

# **Trust Deficit in Pak-Afghan Relations and its Implications: A Historical Perspective (1947-2001)**

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## **Abstract**

*The element of mistrust in Pak-Afghan relations is not a new phenomenon; in fact, it has a long history. Their bilateral relations have been frail and fragile, based on mutual mistrust and acrimony, which have discouraged the two countries to forge closer ties. Pak-Afghan mistrust is the result of destabilizing measures carried out by both the countries. This paper presents the historical perspective of Pak-Afghan relations in a chronological manner. Moving in this order provides a broader and deeper base to understand current and future prospects and policies. Moreover, it examines the nature of relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the factors that strained their relations and their implications for both the neighbors. It also focuses on the evaluation of Pakistan's relations with Taliban and its impact on Pak-Afghan mistrust. Understanding geneses of mistrust will be helpful in formulating future policies based on mutual trust.*

**Keywords:** Pushtun, Pushtunistan, Durand Line, Pak-Afghan relations

## **Introduction**

There are different historic reasons for Pak-Afghan mistrust which kept their relations strained for most part of the history. They always considered their geographic proximity as a liability. Their common border had always been a cause of political differences and saw each other as a problematic neighbor. Their divergent outlook about the border, conflicting interests, and Afghanistan's claim on Pakistan's Pushtun territory deepened mutual mistrust and made it logical for them to be suspicious of each other's policy objectives. Successive governments in Afghanistan raised the territorial claims and questioned the validity of Pak-Afghan border while on the contrary; Pakistani leaders had pathological distrust of Afghan nationalism. As a result, both the neighboring countries instead of using normal diplomatic channels to solve their bilateral issues resorted to hostile propaganda, gave negative statements against each other and supported each other's dissident groups. Consequently, their non cooperative attitude gave birth to

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policies responsible for creating instability and conflicts which hardened mistrust and embittered masses.

In addition, Pakistan has always seen its relations with Afghanistan through the lens of hostility with India. Afghanistan's tilt towards India and its close relations with Soviet Union was considered by Pakistan as a security threat which impeded growth of normal bilateral relations and widened mistrust. India which is considered an arch rival had more say in Afghanistan which led to interventionist policies by Pakistan. Pakistan supported different Afghan dissident religious leaders i.e. Gulbadin Hikmatyar (Hezb-e-Islami), Ahmad Shah Massoud, Burhanuddin Rabbani (Jamiat-e-Islami) and, Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan) to gain strategic depth against India and to pressurize Afghanistan to quit her claims on Pakistan's territory.

Marvin G. Weinbaum noted that the mistrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan has dissimilar ideological foundations.

*“The basic principle and raison d'être of the Pakistani state is an Islamic harmony that is expected to transcend geographic and ethnic division. Traditionally, the Afghan state has formed its legitimacy in satisfying and balancing the interests of the ethnic and tribal communities. The relationship between ethnicity and politics has been virtually reversed from one state to the other.”<sup>1</sup>*

Therefore, Pakistan which came into being as an ideological state has feared India. It has viewed any backing of its ethnic groups by India or Afghanistan as a treachery and denial of Pakistani state and perceived Afghanistan's good relations with India and its support for Baluch and Pushtun interests with suspicion and threat to Pakistan's existence.

In addition, many Afghans believe that most of the empires have been governed either from New Delhi or Kabul, not from Islamabad. They firmly believe that Afghanistan and India share more history than Pakistan and that's the reason of their warm relations. Afghans' contentions are viewed by Pakistan as an attempt by India and Afghanistan to destabilize Pakistan which deepened Pakistan's mistrust and led to the Pakistan's interference in Afghanistan. Moreover, the then President Zia-ul-Haq's role during Afghan-Soviet war by funding madrassas, militant organizations and their leaders which promoted extremism and warlordism in Afghanistan, is highly resented by Afghans, shaped their hostile perception and highlighted Quotient of mistrust. [It is a different matter though that Zia-ul-Haq was considered as the last leader of Afghanistan by some of the Western diplomats]

### **Pak-Afghan Relations: Genesis of Mistrust**

Historically, the nature of Pak-Afghan relations is characterized by mistrust and suspicions. Since 1947 both countries have been at logger heads and have interfered in each other's affairs which increased mutual trust deficit. There are two interconnected, historical *raison d'être* which created impasse i.e. Durand line – the joint but undecided border and the Afghan backing for the 'Pushtunistan' issue which has influenced the foreign policy of both the countries. The claims on Durand line and the Pushtunistan movement continued in different capacities in different eras and shaped the perception of Pakistan regarding Afghanistan. Both the issues were articulated by Afghanistan's policy makers in such a way to gain influence and power against Pakistan. Resultantly, Pakistan resorted to bring instability in the region to suppress the Pushtunistan movement or the invalidity of Durand line. Afghanistan since the beginning has found it difficult to discuss the border issue because of its over commitment to the issue and larger public passion towards it. Therefore, Afghanistan exaggerated the issue to a large extent that it was a land lawfully belonging to them. Though Kabul's uncompromising backing of the issue made it vulnerable increased its economic and political reliance on Soviet Union, consequently leading to its invasion of 1979. On the contrary, Pakistan formed on ideological basis having different ethnic groups, feared that further disintegration after the East Pakistan (Provincial State of Pakistan) in 1971 might end the Pakistani state altogether which increased its sensitivities several fold.

### **Durand Line Issue: Historical Reason of Pak-Afghan Mistrust**

Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, Durand line remained a protracted issue and a cause of mistrust. Durand line claim by Afghanistan increased Pakistan's intervention in Afghanistan and heightened mistrust syndrome. In the past it led to insurgencies, skirmishes and tribal uprisings between the two countries.

The Durand Line is a 2,640 km long boundary line between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The agreement was signed at Kabul between the British government and his highness Amir Abdul Rehman Khan of Afghanistan, on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1893. On Pakistan side the Durand line include the territory of Baluchistan province, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas. On the contrary, the frontier on the Afghan side extends from Nuristan province in the north east to Nimruz in South East. Pakistan has always faced problems with Kabul rulers over the validity of Durand line. Kabul never accepted Durand line or the fact that NWFP is a part of Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> [Neither could we expect that Pakistan would surrender parts of its country because of historical fiction]

After 1947, Kabul government approached Pakistan demanding reformation of the Durand line to avoid a divide of Pushtun tribes. This proposal was rejected by Pakistan on the ground that border cannot be restructured or nullified because the Vienna Convention on Succession of States on Respect of Treaties (VCSST) have unanimously endorsed *uti possidetis juris*, which says that bilateral treaties with or between colonial powers pass on to the descendant sovereign states.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Afghanistan cannot restructure or change the Durand line. This contention led to a deep and continuous distrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan leading to rivalry, suspicions, and resentment. Afghans believe that the Durand Line agreement was concluded for 100 years and validity of Durand line expired in 1993. Secondly they believe, Durand line was demarcated by force. It was imposed on the country by the Britishers. Thirdly, all the agreements concluded with the British government have become dead and illegal after the emergence of Pakistan because the agreement was originally concluded with British Indian authorities not with Pakistani authorities.

Pakistan rejects Afghanistan point of view on the ground that Afghans cannot invalidate the legal aspect of international laws. International agreements once concluded can be revoked unilaterally and not bilaterally. Unless otherwise provided in the concluded treaty about its duration, the treaty becomes permanent in nature. This is applicable to the Durand line treaty agreement. International laws do not lay down the maximum life period of one hundred years for an internationally concluded border agreement between two states, when a fixed period of validity has not been mentioned in its text.<sup>4</sup> The transfer of power from one country to another i.e. from Britain to Pakistan did not change the legal status of the Durand line. The law *res transit cum sua onere*<sup>5</sup>, decodes that all agreements of the extinct state regarding the border line stay legitimate. In addition, all the obligations arise from such treaties of the extinct state pass on to the absorbing state.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the legal status of Durand line remains the same even after the birth of Pakistan. These divergent views made mistrust a dominant factor and kept their relations bitter and strained.

### **Pushtunistan Issue and Pak-Afghan Mutual Mistrust**

Pushtunistan issue is an extension of Durand line issue. When Pakistan came into being Afghanistan argued that Pakistan should give the Pushtun areas the option to become independent as a separate entity called Pushtunistan (land of Pushtuns) rather than giving the latter an option to join India or Pakistan. Afghanistan believed that once independent of Pakistan's control the Pushtun areas would join the Pushtun dominant Afghanistan (increasing the Pushtun proportion in

Afghanistan). From Pakistan's point of view Afghanistan was demanding greater part of Pakistan's territory which was unacceptable to it which soon became an issue of mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup>

Pakistan after its inception took over the functions of British India government in formulating the Afghan policy. While Afghanistan questioned the emergence of Pakistan by refusing to recognize it and then laid claims on its territory which increased Pakistan insecurity at birth, who already believed that India is against the partition and is struggling to undo it.<sup>8</sup> This belief was further reinforced when Afghanistan forged closer ties with India. The existence of Kashmir dispute was used by Afghanistan to come closer to India. Because of Kashmir dispute, Pundit Nehru viewed the Pushtunistan issue from a sympathetic point of view. As a *quid pro quo*, Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Daud lent support to India in its dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir.<sup>9</sup> India helped Afghanistan to keep up its propaganda against Pakistan which served its interests. In 1951 Indian government hosted "Pushtun Jirga" in Delhi where President Sardar Najibullah Khan made anti Pakistani speech broadcasted by All India Radio. Moreover, in 1967 United Pushtun Front (UPF) was formed in Delhi under the leadership of Chand Khana, Indian minister to support demand for Pushtunistan.<sup>10</sup>

The factors which shaped Afghanistan policy towards Pakistan are better be described by Ayub Khan in his book *Friends not Masters* (1967) that, when Pakistan came into being there were two fears in the mind of Afghan monarchs. The first was created by Indian constant propaganda that Pakistan as a separate entity would not survive for long and would soon disintegrate. Afghan rulers considered it to be true and laid claims on Pakistan's territory. The second fear was in the mind of Afghan monarchs who believed that if Pakistan survived it would be a democratic country which can pose a threat to the legitimacy of Afghan monarchs. As a result, they laid claim on Pakistan Pushtun territory called Pushtunistan.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it seems that Afghan monarchs feared that a strong democratic country in the neighborhood would pose a threat to the Afghan rulers.

In addition, Peshawar relatively was in a better economic condition than Kabul. Thus, it could have been a source of dissatisfaction for Pushtuns of Afghanistan who shared ethnic bonds with Pakistan's Pushtuns, therefore creating unrest in Pakistan.<sup>12</sup>

Olaf Caroe noted that the temptation for Peshawar has always been an obsession which was found deep in the ruling elites of Afghanistan, who were the direct heirs of Peshawari Sardars. King Zahir Shah and his prominent ministers were the great grand sons of Sultan Mahmood Khan. After the inception of Pakistan in 1947, Afghanistan

put these aspirations into an official claim over the Pushtun territories as well as on Indus.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, from 1947 till 1979 Pushtunistan issue soured their relations and caused mistrust. Afghanistan once dedicated itself to the issue, found it extremely difficult to withdraw its claim which then became a major element of Afghan's foreign policy. Another rationale which prompted Afghanistan to make claims on Pakistan's territory was a longing for an outlet to the sea.<sup>14</sup> The Pushtun including traders were the leading cultural group in Afghanistan state apparatus, long desired to have an access to warm waters to make possible smooth trade and to divert attention of Afghan people from internal problems. Therefore, they raised Pushtunistan issue.<sup>15</sup>

Keeping all the above mentioned factors in account relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan had a discouraging beginning. When Pakistan applied for the membership to the United Nations on September 30, 1947 Afghanistan, a member of the UN since November 19, 1946 casted negative vote against Pakistan's membership. This was actually the first act of distrust between the two Muslim neighboring countries in spite of having much in common.

In addition, vague demands were raised for independent Baluchistan free from Pakistani control by integrating Baluch territories in Pakistan and Iran with Baluch areas in Afghanistan. In this regard the most vocal supporter of this demand was Sardar Daud. From Pakistan point of view Afghanistan claim on sizable Pakistani territory was not rational and lack clarity. Afghanistan claim did not generate any international backing. It had a small population of 12 million at that point in time and a small army which could not pose threat to Pakistan. But it did add to overall insecurity and increased quotient of mistrust. Afghanistan friendly relations with India and demands on Pakistan territory created security dilemma and required strong military preparedness.<sup>16</sup>

Resultantly, both the countries resorted to fierce propaganda duels which widened trust gap between the two neighbors and intricate their relations. Pakistan opened a Radio Free Afghanistan at Quetta in 1949 and initiated broadcasting propaganda campaign.<sup>17</sup> While Afghanistan supported insurgents to cause unrest in adjacent Baluchistan and NWFP.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout 1950's and 1960's there were reports of hit and run activities including attacks on military persons, disruption of buildings, bridges and electricity poles, telephone lines were cut, Pushtunistan flags were hoisted at several places around Chamman, after which the miscreant would run and cross the border to Afghanistan. Afghan government supported exiles, provided them money and land for carrying out sabotage activities in Pakistan. Pakistan also supported

sabotage activities to inflict loss on Afghanistan i.e. telephone lines were cut and school buildings were damaged in Afghanistan. Jaffar Achakzai who was a prominent activist in Pushtunistan movement highlighted that government of both the countries supported the rebellious activities in each other's territory by supplying "money, books and bombs" which strained their relations.<sup>19</sup>

In 1951 three Afghan based Pushtun columns crossed the border with the aim to raise Pushtunistan flag on the river Indus. In return Pakistan protested and imposed blockade on transit goods. Afghanistan denied any link with the Afghan based Pushtun columns and called them freedom fighters striving to liberate their Pushtun brothers.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, in 1953 it was reported by commissioner of Quetta that a Maulvi (Cleric) with his followers crossed the Pak-Afghan border established a camp at a border area called Shorawak to carry sabotage activities in Pakistan. Later, he was appointed as judge in Islamic court in Shorawak (valley in southern Kandahar province) with a stipend of 200 Afghanis.<sup>21</sup>

Afghanistan's dispute with Pakistan over Pushtunistan thereby became a main foreign policy matter for the officials. Afghan bureaucracy highlighted different versions of their government positions regarding the issue ranging from the right of self-determination for the Pakistani Pushtuns to the unification of the North West Frontier Province, extending to river Indus with Afghanistan. They even went to the extent of including Baluchistan in their claims on Pakistani territory.<sup>22</sup>

From a geo-strategic point of view Pakistan feared that a pro India Afghanistan on its borders would leave their country encircled by its enemies. In such an insecure environment of trust deficit Pakistan aligned itself with the US in order to balance Indian influence, and joined CENTO and SEATO which increased Soviet's security fears and they decided that Afghanistan should be brought closer.<sup>23</sup> Soviet Union provided assistance and helped to challenge the legitimacy of Durand line and enabled Afghanistan to adopt a more irredentist claim regarding Pushtunistan. As a result Durand line and Pushtunistan became cold war issues between the two power blocs which embittered Pak-Afghan relations and exacerbated distrust. Soviet Union decided to fully support Afghanistan on Pushtunistan issue and India on Kashmir issue. Bulganin<sup>24</sup> in December 1955, on his visit to Kabul expressed that they have full sympathy for Afghanistan stance to the Pushtunistan problem. He further highlighted that the Pushtun should be consulted on the resolution to the problem.

Pak-Afghan relations further strained and propaganda increased when the Pakistan government restructured its administrative system and merged all the provinces of West Pakistan into a single unit in 1955. The

aim was to correct in theory, the imbalance in power sharing between East and West Pakistan. Prime Minister Daud condemned one unit plan and declared the move as an attempt to absorb and alienate the Pushtuns of the Frontier province by destroying their autonomy and pledged greater support for the Pushtunistan cause. His open criticism of one unit plan encouraged mobs to attack Pakistan's embassy in Kabul in April 1955, and raided Pakistani consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad which caused severe damages.<sup>25</sup>

Pakistan took serious notice of the incident and blamed Afghanistan for the attacks, which was denied by Afghan embassy in Karachi.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, insurgency in Baluchistan increased when the governor of Kandahar (Afghanistan) contacted mullahs in Baluchistan and convinced them to declare Jihad Holy war against Pakistan. It was reported that Afghanistan was providing money to *maliks* (elders) in border region to oppose one unit plan and sponsor sabotage activities. Baluch nationalist leaders like Prince Abdul Karim (younger brother of Khan of Kalat) and Ustoman Gal<sup>27</sup> (People's Party) took money to oppose one unit and sponsor sabotage activities.<sup>28</sup> As a result Pakistani government retaliated by supporting mob attack on Afghan embassy in Peshawar closed down its consulates and suspended Afghanistan's transit trade through Pakistan which deteriorated Afghan economy.<sup>29</sup>

Pakistan's suspension of Afghan transit trade benefited Soviet Union and it came closer to Afghanistan. During one month from Oct-Nov 1961, Soviet planes daily left for Kabul carrying more than 100 tons of Afghan fruit, providing outlet for Afghanistan agriculture export. The growing Soviet Afghan alliance alarmed Pakistan and intensified mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup> Pakistan believed that Soviet can use hostile Afghanistan to dismember Pakistan. Moreover, Afghanistan's dependence on Soviet Union made it more vulnerable to its expansionist desires and increased the risk of Soviet rebellion through Afghan army that were directed, made operational, and instructed by Soviet advisors. Daud without any doubt conceived this threat but believed that he could handle it through his army personnel loyal to him, the patriotism of the Afghan citizens and the natural mistrust with which Afghans looked at Russians.<sup>31</sup>

Strained relations with Pakistan damaged Daud's reliability and deteriorated the Afghan economy. Three times transit trade was suspended because of border closure with Pakistan, which stopped Afghan trade, halted 200 truckloads of imports and exports; shattered its economy badly and led to the Daud's removal from his office.<sup>32</sup> In March, 1963 Daud stepped down, and diplomatic relations were reestablished in May 1963 through the good offices of the Shah of Iran. Dr Yousaf a commoner was appointed as a Prime Minister. Relations

between 1964-1972 remained normal, not hostile as in the 1950s. Daud's stubborn policies towards Pakistan and its dependence on the Soviet Union were creating fears in royal family. They feared that, Afghanistan's inflexible attitude towards Pakistan and its reliance on Soviet Union could cause harm to Afghanistan and considered Afghan reliance on USSR undesirable.<sup>33</sup>

Diplomatic relations were restored after Daud resignation once again but Pushtunistan was still a main hurdle in the establishment of friendly relations. In 1964, Zahir Shah called a *loya Jirga* during which various delegates spoke out on the issue keeping the irritant in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations alive. The new policy therefore, was to maintain moral support for Pushtunistan without jeopardizing Afghanistan's economic or diplomatic interests.<sup>34</sup>

After Daud left power in 1963, the Afghan state machinery had made a continuous effort to pay little attention to Pushtunistan issue and to keep ties with Pakistan as friendly as possible. In 1971 after the formation of Bangladesh from East Pakistan, the leadership responsibility of West Pakistan was transferred to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of Pakistan People Party (PPP).<sup>35</sup> Bhutto was determined to change the direction of Afghanistan policy towards Pakistan by bringing them on negotiating table. He was of the view that Pakistan's security depends more on cooperation with Iran and Afghanistan. Thus, after becoming president and martial law administrator the first country he visited was Afghanistan. Bhutto got well with Afghan monarch and several agreements were concluded on economic cooperation. But these steps did not inhibit the Afghan media, especially Radio Afghanistan, from frequently demanding Pushtunistan independence.<sup>36</sup>

Sardar Daud in July, 1973 staged a bloodless coup, overthrew his cousin King Zahir Shah when he was in Europe and proclaimed himself a President.<sup>37</sup> Pushtunistan was the main validation presented for the coup. Daud maintained that Zahir Shah had not adequately exploited Islamabad's military and political failing to its benefit mainly after the disintegration of Pakistan.<sup>38</sup> Immediately after seizing power Daud revived the political dispute with Pakistan and got renewed support from Soviet Union. He at a conference referred to 'Pushtunistan' as an inconvertible reality.<sup>39</sup> He provided the Baluch and Pushtun insurgents with small weaponry. He allowed Baluch insurgents calling themselves 'Parari' (a Baluch word used for a person with grievances which cannot be solved with talks) to establish guerrilla camps adjacent to the Afghan-Pakistan border. Officially Daud government called them refugee camps.<sup>40</sup> Those who escaped army operation in Baluchistan were provided safe haven in Kabul which gave Pakistan the reason to increase its engagement in Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> Prominent rebels' leaders who escaped

to Afghanistan were Asfandiyar Wali Khan, Ajmal Khattak, Sardar Attaullah Mengal, Sardar Khair Bakhsh Marri. On August 30, 1973 Daud's government celebrated Pushtunistan day. Kabul's main square, known as Pushtunistan square was the main place for demonstrations where Pushtunistan flag was hoisted. In response Pakistan charged Afghanistan of recruiting 15,000 Baluch and Pushtun insurgents for a "People war."<sup>42</sup>

Afghanistan's all out support to Pushtun and Baluch insurgents caused immense security threats to Pakistan. As a result Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, condemned the new Kabul regime as anti Pakistani and anti-Islamic. A massive propaganda war was initiated by Pakistan, portraying Pakistan a vulnerable victim and Mohammad Daud as an evil marauder bowed on destroying Pakistan. In addition, he was also charged of being behind the uprisings in Baluchistan and disruptions in NWFP that started in 1973.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Afghanistan's Islamist Movement and Pakistan's Support to Islamists: A Contributory Factor in Pak-Afghan Mistrust**

Pakistan's support to Islamists contributed to trust deficit between the two countries. It increased suspicions; brought Afghanistan closer to the Soviet Union and deteriorated Pak-Afghan relations to a large extent.

Daud after capturing power not only forced the monarchs to abandon the country but he also detained, killed and expelled various traditionalists and Islamists. More than 600 Islamists were assassinated during Daud tenure. Former Prime minister Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal who was a traditionalist was killed in police custody. Professor Ghulam Mohammad Niyazi who was a prominent Islamist and founder of Jamat Islami was jailed and later killed. While several other Islamists leaders fled to Peshawar. Prominent among them was the Tajik Professor Burhanudin Rabbani<sup>44</sup> (Jamat e Islami), his supporter Ahmad Shah Masoud and Gulbadin Hikmatyar, founder of Hezb-i- Islami (Party of Islam).

Islamists wanted to transform Afghan society and develop a modern political ideology based on Islam. It originated in 1958 in response to the way the state run its affairs. The Islamists were intellectuals who emerged from state education system or Muslim colleges. A group of scholars studying at Kabul University went to Al-Azhar University Cairo to complete their education where they came under the influence of Muslim Brother Hood or Akhwanul Muslimeen<sup>45</sup> and got inspired by the writings of Sayyed Qutb.<sup>46</sup> Later they came back and started teaching at Islamic faculty of Law at Kabul University and spreaded the writings of Egyptian scholars through translations and publications. <sup>47</sup>Daud considered Islamists a major threat to his

government. They were against Soviets, West foreign interference in their country, communism and Pushtun nationalism<sup>48</sup>. Immediately after coup, Daud started arresting Islamists as a result they fled to Peshawar and took refuge there.<sup>49</sup>

During that period more than fifty Islamists escaped to Pakistan where Prime Minister Bhutto used them to weaken and destabilize Daud government by incorporating them in his forward policy. Bhutto supported Islamists for strategic rather than ideological reasons. Young Afghan student leaders Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masoud had the ability to strike against Daud's regime. They came regularly to Pakistan for briefings and were put on the pay roll of the frontier constabulary. Pakistan trained some 5000 Afghan dissidents in secret military camps in warfare, wireless communication and guerilla activities. Pakistan's embassy in Kabul in 1974 was provided with a list of 1,331 Afghans nationals and their families for monthly stipends.<sup>50</sup> In addition, they were provided money for propaganda purpose against the communist government and for transforming public opinion in favor of Pakistan. Small weaponry, type writers, photocopying machine and stationary were also provided to the leaders so that they can print and give out propaganda material.<sup>51</sup> In 1974 the dissidents planned a coup with the help of Pakistan but Daud discovered their plan and imprisoned those involved. In July, 1975 Afghan Islamists attempted an uprising in Panjshir Valley (north east of Kabul) in response to bomb attacks in Pakistan, attacked two police stations and succeeded in keeping most of the valley for three days but they failed and fled back to Pakistan. Daud blamed Pakistan for coordinating the insurgency.<sup>52</sup> Panjshir was a very difficult area; the reason Pakistan chose it for guerilla activities were to teach a lesson to Afghan rulers that Pakistan can go to any extent. Nasirullah Baber associated with Afghan affairs during Bhutto era stated in the book by Imtiaz Gul "*The Unholy Nexus: Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban*"

*"We had a small operation in Panjshir in August 1975, a time when there were so many bomb attacks in Pakistan, probably by the Afghan insurgents. So we thought we must give a message to Afghan Ruler Daud and I personally advised Mr. Bhutto to do something.... We also wanted to assess the level of training of these people who had been training since 1973."*<sup>53</sup>

Thus, relationship in 1970 commenced with each country supporting the other rebels on a tit-for tat basis. In 1976, the domestic security situation in both the countries deteriorated to alarming level as a result both the countries decided to seek reconciliation. They exchanged high profile visits and agreed on solving their differences including long

standing Pushtunistan issue. These efforts of reconciliation not only diffused their tensions, revived trust but also normalized their relations to a great extent.<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately Bhutto was toppled by the military on July 5, 1977. The chief of army staff, General Zia-ul-Haq took over as chief marshal law administrator.<sup>55</sup> Zia ul Haq maintained Bhutto's legacy and adopted his course. He visited Kabul in Oct, 1977 and showed his determination to normalize Pak-Afghan relations by removing all the obstacles impeding the growth of normal bilateral relations. In response Daud paid a return visit in March 1978. The Baluch insurgency came to an end and by the end of 1978 the situation became normal. Baluch and Pushtun leaders expressed their satisfaction at the improvement of relations but unfortunately the communist coup in April 1978, reversed all the efforts towards reconciliation started by Mohammad Daud and Zia-ul-Haq who came so close to decide the long standing dispute between the two neighbors.<sup>56</sup>

### **Revival of Pushtunistan Rhetoric and Mistrust**

Soviets fully supported Khalaq and Parcham faction of PDPA leading to communist bloody coup which threatened Pakistan's security, revived interventionist policies and highlighted mistrust. After communists rose to power, the Pushtunistan rhetoric was revived. The governments of Nur Mohammad Taraki and then Hafizullah Amin had no other choice but to legitimize their governments by pressing hard for Afghan nationalism, so as to defend the right of Pushtuns and Baluchis to self determination.<sup>57</sup>

Amin tried to normalize relations with Pakistan. However, he backed off from his new stance soon and continued his earlier position on Pushtunistan. He encouraged the activism of Pakistani political exiles, among them prominent figure was Mir Murtaza Bhutto, the son of former Prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and head of Al-Zulfikar which was the militant wing of Pakistan's People Party. The aim of the organization was to destabilize Zia Ul Haq regime.<sup>58</sup>

The Afghan government was once again toppled in a coup backed by Soviet forces. On the eve of the Soviet invasion, the Pushtunistan issue remained the bone of contention and a constant source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>59</sup> Pakistan decided to adopt every forum against Soviet Union along with mobilizing Mujahideen (Soldiers of God). Meanwhile Islamists who were already in exile in Pakistan announced Jihad against communist government in Kabul and Soviet forces. President Zia-ul-Haq declared Pakistan a front line state and adopted a strategy of indirectly confronting the Soviets by supporting the Mujahiddin.<sup>60</sup>

Soviet invasion came as a blessing for General Zia by giving him an opportunity to get rid of Pushtunistan issue for ever by pursuing strategic depth policy i.e. establishing a Pakistan friendly Pushtun government in Kabul so as to off set Indian designs and to legitimize his government. It was believed that Pakistan friendly government in Kabul would provide Pakistan much needed strategic depth against its main adversary India. Pakistan's lengthened geography, the lack of space, depth and hinterland prevents its armed forces ability to fight a protracted war with India, while a friendly government would give Kashmir's Mujahidin a ground from where they could be organized, funded and armed.<sup>61</sup> The concept of strategic depth which later became Pakistan's foreign policy central pillar was first coined by chief of army staff General Mirza Aslam Beg in 1989. The concept emphasized the need for spreading Pakistan's military persons and assets in Afghanistan more than the Indian military capability. Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal was an ideal place to gain much needed depth against India.<sup>62</sup>

Some analysts also believe that apart from military version of strategic depth there is also another version which is averse to military concept of strategic depth i.e. Pakistan wants to strengthen its relations with the Muslim countries i.e. Turkey, Iran Middle Eastern, Central Asian Republics through Afghanistan so as to create an Islamic bloc visa-v India. Since its inception Pakistan is struggling to create such a block and has not been successful so far.<sup>63</sup>

It was because of this policy that even a divided and weak Afghanistan was favored over a strong, pro Indian Afghanistan. This geostrategic gesture adopted as a result of Indian threat perception was viewed by Afghan as Pakistan's endeavor to make Afghanistan its fifth province and increased their suspicions. In order to achieve strategic depth Zia-ul- Haq followed a policy of active interference in Afghanistan by influencing politics, which increased trust deficit and suspicions of Afghan people, ruined Pakistan's image and had disastrous consequences of talibanization and militancy in both the countries.<sup>64</sup>

For this purpose Zia-ul-Haq approached US with his strategy of facilitating and organizing Afghan Mujahidin against Soviets. CIA, the British M16, and the Saudi intelligence agencies agreed to collaborate closely with Pakistan's ISI to prevent creation of communist Afghanistan and started providing arms and ammunition to the Afghan Mujahidin.<sup>65</sup> Training camps were established in areas adjacent to Peshawar. Unregulated, inaccessible, rugged and vast tribal areas became safe havens for Jihadis all over the world to meet, get training and equip themselves to fight in Afghanistan.<sup>66</sup> From 1982-1992, 35000 Muslim fundamentalists from different Muslim countries came to take part in jihad. While ten thousand came to study in Pakistani Madrassas. As a

result 100000 foreign Muslim fundamentalists were involved in Afghan war. Training camps established in Pakistan and Afghanistan became virtual universities for promoting extremism in Muslim countries like Egypt Yemen, Sudan, Jordan, the Philippines, Algeria and Bangladesh.<sup>67</sup> Late in 1985, the Mujahidin were active in and around Kabul, launching rocket attacks and conducting operations against the communist. US aid to Pakistan was channeled through ISI.<sup>68</sup> The leading recipient of aid was Hizb-e-Islami of Gulbadin Hikmatyar because of its contacts with Pakistan based Jamate-Islami. Hikmatyar's Hizbe Islami was the most organized, disciplined group having relation of trust and confidence with Pakistan's military, including ISI, Saudi Arabia, other Muslim countries and had operated on all fronts.<sup>69</sup>

Pakistan supported different Islamic Pushtun factions in Afghanistan since 1970 instead of modern democratic parties. In addition, Pakistan worked to support the regime in Afghanistan that would decrease Pakistan's internal security threat rising from Afghanistan by countering nationalistic agenda of the tribes stretched along Pak-Afghan border which would ultimately enhance the former's internal security. To achieve this end, Pakistan started supporting Islamists groups by providing them training and fund which Pakistan received from US to counter Soviet Union. Pakistan also worked to suppress local support for Afghanistan's aspiration of denouncing Durand line and Pushtun nationalists groups gaining strength that may raise creation of Pushtunistan by merging some territories of Afghanistan and Pakistan. For this reason Pakistan started relying on Hizb-e-Islami led by Gulbadin Hikmatyar a Pushtun group, that was working for the creation of Islamist state rather than nationalistic state. He got large amount of aid and support for achieving this end from Pakistan.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, Pakistan put its support behind Hikmatyar because President Zia-Ul-Haq very well understood the incident of "Black September" in 1970, which influenced his calculations regarding his support to Hikmatyar. Black September was the code assigned to a rebellion by Palestinians in Jordan led by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). This rebellion was harshly suppressed with the assistance from Pakistani troops under the supervision of the then Brigadier Zia ul-Haq. President Zia who was aware of substantial refugee population in Pakistan and the danger of supporting a charismatic Afghan nationalistic leadership in exile which could in return turn tables on Pakistan. Therefore, he did not want that threat to take practical shape and avoided reliance on secular nationalist parties.<sup>71</sup>

The Soviet invasion turned out against the expectation of Kremlin leadership. It was the longest, costliest, and largest military operation in Soviet history and they decided to withdraw. Pakistan had

still not achieved its goal of friendly government in Afghanistan and kept intervening in Afghanistan politics. The then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during her tenure in 1989 approved a military operation masterminded by General Hamid Gul to capture Jalal Abad, which is the fourth largest urban area situated at a distance of only 40 miles away from Khyber Pass which turned out to be a failure for Pakistan's military because of miscalculations and added to trust deficit.<sup>72</sup>

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as a result of Geneva accords in 1988 and the fall of Najeebullah government in 1992, the Mujahidin and the ISI felt proud and started to believe that they had defeated a super power. The triumph over a world power resulted to be a pyrrhic victory as the Mujahidin soon got entangled in bloody feuds among themselves.<sup>73</sup> Pakistan wanted Mujahidin to form a broad based government friendly to Pakistan but could not succeed because they were unable to reconcile their differences; as a result Pakistan failed to achieve its objectives. The factional fighting among the Mujahidin groups created an opportunity for external elements to exploit Afghanistan's internal situation to their advantage, thus creating a conflict of interests among regional and global forces.

Here a point to note is that, historically Afghanistan had a conservative Muslim society. Sharia interpreted by tribal customs was practiced by them. Afghanistan has been tolerant of the other Muslim sects. Until 1992, all the other sects including Hindus, Sikhs, and Jews contributed a huge share to the Afghan's economy and there was no concept of sectarianism. But Soviet withdrawal followed by civil war saw sectarianism a major rift. Islam as a unifying force became a dangerous weapon in the hands of Mujahidin and then Taliban. One group was played against another in a way which was beyond comprehension.<sup>74</sup> Mujahidin failed to reconcile their political differences and their factional fighting plagued the new government headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani and contributed to its overthrow. Rabbani's government was not considered to be friendly government in Islamabad. Pakistan had strong reservation against it, because it was perceived to be friendlier towards India. However, Rabbani government made some significant contacts with India, Russia and Central Asian states which were considered against the interest of Pakistan and increased Pakistan's mistrust.<sup>75</sup>

In addition, there was mistrust between Ahmad Shah Massoud and Pakistan, which can be traced back to 1984 when ISI tagged him a Russian agent and stopped assisting him. He was suspected of fake operations against Russia without harming them and letting them carry their supplies to Kabul.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, mistrust on Rabbani government and

Ahmad Shah Massoud compelled Pakistan to nurture Taliban<sup>77</sup> with Saudi and CIA help and launched them in Afghanistan.

**Pakistan Support to Taliban and its Impact on Pak- Afghan Mistrust**

Pakistan Pushtun centric policies manifested in Pakistan's support to Mujahidin and then Taliban to halt Pushtun nationalism exacerbated mistrust between the two countries. Pakistan former army Chief Mirza Aslam Baig declared that Pakistan desires stability and peace in Kabul along with a valid share in governance of Afghanistan to Pushtuns who constitute a majority.<sup>78</sup> Pakistan who has always been fearful of Pushtun nationalism created proxies in the shape of Mujahidin and then Taliban to lead pro Pakistan friendly Pushtun groups. Pakistan reliance on Taliban to enhance its security thereby caused the state to lose the good will of Afghans. Taliban controlled ninety percent of Afghanistan by late 1990's, played havoc with the state structure and politically alienated other ethnic groups. This resulted in the grouping together of non Pushtuns against the Taliban. They saw Pakistan as a patron of Taliban in Afghanistan in 1994 that added to the sufferings of Afghan people and shaped their perception. They are still considered to be one of the problems and blamed Pakistan intelligence's for sponsoring them. Pakistan support to Taliban in 1990s created mistrust between the two countries. Majority of Afghans believe that Pakistan supported Taliban; they stayed alive with Pakistani backing which created Afghan's mistrust of Pakistan.

In 1993, Benazir Bhutto voted as a Prime Minister of Pakistan, followed a market oriented policy rather than a militaristic tactical approach towards Afghanistan. Contrary to Zia, Bhutto administration attempted to influence Afghanistan because of its importance as an economic high way connecting Pakistan to Central Asia as well as a strategic support base in military conflicts against India. Thus, this new policy was a combination of General Zia's pan Islamism and Bhutto's Market oriented policy.<sup>79</sup> She appointed Gen. Naseerullah Baber<sup>80</sup> as an interior minister. Baber began to move Pakistan away from its reliance on Hekmatyar as an agent of Pakistan's influence, a policy that he had begun in 1974 as a Zulfikar Ali's Bhutto governor of NWFP. At that time moderates in the Pakistan's foreign policy elites led by then minister of State for economic affairs Sardar Asif Ali after the breakup of Soviet Union maintained, that focus of Pakistan's foreign policy should be on its North West borders. It should be opening trade with Central Asian Republics and not an Islamic campaign. General Baber appears to have adopted this policy.<sup>81</sup>

Taliban attracted the attention of world community as well as Pakistan in 1994, when a small group majority of them were madrassa

students, under the leadership of Mullah Omar raided on the area of local warlord who was involved in several unethical activities i.e. plundering, killing and innumerable rapes. In a little span of time, they were noticed by Pakistan as capable force to achieve some of its foreign policy objectives for which it was struggling for a decade i.e. to open up routes to Central Asia and set up a regime in Kabul welcoming to its interests.<sup>82</sup> Taliban were also favored over Mujahideen because they were Pushtun, they were united, able to restore peace in Afghanistan and willing to support Pakistan's military aim not just in Afghanistan but even in Kashmir. Pakistan backed Taliban on ethnic links between Afghan Pushtun and Pakistani Pushtuns which constitute Pakistan's largest ethnic group. Moreover, Pak-Taliban policy was shaped by its fear of revival of Pushtunistan issue.

Pakistan believed that Taliban would prove to be a guarantor of peace; would establish a government friendly towards Pakistan and will emerge as a force which will recognize the disputed Pak-Afghan boundary line i.e. Durand Line as well as will prevent Pushtun nationalism. Taliban failed to fulfill Pakistan's political objectives and went in opposite direction which increased Pakistan sense of insecurity and created trust deficit. They refused to recognize Durand line and could not halt Afghan claim on NWFP. They increased Pushtun nationalism, provided safe havens to Sunni extremists groups who were against Shias, leading to Talibanization of Pakistan and showed an intention to declare Pakistan a Sunni state through revolution.<sup>83</sup>

Pakistan relations with Taliban were also seen with suspicions by ordinary Afghans. They were embittered about Islamabad's interference in supporting various warring groups and playing havoc with the state structure. Taliban proved to be unpredictable, uncontrollable, and difficult to deal with and started proving detrimental to Pakistan's economic and physical security which could be accredited to short comings in its Afghan policy, and isolated Pakistan from rest of the world.

Pakistan's interventionist strategy of supporting Taliban laid negative impact on its relations with other Afghan ethnics, as well as its security. On the external front Pakistan's relations with northern alliance as well as regional countries deteriorated and widened trust deficit. Taliban increased Iran's sense of encirclement by Sunni Muslim states and became a major cause of deterioration of relations with Shiite Iran.<sup>84</sup> India also took an anti Taliban position. On 15 Oct, 1996 the Indian foreign minister announced that India does not intend to recognize Taliban and would continue to support the government headed by Rabbani.<sup>85</sup> By recognizing Taliban Pakistan isolated itself regionally and internationally. Internally the fall out of interventionist policy is

Talibanization of Pakistan's own society, social unrest and militancy in FATA, deteriorated law and order situation, increased in Jihadi infrastructure and Jihadi groups such as Lashkar-e- Tayaba, Hizbul-Mujahidden, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi etc which have established links with Al-Qaida and has given birth to international terrorism. Moreover, it created sectarian havoc at home.

Pakistan openly pursued pro Pushtun policy which angered adjacent neighboring states as well as lost hopes of peace settlement with Ahmed Shah Massoud, Professor Rabbani and even Hekmatyar. Overtly recognizing pro-Pushtun support, Pakistan seemed to be disregarding and sidelining Afghanistan's other ethnic groups and the stakes of the other states. Pakistan policy left no space to the security interests of the neighboring countries that increased interference in Afghanistan. Pakistan considers itself as having authentic security interests in Afghanistan but is not ready to see that other countries have similar objectives as well.<sup>86</sup> Consequently, the fall out was distrust between Pakistan and neighboring countries.

### **Conclusion**

Historically, Pak-Afghan mistrust is a result of bitter British colonial legacy when they left their colonies in South Asia with territorial disputes, continuing rivalries, Afghan irredentism, the mal practicing on both sides of handling issues, the colonial mindset of Pakistan's decision makers in dealing with Afghanistan after its independence and its struggle to shape Afghanistan destiny after Soviet withdrawal by playing one faction against another so as to make Afghanistan its satellite state. Therefore, an objective analysis of their relations allocates blame equally and rejects a self righteous attitude on both sides. Trust is built over a period of time through cooperation, collaboration and through intimacy between the governments, which ultimately leads to the intimacy between groups and the people. It can also be built by adopting policy of restrain and by solving issues politically, diplomatically showing some flexibility without resorting to military means. Afghanistan's early aggressive policies towards Pakistan were the demonstration of the fact that it was not ready to see Pakistan into the role that the latter inherited from the British India.

Since Pakistan's inception Afghanistan adopted a hostile policy towards Pakistan by raising Durand line issue and Pushtunistan for strategic reasons which were ill-conceived based on misconceptions in response to which Pakistan also adopted offensive measures, ineptly handled the issues and stubborn policies which deteriorated their relations to a great extent. The hostile statements against each other, propaganda, supporting each other dissidents groups on quid pro quo

bases consequently produced environment of mistrust among their public and leadership. The history of Pak-Afghan relations highlights the fact that both the countries offered safe havens to each other's dissidents group which generated bitterness and mistrust. Afghanistan provided shelter to Pushtun leaders which intensified in 1970s when Kabul provided shelter to Marri Baluch tribes who ran away from Pakistan's military operation in response to nationalistic insurgency in Baluchistan and then to Al Zulfikar to destabilize Zia-ul-haq regime. As a result, Pakistan supported madrassas along Pak- Afghan border, weaponized and promoted extremism, provided shelter to fundamentalists such as Ahmed Shah Massud, Gulbadin Hikmatyar by increasing their financial assistance. Pakistan's Islamist party Jamat-e-islami, towards which Zia-ul haq was more inclined established close links with Afghan Islamist parties with backing from military establishment influenced Afghan politics and prevented modern and progressive parties to emerge and take part in Afghan politics.

In addition, Pakistan's tilt towards Pushtuns leaders especially in Afghanistan in the shape of Mujahideen in the 1980s and later Taliban aggravated their hostility and impacted their policies. Pakistan took sides, favored Hekmatyar, who was a Gilzai Pushtun from North having limited links to the Pushtun of South (anti Pushtunistan) and paid no attention to forces which emerged by 1992-93 such as Dostum, Ismail Khan in Herat, other Shuras working in the country and Ahmed Shah Masoud (Tajik), who turned against Pakistan. To sum up, instead of supporting pro-democratic forces, extending equal treatment to the country and working towards establishing a broad based government, Pakistan played favorites.

Since Pakistan's inception to 1978 Pakistan policy towards Afghanistan was defensive. Pakistan during this period succeeded in engaging Afghanistan effectively. During Afghan war Pakistan policy towards Afghanistan was withdrawal of Soviet arm forces from Afghanistan and establishment of pro Pakistan pliant regime in Afghanistan. As far as the first objective is concerned Pakistan succeeded in achieving it and failed in achieving the second. Hosting Afghan refugees did provide Pakistan with an opportunity to gain influence in Afghanistan but after Soviet withdrawal Pakistan policy was confused and gave birth to warlordism, sectarianism and militancy in Afghanistan which widened Pakistan's mistrust among general public in Afghanistan and they started holding Pakistan responsible for every atrocity. Pakistan Taliban policy was also a failure and soon mistrust developed in their relations. Taliban did bring peace to Afghanistan but Pakistan wrongly assumed that Taliban will recognize Durand line and will drop Pushtunistan issue once for all.

The research paper therefore, concludes that durable peace can only be achieved if this mistrust boils down. For this purpose both countries must address each other's concerns and make an endeavor to solve entrenched issues of mistrust.

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<sup>44</sup> Burhanudin Rabbani was a Tajik from Badakhshan who succeeded Nayazi; who was the founder of Jamat-e-Islami executed by Daud. He had a Sufi background and attended a state Madrassa before going to study and graduate at Al-Azhar in Cairo. See Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History*, (New York: London, 2003), 103.

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