

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN SINCE OPERATION FREEDOM SENTINEL: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

This paper discusses Pakistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan in the wake of the Operation Freedom Sentinel since January 01, 2015. As this work is based in Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex and its interplay with other territorial and non-territorial sub-systems, in this article the complex nature of relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been emphasized. Since 1970s Pakistan had adopted rather strong policy towards its neighbour Afghanistan during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's premiership. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided basis to Pakistani leadership for active involvement in Afghanistan which lately caused serious repercussions for Pakistan. Pakistan's foreign policy has gone through various ups and downs during the 1990s, and then the War on Terror changed the course of action with Afghanistan. Afghanistan had been important in Pakistan's foreign policy as 'strategic depth' due to which Pakistan could never be indifferent from Afghanistan's precarious situation of peace, security, and stability in which Pakistan had been playing its role. Even in the post-War on Terror era, Pakistan is trying to broker peace between the stakeholders, Taliban, other militant groups, the government of Afghanistan, and the US. In the absence of peace in Pakistan-Afghanistan security complex, it will not be possible for Pakistan to pursue effective foreign policy in the region.

Keywords: Pakistan-Afghanistan Regional Security Complex, Durand Line, Taliban, Afghan Peace Process.

Introduction

Afghanistan has been the cornerstone of foreign policy of Pakistan. Particularly since Pakistan has played an important role of the frontline state against the Soviet offensive in Afghanistan, fought the proxy war, and fulfilled the Capitalist resolve of containing Communist expansionism towards South Asia. It has emerged an important regional actor. But with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US too withdrew its interest and support from the region creating a political mess in the region. Being an immediate neighbour,¹ stakeholder of the Afghan *jihad*, and host of large numbers of Afghan refugees, it was not possible for Pakistan to become indifferent from the political turmoil and civil war in Afghanistan. Pakistan had been trying to pursue its

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efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan because a peaceful Afghanistan, particularly under the rule of group/s which would be complying with Pakistan's interests could be beneficial. Even Pakistan's support to the *Taliban* government established in 1996 in Kabul was reflection of such desire.

The incidents of 9/11 and the retaliatory war against terrorism by the US brought a paradigm shift to the foreign policy of Pakistan one more time and the state had to make a drastic turn from its previous posture of supporting *Taliban* regime to ceasing all kind of support to them and becoming an ally to the US-led alliance against terrorism. The War on Terror was formally concluded in December 2014 after thirteen years of its initiation with the rolling down of the flag of the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in a formal ceremony in Kabul, wherein Obama declared it a 'responsible conclusion'. However, that was not an absolute ending, but rather the beginning of a new strategy which was named as "Operation Freedom Sentinel" with another international mission, the Resolute Support.² Since Afghanistan had still been facing precarious situation of law and order due to the *Taliban* issue and its political instability, the state was too fragile to handle these challenges. On the other hand, Pakistan had been grappled by a fresher wave of terrorism and needed a foreign policy which could address the Afghan problem as its long-range, long-term objective.³

Every policy has some flaws and shortcomings which are studied, or to be studied to avoid such happenings in future. Despite the fact that numerous authors and researchers have worked on different dimensions of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations after 9/11 with every possible perspective, studying Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan has always been an agenda to be evaluated fully. Since then, tremendous amounts of literature have been proliferated on Afghanistan, Pakistan, *Taliban*, War on Terror, and all kinds of transnational terrorism. The available literature can be divided into four categories. The first category includes literature discussing the history of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations since Pakistan's independence for which abundant scholarly work is available as Mehtab Ali Shah's *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy*,⁴ Ahmad Shayed Qassem's *Afghanistan's Political Stability: A Dream Unrealised*,⁵ Thomas H. Johnson and Barry Scott Zellen's edited work *Culture, Conflict, and Counterinsurgency*,⁶ and Bijan Omrani's article "The Durand Line: History and Problems of the Afghan-Pakistan Border."⁷ The second category embraces the books, articles, research papers, and reports about terrorism, trans-

national ties, and support of terrorists of Taliban and Al-Qaeda, cross-border terrorist networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and role of the US and its allies to end terrorism from Afghanistan and rest of South Asia which includes Bruce Riedel's *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad*,⁸ Zahid Hussain's *Frontline Pakistan: The Path to Catastrophe And the Killing of Benazir Bhutto*,⁹ John K. Cooley's *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*,¹⁰ and Mariam Abou Zahab and Oliver Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection*.¹¹ The third category contains literature which discusses shifts and challenges of foreign policy of US, Afghanistan, and Pakistan during the War on Terror which includes Mary Buckley and Rick Fawn's *Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11, Afghanistan and Beyond*,¹² and James J. F. Forest's *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century: International Perspectives*.¹³ The fourth category includes *Afghanistan Post-2014: Power Configurations and Evolving Trajectories* by Rajen Harshé and Dhananjay Tripathi, eds.,¹⁴ and *Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict: Armed Groups, Disarmament and Security in a Post-War Society* by Michael Vinay Bhatia and Mark Sedra, which explain the role of different international and regional actors in Afghanistan. But since the commencement of the Operation Freedom Sentinel in Afghanistan, Pakistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan and strategies to address that issue are largely lacking the substantial debate.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Regional Security Complex in the Post 9/11 Era

This section discusses the Regional Security Complex framework presented by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever as the theoretical ground for this paper. This framework explains concept of security at regional level as the primary level to discuss security. The region is determined basically as the territoriality and geographical proximity; and the security of the states in that region is highly interlinked and dependent on each other. According to Buzan and Waever, the region would be the level "where states or other units link together sufficiently closely that their securities cannot be considered separate from each other."¹⁵ This framework puts Pakistan and Afghanistan into a tight Regional Security Complex because the national security of both states cannot be exclaimed in seclusion from each other, and peace, security and stability of this region is guarantee of peace and security at large. But it is not as straight forward as it seems. The regional security complex which these two states create make

becomes truly complex when sub-systems not based upon territoriality will enter and make constellations according to their own national interests.

Buzan and Waever consider such inclusions “fully compatible with the meta-theory of securitization” but with overriding of the fundamental principle which explains that intensity of the threats will naturally be intense in closer proximity. They suggest two ways in which such overriding can occur: “(1) by a shift from more territorialised (e.g., military) to less territorialised (e.g. economic) threats; and/ or (2) by a rise in levels of absolute power sufficient to enable more and more actors to ignore the constraints of distance.”¹⁶ When applied on Pakistan-Afghanistan Security Complex, the issues not only include the other regional actors but the non-territorialised sub-systems at international level too emerge as potential stakeholders in the complex. Iran, China, and three Central Asian states Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are in proximity with Afghanistan and make individual security complexes with the state; whereas their security concerns also impact Pakistan-Afghanistan Security Complex. For these Central Asian states, Russia has rather stronger standing in their domestic politics, particularly trade and energy sector, and in the post 9/11 time period, Russia does not want to let this hold weak.¹⁷ Particularly President Putin’s foreign policy vision of February 2013, which strongly emphasized upon stepping up of Russian involvement and role in the Central Asian states¹⁸ which undoubtedly affects foreign policy of those states in favour of Russia. Simultaneously there are two more sub-systems that affect the two-state security complex. One sub-system that is proximal to this complex is India, while the US, Russia, Central Asia, and Middle East (Saudi Arabia and Iran in particular) make non-territorial sub-systems which affect Pakistan-Afghanistan Security Complex.

In the post 9/11 era, Afghanistan-Pakistan Security Complex has emerged as an epicenter of capricious international politics. Its geographical location as well as its volatile history makes it too complex. There are number of international actors playing their roles accordingly in the two states. The interplay of all these security complexes makes South Asia increasingly vulnerable and prone to overriding each other interests. Pakistan’s foreign policy needs to encompass all these ground realities to be effective in the given security complex.

Brief History of Pak-Afghan Relations

Afghanistan has always been a tough neighbour to Pakistan, since beginning, a major issue between these two states was the Durand Line, the border established since times of the British India and about which there had not been any misunderstandings between the British India and Afghanistan.¹⁹ After Emir Abdul Rahman was sworn in, the British adopted a rather assertive foreign policy at that time and in 1886 the delimitation of the border was completed and an agreement was signed in which Emir Abdul Rahman ceded territory to the British India²⁰ which includes parts of present-day Western Baluchistan, Quetta and large territory of Federally Administered Tribal Area.²¹

This delimitation of the border remained unaltered but as soon as the partition plan of Indian subcontinent surfaced and it was decided to make two independent states of Pakistan and India out of the British India, the separatist demands were being made on the basis of ethno-nationalism by the factions residing on both sides of border. After this inception of Pakistan, Afghanistan refused to recognize Pakistan and cast the only vote in the United Nations against the grant of membership to the newly-independent state. Afghanistan also started igniting these elements on the irredentist grounds that started claiming of “Pakhtoonistan/ Pashtunistan” which held a strong ground in the Pakhtoon/ Pashtun nationalists and Baloch nationalists causing serious threat to Pakistan’s national integrity.²² Pakistan always tried to resolve these issues politically and diplomatically, and proved the legitimate status of the Durand Line being a successor state of the British India.

During the Bhutto era, Pakistan adopted a rather enhanced posture; and strong steps were taken at domestic and external fronts, i.e. deployment of military at borders, military action in Balochistan against the ethno-nationalists; and diplomatic and official visits were extended to Afghanistan simultaneously which played significant role. The foreign policy of Pakistan toward Afghanistan during that period provided the basis to address the bilateral issues which had been straining relations between the two states. It was being assumed that the issue of Durand Line would be resolved, but the assassination of President Daud in Afghanistan as well as military coup by General Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan stalled the progress in that regard for some time. After President Daud’s assassination, his successor Taraki tried to re-instigate irredentist claims and even despite Zia’s efforts to continue the process and dialogue with Taraki, he did not show any sign of reconciliation. But soon the process was revived as Taraki felt his

weakening political position and increasing Soviet interference in Kabul, and he offered Zia recognition of the Durand Line as the international border if on the basis that he would ensure to seal border from Pakistani side, for which Zia suggested that the border should be sealed from Afghan side as well to stop the infiltration of the insurgents on both sides.²³ That seemed a logical demand from Pakistani side which suggested reciprocity of action. However again it could not be materialized as Taraki was killed, and the Soviet invasion changed the political situation in the region.

Though Afghanistan had largely been a turbulent area historically, but since the Soviet invasion of the state in 1979 which took place to support the Communist regime in Afghanistan at that time, initiated a new wave of militancy and violence. The Islamist resistant groups (denoted as *mujahidin*) being supported, funded, and trained by the international actors and agencies²⁴ during Afghan *jihad* were left unsupported and unguided by the US and its Western allies after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan which resulted a massive power vacuum; power struggle among Afghan war lords (previously fighting as *mujahidin*), and widely spread civil war across Afghanistan. Pakistan along with the some Arab states which did not leave Afghanistan, and continued its support in anticipation of a long lasting peace in the country. Particularly for Pakistan, the peace and stability in Afghanistan was core national interest without which Pakistan would not be able to maintain peace in its own territory and sustainable development for its people. Afghanistan was considered as 'strategic depth' to Pakistan against any possible aggression from the western borders.²⁵

The *Taliban* movement emerged in the mid 90s and eventually succeeded to establish a government gaining control over massive area of Afghanistan which announced to approximately 90% of land of the state.²⁶ Supporting *Taliban* was more like a compulsion for Pakistan as continuously warring Afghan groups were threat for Pakistan's peace, security, and stability, as well as due to the religio-political parties of Pakistan which too were inclined towards *Taliban's* implemented Islamic system. Unfortunately *Taliban* failed in getting international support due to the version of Islamic political system and legislation, which was according to their own interpretation of Islam; and largely a violation of not only fundamental human rights but even the ideology of Islam. They were basically representatives of a tribal society which mainly followed the age-old system of norms and traditions known as *Pashtunwali*.²⁷ Providing sanctuary to *Al-Qaeda* leadership and not handing over Osama Bin Laden to the

US by *Taliban* was also abidance of *Pashtunwali* which caused huge antipathy in the US government for *Taliban* regime. The incidents of 9/11 proved to be the last nail in the coffin, and the US decided to launch a retaliatory war against Afghanistan's *Taliban* government after their repeated refusal of unconditional handing-over of Osama Bin Laden to the US.

In October 2001, the War on Terror with global reach was waged and Afghanistan was attacked by the US and the NATO forces. Due to inevitable historical factors as well as geo-political facts which have been determining dimensions of Pakistan-Afghanistan mutual relations, Pakistan's role in Afghanistan could not be negated by the US and its allies, and when Musharraf agreed to become an ally to the War on Terror, it caused drastic reaction within Pakistan as well as Afghanistan. Nevertheless the War on Terror was continued for a little more than thirteen years, and it was formally conducted in December 2014. It was not an abrupt end. Rather it was well-worked upon before and gradual drawdown of NATO/ISAF forces from Afghanistan took place. The time period was assigned with the vision to launch a strong final offense against *Taliban* and *Al-Qaeda* and to enable Afghan Security Forces to take over their responsibilities in the meantime.²⁸

From War on Terror to Operation Freedom Sentinel: Challenges to Pakistan's Foreign Policy toward Afghanistan

This section discusses the challenges to Pakistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan after US policy shift in Afghanistan from the War on Terror to the Operation Freedom Sentinel. Contextually these challenges are identified and discussed as Pakistan's role in Afghan peace initiatives, cross-border attacks by US and/ or Afghan security forces, border management, and the issue of Afghan refugees. Soon after announcement about the US-schedule to drawdown the security forces from Afghanistan by the US President, the regional actors started realizing the potential hazard of re-emergence of the violent extremism and terrorism in the region. Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex had already suffered a lot at all levels of state and society, whereas at that time when both countries would have invested heavily into the counter-terrorism strategies and operations which could go futile at that point. It was the stage when both states had to take decisive measures for peace, security, and stability in the region as both regional actors had started realizing that after this withdrawal, similar situation of power vacuum could take place as it had happened in 1990s.

The only viable solution was peace-building with *Taliban* and finding a political solution. The US which previously had been opposing the efforts of reconciliation with the militants by Pakistan's political and military leadership, had realized that the solution of Afghan problem was not only military offense, but multi-pronged strategy which could address and involve the moderate elements from within the militants would be more beneficial as Obama mentioned in his 2009 speech which was appreciated by Pakistan and Afghanistan as well.²⁹

Prior to that, Afghanistan's political leadership had been in favour of reconciliation and inclusion of *Taliban* in the national politics. The aim was peace-building in the region with a broader focus.³⁰ For this purpose, there had been several initiatives taken at different times since 2003 which due to their limited nature or other issues could not be eventful.³¹ A joint peace *Jirga* based upon *Pashtunwali* was held in August 2007 as a ground-breaker in the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan.³² The apparent reason for failure or minimum success of all these peace efforts was lack in understanding the dynamics of peace process. A big breakthrough after Obama's visionary speech about integrating the moderate elements present within *Taliban* was Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP) in 2010 by Afghanistan government on the principle to engage the willing moderate elements into integration process and weaken the strong weave of *Taliban* militancy. But the military offence was being considered more effective than integrating the Afghan insurgents into political process in dealing with Afghanistan issue. The strategic lacunas and divergence of opinions in dealing with *Taliban* weakened the peace process at all levels as the American decision makers were divided into groups as one group was in favour of talks with *Taliban* and thought that peace in Afghanistan was not possible without that step; while the other group was skeptical about the efficacy of the talks and wanted to deal with the militancy and insurgency iron-handedly.³³ Similar happened with the initiatives of the International Conferences held to find solution of Afghanistan issue in different years from the Conference held in 2001 in Bonn to the Conference held in 2014 in London; no remarkable solution came forward other than frameworks which had been tried accordingly.

Pakistan's Role in the Afghan Peace Initiatives

The Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex and rather inter-dependent security challenges and issues make Pakistan indispensable to initiate

any peace process in Afghanistan. It does not mean that peace, security, and stability in Afghanistan are conditional with Pakistan's inclusion in the process, or that Pakistan would be trying to control internal politics of Afghanistan. Rather, the ethnic and religious ties across the border, and support to militants, particularly *Taliban* into each other's territories determine the role and limits of involvement of Pakistan in Afghan peace process.

Since the NATO forces drawdown was nearing according to the given time frame, the terrorist activities were predominantly increased in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The *New York Times* mentioned in a report based on the figures provided by the Afghan Ministry of Defence, "...of the 4,451 Afghan soldiers killed in the war, 2,771, or over 60 percent of the total, were killed in the three years that ended March 20, 2013."³⁴ Similarly Pakistan was facing brutal terrorist attacks, target killings, firing, bomb blasts in all areas of Pakistan, from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Balochistan, from Shiites, Sunnis to minorities, from infants to elderly, and without any discrimination of civilians or security forces after the gradual process of the NATO forces drawdown started taking place in Afghanistan. That increased terrorism was indication of several factors; weakening and frustrating terrorists/militants taking revenge from the governments, implying different strategies by the militants like attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling, or outbidding³⁵ to extend their influence through terror, and attempting to get noticed politically and getting better bargains. However after several unsuccessful or inconclusive efforts like involvement of Qatar, Iran, and Saudi Arabia to bring *Taliban* or other militant groups into meaningful talks, Pakistan facilitated the Murree Peace Process in July 2015.³⁶ Since then the talks and peace-building process have been occurring under different arrangements like Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), and the Heart of Asia Conferences, however with stalls and breaks. Therefore without Pakistan's role as an effective facilitator, the peace-building could not be presumed in the Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex.³⁷

Cross-Border Attacks by the US and/or Afghan Security Forces

The cross-border attacks including the drone strikes by the US and/or Afghan security forces have already emerged as major irritant between the relations of the two countries. These attacks have questioned Pakistan's sovereignty and security by and large, and Pakistan has been demanding to stop these attacks, and since Operation Freedom Sentinel has been taking place in

Afghanistan, Pakistan is addressing this issue rather effectively. One of such example is incident of retaliatory firing from Pakistani side in May, 2017 due to a cross-border attack on Chaman border which killed 50 Afghan soldiers.³⁸ However the drone attacks are still a challenge to Pakistan's national security.

Border Management

Illegal cross-border movement of the natives and the networks of militants and terrorists, transnational organized criminals, smugglers, and traffickers are the most serious challenges for the foreign policy of Pakistan. These activities can be controlled only if the border management will be enhanced from both sides. Unfortunately the Afghan government as well as the tribal people opposed the idea of strictness on the borders. Despite all the opposition, Pakistan took some effective measures like installation of gates on entry and exit points, establishing check posts, fencing in some areas, documentation of the people moving across the border, bio-matric identification, and data collection to stop the terrorists, militants, and other culprits. Despite all these measures, the smugglers, traffickers, and transnational organized criminals do find the ways to infiltrate into each other's countries and challenge the state writ and make law and order more wobbly. As it is a long and porous border, the only solution is recognition of border and fencing it completely to control such unwanted movement.

The Issue of Afghan Refugees

Pakistan has been hosting large number of the Afghan refugees. Nevertheless the international community as well as the humanitarian organizations are quite helpful in managing the burden but the worrisome part is the socio-economic factors which have been affected by these refugees. As these refugees are unable to earn their livelihood in appropriate manner, majority of them are living under the poverty line and get easily involved into crimes. Some of them are the ones who work for the terrorists and militants as they are the easy prey to such elements. The repatriation process under the National Action Plan is underway but rather less effectively. Their return to their homeland is only possible if there will be peace for which the international community should play its role.

Energy and Trade Agreements

Another important area in Pakistan's foreign policy which needs continuous development is fulfillment of the energy and trade agreements in which both states are party. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline and KASA-1000 Project among Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan about electricity transmission are example of such agreements. Similarly trade agreements in which both states are party need to be worked upon persistently to get the spill-over effects of economic peace. All these arrangements and consolidations can be successful if the peace, security, and stability in both countries will be assured.

Peace and Stability in Afghanistan: Long-Range, Long-Term Objectives of Pakistan's Foreign Policy

This section emphasizes upon the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan as it will be considered as long-range, long-term objective of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan and Afghanistan as regional security complex are interlinked for their national security. The ominous threat from Afghanistan-side of border has been a matter of serious concern for Pakistan; however major focus in conceiving the solution of the issue would have been shifted. It can be exclaimed as shift in perception from controlling Afghan politics to cooperating with the Afghan government in dealing with common enemy, the terrorism. However Pakistan had learnt its lesson and no longer willing to provide any guarantees other than playing its role in facilitating the peace initiatives regarding Afghanistan. Pakistan's willingness to play a calculated role in Afghan conflict was a reflection of its changing approach towards Afghanistan. The dynamics of Pakistan's foreign policy had been changed and the state was no longer ready to fight anyone's war. This shift was not an easy one; rather Pakistan had paid heavy toll at domestic level in form of human losses of its citizens and security forces, material possessions, as well as national cohesion. The newly assumed role of Pakistan as 'facilitator' in Afghan peace processes, and not a 'guarantor' for any of the sides was a wise decision in the light of previous experiences.³⁹

Pakistan and Afghanistan have been viewed through different lenses by the US and its allies. Since initiation of the War on Terror, Pakistan's leadership had been blamed by Afghanistan and the US for putting least effort in anti-terrorist actions and operations; whereas Pakistan had been facing serious

political turmoil internally due to its anti-terrorist operations starting from Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and later spreading across the country causing serious opposition politically. The terrorism has not been eradicated from the nip as yet due to the number of factors involved in the regional security complex of Pakistan-Afghanistan. These operations however have controlled such incidents to an extent.

The *Taliban* has emerged as resilient and undeniable stakeholder in Afghanistan's politics over all the years of War on Terror and even after that. Afghanistan's peace, security and stability is greatly dependent on the solution of *Taliban* issue. Pakistan is directly affected by Afghan's political situation due to its geopolitical and ethnic connections. *Talibans* are not mere in a group of people. Rather they have emerged as a particular mindset which could be found on the both sides of border. Their cross-border connections provide support and safe havens to like-minded people even after carrying out terrorist activities. There is a similar issue with the smugglers, traffickers, and transnational organized criminals which have extensive links across the border. Even they can have political or popular support in their areas which would make it difficult for the law enforcement agencies and/or security forces to take action against them. The logical solution is extensive dialogue on border management between the two states, and recognition of the Durand Line as an international border because being a successor state of the British India, Pakistan's claim on the Durand Line is legitimate.⁴⁰ The United Nations, the US and international community should play their role in resolving this issue as it would provide permanent legality to the Pakistani government to manage the infiltration of insurgents and illegal movement. Even *Taliban* were not willing to recognize the Durand Line as they did not want to lose their safe havens in Pakistan. Now when the US and the Afghan government are admitting political existence of *Taliban* in Afghanistan and extending opportunities for talks to seek political solution, they should recognize the international border first in spite of hue and cry about Pakistan's not doing enough to stop the terrorism and providing safe havens in its territory.

Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex has complicated interplay of other sub-systems with their own agendas, national interests, and patterns of convergence and divergence. These sub-systems as discussed earlier in this paper, do act, re-act, and/or interact at different levels making the security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan further precarious. These sub-systems are based on territoriality and non-territoriality too. Figure 1 shows the

complexity of the interplay of all these territorial sub-systems with Pakistan-Afghanistan Regional Security Complex.

If the above figure about the territorial sub-systems is elaborated, the most complex picture comes afore. Pakistan and India have been locked in enmity since inception and have fought four wars and numerous skirmishes on their borders and/or the Line of Control. Biased or unbiased, both states have similar attitudes towards each other. Evidently India has been trying to destabilize Pakistan through implying different strategies and doctrines, particularly in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, e.g. Ajit Doval, founder of the Doval doctrine about whom the Indian media reported that he had spent 7 years in Pakistan in disguise of a Muslim,⁴¹ and Kulbhushan Jadhav caught for espionage and terrorist-funding charges in Pakistan whose case is in International Court of Justice (ICJ).⁴² Contrarily India has accused Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir, Urri attack, Mumbai terrorist attacks, and Indian Parliament attacks in different time periods. In that context, Indian investment in Afghanistan's infrastructure development and training Afghan security officials as well as its use of soft power in Afghanistan intensifies Pakistan's insecurities, and Pakistan interprets such actions as the Indian policy of Pakistan's encirclement.

When all these territorial sub-systems and non-territorial sub-systems further interact with each other, their individual national interests or mutual interests further intricate the regional politics and politics of the security complex. For example, Iran shares borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan both states of the complex, and due to its converging strategic and economic interests with India, is playing role in regional politics despite the fact that India has strategic partnership with the US due to which India had suspended its part from the IPI gas pipeline. Similarly India and the US have strong economic and strategic relations since 2005, which has caused concerns for its long-time strategic partner Russia which consequently has improved relations with Pakistan rather cautiously. Central Asia and Middle East have their own concerns linked with Pakistan-Afghanistan security complex but when the Middle East is mentioned, Iran and Saudi Arabia have mutual divergence which is quite apparent from their postures in having relations with the said security complex; whereas the Central Asia is predominantly linked with the Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex through the energy and pipelines' routes. On the contrary, the Central Asian states have become a ground of competing control

and influence between the US and Russia. China which has emerged as a challenger to the US hegemony has its own agendas of convergence and divergence with the security complex. It has territorial boundary issues with India and has gone to a war in 1962 and number of skirmishes on that border. China extends immense support and assistance to Pakistan as Pakistan provides 'strategic depth' to China. Another area of convergence with Pakistan and several other states emerged potentially is China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects which have capability to engage several countries of the region will require peace, security, and stability in the region.

Conclusion

Pakistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan has been rather dynamic. It has been going through continuity as well as change. Since 9/11 the nature of this shift is quite visible. Pakistan has devised and adopted different strategies to address all aspects of the Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex, i.e. bowing to international pressure and disconnecting support and ties with *Taliban* government, regaining status of the frontline state in the War on Terror, extending the anti-terrorist activities and operations across Pakistan, the civil-military unified stance regarding countering terrorism in the state, developments regarding the border management between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and peace-building efforts at the national and regional levels as well as playing important role in facilitating the Afghan government to build peace. The War on Terror was continued in Afghanistan for more than a decade, and ultimately ended in 2014 with the apparent upshot that *Taliban* were stakeholders in Afghan politics and they could not be terminated even with the use of the accumulated resources of the great powers and security forces across the world. The only solution to *Taliban* issue has been understood as extending opportunities to *Taliban* and other militant elements to become part of the talks and legitimate political integration into Afghanistan's politics. However the world has yet to think about the flip side of their demand of implementing Islamic political and legislative systems in Afghanistan.

The *Taliban* leadership has presented their demands as pre-requisite to the talks in January 2016 which comprised upon the points about withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghan soil, lifting of the UN sanctions against their leaders, re-opening their political office in Qatar, release of their prisoners, and ending propaganda against the group which caused much reluctance in Afghanistan and

US. Nonetheless, Pakistan has been considered crucial for the peace talks among the parties,⁴³ but Pakistan also requires assurance from the Afghan border which is only possible if the Durand Line would be recognized as the international border. Contrarily since President Donald Trump has assumed the office in January 2017, his contradictory approach toward Afghanistan issue has further complicated the situation. President Trump has presented his Afghan policy in which he has intended to increase the number of troops again in Afghanistan. He has accused Pakistan for harboring terrorists and Afghan *Taliban* while opening doors to peace talks with *Taliban*.⁴⁴ Hence his attitude has made peace-building further difficult. Pakistan-Afghanistan regional security complex can only get peace, security, and stability when the issue of *Taliban* will be resolved. Pakistan's foreign policy objectives toward Afghanistan can be achieved effectively only if Pakistan would be able to expand its writ to the tribal areas through extended reforms at large and bring them to the mainstream. Simultaneously Pakistan needs to reshape its strategies to enhance the efficacy of its foreign policy according to the changing policies of the territorial and non-territorial sub-systems as well as improve its diplomatic skills too to present its rightful position to the world about Afghanistan issue.

NOTES

- ¹ Pakistan shares 2,430 km long porous border with Afghanistan. See "Geography: The borders of Pakistan," *Dawn* (Karachi), October 17, 2009, accessed on November 10, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/884966>.
- ² "Obama heralds formal end of war in Afghanistan after 13 years," *The Guardian* (London), December 28, 2014, accessed on January 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/28/us-nato-formally-end-war-afghanistan-kabul-ceremony>.
- ³ These two terms used in this section have contextual linkage to the foreign policy. The long-range objectives usually include the nature and significance of the objective or goal having intense impact on beholder like peace-building, democracy, state ideology, international regimes, nationalism etc on the expense of other states. It is achieved over long period of time that is why it is mentioned as long-term.
- ⁴ Mehtab Ali Shah, *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1997).
- ⁵ Ahmad Shayed Qassem, *Afghanistan's Political Stability: A Dream Unrealised* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009)
- ⁶ Thomas H. Johnson and Barry Scott Zellen, eds., *Culture, Conflict, and Counterinsurgency* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014).
- ⁷ Bijan Omrani, "The Durand Line: History and Problems of the Afghan-Pakistan Border," *Asian Affairs* 40, no. 2 (June 2009): 177-195, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068370902871508>.
- ⁸ Bruce Riedel, *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2011).
- ⁹ Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Path to Catastrophe And the Killing of Benazir Bhutto* (India: Penguin Books, 2008)
- ¹⁰ John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* 3rd edition (London: Pluto Press, 2002).
- ¹¹ Mariam Abou Zahab and Oliver Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004).
- ¹² Mary Buckley and Rick Fawn, eds., *Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11, Afghanistan and Beyond* (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2004).
- ¹³ James J. F. Forest, *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century: International Perspectives, Volume 1, Strategic and Tactical Considerations* (Connecticut, London: Praeger Security International, 2007).
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- ²⁰ According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the tribal territories of the Afridis, Maḥsūds, Wazīrīs, and Swātīs, and the chieftainships of Chitraland Gilgit, were ceded to the British India.
- ²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, “Denmark’s Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Afghanistan-Pakistan Region 2015-2017, Concept Note,” accessed on May 22, 2017, file:///C:/Users/ACER/Downloads/Afghanistan-Pakistan%20Concept%20Note.pdf, 8.
- ²² Hanif-ur-Rahman, “Pak-Afghan Relations during Z.A. Bhutto Era: The Dynamics of Cold War,” *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* XXXIII, No. 2 (2012): 23-42.
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- ²⁴ Initially it was Pakistan which had decided to help and support the Afghan resistant groups against the Soviet troops and began its move at diplomatic front by using support of the non-aligned like-minded countries, and mobilized this support in the UN resulting in a series of the UN Resolutions passed every year from 1980 till 1987. The other vital support to the Afghan crisis of 1979 was giving refuge to the Afghan displaced people in result of the erupting of violence and war, as well as support to the Afghan resistant groups against the Soviet invasion which was soon joined by Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states. The US, though willing to join this effort to contain the Communism since beginning was lately welcomed in the resistance efforts by Pakistan and the Afghan militant groups approximately after one and half year of initiation of the Afghan *jihād*. See Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan’s Foreign Policy, 1947-2009: A Concise History*, Second edition (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 173-178.
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