

## **Unfaithful Neighbors: A Review of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations 1979-2001**

### **Abstract**

The key objectives of this research are to investigate the key causes in up/down in the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as to shed light on the foreign policies of the both countries that damaged the relations. This research is based on the secondary and primary material collected from different reliable sources such as government official records, newspapers, books and articles. For the analysis of the data, descriptive and deductive methods have been used. The major finding of this research directs that Pakistan and Afghanistan have a zigzag history towards their relations with each other's. Further, Kabul and Islamabad mostly played the blame game against each other's, hence, there were number of challenges in enhancement of relations between both the nations such as drug trafficking, refugee's problems, use of each other's land against each other, and Durand Land issues. On the other hand, as both the countries have long border such as Durand Line and strong religious ties, hence, both the states also took various positive actions and policies to get the various opportunities but more challenges.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, Afghanistan, Relations, Challenges, Opportunities.

### **Introduction – Historical Background**

Historically, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were good since the birth of Pakistan but this gone worst soon after the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan changed dramatically. The region's complexion was completely altered as a result of this occurrence. In Afghanistan, the presence of the Red Army presented a direct threat to regional stability. This initiative (Soviet's invasion) was further sensed the greatest threat and consequences for Pakistan's regional stability and external and internal security as well. Hence, Pakistani think-tanks felt greater communist expansion in the region, as well as probable Afghan-Soviet moves towards the new chaos.

Soon after entrance of Soviet Red Army into Afghanistan, they assassinated Hafizullah Amin, the President of Afghanistan, and chaired their favorite Babrak Karmal as president of the Afghanistan, that further opened the doors for Soviets forces to come close to the Khyber Pass, a gateway from Afghanistan to Pakistan and towards South Asia as well. These actions threatened the international community, particularly the U.S. interests in the region and Pakistan's sovereignty issues and Gulf region as well. On the other side, international community, particularly United States and Pakistan, was watching these circumstances very carefully.

Now, Pakistan has three alternatives to handle the Afghan situation: either accepts it as it is, or provides full assistance to international community to press Soviet Union politically and coupled with hidden backing to the resistance groups. Hence, both Washington and Islamabad decided to punish the Soviet forces in the Afghanistan. Therefore, CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) began to support the Afghan Mujahedeen those were already stood up again the Red Army in Afghanistan (Imran, 2020).

Further, Mr. Abdul Sattar, ex-foreign minister of Pakistan stated that:

*“The Soviet military intervention provoked a deep sense of alarm in Pakistan. Suddenly the buffer disappeared and if the Soviet rulers consolidated their control in Afghanistan they could use it as springboard to reach the warm waters of the Arabian Sea. Pakistan could not afford to acquiesce in the Soviet intervention. But neither could it afford a confrontation with a super power. Islamabad therefore decided on the middle course, avoiding confrontation but raising a low pitched voice of concern and protest (Sattar, 1997).”*

Furthermore, Islamabad was moving to build its atomic bomb; hence, it's also needed Washington's support. Along with number of other interests, Pakistan also wants to get its hidden interests, hence, reformed its foreign policy towards Afghanistan to stand with the U.S. against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Government of Pakistan cemented an agreement with the United States that:

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\* Dr. Ali Imran\*, Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. imran\_ali@iub.edu.pk

\*\* Rabia Islam, MS Research Scholar, School of History, Nankai University, Tianjin, P.R. China. rabiaislam555@gmail.com

*“Pakistan would work with the CIA against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and in return the U.S. would not only provide massive aid but would agree to look the other way on the question of the (“Islamic”) bomb”* (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2016).”

### **Pakistan’s Policy towards Afghanistan**

Although Pakistan-Afghanistan relations were already on zigzag page due to number of issues between both the states. However, soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan changed its foreign policy towards Afghanistan and decided to take various actions to secure its interests in the region as well as to safe it sovereignty. On the other hand, U.S. also felt threats to its interests in the region, hence, decided to punish the Soviets in Afghanistan, therefore, both, Islamabad and Washington developed ties and started working together against the red army in Afghanistan. Although, these actions were acceptable to the government of the Afghanistan but Pakistan was moving to secure its interests in the region.

Further, a meeting between U.S. Director of CIA William Casey and the President of Pakistan General Zia-ul-Haq hold a meeting on April, 6, 1980, to discuss the Afghan issues where Zia highlighted the Moscow’s advancement in Afghanistan that threatened the regional security, both countries interests and threat to the Persian Gulf region as well. He further encouraged the Washington to stand with the Mujahedeen and as well as asked to Washington to warn the Moscow should not cross the Pakistan and Iran border otherwise a war may merged (Gates, 2006, pp. 251-52). Under its foreign policy towards Afghanistan, Pakistan opened the hands to help for Afghan Mujahedeen and developed an alliance with United States as well as other nations. Pakistan, further, started intelligence sharing with the U.S. regarding Soviets actions in Afghanistan, started training of the Mujahedeen in Pakistan and other logistical support to them. Pakistani leadership further asked to Zbigniew Brzezinski, U.S. National Security Adviser for more help to the Mujahedeen, hence, Brzezinski wrote a memo to his leadership at Washington as under:

*“To make the above possible we must both reassure Pakistan and encourage it to help the rebels. This will require a review of our policy toward Pakistan, more guarantees to it, more arms aid, and alas, a decision that our security policy towards Pakistan cannot be dictated by our non-proliferation (of nuclear weapons) policy (Levy & Catherine, 2007, p.64).”*

The Pakistani leadership further encouraged the Washington leadership to supply the modern weapons as well as anti-aircraft to handover the Afghan Mujahedeen to fight with the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan (Gates, 2006, p.252). Later, during the President Ronald Reagan era, Pakistan played its full flag role in Afghanistan’s issues as well as got the confidence of American leadership. Zia administration received more than three billion dollars from Reagan administration and further supplied the Mujahedeen to do their job excellently (Imran and Xiaochuan, 2016). An American journalist, John K. Cooley expressed the Pakistan’s policy towards Afghanistan in his account, *Unholy Wars*, as under:

*“Pakistani support for the operation was the most vital component, as its geographical and ethnic ties to Afghanistan provided a secure base to flood the country with weaponry. The agreement between Pakistan and the United States could be summarized as follows: the CIA was to supply arms, finance, and training for the mujahideen, but it”...must be provided through Pakistan and not directly from the CIA.... (Cooley, 2002, p.55).”*

Mr. Cooley further added:

*“Zia placed three absolute conditions for allowing shipment of the arms... First, the countries concerned... were to maintain absolute silence about the shipments... Second, arms and other war supplies were to be shipped to Pakistan by the fastest available means. Third, the shipments by air were to be limited to two planeloads per week (Cooley, 2002, p.55).”*

It was further decided that the American should use its full power through arms, money and intelligence and Pakistan should train, support and encourage them to fight against the Soviet in Afghanistan. The Washington leadership later, during an interview, articulated to assist the Islamabad billions of dollars as defensive assistance against the Moscow’s wakeup in the Kabul (Wright, 2011). National Security Archives also highlighted that Pakistan began assistance to thousands of Afghan Freedom Fighters and training, arms and sheltered them to fight against the red army in Afghanistan as well as played a role a bridge between Washington and Mujahedeen troops (The National Security Archives, 2001). Emadi (1999) expressed that a report by People’s Canada Daily was published that highlighted the mujahedeen camp established in Pakistan’s northern areas to trained them against the Moscow troops in Afghanistan under the umbrella of Washington (Emadi, 1999). Pakistan received the U.S. aid in the form of medical, arms, communications instruments and many other forms and forwarded it to Afghan Mujahedeen through Pakistani military intelligence (Coll, 2004, p.44). Due to unacceptable foreign policy of Pakistan towards Afghanistan, the relations between both the countries fell worst. Such as, during the era of 1980s, Pakistan and Afghanistan’s government relations gone worst, however, the relations with the Afghan mujahedeen established better.

### **Afghanistan's Policy towards Pakistan**

Indeed, without full implementation by every state unit, any policy developed in Kabul would probably be ineffective. In the last five decades, Afghanistan's development infrastructure, improvement in society, and the institutions of the state have been largely affected. The institutions required some time to function normally and the management is trained. It would also take some time to establish a cohesive approach in view of the shattered status of Afghanistan. Afghan leaders were interested to enhance their relations with countries except Pakistan, such as Iran and India. Pakistan viewed to be a strategic development in Iran, India and Afghanistan as a probable nexus. Pakistan, as always, concerned about India's role in Afghanistan. Uncontroversial issues between both the Afghanistan and Pakistan were always on top such as the Durand Line problem, border crossing movements and Pukhtunistan issue. But, as a result of the 2005 parliamentary elections a broad, ethnic-balanced government in Afghanistan is now under control, reconciliation between Islamabad and Kabul was expected to continue but failed. The elements behind the motivation of the leaders in Afghanistan to formulate their foreign policy towards Pakistan were vital to comprehend and unbalanced. In the following lines, President Mohammed Ayub Khan summarizes the objections of Afghanistan.

There were two fallacies in Afghanistan's thoughts while Pakistan came into existence. The first misperception was that Pakistan could not remain an independent country due to Indian continual propaganda. This was considered accurate by the Afghan authorities and before it split it planned to make claims in Pakistan. As a result, Pukhtunistan was claimed.... The second misunderstanding was the behavior of the Afghan leadership. They thought that Pakistan was a democratic country if their premise was incorrect and Pakistan survived. Of course, this would undercut the position of Afghanistan's leadership. So these assertions were made to our countries (Hussan, 2005, p.174-5).

Afghanistan has been pursuing a policy of hostility against Pakistan right from the outset and stayed loyal to its Pukhtunistan objectives. Such as, Afghanistan openly stand against the accession of Pakistan in the UN, subject to the condition that the people of Pakistan's NWFP are entitled to the self-determination right (Burke & Ziring, 1990, p.74). In fact, in the last month of 1947, while the Indian troops ready to control over Kashmir at the Pacific boundary, demand for Pukhtunistan was made. Since then, raids have taken occurred sometimes from Afghanistan to Pakistani areas (Siddiqi, 1960, p.25).

Later in 1949, Kabul further deployed military troops and air force to a site at the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan. This was apparently done in the hope that certain tribal interests of Pakistan on the Durand Line may be given moral support. In 1950, King Zahir Shah, an Afghan king, openly spoke out against the Pakistan during his speech in Kabul (Burke & Ziring, 1990, p.87). Further, anti-Pakistan pamphlets were spread around the Kabul by Afghan officials that hosted the Afghan flag. Liaquat Ali Khan denounced Afghanistan for its hostilities in the parliamentary speech on 9 January 1950 while adopting a strategy for tolerance (Hussan, 2005, p.20).

In 1976 Dawood was concerned that his policies towards Pakistan caused more damaging for its government than good. A big achievement of foreign policy occurred. In addition, the Soviet army, Afghan media and Afghan educational institutions were completely influenced by that time (Hussan, 2005, p.23). Later, Dawood felt threat from the Soviets influence in Afghanistan's internal affairs; hence, he attempted to normalize relations with Pakistan. Afghan military forces were too weak in the Soviet invasion to pose a real threat to Pakistan and without backing from outside, Bhutto, and Zia later, were able to pursue their Afghan policies (Magnus, 1985). As discussed above the failures of the Pakistan foreign policy, one the same page, Afghanistan's un-necessary criticism and to get the political advantages and wrong foreign policy actions also destroyed the reliability of both the countries towards each other's. These actions and policies emerged the number of uncertainties between both the states as under.

### **Key Challenges to Pakistan and Afghanistan**

Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Afghan crisis showed the various consequences on Pakistan as well as the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan went painful. The succeeding governments of Kabul have shown different levels of animosity with Islamabad, with the exceptions of the four-year Taliban period (1997-2001). The two eras of Sardar Dawood, from 1947 to 1963 and from 1973 to 1978, were the most troubling period of unpleasant experiences. He was the Pakhtunistan question champion and disputes of Durand Line (Khan, 2003).

### ***Durand Line Issue***

The key issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the Durand that destroyed the peace and natural friendship of neighbors. It is border line between Pakistan and Afghanistan, formed by a thoroughly negotiated agreement signed on November 12, 1893, by the Britain foreign secretary Sir Mortimor Durand and Afghan official Amir Abdul Rehman Khan (Hamid, 2017). The agreement was then repeated in the various agreements and treaties of the successive Afghan leaders. Later in 1947, while Pakistan was created, soon the Afghan government rejected the Durand Line and demands some areas of Pakistan that created the number of uncertainties between both the countries (Qaseem & Durand, 2008).

### ***Refugees Problems***

In 1979, Afghan refugees started pouring into Pakistan after the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. An estimated three million Afghan refugees have fled to Pakistan during the previous thirty years. Much of the registered Afghan refugees have been living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the province of Baluchistan and the rest of them scattered throughout the country. Millions of Afghans who fled to hide in Pakistan during the Soviet War in the 1980s were unable to return to their country (The Diplomat, 2016). Currently, Pakistan has been heavily affected by the presence of these refugees. The Afghan immigrants have not only ruptured Pakistan's faint social life, creation of extremism, jihadi culture, viciousness, criminality and venality in the country. Afghan refugees also showed various economic and security implications on the state. The terrorist groups who have stated violence against the country or engaged in anti-state activities have been easily recruited; drug trafficking, the spread of weapons and murder targets represent a severe threat to the security sector. Pakistan's growing number of heroin users is linked to refugees who have a key role to play in the drug trade. The number of heroin users recorded in Pakistan was estimated at 100,000 in 1982 and reached 450,000 in 1986 and 657,842 in 1987. Crime rates are also rising, anti-government activities, not exclusively driven by Afghan refugees by Pakistani officials (Ghufuran, 2010).

### ***Drug Trafficking***

The drug trafficking is the biggest challenge for Pakistan as well as the key issue between the relations of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It further played the key role in emergence of international terror, insurgency, destabilization and the exacerbation of war. Pakistan perceives Afghanistan as a narco-state in which 90% opium is grown worldwide. It plays a key part in Afghanistan's geo strategic position, geographical proximity and porous border. Pakistan accuses the Afghan Government of failing to take a harsh line on cotton production and giving it secondary prominence in post-Taliban counter-insurgency operations. The horrific surge in poppy crops and trafficking pose one of the largest difficulties facing Afghanistan since the ousting by the Taliban (Khan, 2021). Both countries have made efforts to create solid ties to drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Pakistan because the use of drug money for sponsoring terrorism. The geographical position of the Pakistan, as neighbor of Afghanistan, found the country in a sensitive position with regard to both narcotics and drug trafficking. Pakistan is one of Afghanistan's leading drug transit countries, causing severe problems in Pakistan. Through Baluchistan and NWFP, drugs come from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Pakistan's society has been greatly harmed. The number of addicts has increased. Afghan immigrants introduced the culture of drugs in Pakistan during the Afghan insurgency to the Soviet Union. After Colombia and South America, Afghanistan has today achieved the "unenviable distinction" of becoming the biggest narco-state in the world (Nuri, 2007). Although number of issues have been involving between both the countries, there are also many good wills and well-wishes for each other's.

### ***The Good Wills between Pakistan and Afghan***

There are also deep historical, religious, cultural and linguistic links between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Late ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan Z.A. Bhutto expressed that if Pakistan may have to choose one country from all over the Asia and Africa, we should move towards the Afghanistan, as it is most important for us.

### ***Economy***

Afghanistan is the locks land for trade, hence, the majority of its imports and exports depend by the port of Karachi, Pakistan. This has been the main influence of Pakistani authorities traditionally when the border problems of Afghanistan or the Pushtunistan question are generated. In smuggling commodities smuggled into Pakistan by this scheme, the business elite in Afghanistan are significantly involved. Furthermore, in any part of Afghanistan, Pakistani cash is open to trade. Oil and wheat items are also imported from Pakistan, and the Afghan wheat requirements in its province forecasts, in general, are included in the Khyber Pakhton Khawa (KPK) Government. Further, every year various afghan peoples entered into Pakistan for the purpose of temporary work (The News, 2003).

### ***The Welfare of Refugees***

Although Pakistan was not a member of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention but Pakistan is still bearing the burden of more than three million of Afghan refugees and active in the rehabilitation of these refugees. The Commissioner for the welfare of these peoples was consequently established in Afghanistan (The Pakistan Times, 1985). In Pakistan, as well as providing a plethora of other facilities, refugees were supplied with health care, education, including vocational training and job prospects for females. In spite of the negative social consequences and the continuous expenditures of maintenance for these refugees, it is maybe young Afghans who better grasp what their lives are all about in Pakistan that would be the greatest value for Pakistan. They were well educated at Pakistani institutions, schools and universities (The News, 1998). They grew up in Pakistan. It is the source of Pakistan's "soft power" in Afghanistan.

### ***Religion***

The Afghan priesthood traditionally looked for religious education in the subcontinent. The *Darul Ulum Haqqaniain Akora Khattak* in India was taken over by Deoband, near Nowshera before partition; therefore, *Darul Ulum Haqqaniain* produced the most Afghan academics' alma mater. In the mosques in the KPK, there was lot of Afghan mullahs acting as an imam. The closest link between Afghanistan and Pakistan lies in the religious affinity, bolstered by ethnic ties.

#### **Exploration of Oil and Gas**

Afghanistan's key trading route pass through Pakistan, hence, during the administration of the Taliban, a Latin American business tried to explore Turkmenistan's oil and gas. There is still opportunity for a gas pipeline from Uzbek-Turkmen gas reserves to Pakistan via Afghanistan.

#### **Construction**

Both countries commenced different trade measures, which include re-launching the Trade Agreement on Transit, the signing of a Treaty on investment protection and a memorandum of agreement (MOU) that affirmed the multilateral and mutual benefits for both the countries. It further encouraged to both countries, Islamabad and Kabul, to build relations, confidence, educational enhancement activities, and road building in the Afghanistan. Under the good will relationships, the opening of the bank branches and development of the track connecting Chaman and Spin Bodak and Chaman and Kahndhar will also help the stimulate trade. There is also a planned railway route from Chaman to Kandhar. While Pakistan, for its part, had decided on the reduction to a million dollars in help from the negative list of six products under the Transit Trade Agreement, it had established 9 extra custom stations in the border regions and opened the Waziristan commercial route (Threlkeld & Easterly, 2021).

#### **Pak Afghan Joint Peace Jirga**

In order to safeguard the peace of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Pak-Afghan Peace Jirga was set up after September 11 incident. "Joint Peace Jirga would be a mile stone in regional customs as the first representatives of peoples from both adjacent states were gathered on their rooftops, while joint and common issues were debated (Mazhar & Goraya, 2010)".

#### **Conclusion**

The main objectives of this study are to investigate the key causes in up and down in the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as highlight the foreign policy of both the countries towards each other's that destroyed the relations between both the nations. Furthermore, to explore the importance of both the countries for each other's and good will policies and actions taken by the leaderships of both the states to secure their interests. This research is based on the secondary and primary material collected from different reliable sources such as government official records, newspapers, books and articles. For the analysis of the data, descriptive and deductive methods have been used. The major finding of this research directs that Pakistan and Afghanistan have a zigzag history towards their relations and never stayed on the consistent way. Sometimes, it has been at its pinnacle especially in Zia era with the Mujahedeen and later during the Taliban administration during 1996-2001, however, the relations with the Afghan government were always on the bitter ways. Particularly, during, 1979-88 both countries' relations gone worst and external players played key role such as India and U.S. and both countries used its land to damage each other's. However, various actions and policies during the said era also played the positive role in developments of relations, to enhance trade, and government to government and people to people contacts. On the other hand, there were number of challenges in development of relations in both countries such as drug trafficking, refugee's problems, use of each other's land against each other, and Durand Land issues. As both the countries have long border, During Line, hence, both the countries got the various opportunities but more challenges.

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