

Afghanistan Under Taliban Rule: A Shift in Islamabad's Policy



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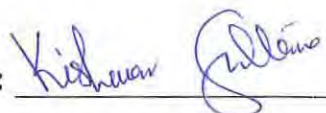
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I hereby declare that the dissertation presently submitted bearing the title “**Afghanistan under Taliban Rule: A Shift in Islamabad’s Policy**” is the result of my own research and has not been submitted concurrently to any other institution for any other degree nor does contain any violation of International Copy Right Law.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my beloved Parents.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANP	AWAMI NATIONAL PARTY
ATA	ANTI TERRORISM ACT
ATDC	AFGHAN TRADE DEVELOPMENT CELL
BLA	BALUCHISTAN LIBERATION ARMY
BLF	BALUCHISTAN LIBERATION FRONT
BRI	BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE
CAA	CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY
CARs	CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS
CENTO	CENTRAL TREATY ORGANIZATION
CIA	CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
CPEC	CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR
CTD	COUNTER TERRORISM DEPARTMENT
DG	DIRECTOR GENERAL
DRA	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
ETIM	EAST TURKISTAN ISLAMIC MOVEMENT
FATA	FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS
FATF	FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE

FBI	FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FC	FRONTIER CORPS
FDI	FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
FCR	FRONTIER CRIMES REGULATION
FIA	FEDERAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY
GHQ	GENERAL HEAD QUARTER
GWOT	GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR
IDPs	INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS
IEA	ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF AFGHANISTAN
IMF	INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
ISAF	INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE
ISI	INTER SERVICES
INTELLIGENCE	
ISIL	ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND THE LEVANT
ISIS	ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA
IS-K	ISLAMIC STATE OF KHURASAN
JUI-F	JAMIAT ULEMA-E-ISALM FAZAL UR RAHMAN
JUI-S	JAMIAT ULEMA-E-ISALM SAMI UL HAQ
KP	KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
LET	LASHAKAR-E-TAYYEBA

LEJ	LASHKAR-E-JHANGVI
MPA	MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY
NA	NORTHERN ALLIANCE
NACTA	NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM AUTHORITY
NAP	NATIONAL ACTION PLAN
NATO	NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
NDS	NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
NLC	NATIONAL LOGISTIC CENTER
NNA	NON-NATO ALLY
PATA	PROVINCIALY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS
PDPA	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN
PEMRA	PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITY
PK-MAP	PUKHTUNKHWA MILLI AWAMI PARTY
PPP	PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY
PTC	PAKISTAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION
PTI	PAKISTAN TEHREEK-I-INSAF
QWP	QOUMI WATAN PARTY
RAW	RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS WING

SCO	SHANGAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION
SEATO	SOUTH-EAST ASIAN TREATY ORGANIZATION
SIGAR	SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION
SSC	SUPREME COORDINATING COUNCIL
TNSM	TEHREEK-I-NIFAAZ-I-SHARIAT- I-MUHAMMADI
TTP	TEHREEK-I-TALIBAN PAKISTAN
TTS	TEHREEK-I-TALIBAN SWAT
UAE	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
UK	UNITED KINGDOM
UN	UNITED NATIONS
UNSC	UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
US	UNITED STATES
USSR	UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
WOT	WAR ON TERROR
WTC	WORLD TRADE CENTER

ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to focus on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and their ups and downs during the Taliban regime. There are a number of episodes in Pakistan's foreign policy with regard to Afghanistan's relations. Pakistan's foreign policy experienced many changes with respect to its relations with Afghanistan. Pakistan has always tried to find a friendly government in Afghanistan. There are several reasons why Islamabad wants a favorable and friendly regime in Kabul. These factors include the issue of Pukhtunistan or the Durand Line, Indian influence, access to Central Asian Republics (CARs), and Pakistan's strategic depth policy. Pakistan's relations with the Afghan Taliban were very close and friendly under the 1996 government. However, the current Taliban rule in Afghanistan did not receive as much support from Pakistan as was in their previous one. The Taliban recaptured Kabul in August 2021 following the withdrawal of the NATO and US-led coalition from Afghanistan, but Pakistan has not recognized their government officially. This study is being conducted to find out the causes of this major shift in Islamabad towards Taliban rule in Kabul. A field survey was conducted to ask the people about the current situation of Pak-Afghan relations under Taliban rule. Most of the respondents responded that, as there are many challenges for Pakistan caused by the current Afghan scenario, Pakistan's concerns are primarily focused on these challenges right now. The resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), cross-border firing, the issue of Afghan refugees, and cross-border terrorism are currently big challenges for Pakistan. Islamabad, from time to time, approached Kabul for the settlement of such issues. The Afghan Taliban blames Pakistan for their killings due to Pakistan's joining the global war on terror and its alliance with the United States in Afghanistan. Pakistan, on the other hand, blames the Afghan Taliban for the provision of safe heavens to Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other anti-state actors who are involved in bloody attacks on Pakistan. These claims and counterclaims led to and still lead to mistrust for both parties (Pakistani officials and the Afghan Taliban).

KEYWORDS: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Foreign Relations, Interdependency, Afghan Taliban, Terrorism, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

National borders have been of significant strategic, economic, political, and security concern for the countries that share them. As national borders are political constructs, it is through these borders that they have the choice of having good or bad neighbors. (Baud & Schendel, 2009, p.19). People usually ignore borders when it suits them, but when it goes against their interests, they challenge the political status quo of these borders. Thus, the study of borders or borderlands has been viewed in terms of legal, geographical, and geopolitical perspectives up to now (Prescott, 1987, pp. 33–34).

Pakistan shares its north-western and western border with Afghanistan, with a total length of about 2600 kilometers. So, disturbances in its western neighbor, Afghanistan, always influenced its eastern neighbor, Pakistan. Afghanistan has always remained the home of wars and clashes throughout history. Conflicts and disturbances have taken place here about every decade since this millennium. In the twentieth century, Afghanistan was first confronted with the British Empire in India and, at the end of the century, with Russia. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, Afghanistan once again became a home of war for the United States. Instability in Afghanistan led to the rise of different stakeholders and warlords inside the country. After the withdrawal of the red forces from Afghanistan in the 1990s, the situation became worse, and in 1992, a civil war in Afghanistan led the country into another conflict. Due to the worse situation in the country, the Taliban came up with the idea of founding a state under "Islamic principles." Mullah Omar was the founder of the Taliban in Afghanistan, which he founded in 1994 in Kandahar province. Mullah Omar was among those Mujahedeens who fought against the Soviet Union in 1980. He demanded a system based on Islamic values after the toppling of the country's communist regime. The center of Kandahar Province was seized by the Taliban on October 3, 1994. In 1995, the Taliban took control of 12 Afghan provinces. In 1996, the Taliban entered Kabul and ended the temporary government, announcing the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

The Taliban controlled 90% of the country's territory in 1998. With the annexation of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban started to rule the country. Pakistan was one of the three countries; the other two were Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which at the time recognized the Taliban government (Chayes, 2007).

This shift of power in the hands of the Taliban reflected changes in Pakistan's domestic politics. In 1993, newly elected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) found new ways to open trade routes to Central Asia. Support for the Taliban under Bhutto resided mainly in the interior ministry, according to some analysts. Bhutto's interior minister, Gen. Naseerullah Babar, created the Afghan Trade Development Cell (ATDC) in the ministry in 1995, ostensibly to promote trade routes to Central Asian Republics (CARs) but also to provide the Taliban with funds. Moreover, the state-owned Pakistan Telecommunications Corporation (PTC) set up a telephone network for the Taliban; the public works department repaired roads and provided electricity; the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC), a part of the interior ministry, set up a wireless network for Taliban commanders; the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) repaired Qandahar airport and Taliban fighter jets; and Radio Pakistan provided technical support to the Taliban's official radio service, Radio Shariat. Observers interviewed by Human Rights Watch in Afghanistan and Pakistan have reported that Pakistani aircraft assisted with troop rotations of Taliban forces during combat operations in late 2000 and that senior members of Pakistan's intelligence agency and army were involved in planning major Taliban military operations. The extent of this support has attracted widespread international criticism. In November 2000, the United Nations (UN) secretary-general implicitly accused Pakistan of providing such support (Davis, 2001).

The post-9/11 scenario once again brought shifts in the domestic politics of Pakistan as Pakistan played a role of a frontline state and allied with the United States (US) in Afghanistan. This shift was based on opposing the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Pakistan, once again, as in the 1980s, received huge military and economic aid from the US. Besides, there were more negative impacts of the war on terror on Pakistani society than positive ones, as Pakistan faced terrorist attacks, including suicide bombing, which has deteriorated the law and order situation. The military operations against the terrorists displaced millions of people from Swat and ex-FATA, Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Terrorism has threatened the

peace, stability, and wellbeing of Pakistani society, and terrorists have challenged the writ of the state, thus tarnishing the soft image of Pakistan (Stephen, 2011).

The twenty-year war inside Afghanistan finally came to an end with the decision of the United States to withdraw NATO, or North Atlantic Treaty Organization, forces from Afghanistan. The Taliban once again came into power in Afghanistan last year. Pakistan still did not recognize the Taliban government in Afghanistan. This study will mainly focus on this shift of Islamabad towards the current rule in Kabul and will also compare it with that of the 1996 Taliban rule. The study will also discuss the big challenges for Pakistan caused by the current Taliban rule in its western neighbor.

Statement of the Problem

The ongoing crisis in Afghanistan has direct implications for the security of Pakistan. As this situation in Afghanistan has caused unending insurgencies that make Pakistan feel worried, both defensive and offensive measures have taken place from time to time throughout Pakistan's history. This unending, worse situation in Afghanistan has direct impacts on the region and Pakistan in particular. On September 11, 2001, an attack occurred at the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, US. Al-Qaeda was blamed for this act. At that time, as the chief of Al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, was in Afghanistan, the US government demanded from the Afghan government that Bin Laden be handed over to them. With the refusal of the Afghan government, the US attacked Afghanistan. The country, which recently came out of a war with Russia, fell into another war, this time with the US. The conflict in Afghanistan was not only limited to that country, but it had consequences beyond the borders for its neighbors, especially Pakistan. Pakistan once again played the role of a front-line state, as the country had played in 1980 against the Soviet intervention. Pakistan received the status of non-NATO Ally (NNA) from the US. Though the United States helped Pakistan both in economic and military fields and all the sanctions were lifted from Pakistan that were imposed on it after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the country faced many bad impacts due to the Afghan conflict. In economic terms: unemployment, poverty, and money laundering; in social terms: illiteracy, drug addiction, and other social issues; injustice; lawlessness; and state-controlled media; while in political terms: democratic instability, alliance with the United States, aid from the United

States since 9/11; and religious extremism faced by Pakistan due to the conflict in Afghanistan.

This ongoing situation in Afghanistan and its implications for Pakistan's internal stability are directly proportional to each other. Islamabad always took an interest in Afghanistan due to many factors, i.e., strategic depth, the cause of Pukhtunistan, increasing its influence and friendly regime in Kabul, its approach to energy-rich Central Asian countries, and the Indian factor. Pakistan recognized and supported the Taliban regime back in 1996. When it comes to the current rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan is not showing as much softness as it did in 1996. The current study will explore the paradigm shift in Islamabad's policies with regard to the Taliban rule in Afghanistan and its consequences, particularly for Pakistan and for the region as a whole.

Review of Literature

Before starting field research, a review of the literature is an important task because it informs the researcher about the already-existing relevant materials on such a topic. The researcher also finds the research gap with the help of a literature review. Without a review of the literature, the researcher cannot identify the research gap. With regard to the current study, there is different literature available on the impacts of the Afghan crisis on Pakistani society. Work has also been done on Pakistan's relations with the Afghan Taliban in the past and in the recent past. When it comes to the research gap for the current study, which the researcher has identified with the help of the already existing literature and materials, the research gap is: what nature of shift has occurred in Islamabad's policies towards the current Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and what factors are responsible for such a shift?

Talal Hassan's article "AFGHANISTAN COMPLEX SITUATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON PAKISTAN" examined that Afghanistan, since the late 1970s, has suffered brutal civil war in addition to foreign interventions in the form of the Soviet invasion in 1979 and the US invasion in 2001. The article explored the strategic interests of the great powers of the day in Afghanistan, which pitched against the potential threat of terrorism, religious extremism, smuggling, and drug trafficking. With respect to Pak-Afghan relations,

the article describes that historically, Pak-Afghan relations have never been on a smooth track. With regard to the security challenges for Pakistan due to the bad situation in Afghanistan, there is no country that wants peace and stability in Afghanistan more than Pakistan, and no country has suffered more from instability in Afghanistan than Pakistan. It is Pakistan's geo-strategic interests that require the re-establishment of a peaceful, stable, and friendly Afghanistan. While unstable and disturbed, Afghanistan is a big security threat and challenge for Pakistan (Hasan, 2009).

Zahid Shahab Ahmed stated in his article "Taliban's Takeover of Afghanistan and Pakistan's Security Challenges" that despite friendly relations between the two neighbors, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban's control over Afghanistan has been far from an unmixed blessing for neighboring Pakistan. The article provides context and assesses the security threats that Pakistan faces arising out of the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan. When the US troops began to withdraw from Afghanistan during July and August 2021, the Taliban began to take over the country. Today, the Taliban fully control the country and have established an interim government in Kabul, which they claim is inclusive. At the global level, Pakistan is seen as the Taliban's key partner, and Islamabad also views the Taliban-led regime as friendly, but the increasing fragility of Afghanistan continues to have adverse effects on Pakistan's security. The article assessed Pakistan's terrorism problem since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 (Ahmed, 2022).

Eva Gross's paper "Afghanistan: The View from Pakistan" gives a picture of Afghanistan's future and its consequences for Pakistan. The paper describes the significance of Pakistan over the issue of the Afghan crisis by stating that Pakistan will definitely be the most crucial regional player in post-2014 Afghanistan. Close religious and cultural links to the Taliban give Islamabad valuable leverage and influence over any peace process regarding Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban. The paper stated that the protection and support given to insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban over the past decade has had alarming domestic consequences for Pakistan, ranging from the growing number of terrorist attacks to posing a significant threat to the country's internal stability. Failure to reach a political settlement in Kabul is therefore likely to have negative impacts that would further weaken Islamabad's ability to fight against extremist groups operating inside Pakistan and Afghanistan as well. Although US-Pakistan relations are complex in nature, a complete

US withdrawal by the end of 2014 is not in Islamabad's interest because the aftermath will create a security vacuum for Pakistan. Throughout its history in the bilateral dimension, Pakistan has influenced Afghan politics through its backing of the Taliban. Rather, Pakistani secret agencies like Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had a hand in the Taliban's creation, and Pakistan was among the three countries (the rest were Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) that officially recognized the Taliban government of Kabul in 1996. And the Afghan Taliban's leadership has been based in the Pakistani city of Quetta since 2001, which was commonly known as Quetta Shouraa. Bilateral relations have further improved since the end of military rule in Pakistan and the return of an elected civilian government in 2008. When Nawaz Sharif became the premier of the country in 2013, reciprocal visits to Islamabad and Kabul took place. During such visits, Nawaz Sharif promised that Pakistan would provide support for the process of reconciliation between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban. For such a purpose, Pakistan also released a number of Afghan Taliban prisoners (Gross, 2014).

Dr. Imran Khan and Dr. Karim Haider Syed, in their paper "Afghanistan under the Shadows of the Taliban and Implications for Pakistan and Regional Security," shed light on the future prospects of regional politics in case the Taliban recapture Kabul and find out that the Taliban's return to Kabul would affect the entire region. Perhaps, in the short term, the situation in Afghanistan may benefit many regional players like China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran, but in the long term, however, it can become problematic for such countries. The power structure of future Taliban rule over Kabul will determine the future of the region and Pakistan's relations with them. The paper concluded that if the Taliban remain capable of governing Afghanistan alone, it will affect neighboring states and the region differently, and if they return with a power-sharing formula as desired by the western power, then the implications will be of a different nature. The paper recommended that Pakistan, along with other regional players, should prepare for both situations so that they can manage the situation accordingly. (Khan & Sayed, 2021).

Julian Schofield's article "The Anatomy and Future of Pakistan's Afghan Interests" describes the complexities of the relationship between the nation-building mission in Afghanistan and that country's connection with its influential neighbor Pakistan. The author believes that when it comes to the success of NATO's strategy to strengthen the new regime in Kabul, it depends

on its intersection with Pakistani policies. In turn, Pakistan's strategy in Afghanistan is tied to its security policy against India. Afghanistan's refusal to recognize the Durand Line as an international border and a history of Afghan sponsorship of secessionism in Pakistan complicated Afghanistan-Pakistan disputes over territory. The article recommended that if Islamabad and Kabul look over the overcoming of mistrusts and promote bilateralism through proper channels, the long-term effect of such a strategy would be a gradual economic integration and normalization of the Afghan and Pakistan bordered areas (Schofield, 2008).

Nasreen Akhtar pointed out in her thesis –PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, AND THE TALIBAN“ that Pakistan and Afghanistan are the two neighbors in South Asia. The author focused mainly on those areas where the Taliban exists, and that is primarily centered in the border regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, affecting the politics of both states. The article historically revolves around Pakistan's support for the Afghan Taliban in the second half of the 1990s, both diplomatically and materially. And then Pakistan's decision to support the US policy of war on terror after 9/11, which meant Pakistan officially joined with the US in the war against the Taliban, And it seems once again Pakistan's favor the Pashtuns in the governance of Afghanistan if the US withdrew (Akhtar, 2008).

Dr. Noor Ahmad Khalidi's paper –Afghanistan after the United States and the Role of Pakistan", a recent paper on the Afghan crisis, gives a wondering picture of the current situation in Afghanistan by stating, –No one in Afghanistan or abroad, not even the Taliban, Pakistan, or the United States, expected the sudden and unexpected fall of the Afghan National Army, armed to the teeth and a well-trained and professional force trained and equipped by the best American, German, and British troops". It should not be considered that the US withdrawal from the battlefields resulted in the fall of Kabul because the Americans did not participate in ground wars with the Taliban for the past five years. The paper deals with the structure of the newly formed Taliban government in Kabul, which is an interim government in nature. As of so far, the Taliban have not entered Afghanistan politically, and the nature of the new "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" system is set to begin in the next few days between the top leaders and officials of the Tehreek-i-Taliban and a number of former jihadi leaders of the Northern Alliance (NA), including Ismail Khan, in Pakistan. In the 1980s, President Zia-ul-Haq realized that the United States was no longer interested in Afghanistan. Ultimately, he defined Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan, which was not

much different from the policies of the British colonial government in Afghanistan, as Pakistani officials stated that we have gained power in Kabul that is very friendly to us (Khalidi, 2021).

Omer Farooq Zain, in his article –The Failure of American Strategic Initiative in Afghanistan and its Implications for Pakistan (2001–2005)“ examined the worries of the officials in Washington, D.C., as the military situation on the battlefield in Afghanistan has gotten worse and the momentum seems to be with the Taliban and their supporters. This paper investigates the causes of US strategic failure in Afghanistan and its implications for Pakistan in the period 2001–2005. Despite countless clandestine operations and open combat, all the efforts of the US to degrade Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan have not succeeded. The US mostly worries about Al-Qaeda because the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have been closely aligned ever since Osama bin Laden came back to Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. The Taliban leadership under Mullah Omar was not willing to break up with Al-Qaeda. On the other hand, top NATO partners and commanders are not happy with the consistency of their losses and have been forced to change operational procedures. Now, they are looking for a viable solution to this long-standing conflict through multilateral dialogue. Pakistan, obviously, in this whole trauma, cannot be ignored by the US, NATO members, and Afghan Taliban, as Pakistan has influenced all of them. (Zain, 2011).

Dr. Raziq Hussain et al., in their research paper –Afghanistan at the Center of the New Great Game: Implications for Pakistan,” examined the concept of the "New Great Game" with reference to Afghanistan according to the theory of realism in order to understand the motivations and actions of regional and global powers involved in the country. The paper employs a case study approach to evaluate the old –Great Game” and its ongoing version in Afghanistan. The article argues that Afghanistan is the hub of the –New Great Game” as many actors try to further their agendas in the region, and Pakistan will most likely be impacted by the actions of outside actors as it has a large stake in what happens in Afghanistan. The paper utilizes the theory of realism, an analysis of key events and actors in Afghanistan's recent history, as well as their implications for the region in general. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of the New Great Game for regional stability and international security (Hussain et al., 2023).

Dr. Muhammad Tariq et al., in their research article –US Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Latest Development and Security Situation (2020),” discussed US activities and involvements in Afghanistan with particular reference to their withdrawal within a specific period of fourteen months. The withdrawal was a result of an agreement between the US and Taliban on February 29, 2020, in Doha (Qatar), followed by intra-Afghan talks. This talk is expected to bring lasting peace and stability to the country. There are major issues of deadlock between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which are obstacles in the way of peace progress. The article is based on the theory of bargaining. Although the agreement has been signed between the US and Afghan Taliban, there are still clouds of complexities and difficulties (Tariq et al., 2020).

Ejaz Hussain and Muhammad Jahanzaib, in their article –Afghanistan: The Western Withdrawal and its Implications for Security and Economy,” attempted to explain the implications of the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014 onwards. With the help of the proposed rational choice model, the implications for regional security and economy have been explained, which is too applicable to the case of Afghanistan. The study found that a lack of planning in the post-war period leads to more conflicts, and collaboration among regional powers can help achieve peace and economic stability. As a result of its model-guided empirical analysis, this study finds the post-withdrawal situation in Afghanistan to be more complicated. If the participants on the battlefield move forward with negotiations, the issues can be resolved positively. But if they do not prefer to negotiate, it will lead to more confrontation and, hence, chaos beyond the South Asian region (Hussain & Jahanzeb, 2015).

Zain Rafique and Muhammad Azfar Anwar discussed in their paper –Insurgency in Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan's Internal and External Security" The aftermath of 9/11 was when the US launched –Operation Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan. The wider shadows of this insurgency in Afghanistan spilled over into Pakistan, with disastrous consequences. The resurgence of the Taliban with more formidable tactics and maneuvering skills has become more problematic for Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US, and its allied forces. Ultimately, the insurgents challenged the political and territorial integrity of Pakistan. The article analyzes the current situation in Afghanistan and its implications for Pakistan's

security. The article recommended some key terms for Pakistan to overcome the growing worse situation in the country caused by the instability in its north-western neighbor.

- Elimination of foreign terrorists and their facilitators.
- Strengthening of the political and administrative institutions in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).
- Establishing a safe and secure environment conducive to sustained development and the realization of real socio-economic progress. (Rafique & Anwar, 2014).

RAJAN JHA's article "India-Afghanistan Strategic Relations in the Post-Taliban Period" historically explored the "old" Great Game between Britain and Russia, the twentieth century Cold War that led to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and the "new" Great Game between the US and the Russian Federation since the 1990s. When it comes to India, it has been linked with Afghanistan through geography and history, but in the current era, due to the presence of Pakistan, the relationship has been complicated. Both India and Pakistan attempt to exert influence over Kabul. Islamabad, with the help of the Taliban, has kept Kabul weak and isolated, while New Delhi and Kabul have forged a strategic partnership that could be enhanced by their growing participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and by India's rapprochement with Iran (JHA, 2015).

Rifaat Hussain's thesis, "PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE," describes the ups and downs of Pak-Afghan relations with the passage of time. Although both countries share geography, ethnicity, and faith, relations between them have never been smooth. With the sole exception of the four years of Taliban rule over Afghanistan, successive governments in Kabul have displayed varying degrees of disaffection towards Islamabad. While the key historical cause of this disaffection has been the unresolved border issue of the Durand Line, Pakistan has always supported Pukhtoon factions in Afghanistan to suppress the issue of Pukhtunistan. Pakistan's foreign policy-dependent nature always stood in contrast to Afghanistan's image as an independent people and country. On a bilateral level, there are key differences in socio-economic development, social and political structures, and their proclivity to meddle in each other's internal affairs (Hussain, 2002).

Dr. Eamon Murphy and Dr. Ahmad Rashid Malik, in their article “PAKISTAN JIHAD: THE MAKING OF RELIGIOUS TERRORISM,” identified the root causes of the militancy and extremism in Pakistan. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the late 1970s, the United States and its allies declared war against them during 1979–88. Pakistan, being an eastern neighbor of Afghanistan, also played a crucial role in this whole trauma. Finally, the social, political, and economic consequences of the war paved the way for extremism, militancy, and terrorism in Pakistan. Furthermore, state authoritarianism and political and social instability in the country during the 1980s and 1990s played their part in the growth of fanatical outfits prone to violence. Today’s Pakistan is almost suffering more from extremism, religious intolerance, and militancy than any other country in the world. The revival of the liberal-democratic process in Pakistan in recent months is evidence of the way its people look at religious extremism and terrorism (Murphy & Malik, 2009).

Dr. Sadaf Bashir’s paper, “An Assessment of Pakistan’s Balancing Act in the US-Led War on Terror” assesses Pakistan’s balancing act in the US-led War on Terror. ‘Pakistan decided to join the US-led war to secure its core national interests. This decision, however, did not prove to be a structural change in Pakistan’s policy. Islamabad retained a delicate balance’ in its relations with Washington and Afghan insurgents. On the one hand, Pakistan provided open assistance to the US-led coalition by targeting Al-Qaeda operatives, combating sectarian outfits, and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), on the other hand, declining to target Afghan Taliban and Kashmir-focused groups for achieving its foreign and security policy objectives. The study argued that the US counterterrorism strategy in Afghanistan, its policy in South Asia, and Pakistan’s internal political and security dynamics were the reasons for Islamabad’s growing reluctance to align its strategic objectives with US policy (Bashir, 2021).

Umbreen Javaid and Qamar Fatima, in their article “An Analytical Study of Pakistan’s Policy Toward Afghanistan Before the Taliban’s Rise, analyzed and rooted various phases and perspectives on Pakistan’s policy and the complex nature of Pak-Afghan relations as they are interlocked into numerous connections ranging from geographical proximity, ethnic religious commonalities, and historical experiences. But no harmony of interests or shared strategic considerations for the region and the world as a whole could take place. Pakistan, at the time of its birth, aspired to have friendly relations with Afghanistan. Since Pakistan’s birth, due to

its denial of the legality of the Durand Line, Afghanistan has been supporting Pashtun separatists. Reluctantly, in the 1970s, a shift in Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan occurred to counterbalance the challenges emanating from the Afghan governments' hostilities. This shift was based on creating links with a number of Afghan Islamist opposition leaders. In the 1980s, the scenario of Afghanistan changed with the Soviet invasion, which reflectively changed Pakistani links with a new dimension to force a communist superpower, the Soviet Union, to retreat from the backyard of Pakistan. And thus, from then on, Pakistan has actively remained engaged in Afghan affairs. The study concludes that Pakistan's peace and stability are divinely bound to Afghanistan due to its geographical vicinity and racial, ethnic, and religious intricacies (Javaid & Fatima, 2013).

Ghulam Ali, in his article "China-Pakistan cooperation on Afghanistan: assessing key interests and implementing strategies" studied the key interests of China and Pakistan in Afghanistan and their mutual cooperation to pursue them. The article identified that China's key interests are security, energy, connectivity, and geopolitics. With respect to Pakistan's key interests, the article identified: recognizing the Durand Line as an international border with Afghanistan, preventing 'hostile elements' from using Afghan territory against Pakistan as a security threat, and access to the Central Asian Republics. Both China and Pakistan supported and cooperated with each other in Afghanistan under the umbrella of their strategic partnership. Pakistan helped establish initial Taliban-China contacts and persuaded the Taliban to negotiate with the USA and representatives of the Afghan government. In return, China supported Pakistan's Afghan policy and became a mediator between the Islamabad-Kabul and Taliban-Kabul negotiations. Islamabad and Beijing backed their diplomacy with economic assistance and extended the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to Afghanistan (Ali, 2020).

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai, in his book "The Troubled Triangle: U.S.-Pakistan Relations under the Taliban's Shadow", brought major details and analysis of the origins and continuation of the Afghan wars. The author discussed the triangular shape of the relationships between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States and their mistrusts of each other. The author argued that the U.S. has consistently overlooked key aspects of Pakistan and their regional positions. The author presented a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Taliban on Pakistan's relations with the United States. The book stated that bilateral relations are

important not only to consider Pakistan's role in Afghan peace processes but also to understand the degree to which Islamabad has been able to influence the Afghan Taliban. The book traces the historical connection between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban and the evolution of Pakistan-US relations, especially after 9/11. The book gave a picture of the genesis of the Taliban, the rationale behind their emergence, and how they consolidated their rule in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. It also examined the U.S. policies towards the Taliban in the post-9/11 era, and Pakistan's role as an ally in their efforts towards breaking the Taliban rule in Afghanistan ranged from Obama's 'fight and talk' policy to the Doha peace agreement in 2020. The book also discussed the consequences of the War on Terror (WOT) for the globe and Pakistan specifically, as well as the Taliban's response to U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in Afghanistan. (Yousafzai, 2021).

Joseph J. Collins's book "Understanding War in Afghanistan" warned the engaged powers in Afghanistan that if they fail in Afghanistan, the state will fragment, and if it fragments, then most of its parts will again become the natural base for those who have attacked not only New York and the Pentagon but also London and Madrid. Similarly, a fragmented Afghanistan will become the strategic nurture and ground for extremism in Pakistan, a nation that is armed with nuclear weapons. Not only Pakistan, but the entire region will be affected as fragmented Afghanistan will facilitate support for extremist movements across the energy-rich Central Asia. Similarly, a disturbed Afghanistan will enormously empower jihadists everywhere in the world. Failure in the United States' succeeding in Afghanistan will support the notion that America is incapable of capitalizing on its military power. It will pave the way for warlords and civil war inside Afghanistan, as was witnessed in the 1990s. The author declared Afghanistan one of the most devastated countries on Earth (Collins, 2011).

Safdar Sial and Talha Saeed Satti, in their article "2014 withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan: implications for regional security," identified that Afghanistan's main and key post-2014 concerns will be: to sustain economic viability and enhance the capacity of its security infrastructure; to deal with an emboldened Taliban; to manage intra-Afghan political reconciliation; and to develop good relations with its neighbors and the international community. The insecure and unstable Afghanistan may have serious implications for Pakistan's internal and Pak-Afghan border security and might increase the burden on the

latter's counterterrorism efforts. And with the withdrawal of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the US, Afghanistan will no doubt result in insecurity for the regional states. Interestingly, the book described that no country in the region, including Pakistan, wants to see the Taliban again rise to power in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda relied heavily on the Taliban, and this would not be different now if Afghanistan entered a renewed civil war. The author considered that Afghanistan must remain on the West's radar screen for the foreseeable future because this will be the only way to prevent terrorism from re-emerging (Sial and Satti, 2014).

Sumit Ganguly and Nicholas (2009) have focused, in their article INDIA-PAKISTAN RIVALRY IN AFGHANISTAN, on the strategic interests of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan. The paper mainly discussed the tenure of Hamid Karzai and the immediate situation after the fall of Taliban rule in Afghanistan and its impacts on both India and Pakistan. The paper states that both countries, since their emergence from the break-up of the British colonial empire in South Asia in 1947, have had ties with a range of Afghan governments (Ganguly & Nicholas, 2009).

Khurram Ahmad's article TALIBANIZATION IN AFGHANISTAN: IMPACT ON PAKISTAN is based on finding out the core key of Talibanization and its impacts on Pakistan. The study found out the conceptual framework of Talibanization that originated in Afghanistan and spread to the region of Pakistan due to complex borders between both countries and the ideological and social affiliations of people living in the bordering areas of both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The study is based on understanding the extraordinary socio-political phenomenon (Talibanization) of contemporary Afghanistan, its social and doctrinal roots, and their sources strengths in order to understand their nature of behavior. The study explored that Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan served a strategic interest for them. The study highlighted Islamabad's dual policy, as after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Pakistan became a partner with the USA in their "war on terrorism" and stopped their official support for the Taliban. However, some experts consider that the Afghan Taliban is still receiving support from Islamabad, which is repeatedly denied by Pakistani officials (Ahmad, 2011).

Michael Rubin's paper WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TALIBAN? explained the Americans' involvement and Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. The study stated that after the

9/11 attacks on New York City and Washington, America refocused their attention towards Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion ended. The origin and rise of the Taliban became a subject of great interest. The Mujahideen, who were America's backers, and the Taliban, a movement developed a decade later, were violent rivals. It was Pakistan that supported radical Islamists in order to protect itself from Afghan nationalist claims on Pakistani territory, commonly known as the issue of Pukhtunistan, which Islamabad feared might pull apart the country (Rubin, 2002).

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of this study are the following:

- 1) To analyze the historical perspective of the Afghan crisis
- 2) To look at the implications for Pakistan caused by the Afghan crisis
- 3) And to investigate the root causes of the current paradigm shift in Islamabad's policies with regard to Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

Research Questions

The main research question is:

What are the major shifts in Islamabad's policies with regard to the Taliban rule in Kabul?

Besides it, subsidiary research questions followed the main research question. Subsidiary questions are the following:

What are the factors responsible for the worsening situation in Afghanistan?

How has the Afghan crisis contributed to Pakistan's internal insecurity?

What were the main reasons Pakistan was in support of the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 1996?

What are the main reasons Pakistan is less active with the support of the Taliban government in Afghanistan at present?

Significance of the Study

Pakistani society suffered very badly due to the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan. Different social evils took place in Pakistani society during the Afghan conflict in the War on Terror. As the conflict gained more momentum in Pakistan, caused by different elements, the current study focuses on the extent to which Pakistan learned from history with regard to the Afghan crisis. The study will analyze whether there is any kind of realization with reference to Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan.

Hypothesis of the Study

The government of Kabul and the government of Islamabad are the two variables in this study. The government in Kabul is an independent variable, as it influences the government in Islamabad. Like the government in Islamabad, it is the dependent variable that makes policies and forms relationships as a result of the regime in Kabul, which is an independent variable.

Research Methodology

The most important part of the research is its methodology. It is this methodology that tells us about the authenticity and correct result of any study. It is this methodology that means that if someone follows the same research method for such a phenomenon, he or she

will get the same result. The current study is exploratory and qualitative in nature, for which both primary and secondary sources have been utilized. Primary sources include a questionnaire as well as interviews with experts and mostly the local masses of both nations, Pakistan and Afghanistan, to get their expert views regarding the ongoing situation in Afghanistan and its consequences for Pakistan. Face-to-face, in-depth interviews are conducted for the collection of data. Data organization and analysis are based on the objectivity of the study. The sampling techniques for conducting the interviews were the purposive and snowball types.

Secondary sources have also been utilized in this study. Archival studies have included books, research journals, magazines, and articles.

Organization of the Study

In addition to the abstract, conclusion, and bibliography, the present study is composed of a total of 4 chapters.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 is an _introductory chapter_ starting with an introduction. This chapter includes an introduction, statement of the problem, objective of the study, main research question and subsidiary research questions, significance of the study, hypothesis of the study methodology, and review of literature.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 looks over to the _historical perspective of the Afghan crises_. This chapter includes: Afghanistan during the Cold War, followed by: Political Landscape, Soviet Invasion, Pakistan's Response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, Resistance of the Mujahedeen against the Soviet Union, and Soviet Forces Withdrawal from Afghanistan. It also includes the civil war inside Afghanistan, followed by the aftermath of the Dr. Najib government, the rise of different warlords, the emergence of the Taliban, the Taliban confrontation with Mujahedeen, and Taliban rule from 1996–2001.

The US invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11 is followed by the attacks of 9/11, the presence of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, the US invasion of Afghanistan, and Pakistan's response to the US invasion of Afghanistan.

The last part of the chapter is about current humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, followed by mistrust on the Taliban by the common people, women issues, and global sanctions on the Taliban.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 deals with the implications for Pakistan caused by Afghan crises. This chapter includes the political impacts of the Afghan conflict on Pakistani society, followed by democratic instability, an alliance with the United States, and Pakistan's dependency on American aid. The social impacts of the Afghan conflict on Pakistani society are followed by religious extremism and drug addiction. At last, the economic impacts of the Afghan conflict on Pakistani society are followed by economic losses to Pakistan due to terrorism and money laundering.

Chapter 4

The final chapter, Chapter 4, investigates the root causes of the current paradigm shift in Islamabad's policies with regard to Taliban rule in Afghanistan. This chapter includes the resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), cross-border terrorism, cross-border firing, Pakistan's role as a front-line state with the US in the War on Terror after 9/11, and the issue of Afghan Refugees and Kashmir.

CHAPTER 2

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE AFGHAN CRISIS

Background

Afghanistan formally came into being in 1747 as a state. Its founder was Ahmad Shah Abdali. There are about twenty ethnic groups living in Afghanistan. Its official languages are Pashto and Dari, along with thirty other local languages (Ewans, 2001).

Afghanistan is a landlocked country situated in south-west Asia. Afghanistan borders in the north with the Central Asian Republics, which include Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; in the west with Iran; and in the east as well as in the south with Pakistan. Similarly, the country also shares its narrow, almost 76-kilometer border with China. The popular Khyber Pass is in the south-east and connects Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Afghanistan's Ningarhar Province (Lee, 2018). Afghanistan, in some measure, is a resource-rich country that contains oil, gold, and chromate. Gas can be found in Shaberghan city, situated in the north of Hindu Kush. Oil, iron, and copper can be found in the north and south-east parts of Hijighat Pass and Kabul, respectively. Khiljis, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Badghis, Marghabs, Lodhis, Babur, Suris, Safavids, Mir Wais Hotak, and Ahmad Shah Abdali, also known as Ahmad Shah Durani, ruled over Afghanistan. After Abdali's death, Afghanistan was ruled by incompetent and weak rulers, which led to the Anglo-Afghan wars as Afghanistan remained a buffer zone between Russia and British India in the nineteenth century. In 1839, 1878, and 1919, the first, second, and third Anglo-Afghan wars took place, respectively (Meher, 2004).

Due to its strategic location as a gateway to energy-rich Central Asian Republics (CARs) and at the crossroads of three regions—Central Asia, South Asia, and West Asia—Afghanistan remained the hub of the crisis. The Afghan crisis has a very complex historical perspective

based on several decades. The crisis contains multi-dimensional angles and dynamics that range from political to social to military. The crises in Afghanistan are not limited to that country; they have impacts far beyond the border. An unstable and disturbed Afghanistan will also destabilize the entire region. Since the period of the Cold War, the Civil War inside Afghanistan, the US invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11, and the current humanitarian crises in Afghanistan have shaped the complex history of the Afghan crises. Here are some of the terms regarding the historical perspective of Afghan crises that will enroot their causes.

Afghanistan during Cold War

Political Landscape

When it comes to the political landscape of Afghanistan, it can be traced to internal political division. This division is divided into ethnic, linguistic, and religious. Afghanistan is based on a heterogeneous society where Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazaras, Pamiris, etc. live. The country remained in a state of war both internally and externally almost all the time. In 1919, after the third Anglo-Afghan war, Ghazi Amanullah Khan declared a sovereign Afghanistan. King Amanullah Khan, also known as Ghazi Amanullah, ruled over Afghanistan from 1919 to 1928. Amanullah was famous for his anti-British views, and that is why he extended relations to other nations. Besides, he was a modernist too in his views and wanted to make Afghanistan a modern and progressive state in the world (Roberts, 2003). He established different modern educational institutes in different parts of the country and promoted women's education throughout the country. Along with modernist views, King Amanullah also wanted to make Afghanistan a strong nation, and hence, he focused on the defense of the country. For this purpose, he established different military training centers and academies to make possible military short and long courses and military advancement as well (Goor & Leeuwen, 2000).

The period between 1926 and 1973, from King Amanullah's tenure to that of Zahir Shah's tenure, is known as the Kingdom Period in Afghanistan and is also called the Kingdom of Afghanistan. During 1928 and 1929, a civil war was started in Afghanistan. Chaos erupted in the country, and due to allegations and conspiracies against King Amanullah Khan, he

reluctantly left for Delhi in 1929. Finally, the kingdom was again restored by Muhammad Nadir Shah in 1929 and, hence, maintained until the Muhammad Zahir Shah period of 1973. In 1973, Sardar Muhammad Daud Khan, the first cousin of Muhammad Zahir Shah, led a military coup and overthrew Zahir Shah's government. General Muhammad Daud Khan was very strict by nature. He targeted all his political opponents and the Islamist parties in the country, most of whom fled to Pakistan. Very strict measures were taken by General Daud as he imprisoned the leaders of the Islamist parties, and they were beaten and forced to leave the country. General Daud initiated land reforms in the country. General Daud, along with most of his family members, was assassinated during the very popular Saur Revolution in Afghanistan. Nur Muhammad Tarakai was more inclined towards socialism and its views, which resulted in clearing the way for foreign intervention in the form of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) invasion of Afghanistan. As it is said by a prominent Muslim philosopher, Ibn-I-Khaldun, an internal chaos has always contributed to external invasions. Therefore, if someone looked over the Afghanistan case with the same lens, Afghanistan's internal issues and their political deadlock are more responsible for foreign intervention than any other external cause (Goor & Leeuwen, 2000).

Soviet Invasion

Afghanistan is viewed as the center or home of clashes, conflicts, and crises. It has always suffered from both exogenous and endogenous conflicts. These episodes of conflict and crises have both internal and external stories. The Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan, which lasted for a decade, was a major event in the second half of the twentieth century. Its consequences still exist in Afghanistan and in the region. In 1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew the government of Afghan president General Muhammad Daud Khan, who had himself taken power as a result of a military coup, and established an autocratic one-party system in Afghanistan. The Afghan state was renamed from the Republic of Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), which lasted until the resignation of then-President Dr. Najibullah Khan in 1992. In 2004, the name of the state was again renamed the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during the reign of President Hamid Karzai. The successful takeover of the PDPA gave way to the creation of a socialist Afghan government. The PDPA government was closely aligned with the Soviet Union, and Nur Muhammad Tarakai was serving as the General Secretary of the

Revolutionary Council. In 1978, an agreement was signed between the Soviet Union government and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. It was signed into agreement that the Soviet Union would help the PDPA government economically and with military assistance as well. It was in September 1979, with the removal of Nur Muhammad Tarakai by Hafizullah Amin that Tarakai's suspicious death led to the deterioration of Afghan-Soviet relations. After that, in December, the Soviet leadership established an alliance with Babrak Karmal by making him Amin's successor. After all, when the situation in Afghanistan was becoming worse, the Soviet Union finally sent its armed troops and invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. There were some main reasons behind the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan, such as the fact that, in a time of internal differences and clashes in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union was afraid of fundamentalism and fundamentalist groups. They were also unhappy with Amin's government and wanted to support Tarakai against him. Another reason was the balance of power and security arrangements by the US in the South and South-West Asian regions (Goor & Leeuwen, 2000).

Pakistan's Response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

In the late twentieth century, the Iranian revolution, also known as the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan were the two major events in south-west Asia that created a state of uncertainty in the region. These events took place at the threshold of Pakistan. Both countries, i.e., Iran and Afghanistan, are immediate neighbors. Pakistan's response to the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan was not simple but rather complex and multi-dimensional. Due to historical ties with the Afghan masses and being an immediate neighbor, Pakistan's role was more challenging in this whole scenario than any other nation in the world. It is viewed that although this invasion affected all the immediate neighbors of Afghanistan, which are China, Iran, Tajikistan, and Pakistan, Pakistan was more significantly and directly affected by this event. After the red forces arrived in Afghanistan, Pakistani policymakers and security experts took it seriously and totally focused on Afghanistan because it directly threatened Pakistan's security. The invasion created fear and uncertainty among Pakistanis as they viewed that their country would be the next target and that Moscow would try to extend their advancement beyond the borders of Afghanistan. Many Pakistanis viewed Moscow's main target as not Kabul; rather, it may be Islamabad, as they will try to get ways for their access to warm water (Cheema, 1983, pp. 227–230).

Although, keeping in view Russian advancement, Islamabad was still in confusion about whether the country would ally with the US or not. Some were of the view that direct alignment as a “front line state” would be somehow risky for Islamabad’s foreign policy. From the late 1960s until the mid-1970s, Islamabad and Moscow had good relations (Wriggins, 1984, pp. 298–299).

The United States (US) got the golden opportunity in Afghanistan to combat communism and the growing influence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The US participated in the Afghan crisis against the USSR. For the United States, the importance of Pakistan since then has increased dramatically by virtue of its geographical position and historical ties with the US. When the United States decided to fight against the USSR in Afghanistan, Washington approached Islamabad for assistance. On the other hand, for Pakistan, it was also a golden opportunity to regain its status in global politics since the fall of Dhaka in the recent past. Pakistan’s ambitions for gaining nuclear power could also be served by Pakistan’s alignment with the US. Similarly, with regard to Pakistan, Moscow had three objectives in mind: firstly, to control or get rid of threats to their presence in Afghanistan arising from Pakistani territory. Secondly, to stop the emerging relationships between Pakistan and the United States. Thirdly, to make possible their access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistani soil in the long term. Islamabad, keeping in mind all the above phenomena, finally decided to ally with the US against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. (Fukuyama, 1982).

Resistance of the Mujahedeen against Soviet Union

The resistance of the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union was a complex, multifaceted, and long-standing struggle in the late twentieth century. This struggle changed the geopolitics of this region. When it comes to the term Mujahedeen, they were those Afghan rebels who fought against the Soviet Union from 1979 to 1989. Mujahedeen are considered all those Afghans who were actively engaged in war against Soviet forces and the PDPA government in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. They were not a uniformed force but rather a kind of loose coalition of various Afghan resistance groups and some foreign volunteers from various North African and Middle Eastern countries who also fought against Soviet occupation in Afghanistan. This coalition was linked to often

different ideologies and objectives. Besides, they were divided by regional, ethnic, tribal, and sectarian differences. They gained more popularity in Afghanistan when the Babrak Karmal government was replaced with Dr. Najibullah's government. Their most influential leaders were Professor Burhan-ud-din Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Massoud (Jamiat-e-Islami), and Sibghatullah Mojaddedi. Gulbadin Hekmatyar (Hizb-e-Islami Group), Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi (Hizb-e-Harakat-e-Islami), Abdul Ali Mazari (Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami) Mujahedeen received domestic and global support to fight against red forces in Afghanistan (Adamec, 2005).

They received significant support from different groups, organizations, and governments around the world. Major contributors and collaborators in this regard were the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirate, and obviously Pakistan. The former three supported the Mujahedeen financially and with the provision of weapons, while Pakistani physically and logistically. Islamabad played a key role in helping Washington reach Mujahedeen and assist them fully. The primary tactics of the Mujahedeen, which they used to combat with red forces, were guerrilla warfare. Different volunteers came from various Islamic countries to take part in the war. The Mujahedeen used US-supplied Stinger missiles against Soviet aircraft. It was one of the most major developments in the ongoing war. These were the shoulder-fired missiles used for crushing the helicopters and aircraft. The use of these missiles proved highly effective for Mujahedeen. This conflict highly disturbed the civilian population of Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans were killed, and similarly, millions were displaced on their own wills or forced to do so. Most of the Afghans became refugees, and they flew to neighboring countries, i.e., Tajikistan, Iran, and Pakistan. The conflict totally destroyed the country's economy and ruined its infrastructure. The war was exploited by different stakeholder groups around the world. It was named the holy war, or Jihad. The United States, Pakistan, China, and Saudi Arabia were actively engaged in this respect (Meredith, 2003, pp. 380–381).

Soviet Forces Withdrawal from Afghanistan

A nine-year-long Soviet-Afghan war came to an end with the signing of the Geneva Accords. The Geneva agreement was a kind of approach to normalizing the situation in Afghanistan. It was a series of agreements that aimed to address the conflict in Afghanistan.

Participants in the Geneva agreement were the United States, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Pakistan signed the agreement with Afghanistan based on mutual bilateralism between the two neighbors, i.e., the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Afghanistan. According to the agreement, the policy of non-interference and non-interventionism was promised. It was made mandatory for both Pakistan and Afghanistan that no one further interfere in one another's internal affairs. The voluntary return of the Afghan refugees and the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan were also signed by Pakistan and Afghanistan. When it comes to the United States and the Soviet Union, they signed a declaration on international guarantees. Moreover, the Accord also outlined a plan and scheduled a timetable framework for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan. It also aimed to reach a political settlement for the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan (Klass, 1988).

On February 15, 1989, 115,000 Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan. Although conflict in Afghanistan came to an end, the Soviets' influence over Afghanistan still existed in the form of aided and supported Dr. Najib's government. In May 1989, a number of Mujahedeen attacked to seize the eastern city of Jalalabad but failed to achieve success. Najibullah was fully supported by the Soviet Union and, hence, fought against Mujahedeen for three years. On December 25, 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev, the then President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), resigned from his post and announced that the Soviet Union collapsed and the newly independent Russian state came into being. Boris Yeltsin became the first president of the newly independent Russia. After all, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Dr. Najib's government was lacking foreign support and thus stopped fighting against Afghan Mujahedeen and the recently emerged group of Taliban from Madrassas in southern Afghanistan. Dr. Najib left Kabul, the capital city, and took refuge in the United Nations compound until it was seized by the Taliban in 1996. After the fall of the Dr. Najib government, chaos, political instability, and civil war erupted throughout Afghanistan. Different groups of the Mujahedeen and the newly emerged Taliban were struggling and trying their best to get the throne of Kabul (Collins, 2011).

Civil War in Afghanistan

Aftermath of the Dr. Najib Government

The Dr. Najib government faced many internal and external challenges and finally came to an end in April 1992. Till that time, he was the President of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and also the leader of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. The groups that took part in the war against the Soviet occupation became rivals for the throne of Kabul. All the groups in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation were uniformed around a common objective, which was the defense of the country from Soviet invaders. Later on, these groups organized to represent ethnic, religious, or local interests. All of them were splintered into several factions by either their ethnic, sectarian, or religious outlook. A kind of ethnic politics started in Afghanistan instead of national politics. These ethnic politics came to define the political and social developments of the country. Consequently, these developments led to the breakout of civil wars in the 1990s. The period between 1992 and 1996 is known as the period of warlords in the history of Afghanistan. Different groups with different warlords came on front to get rule of the country in this era. To rule the country, a provisional government was formed in Afghanistan with the help of the United Nations in 1992. The overall situation in Afghanistan in 1992 and its aftermath were extremely complex and chaotic. This bad situation marked the emergence of alliances, factional rivalries, and ongoing violence. The country experienced instability, insecurity, and internal conflicts in the following years. The country experienced a wide-spread displacement of common people from their homes. Thousands of Afghans became internally displaced persons (IDPs) and were displaced to secure areas of the country during the following situation (Kashima & Wafayezada, 2012).

The civil wars during 1992–1996 in Afghanistan proved to be overtly ethnic clashes. Every group lined up themselves along ethnic cleavages to champion ethnic rights and interests. These ethnic groups were the Pashtuns, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek. The atrocities and violence that occurred in the 1990s civil wars further contributed to social gaps and increased inter-ethnic hostility. Additionally, this ethnicization of clashes and politics changed the political and social parameters. It was this ethnicized political environment that made possible the rise of different warlords representing their own ethnic groups. Consequently, the Taliban

movement emerged from the southern province of Qandahar with religious agendas as an ethnic organization representing certain ethnic groups of Pashtun (Ahmad, 2002).

Rise of Different Warlords

In 1994, there were five power centers in the Afghan scenario. Two of these five power centers were fighting each other, while the remaining three others were neutral. The two groups confronting each other were the group led by Burhan-ud-din Rabbani, head of Jamiat-e-Islami, who considered himself the legitimate President of Afghanistan, and the group led by Gulbadin Hekmatyar, head of Hizb-e-Islami. Burhan-ud-din Rabbani had the support of Ittihad-e-Islami, headed by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and Ahmad Shah Masood, the key figures and strongmen in this coalition. This group dominated the Tajik ethnicity. While Gulbadin Hikmatyar had the support of the National Islamic Movement headed by Abdul Rashid Dostam and Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, this group dominated the Pashtun ethnicity, assisted by Uzbeks. Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Sibghatullah Mojaddedi led Pakistani-based resistance against the Soviet Union during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Abdul Rashid Dostam was a general in the Soviet-controlled Armed Forces. Later on, differences arose between Abdul Rashid Dostam and the Najib government, and he abandoned Najib's government. Before the alliance with Gulbadin Hekmatyar, Abdul Rashid Dostam was the ally of Burhan-ud-din Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masood. But in 1994, his relations became worse with Ahmad Shah Masood, and that is why he sided with Gulbadin Hikmatyar. After being assisted by Abul Rashid Dostam, Hikmatyar's group strengthened further and formed the Supreme Coordinating Council (SCC). Abdul Rashid Dostan, after a coalition with Gulbadin Hikmatyar and the formation of the SCC, attempted to take over Kabul. This attempt was described by the forces of Burhan-ud-din Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masood as a coup by Hikmatyar for the purpose of replacing Rabbani as President of Afghanistan. Consequently, the fight began between the two opposing parties with the use of heavy weapons, artillery, tanks, and aircraft. In this ongoing situation, Burhan-ud-din Rabbani declared Jihad against Abdul Rashid Dostam, and several days after the severe war, Rabbani forces recaptured several areas from Dostam forces and pushed back the Supreme Coordinating Council to their old position. However, the struggle for the throne of Kabul did not stop, and war usually continued. In 1994, many parts of the country experienced an

intensified situation due to the ongoing conflict. In the same year, humanitarian and economic conditions worsened in most parts of the country.

Finally, Rabbani proposed to Afghanistan's Loya Jigah (Afghanistan Grand Assembly) the choice of the new head of the country. For this purpose, Rabbani formed an interim parliament and set the strategy for future national assembly elections. In late 1994, the Taliban, the movement purely based on religious students, emerged in southern Afghanistan and came on the front as a new player in the power center. The Taliban put forward their move from Qandahar towards Kabul and were actively involved in the fight for the throne of Kabul in early 1995 (Khalilzad, 1995).

Emergence of the Taliban

The term "Taliban" means students. Taliban's emergence initially came into being in the early 1990s. Many of their founding members studied at religious seminaries in Pakistan when they were Afghan refugees. Although they initially emerged in the early 1990s, their formal emergence as Afghan power players came in late 1994. The founder of the Taliban was Muhammad Omer, commonly known as Mullah Omar. Mullah Omar belonged to Singesar, a village 40 km to the west of Qandahar province. Mullah Muhammad Omer lived there from the end of the anti-Soviet war in 1989 until the launch of the Taliban movement in 1994. Mullah Omar was working there as an Islamic preacher and religious instructor. The Taliban started to claim that they had strong command over religious affairs and religious teachings. They had a very strict approach to Islamic principles (Maley, 2009).

The Taliban believed purely in Emarat (a system where a supreme leader, 'Amir', should be the head and he must follow the strict teachings of Islam) and were against democracy. Therefore, the Taliban resisted the Dr. Najib government by declaring Jihad against him. At first, they entered Qandahar, followed by Herat, and then moved onward to capture other parts of the country (Roberts, 2003).

Taliban Confrontation with Mujahedeen

The Afghan Taliban and Afghan Mujahedeen both evolved through various transformations and consequently splintered into many groups and factions with the passage of time. The Afghan conflict has been colored by the sifting of alliances, power struggles, and external interventions. The Taliban wanted to end the ongoing factional competition of the Mujahedeen. As the emergence of the Taliban took place in the southern province of Qandahar, they made the province their central headquarters. The Taliban were comparatively stronger in the southern parts of Afghanistan. While the Mujahedeen and its various factions were stronger in the northern parts of the country, the Taliban were disappointed by the over-and-over failure of the Mujahedeen during their factional rivalry, so they totally disassociated themselves from the Mujahedeen. The Taliban were not trusting Mujahedeen and considered them morally, ethically, and materially corrupt. With regard to the Taliban's nature, attitude, and extent, there were a lot of opinions inside and outside Afghanistan. Some were of the view that the Taliban are backed by the West, while others were of the view that they are backed by some South Asian countries (Goor & Leeuwen, 2000).

Along with internal differences between the Taliban and Mujahedeen, different external forces were also involved in the ongoing scenario. Pakistan, Iran, India, the United States, and Russia were the most dominant in this regard. Rabbani's regime was always viewed as considerable, moderate, and favorable for Russia in post-Soviet Afghanistan. Comparatively to his Taliban counterparts, Rabbani was notably more moderate in his policies. Russia was worried about the Taliban's brand of radical Islam. There were threats to Russia from the Taliban in the bordering areas of newly formed Central Asian nations. India's concerns regarding the Taliban were also fearful due to Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban. India's concerns were regarding Pakistan-backed militants who were operating in Jammu and Kashmir. India was accusing Pakistan of using Afghan soil to train Kashmiri militants. Similarly, India is concerned that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan will further inflame its own internal Hindu-Muslim stresses. Pakistan was supporting the Afghan Taliban faction over other factions. Pakistan's support was based on the installation of a friendly regime in its western neighbor. Similarly, Pakistan wanted to build a strategic depth against India, and for such purposes, Afghanistan was the most suitable choice. The period between 1992 and 1996 experienced severe humanitarian and economic losses for Afghanistan due to the ongoing

struggle for the throne of Kabul among various factions of Afghan society (Withington, 2001).

Taliban Rule 1996-2001

After a long struggle and effort, the Taliban captured Kabul in 1996. They established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) by implementing strict Sharia rules based on their own understanding and interpretation. They claimed their government as a legitimate one, but no country in the world, except the three, recognized their government. Only three countries—Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—recognized Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Although the Taliban came into power, the conflict did not come to an end in Afghanistan. The Taliban government faced many oppositions and challenges from various factions within Afghanistan. The Northern Alliance (NA), which was based on an anti-Taliban stance, showed their full form of resistance against the Taliban throughout their rule in Afghanistan. As Afghan people had witnessed harsh situations after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, the Taliban succeeded in gaining public support in their early years. But when they came into power, their form of governance was harsh, and they banned all the un-Islamic practices in the country. They also restricted individual freedom. There was a complete ban on music, television, any form of entertainment, and showbiz activities within the country during Taliban rule. The Taliban introduced a religious police, aiming to prevent people from doing un-Islamic deeds. They also targeted the cultural heritage and sights, including the statues of Buddhas in the Bamiyan region. Therefore, the rule of the Taliban was widely condemned throughout the world, except in a few nations. The Taliban warned the Hazara community in Afghanistan to either leave the country or to convert to the Hanafi version of Islam. By 1998, the Taliban controlled almost 90% of Afghanistan. The Taliban continued their offensive strategy against their opposing groups. The Northern Alliance (NA) was the main target of the Taliban, and they were the most hostile to them. Throughout these bloody wars, there was a great loss of civilians and infrastructure in the country (Malik, 2019).

Despite the opposition of various nations in the world towards Taliban rule in Afghanistan, there were some nations that were in support of Taliban rule in Kabul. These nations provided the Taliban government with diplomatic, moral, and some kind of economic and

physical support. Pakistan was among the supporters of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan was among three nations in the world (the two others were the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the KSA, and the United Arab Emirates, UAE) that recognized the Taliban rule in Kabul. In October 1994, the Pakistan Army sent the National Logistic Center (NLC) to deliver Americans' weapons to the Mujahedeen for fighting against the Dr. Najib government. On such involvement of Pakistan with Afghan Mujahedeen and Taliban, many Afghan leaders condemned Pakistan's role (Maley, 2009).

US Invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11

The Attacks of 9/11

The September 11 attacks, commonly known as the 9/11 attacks, were a series of attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda targeting the US. On August 7, an explosion was carried out outside the US Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Another attack was carried out on the same day in Dar-us-Salam, Tanzania, also outside the US Embassy. These attacks killed hundreds of people, including Americans, and injured thousands. In response to such attacks, the United States targeted Al-Qaeda training bases in Afghanistan and Sudan with missile strikes. Al-Qaeda was in search of major attacks on the US to respond to these strikes. It was September 11, 2001, when American Airline No. 11 crashed the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York, US. The airplane crashed on the 78th floor of the tower. Another airline, No. 175, crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Another airplane crashed into the Pentagon building in Washington, DC. Total deaths were recorded at 2973, and 19 Al-Qaeda hijackers were involved in such incidents. The rescue workers who were involved in rescue operations also suffered health problems due to exposure to toxic dust and debris. After the attacks, the security situation in America was alarmingly high. Security measures increased at all strategic and important points, including airports and public buildings.

These attacks changed the security and foraging policies of the US. The attacks reshaped international relations, security strategies, and policies worldwide. Consequently, many countries in the world increased their counterterrorism efforts. Overall, the 9/11 attacks were a significant and memorable moment, and they had far-reaching consequences for global

politics and security measures. To respond to the 9/11 incident, the US government, under the presidency of President George W. Bush, launched the War on Terror (WoT) worldwide. Al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden, claimed responsibility for these attacks. Al-Qaeda leadership was present in Afghanistan at the time. The US government demanded the handover of Osama bin Laden to the US from the Afghan Taliban. The Taliban officials refused to accept the US demand to hand over Osama bin Laden to them. The Taliban argument was that handing over Osama bin Laden to the US was against the *Nenawaty* (asylum) in Pashtunwali (the code of ethics for Pashtuns) and that it was against the tradition of Pashtun. On the refusal of the Afghan Taliban, the US attacked Afghanistan with missile strikes and invaded Afghanistan. The main purpose of the US was to dismantle Al-Qaeda's network in Afghanistan and abolish the Taliban regime, which was responsible for providing shelter and support to Al-Qaeda (Maley, 2009).

Presence of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan

Osama bin Laden was born in 1957. He was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. His father, Muhammad bin Laden, was a Yemeni constructor. The Bin Laden family was a rich family. Osama was a trader and such a wealthy person. During the Soviet-Afghan war, Osama bin Laden supported Afghan Mujahedeen and took part in the war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Osama had good relations with Gulbadin Hikmatyar. Osama laid the foundation for Al-Qaeda in 1988. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, Osama returned to his motherland, Saudi Arabia. In the beginning, he was welcomed warmly and was received as a hero of Islam by the people of Saudi Arabia upon his return. But after some time, when his radical activities increased, the Saudi government warned him to stop doing such activities, but he continued. The Saudi government sanctioned his visit to Afghanistan, but he visited again in 1991. Due to the increased differences with Saudi leaders and the government, Osama left for Sudan in 1991. During the 1990s, Osama bin Laden praised all the militant attacks against the United States (US). In 1994, the Saudi government cancelled his citizenship and frozen all his assets to pressurize him into stopping militancy. Due to heavy pressure from the international community, the Sudanese government decided to expel Bin Laden from their soil, and hence, he left for Afghanistan. Then after, Osama sheltered in Afghanistan and worked to run his network from Afghan soil. Al-Qaeda targeted US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998, and an American warship was harbored in Yemen

in 2000. Osama was blamed for such attacks by the US. Bill Clinton's administration demanded strikes against Al-Qaeda. Clinton ordered missile strikes on Al-Qaeda bases. And finally, training camps of Al-Qaeda in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, were targeted by the US with missile strikes (Maley, 2009).

US Invasion of Afghanistan

The United States recognized Afghanistan in 1921 and established diplomatic relations with it in 1935. Afghanistan had never remained a high-priority area for the US until the Soviet occupation. Afghanistan received zero or very little importance in US global strategy until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During such an invasion, America got a chance to combat Soviet influence and communism (Meher, 2004). The United States announced new policies for Central and South Asia. The main purpose of this policy was to secure the oil pipelines in Central Asia. Therefore, the United States considered that peace and stability in the region could only serve their motives and interests, which was not possible without peace and stability in Afghanistan, the gateway to India and Central Asian Republics (CARs) (Goor & Leeuwen, 2000).

The era of the new great game started in Afghanistan after the 9/11 incident. The term great game was not anonymous for Afghanistan, as it was witnessed in the 19th century between the rivalry of the British and Russia. So, after the attacks of 9/11, the concept of great games once again came to the fore as a new great game for this time. George W. Bush was the President of the United States at the time of the 9/11 incident. The Bush administration, on the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden to the US, decided to attack Afghanistan and the Taliban government. The US priority at that time was to make more friends and collaborators to assist her in the war on terror and the new great game in Afghanistan. The United Kingdom (UK) was the very first country to come forward to assist the US in the war on terror. The UK's Prime Minister of that time, Tony Blair, announced the alliance with the US in the war on terror. The other European allies, including Australia, followed the UK's Prime Minister's decision. And, hence, the NATO forces got ready to invade Afghanistan. The US used its allied countries' airbases and seaports for their invasion of Afghanistan. The formal invasion, in the name of Operation Enduring Freedom, started on

October 7, 2001. The US government began its mission in Afghanistan with the following objectives:

- To eliminate Al-Qaeda, its presence, and its hidden places and training bases in Afghanistan.
- To end the Taliban regime and remove them from power in Afghanistan. The Taliban regime was regarded as supporting Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups.
- To establish a more friendly and stable civilian government in Afghanistan.

The US-led coalition, NATO, and Afghan forces launched a massive operation against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in October 2001. At first, the US launched an air operation against Al-Qaeda and Taliban safe places in Afghanistan. Hundreds of bombs were dropped on the hidden places and camps of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Besides bombs, cruise missiles were also fired into Afghanistan. Ground operations took place with the deployment of NATO forces in Afghanistan (Maley, 2009).

Pakistan's Response to the US Invasion of Afghanistan

The aftermath of 9/11 and the US invasion of Afghanistan was a challenging situation for Pakistan. Islamabad had good relations with the Taliban regime in Kabul. General Musharraf, the then President of Pakistan, sent ISI's Director General Lieutenant General Mehmood Ahmad to Qandahar, Afghanistan, to convince the Taliban officials to hand over Osama bin Laden to the US. But the Taliban refused to do so (Maley, 2009). When the US invaded Afghanistan, they kept in mind the critical importance of Pakistan. Along with the support of world and regional powers, the US concerns over Pakistan were drastic regarding Afghanistan. Pakistan's response to the US invasion was complex and was influenced by several factors, such as historical ties, strategic interests, and its own security concerns. Pakistan was most important and needed by the US at this time over all other collaborators and allied countries. The US needed and wanted Pakistan's role as an active player in the War on Terror (WoT). At first, Pakistan showed less interest in allying with the US in the war on terror, but after the warning received by General Musharraf from Colin Powell, the then Secretary of State of the US, Musharraf decided to ally with the US in the war on terror. Pakistan officially joined the US-led coalition against terrorism and closed its border with Afghanistan to prevent the escape of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda personnel from Afghanistan.

Pakistan changed its policy with regard to the Taliban, providing support to the US against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was like yesterday's heroes became today's villains. Pakistan was one of the three countries that recognized the Taliban regime and was their supporter. Though Pakistan allied with the US in the war on terror, there was a controversy in Pakistani society regarding the country's decision to form an alliance with the US. Most Pakistanis were considering the US invasion as an attack on their fellow Muslims. They considered this invasion illegal, like the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. There were many elements in Pakistani society that had sympathy with the Taliban regime in Kabul. So, public perception was not the same and was divided by their own way of approaching things. With respect to the Pakistani establishment, they were also not on the same page, as some of them believed in maintaining good relations and ties with the Afghan Taliban, while others were in support of the alliance with the US against the Afghan Taliban. This kind of policy was considered a policy of double game by Pakistan with the US and Afghan Taliban as well (Rubin & Rashid, 2008).

Current Humanitarian Crises in Afghanistan

Afghanistan remained the hub of anarchy and disturbance in the twentieth century, which was not lost in the twenty-first century. Since the start of the twenty-first century, the country has witnessed humanitarian crises. These humanitarian crises in Afghanistan were in the form of internally displaced persons (IDP) crises, human rights issues, food crises, health and education issues, economic crises, mistrust of the common man by the Taliban, women issues, and global sanctions on Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. The recent developments in Afghanistan, in the shape of the withdrawal of the US-led coalition and NATO forces from Afghanistan, once again clear a path for the Taliban to recapture the throne of Kabul.

Mistrust of the Taliban by the common people

The Taliban came to power in Afghanistan for the second time in August 2021, first in the mid-1990s, following the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan. Their return

to power has raised notable concerns among Afghans due to various reasons. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan is considered rigid by common Afghans. The mistrust of the Taliban government by the common people is influenced by several factors, such as historical, political, and social. The past experience of Taliban rule in the late 1990s was marked as harsh and rigid for the common Afghans. Very strict interpretations of Islamic laws, social restrictions, gender restrictions, and severe human rights abuses were the dominant principals practiced by the Taliban regime back in the late 1990s, during their first rule in Kabul (Brobbeey, 2023). With the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, most Afghans were in fear of a return of the Taliban to such conditions. Afghanistan is not a homogenous country; rather, there is diversity in the country regarding ethnic and religious division. The Taliban are primarily Pashtuns who practice the Sunni School of Thought in Islam. This point has raised significant concerns among others (non-Pashtuns and minority sects) with respect to discrimination. Besides, the different factions and political groups in Afghanistan also have deep reservations about their exclusion from the Taliban's interim government. There is mistrust among different factions of Afghan society as they are excluded from the decision-making process. These factions of Afghan society want to be given proper representation in the country's political setup. The mistrust of the Taliban government by the common Afghans is not limited to their ethnic or political representations but also with regard to the ongoing economic crises, inflation, unemployment, and food shortages, which have worsened the situation in the country. The common people blame the Taliban for their incompetence in controlling such issues. Reports of human rights abuses, target killings, forced disappearances, and violence against civilians have further heightened the mistrust in the Taliban's ability to protect the rights of Afghans (Kaleem et al., 2023).

Women Issues

Women have faced various challenges in Afghanistan following the Taliban's coming to power. Restrictions on women were highly experienced during the Taliban rule of 1996. With the return of the Taliban in August 2021, the people of Afghanistan have significant concerns over women's rights. Among all other challenges faced by women in Afghanistan, freely and easily accessing education is a significant one. Girls in Afghanistan are only allowed to get their education up to the 6th level. High and higher-level studies are banned or very restrictive for girls in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. The people have deep

reservations about the girls' access to quality education in the country. The political participation of women in Afghanistan is zero. There is not a single woman in the current Afghan interim government. The Taliban has clearly announced that high posts and offices of public affairs will be run by male members instead of female members. Afghan women think that political participation and representation are very important for gender equality. Women's participation in social and economic activities has also suffered badly with the coming of the Taliban into power. The Afghan women think that economic independence and the provision of job opportunities can improve their lives. Women cannot move freely and without restrictions. Most of the women in Afghanistan have made significant progress in these areas since there was no Taliban rule in the country (Akbari & True, 2022).

Global Sanctions on the Taliban government in Afghanistan

The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has led the country into international isolation. Most Afghans worry that this isolation will result in a lack of financial and humanitarian assistance from the world, which will further create problems for the country. There is not a single country in the world that has recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan. The Taliban's first rule of Afghanistan in the late 1990s was recognized by Pakistan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and the United Arab Emirate (UAE). But, currently, even these three countries have not officially recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan. With the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, there were discussions and efforts by various countries around the world to impose sanctions on the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Most countries in the world consider the Taliban a fundamentalist group based on strict and rigid principles. They view the Taliban government as a pure theocratic regime based on their own interpretation of Islamic laws and principles. And this theocratic regime will create problems for global peace, and it will provide safe havens for different extremist groups of the world likewise in the past. Most of the countries in the world regarded Taliban rule as a forcefully imposed theocracy upon the Afghans without their wills. Most of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan are also worried with regard to regional peace and stability. They feel fear that Afghanistan may become a cradle of terrorism and extremism once again. The Taliban's current experience shows that their style of governing the country has not changed at all and that they still rule the country with medieval methods and strategies. The Taliban consider democracy to be illegal in Islam.

They believe in the Emarat system, which they consider the best way for the unification of people and society. The Taliban believe in their own style of government instead of parliamentary democracy. The Taliban also consider political parties and factions un-Islamic. They view that there is no division and Nifaaq in Islam, which is the production of such political parties. Therefore, all the political parties in the country are currently banned. These parties are not allowed to take part in any kind of political activity. People in Afghanistan currently face severe hardships and challenges. Hundreds of thousands of Afghan people want to leave their country for the West and other developed nations. Afghanistan has almost transformed into a narco-state (Modebadze, 2022).

Conclusion

Afghanistan is a heterogeneous country that formally came into being in 1747 as a state. Its founder was Ahmad Shah Abdali. It is a landlocked country situated in south-west Asia. Afghanistan borders Pakistan in the east and Pakistan in the south. The popular Khyber Pass is in the south-east and connects Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Afghanistan's Ningarhar Province. Afghanistan had been ruled by Khiljis, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Badghis, Marghabs, Lodhis, Babur, Suris, Safavids, Mir Wais Hotak, and Ahmad Shah Abdali, also known as Ahmad Shah Durani. After Abdali's death, the country was ruled by incompetent and weak rulers, which led to the Anglo-Afghan wars. Afghanistan remained a buffer zone between Russia and British India in the nineteenth century, which led to the first, second, and third Anglo-Afghan wars in 1839, 1878, and 1919, respectively. Afghanistan's strategic location plays a very critical role in shaping the country's political and ideological history. It has remained a hub of war among world powers and part of the great game and the new great game as well. The Afghan crisis has a very complex historical perspective based on several decades that range from political to social to military. This crisis is not limited to Afghanistan alone; it has impacts far beyond the border. An unstable and disturbed Afghanistan will also destabilize the entire region. Afghanistan witnessed the invasion of the Soviet Union in the late 1970s and its long-term effects. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, a civil war started in Afghanistan, which further led to anarchy in the country. Different warlords with different ideologies started struggling for the throne of Kabul. It was this time in the mid-1990s that led to the creation of the Afghan Taliban, led by Mula Muhammad Omer. The

very severe and worst-ever clash of Taliban vs. Northern Allies was one of the most horrific and terrible situations experienced by the Afghan society. The Taliban's capture of Kabul in 1996 changed the political history of Afghanistan. The US invasion of Afghanistan following the attacks on 9/11 was another turning point in Afghan politics and history. Pakistan allied with the US and joined the global war on terror. The Afghan Taliban became hostile to those who launched an operation against them. Yesterday's friends became today's enemies for the US and Pakistan. The post-August 2021 period (the withdrawal of the NATO and US-led coalition from Afghanistan) is, probably, another transitional period in the political history of Afghanistan. This withdrawal once again paved the way for the Afghan Taliban to recapture the throne of Kabul. The international community is observing the current Taliban rule in Afghanistan from their own perspectives. They blamed the Afghan Taliban for the humanitarian crises in Afghanistan currently.

CHAPTER 3

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN CAUSED BY AFGHAN CRISES

Background

The beginning of the 21st century brought major changes in international politics. Terrorism, or extremism, is a big challenge in today's world. It disturbed the peace and prosperity of the world. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the September 11 attacks in 2001 cost America \$21.4 billion. Pakistan's loss due to the Afghan conflict is a massive one. The Soviet expansionist plan with the invasion of Afghanistan created security challenges for Pakistan. Although the Afghan war benefited Pakistan in the short term with economic and military aid, it had significant implications for the internal and external security of Pakistan. At that time, the Afghan refugees created social, economic, and ecological problems. With the influx of Afghan refugees, issues such as sectarianism, Kalashnikov culture, and drug trafficking were dominant. Not only these issues, but this war also resulted in corrupt Pakistani elites (Hilali, 2002). Besides, Pakistan has been fighting the war on terror since 9/11. Consequently, the war has cost the country a number of thousands of citizens and security personnel's lives. Terrorism and militancy have threatened the peace, prosperity, and overall well-being of the country. Military operations against terrorism took place in Pakistan time and again. These operations resulted in the displacement of the common people as they became internally displaced persons (IDPs) at different times. Pakistan is a developing country with low economic growth and low per capita income, and this war on terror further strengthened Pakistan's economic issues. Foreign debts have increased, and the terrorists have challenged the writ of the state every time (Cohen, 2011). The ongoing Afghan conflict has significant implications for Pakistan. Therefore, crises in Afghanistan always affected the region and Pakistan especially. It has a deep rooted history that conflict and disturbance in Afghanistan always affected Pakistan. These effects have

complex and multifaceted in nature. These effects affected various aspects of Pakistan's political, social, security, economic and humanitarian landscape.

Political impacts of Afghan conflict on Pakistani Society

Democratic Instability

Pakistan is a democratic republic based on a parliamentary form of government. Constitutionally, Pakistan's political system is based on an elected form of governance. It is also termed a non-liberal democracy in the world. Since its inception, Pakistan's naked system has fluctuated between civilian and military governments at various occasions throughout its political history. There are a number of factors that contributed to weakening Pakistan's democratic structure. Some of these factors are political instability, civil-military conflicts, and political corruption. Terrorism is yet another huge factor in this regard because it has affected political stability throughout the country very badly (Maley, 1998).

After the US invasion of Afghanistan, a huge number of militants crossed the border to enter Pakistan from Afghanistan. These militants considered Pakistani officials and authorities responsible for their killings, as Pakistan allied with the US in the war on terror. These militants settled in the tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bordering Afghanistan. After the formation of the Pakistani-based Taliban as the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan in the second half of the 2000s, attacks on the political leaders started in the country. The terrorists killed many of the workers and leaders of different political parties. Along with the senior leaders of political parties in Pakistan, the militants, mostly in Swat Valley during 2007–2009, targeted those local tribal chiefs and Khans who were affiliated with any political party in the country. After the 2008 general election, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) formed the coalition government in the center and the Awami National Party (ANP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The ANP was in the coalition government with the PPP in the center. During the 2007–2009 Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remained the hub of the militants. A peace deal—Nizam-e-Adal Regulation—took place between the ANP's government and the Taliban in Swat in February 2009. For the success of such a deal, the ANP government released Mulana Sufi Muhammad from prison, who was the head of the Tehreek-i-Nifaa-i-Shariat-i-

Muhammadi (TNSM) and the father-in-law of the Fazal Hayat, commonly known as Mula Fazlullah, the head of the Swat-based Tehreek-i-Taliban Swat (TTS). This peace deal did not succeed, and the Taliban then targeted most of the ANP's leadership. The militants in Swat Valley and the rest of the province targeted the ANP's leaders and MPAs. The year 2009 was witnessed by the ANP as the bitterest year for them. On February 11, 2009, a remote-control bomb attack was held in Peshawar, which killed Alamzeb Khan, leader and MPA of the ANP, and injured seven others. On March 11, a suicide attack targeted Bashir Bilour, a senior leader of the ANP and senior minister in the KP government. And on December 1st, a suicide bomber blasted in Swat Valley, killing ANP's MPA, Dr. Shamsheer Ali Khan, and injuring 11 others (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, United States Department of State, 2011).

These militant groups challenged the writ of the state. They targeted the political gathering (Jalsa) mostly in the tribal areas and in Swat and Dir in the period of 2004–2010. They targeted them with suicide bombings. The democratic system in the country became very slow during the Talibanization period in Pakistan. The election campaigns of the 2008 elections were a great challenge in the tribal areas and some other settled districts of the Malakand division. This kind of situation led to a worse and more unstable democratic system in the country. Democratic institutions and other public institutions, such as police stations, courts, and schools, were targeted by the militants. The links between Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban and the Pakistani Taliban and the Afghan Taliban created an environment of uncertainty for the democratic setup in Pakistan. Like the Afghan Taliban, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) also considers democracy an un-Islamic practice (Abiden et al., 2019).

Alliance with the United States

Since its independence, Pakistan has fallen into the western block and allied with the US. However, in the 1970s, a revivalism was experienced in Pakistan's foreign policy, and the country tried to revisit its foreign strategy, which was called the 'transitional period in Pakistan's foreign policy'. In 1970, Pakistan withdrew from the South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), or Baghdad Pact, in

1973 and 1979, respectively. This was a period when Pakistan's foreign policy was based on a non-alignment policy. In the 1980s, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, the United States once again approached Pakistan. Pakistan's role in this period came on the front as a close ally with the United States against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan and the United States jointly provided every kind of assistance and support to the Afghan Mujahedeen against the Soviet Union. Till the end of the Soviet-Afghan war, Pakistan allied with the US. After the September 11 attacks, the United States invaded Afghanistan, and once again, the US demanded from Pakistan its active role as an ally with her. Pakistan, led by General Pervez Musharraf, the then President of the country, reversed the course of the country's foreign policy as they were under pressure from the United States. Pakistan, though, received huge resistance from its own people against joining the war on terror and reluctantly joined it as a US ally. Pakistani high officials tried to convince the Taliban leadership to hand over Osama bin Laden to the US, but in vain. When Pakistan became an ally of the US in the war on terror, it played a key role as a front-line state against terrorism. Pakistan provided a number of military airports and bases, along with other logistical support, to the US for their attacks on Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda. Pakistan arrested hundreds of Al-Qaeda members and handed them over to the United States. In 2004, President George Washington Bush, the then President of the United States of America, designated Pakistan as a major non-NATO ally (NNA) of the United States. Musharraf's administration was praised by Bush's administration several times. Although Pakistan joined the war on terror and allied with the US, it has lost thousands of civilian lives, both civilians and soldiers. All of them became victims of the terrorist attacks in the country. Suicide attacks became common in Pakistan, which were unheard of for people before 9/11. Hundreds of thousands of families became internally displaced persons (IDPs) as they were forced to flee from their homes as a result of the war between Pakistani forces and the Taliban, mainly in the tribal areas and Swat Valley. Public perceptions in Pakistan were not in favor of the country's alliance with the United States after 9/11 (Rabbi, 2012).

Pakistan's dependency on American Aid

After joining the war on terror, Pakistan received significant status from the United States. Pakistan became a major player in Afghanistan, was allied with the US, and was given the status of a non-NATO ally by the US. Pakistan became a major recipient of

American aid. The country provided logistical support to the US. Pakistan provided its main military bases, such as Pasni, Jacobabad, Shmsi, and Dalbandin, to the US. To prevent any possible flee of the high-value Taliban, Pakistan provided 35,000 troops on borderland and captured 420 Al-Qaida and Taliban escapers. On the other hand, in return, the United States provided economic aid of \$3 billion to Pakistan to strengthen its military power (Fair, 2004). The US government lifted all the sanctions imposed on Pakistan in return for Pakistan's support for the US. Military and war equipment have been received by Pakistan from the US since 2001.

The war equipment included 18 new F-16 aircraft, 8 P-3C Orion Maritime Patrol aircraft, anti-tank missiles, air-to-air missiles, 6 C-130 transport aircraft, and 20 Cobra Attack helicopters. Almost half of this aid package was given during the Bush regime, while the remaining half was given during the Obama regime. During Obama's administration, the aid was more economic than military. Pakistan received more non-military aid during Obama's tenure. During the Obama administration, the United States expected to triple non-military aid to Pakistan by \$1.5 billion per year over 10 years. The purpose of such aid was to help strengthen the then-new democratic government of the PPP and the civil institutions of the country. Despite the economic and military aid received by Pakistan from the US, Pakistan has suffered a lot, both economically and physically—in the form of civilians's and soldiers' lives lost—since joining the war on terror. Since the attacks of 9/11, 21672 civilians and 2795 soldiers have lost their precious lives. A total of 3486 bomb blasts took place in the country, of which 283 were suicide attacks. 8671 people have been injured in such attacks in the country. In exchange for Pakistan's joining the war on terror, the country suffered domestic terrorism at first in both South and North Waziristan, followed by other tribal areas, and then settled districts of KP. The security situation of the ex-FATA remained very bad during this period. This environment created hatred in the people of Pakistan towards the US. Since 2002, comparatively, US assistance to Pakistan has been recorded at \$8.5 billion, while economic losses to Pakistan have been recorded at \$43 billion (Akhtar, 2012).

Social impacts of Afghan conflict on Pakistani society

Religious Extremism

Religious extremism in Pakistan has been influenced by the Afghan conflict in the 1980s and its aftermath's subsequent wars in Afghanistan. During the Soviet-Afghan war, Pakistan trained Afghan Mujahedeen with the provision of logistical and physical support for them. However, after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, these militant groups and Mujahedeen turned their attentions to Pakistan, which ultimately led to the beginning of extremist ideologies in Pakistan. Then onward, religious fundamentalism gained momentum in the country. Pakistani security institutions and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) also supported some of the militant groups after the Soviet invasion due to the Kashmir cause. Various extremist and fundamentalist groups emerged within Pakistan, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). As, during the Soviet-Afghan War, most of the Afghan refugees had come to Pakistan, the majority of them belonged to the Deobandi school of thought. The Deobandi followers were also influential in Pakistan, so many Afghans and Pakistani militants belonged to the Deobandi school of thought, which contributed to the spread of extremist ideologies and sectarianism in Pakistan. During proxy wars and civil wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan was accused of supporting some factions in these wars. This kind of policy of Pakistan led to the rise of concerns about Pakistan's role in fostering religious extremism (Maley, 1998).

Drugs Addiction

The Taliban government of Kabul had successfully eradicated poppy and opium from Afghanistan. However, with the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan experienced a huge growth in both poppy and opium cultivation. Currently, it has recorded the highest growth, with almost 90% of the world's opium supply. In Afghanistan, poppy cultivation was recorded at 7700 metric tons cultivated over 157,000 hectares of land in 2008 (Blanchard, 2009). Additionally, more than 70000 hectares of land were used for the cultivation of cannabis. It is roughly estimated that the illegal drug trade in Afghanistan may exceed \$3.4 billion, which makes up about 33% of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the country (Saikal, 2006).

During the Soviet-Afghan war, opium was the major source of funding for the Mujahedeen, and even now, it is the greatest source of revenue for the insurgents. This extensive rise in the drug industry in Afghanistan is alarming and a big threat to the security of Pakistan. Pakistan shares its long border with Afghanistan, which links two provinces, i.e., Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. In Baluchistan, drug smuggling is enormous. Almost 35% of the total drug production from the southern parts of Afghanistan is smuggled via Dalbadin and Chaghi cities in Baluchistan Province. This smuggling continues forward to the Gulf States. This business has long-term adverse effects on Pakistani youth. It undermines their motivation and level of engagement with the normal functioning of society, which ultimately leads to physical and psychological changes in them (Tellis, 2008).

Economic impacts of Afghan conflict on Pakistani society

Economic Loss to Pakistan due to Terrorism

The bond between peace and economic growth is indispensable. Economic growth is not possible without peace and security. Terrorism, violence, war, and conflicts have direct or indirect effects on the economic growth of any country. It destroys both physical and human capital. The Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s brought extremist minds into South Asia from all over the world in the name of Jihad (the Holy War). These Mujahedeen were trained by the US secret agency, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to fight a proxy war against the forces of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. After the attacks of 9/11, both internal and externally funded extremists started terror activities in Pakistan. These terrorist activities adversely affected Pakistan's economy. A significant share of human and financial resources has been allocated to overcome terrorism in Pakistan. Terrorism in Pakistan drastically increased in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when the country began to play a key role as a front-line state against terrorism. This terrorism in Pakistan has negatively affected the economic growth of the country. Economic and trading activities in Pakistan have been adversely affected, which has led to an increase in the cost of doing business. Foreign investment has decreased due to the uncertainty in the country caused by militancy and terrorism. Terrorism has severely affected Pakistan's international trade. Economic costs to Pakistan due to Afghan conflict and terrorism are wide-ranging. Allocating a large portion of

the budget for security expenditures, counter-terrorism, and military operations to combat terrorism has badly affected Pakistan's economy. Infrastructure and property damage in Pakistan by terrorists in their bomb and suicide attacks, and then repairing and rebuilding it, was a great challenge for the poor economy of the country. Pakistan has suffered \$126.79 billion in the last fiscal years since 9/11 (Hyder et al., 2015).

Money Laundering

Money laundering is another bad factor for the economy of any country. Its far-reaching negative effects are very dangerous for the economic growth of any nation. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) identifies money laundering as “the processing of criminal proceeds to disguise their illegal origin”. There are traditional and illegal sources of money transfer in Pakistan. ‘Hundi’/‘Hawala’ (guarantee) is a major channel of money laundering in Pakistan. These are informal banking systems in Pakistan in which funds are transferred on the personal guarantees of the sender without scrutiny or accountability by the government. Most of the overseas Pakistani nationals send their remittances to their relatives via Hundi. Hundi works as a credit transfer and, hence, transfers the money without actually moving it from one region to another. Allegedly, some foreign exchange companies use this source for the purpose of hiding their earnings, on which they have to pay taxes to the government. The money launderers used these illegal sources for sponsorship by extremist and terrorist groups. In the tribal areas, or ex-FATA, this illegal source of money transfer is very common. Money laundering by terrorists in Pakistan is a concerning issue and has received the focus of domestic and global efforts to stop terror financing. Terrorist groups often engage in money laundering to fund their activities. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) kept Pakistan on their gray list and warned the country to take measures for anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing. The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) played a key role regarding counter-terror financing (Khan, 2007).

Conclusion

An unstable Afghanistan has always influenced Pakistan. The ongoing Afghan conflict has significant implications for Pakistan. Therefore, crises in Afghanistan always affected the region and Pakistan, especially. It has a deep-rooted history that conflict and disturbance in Afghanistan have always affected Pakistan. Pakistan's loss due to the Afghan conflict is a massive one. Although the Afghan war benefited Pakistan in the short term with economic and military aid, it had significant implications for the internal and external security of Pakistan. The war in Afghanistan displaced the Afghan people internally and externally as well. Most of the Afghans crossed the border into Pakistan. The Afghan refugees in Pakistan created social, economic, and ecological problems. With the influx of Afghan refugees, issues like sectarianism, Kalashnikov culture, and drug trafficking were dominant. Not only these issues, but it corrupted Pakistani elites.

The effects of the Afghan conflict on Pakistani society are complex and multifaceted in nature. These effects affected various aspects of Pakistan's political, social, security, economic, and humanitarian landscapes. The political impacts resulted in democratic instability, an alliance with the United States, and Pakistan's dependency on American aid. Pakistan's alliance with the United States of America in the war on terror made the Afghan Taliban resistive and hostile towards Pakistan. They regarded Islamabad as responsible for their combat as much as the United States. The tribal areas of Pakistan became centers of the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and the Pakistani-based Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007. The TTP started their anti-state activities across the country. They targeted political parties and political leaders in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Terrorism and militancy have become common phenomena in Pakistani society. Suicide attacks and bombings became daily practices in the country. Moreover, religious extremism and drug addiction also badly affected Pakistani society and youth, especially. Almost 35% of the total drug production from the southern parts of Afghanistan is smuggled via Dalbadin and Chaghi cities in Baluchistan Province. During the Soviet-Afghan war, most of the Afghan refugees had come to Pakistan; the majority of them belonged to the Deobandi school of thought. Here in Pakistan, the Deobandi followers were also influential, so many Afghan and Pakistani militants belonged to the Deobandi school of thought, which contributed to the spread of extremist ideologies and sectarianism in Pakistan. During proxy

wars and civil wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan was accused of supporting some factions in these wars. The Afghan conflict also left Pakistani society with economic losses. Terrorism in Pakistan drastically increased in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when the country began to play a key role as a front-line state against terrorism. This terrorism in Pakistan has negatively affected the economic growth of the country. Economic and trading activities in Pakistan have been adversely affected, which has led to an increase in the cost of doing business. Foreign investment has decreased due to the uncertainty in the country caused by militancy and terrorism. Terrorism has severely affected Pakistan's international trade. Economic costs to Pakistan due to Afghan conflict and terrorism are wide-ranging. Allocating a large portion of the budget for security expenditures, counter-terrorism, and military operations to combat terrorism has badly affected Pakistan's economy. Infrastructure and property damage in Pakistan by terrorists in their bomb and suicide attacks, and then repairing and rebuilding it, was a great challenge for the poor economy of the country.

CHAPTER 4

CAUSES OF THE CURRENT PARADIGM SHIFT IN ISLAMABAD'S POLICIES WITH REGARD TO TALIBAN RULE IN AFGHANISTAN

Background

Pakistan always wanted a close and friendly regime in Afghanistan that could serve Islamabad's motives and objectives. There are many factors due to which Islamabad cannot ignore Afghanistan's importance. These factors include Pakistan's strategic depth policy in Afghanistan, the cause of Pukhtunistan, Indian influence, and direct access to Central Asian Republics. Almost every government in Afghanistan has reservations regarding its eastern neighbor, Pakistan. Islamabad's policy toward the Afghan Taliban has shifted over the years. Many developments have occurred regarding these shifts in policies. In 1996, when the Taliban captured Kabul, Islamabad celebrated it due to their strategic interests in Afghanistan. Islamabad's relations with the Afghan Taliban remained very complex. At first, Pakistan fully supported the Afghan Taliban for their strategic interests. Many of the Pakistani intelligence and military personnel were accused of providing safe heavens to the leaders of the Afghan Taliban, especially the Haqqani network. This led to an allegation that Pakistan was playing a double game. The United States blamed Pakistan several times for this double game. The current Taliban rule of Kabul, followed by the withdrawal of NATO forces and a US-led coalition from Afghanistan, did not prove as friendly and close to Islamabad as it was in the 1990s. This time, both parties did not show as much gratitude compared to the 1990s. In 2001, following the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan changed its policy toward the Afghan Taliban and joined the US-led global war on terror. In August 2021, the Taliban came into power in Afghanistan. Islamabad, however, did not recognize the Taliban government in Kabul. Pakistan is reshaping its foreign policy with regard to the Afghan Taliban. There are several factors for Islamabad as well as for Kabul, due to which

they are not in full form to support each other openly. These factors include the resurgence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), cross-border terrorism, cross-border firing, Pakistan's role as a front-line state with the US in the War on Terror after 9/11, and the issue of Afghan refugees.

Resurgence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

The history of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) can be traced back to 2007. In December 2007, a militant group named Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) formed with its first head, Baitullah Mehsud. TTP claimed that the legal and constitutional system of Pakistan is un-Islamic. They strongly resisted the operation in Laal Masjid (the red mosque) and Jamia Hafsa in Islamabad. From then on, the TTP became a symbol of terror, violence, and extremism in Pakistan. The TTP targeted Pakistani security forces and government institutions with their bloody attacks. In 2008, the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was established to combat militancy in Pakistan. The Authority further granted administrative and financial autonomy through the NACTA Act, 2013. Besides NACTA, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) was also established in 2010. Currently, there are four CTDs in each province: CTD Punjab, CTD Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, CTD Sindh, and CTD Baluchistan. The atrocities of the TTP were at their peak during 2007–2010. And from 2010 to 2014, it was high. In 2015, the terrorist activities of the militants showed a comparatively smaller overall decrease than in previous years. In 2015 and 2016, there were very few attacks, and fewer casualties were recorded in such years (Crawford, 2016). The Army Public School (APS) Peshawar incident shocked the whole nation in 2014. After this bloody attack on the schoolchildren by the terrorists, the government of Pakistan decided to show zero tolerance for the militants. To achieve their goals, the government of Pakistan elaborates on the National Action Plan (NAP). In June 2014, the TTP militants attacked Jinnah International Airport in Karachi. Operation Zarb-e-Azab started against the terrorists in Pakistan. In the war against terrorism, Pakistan was adversely affected, resulting in the deaths of more than 60,000 people, including security forces (Abbas 2015). Pakistani security agencies launched massive operations against terrorists in Pakistan. These operations included Operation Raah-e-Nijaat, Operation Raah-e-Haq, Operation Raah-e-Raast,

Operation Zarb-e-Azab, Operation Radd-ul-Fasad, etc. After Operation Zarb-e-Azab and Radd-ul-Fasad, the government of Pakistan claimed that 80 to 90% of the country had been cleared from militants and terrorists. The government also claimed all the hiding places of the terrorists had been destroyed by security forces. The post-2015 era in Pakistan was comparatively peaceful, and no major militant attacks took place as they did before 2015. In August 2021, when the Afghan Taliban recaptured Kabul for the second time, the TTP also found safe havens for them in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Afghan Taliban. The post-2021 era once again witnessed militant and terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Most of the TTP personnel entered the Swat Valley, Waziristan, Kurram, Khyber, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, and Chitral Valleys. The TTP's sudden reappearance on Pakistani soil spread worries among the common people of the mentioned regions. Pakistani officials from time to time approached Taliban officials in Kabul to overcome the issue of the resurgence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The Afghan Taliban denied the presence of the TTP on Afghan soil. Pakistan's claim about the TTP's presence on Afghan soil and the Taliban's rejection led to the rise of tensions between these two parties. These tensions ultimately have resulted in a negative sense of Pakistan's relations with the Afghan Taliban (Sayed & Hamming, 2023).

Most of the interviewees (by keeping their identities secret during the interviews) responded that Al-Qaeda, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and a number of Central Asian Jihadist groups are working under the umbrella of the Afghan Taliban even at present. They responded that the Afghan Taliban will never agree to take action against any of the mentioned factions. The interviewees concluded that all of these groups are close allies of the Afghan Taliban. If Pakistan demands from the Afghan Taliban that they take measures regarding controlling and restricting TTP personnel from anti-Pakistani activities, it will be in vain. During this study's survey, almost 70–80% of the respondents agreed that the Afghan Taliban needs the TTP and the TTP needs the Afghan Taliban for the preservation of their mutual interests and both of them are interdependent on each other. They responded that most of the Central Asian Jihadist groups, Al-Qaeda and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, have supported the Afghan Taliban in the war on terror against the United States; hence, on their return, the Afghan Taliban will never disappoint them. Most of the respondents said that although the Pakistani government wanted to resolve the issues with the TTP through negotiations, for which both parties have met several times, there are some factions within the

TTP who do not want to negotiate with the Pakistani government. Therefore, it is very difficult for Pakistani officials to bring the TTP to table talks.

Cross Border Terrorism

The Durand Line has always remained a burning issue for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Illegal crossings over the border remained a common practice for people from both sides (Mazhar, 2020). Both Afghanistan and Pakistan blamed each other in the recent past for their security situation. Afghanistan and other global actors blame Pakistan for providing safe havens to the Taliban, responsible for attacks in Afghanistan. While Pakistan has also expressed its concerns about certain anti-Pakistani militants operating in Afghanistan and responsible for attacks in Pakistan, The United Nations (UN) reported that between 6,000 and 6,500 anti-Pakistani terrorists of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were hiding in Afghanistan (Dawn, 2020).

When it comes to the security situation at the Pak-Afghan border, the Pakistani government has decided to fence the Pak-Afghan border. Meanwhile, Afghanistan opposed the fencing of the Durand Line. Afghanistan considers the Durand Line a disputed border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Therefore, Afghanistan's opposition to border fencing was based on the worry that it would become a formal border between these two neighbors. Pakistan's stance on border fencing was based on cross-border terrorism. With regard to counter-terrorism, certain agreements had taken place between the two countries during the Ashraf Ghani government but were failed due to the mistrust linked to cross-border terrorism. When the United States decided to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, it worked closely with its regional allies, especially Pakistan, to find a possible solution to the Afghan conflict. The US Secretary of Defense Randall Schriver visited Pakistan and said, "We are appreciative of Pakistani leadership in its cooperation in achieving the objective of peace in the region." After the visit of Schriver, Pakistan hosted the Taliban delegation at its Foreign Office in Islamabad. The then foreign minister of Pakistan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, went to Doha to witness the US-Taliban peace agreement in February 2020 (Taye & Ahmad, 2021). Pakistan stated from time to time that the TTP has safe havens in Afghanistan, which are responsible for cross-border terrorism and attacking Pakistan from Afghan soil.

Most of the interviewers consider that one of the top reasons for hostility between Islamabad and Kabul at present is cross-border terrorism. Although cross-border terrorism was also a common practice for Pakistan in pre-Taliban Afghanistan, when the Taliban gained power in August 2021, it was also pushed up very high. The respondents believed that it was easy for Pakistan in pre-Taliban Afghanistan to approach Kabul against cross-border terrorism. While the Taliban controlled Afghanistan, whenever Pakistan approached the Taliban officials about cross border terrorism, they denied this act. The Afghan Taliban stance is that Islamabad is blaming Kabul without having solid evidence.

Cross Border Firing

The closure of the two main Pak-Afghan border crossing points at Chaman and Tor Kham has become a common practice due to tensions between Islamabad and Kabul caused by cross-border firing. Since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2022, the frequency of cross-border firing and clashes has further increased. The Afghan Taliban usually seemed to be a valuable strategic asset for Pakistani establishments, but not this time. And, even under the leadership of the Afghan Taliban, this underlying issue of cross-border firing between the two countries remains difficult to resolve. On November 13, 2022, a Pakistani security guard was killed due to cross-border gunfire. Sajid Hussain Turi, Pakistan's federal minister for overseas Pakistani and human resource development, tweeted that "Afghanistan's violation of Pakistan's Kurram border at Kharlachi and Borki and targeting the civilian population is condemnable." Pakistan's unpopularity among local Afghans has made the Taliban officials cautious about their policies and relations with Islamabad. The TTP symbolizes the victory of the Afghan Taliban because of their inspiration and spirit. The TTP views this victory as a source of courage for them to impose sharia law in Pakistan. And, therefore, they started their mobilization on the Pak-Afghan border to move Pakistan to start their activities within Pakistan. The TTP considers the Afghan Taliban as a role model for them and, therefore, launches a terror campaign inside Pakistan. Currently, once again, like in the 2010s, Pakistani security forces are facing attacks from the TTP. Neither the TTP nor the Afghan Taliban are ready to accept Pakistan's border-fencing activities. The Afghan Taliban fighters, from time to time, removed the barbed-wire fence at many places along the Durand Line. In 2022, many of the TTP personnel crossed the

Durand Line and reached the Swat Valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They targeted many people in the area, including the abduction. After their activities, the militants backed into Afghanistan via Dir. The abducted people were termed Laapata Afraad, and the abductors were Namaloom Afraad. A 50% rise has been experienced in terrorist attacks in Pakistan since the Taliban took over Afghanistan (Kaura, 2022).

Pakistan's role as a Front Line State with US in War on Terror After 9/11

After the September 11 attacks, Pakistan joined the global war on terror and allied with the US. Pakistan's decision to ally with the US in the war on terror was very complex. Islamabad had good relations with the Afghan Taliban, so they did not want to lose it. Finally, after heavy pressure from the US and other international actors, Pakistan officially joined the war and played as a front-line state against terrorism in Afghanistan. Consequently, the Afghan Taliban became disappointed by Pakistan's decision to align itself with the US. Most of the Afghan Taliban's leaders are concerned that Pakistan's alignment with the US will jeopardize their ability to operate freely in Pakistan and receive sanctuary and support. During the American war campaign in Afghanistan, there have been tensions between Islamabad and the Afghan Taliban. Sohail Shaheen, a spokesperson for the Afghan Taliban, stated during his interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that Pakistan was a friend of the US during her anti-Taliban campaign in Afghanistan after 2001. Shaheen further explained that the Taliban's relationship with Pakistan would be based on regional security and prosperity. With respect to the ongoing border tensions between the two neighbors, Shaheen responded that the issue of the Durand Line is so complex and is not possible without the will and consultation of the Afghan people (BBC, 2021).

The Issue of Afghan Refugees

Pakistan's internal security situation is mostly affected by the uncertain security situation in Afghanistan. The instability and disturbance in Afghanistan have had negative effects on Pakistan's domestic framework. This situation further worsened with the influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan. In the 1980s, a large number of Afghan refugees crossed the

border on their way to Pakistan. In the initial years, 3 million people came to Pakistan from Afghanistan as refugees. The 1980s' massive inflow of the Afghan refugees' population to Pakistan brought a number of demographic and security challenges to Pakistani society. Afghan refugees have also remained a principal factor in determining Pak-Afghan relations. Most of these refugees have settled in the camps near the Pakistan-Afghan border and in other metropolitan cities of Pakistan, such as Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, and Rawalpindi. The issue of Afghan refugees poses a big challenge to Pakistan's economy and security areas. The refugees provide safe havens for extremist ideologies and other social issues in the country. They are also involved in criminal activities across the country. Pakistani officials announced from time to time that they would plan their strategies regarding Afghan issues (Borthakur, 2017).

There are some technical issues with handling the issue of Afghan refugees. As most of these refugees lived here in Pakistan illegally, Most of them have no non-objection certificates (NOCs) or visas. Additionally, most of the Afghan refugees have made Pakistani National Identity Cards (NICs) with unfair means. Most common Pakistanis termed the Afghans namak haram (traitors) by saying that the Afghan refugees had lived here in Pakistan for decades, so instead of being thankful to Pakistan, they created social issues for Pakistan. During an interview with the Pakistani news channel, the caretaker Prime Minister, Mr. Anwar ul Haq Kakar, was asked regarding his views on the statement of Afghan cricket player Ibrahim Zadran, who, after winning a cricket match against Pakistan in a world cup, said that he dedicates his winning player of the match award to those Afghan refugees who are returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan. Mr. Kakar responded that if Pakistan had won that match, he would have ordered to dedicate the match-winning award to those law and enforcement agencies of the country that are involved in the evacuation of illegal refugees from Pakistan.

Conclusion

Afghanistan's importance for Pakistan is contributed by many factors, which Islamabad cannot ignore. These factors include Pakistan's strategic depth policy in

Afghanistan, the cause of Pukhtunistan, Indian influence, and direct access to Central Asian Republics. Therefore, Islamabad has always favored a friendly regime in Kabul. Pakistan was very close to the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 1996. Pakistan fully supported the Afghan Taliban for their strategic interests. Many of the Pakistani intelligence and military personnel were accused of providing safe heavens to the leaders of the Afghan Taliban, especially the Haqqani network. Islamabad's policy toward the Afghan Taliban has shifted over the years. Many developments have occurred regarding these shifts in policies. Islamabad's relations with the Afghan Taliban remained very complex. The current Taliban rule of Kabul, followed by the withdrawal of NATO forces and a US-led coalition from Afghanistan, did not prove as friendly and close to Islamabad as it was in the 1990s. This time, both parties did not show as much gratitude compared to the 1990s. Reluctantly, Pakistan is reshaping its foreign policy with regard to the Afghan Taliban. There are several factors for Islamabad as well as for Kabul, due to which they are not in full form to support each other openly.

These factors include: The resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is such a big challenge for Pakistan's security, As in August 2021, when the Afghan Taliban recaptured Kabul for the second time, the TTP also found safe havens in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Afghan Taliban. The post-2021 era once again witnessed militant and terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Most of the TTP personnel entered the Swat Valley, Waziristan, Kurram, Khyber, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, and Chitral Valleys. The TTP's sudden reappearance on Pakistani soil spread worries among the common people of the mentioned regions. Pakistani officials from time to time approached Taliban officials in Kabul to overcome the issue of the resurgence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Cross-border terrorism is another challenge for Pakistan in the present Pak-Afghan scenario. The Durand Line has always remained a burning issue for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The decision of the Pakistani officials to fence the Pakistan-Afghan border was opposed by the Afghan officials. Afghanistan considers the Durand Line a disputed border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Therefore, Afghanistan's opposition to border fencing was based on the worry that it would become a formal border between these two neighbors. While Pakistan's stance on border fencing was based on overcoming cross-border terrorism, The issue of cross-border firing between the two countries is another burning issue that still remains difficult to resolve. On November 13, 2022, a Pakistani security guard was killed due to cross-border gunfire. Sajid

Hussain Turi, Pakistan's federal minister for overseas Pakistani and human resource development, tweeted that "Afghanistan's violation of Pakistan's Kurram border at Kharlachi and Borki and targeting the civilian population is condemnable." Pakistan's role as a front-line state with the US in the War on Terror after 9/11 and the issue of Afghan refugees made the Afghan Taliban hostile to Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the constraints in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. The study focused on Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, especially during Taliban rule. Pakistan and Afghanistan are two interdependent neighboring countries. Both share a 2600-kilometer border known as the Durand Line. The Durand Line is one of the most complex borders in the world. Relations between these two countries have always remained up and down, with mostly downs. After the creation of Pakistan, Afghanistan was the only country in the world that opposed Pakistan's membership in the United Nations (UN). Afghanistan has always remained the home of wars and clashes throughout history. Conflicts and disturbances have taken place here about every decade since this millennium. In the twentieth century, Afghanistan was first confronted with the British Empire in India and, at the end of the century, with Russia. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, Afghanistan once again became a home of war for the United States. After the withdrawal of the red forces from Afghanistan in the 1990s, the situation became worse, and in 1992, the civil war in Afghanistan led the country into another conflict. Due to the worse situation in the country, the Taliban came up with the idea of founding a state under "Islamic principles." Mullah Omar was the founder of the Taliban in Afghanistan, which he founded in 1994 in Kandahar province. In 1995, the Taliban took control of 12 Afghan provinces. In 1996, the Taliban entered Kabul and ended the temporary government, announcing the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Pakistan, along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, recognized their governments.

The September 11 attacks, commonly known as the 9/11 attacks, were a series of attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda targeting the US. On September 11, 2001, American Airline No. 11 crashed the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York, US. Similarly, another Airlines No. 175 crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Another airplane crashed into the Pentagon building in Washington, DC. Total deaths were recorded at 2973, and 19 Al-Qaeda hijackers were involved in such incidents. After the attacks, the security situation in America was alarmingly high. These attacks changed the security and foraging policies of the US. The attacks reshaped international relations, security strategies, and policies worldwide. Consequently, many countries in the world increased their

counterterrorism efforts. Overall, the 9/11 attacks were a significant and memorable moment, and they had far-reaching consequences for global politics and security measures. To respond to the 9/11 incident, the US government, under the presidency of President George W. Bush, launched the War on Terror (WoT) worldwide. Al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden, claimed responsibility for these attacks. Al-Qaeda leadership was present in Afghanistan at the time. During the 1990s, Osama bin Laden praised all the militant attacks against the United States (US). In 1994, the Saudi government cancelled his citizenship and frozen all his assets to pressurize him into stopping militancy. Osama left for Afghanistan. Then after, Osama sheltered in Afghanistan and worked to run his network from Afghan soil.

The US government demanded the handover of Osama bin Laden to the US from the Afghan Taliban. The Taliban officials refused to accept the US demand to hand over Osama bin Laden to them. The Taliban argument was that handing over Osama Bin Laden to the US was against the *Nenawaty* (asylum) in Pashtunwali (the code of ethics for Pashtuns) and that it was against the tradition of Pashtun. On the refusal of the Afghan Taliban, the US attacked Afghanistan with missile strikes and invaded Afghanistan. The main purpose of the US was to dismantle Al-Qaeda's network in Afghanistan and abolish the Taliban regime, which was responsible for providing shelter and support to Al-Qaeda.

The post-9/11 scenario once again brought shifts in the domestic politics of Pakistan as Pakistan played the role of a frontline state and allied with the United States (US) in Afghanistan. This shift was based on opposing the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Pakistan, once again, as in the 1980s, received huge military and economic aid from the US. Besides, there were more negative impacts of the war on terror on Pakistani society than positive ones, as Pakistan faced terrorist attacks, including suicide bombing, which has deteriorated the law and order situation. The military operations against the terrorists displaced millions of people from Swat and ex-FATA, Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Terrorism has threatened the peace, stability, and wellbeing of Pakistani society.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the September 11 attacks in 2001 cost America \$21.4 billion. Pakistan's loss due to the Afghan conflict is a massive one. The Soviet expansionist plan with the invasion of Afghanistan created security challenges for Pakistan. Although the Afghan war benefited Pakistan in the short term with economic and military

aid, it had significant implications for the internal and external security of Pakistan. At that time, the Afghan refugees created social, economic, and ecological problems. With the influx of Afghan refugees, issues such as sectarianism, Kalashnikov culture, and drug trafficking were dominant. Besides, Pakistan has been fighting the war on terror since 9/11. Consequently, the war has cost the country a number of thousands of citizens and security personnel's lives. Terrorism and militancy have threatened the peace, prosperity, and overall well-being of the country. Military operations against terrorism took place in Pakistan time and again. These operations resulted in the displacement of the common people as they became internally displaced persons (IDPs) at different times. Pakistan is a developing country with low economic growth and low per capita income, and this war on terror further strengthened Pakistan's economic issues. Foreign debts have increased, and the terrorists have challenged the writ of the state every time.

Pakistan always wanted a close and friendly regime in Afghanistan that could serve Islamabad's motives and objectives. There are many factors due to which Islamabad cannot ignore Afghanistan's importance. These factors include Pakistan's strategic depth policy in Afghanistan, the cause of Pukhtunistan, Indian influence, and direct access to Central Asian Republics. Almost every government in Afghanistan has reservations regarding its eastern neighbor, Pakistan. Currently, Afghanistan is ruled by the Afghan Taliban. The Taliban came into power following the decision of the United States to withdraw NATO, or North Atlantic Treaty Organization, forces from Afghanistan. So, the Taliban once again came into power in Afghanistan, but Pakistan still did not recognize the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Islamabad's policy toward the Afghan Taliban has shifted over the years. Many developments have occurred regarding these shifts in policies. The current Taliban rule of Kabul, followed by the withdrawal of NATO forces and a US-led coalition from Afghanistan, did not prove as friendly and close to Islamabad as it was in the 1990s. This time, both parties did not show as much gratitude compared to the 1990s.

In 2001, following the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan changed its policy toward the Afghan Taliban and joined the US-led global war on terror. Pakistan played a role as a front-line state with the US to fight against terrorism. The US declared Pakistan a non-NATO ally for their support and collaboration with the US in the war on terror. In August 2021, the Taliban came into power in Afghanistan for the second time. Islamabad, however, did not recognize the

Taliban government in Kabul. Pakistan is reshaping its foreign policy with regard to the Afghan Taliban. There are several factors for Islamabad as well as for Kabul, due to which they are not in full form to support each other openly. These factors include the resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), cross-border terrorism, cross-border firing, Pakistan's role as a front-line state with the US in the War on Terror after 9/11, and the issue of Afghan refugees and Kashmir. With the Taliban's coming to power in Afghanistan, the security situation in Pakistan suddenly worsened. Although the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is a separate and distinctive group from the Afghan Taliban, they are a close ally of the Afghan Taliban. Militants' attacks, especially targets of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, have boosted up in the country. The number of their terrible and horrific attacks has increased significantly in Pakistan, especially in the bordering regions with Afghanistan. The government of Pakistan merged the tribal areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The TTP does not accept this merger. They want the merger reversed. Pakistan had experienced a crucial decrease in extremism and terrorist attacks after the elaboration of a national action plan and massive operations against the militant groups in Pakistan. These operations were Zarb-e-Azab and Radd-ul-Fasad, respectively. The post-2015 era was very peaceful in the country compared to the pre-2011 era since 9/11. About a 60% increase in terrorist attacks and targets has been witnessed in the country since the Taliban recapturing Kabul and coming to power again. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan are the most affected areas by such terror activities by the TTP in the country.

There have been massive militant attacks in the country since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power. On March 2, 2022, at least 3 people were killed and another 25 injured in a bomb explosion in Quetta, Baluchistan. Similarly, on the next day, five people were killed and injured, including at least six Frontier Corps (FC) men. On March 4, 2022, a Shia mosque near Qissa Khwani Bazar, Peshawar, was targeted brutally with a suicide bomb. The explosion resulted in 63 deaths and at least 196 injuries. On May 15, 2022, at least six Army personnel were targeted in a suicide attack in Miranshah, North Waziristan district. On August 10, 2022, the militants captured two officers, an army officer and a police officer, in Swat Valley, a district in northern Pakistan. They took both of them to the Balasur Valley, a thick mountainous valley in Matta, Swat, and released their video. The militants announced in such a video that they had once again entered the valley to start their activities. On September 13, 2022, at least five people were killed in a remote control car blast in Swat

Valley. On the same day, seven staff members of the international cellular company were allegedly abducted by TTP personnel and demanded 10 million rupees in ransom in the same valley. On November 16, 2022, the militants opened fire on a police patrol vehicle and killed six police officers in Lakki Marwat district. On December 14, 2022, a suicide bomber killed at least three people and injured another five. Four days later, on December 18, 2022, the militants sieged the counterterrorism center in Bannu district and took the officers hostage for three days.

On January 30, 2023, over 100 people, including 90% of police officers, were killed and hundreds of others were injured in a horrific suicide attack on a mosque inside the police line in Peshawar. On March 29, 2023, the terrorists attacked the Sadar Police Station in Lakki Marwat district. They killed at least four policemen, including the Deputy Superintendent (DSP) Iqbal Mohmand, and six others were injured. On April 8, 2023, a remote control bomb explosion killed at least 2 soldiers and injured 4 others in Khyber district. On April 24, 2023, a bomb explosion at the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Police Station in Kabal, Swat, resulted in the killing of at least 17 people and more than 50 injuries. On July 30, 2023, a terrible suicide bomber was exploded at the rally of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal Ur Rahman (JUI-F) in Khar, Bajaur district, which killed at least 63 people and injured 200 others. These all major attacks spread fear and threats among the locals as they were thinking about the re-emergence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan are blaming each other for their worse security situation. Afghanistan is currently ruled by the Taliban, and Pakistan has reservations that the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) possesses safe havens in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban always denied Pakistan's claims. The Afghan Taliban stated from time to time that Pakistan should focus on their internal security situation rather than blaming Afghanistan as responsible for such a situation. This series of episodes, based on claims and counterclaims, led Pakistan and Afghanistan to mistrust each other. Relationships between Islamabad and the Afghan Taliban have evolved over time. It is noted that the situation between the two parties is fluid, and their relations have been marked by shifting dynamics. Even a cricket match between Afghanistan and Pakistan has not remained a sport rivalry but rather an ideological rivalry. Supporters from both sides support their teams with full emotion and spirit. Their supporters claimed the opposite team as their enemy.

Finally, there are historical roots to Pak-Afghan relations. Both countries have witnessed many ups and downs in their relations. Relations between these two countries remained mostly hostile. Their hostility is based on their own claims and counter-claims. These claims and counter-claims have led to mistrust on both sides. When it comes to Afghanistan, they, even under the current rule of the Taliban, do not recognize the Durand Line. From time to time, Taliban officials decided to build further checkpoints along the Durand Line at Ningarhar, Kunar, and Nooristan, respectively. Pakistani officials claimed that those cities that have proposed the building of checkpoints belonged to Pakistani territory. Cross-border firing and cross-border terrorism became recent trouble for Pakistan from the Afghan side. Pakistan considered the Afghan Taliban responsible for the provision of safe heavens to TTP, as its resurgence is a big challenge for Pakistan. So, from both sides, Kabul and Islamabad, there are mistrusts that exist, which led to a kind of transitional period in Islamabad's perspectives and policies toward the Afghan Taliban.

Recommendations

Pakistan and Afghanistan make each other responsible for their issues and challenges. Both countries blamed each other as responsible for all such conflicts within their countries. This kind of situation does not allow for fluency in soft relations between them. Therefore, it should have a long-term strategy to solve all such issues between them. There are some suggestions that will lead them to an approach to settlement.

- Pakistan should focus on its internal issues instead of intervening in Afghanistan's internal affairs.
- Besides Pakistan, Afghanistan should also focus on its internal issues instead of intervening with Pakistan.
- The issue of the Durand Line must be resolved, as most Afghans still do not recognize it and consider it a Farzi Karkha, a supposed or alleged line.
- Pakistan, just like India, should need to assist the common man in Afghanistan. Most of the common Afghans regarded India as their true friend because the Indian government always helped the Afghan common men and worked at the ground level

in Afghanistan. Pakistan always favored a friendly regime in Kabul but did not show as much sympathy and support for the ground level in Afghanistan.

- The current issue of the cross-border firing and building-up of the new checkpoints alongside the Durand Line should also be resolved through bilateral means and negotiations.
- Both countries need to respect each other's territorial integrity.
- The Afghan Taliban must stop providing safe heavens to TTP personnel.
- The issue of Afghan refugees must be solved through negotiations with fair means.
- The legal status of the TTP should be cleared by the Afghan Taliban, whether they are Afghan nationals, refugees, or have taken political asylum inside Afghanistan.
- By avoiding mistrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan, they should eliminate the exchange of hate speeches among the common men of both nations.

GLOSSARY

A

Abdali The term ‘Abdali’ refers to one of the many Pashtun tribes that are primarily associated with the Pashto-speaking people of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The tribe makes up the larger Pashtun ethnic group.

Al-Qaeda Al-Qaeda is an Islamic militant organization. It was founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden and several other Islamist leaders. This organization gained popularity after the memorable 9/11 attacks. The UN declared it a terrorist organization.

B

Bad Taliban The term ‘Bad Taliban’ refers to those factions of the Taliban that are viewed as extremist, violent, and radical. In the case of Pakistan, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is a bad Taliban for the state. After the 9/11 attacks, the Afghan Taliban were considered a bad Taliban for the US.

Belt and Road Initiative The term ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ refers to the massive economic and infrastructure project initiated by the People’s Republic of China in 2013.

C

Civil War The term ‘Civil War’ refers to conflict within a country where different groups or factions of such a country engage in armed activities against each other.

Cold War The term ‘Cold War’ refers to the period from 1945 to the early 1990s. This period was based on the ideological and geopolitical tensions between the bipolar world, i.e., the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or Western Block and

Eastern Block.

D

Doha Talks

The term ‘Doha Talks’ refers to the series of talks and negotiations that began in September 2020 among the Afghan Taliban, the Afghan Government, and various stakeholders around the world in Doha, the capital city of Qatar.

Durani

When Ahmad Shah Abdali became the Ruler of Afghanistan, he adopted the title of Padshah, durr-i-durran (King, "pearl of pearls"). From then onward, the Abdali Pashtuns were known as the Durrani, and the name of the Abdali confederation was changed to the Durrani Empire.

F

FATA

The term ‘FATA’ refers to previously federally administered tribal areas that were composed of seven agencies: Bajaur, Mohmand, Aurakzai, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan. On March 31, 2018, these agencies merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Fall of Dhaka

The term ‘Fall of Dhaka’ refers to the separation of East Pakistan and the establishment of an independent Bangladesh in 1971.

Frontier Corps

The term ‘Frontier Corps’ (FC) refers to a paramilitary force that primarily operates in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The force was established during the period of British India.

Front Line State

The term ‘Front Line State’ refers to a country that is situated on the front lines or borders of a conflict or geopolitical struggle. Pakistan was a front-line state during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and after 9/11.

Fundamentalism The term Fundamentalism refers to a strict adherence to fundamental principles or beliefs.

G

Good Taliban The term Good Taliban refers to certain factions of the Taliban that may be considered more moderate or less hostile compared to the others. As for Pakistan, some factions or individuals of the Afghan Taliban are good because they serve its motives or interests.

Geneva Accords The term Geneva Accords refers to the international treaties and agreements that take place in Geneva, Switzerland. The 1988 Geneva Accords were regarding settlements in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

Great Game The term Great Game refers to the rivalry between British India and Russia in Afghanistan. At such a time, Afghanistan was a buffer zone between the two powers mentioned.

Guerrilla Warfare The term Guerrilla Warfare refers to a weaker force fighting with a stronger force. It was referred to as Mujahedeen during their fight against Soviet forces.

H

Hazaras The term Hazaras refers to an ethnic group primarily living in Afghanistan. Its smaller population also lives in Pakistan, Iran, and some other countries.

Haqqani Network The term Haqqani Network refers to an Afghan militant group founded by Jalaluddin Haqqani in 1970 during the Soviet-Afghan war. It is one of the most active insurgent groups in Afghanistan, operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well. The group is declared a terrorist group by the United States. The group is aligned with the Afghan Taliban.

Hizb-e-Harakat-e-Islami The term Hizb-e-Harakat-e-Islami refers to Afghanistan's political party and former faction of the Afghan Northern Alliance. The party emerged in 1978 under Ayatollah Muhammad Asif Muhsini.

Hizb-e-Islami Group The term Hizb-e-Islami Group refers to Afghanistan's Pashtun-dominated political party, founded in 1976 by Gulbadin Hikmatyar.

Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami The term Hiz-e-Wahdat-e-Islami refers to Afghanistan's Shia-dominated political party, founded in 1989 by Abdul Ali Mazari.

I

Immediate Neighbor The term immediate neighbor refers to someone or something that is situated very close or adjacent to another person, place, or thing. For example, Pakistan's border is adjacent to Afghanistan; therefore, Pakistan is an immediate neighbor of Afghanistan.

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan The term Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan refers to a political entity that existed in Afghanistan at two different points in history: the Afghan Taliban in 1996 and 2021, respectively. The Taliban believed in the Islamic Emirate system, which means an Ameer-ul-Moumineen (the supreme leader of the believers) would be the head of the state.

J

Jamiat-e-Islami The term Jamiat-e-Islami refers to a group of Islamist intellectuals like Burhan-ud-Din Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud in 1972. The aim of the group was the establishment of an Islamic state in Afghanistan.

L

Laapata Afraad

The term Laapata Afraad refers to the enforced disappearance or missing persons by unknowns. All those persons and people who disappeared during Taliban militancy in ex-FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and are still missing are known as Laapata Afraad.

Landlocked

The term landlocked refers to a geographical location surrounded by land with no direct access to an ocean or any other major bodies of water. Afghanistan, Nepal, Austria, and Zimbabwe are some of the landlocked countries in the world.

Loya Jirgah

The term Loya Jirgah refers to a grand gathering of masses. It is a Pashto term used for the Grand Assembly in Afghanistan. This gathering brings together representatives from almost all ethnic, religious, and tribal communities in Afghanistan. It is a centuries-old tradition in Afghanistan to settle national crises with reconciliation for all.

M

Madrassas

The term Madrassas refers to religious seminaries of Islam or Islamic educational institutions. It is an Arabic term that primarily focuses on Islamic education of the Quran and Hadith.

Madrassa Haqqaniya

The term Madrassa Haqqaniya refers to an Islamic seminary or educational institution located in Akorha Khatak, Nowshera, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It was founded by Mulana Abdul Haq in 1947. This madrassa is often dubbed the Factory of Jihad or University of Jihad. Most of the Taliban members taught here, including their chiefs, and they used Haqqani as their affiliation with Madrassa

Haqqaniya.

Mikhail Gorbachev Mikhail Gorbachev was the President of the Soviet Union from 1988 to 1991. Gorbachev played a key role in the political and social transformations that ultimately came with the collapse of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1992.

Mujahedeen The term ‘Mujahedeen’ generally refers to those people who fight the Holy War ‘Jihad’ in Islam. In the context of Afghanistan, Mujahedeen were such people who fought against the Soviet invasion in the 1980s, including native Afghans and volunteers from African, Middle Eastern, and other Muslim states.

N

Namaloom Afraad The term ‘Namaloom Afraad’ refers to undisclosed, anonymous, or hidden persons. During the Taliban militancy, whenever there was any terrorist attack, it was to be accepted by ‘Namaloom Afraad’, the undisclosed bodies. Also, when someone had to ‘Laapata’ (disappear), it was considered to be done by ‘Namaloom’ (undisclosed).

NATO The term ‘NATO’ refers to a political and military alliance of North America, Europe, and some other influential countries in the world. It stands for North-Atlantic Treaty Organization. Its headquarters are in Brussels, Belgium.

Nenawaty The term ‘Nenawaty’ refers, in Pashtunwali, to a protection given by some to someone else against his or her enemies. When someone asks for nenawaty (protection) from others, he or she must give protection at any cost to such person. In 2001, when the US demanded from the Afghan Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden to them, Mula Muhammad Omar refused, claiming that it was against the

tradition of Nenawaty in Pashtunwali.

New Great Game

The term ‘New Great Game’ refers to an increasing competition among the great economies of the world, including the European Union, the United States, and the People's Republic of China. Their rivalry is for the exploitation of natural and mineral resources around the world, especially in the third world.

Sharia-Nizam-e-Adal Regulation

The term ‘Sharia-Nizam-e-Adal Regulation’ refers to a peace deal that was implemented in Swat Valley, Pakistan. The peace deal or regulation took place between Maulana Sufi Muhammad’s Tehreek-i-Nifaazi-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM) and the ANP government in 2009. It was a step by the then-government towards the settlement in Swat Valley. It aimed to introduce Sharia law in Swat Valley, Pakistan.

Non-NATO Ally

The term ‘Non-NATO Ally’ refers to a status designated by the United States to describe those countries that have close and good cooperative relationships with the United States but are not members of the NATO.

Northern Alliance

The term ‘Northern Alliance’ refers to the political and military coalition that formed in Afghanistan in the late 1990s. This coalition was composed of various Afghan factions who were opposed to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

O

Operation

Enduring Freedom

The term ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ refers to the United States-led and launched military campaign that was initiated in response to the 9/11 attacks.

P

Pamiris

The term ‘Pamiris’ refers to an ethno-linguistic group that lived in the mountainous regions of north-western Afghanistan, eastern Tajikistan, and some parts of Pakistan. The majority of them practice the Ismaili sect of Islam and are associated with Aga Khan.

Pashtunwali

The term ‘Pashtunwali’ or ‘Pakhtunwali’ refers to the way of life or code of ethics of the Pashtuns or Pakhtuns. Pashtunwali plays a key role in shaping Pashtun’s social values, behaviors, and interactions with others. It fixed the cultural and social norms for Pashtuns. Some of its salient features are: Melmastiya (hospitality), Badal (revenge), Nang (honor), Pat (respect), Nenawaty (asylum), Khegarha (kindness), Namus (female honor), Tura (bravery), and Jirgah (arbitration).

Pentagon

The term ‘Pentagon’ refers to the Department of Defense of the United States. Its headquarters are located in Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington D.C.

Pukhtunistan

The term ‘Pukhtunistan’ refers to a hypothetical independent or autonomous region that would be inhabited predominantly by Pukhtun people of the bordering regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Q

Quetta Shouraa

The term ‘Quetta Shouraa’ refers to the Supreme Council of the Taliban. After the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001, senior Taliban leadership gathered in Quetta, a city in southern Pakistan. The ten most influential figures and leaders in the Taliban government formed a Council of Leaders in May 2002.

R

Radio Shariat

The term ‘_Radio Shariat’ refers to the broadcast of religious programs and official decrees and announcements by the Taliban via radio. It was the foreign media's main source of information from the Taliban.

S

Saur Revolution

The term ‘_Saur Revolution’ refers to the series of events that took place in Afghanistan during 1978. These events led to a communist coup and established a pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan.

Strategic Assets

The term ‘_Strategic Assets’ refers to those resources or factors that are essential for an institution’s long-term advantage or interests and through which an institution can serve its motives and achieve its objectives. With respect to Pakistan, it is regarded that the Afghan Taliban are strategic assets for such a country.

Strategic Depth

The term ‘_Strategic Depth’ refers to the concept of having an additional territory, region, or buffer zone beyond a country’s borders. Such territory can serve as a defensive barrier or blockade, which provides a strategic advantage. It is considered that if any country has strategic depth, it can absorb the attack of an enemy country. Pakistan wants to utilize Afghanistan for its strategic depth against any possible attack from its eastern enemy, India.

T

Tajik

The term ‘_Tajik’ refers to an ethnic group basically living in Tajikistan as well as in Afghanistan and China's Xinxiang region. Their culture and language are linked to the Old Persian-speaking people of

Central Asia.

Taliban

The term ‘Taliban’ refers to the Islamic fundamentalist group that emerged in Afghanistan in the early 1990s. It is an Arabic name that means ‘students’ or the seekers of knowledge. They ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 and 2021 to date.

Talibanization

The term ‘Talibanization’ refers to the spreading of extremist ideologies and practices in the world similar to those of the Taliban views and ideologies. The Taliban used this terminology to impose their own-interpreted Islamic version on society.

Tehreek-i-Nifaa-z-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi

The term ‘Tehreek-i-Nifaa-z-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi’ refers to an Islamic militant group that was founded in 1992 by Maulana Sufi Muhammad of Maidan, Dir Lower. Its main objective was to enforce harsh Sharia law in Malakand Division.

Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

The term ‘Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)’ refers to the unification of various militant groups in the tribal areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan under the umbrella of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007. After their formation, TTP challenged the writ of the state and wanted to impose Islamic Sharia rule in the country. They also opposed Pakistan’s alliance with the United States.

Tehreek-i-Taliban Swat (TTS)

The term ‘Tehreek-i-Taliban Swat (TTS)’ refers to a militant group that emerged in Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, in 2007. The head of TTS was Fazal Hayat, commonly known as Mullah Fazlullah, the son-in-law of Maulana Sufi Muhammad. The TTS imposed a harsh interpretation of Islamic law in the Swat Valley. They banned girls’ education in such an area and targeted girls’ schools with bomb attacks. The group also targeted Pakistani

security forces, local Khans (tribal chiefs), and political leaders in the area. Pakistani security forces launched two massive operations against this group in Swat. These two were Operation Raah-e-Haq and Operation Raah-e-Raast in 2007 and 2009, respectively.

U

Uzbek

The term ‘Uzbek’ refers to an ethnic group primarily living in Uzbekistan but also in the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and China's Xinxiang region.

W

War on Terror

The term ‘War on Terror’ refers to the United States’ global military, political, and ideological campaign after the incidents of 9/11. Its primary aim is to counter terrorism across the globe.

Y

Ya Shariat Ya Shahadat

The term ‘Ya Shariat Ya Shahadat’ refers to the famous slogan of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its factions. It is the state of ‘Do or Die’ for them. The term ‘Ya Shariat Ya Shahadat’ means ‘either Sharia (Islamic rule) or either Shahadat (martyrdom)’. The TTP said that, apart from these two, there is no third destiny.

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