

## **The New Great Game in Afghanistan: Role of India (A Pakistani Perspective)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Afghanistan's strategic and economic importance hits the world actors. India's active involvement is quite realistic. India took the better part of the last decade in getting over her strategic timidity to assume a more assertive security role in Afghanistan. India was content to take refuge behind the façade of exercising 'soft power' only, oblivious to the strategic reality that India had legitimate strategic interests in Afghanistan. Pakistan is also founding itself in a new caul-dron in Afghanistan after Indian active involvement in Afghanistan. The present study is an effort to understand the great game in Afghanistan and Indian motives. Indian involvement raises questions like, What is the nature of new great game in Afghanistan, who are main actors, what can be the future map in Afghanistan. The research concludes that the new great game in Afghanistan is constantly disturbing the balance of power in the region which is not in favor of the stability of South Asian region.

**KEY WORDS:** New great game, Afghanistan, strategic, Taliban, Indian motives

### **Introduction**

Afghanistan has remained central in the global power politics since 19<sup>th</sup> century. Afghanistan, at that time, was cause of rivalry between two imperial powers Russia and Britain. Early 1830 have emphasized the strategic importance of the area British relations with Afghanistan assumed new dimensions due to the fear of Soviet invasion. Soviet Union was extending its strategic and political power in Asia. British were concerned over the expansionist policy of Soviet Union that is why it decided to contain the Soviet influence in the region of Asia. In their power struggle, both Britain and Soviet Union were trying to narrow down each other's influence on Afghanistan. In this quest in 1838 UK invaded Afghanistan with 21000 of its own and Indian colonial troops and in 1878 with twice that number to counter Russian influence in country. Famous writer Kipling named it as "The Great Game" in which Afghanistan was a hard pawn. Afghanistan played a role of buffer zone between two colonial powers of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Afghanistan is an

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unfortunate country as far as its location is concerned because it always had foreign intervention in its internal affairs. Due to the location of Afghanistan global powers take it as the route to the central Asian states and their rich resources.

### **Geo-strategic Position of Afghanistan**

It is mainly due to geo-strategic location of Afghanistan that it has remained central to the global political agenda of the super powers. Afghanistan is a land locked country. It is situated at the crossroads of central South and West Asia. It shares its borders with central Asia on north China's province Xining in the east Iran on the West and in South West with Pakistan. Afghanistan occupies a unique geostrategic placement in South Asian region, which is an important element that helps to shape its history, economy, ethnic diversity and political situation in the region. A century ago, *Rudyard Kipling* mentioned Afghanistan in his novel "*Kim*" as a cause of geopolitical rivalry of the Great Game. The British colonial power was aware of geostrategic importance of Afghanistan. They considered it as keystone in the defense of the Indian subcontinent. "The soviet for their part had drawn exactly the opposite conclusion with regard to Afghanistan's geopolitical role within the region. The weakness of Pakistan, the tempting recourses of oil richer states of middle east, and the U.S distancing itself from foreign commitments, all raised the possibilities of major or even decisive geopolitical gain on the soviet southern flank through the utilization of Afghanistan's central position" (Naby & Margnus, 2002). The economic interests inside Afghanistan are not very significant; however, Afghanistan's geographical location makes it prominent in the region and in the world. The Afghan people are also aware of the importance of their country's geographical location and they are paying the cost of this established fact.

### **Afghanistan after Soviet Withdrawal**

In 1989 Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. Now the challenge before Afghanistan was the internal stability and devising of a workable system. Instead of working for a stable state there started a civil war in Afghanistan. After several years of fighting, along with facing severe economic crisis that had rendered the Afghan government at the time completely dependent on the Soviet Union, the Afghan communist regime collapsed in 1992. The civil war finally resulted in the establishment of the "Islamic State of Afghanistan" led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, with continued infighting among anti-communist forces such as Ahmed Shah Massoud's forces and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezbi Islami. In 1996, the country was renamed the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" by the Taliban, after seizing

control of the majority of the country. This newly established state was recognized only by Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Pakistan. Ahmad Shah Massoud, created the United Front (Northern Alliance) in opposition to the Taliban and fought for the democratic system to be implanted in Afghanistan, while Al Qaeda supported the Taliban with troops of imported fighters from Arab countries and Central Asia.

By July 1998, the Taliban had taken control of much of the area north of Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. Massoud stayed in opposition until his assassination in September 2001. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the US attacked Afghanistan and bombed the Taliban forces and their military infrastructure. In November and December 2001, ground troops of the United Front ousted the Taliban from power in Kabul. During this entire time period India did not recognize Taliban administration in Afghanistan.

## **Taliban regime (1996-2001) and India**

Taliban are group of Muslim fundamentalists, they took control of Afghanistan in 1996 and remained in power till 2001. “The



Taliban was initially a mixture of mujahedeen who fought against the Soviet invasion of the 1980s, and a group of Pashtun tribesmen who spent time in Pakistani religious schools and received assistance from Pakistan's ISI. The group's leaders practiced Wahhabism, an orthodox form of Sunni Islam similar to that practiced in Saudi Arabia. With the help of government defections, the Taliban emerged as a force in Afghan politics in 1994 in the midst of a civil war between

forces in northern and southern Afghanistan. They gained an initial territorial foothold in the southern city of Kandahar, and over the next two years expanded their influence through a mixture of force, negotiation, and payoffs. In 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul, the Afghan capital, and took control of the national government” (Bruno and Kaplan, 2009).

During Taliban regime there was end of diplomatic relation between both states. India ceased its diplomatic relation with Afghanistan and closed its embassy from Kabul. India was afraid from increasing Islamic militancy in the region. To counter Taliban India started supporting Northern Alliances and it provided high-altitude warfare equipment, helicopter technicians, medical services, and tactical advice. “According to one report, Indian military support to anti-Taliban forces totaled US\$70 million, including five Mi-17 helicopters, and

US\$8 million worth of high-altitude equipment in 2001”(McLeod, 2008). India extensively supported the new administration in Afghanistan (Ishaan, 2009). During the course of the Afghan war, India came to support Ahmed Shah Massoud’s Northern Alliance because of its hostility toward the Pakistani-supported mujahedeen groups (Howenstein, Ganguly, 2009). Map of Afghanistan in late 1996 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File%3A1996afghan.png>)

## **New Great Game in Afghanistan and Indian Involvement**

On the world globe Afghanistan is located at the midpoint of world’s largest continent. This location is the only reason that it had been conquered many times in past. Each new subjugator had its own motives and interests not only in Afghanistan but in the region as well. After the event of 9/11, Afghanistan again has to face the situation of turmoil and chaos due to attack of NATO forces leading by U.S. It is not NATO forces alone but India, China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran are also key actors in Afghanistan; they are playing their role to meet their strategic and political interests in the region.

Basic rationale of the US was to capture Osama bin Laden, destroy Al-Qaida’s network, welfare of Afghan people, and to counter terrorists’ activities. However under lying motives of the US are to presenting NATO to the world as active military organization, by taking control of Afghanistan and keeping check on Iran, China, and Russia. Afghanistan is gateway to oil rich central Asian Republics and US can get secure access to oil and mineral resources by taking control of Afghanistan. As far as India is concerned, it is not member of NATO but it is very active for reconstruction and economic development of Afghanistan. Currently India is one of the biggest donors of Afghanistan, both states have signed many treaties and agreements of cooperation, and this shows the long-term interests of India in Afghanistan. India wants to marginalize Pakistan’s influence in the region by increasing its influence in Afghanistan. By doing so, it can get secure access to Central Asian Republic’s natural resources as well. Since 2001 India has been involved in many developmental projects, one of the major projects is the 280 kilometers strategic road in Afghanistan that link it to Iran border, India has provided \$80 million for this project. Reconstruction of the Salma Dam power project is also competed with assistance of India. During the visit of Hamid Karzia to Delhi, India and Afghanistan signed the preferential trade agreement, according to which 38 items that Afghanistan exports to India have been given 100% tariff concessions. The role and number of working consulates is also very controversial, a Pakistani news channel claims that number of working consulates in Afghanistan is more than 13 and these are the training camps of Indian intelligence agency RAW to create insurgency in Baluchistan. On June 2009 senior diplomat, Burns gave Indian officials a short and cryptic order “shutdown Indian consulates in Afghanistan reduce presence in Kabul and stop sending mercenaries across the

Durand line”. “Former commander of US and ISAF forces in Afghanistan, General Stanely McChrystal has, in his assessment to Secretary of defense Robert Gates, said, “Increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan is likely to exacerbate regional tensions”. Moreover, he said that although Indian involvement in form of development projects is beneficial for Afghan people but it encourage Pakistani countermeasure in Afghanistan or India” (Joshi, 2009).

## **Indian Motives in Afghanistan**

### **Political and Strategic Motives**

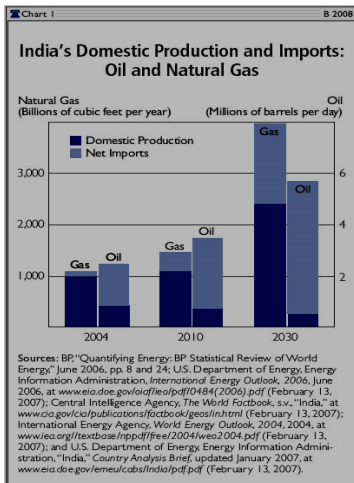
India is looking for a significant role in the territory after the collapse of Taliban regime and formation of so called democratic government in Afghanistan. That provides influence to its domestic and regional politics. In past Afghanistan played a role of pawn for India against its rival states.

India is a developing country, still it is the second largest donor of Afghanistan .It is providing large amount of aid to Afghanistan. There are many political reasons behind this aid program. All major regional actors are occupied with the task of making their places in the territory by using different ways and means; India is trying to do this by involving itself into Afghanistan. There is race going on between India and China for dominance in the region. China is an emerging superpower; India’s intensifying efforts in Afghanistan make it prominent in region and to limit china’s influence in the region. “After 9/11 attacks and launch of “operation Enduring Freedom” by US it provides India an opportunity to pursue its foreign policy goals of attaining hegemonic position in the region” (Treved, 2008).

It is important to denote that India want to marginalize the role of Pakistan in Afghanistan and obviously America is not unaware of Indian activities against Pakistan. As a matter of fact, all three parties have overriding national interests in the situation (The Great Game revisited, 2007).

India also wants to limit the role of China in Afghanistan. China is growing its influence in Afghanistan to utilize unexploited resources. India is providing assistance in many projects of reconstruction to counter the influence of China in the region. Afghanistan is the gateway of oil riche Central Asian Republics (CARs) but India does not have direct land passage towards CARs; it has to depend on Afghanistan to access CARs. The penetrating influence of India has advantage for India that it acts like a bridge to enter into CARs. Convivial relations with Afghanistan and its association in almost each field of Afghanistan give prospect of developing good ties with CARs.

“India’s diversifying and developing economy demands exploration of energy resources, and CARs have rich oil, gas and hydrocarbon resources. India set a military base in Tajikistan located at Farkhor, this base has been operational since



May 2002, and this base is presently being used to transport relief assistance that India has been pledged to Afghanistan” (Bedi, 2002). This military base shows strong ties between both states and also physical presence in the region to keep check on Pakistan and China. Although Uzbekistan is not abundant in terms of energy resources, but is a major producer of cotton. Apart from oil and gas India have other interests too in CARs including trade of arms, to undermine Pakistan’s influence and try to limit China’s influence in the region which is difficult task because China has land borders with three CARs –Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan and it has broad strategic interests in whole Central Asian region.

It is mainly due to future energy requirements and strategic positioning that has compelled India for its recent diplomatic push into Central Asia. India is planning to import gas from Turkmenistan via TAPI; it’s named after the initials of four participating countries (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India). This is very uncertain and in case if India gets the long term supply of gas than it would need to go through with Afghanistan and Pakistan. There is disagreement on how much gas the country actually holds. “According to the BP Statistical Review 2009, Turkmenistan has the world’s fourth largest reserves of natural gas, 7.94 trillion cubic meters (TCM), exceeded only by Russia, Iran and Qatar. Turkmenistan’s 2009 ranking represents a sharp upgrade from 2008 (2.43 TCM). The new estimate follows the 2008 audit of the huge South Yolotan-Osman field in western Turkmenistan, conducted by the UK auditing firm Gaffney, Cline & Associates. The audit estimated the reserves of this field alone to be between 4 and 14 TCM of gas, making it the world's fourth or fifth largest field” (Foster, 2010).



**Proposed TAPI Gas Pipe Line Source: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

## **Economic Motives**

India's economic interests are no less significant. They are as important as the political gains. After disastrous Soviet takeover, the civil war for control between Taliban and the Northern Alliance and the US bombing campaign to remove the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden, reconstruction emerged as a major priority. India can help in this reconstruction and rebuild the infrastructure. Even if the pipeline does not come through Afghanistan, the presence of a moderate regime in Afghanistan will enhance the flow of oil, which is essential for economic stability.

India is in an effort to emerge as a regional super power and it is trying to enhance its trade in the region. Afghanistan is the second largest export market of India. As Afghanistan is a landlocked country. India is relying more on Iranian port at Chabahar due to Pakistan's refusal to give permission to imports goods from India through Wagha border. Chabahar is expected to play crucial role in India's quest for energy security as it would give access to CARs. "According to preferential agreement signed in 2003, 38 items that Afghanistan exports to India have been given 100 percent tariff concession" (Trevedi, 2007, p.77). Industrialization in India demands new markets for its exports and Afghanistan provides good market for its exports.

## **Economic Importance of CARs for India**

Geographical location of Afghanistan makes clear the interests of India in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a lot to gain in terms of energy supply and transit fees. By becoming part of this regional distributional network, India will tie itself into border Central Asian interest and acquire a foothold in the region (2007, p.71) India inevitably needs Afghanistan link to maintain its trade contacts with CARs. Turkmenistan has huge resources of Natural gas until 1991, it was part of Soviet Union and its gas flowed North through Soviet pipelines. After collapse of Soviet Union US has promoted gas pipeline through Afghanistan.

Strategically Afghanistan is gate way to oil and gas pipeline rich CARs. Strategic relations with Afghanistan and presence of Indian military in Afghanistan make the task easy. India is signing many deals of energy with states of CARs, as reported New Delhi and Astana signed for energy-industrial Corporation .Kazakhstan already supplies India with nuclear fuel from its significant Uranium deposits, while India plans to increase its nuclear civil program. India's continuing relationships and participation in the project for Turkmenistan, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (TAPI) natural gas pipeline has contributed to increase its profile in the region. Bilateral Energy Corporation between India Uzbekistan extends to Afghanistan. Nor is Uzbekistan alone in deepening its relations with the subcontinent .given India's need to increase its energy imports, it is not surprising that a significant economic axis fro its newly

developing corporation with Central Asia is in the oil and gas sector (Cutler, 2011).



Source: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

### Internal and External Security Motives

India is a huge country and it has deep security concerns on both internal and external fronts. The insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir has coincided with the rise of the Taliban. The Taliban were detected to directly involve in insurgencies and terrorism in the Indian state. The closure of terrorist camps across Afghanistan becomes the top priority for India. Pakistan had 'strategic depth' in Taliban controlled Afghanistan. The collapse of Taliban regime reduced the room for strategic plot available to Pakistani forces.

The entire world is facing the threat of terrorism including India. To combat the terrorists' activities and to improve the capacity of Indian security forces, the US states department's Antiterrorists Assistance Program has trained hundreds of Indian police and security officers. In the words of B. Raman global terrorist refers to the activities of Al Qaida and other Jihadi terrorist organization of different countries associated with it in the International Islamic Front (IIF) for Jihad against crusades and the Jewish people.

Internally India is facing many rebellion movements of Sikhs, Mao and Kashmir movement. "The export of terrorists to Jammu and Kashmir from Afghanistan has been the most vital concern. The role played in the hijacking of Indian aircraft Islamic Fundamentalists demonstrated the level of viciousness that the Taliban regime had acquired a friendly and stable government in Afghanistan can lessen much of India's security concerns" (Singh, 2010). Afghanistan is considered as heaven for Jihadists with the alleged support of Pakistan. In Indian perspective they are being used by ISI for terrorists attack against India in Mumbai attacks and Embassy of India in Kabul. Physical presence of India in Afghanistan can mould public opinion in favor of India and it can keep a check on Terrorists activity of Jehadis. India need to make sure that Afghan territory doesn't emerge as hot bed of anti- India Taliban and other extremist groups. Being the emerging



regional power India is required to play its role in stabilization of the region. This phenomenon is associated with stabilization of Afghanistan.

### **Sociological Motives**

Indian presence in Afghanistan also favors its social interests. India is very keen in promotion of its Culture and Hinduism. Direct involvement in Afghanistan provides India an opportunity to expand its culture in the region. Pavan Verma the current head of Indian council on cultural relations has argued that “culturally, India is a super power” and that Cultural diplomacy must be persuade for political ends” (Tharoor, 2009). Through increasing its influence in the Afghanistan India is availing opportunity for expansion of its culture and Hinduism in the region.

### **Efforts on Regional and International Level to Counter or Support Indian Strategies in Afghanistan**

Indian role is receiving multiple responses on its involvement in Afghanistan. On international level USA, Britain and Russia are supporting the Indian presence in Afghanistan while Pakistan and China are containing Indian presence in Afghanistan. Iran on the other hand occupies an intricate position. West views the presence of Iran in Afghanistan as doubtful.

## **USA on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

India being a candidate of regional super power is playing very crucial and critical role not only in Afghanistan but also in the region. International and regional actors have adopted different strategies on growing influence of India in Afghanistan. USA is engaged in war on terror in Afghanistan. USA has long term interests in South Asian region. India is penetrating its influence for its strategic, political and economic interests mainly with US support. The support of USA to India is not absolute; India is of crucial importance for US’s economy.

“United States welcomes Indian involvement in Afghanistan, Michele Flournoy, the US undersecretary of defense for policy supported role of India in Afghanistan on July 1, 2010 while in her speech to Asia society on future of US-India defense relations and said that we highly value India’s role and frankly the sacrifices India has made in support of this mission in building economic and social opportunities in Afghanistan. State department spokes man Mark Toner told reporters at his daily news conference on 14 may 2011 that India can play constructive role in Afghanistan and in the region. And we could certainly welcome their involvement” (India can play constructive role in Afghanistan, 2011).

Gen Stanely McChrystal discuss India’s increasing involvement in Afghanistan in his address to "COMISAF’s initial Assessment” on august 2009 as “Indian political and economically influence is increasing in Afghanistan,

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including significant development efforts and financial investment. In addition the current Afghan government is perceived by Islamabad to be pro Indian. While Indian activities are largely beneficial for Afghan people” (2009) Support of Indian activities in Afghanistan is in favor of US.

India is helpful in revival of USA’s nuclear industry that is one major reason for supporting India in Afghanistan. “In the 1950’s US provided assistance to develop nuclear energy under the atoms for peace program and it refused to sign the NPT and India labeled it as biased. . . As a result, the United States isolated India for twenty-five years, refusing nuclear cooperation and trying to convince other countries to do the same. But since 2000, the United States has moved to build a "strategic partnership" with India (Bajoria, Pan, 2010).

## **Britain on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

United Kingdom also views Afghanistan significant strategically like entire international community because of its geostrategic location and security reasons as well. Afghanistan’s internal political and security situation has great impact on national security on UK. Regional insecurity can be harmful for UK’s interests in South Asia and Afghanistan’s insurgency is a constant source of insecurity in the region. UK agenda in Afghanistan include improving regional security, reduce insurgency, and reduce drug trade, uphold the western interests generally as a key ally of USA and building of strong and stable Afghanistan. UK is working closely with international community to achieve these objectives. There is a serious realization on the part of UK that the military operation is not the permanent solution. It is important for stable region and the country the arm forces of Afghanistan should be trained to promote peace and for elimination of the insurgency in the region.

India and UK have constant and stable bilateral relations with each other. Since independence both states are enjoying enjoy economic, political and strategic cooperation. “Trade and investment are two –way and it expanding by the time. 700 out of the 1200 Indian firms in the EU operate from the UK. Tata is the largest single manufacturing company in the UK. Bilateral trade was £11.5 bn in 2009 and £ 12.6 bn in 2008 (Source: BIS Economics & Statistics Directorate, UK). In 2009, UK exports to India (goods and services) were £ 4.7 bn (£4,687mn) and imports from India were £ 6.8 bn (£6,763mn). Both states have collaboration in area of education, Up to 700 scholarship awards are offered to Indians by UK institutions each year, including 50 FCO-sponsored Chevening scholars. The 2006-11 UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) has linked 475 schools and higher education establishments in the UK and India” (India-U K relations,2011).

Both states have serious security threats and they are strategic partner in this field. In the same way both are sharing best planning and preparedness in planning

and vigilance in crisis management. The UK strongly supports India's candidature for a Permanent Seat on the UN Security Council and will continue to work with India to achieve this. The UK and India are partners in the G20 and worked closely together to endorse a global recovery after the 2008-9 financial crises. British PM Gordon Brown believes India has a major role to play in Afghanistan. Replying to a question at a press conference at 10 Downing Street, he told: "I believe that neighbors of Afghanistan should come together to help sustain an infant democracy like Afghanistan. India has a big role to play.

## **Russia on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

Russia has deep interests in South Asian and this region is utterly significant for Russia. It has great economic and strategic interests in Afghanistan and in the region as well. Russia requires CARs's cooperation to eliminate the threat of the Islamic fundamentalism. Russian foreign policy objectives have been remained to secure its territorial integration, maximum participation in the economic world affairs. Russia and India always enjoys cordial relations with each other. It serious endorses the presence of India and it will be helpful element in stability of Afghanistan.

Historically Russia is an old ally of India and they had strong strategic, military and economic relations during the cold war. Even after disintegration of Soviet Union, Russia inherited the good relations with India even it enhanced its relations with the west after the end cold war .India is the second largest market for the Russian defense industry. Bilateral trade turnover is modest and stood at US\$ 3 billion in 2006–07, of which Indian exports to Russia were valued at US\$ 908 million. There is an interesting comment on the relations of both countries, "We are confident that India lives in the hearts of every Russian. In the same way, I can assure you that Russia also lives in our souls as a Homeland, as people who share our emotions, our feelings of mutual respect and constant friendship. Long live our friendship!" (Pratibha Patel. Page 55)

Russia always stood with India on all international forums on all vital issues. Russia provides full support to Indian presence in Afghanistan and considers it as positive step in stabilization of the region. India and Russia have reiterated their shared positions on Afghanistan and agreed to step up cooperation in the region. Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao told journalists after talks in Moscow. NEW DELHI, Oct. 25 (Xinhua) -- Russia has expressed support for a greater role by India in Afghanistan, saying that both Russia and India were on the "same side" in their fight against international terrorism."We desire that India's role increases in Afghanistan. This is what we desire and this is our thought process.

What Russia can do for Afghan people, it is doing and will continue to do," local media quoted Russian Federation Ambassador to India Alexander M Kadakin as saying on Sunday."The facilities that we created in Afghanistan during the Soviet era, we are rebuilding and repairing them. We will do this. We are

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helping the Afghan Home Ministry also," said the Russian envoy that was in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand to witness Indo-Russian joint Army exercise "Indra 2010". Kadakin also said Indian and Russian thinking on Afghanistan was the same. "We want Afghanistan to be peaceful, democratic country, and not a source of terrorism. We are against... if American and allied forces leave immediately, overnight, there will be a 'gadbad' (crisis). This gadbad (crisis) is not good for India or Russia," he was quoted as saying. He said any crisis in Afghanistan will have huge impact on Russia due to drug trafficking and arms smuggling.

### **China on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

China is crucial to both India and USA in both political and strategic terms. China is challenge for India on regional front and competitor for USA on international front. Both India and USA are striving to restrict China's influence in Afghanistan and CARs. US support overt and covert activities of India in Afghanistan; this support provides edge to US. USA is trying to contain China's influence by endorsing Indian presence in Afghanistan. China's booming economy is a big threat for USA. China is now on such a point of its economic development that it threatens to overtake US in next two to three decades in terms of GDP growth. China has attained marvelous achievements through its "reforms and opening up". "Interestingly, more and more American people feel that China is catching up to the US. According to a survey conducted by the Washington-based Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in 2011, about 47% of participants say China, not the US, is the world's top economic power, while 31% continue to name the US. The result of the survey obviously contradicts the reality, though it shows the American people's uneasiness with China's growing power. They worry that the US is at risk of falling behind in a global battle for influence with China. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has admitted that the US is struggling to hold its role as global leader." (USA is struggling to held role as global leader, 2011). US don't want to become the number two power, and not even can tolerate its status of regional super power, so to limit China's activity in the region US is supporting India's activity in the Afghanistan.

### **Pakistan on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, it is strategically important for both the regional power, Pakistan and India. India's growing influence in Afghanistan and its covert and overt operations creating disturbance in military and politically leadership of Pakistan. Support of NATO and US to India's growing influence in Afghanistan is disturbing Balance of power in the region. Critics in Pakistan see India's activity in Afghanistan as an attempt to derail security of Pakistan. Stable

Afghanistan is a political and strategic priority of Pakistan. It is an established fact that a stable neighbor can assure stability of Pakistan. Neither India can achieve its goal from Afghanistan nor can it enhance its influence in unstable region. Mr. Dalrymple adds: “The stage is now open for a deal whereby India could agree to minimize its presence in Afghanistan – which it could accept as Pakistan’s sphere of influence – in return for Pakistan withdrawing its longstanding sponsorship of the Kashmir jihad, which it could accept as India’s domain” (The guardian).

It’s practically a ritual to see India Pakistan relation as “zero sum game”, it means if something is good or beneficial for Pakistan than it must have devastating effects on India and vice versa. Pakistan and India has long history of rivalry both states have different and divers’ conflicts. From the independence they fought three wars. Kashmir issue, sir creek issue, Kargil conflict, division of water, terrorist activities are the area of concern for both states. After 9/11 US adopted the agenda of counter terrorism and Pakistan was required to adopt the role of frontline state. After the fall of Taliban regime India re-establish diplomatic relations with Afghanistan and it is gradually growing its influence in the territory. This situation is alarming for Pakistan’s political and military leadership. Both India and Pakistan always strive to narrow down each other’s influence in land of Afghanistan.

## **Iran on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

Since 1935 Iran Afghanistan have relations with each other. Both states share common language and culture, in eastern dialect of Persian, Dari Persia is the language of Afghanistan. Despite of these close ties both states have differences too. Both states have differences on Taliban regime in 1990s and dispute over water and Helmand River. Both states relinquished their diplomatic relations with each other on the invasion of Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Iran supports the Afghan Shi’a resistance groups to oppose Soviet intervention. During the Taliban regime Shi’a Muslim has to face a lot of problems in country during that time Iran supported Northern Alliances. After the collapse of Taliban government both states enjoying cordial relations with each other. Iran has built some roads, power transmission lines, and border stations, among other infrastructure projects which would better link the two nations. Furthermore, trade between the two nations has increased dramatically since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. Iran and Afghanistan plan on building a new rail line connected Mashhad to Herat and, eventually, Tehran to Kabul. In 2009 Iran was the fourth largest investor in Afghanistan. They invest on construction of roads and bridges, energy, agriculture and health care.

Relations of India and Iran can be traced back to “New Stone Age”, both shares significant cultural, linguistic and ethnic characteristics. During the era of Cold war relations between both states were cold, but when Iran withdrawal itself

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from CENTO and it disassociated itself from Pakistan both became strategic partner and support the Northern Alliances against Taliban regime. Both states want to minimize the dependence of land locked states of Afghanistan on Pakistan that's why work is underway to link Afghanistan to the Iranian port of Chabahar on the Gulf of Oman, which would alleviate Afghan dependence on the Pakistani port of Karachi, India has also its share in construction of this port.

Apart from the cooperation both states have differences too, Iran wants the abrupt withdrawal of NATO forces from the Afghanistan while presence of NATO and US in Afghanistan is vital for fulfillment of its national interests and India cannot afford to favor Iran nuclear plan by going against the will of US and UN. But only the stable Afghanistan can assure the achievements of objectives of both states and India's overt operation in Afghanistan including the developmental projects, construction of roads and training of Afghanistan army have significance importance in stability of Afghanistan and Iran support India for its developmental projects but Iran doesn't support any regional setting which support the hegemonic design of India in the region.

## **United Nations on Indian involvement in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan has turbulent history. Afghanistan has suffered from great powers rivalry and foreign military intervention including Anglo Russia rivalry of nineteenth century. In 1979 country descended into prolonged conflict with Soviet intervention. After Soviet withdrawal Taliban regime came into power. In 2001 after 9/11 tragedy Afghans government was accused of supporting and nourishing terrorism in its territory. The Security Council authorized the United States to depose the Taliban government, as an offensive against the terrorist al-Qaeda organization, said to be based in the country. The Council also authorized the US and its NATO allies to set up the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide military support for a newly-established pro-Western government (the United States also continued to run a separate anti-terrorist military operation). In March 2002 the Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) to manage all UN humanitarian, relief, recovery and reconstruction activities. Despite (or perhaps because of) these military-centered initiatives, Afghanistan has remained a "failed state".

India has been one of the 51 original members of UN who signed the UN charter. India has served as non permanent member of Security Council for six terms (each of two years during) from 1950-1952, 1965-1967, 1970-1972 and 1990-1992. UN is an organization which theoretically came into being for the promotion of peace and equality and overtly India is doing social work there for the welfare of people of Afghanistan and UN has the same agenda. US has a dominant role in UN so ultimately if India has support of USA then it is not hard to mould UN in favor of India.

## **An Assessment**

In the era of Globalization there are no permanent friends and no foes. Interaction of global actors and to maintain relations with each other is the social reality. Every state maintains and builds relations with other state to assure the maximization of its power and achievement of its national interests, national interests are the priority of every state. State is the highest expression of individual's security and as binding force, it regulates the individual liberty in the proper channel. To provide security to its citizens is essential duty of state, security has broader meaning it can be expressed as internal and external security.

Security dilemma is currently the issue for every state of the world, the meaning of term terrorism. Security threats have different meanings in the current times. After World War II, the tragedy of 9/11 is the single events that has changes the global security pattern. USA enter into Afghanistan with the purpose of combating terrorism. The presence of NATO and USA in South Asia make that region not only media attentive but also it has made Afghanistan to became path way for regional and international powers to attain their own objectives and in promotion of their interests. In 19<sup>th</sup> century global imperial powers like Great Britain and Russia were fighting for the influence. In Afghanistan they were fighting the war of interests not of principles. The Great Game of imperial powers continued form 1826 to 1919, it ends when both states agreed to accept Afghanistan as Buffer state.

9/11 incident has initiated another great game in the region. Afghanistan is being involved in another global game. With the US advancement in Afghanistan India got chance to endorse its own interests and develop image of soft power in the world. This development has marked start of "New Great Game" in Afghanistan. Historically both India and Afghanistan enjoyed and still they are enjoying cordial relations with each other. Afghanistan is of crucial ifor Indian expanding economy. Geographically, Afghanistan provides the path way to CARs. Good bilateral relations with Afghanistan will be beneficial for India's steel industry because of huge and precious iron reserves of Afghanistan. Indian political, strategic and economic activities in Afghanistan are indeed very controversial; Pakistan perceives it as threat for its strategic depth in Afghanistan. "The New Great Game" has new player with more stake in Afghanistan, China, Iran, India, USA and Russia are key players. The war in Afghanistan provides USA a chance to reinvent role of NATO, Iran wants to minimize the dependence of Afghanistan on Pakistan that's why Iran is constructing Chabahar port, China's booming economy needs unexploited recourses of Afghanistan. China's MNC are actively exploring its resources. India has lot to gain from Afghanistan, it is a strategically of crucial importance for India. By penetrating its influence in Afghanistan, India got an opportunity of marginalizing Pakistan's influence, dominance in the region, creating insurgency in Baluchistan and promotion of Hinduism in the region. As far as Pakistan is concern Pakistan's stability depends

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on stability of Afghanistan so Pakistan has great concern over stability of Afghanistan (Same lines from conclusion).

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