

# Pakistan Afghan Policy in Post-Taliban—2 Scenario

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## Abstract

Afghanistan occupies extreme geo-political status in the region. After the partition of the sub-continent, Pakistan emerged as a new entity. But Pakistan and Afghanistan have had bitter relationship till December 1979 Soviet intervention. During the period of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan (1996-2001), India's internal security was badly hit due to sustainable cross border support. The focal focus of this paper remains to deliberate on Pakistan's Afghan policy in the backdrop of prevailing security situation. Durand Line was drawn in 1893 to bifurcate turbulent Pathans between British India and Afghanistan. However Afghanistan never accepted this line and argued in the backdrop of British Withdrawal that this line was drawn under duress and as per the provisions of the international law, any agreement inked under duress remains illegitimate.

## Introduction

Afghanistan is geo-politically extremely important country since long. All northward invasions on India were routed through this country. Before both world wars it was an apple of discord between British and the Russian empire. The British Empire divided the Pathans through demarcating Durand Line in 1893. After the partition of the sub-continent, Pakistan emerged as a new entity. But Pakistan and Afghanistan have had bitter relationship till December 1979 Soviet intervention. In 1989 the Soviets withdrew and vacuum was created which was filled by the growth of the Taliban, which finally captured the power in 1996. Taliban was illegitimately nurtured by Pakistan to pursue its goal to maintain its strategic depth over India. Since then terror remained an instrument of Pakistan's foreign policy. Afghan Jihad was consolidated by the US led forces during Soviet intervention but later on emerged as an independent global movement led by Osama Bin Laden. After Operation Enduring Freedom (2001) he took shelter in Pakistan and finally was killed by US commandos in May 2011 at

Abbottabad. His elimination has vindicated the nexus between the Jihad factory and Pakistan.

During the period of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan (1996-2001), India's internal security was badly hit due to sustainable cross border support. In 1999 an Indian Airlines plane was high jacked from Kathmandu ended at Kandahar. This incident dramatically underscores why New Delhi cannot take its eyes off from Afghanistan and the Taliban. JM quickly became one of the most vicious terrorist groups operating in India, that has long ties to Afghanistan and the Taliban (it has also enjoyed support from the ISI), threatening vital Indian national security interests.<sup>1</sup>

India's engagement with Afghanistan advances its position as an important power beyond South Asia, other interests in Afghanistan specifically advance regional security concerns localized in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many of these are tied to the proliferating Islamist militant groups which have terrorized India. Virtually every Islamist militant group operating in and against India (e.g., HUJI, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen/Harkat-ul-Ansar, among others) trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **Arrival of Taliban in August 2021 and its Impact on Pakistan**

Taliban came into power 1<sup>st</sup> time in 1996 and ruled over Afghanistan till their ouster created by the 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in October 2001. This operation was launched by the NATO forces to weed out terrorists who were accountable for the infamous WTC attack in September 2001. Pakistan played double game even at that point of time and openly recognised Taliban government and meticulously managed the recognition of UAE and Saudi Arabia also. Operation Enduring Freedom continued till the withdrawal of the NATO forces in the backdrop of Doha agreement between the Taliban and Washington D.C. Afghan regime based on democratic order was propelled during this stipulated period by the NATO. But with the assertive Taliban, Ashraf Ghani led democratic regime left Kabul and president himself left Kabul and finally sheltered in the UAE. Only Massoud fighters gave tight contest to the raging Taliban in northern provinces but this area was also finally captured by the Taliban. In August 2021, Taliban came into power and till date their rule is on throughout Afghanistan. Unlike their previous regime (1996-2001) Taliban captured entire country and there is hardly any challenge by any formidable group. But one thing remains strange that not a single country including the biggest harbinger of the Taliban gave recognition to the Taliban till date as per the

requirements of the international law. Interestingly, Russia which lost over 14,453 of their soldiers during 1979 to 1988 intervention to the precursors of the Taliban<sup>2</sup>, stood with the Taliban this time but again Russia has also not recognised Taliban regime yet.

The focal focus of this paper remains to deliberate on Pakistan's Afghan policy in the backdrop of prevailing security situation. Durand Line was drawn in 1893 to bifurcate turbulent Pathans between British India and Afghanistan. However Afghanistan never accepted this line and argued in the backdrop of British Withdrawal that this line was drawn under duress and as per the provisions of the international law, any agreement inked under duress remains illegitimate.

Since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, Pakistan remains nursery of Taliban in Afghanistan. Almost all Taliban leaders are trained in the Madrasas in Pakistan. Pakistani former Information and Broadcasting minister, Fawad Chaudhry delivered a dare devil speech during a consultative conference in Islamabad in November 2021 and identified the root cause of religious extremism in Pakistan. While he did not altogether exculpate madrasas, his statement that public schools and colleges were the major source of extremism, and not madrasas, did not tell the entire story. However, his claim that teachers were hired in schools and colleges during the 1980's and 1990's as part of the plot to teach extremism was correct. He appeared to be refereeing to the Jamaat-i-Islami and its subsidiaries, which were a major partner of military dictator, General Zia in his goal of encroaching on educational campuses, sowing the seeds of religious extremism and recruiting for 'jihad' in Afghanistan and Kashmir.<sup>3</sup> General Zia's illegitimate government due to two factors. First Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (December 1979) brought his regime closer to the United States due to their tacit war against the invading red army. Second, General Zia gave unprecedented space to the Mullahs and accommodated them into high seats of power. This unholy alliance of the military and the mullahs have become stronger and still powerful in 2022. This unholy alliance has been the prime motivator of Pakistan's lopsided Afghan policy since 1979 Soviet intervention. Irrespective of change of regime this India centric Afghan policy remains the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy even today in 2022.

Since the departure of General Zia in 1988, attempts are made to modernise the madrasas through incorporating science, mathematics etc into the syllabus. General Musharaff made a pledge to modernise the madrasas but till 2022, it has done partially. According to Amir Rana "The state has not come out of Zia era mindset and still believes

that the madrasas is not the source of the problem, rather it is helping the state cater to the educational needs of the masses. Otherwise, the state could have used the madrasas as their possible links with terrorist groups and for the reason it might not want to antagonise the madrasas establishment. In fact, state institutions have adopted the madrasas elite's narrative that the source of the problem lies with the public education institutions and not madrasas."<sup>4</sup>Imran Khan led PTI also pledged a lot but did nothing minus rhetoric.

Pakistan always perceived Afghanistan as a rear base against India. Pakistan and India fought 3 and half war. Through this experience Pakistan has realised that its air space is too small for its air force. For an example, from Wagha border (Amritsar) to Tokram border point of Afghanistan while crossing entire Pakistani territory is only 589 KM. for aerial military purposes it remains a very limited air space. During the wars with India, Pakistan has felt that this squeezed air space of Pakistan remains unable to provide adequate strategic space to the Pakistani air force. Second Historically Pakistan-Afghan relations have been turbulent. Afghanistan was the maiden country that opposed the demand of plebiscite in Kashmir by Pakistan on the ground that Pakistan declined the exact demand of the Pashtuns in 1948 at the United Nations. During the British empire, Afghanistan remained a buffer zone between the British empire and the Russian empire. Afghans were creating enormous problems for the British empire.

In 1893, the Britishers divided the Afghan and demarcated Durand Line. Under duress, the Afghan establishment accepted this demarcation which had divided their natural habitat. After the formation of Pakistan, the Afghan establishment refused to accept Durand Line on the excuse that this line was demarcated under duress, and under the provisions of the international law, any treaty under duress is illegal. In the last 75 years, not a single Afghan government has accepted the Durand Line. Even the Taliban (1996-2001 and August 2021 onwards) in her terms refused to accept it on the plea that both Pakistan and Afghanistan are Islamic countries and citizens of both countries did not require visas and passports to visit another Islamic country. Taliban regime again prevented Pakistan to fence the border in January 2022 and it is on. After many such incidents, new Taliban regime has called Pakistani diplomats based in its Kabul embassy and lodged their protest. Whenever there is comparative independent government in Kabul, they have raised the legality of the Durand Line and also advocated tacitly for Pakhtunistan.

Taliban take over of Afghanistan in August 2021 has opened a new

chapter in the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship. Outgoing Afghan President Ashraf Ghani alleged at the Samarkand conference in the presence of Pakistani Prime Minister, Imran Khan in June 2021, that Pakistan had sent over 10,000 fighters to fight along with the Taliban against the Afghan National Army (ANA). The New Taliban regime has taken over after 20 years.

With the takeover of Kabul in August 2021, the Taliban has won Afghanistan. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital world, the entire humanity witnessed the high profile hypocrisy of Pakistan regarding their relationship with the Taliban. We have also witnessed the ordeal of common Afghan people due to sudden take over. Years ago, Tehrik-E-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was very active in Pakistan, including an attack on an army public school in Peshawar (2014). They executed many terror attacks throughout Pakistan. TTP is an ideological brother of the Afghan Taliban, but it is estimated that once the Taliban will stabilize its footprints in Afghanistan, TTP will be morally boosted. TTP has already accelerated its terror activities in Pakistan after the arrival of the Taliban in Kabul. TTP activities may scale up further and also propel terror violence across Pakistan. The annual report of the 1988 Taliban sanctions committee monitoring team noted TTP's linkages with Afghan Taliban, explained how the group benefited from the fall of Ghani regime last year and touched upon its relations with other terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan. The banned TTP, the report noted, had up to 4,000 fighters based in east and south-east areas along Afghanistan-Pakistan border and made up the largest group of foreign fighters based there. According to this group despite the fact that Afghan Taliban is taking keen interest to cook peace between TTP and Pakistan government, the possibilities are bleak.<sup>5</sup>

### **India and Afghanistan Factor & Concept of Strategic Depth**

The Heritage Foundation's Lisa Curtis has cautiously argued thata "transformation of Pakistan-Afghanistan ties can only take place in an overall context of improved Pakistani-Indian relations."<sup>6</sup>

On Afghanistan, India and Pakistan have remained on different pages throughout last 75 years due to divergences of interests. Some leading pundits of India-Pakistan relations including eminent Pakistani writer Ahmed Rashid is of the opinion that till Kashmir will not be resolved, Afghanistan tango will sustain.

But even in the situation when Kashmir will be resolved amicably there are gamut of issues beside Afghanistan which will sustain both countries

relationship turbulent. According to Ambassador Munir Akram, an eminent Pakistani strategic thinker “The hostility between Pakistan and India has deep historical and popular roots in both countries. Despite cultural, linguistic and ethnic affinities, the mutual hostility between Hindus and Muslims of the sub-continent is real and endemic. It was the *raison d’être* for the creation of Pakistan. The history of last fifty years has, if any thing, further intensified this hostility and given a structural expression in the relationship between the two states. The Kashmir dispute , in essence , is but one expression of this divide and hostility, ( Bangladesh relations with India displays the same dynamic) .Thus , even if outside issues like Kashmir , are resolved , and some semblance of civility restored between Pakistan and India, their relationship will remain competitive for the foreseeable future. Those who argue that, with goodwill and conflict resolution , peace and harmony can descend on the sub-continent are either ignorant or self-serving.”<sup>7</sup>

Another eminent Pakistani strategic writer, Ayesha Siddika has also argued in her famous book *Pakistan Military Inc.*

It has happened first time in the history that the United States has bifurcated its Pakistan policy from its India policy. In June 2022 Pakistan foreign reserves was only \$ 10 billion and India’s over \$ 600. Pakistan economic woes have become acute turbulent. According to eminent economist, Hafiz Pasha, the country needs about \$ 37 billion in foreign financing during the fiscal (2022-2023) year to meet its needs.<sup>8</sup>

In the FY of 2021-2022, India- United States bilateral trade was \$ 119.42 billion with around \$ 33 surplus of India. China became 2<sup>nd</sup> trade partner of India in the same FY with \$ 115 billion.<sup>9</sup>Beside India’s rise on economic front the changing security architecture in the Asia-Pacific and rise of China as a challenge for US hegemony. India and United States came closer due to convergences of interests. Trump Administration had given 2+2 status to India in 2018 and mechanism is working well to accelerate the bilateral relations. QUAD has become a huge strategic headache for China. It is vindicated with the following comment of the ‘Global Times’ official mouthpiece of China.

“Quad is widely considered a bloc designed to form a united front against China in the so-called Indo-Pacific region, toward which Chinese officials have voiced strong opposition. Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Monday that China resolutely rejects any attempt to introduce confrontation between military blocs and camps in the Asia-Pacificregion.”<sup>10</sup>

Many strategic experts opined in the backdrop of President Biden Administration arrival into power in January 2021 that now Indo-US relations is bound to slow down. But we have witnessed accelerated pace of bilateral relations between India and the United States.

QUAD had physical summit in Tokyo in May 2022. Global Times was very critical of it and its following comment vindicates the state of strategic security dilemma among the China about India's growing role of the QUAD. According to Global Times, "After all, the US is supportive of a militarily stronger India as it considers China as its primary opponent, and is using New Delhi as a tool to suppress China. The US is known for having an opportunistic foreign policy, which solely focuses on its geostrategic interests, having nothing to do with the so-called "values" it touts.

In addition, the fundamental purpose of the US in establishing the Quad is to maintain its hegemony, hoping to cultivate India into an obedient partner like Japan, Australia, and the UK, who are loyal to maintaining American global hegemony.

However, when one considers India's original intention of joining the Quad, this amounts to huge differences which create irreconcilable contradictions between the US and India.

Above all, India desires to maintain a degree of strategic autonomy because in the long run what it is eager to achieve is to be truly powerful and even become a first-class superpower. With such an ambition, India would never want to be a pawn of the US like the other two Quad members, who have long fully cooperated and implemented US directives, serving as little more than hatchet men of the US.

This determines that at some point, there will be potential conflicts in both the India-US bilateral relationship and the wider Quad mechanism. The reason for India's active participation in the Quad is to highlight its unique presence as a littoral state in the Indian Ocean, boasting that "it is India who connects the two oceans." But in light of America's intentions in proposing the Indo-Pacific Strategy and establishing the Quad mechanism, India is essentially a supporting character despite its seemingly prominent position in Quad. In particular, the US and its allies are the majority group within Quad. In most cases, the US, Japan and Australia will privately coordinate, align, and reach consensus, while India can only be a vulnerable member on the fringe, in the danger of being used and betrayed at any time, Lan Jianxue, director of the Department for Asia-Pacific Studies at China Institute of International Studies, Said."

The remarkable US shift towards India is a huge dent in Pakistan-US relations. Rising China is all set to dent American hegemony in Asia-Pacific. For Mearsheimer, rising powers tend to seek regional hegemony and China is heading in this direction.<sup>11</sup>

Former Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani described the relationship between Pakistan and China as being 'higher than mountains, deeper than oceans, stronger than steel and sweeter than honey.'<sup>12</sup> Of course , the 2013 moves of Pakistan like handover of Gwadar port to China , all weather friendship is growing despite the fact that western Chinese province of Xingjinag is infected with tentacles of terror and we are aware about the fact that terror factory is based in Pakistan. But due to geo strategic compulsions, China is undermining those realities. Sustainable rise of India since last two and half decade has worried the Chinese therefore benefit is bound to go to Pakistan.

### **Role of the United States of America**

After the elimination of Bin Laden in May 2011 it has become an open secret that Pakistan is playing double game with the United States. There is growing anti-Americanism in Pakistan and that has made the things extremely tough. But the question remains that does China has the capacity of replacing US? The answer lies in the future but one thing is clear that despite all rhetoric, China is unable to replace US for Pakistan. The growing Indo-US relationship has put China into the trap of the concept of Security Dilemma and China-India-Pakistan emerging triangular relationship is a classic example. .

Another factor of sustainable tension between Pakistan and US has been Afghanistan. Since October 2001, NATO led forces are operating in Afghanistan and despite its declared pledge Pakistan is not cooperating with the US led NATO forces to eliminate the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. In the meanwhile, the United States has poured \$ 20 billion as largesse to Pakistan. There is ample evidence to prove that Pakistan is not cooperating with the US in Afghanistan. It has enhanced the perception that Pakistan is part of the problem in Afghanistan so how it could be a part of solution? Many projections have been made. But only four are worth mentioning. Firstly, post Karzai elected government may sustain power. Secondly, it can share power with Taliban. Option-three, division of Afghanistan on the basis of ethnicity between South and the North and Option Four-Taliban may take over. First three scenarios are not suiting Pakistan's interests therefore there is hardly any possibility of support of Pakistan to these options. Option four suits



Pakistan but it does not suit the US given all scenarios it is extremely tough for the US too to maximize its national interests. India factor in Afghanistan is also important and Pakistan has kept demanding to reduce growing Indian imprint into the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Pakistan has been pursuing the doctrine of strategic depth since independence in Afghanistan to score points against India. In the Pakistani context, strategic depth is an outcome of national insecurity with regard to India. In order to curtail Indian influence, Pakistan has long supported anti-India proxies in the form of various militant groups. Other people believe that the Pakistani army uses militant proxies on the pretext of strategic depth not only to pursue its strategic designs in neighboring countries, but also to obtain foreign aid.<sup>13</sup> By virtue of Operation Enduring Freedom, India is back in Afghanistan and since October 2001 has been proactive. According to Ahmed Rashid, eminent Pakistani expert of Afghan affairs

“The India factor has now returned with vengeance for the Pakistan army. When India did return to Pakistan after 9/11 it found its non-Pastuns allies within the government as it had aided the Northern Alliance in the civil war.

Despite paying a high price for following this policy, Pakistan’s military establishment still seems stuck to it, meaning that it continues to rely on Afghan Taliban groups as proxies for its so-called strategic interest. But this has proven to be an unrealistic approach, for despite the unprecedented sacrifices made by its people to host millions of Afghan refugees since the 1980s, today Pakistan is one of the most hated countries in Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> This hostility is no longer confined to the Northern Alliance or elements in the Afghan government, but now runs so deep that most Afghans have stopped differentiating between Pakistan’s military and the general population.<sup>15</sup>

Pakistan has deceived the United States in Afghanistan which resulted into the withdrawal of the NATO forces in August 2021 despite achieving its basic objectives. This has created a huge trust deficit between Pakistan and the United States who remained closest allies in Asia during the Cold War period. It is vindicated by Maleeha Lodhi, former Pakistani Ambassador of the United States and a leading strategic analyst

“Recent illustrations of Pakistan standing up to sustained pressure are found in the uneasy Pakistan-US relationship during the 20 year war in Afghanistan, a war Islamabad counselled Washington not to wage in early exchanges following 9/11.”<sup>16</sup>

## **Nexus between Pakistani army and Jihad Factory**

In the eyes of Pakistan's security establishment, strategic depth against India is a genuine requirement for the country's security and survival, for it is now a security state increasingly encircled by "enemies" and Pakistani tacit hegemony over Afghanistan is must for that. The 2013 signed "strategic partnership" between Afghanistan and India once again sends the wrong signal at a critical time, for all it does is reinforce Pakistani paranoia and, perhaps, might push the country to provide even more support to its proxies.<sup>17</sup>

Pakistan's tacit support to terror networks operating in Afghanistan had been a bone of contention between Pakistan and the United States. The Quetta Shura, led by the Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, is considered to be the main insurgent group in Afghanistan. But the latest bogeyman, at least for the US/NATO forces, has become the Haqqani Network.<sup>18</sup> It is well connected and engineered majority of attacks against NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Jalaluddin Haqqani has long since been replaced by his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is known as the khalifah (caliph) among his followers as well among journalists in the tribal region. This active operational leader carried a US \$ 5 million bounty on his head.<sup>19</sup> They had close ties with Arab fighters and al-Qaeda leaders during the anti-Soviet war and under the Taliban. According to Kathy Gannon, a senior American journalist in the region, "Had he wanted, Haqqani (Jalaluddin) could have hand (ed) over the United States the entire al Qaeda network."<sup>20</sup>

Jalaluddin Haqqani, who went into hiding after the Taliban's collapse in 2001, made a rare appearance on a video interview in May 2008 on Al Jazeera TV, in which he vowed renewed attacks on what he called "the US and NATO invaders in Afghanistan."<sup>21</sup> The United States has pointed Haqqani network as its arch enemy and pledged to eliminate them. According to Ahmed Rashid, eminent Pakistani scholar of Afghan affairs

"As the US military surge got under way in early 2010 in Helmand and Kanadhar province, there was increasing US pressure for Pakistan to do more to 'capture or kill' Afghan Taliban leaders. The Army, which was now fully convinced that it had to eliminate the Pakistani Taliban in FATA, and deployed 1,40,000 troops to do so, but it still refused to go after Haqqani's base in North Waziristan."<sup>22</sup> The Pakistani army and the Jihadi factory super headed by Haqqani's have been interlinked since the Soviet intervention era. These so called non state actors had

been the masterminded for the Mumbai (2008) carnage and gamut of attacks made against the Indian interests in Afghanistan recently. Some elements of the jihadi umbrella have inflicted bloodshed in Pakistan also. Some are linked with the sectarian divide as well. Despite all those acts, Pakistan has yet not snapped ties with these groups.

Haqqani has become interior minister in Taliban-2 and still ideologically motivated for his pan-Islamic agenda and India remains his arch enemy. He holds interior ministry not taking adequate steps to contain the assertive Islamic State. It is believed that his act is being tacitly supported by the ISI.

### **Pakistan's Policy Options**

India has tried in some measure to protect its key personnel in Afghanistan. For example, to protect civilians with the Border Roads Organization (BRO) who were building the southern portion of the Ring Road, India deployed the Indo-Tibetan Police Force (ITPF) as well as a small number of army commandos. After the embassy and other attacks, India is expanding the ITPF presence in Afghanistan to protect key Indian installations.<sup>23</sup> These measures have infuriated Pakistan. It should be noted that some of these attacks have been linked to the ISI.<sup>24</sup>

In the backdrop of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the Jehadi elements became a consolidated force. The establishment of the Taliban regime further emboldened their fire power. The danger is equally great, and perhaps more urgent within Pakistan itself, as it becomes increasingly uncertain whether its leadership is “master or victim”<sup>25</sup> of the militant fundamentalism it fuelled for its campaign against the Russian presence in Afghanistan through the 1980s, and continues to stoke in pursuit of its strategic ambitions in Kashmir. Ahmed Rashid notes the devastating potential of Pakistan's flirtations with “fundamentalist” mass mobilization: “In the late 1990s the repercussions were much more pervasive, undermining all the institutions of the state . . . law and order broke down as Islamic militants enacted their own laws and a new breed of anti-Shia Islamic radicals, who were given sanctuary by the Taliban, killed hundreds of Pakistani Shias between 1996 and 1999. This sectarian bloodshed is now fuelling a much wider rift between Pakistan's Sunni majority and Shia minority and undermining relations between Pakistan and Iran. At the same time, over 80,000 Pakistani Islamic militants have trained and fought with the Taliban since 1994. They form a hard core of Islamic activists, ever ready to carry out a similar Taliban-style Islamic revolution in Pakistan”.<sup>26</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Taliban regime is even not ready to accept Duran Line. They are also not ending brewing insurgency in Pakistan which has propelled in the backdrop of the arrival of Taliban regime in Kabul again. This has created a bad blood between Taliban and Pakistan government. Pakistan may engineer fresh violence in Afghanistan to destabilize new Taliban regime. They have already extended their tacit support to IS- Khurasan branch to weaken Taliban regime. It seems that Pakistan's strategic objectives have not been met in Afghanistan even after the arrival of the Taliban. Pakistan has to reconcile with the fact that till Afghanistan will not stabilize there is no possibility of stability and economic growth in Pakistan. According to Mian Mansha, eminent business tycoon "Mian Mansha advised the government to close the deal with the IMF, privatise the state-owned enterprises (SOE) that are costing taxpayers up to \$ 3.5 billion a year, bring in FDI, reopen borders with India, boost trade with Afghanistan and beyond, improve the business climate in the country by ensuring policy consistency and build trade infrastructure to put the nation back on the growth track. He is of the view that all these actions need to be taken without delay."<sup>27</sup> It is only possible when Afghanistan will stabilize and that will only be possible when army will stop interfering in Afghanistan.

## **Conclusion**

Pakistan today in 2022 has become extremely weak. Its forex reserves has gone down below to \$ 10 billion and it is on the verge of economic disaster. Even in this pathetic economic situation why Pakistan has opted a proxy regime in Kabul. It is another serious fact that four decades of Afghan war and tacit participation of Pakistan has not only brought huge losses to Pakistan but also erased its economic prospects. Given the excellent geo-strategic status why it has not transcended it towards geo-economics to garner maximum benefits. It is also directly related to its Afghan policy which remains sustainable since Z.A. Bhutto and still on. Pakistan still believes that weak and submissive Afghan regime will fulfil its strategic designs particularly against India. I understand that Pakistan's security obsession against India in the backdrop of Bangladesh Liberation War remained one of the prominent elements of its Afghan policy but there are other significant factors also.

Pakistan remains part of problem and could not become part of the solution of the Afghan tango till army will not perceive this reality. Four decades old unique Afghan policy has damaged Pakistan massively. Army has to understand that a weak economic status of Pakistan is all set to weaken the status of the army as well. Army needs to become

steel frame for geoeconomics. Imran Khan had hinted towards it many times. PML and the PPP never opposed geoeconomics. Army is the only institution which could ensure difficult consensus among all stake holders for geo-economics. Pak Afghan policy need to be recalibrated in such a way which could cope up this reality. Army is sole authority to reconcile these facts and frame a recalibrated and relevant Afghan policy. It will not only consolidate economic might of Pakistan but also help Afghanistan to earn much awaited peace. It will be great facilitator of peace and prosperity in South and South West Asia. It will be also positive for the army as well.

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