

## **GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF AFGHANISTAN FOR PAKISTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Afghanistan has a special geographical position. The country is located in the economic, cultural and geopolitical important areas of the region. Pakistan and remaining south Asia is in its East and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in west, Tajikistan and China is located in its north and in its South is Iran and remaining West Asia. Afghanistan connects south Asia and West Asia with Central Asia that is an important thing to understand as South Asian nations are overpopulated and are energy hungry whereas Central Asia has energy resources. Connectivity of Central Asia and South Asia, can open up many opportunities for each other, they have been less able to have beneficial and constructive trade and cultural relations with each other due to the lack of safe transportation routes and necessary communication channels. On the other hand, Afghanistan, being in a special geographical position, can enjoy a great economic opportunity in the field of trade and transit and use it for the development, construction and prosperity of the country. Although efforts have been made over the past few years to take advantage of these opportunities, world nations have so far yielded no tangible results. This article discusses the opportunities and capacities that this geographical location of Afghanistan has provided for Pakistan in the economic and security fields and this article discusses and tries to identify the most important features of the geographical location of Afghanistan that can be effective for the development of Pakistan and Afghanistan in visa versa.

**KEY WORDS:** Afghanistan, Central Asia, Economic, Geostrategic, Importance, Pakistan.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Afghanistan is geographically a hub, where South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia meet, it can be the main corridor for these three regions. Pakistan and Afghanistan's geo-economic, geostrategic and geopolitical positions are historically very important. The length of Afghanistan's international borders with the Republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is 2087 km, with the Islamic Republic of Iran 936 km, with Pakistan 2430 km and with China 76 km. The longest distance between east and west Afghanistan from the Khyber Strait on the Pakistani border to the Zulfiqar Strait on the Iranian border is about 1,240 km and from the north to the south is about 855 km. It is noteworthy that the joint border between Iran and Afghanistan starts from the mouth of Zulfiqar in northeastern Iran and continues to Malek

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Siah Mountain in the southeast. (Anderson 2003, 830). Iran is in the west of Pakistan and is called the international border between Pakistan and Iran and it is demarcated Baluchistan province of Pakistan shared with Sistan and Baluchistan Province of Iran and is 959 kilometers in length. Afghanistan is in its northwest with 2,670 kilometers border and people republic of China is its north having 559 kilometers border with Pakistan, and in its east is India and three states of India share their borders with Pakistan. These provinces or states are Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujrat having total boundary of 2390 kilometers and in its southeast is Muslim majority region of Kashmir mostly under illegal occupation of India and including this it becomes the longest boundary with Pakistan 933 km. The southern border of Pakistan is covered with the Arabian Sea (Kazi 2003, 2). Afghanistan has direct access with Iran as Chabahar an oceanic port of Iran has potential to unlock Afghanistan that is landlocked state. If Afghanistan want to reach Indian Ocean Chabahar has that potential and became a substitute of Karachi and Gwader. But unfortunate thing is the American sanctions of Iran and Afghanistan dependency on American support. Chabahar Port of Islamic Republic of Iran is located in Sistan-Baluchistan and it can become lifeline of Afghanistan needs to revive its trade prospective (Amirtha 2016. ). It can also help Afghanistan to come out of Pakistan's influence as Karachi and Gwadar ports are deep sea ports of Pakistan serving as lifeline of Afghanistan needs of trade. Trade through Iranian port will meaningfully increase trade capacity of Afghanistan with world because, as it stands, it is matter of fact that using Pakistan ports Afghanistan trade with India will not improve as India cannot get permission overland transit access from Pakistan, that is a major obstacle for serious trade between India and Afghanistan. It can be right to say that Afghanistan is no more under pressure of West to rely on its unpredictable relations with Pakistan securing resources. The alleged support of Pakistan for the Taliban make it an unpleasant ally for Afghanistan, the Pakistan-India tensions stand with full might, in strategic partnership of Afghanistan and India these factors make Pakistan a regional player and to be consider as a reliable ally for Afghanistan. In an effort to encourage Afghanistan to prioritize Pakistan for imports and bring limits on Afghanistan collaboration and coordination with India, Pakistan tried to impose regulations on borders, prior to consummate excepting Indian right of entry to Pakistan for using the trade routes for Afghanistan. Afghanistan's trade with Pakistan in the peak days was between 2014 and 2015 that was of amount of 2.7 billion dollars, but the Afghan government's decide to make a reassessment of the choices and finally chose Iran as substitute of Pakistan that was result of excessive documentation at ports of

Pakistan and random closures of border crossing at Chaman and Torkham (Arwin, 2017). Finally, the number of severe rules, the Pak-Afghan trade reduced to size of 500 Million American dollar in the 2018 in as Iran allowed the utilization of Bandare Abbas and Chabahar, ports for Afghanistan trade which accounted for 80 percent of the trade through Pakistan before the strict regulations (Shoib, 2018). These development are realities but direct and easy accesses from Pakistan for Afghan trade has no substitute due to number of factors; i.e loose regulating authorities and system of Pakistan, trade route through Pashtun belt in Pakistan and around the ports specially in Karachi, free movements of Afghanistan people for trade and labor in Pakistan, both are Sunni states that develop some kinds of sympathies, huge chunk of Afghanistan migrants in Pakistan and many other socio-economic factors. For more than a hundred years, Afghanistan has been prominent in the geo-strategies of super and regional powers. Afghanistan witnessed the presence of United Kingdom, United States of Soviet Russia and the United States of America in its territory. Its mean it has witnessed three world Orders i.e the geopolitical order of the Great Game, the order of the Cold War and the theory of the new World Order and the role of Afghanistan had distinct geopolitical position in the strategies of the great powers and the region. In the last two order Pakistan also enjoyed the same status of Afghanistan as their geostrategic positions has connected them and they had to face (Goodson 2014). Ole Waever and Barry Buzan added very important idea of regional security complex theory. In which they explained group of nations having interlinked security concerns as the regional security complex as they cannot be addressed and extracted independently of each other. The notion interpret factor of security interdependence as a critical to create the cluster based on regions (Bozan 2011, 42)According to this definition, peace, security and stability in Afghanistan depend on understanding the geographical location of Pakistan. Pakistan is key to open the landlocked Afghanistan and can connect it with South Asia. The positions of Pakistan and Afghanistan on the ancient Silk Road, South Asia, and their position among important neighboring countries are factors that has both an advantage and a disadvantage for them, based on how opportunities have been used by their governments. One of the major advantages of Pakistan and Afghanistan is their use as a transit hub between Central and South Asia. (Harpviken & Tadjbakhsh 2016). One of the factors involved in access to energy is the geographical location of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan, due to their geographical position, can play a constructive role in energy transfer between the countries of the region. Due to their proximity to Central Asian

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countries as one of the most important energy sources in the region and the energy thirsty world, Pakistan and Afghanistan can play a key protagonist in the growth of the regional economy. As Central Asian countries are landlocked, the transfer of oil and gas from the region to consumer markets in other countries requires the construction of diverse pipelines. Pakistan and Afghanistan's geographical position has the potential to facilitate the transfer of Central Asian energy to South Asia. This study shed light on the geostrategic importance of Afghanistan for Pakistan.

Hypothesis; the study hypothesizes that geographical location of Afghanistan and Pakistan is playing a role as factor in foreign policy of these two nations, this factor has been forced the leadership of both nations to cooperate in different willingly or reluctantly.

(Goodson 2001), in his work explains the six factors that influence the Afghanistan and has maintained efficiency throughout the history of this nation. First of all, the author demonstrate why the context of Afghanistan has often reduced the progress of Afghan nation and, in particular, its cultural, religious, economic and geographic attributes, and has taken on a new significance as a result of the nation's death in the 1980s and again in the early 1990s. This work provides the significant foundation for describing Afghanistan, which investigates in certain detail keeping focus on the six factors and the author look at the early historical record of insufficient national identity and timid patriotism in Afghanistan, it also examines the historic variables that underlie the incompetence of Afghanistan to grow into a centralized government in the modern era in conjunction with its religious, ethnolinguistic, and geographical configuration. The following discussion makes it easier to understand how geopolitics and economic growth decided to bring Afghanistan to its present level before 1978. It also examines the war as consuming so far passed through a series of eight stages of growing, then declining, the Afghanistan status as sovereign state and has been distorted by modern Wars around the national boundaries, how its prerogative to Statehood has been weakened by the massive changes executed by the actions in recent history and its present confusion promises unfriendly for the region by its presenters. The oppressive theocracy in Afghanistan, which led to the current resurrection of Taliban, also has importance to its foundations as the discussion on the Central Asian region and South Asia made this work important for the current study. Explaining the situation gave an analyses how external players in the region continue to effect the relations of Afghanistan with Pakistan and Iran and other neighbors and the complicated the relations within Afghanistan. It is

true that for geopolitical and geo-economic reasons are important this work also examine them in detail.

(Krause & Mallory 2015), in their book shed light on key major strategic changes in the region covering Afghanistan and Pakistan. The object of the study is to analyses the nature, to look for the future and to investigate the choices of this strategic change. It also carries on a critical analysis or the fundamental elements of the foreign strategic strategy for dealing with regional disputes throughout the world with a focus on the region encompassing the Pakistan and Afghanistan. This work is based on the international sessions held in Germany in 2012, which brought together some of the topics of this subject, the Aspen Institute Germany and the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation were the leading center of discussion on Pakistan and Afghanistan. This book tackle important challenges and questions like; what has happened with Afghanistan in the past and what strategic adaptations are needed to settle the mistakes? Is Pakistan an important in future as a strategic Western ally or is Pakistan an itself strategic problem for regional issues? What are the potential solutions for the long term and what do strategic revision necessarily imply? The book is a convenient and objective effort to approach allows Afghanistan's socioeconomic, cultural, political and domestic security. Information sources here include publications, journals and monographs, government statements and national newspapers and discussions with persons with specific Afghan expertise. At the end of this book, bibliographies of chapters appear; at the end of every chapter, relatively short comments are made on some of the more valuable sources. The metric system contains measurements and a conversion table to support those unaware of the metric system. There is also a synopsis of foreign words and phrases.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology of any study is important part of that work an appropriate research approach and method is crucial part to explain the worth of any study. In this study the geographic Approach is used that is important for geographical based analysis of data and study of decision making process. In this study a selected geographic data is examined in detail, to combine for the inclusive study and investigation of geographical spatial problems. The research method in this research is descriptive-analytical and based on a qualitative method, data collection is from written and Internet sources.

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Objectives; the objectives of any study are vital part to make understandings about the worth of work and the objective this paper are as under;

1. To explain the geostrategic importance of Afghanistan for Pakistan.
2. To shed light on the changing geostrategic environment in Afghanistan and response of Pakistan.

### RESULTS

#### Role of Geographies

Afghanistan is among the four regional security complexes, due to its geographical location: South Asia: In this order, the two regional powers, India and Pakistan, are in fierce competition. This competition has had a devastating effect on the current security and situation in Afghanistan. Exertions of Pakistan to surround India and Indian strategic depth have worsened the position in Afghanistan. In historical context Afghanistan has long history of its involvement in instability of Pakistan with its collaboration of India (Dave, 2010, 21). Convergence and Mutual cooperation have been the basis of the formation of various human societies in the history of social life, which can be traced in the writings of Aristotle, Plato, Ibn Khaldun and Hegel. Mutual cooperation is a situation in which groups, organizations, institutions, or countries work together extensively to protect the common good and move toward a kind of unity. Successful examples of Mutual cooperation in the contemporary world are the process of Mutual cooperation in Europe and eventually the formation of the European Union and the Mutual cooperation between the countries of Southeast Asia (ASEAN), caused experts and politicians to look at this experience. Relatively successful people consider Mutual cooperation as a desirable experience in order to gain more benefits and better cooperation, while ensuring relative security in relations between countries, especially in the form of regionalism. Accordingly, the 21st century is considered the century of regional Mutual cooperation by governments according to their own advantages and experiences and what they can gain from the Mutual cooperation in the world. Afghanistan has a special strategic geography. Its geographical location has made it always subject to the interventions of great colonial powers, such as the Sassanid's, the British, Russians and Americans in various historical eras. Afghanistan is not only important for Pakistan in the Indian context but also is strategically important for Pakistan (Holdich, 2001) A shift in Pakistan's geo-strategic stance will be the result of the change in geopolitical landscape of South Asian region and this change will be revolving around a large-scale geo-economic, and geostrategic shift and if so, it

would be a very clear ideological shift in Pakistan policy towards Afghanistan. But the silence in Pakistan over withdrawal of American troops and its role in bringing Taliban on table talks do not indicate any rapidly changing scenario, or perhaps they are looking at it differently. Pakistan's positive economic indicators do not support the idea that it is working to a certain extent to change its previous geostrategic or geo-economic position in Afghanistan. Even the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which was cited as a game-changer for the country's fragile economy, has fallen victim to the less inattentions of Imran Khan Government. However, some analysts are witnessing a shift in Pakistan's geostrategic approach, they not only capture economic arguments, but also highlights the Pakistan's shifting geopolitical approach to Afghanistan in particular (Rais 2021). Afghanistan is a landlocked nation in Asia and is generically characterized as being positioned within Middle East, south Asian region and also in Central Asian region. A mountainside of Hindu Kush, 600 km in long and stretching from north-east to south-west, is the political, social, economic, and military life of the afghan state, covering 652,000 square km. It borders on the south with Iran and Pakistan is on Afghanistan's east sides, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan are on its western borders and on the northeast is China. The geographical entity that has a long history now identified as Afghanistan was an old center of the Silk Road and of immigrants. It's a major geostrategic location between East and West Asia or the Near East and Middle East. This area was the target of several invading forces and a basis from which surrounding areas were invaded by regional powers to establish their own empires (Sahoo, et. El. 2015, 34). The Durrani Empire, considered to be the foundation of modern Afghanistan, was established by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747. Afghan soil seems to have been a natural corridor for several centuries for invaders and traders who have shifted military forces or merchandises from western borders to Eastern borders, from Middle East to South Asia. This was the route chosen 328 years before Christ by Alexander the Great to reach South Asian region. Afghanistan today is more like a corridor, it is an intersection of Asian routes. Furthermore, throughout winter, the hard continental climatic conditions promotes the tribal prominence over the federal government and repeatedly restricts the country's actions on the resources and the location of the nations (Qayum, et. el 2017). . These mountains form an important part of the land and impede connectivity between provinces. The lack of any type of control on the borders of Afghanistan is prone to criminal traffic of human beings, drugs and weapons towards Pakistan. The length of Afghanistan's borders is directly proportional to its foreign policy towards the neighboring states including Pakistan. This study has

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explain the perception that has emerged in the government of Imran Khan that Pakistan is trying to mend its ties with the United States that is hampering relations between Pakistan and China, and the slowdown speed in CPEC has made the South Asian region deeper and more dubious. Pakistan has brought America on the point that return of Taliban in Afghanistan can bring peace (Ali 2020). It is looking like that America has changed its position in Afghanistan but there is no sign of a change in Pakistan's geo-strategic vision about Afghanistan, but instead there is support for its long-standing position about the conflict in Afghanistan. Pakistan has given little importance to South Asia or in other words, South Asia does not fit into the framework of Pakistan's ideological structure. However, the relations of Asian nations with Pakistan are an important asset in terms of the region's political and geographical interests. Pakistan is unable to use the Afghan situation effectively to its advantages and it is the FATF that is forcing Pakistan to provide full support to the United States regarding Afghanistan. This study has explained the geostrategic vision of Imran Khan's government that the nature of Pakistan's geological, geo-economic and strategic relations with China has changed.

### **Geostrategic Importance of Afghanistan for Pakistan**

Afghanistan is geo-strategically more imperative than other Asian States, Afghanistan is a bridge between South West Asia, South Asia, and Central Asian region. Central Asian states and Iran are rich of energy resources while Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and India are energy thirsty nations, so they need access to Iran and Central Asian nations. Afghanistan offers direct land route to Central Asia through Pakistan and Pakistan offer same kind of route to energy thirsty world to Iran and through Afghanistan and Iran to Central Asia. Afghanistan is the 41st biggest country with an area of 652000 square kilometers. This landlocked country is mountainous, with plains in its southwest and north regions. It has very attractive location on world map being a criss road for Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and China. It has 2430 kilometer border with Pakistan, 1206 km with Tajikistan, and 936 km with Iran, 744 km with Turkmenistan 137 km with Uzbekistan and 75km with China. The northern as well as southern portion of Afghanistan is separated by the huge mountains ranges of Hindu Kush. The Pamir Mountain in the north-east is the link between Tajikistan, Afghanistan and China, also called the roof of the world by Marco Polo. To the east, passes like the renowned Khyber Pass in the Suleiman Mountains have given access to the Subcontinent (Sinha et. El 2020, 29). Looking at the map of Afghanistan it became visible that it is at the crossroads of leading atomic nations aimed at goal of leadership



in the region; i.e Russian federation, Pakistan, India, and China. Iran, regardless of no capability of nuclear weapons, desires to be treated as a nuclear nation, for the reason that it has the uranium enrichment technology essential to grow its capability. All the neighboring nations grants a special attention to Afghanistan. Afghanistan is directly bordered by two nuclear countries Pakistan and people republic of China and an onset nuclear state; i.e Iran. It also have important nations in nuclear club in its near neighborhood; i.e Russia and India. This has placed the nation in a problematic position with other nations competing for the hegemony in the region and footing in area. There are different features in each country (Jalalzai 2003, 224). There are also numerous unusual geographies in Afghanistan which make it more important and imperative. The Paktia, Paktika, Nagharhar, Konhur, Badakhshan, Nurestan, Khost, Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz are all adjacent to the Pakistani border. The emergence of new countries in Central Asia in 1991 highlighted the extensive accessible hydrocarbon natural resources, with Afghanistan again becoming crucially important on the road that has strong potential to connect the Central Asian region with sea routes in Arabian Sea. Regardless of its locality the significance of Afghanistan is in the context of geo economically and has made it an energy corridor that is vital for central Asian energy resources for its production and market access for the oil and natural gas gigantic reserves in the area, which are evaluated and yet to reach market. The countries of Central Asia are hoping to find ways to export their oil and gas resources in order to put an end to their seclusion and economic dependence on Moscow (Bahera 2006, 66). The hope of Turkmenistan to revive the pipeline through the war torn country Afghanistan into Pakistan and then into India, revealed the grief these states are facing. They are three geopolitical regions of Afghanistan with many centers of different civilizations: Pakistan is in the East and the 90 percent of its Majority population believed in Sunni Islam and seven percent are Shia playing important role to connect it with Arab world and Iran respectively. Looking in the North of Afghanistan: there are the plains of Central Asia spreading from Amu River to Syr River, being a center of Orthodox Christian, Muslim civilization in past. And in the same region is China with its ancient culture that is gaining influence day by day in the region. Looking in the west of Afghanistan, there is a Persian plateaus of Iran with its Shia influence in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain and beyond it is an Arabian peninsula of Sunni Muslims. Afghanistan importance has increased as a results of the Great Game in the Asian region; examining the great game theory it is geo-strategic notion that explain the rivalry turn enmity between Russian empire and British empire in the region of

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Central Asia throughout the 19th century (Rashid 2012, 32) For the good reason these empires decide to leave the Afghanistan as a buffer nation to stop their direct interaction. In Pamir Mountains and north-east of Afghanistan there is a Wakhan strip and in its great extent is people republic of China and it is serving as the durable resolve of averting any armed conflict between Russian and Britain empires. The Chinese frontier, one of the world's highest, shut downed for minimum 5 months in every year because of winter season. In the long term, this route can, after all, be of great importance for transportation of energy products to China as an energy corridor in the design of the alternate solution gases and oil pipelines. Today, foreign powers participate in the Afghan conflict, although the scenario is far more complicated this time, in particular due to its increased volume. It is vitally important for all geopolitical and geostrategic players including Pakistan having interests in this buffer state to analyses their interests and positions and major role in the contest will of Pakistan.

### **Geopolitical Assessment of Afghanistan**

In 1893, a 1500-mile border line was created to define the West border of British India by Sir Henry Durand, whoa Senior Management officer of the British Administration. This line divided the Pashtun region into two parts, which was meaningful of its empire in Afghanistan for the Afghans. Thus, various governments in Afghanistan have claimed the Pakistan's Pashtun territory. The Pashtun were definitely distributed in two countries when Pakistan achieved independence in 1947. Out of the forty million, 13 million Pashtun live in Afghanistan, the major ethnic group, and reaming majority Pashtun nearly 27 million are in Pakistan, which is a second major ethnic group in Pakistan against the Punjabi community (West 2009, 647). The ISI assisted the Pashtun ethnic group of Afghanistan in the struggles against foreign military forces of USSR and other ethnic communities, to discourage any kind of destabilization in the Pashthun area of Pakistan. In the Afghan war, Pashthun freedom fighter taken refuge in Pakistan in the northwest of its region among 2.5 million of the very same ethnic community. Pashtun in Pakistan and Afghanistan are factor to force both nations to work together and cooperate in many fields. The Tajiki are of Persian origin and Sunnis, which comprises 27 percent of the country. In Pakistan 1.2 million Tajik are living and are very energetic part of Pakistan's population. They converse Dari or Persian which is viewed to be an educated language, facilitating their access to a Pashthun-controlled country's government and clergy. This ethnic minority is the most valuable one after Pashthun in the country because they are living in Kabul and the towns with strong political input as well as in the massive

north-west areas close to borders of Tajikistan, and they do not conceal their ambitions for participation in the political power. Due to the prevailing economic circumstances in their own state, many Tajikistanis have decided to settle in Pakistan in past few years, many decided to settle in northern Ishkuman city(Singh 2007, 34). 1979 saw a huge proportion of Tajik refugees from that state visiting and settling in Pakistan during the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan. Tajikistan is only 14 km away from Pakistan and this Tajik minority is living in the bordering region of Wakahan of Afghanistan that is only 14 km wide separating Pakistan and Afghanistan, so the Tajik community in these nations can play productive role. The Hazaras are regarded by other ethnic groups as Afghanistan's troublemaker; originally nomadic and probably Mongol's descendants, they were demoted to the poorest and most hilly parts in the central part of the nation. They in majority in the Afghanistan's provinces of Bamian, Oruzgan and Ghowr. They belong to Shia Islam, and therefore they feel closeness to with Iran, but the Taliban, who don't consider them to be Muslim, have also greatly brushed aside them. They speak Persian and make up 9 percent of the population in this country (Cheema, et el. 2008, 141). They are nearly one million in Pakistan and consideration about these community in Majority Sunni Pakistan is not more different than the Afghanistan on the same philosophy of being Shia. At the state level they are responsibility of the relevant regimes to protect them and both Pakistan and Afghan government remained fail to protect them. The Pashtun are the main ruling majority population and the community that more classifies themselves with nationalism of Afghanistan, of the independent Afghanistan. They are Sunni and make up 42 percent of the population and for the reason has reduced the importance of Hazara community. Pakistan, however, has not fully allocated any part of its budget for Afghan refugees. But now more than four decades have passed since the refugees from Afghanistan came in and a huge number of refugees from Afghanistan are still do not want to leave Pakistan ( West 2010 446). Unfortunately, at the non-governmental level, a large portion of these migrants are in the labor force, while people from Afghanistan are earning a meager profit in the vegetable and fort markets, including a large number of Afghans are working in the transport sector. Goods imported from different countries through Pak-Afghan transit trade are being smuggled back to Afghanistan and then to Pakistan without any check and balance. Afghans are prejudiced against Pakistan and Pakistanis. "It's just like the Mexican refugees in the United States. The al problem is poor Afghans because they are illiterate to provide them with jobs, or even those Afghans who, if their means of labor are limited, commit petty crimes. The

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burden on the Pakistan's economy is due to the Afghan refugees, the Afghans introduced crime in the society, the indications of those involved in the most serious crime are still found here from the Afghan refugees. Here Afghan refugees worked to earn a living, but their low demand for wages led to the exploitation of local workers and reduced employment opportunities for Pakistanis.

### **Afghanistan: A Potential Energy Corridor**

Many countries in the region have aggressive rivalries and competitions, which are also used by foreign powers to advance their strategic interests. There is factor working actively and it is foreign nations having interest in the region and wanted to achieve them on the cost of local actors. United States and its allies in war against terrorism along with the Russian federation are developing plans to achieve goals by improving their image and addressing security concerns, which have led to a large European and US military presence in Afghanistan. The countries of Central Asia have many features in common, including important historical, cultural, social and ethnic ties (Lumulin 2007 57). They also have common geographical features for instance rugged topography and suffering from very important issue of access to deep water sea. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, progress has been made in these countries. The level of governance, civil society and democratic institutions have previously been disproportionate and low; But now the situation in these areas has improved. Despite advances over the past two decades, Central Asian countries continue to inherit Soviet-style economics; that is, government dominance in primary goods and the nonexistence of operative trade opportunities hinder local trade, and inefficient transportation infrastructure keeps economic growth at a much lower level than real prospective. The emergence of PCR as a major player in this geographical area and possible capacity of Afghanistan may change the geopolitical scene and unleash the potential of Central Asia (Amin 2010, 327). Disappointing Central Asian restrictions have led to serious and lasting economic problems. Trade between neighboring countries accounts for a small part of the total trade of this region. The nations of Central Asia has less trade with South Asian region and the East Asian countries if it is compared with actual trade prospective. According to the standards of the region, trade size between nations of the Central Asia is much lower than trade between countries in other regions. In economic modeling, the term "gravity model" is very important and can be used to measure the probability of business bustle and as a base for assessment through real trade and guesstimating the size of missing trade; For instance, Ian Babetsk according to the model of gravity found

that if the size and relative economic distance are corrected; Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan traded far below their potential in a decade after their liberation from Soviet rule. Trade with other regions is also less than its potential capacity. Alburg-Wojciech found that the real trade of Central Asian countries with Europe was less than their size of trade that actually can be done. Even though the class of infrastructure in Central Asia is not in compatible with the East Asia, the lack of foreign direct investment is even more pronounced in countries in the region. This is a significant gauge of the effect to check the economic integration among the nations of this area. Pakistan can open the gate of trade with these nations if stability came in Afghanistan. Pakistan's economic interests in Afghanistan are well-argued. (Hooper, 2016, 314-342)

The abundant and principally unused energy resources in the CA region have created rivalry between countries for gas and oil development and for its supply through pipelines that can be outside the region and also inside this region. It is matter of fact that Afghanistan and Pakistan are important nations of this region and geographically location of these countries is in an energy-rich area of the Middle East and Central Asia, and countries such as India and China are energy-hungry and have the prospective for economic growth in region that is helping for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan wants energy to improve its economic situation, and the TAPI gas pipeline, with all its problems, will provide an energy source that will be sufficient for Pakistan for the next 50 years. The Pakistan-China Economic Corridor is part of a road development framework, a Chinese belt that potentials to link Central Asia with South Asia beyond Pakistan and Afghanistan. Consequently, whether the security state of affairs in Afghanistan deteriorates or stabilizes has a direct sway on economic interests of Pakistan. (Small 2020 7) Waltz, one of the theorists of the school of structural realism, believes that governments, in addition to increasing military power, also seeks to raise their economic level. It is a matter of fact that the governance structures in the nations of the region is not good, so the efforts of leadership to promote peace and trade within the region, the stability in Afghanistan is prime idea is in the common interest of the regional players. The foundation of Afghan oil and gas pipelines starting from the Central Asia passing through Pakistan and reaching India would increase Central Asia and Iran's energy income, which would benefit almost all countries in the region. However, that would affect Russia's policy that seeks to control the gas transmission in Europe and Asia to the maximum extent possible. Afghanistan, as the shortest and cheapest transit route between Central and South Asia,

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plays a key role in opening up the potential for complementary trade between the two regions and thus creating new trade opportunities throughout the region. When it is compared to alternative routes, Afghanistan and Pakistan can provide the shortest and most cost-effective road routes, railways and gas and power transmission lines between Central and South Asia. (anwar, 2020)

### **American or Chinese Silk Route**

Over the past few years, two projects, one by the United States and the other by the Chinese government, have been re-introduced along the Silk Road. The US plan for the first time was presented by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2011 and the first plan for China was presented by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. American Silk route plan was presented by the US based study of "Frederick Starr" as he was the person who presented the original design of the new Silk Road. The new American Silk Road project connects Russian infrastructure (roads, Railway lines and energy transmission lines) to Central Asian countries and then to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In this way, America can be successful to exclude geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Iran in the region and to establish modern roads in the east. It is in this context that the new Silk Road project of China with its double land and sea links connects East Asia to Central Asia, Central Asia to West Asia and West Asia to the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. As well as the Silk Road project, it is connected to the South China Sea by the Mediterranean Sea (Rafique & Humayun 2011). The importance of Afghanistan in the Manjar region has played a pivotal role in facilitating Pakistan in a wide range of areas of cooperation. It should be used as the main trade route between East and West. The ancient Silk Road of China, which was used more than two thousand years ago, is famous all over the world. The Silk Road, as the bridge between China and the countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, has played an important role in the exchange of material and Eastern civilizations. This land route was China's main trade route with South Asia, West and Europe and Africa through Central Asia. In recent years, the idea of a new Silk Road has been revived and Western and Eastern thinkers have come up with innovative and expansive designs. (Tripathi, 2017)

### **CONCLUSION**

Pakistan and Afghanistan are trying to harmonize their geographical and strategic priorities and are making significant changes in geostrategic affairs. Their geostrategic doctrine could lead to intense changes in Afghanistan and Pakistan's strategic policies and trade with their neighbors. The steps of construction of Pakistan's mega projects and energy projects can be accelerated if peace comes in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan needs to stay connected to CPEC and bring strategic changes in its policies towards Pakistan and Iran, but all this will require vision and visionary leadership to make out-of-the-box decisions. Economic recovery efforts cannot be called a doctrinal shift through the lens of geo-strategic importance. The passage of gas and oil pipelines from Afghanistan through Pakistan to other countries can strengthen relations with other bordering nations and bring stability and peace. The transmission of gas and oil pipelines from Pakistan via Afghanistan could have profound and positive consequences for the Afghanistan's political and economic issues. It should be noted that "the economic belt of the New Silk Road is not just a road, it is an economic, political, security and geopolitical project with an open and multipolar process that covers almost all the countries along the route. The realization of this plan is supposed to be a factor for the growth and prosperity of the countries active in the project." All of this presents an unprecedented historic prospect for the Central Asia to become key players in the international economy. "As a result, there are many bilateral and multilateral projects on a large and small scale that aim to rebuild and revitalize the trade and exchange system similar to the old Silk Road." One of the important aspect of geography of Afghanistan is that is can reduce intergovernmental conflicts by creating regional economic dependencies to develop shared sustainability. It can help Pakistan in transformation of south Asian region into a regional trade and transport hub. It is crucial for countries directly like Iran, China, India, Pakistan Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Russian federation to be part of the idea of shared utilization of. Afghanistan's geography for their development. The geography of Afghanistan at the heart of the New Silk Road can become a proud historical place in the field of trade and culture and become a linking agent at the heart of this road. As these transport projects are important for Pakistan and Afghanistan, they are important for Central Asia and the world. Transport infrastructure and energy resources are the mainstay and vital factor for any economy. For Central Asia, transit through Pakistan and Afghanistan is a vital artery that connects landlocked economies to a major global market. Afghanistan is very important nation for Pakistan to become a gateway for central Asia and without Afghanistan the importance of Pakistan for the said reason will be reduced as Iran as substitute of Afghanistan is not a sane idea as Iran itself has direct access to deep warm waters.

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