

**PAKISTAN'S AFGHAN POLICY: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Pakistan and Afghanistan have been gifted with such a unique geographic location, which attracts every state towards itself. Either it is in strategic or economic perspective they are important for the region, especially and the World commonly. No two nations have got the commonalities as Pakistan and Afghanistan have. Not only their geography, religion, or blood is same but they have same history due to their ethnic, cultural, and political common attributes. Nevertheless, since the inception of Pakistan, in 1947, both of these states have experienced crests and troughs throughout their relations. The regional states have used Afghan soil against Pakistan, time and again. Yet, the decades' long atrocities in Afghanistan have compelled Pakistan to live, move and fight together with its brother Afghanistan for the sake of its own security. This paper will look for the Pakistan's Policies which it has opted for its relations with Afghanistan from its beginning, and will also try to cover the future prospects of their relations.*

**Keywords:** NATO, ISAF, Policy, Interests, Taliban, Security

**INTRODUCTION**

All along the history, Afghanistan has been a crucial strategic area and a pivot for the Asian powers to turn around upon it. Its politics have been under discussion in every sphere of life. Either it's the Gallantry, insurgencies, spirit of Sacrifice, hospitality, social norms and values, Modesty, simple way of life or any other way of life, it has got uniqueness in every

sector. It's only Pakistan which shares these characteristics with its Western neighbor, Afghanistan. Geographically, Afghanistan is at the cross road of South and Central Asia. Historically, its Southern region has been in contact with the Sub-continent. On its South-Eastern Border, Pakistan lies. The provinces that lie on the Border with Pakistan are mainly Pashtun Tribes. They have regular contacts, with their relatives living in Federally Administered tribal Areas (FATA) and other places of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Regardless of the Border Sanctions, they move freely. Even the people of the Border area of FATA get their daily food stuffs from the local Afghan Markets (Razvi, 1971). The people of Pakistan and Afghanistan have their relations, even before the creation of Pakistan. Whenever they needed each other, they helped each other, either militarily, ethically, or economically. When the Muslims of the Sub-continent felt serious threat from the rising power of Marhattas, they called the Afghan Ruler, Ahmad Shah Abdali for help (Burke, Lawrence & Ziring, 1990). The famous Battle of Paniput in 1761 was fought on the spirit of Brotherhood between the Afghan and Muslims of the Sub-continent (Hakim, Tabibi, 1985).

The British Imperialist forces, wanted to invade Afghanistan, to make it a part of their Indian Empire. The people of the Tribal region of the Frontier province stood in their way, and fought them, shoulder by shoulder along with their Afghan Brothers. (Matinuddin, 1991). In all the three Anglo-Afghan Wars, the people of FATA have sacrificed their lives for the sake of Afghanistan's Security (Kamal & Matinuddin, 1991). Due to this allegiance to the Afghan brothers, the people of FATA are still suffering from the Draconian Law of Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). After the creation of Pakistan, Afghanistan, turned against the existence of Pakistan and casted a negative vote in United Nations on September 30, 1947, against the membership of Pakistan (Habib & Curmally, 2009). Nevertheless, three weeks after Pakistan's admission to the UN, Afghanistan withdrew its negative votes (Ahmad, 2010). Once again, Afghanistan came under the Foreign Occupation. This time it was Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), who dreamt for access to the warm water in Pakistan. Afghan's were in serious need of help from its neighbors especially Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> In this war Pakistan, offered its every resource for the liberation of Afghanistan from the occupation of

the then Super Power, USSR. Afghan Mujahedeen were facilitated by Pakistan with every type of weaponry and Man Power (Rahman, 2012).

Furthermore, The Afghan's rushed into Pakistan for refuge, and the later, open heartedly opened its borders for their brothers to come in more than 3 million Afghans got refuge in Pakistan and were hosted by their Pakistani Brothers cordially and still they are living in Pakistan, due the unsure security situations in Afghanistan. Throughout the history, Pakistan has not only provided transit route to its land locked brother country, but also stood by it, in all its foreign aggressions (Weinbaum, 1994). Nevertheless, the saga of "War on Terror" has changed the scenario and everything went upside down. The Sole Super Power of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century turned on to Afghanistan in 2001. They pressurized and threatened Pakistan to stand up with them against Afghanistan, in the War against Terrorism; otherwise Pakistan will suffer serious repercussions for refusal<sup>2</sup>. The all time Friend, was now in the Enemy's Camp against their own Brothers. Pakistan provided Air Bases, Air, Land, and Sea Routes to America for fighting the terrorists and Al-Qaida inside Afghanistan. It started a serious mistrust and skepticism in the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan (Liaqat, 2011).

Now the 13 year long war has been ended in Afghanistan, leaving it in a state of turmoil, instability, blazing insurgency and a vulnerable central government. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) have left Afghanistan, with a few nominal residuary forces to stay in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has got a National Unity Government under President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. A new dawn of bilateral friendship, economic cooperation, and diplomatic relations is seen now. Although there still exists the trust deficit regarding the proxy wars and support of Terrorist groups by Pakistan. In this paper it is tried to pierce into history of the policy of individual rulers of Pakistan and tried to analyze the existing relationships between the two states. Based on the past and present situations, it has also been tried to construct a hypothetical possible future scenario. Here, theoretical, quantitative and qualitative data is used to analyze the state of relationship.

## **1. LEADERSHIP AND PAKISTAN'S AFGHAN POLICY**

### **1.1. JINNAH'S VISION OF AFGHAN POLICY**

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The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-I-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, despite of irredentist claims by Afghanistan, from the very first day of its creation, wished and sought good relations with Afghanistan. While addressing a gathering in Karachi, Quaid expressed his views that, “We hope and trust that the age-old links, between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which bind our two peoples, will be further strengthened, thus paving the way for a bright and happy future for both our countries” (Masood, 2015).

Furthermore, he explained the nature of the relations as “We have natural bonds of friendship and affection, which bind the people of our two countries. It could hardly be otherwise as these bonds are based on ties of faith, culture and common ideals. With such powerful bonds already in our favor we cannot, I feel, fail to bring the people of our two countries closer towards each other closer than they were before the birth of Pakistan”. As a newly born, State, Pakistan desired nothing so ardently, as the goodwill of the world. Its people were determined to work with heart and soul in the task of consolidating their new liberty, they will be deeply conscious of the help and co-operation extended to them by the other States of the world particularly at this moment. Quaid-I-Azam intrinsically wished to establish a strong and effective bloc consisting of all Muslim States of the world and to see that all Muslims of the world were united under the banner of Islam as an effective bulwarked against the aggressive and evil designs of their enemies.

## **1.2. AYYUB KHAN’S AFGHAN POLICY**

Same in line with the Founder of Pakistan, President Ayub Khan on various occasions has also expressed his gratitude and best wishes for good relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. He was of the opinion that “Both the states share the same faith and this alone should prove decisive in eliminating present difficulties and providing a basis for good neighborly relations. In this lies the prosperity of the tribes who live on the either of the Durand Line. The false differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan ought to be removed through giving more responsibility to the laymen, and more people to people contact. The Afghan citizens will realize the palpable benefits of mutual cooperation”<sup>3</sup>. Although in Ayub

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Khan's era the issues of Durand Line and Greater Pakhtunistan were on air from the Afghan Media, but he knew that the real force behind this scene is Pakistan's rival state, India, who wanted to destabilize the Western Border of Pakistan and providing opportunity to Afghanistan to suit for their irredentist Plea of the Pushtun dominated, Frontier Region (Khan, 2002).

### **1.3. BHUTTO'S AFGHAN POLICY**

In the words of Pakistan's former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, "no two countries have so much in common as Afghanistan and Pakistan". Regarding the importance of Afghanistan, for the stability of Pakistan, it was chosen as the first country, visited by Z.A. Bhutto after becoming the President of Pakistan in 1972, followed by the first lady, Nusrat Bhutto's, three-day visit to Kabul in May 1972<sup>4</sup>. During their respective visits, several agreements on economic cooperation were signed with Afghanistan. According to Jilani (2001), during President Sardar Daud's era, the Pak-Afghan relations were antagonistic to each other because of Afghan's claim of Pakhtunistan and propaganda on Afghan Media. In July 1973, Bhutto constituted an Afghan Cell in the Foreign Office under Major General (r) Naseerullah Khan Babur to bump into propaganda from Afghanistan. Afghan Government had also provided the Baluch fighters to make camps in Afghanistan and was declared as official refugees. In order to dull Afghanistan's holding up to the Baluch and Pashtun nationalists, Bhutto retaliated by providing sanctuary and fortified support to the Afghan Islamists and pro-monarchic opposition, including Burhan Uddin Rabbani, Ahmed Shah Masood, and Gulbadin Hikmatyar, who were against the pro-Moscow Daud and did not share Kabul's territorial claims on Pakistan (Rahman, 2012). The relations were so much tense that President Daud did not participate in the Islamic Summit Conference held in Lahore on February 21, 1974.

Bhutto's vigorous policy to counter Daud's support of nationalists through Islamists and Soviet Union's increased involvement in Afghanistan's domestic affairs compelled Daud to alter his mind. In June 1976, Daud invited Bhutto to visit Afghanistan for the resolution of

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the political differences between the two countries. Bhutto paid a visit to Afghanistan on June 7, 1976 and signed a friendship treaty with Afghanistan. Daud also paid a state visit to Islamabad at the invitation of Bhutto in August the same year. These shared visits helped in invigorating trust, defusing tension, determination of peaceful coexistence and finding pacific settlement of the tension causing disputes. Furthermore, Transit trade began smoothly and on March 2, 1976 air service was resumed which had been suspended since 1974. Even surplus wheat from India was allowed to be imported by Afghanistan (Rahman, 2012).

#### **1.4. ZIA UL HAQ ERA AND AFGHAN JIHAD**

A new era of Pak-Afghan relations was anticipated by General Zia-ul-Haq's military rule. Only three months of its take over as Martial Law administrator, Zia-ul-Haq visited Kabul in October 1977. The visit, although short, but was fairly useful. Before his second official visit within a span of nineteen months to Kabul on March 5, 1978 the military ruler, General Zia set free all the imprisoned Pashtun and Baloch leaders, as a good will gesture, that was appreciated by his counterpart, President Daud. Although Zia ul Haq's visits brought happy messages but nothing was considerably followed by these visits, as the President Daud was assassinated in a coup on April 27, 1978 by the leftist revolutionaries. The killing of Daud in Kabul vitiated all such efforts and changed the political scenario of Kabul and Islamabad to a great amount. Daud was replaced by Noor Muhammad Tarakai, of the Khalq faction of the communist Party.

The arrival of a communist and Indian friendly administration, presented a dreadful situation for Pakistan. The new regime of Tarakai also jammed to the already prevailing but partly hibernated issue of Pakhtunistan and stated that it would continue to sympathize with the Pashtuns and Baloch on the other side of the Durand Line. In July 1978, General Zia-ul-Haq paid a one day visit to Kabul but it did not bear any fruit regarding Pakhtunistan and the Afghan Government's support to the nationalists and dissenting elements in Pakistan. On October 9, 1979, Tarakai was killed by his own Prime Minister, Hafizullah Amin. Bilateral Relations got improvement in Hafizullah's rein but unfortunately USSR invaded Afghanistan on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1979 and changed everything. In 1979, when the Soviet Union attacked Afghanistan, the opus of the area totally changed. Surprisingly the array in the middle of Pakistan and the Soviet Union decreased, and the Red Army represented a direct security risk, not just to Pakistan, but to the whole region. The view points of the United States and

Pakistan merged here, as Pakistan turned into the front-line state in the control of the Soviet risk. The Soviets were compelled to withdraw by the opposition to comrade Mujahedeen powers bolstered by the United States and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's backing for the Afghan Mujahedeen turned out to be invaluable in helping them to contain Soviet socialism. Besides, Pakistan, under Ziaul Haq effectively used this opportunity to fortify its Armed Forces and advance its atomic weapons program. On the other hand, Pakistan was not able to accomplish its long-term targets, when it couldn't assist to secure neighborly government in Afghanistan. Facing a super power was a hostile and an unsafe approach in the long term, but it was the need of the hour. Discerning of this circumstance, Pakistan skillfully sorted out and controlled the Afghan resistance development against Communist Forces, all the while putting conciliatory weight on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghan soil (Hussain, 2005).

Zia also opened the borders for Afghan refugees to come to Pakistan, provided them sanctuaries to fight the enemy from Pakistani territory. Until Zia's assassination on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 1988, he overtly supported the Afghan's resistance against the Russian Forces. While Diplomatically, Pakistan worked overwhelmingly at acquiring a political answer for the issue. A determination censuring the Soviet intrusion was received by UN General Assembly in January 1980. Pakistan understood that the Global community was overwhelmingly against the Soviet invasion, issuing it conciliatory quality in their Afghan strategy. From that point on, keeping the quantity of votes expanding at every UN session turned into an issue of Pakistan's international support. After furious conciliatory endeavors over the consequent eight years, on April 14, 1988, the verifiable report was finally marked at Geneva that USSR withdrew from Afghanistan as a consequence of an arranged settlement (Ahmad, 2010).

## **2. PAKISTAN'S AFGHAN POLICY: 1989-2001**

Pakistan's strategy on Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union seemed confused, and steadily structured on the idea of securing a pro-Pakistani regime in Kabul and growing toward the recently autonomous Central Asian states (Ali, 2010). Furthermore, the pro-Pakistani regime was in dire need for the security of Pakistan, because of India's presence on Afghan soil. In this stage, ISI developed as the superior architect of Pakistan's Afghan strategy. Dr. Najibullah's administration's given way following three and half years of war, and supplanted with Mujahidin groups, who began to battle one another for control of

the nation. The Afghan pioneers were not able to structure an agreement although Pakistan tried its level best to bring the Afghan stakeholders to the negotiating table, for solving the issues (Sharifi, 2009).

Since the Soviet withdrawal, various elements became an integral factor that made the Afghanistan's circumstances exceedingly entangled. As the Soviets pulled out, America, been comfortable with the Soviet defeat just walked away, leaving the whole region in turmoil. She also did not take any notice of her own introduced Kalashnikov Culture, which has ruined Pakistan's political and social fabric. The U.S. strategy of removing itself from the area, and thusly crumple of the Soviet Union, made a political hole in the region. Pakistan was the only country in the region that was making sincere efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and make it stand on its own feet, and make a government of Afghans, acceptable to the people of Afghanistan.

The Indo-US nexus has always aggravated the Pak-Afghan Relations, because it not only gives India a strategic ascendancy in the region but also through its overwhelming presence in Afghanistan, gives her a threatening annoyance potential against Pakistan (Ahmad, 2010). He further explains that the rise of the new Central Asian Republics further irritated the circumstances. Pakistan was continuously blamed by the Indians that it has made an open door for foreign elements, and brought about an irreconcilable circumstance which further disturbed the bleeding civil war in Afghanistan. India was curious of Pakistan's involvement and wanted that Afghanistan should not come under the sway of Pakistan. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi confessed in a meeting with Soviet president in 1987 that such a situation would be completely intolerable to India. Afghan president Dr. Najibullah told his Soviet counterpart during a meeting in Moscow on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1990 that India was pursuing its own interests in connection with Kashmir and was obstinately trying to involve Afghanistan in opposing Pakistan without trying very keenly to give precise support to resolving the Afghan issue. The communist regime of Dr. Najibullah tried his level best to put an end to mujahedeen's resistance, but this time he has no support from the Soviet Union after its dissolution in December 1991.<sup>5</sup> Afghan Mujahedeen made Afghan government too much weak to confront their resistance. Consequently, the Mujahedeen entered Kabul on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1992 and executed Dr. Najibullah. Pakistan supported Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, to

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become the first president of the Islamic state of Afghanistan in 1992 after Najibullah's departure (Mojaddedi, 1991).

Besides military and financial support, Pakistan also supported Taliban Government in association with Saudi Arabia. During Benazir Bhutto's second term in 1993, Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Islam head Maulana Fazlur Rahman, had several visits to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States as chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs to hunt for financial and military support for the Taliban. The then Interior minister of Pakistan, Mr. Naseerullah Babar has a significant role in this regard (Siyal, 2015). Benazir Bhutto claimed in her book, "Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West", that her government encouraged the Taliban to work with the international community. The government of Pakistan Muslim League, led by Mr. Nawaz Sharif (1990-93 and 1997-99) did not make any difference regarding Pakistan's Afghan policy. According to some counts Nawaz liked, admired, and wanted to imitate the Afghan Taliban and even tried to pass legislation (15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which stated that the chief executive of Islamic Republic of Pakistan will be called as Ameer-ul-Moumeneen, but due to lack of majority in Senate, it failed to get approval from the upper House of the Parliament) during his second term that would grant authoritarian powers to the Pakistani chief executive similar to those held by Mullah Omer in Afghanistan.

### **3. PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS: POST 9/11**

After the tragic incident of attack on twin towers in New York; Metropolitan city of America, changed the script completely. Being the immediate neighbor and close friend of Afghanistan, Pakistan was pressurized by the International community to reassess its relations with Taliban (Siyal, 2015). Taliban were supposedly blamed for harboring the core leaders of the terrorist network Al-Qaida. They were threatened to repatriate the wanted persons of Al-Qaida to America for trial. The Taliban government failed to comply. So America decided to go ahead and attack The Taliban and overthrow its government. Hence, she strongly demanded Pakistan's support in US and international coalition's Operation Enduring Freedom inside Afghanistan. Due to India's compliance to American threat, Pakistan half-heartedly accepted to support the American War on Terror campaign, and provided them with Air bases and Land routes to reach Afghanistan. Since that day Pakistan has supported the Karzai lead American puppet government, and has been cooperating for

long lasting peace in Afghanistan (Ahmad, 2010). Both the nations are the key states of international war on terror, and both of them are the battlefields for it. They are paying the price either in material losses or in the form of Human lives. These are the sacrifices that no other country has rendered in the contemporary history. Although, Afghan President Hamid Karzai, often criticized Pakistan for destabilizing Afghanistan, but it was due to his tendency towards India, and wanted India to have more role in Afghanistan. Karzai has been noted as exaggeratedly compassionate towards India. Family members of Karzai's first cabinet have mainly got their education in India, while many of them have settled second homes there (Boehner, 2006). Nevertheless, despite of the criticism of Hamid Karzai, Pakistan has supported Afghanistan on every forum for its freedom, self-reliance and strong political system. In February, 2006, Hamid Karzai visited Islamabad and handed over a list of Taliban that were living in the safe havens inside Pakistan. In response, instead of replying to Karzai, Musharraf turned over on India and accused her of propagating false news in Afghanistan, regarding the sanctuaries of Terrorists in Pakistan. Musharraf knew that it is New Delhi who spread wrong intelligence news in Afghanistan. Pakistan has always shown its serious concerns about Afghanistan's inclination towards India. Musharraf has also seen the Taliban as a pro-Pakistan counterbalance to Indian influence in Afghanistan and wanted to keep it physically powerful in case Afghan President Hamid Karzai is overthrown and Afghanistan collapsed into chaos and anarchy.

In August, 2007 "Pak – Afghan Peace Jirga" was held. Around 700 people from both the countries were present, including Rashid Dostum, BurhanUddin Rabbani, Prof. Rasool Sayyaf, Pir Gillani, along with the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan and the members of civil society. The Jirga damned terrorism as a universal threat to the protection of both the countries and determined to continue the war on terror (Ali, 2010). Keeping in view the importance of Pak-Afghan relations after being elected as President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari invited President Hamid Karzai to his oath-taking ceremony. On the eve of 11<sup>th</sup> SAARC Conference, the Afghan Foreign Minister, Dr. Rangin Daftar Spanta and his Pakistani counterpart, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, reaffirmed their determination to better cooperation. While addressing a news conference in Islamabad on August 11, 2010, Afghan President Hamid Karzai termed Pakistan and Afghanistan as "conjoined twins". It is perhaps due to the Presence of a large number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the long shared border, and helpful environment for Afghan nationals to live, work and access to the

education and health facilities in Pakistan, and shared religious, cultural and ethnic ethos, which prompted and realized Afghan President Hamid Karzai to declare Pakistan and Afghanistan the conjoined twins (Sial, 2011). Since the re-election of President Hamid Karzai, constructive developments occurred on both the sides and an affirmative shift has occurred for bilateral policies and regional perspectives. Although certain blame game and political statements caused acute irritation but increased bilateral visits and interaction have considerably overshadowed these statements. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Yousuf Raza Gillani paid a visit to Kabul in December 2010, exchanged views with members of Afghanistan's Chambers of Commerce and Industry and discussed the newly signed Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). Furthermore, the signing of Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), in which Pakistan has agreed to provide transit facility to India for trade with Afghanistan, will further augment trade relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The agreement will also prove a great source of regional connectivity. Likewise, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project is also a great source of boosting regional integration and economic cooperation. Under the project, 1800-kilometer long gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to India via Afghanistan and Pakistan is likely to cost U.S. \$7.6 billion. This project can considerably overcome the rivalry and proxy wars between India and Pakistan on Afghan land. Yusuf Raza Gillani also emphasized that parliamentarians of both the states could play a positive role in bringing people of the two countries closer to each other (Sial, 2011).

The Ex-President of Afghanistan Prof. Burhan Uddin Rabbani also led a High Peace Council to Islamabad in 2011. The main aim of their visit was to forecast for Pakistan's role in the settlement process with the Afghan Taliban. The delegation went back with the idea that Pakistan really desired to be part of the Afghan solution and if Pakistan's genuine concerns in Afghanistan were addressed, Islamabad would be ready to play the role of a peacemaker also. The visit of delegation of Afghan Peace Council to Islamabad was pursued by a visit by Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Salman Bashir to Kabul for policy discussions and exploring new ways and horizons of strengthening bilateral ties. While newly came into power in May, 2013 elections, Nawaz Sharif has negated any change in his government's move towards Afghanistan, apart from that he desires a stable and peaceful Afghanistan (Ahmad, 2013). He has frequently urged on the connotation of pursuing economic diplomacy and cooperation in terms of trade and foreign investment with neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan to

advance Pakistan's interests in the wake of stable Afghanistan. The New National Unity Government (NUG) of Afghanistan has started to work sincerely on the unfinished business, in collaboration with Pakistan. President Ashraf Ghani has started the strategic campaign to persuade the internal and external factors involved in Afghanistan, to stabilize the country. His first ever visit to Islamabad brought the same message, followed by the Pakistani Army Chief, Raheel Sharif's visit to Kabul (Hamid, 2015). Since then several Pakistani and Afghan leaders have visits to further pave the way for peace talks with Taliban.

The first sign of the Pakistan's support came the last month when Pakistan, communicated and convinced the senior Taliban leaders to hold talks with U.S and Afghan officials. Previously, Pakistan had presented its efforts, many times for organizing official or unofficial talks with Taliban. Along with its government, the political parties, religious groups and the people of Pakistan are willing and hope the best for the Peace talks between Taliban and the Afghan government. Those who were supporters of the suicide attacks in Afghanistan are also of the opinion of holding peace talks. On February 21, 2015 President Ghani acknowledged Pakistan's cooperation as Kabul looks for laying the foundation for peace with Taliban insurgents. It is the newest signal of humanizing ties between the two nations. Afghanistan "appreciates Pakistan's recent efforts in paving the ground for peace and reconciliation", Ghani confessed in a statement. On December 16, 2014, the tragic incident of Peshawar Army School attack, which took the lives of 144 innocent students and teachers, attracted the full support of Afghan government to fight the terrorists everywhere. On 17<sup>th</sup> December, the Pakistani army chief visited Kabul and shared confidential intelligence information with the Afghan officials and exposed, that the mastermind behind the Peshawar attack, was giving commands to terrorists from the bordering areas of Afghanistan. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani whispered that Afghanistan stands with the people of Pakistan in their hour of anguish and sorrow.

#### **4. POST WITHDRAWAL SCENARIO**

As the NATO and ISAF forces have started to left Afghanistan, while Afghan security forces are not fully prepared to face the forth coming threats from Taliban insurgents. Afghanistan will be looking for cooperation from its neighbors especially Pakistan. President Ashraf Ghani's overwhelming importance to Pakistan for bringing stability in Afghanistan will ensure Pakistan for their future role in Afghanistan. In the current scenario the things look

like to go ahead in collaboration. Furthermore, bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan would be greatly affected by America in the upcoming days because both countries are allies of America. In the American scheme of things, they have to cooperate with each other, so under the American pressure, relations will continue in the same manner. Then it is also a reality that both countries need each other; Pakistan needs Afghanistan and Central Asia for stability, economic prosperity and for the security of its borders. Afghanistan needs Pakistan for Karachi and Gwadar port and certainly for its border security. Here India also is likely to play its role in minimizing Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. Pakistan needs to adopt a more realistic approach, because no country has the right to interfere in another's affairs<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, Pakistan will be there to secure its stakes, i.e. control of Pashtuns, rise of border issue accompanied by irredentist claims of Afghanistan, which are likely to be pumped by India.<sup>7</sup> Although, Pakistan acknowledges that Afghanistan is a sovereign country and has the right to form its relations independently by following its own interests (Naseem, Ahmad, 2010). Pakistan shall also have to work closely with Kabul to reduce and neutralize external spoilers as far as bilateral relations are concerned. Kabul would need to reassure Islamabad that Pak-Afghan relations are not contingent upon latter's ties with other countries such as India. Bilateral ties will further be strengthened if both Kabul and Islamabad maneuvered economic cooperation and trade as the basic reason for their engagement. They need a roadmap which can take their bilateral trade from the current roughly \$2.5 billion to \$5 billion dollars in near future. The rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is the common threat that both the states have to be concentrated upon. Here are also the prospects of new civil war between Taliban and ISIS, in the wake of weak government in Kabul secured by a fragile security apparatus. It will bring new implications for the stability in the region. With expansion of ISIS into Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan, they must come together. For this time the threat is not only to Afghanistan, but also to Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian states, which in turn will be jeopardizing the security of China and the interests of the broader region and the world (Ahmadzai, 2015).

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## **CONCLUSION**

In international affairs, all the states act according to their respective National interests. Pakistan and Afghanistan, although having most aspects in common, but are Sovereign states, have their own national interests and they will pursue them. The geo-strategic location of both the states has serious implications over the interdependence of both of these states. The commonalities and longest shared border have historically shaped their internal and external policies towards each other. Although, they have bitter relations for the time being but over the time they have lived together, fought together and enjoyed together. Yet, Pakistan has to formulate the Afghan Policy in accordance with its security, economic and political concerns in Afghanistan. To enjoy future good relations, both of them need to focus on those which come and disturb their brotherly relations. The policy makers of both the states should focus on mutual cooperation and better understanding. Whatever Afghanistan's reaction may be, but it is the need of the geo-strategic location of Pakistan to have good relations with Afghanistan, otherwise, rival states and non-state actors can use Afghan soil against Pakistan.

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