited their grievance for Pakistan. Taliban had been source of irritation for India and it is concerned of its dominant role in Kabul due to this group's intimacy with Pakistan. A potential route to Central Asia and a link to 'New Silk Road' make Afghanistan more attractive and win focal position in Indian foreign policy. India has invested about \$2 billion in different sectors. It is now taking deep interest in troops training, energy sector and governance after 2014 (Katzman, 2013: 51). India has also constructed road to Iranian border to link landlocked Afghanistan to Chahbahar port of Iran in Strait of

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Hormuz. The remarkable achievement for India is Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2011 which ensures enduring relations.

Pakistan has always responded in Afghanistan and its relations depended on threat from India. All Indian efforts are to deny Pakistani influence in Kabul as earlier and delink it from benefits in Afghanistan. Indian aspirations to emerge as a regional hegemon draw its attention in Afghanistan. Although Indian private sector has only invested \$25 million so far yet government is deeply involved in providing financial assistance and training to staff in health, education and military sectors. Another investment of \$10-12 billion is in pipeline (Mazhar, Khan, Goraya, 2013: 72). These all facts put a cumbersome responsibility on Pakistan to safeguard its interest. Afghan tilt towards India is not hidden since 1947. Currently, Pakistan's policy towards India also seems to restore dialogue. A comprehensive policy is needed to address this growing threat in neighborhood.

China

China is not a major stakeholder in Afghanistan in terms of investment except gas pipeline from Central Asia. However secure Afghanistan is as much important for China as much for other region. It is particularly concerned about East Turkestan Islamic Movement, separatist group in China. It still keeps up its policy of 'Non-intervention' but reemergence of Taliban is equally perplexing for it. China has not agreed to assist in \$4.1billion assistance program for troops after 2014 but has undertaken to provide training to some troops. (Perlez & Jane, 2012: 78). China Shows Interest in Afghan Security, Fearing Taliban Would Help Separatists. (New York Times). To ensure long term engagement China and Afghanistan have signed Strategic Partnership agreement. For Pakistan China is one of the most important partners. It becomes necessary to care for its concerns as it also involves Pakistan directly.

Iran

Iran shares a common border with Afghanistan. Iran deems western Afghanistan as its part as it was under Persian Empire. Iran's Interests in Afghanistan are still vital owing to Afghan Shia population and afghan security impact on Iran (Mazhar, Khan, Goraya, 2013: 74). Now when Iran and West are on road to reconciliation on Iranian nuclear issue, the challenges for Pakistan will increase. Iran may offer its Chahbahar port for logistic support to NATO forces when they need it much for withdrawal and the route from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been blocked by Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf. This

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convergence of interests will further marginalize Pakistan and its options will remain less.

Russia and Central Asia

Russia is re-emerging economic giant and it is concerned about Afghanistan due to any harm to its security. It needs a stable regional environment to carry out its options. Since Bonn I talks, it has showed keen interest in Afghanistan to bring any formula on table which may accelerate stability. Central Asian Republics have immense economic potential and mineral resources to offer to emerging economic giants. These states are desperately looking forward to offer their resources to achieve their economic stability. They are landlocked and their dependence is definitely on Afghanistan. Thus, stability in Afghanistan is vital for their interests.

Gulf States

Saudi Arabia and other gulf states have always supporter Taliban. The Afghan Jihad was carried out with their generous funds. Their interest still remains in Afghanistan to contain their rivals. Their interests will be met when the Afghan government has sufficient Taliban representation. This refers to another Gulf crisis on the Afghan land perhaps this time. They need to maintain their presence after NATO withdrawal to contain Iranian influence In Afghanistan.

Findings

The above research has put forward certain facts about Afghanistan post 2014 and its security implications for Pakistan:

1. Afghanistan is not ready for NATO forces withdrawal. The arrangements for security, governance and administration are not in any way satisfactory to run the state smoothly.
2. The ethnic composition of Afghanistan and their tribal history of fighting put forward a huge challenge. Afghanistan is at war continuously since thirteenth century either with powers invading it or within.
3. Pakistan is directly affected by Afghan conflict and with coalition forces withdrawal the security of Pakistan will be affected much. The loss Pakistan has absorbed in aftermath of war on Terror may increase many folds.
4. Pakistan will be faced with foreign policy challenges in upcoming situation as all global and regional powers will try to assert themselves in Afghanistan.

Suggestions

The challenges which Pakistan is faced with demand a well deliberated policy to minimize the loss Pakistan can bear. This paper puts forward some suggestions:

1. Pakistan's security is at stake immensely after 2014. Militancy within Pakistan is a major challenge. Before NATO withdrawal, Pakistan needs to draw down a policy to reach out all such militant groups and settle this matter before re-emergence of militancy in Afghanistan.
2. The NATO withdrawal will give more space of action to militants on both sides of border. Pakistani government must chalk out foreign policy to take Afghan government on board to deny safe havens to such groups.
3. Pakistan needs to exert its influence on Taliban to reach a settlement plan for forming government. The world is looking towards Pakistan for its influence. But this time Pakistan cannot afford to neglect other factions in Afghan government.
4. Pakistan needs a diversified foreign policy to maintain relations with all regional states and avoid confrontation in Afghanistan.
5. Pakistan must put special attention on regional economic integration to engage with all states.
6. Indian presence in Afghanistan is of special importance for Pakistan. Instead of directly inflicting with them Pakistan must reach out to all stakeholders in Afghanistan and try to win their trust.

Conclusion

Pakistan and Afghanistan share so much commonalities i-e, religion, culture, races. The politics of one affect the other widely. The security and politics of both nations share so much that any event in Afghanistan distresses Pakistan's defense and foreign policy. The regional states see their interests in Afghanistan and try to attain their interests. This scenario poses Pakistan with a new challenge to be dealt with wisely. The internal condition of Pakistan is already very vulnerable and any uncertainty in Afghanistan will add to this. The Pakistani economic downfall is the outcome of War on Terror and degradation in security. The Afghanistan after withdrawal of NATO forces will be again in more or less similar circumstances as it was in 1990s. Pakistan needs to consider its own interests and chalk out strategy to meet its interests.

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