

## **Pakistan-US-Afghanistan's Cooperation for Resolution of Afghanistan's Conflict: Areas of Focus and Policy Options**

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The Afghanistan's conflict has been main source of scepticism and turmoil in South Asian region. The US policy contours in Afghanistan are unyielding whereby Afghanistan is no more than marsh ground at present. Afghanistan's imbroglio is having reverberation and repercussions in Pakistan as the fallout from Afghanistan are nightmarish to Pakistan's internal security, foreign policy and economy. This study arise question that Afghanistan crisis can be solved through trilateral cooperation and is based on analytical approach and primary and secondary sources whereby defence ministry and foreign office input will be taken for the possible solution of Afghanistan's crisis. Pakistan's stability is directly connected to stability and peace in Afghanistan. Hence the conflict should be resolved by trilateral efforts thereby some basic agreement is required among the power contenders and stake holders inside Afghanistan and imaginative diplomacy on the part of the US/West and the neighbours of Afghanistan. Pakistan should establish writ in federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and to strengthen her own domestic policy.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Policy, Security, peace, militancy, interests.

Afghanistan has assumed a paramount leverage on and pivotal position in the Central and South Asian region due to its undeniably geo-political uniqueness. The one and half decade's long US engagement has deteriorated Afghanistan security and political set up to the utmost. As Afghanistan has fragile central government and shattered security. Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai was inapt to establish writ of state and to launch political strategy for handling such lawless and polarized society. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) estimated insurgents have increased from few thousands to 35,000 since 2005. (Jarvenapaa, 2011) Military operations have also been escalated. Taliban have been penetrated into north and have had assassinated influential political figures and foreigners. Most of government initiated reforms have remained confined to words only and stopped at initial phases due to disappointing level of sleaze and elite vested interests. There is nepotism at higher ratio in order to get their loyalties.

In this region Pakistan being the immediate bordering country and its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and Tribal Areas get immediate fall out of any turmoil within Afghanistan. The three decades long war in Afghanistan has changed entirely the internal and external security parameters and paradigm in Pakistan. Since 9/11 Pakistan's role in the war on terror has been unflinching, nonetheless, the losses in terms of human lives and material suffered by her during this long period have exceeded the gains. Pakistan has been caught in a state of quagmire where the survival and security of FATA is at exigency.

Unfortunately, throughout the ongoing Afghan war, a basic lesson of military history ignored was that you don't start a war unless you know how to end it. So far Washington doesn't seem to have any dialogue strategy, much less a peace plan to end the Afghan war that in the first instance was a wrong war to start. It forced Taliban out of power but never defeated them. One and half decades it is only looking for a 'strategic stalemate' in which it can withdraw but not entirely. (Ahmad, 2013) The US strategy of exit is due to own requirements while for Pakistan and Afghanistan the security maximization is basic priority because they have suffered a lot since last decades. They have none of resources and means at their disposal to prolong such state of affair. Afghanistan and Pakistan are the victims in this power game. They don't have too many options. The US on its part has been using Afghanistan for consolidating its own global outreach.

Afghanistan's conflict has affected the whole region in general and Pakistan in particular so the peace and stability is demand of time. For any viable resolution of this conflict there should be bilateral

cooperation on the part of Pakistan-Afghanistan as well as Pakistan and the US because they are stakeholders whose national interests are interconnected.

### **Method**

This research is based on data collected by primary and secondary sources. Interviews with concerned personalities ( Personnel from foreign office, Retired military officers, Retired interior ministers, Political leaders, Influential in Federally Administered Tribal Area) have been conducted and for secondary source to use qualitative method of visiting various libraries, to collect data from United Kingdom library (Aston University Library), Institution of Strategic Studies Islamabad, Jinnah Institute Islamabad, Behria University Islamabad. This sort of study embodied of Books, national and international journals, magazines, surfing websites of foreign affairs, NATO, ISAF, The US Department of Defense and Department of State as well as Afghan Media and reports available on concerned Embassies websites. Moreover the research is based on analytical reasoning whereby the policy options of three countries are analyzed. Their cooperative and non-cooperative grounds have been studied and findings are based on this analysis.

### **Literature Review**

Khalid Khattak in article 'Afghanistan's Problem' stated that post US withdrawal scenarios in Afghanistan must be seen both in a regional and international contexts as the regional and international environments have changed so drastically that the threat from terrorism is not confined to Afghanistan but has shifted to Middle East in a major way and taken the shape of a multi-dimensional threat and due to monumental changes in these environment the threat from Afghanistan and its implications for Pakistan have drastically reduced in magnitude. US leading the western world up till now considered Pakistan as a hub of international terrorism and at the same time a key to a solution of Afghanistan issue. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi in her article 'Pakistan Security Challenges' has stated that there are internal challenges to Pakistan. There are non-state actors who have trembled the very security of Pakistan. Fallout from Afghanistan has affected Pakistan's security, economy and foreign policy. With the launching of Operation Zarb -e-Azb most of the terrorist dens which have been operating in North Waziristan have been cleared out.

Rahimullah Yusafzai in his article 'Pakistan-Afghan Relations' stated that any Pak-Afghan military cooperation will be vulnerable to political /Security situation. Kabul/Islmabad waiting and hoping for decisive action by each other against militant present in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mr. Ashraf Ghani (current president of Afghanistan) is comparatively with positive trends towards Pakistan hence the relations of Pakistan and Afghanistan have been with developmental trajectory. Pakistan's foreign policy is recently with indicators that Pakistan should deal with all Afghan factions on equal basis whether it is Taliban, Tajik, Uzbek or Hazaras and it has already become policy part.

According to Shanthie D'Souza in article 'intervention in Afghanistan' described that although the US may not want Pakistan to gain influence in Afghanistan, it would be difficult for it because of Pakistan's proximity and its historical/cultural relationships with the people of Afghanistan. During the last three decades this has further been promoted and cemented due to the free movement of People across the Durand line. The US will continue to encourage India to counter this and keep a check on Pakistan.

Afghanistan's recent president Ashraf Ghani was favorable towards Pakistan in the initial but later on his stance get modified due to regional and international geo-politics. Now he cannot side to Pakistan as it was and greater cooperation of Pakistan and Afghanistan is needed for resolution of Afghanistan's conflict.

### **Pak- Afghan relations**

#### **Peaceful Afghanistan under Afghan led initiatives**

There should be Afghan led and owned set up for the resolution of Afghanistan's imbroglio. High Peace council by Hamid Karzai (Ex-president of Afghanistan) was important in this aspect. According to Brig. Asad Munir, Afghan Loya Jirga is indispensable for provision of peace in Afghanistan. (Munir, 2013) After the US withdrawal the turmoil in Afghanistan would get solution by cooperation of UAE, Turkey, UK, US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. All-inclusive setting is required for national unity because reconciliation will be in doldrums if any of group to be excluded. (Yusaf and Zaidi, 2011) The prime most is the peace dialogues with Taliban because without it there can be no any resolution of the conflict.

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Undoubtedly, the gruesome situation of Afghanistan has horrendous consequences for the region. The foremost requirement is the exit of foreign troops, and then on national level the chaos actors should be brought on the same page. The realistic solution of Afghanistan problem is to induce these elements for becoming part and parcel of government within constitutional measures. Furthermore, foreign policy towards neighboring countries should be balanced and other essential policy options should be effective administration and diplomatic relations with economically strong countries. As the political and military aspects have always been affected by ethnic tussle hence there should be dialogue process among Afghans as to ensure integration of Tajik, Hazaras, Uzbeks, anti-Taliban or at least moderate Pakhtun to be abided by power sharing set up. (Sheikh, 2012).

After the US withdrawal the major power holders will be Taliban representing the Pashtun majority, Northern Alliance and Gulbadin Hikmatyar's faction to some extent. Outside powers who would like to influence the situation in Afghanistan may be Russia with Central Asian republic, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arab and possibly Turkey. (Shah, 2013)

### **Role of Pakistan in rebuilding Afghanistan**

Pakistan support Afghanistan led effort for peace because Pakistan's interests can be served inside Afghanistan only if there is stability in Afghanistan and to secure her from hostile two frontline borders. Pashtun must be given due representation in Afghan political set up. Pakistan security has been affected by turmoil in Afghanistan than Saudi Arabia, China, Iran and US. For Pakistan, Afghanistan is the most important country because Pakistan has been adversely affected by Afghanistan's turmoil more than, Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, US, EU. According to Pakistan former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar, Pakistan has always ensured their efforts for peace in Afghanistan because Pakistan is part of solution not part of problem. (Khar, 2013)

Pakistan has absorbed large number of Afghans and has facilitated them with all amenities of life. Moreover, Pakistan has issued comparatively greater number of visas to Afghans and permitted all ethnic groups to live inside Pakistan. At some time there were 5.5 million Afghan refugees resided in Pakistan. Both should work bilaterally for trade, transit, agriculture, industry, energy, water, health and culture. Both should bury the hatchet and to utilize present for peaceful setup in both countries. (Masood, N.D.)

As regard Pakistan political role in Afghanistan then Pakistan should cultivate relations with whosoever is in power in Kabul and stay away from direct involvement in Afghan politics. Pakistan has no other option rather than to be neutral in Afghanistan issue and with no favorite group there. (Pervez, 2013)

The turmoil in Afghanistan has mutilated Pakistan's security but the nightmarish for Pakistan is the enhanced leverage of India in Afghanistan now. The US has brought India to the Afghanistan front as strategic ally. Pakistan is at dismay by this turn of situation because despite entire export and import of Afghanistan through Karachi port, she is tilted towards India.

However, in the post withdrawal scenario three main factors will determine future Pak-Afghan relations; firstly, the advent of China as major factor in the game plan of the region will serve as a counterweight to the presence of India and the US. Secondly, the geo-strategic location of Pakistan makes it indispensable for Afghanistan. Thirdly, Gwader port will serve as the nearest trade terminal for Afghanistan.

In view of these hard facts, Pakistan will become essential for Afghanistan. Development of good relations will be in the interest of both countries. India will be eliminated from the scene sooner or later since it has no land link with Afghanistan. (Haq, 2013) In Afghan backdrop our preference should be a twin track strategy. While improving relations with Afghanistan and the region, Pakistan should also make efforts to restrict Indian access in Afghanistan and simultaneously facilitate the US exit strategy from the region.

### **Safe guard Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan**

Pakistan should have broader interests in Afghanistan comprising not only security but also energy, bilateral trade and reconstruction projects. These aspects of relations will be served fully if Gwadar port get developed which is lynchpin in connecting the whole region. As such it is Afghanistan's stability that is dependent on Pakistan. With the completion of Gwader-Kashger railway line, a Pak-China joint project is presently under construction, Pakistan will get direct access to CARs and China. The same very purpose will

be served by Karakoram highway which is upgraded accordingly. Pakistan will be able to reach European markets in exchange for the trade opportunities it will provide to them for CARs.

The Indians have high stakes in Afghanistan. Her leverage is apprehensive for Pakistan's interests and influence in Afghanistan. Besides creating a base for themselves for trade and commerce with CARs they benefit strategically vis a vis Pakistan by keeping it engaged on its western borders to divert forces from Pakistan's eastern front and to reduce pressures on Kashmir and adjoining areas. The establishment of a large number of consulates in Afghanistan is otherwise not justified. Simultaneously, we have to take serious steps to improve our relations with India otherwise it will continue to engage us on both the eastern and western borders besides creating internal problems for us which can threaten the stability of Pakistan. We should not forget what happened in East Pakistan in 1971 and what is now happening in Baluchistan.

#### **Access to CARs through safe and peaceful Afghanistan**

Pakistan has no common border with CARs hence it depends on a stable Afghanistan for having a safe transit route. Tajikistan is most significant for Pakistan from strategic point of view. Wakhan which is an area in far northeastern Afghanistan a vital linkage of Afghanistan with China, can be an easy connection between Pakistan and Tajikistan. But Afghanistan's imbroglio has hampered trade through this area and economic interests have also been in doldrums. Our relations with the Central Asia Republics (CARs) are in dire straits due to the same reason. Secondly, because of the increasing influence and activities of Taliban and various Jehadi groups operating in Pakistan, the governments of these countries are wary of closer links with Pakistan. Unless the war on terror terminates in Afghanistan and Pakistan there is little hope of promotion of active bilateral relationship with these nations.

Afghanistan can serve as route of oil and gas to Central Asia and Iran but this beneficial aspect can be enjoyed by Pakistan and CARs only through Afghanistan stability. Pakistan is crucial due to the presence of deep sea port in Gwadar. If Baluchistan remained stable in security terms then it's an important channel to expansion of economic ties and cooperation with Central Asia and Pakistan would be an energy corridor for the region.

Pakistan's relations with CARs need to be developed further. The huge Central Asian land mass should be linked to Gwadar via Afghanistan. It is essential for peace that foreign forces exit Afghanistan, then Central Asia, Afghanistan trade route will flourish. Secondly, Central Asian states can join western China so trade and transit can take place through Kashgar – Gwadar corridor. The future of Central Asia and Pakistan are clearly linked. (Mir, 2013).

There is need of turning hurdles into opportunities. Pakistan must welcome all official visits of diplomats and think tanks to each country so that economic ties could be ensured. All the developmental aspects as of infrastructure, professional services and insurance groups must be flourished. We should independently have good relations with CARs.

#### **Mitigating effects on internal situation of Pakistan.**

Peace in Pakistan is connected with peace in Afghanistan and the turmoil inside Afghanistan will tremble security of Pakistan. In adverse situation the consequences will be more infiltration of Afghan Taliban and greater number of refugees to Pakistan. The culprits will commit in Pakistan and then will harbor in Afghanistan. (Yusafzai, 2013)

The viable policy against such attacks can be military strategy and border management. In the exit strategy scenario, Pakistan is indispensable for the passing of US/NATO supplies. In case of any border tussle and attack, Pakistan should give diplomatic support at international level to China, Turkey and Iran.

Be it Taliban, be it a state, be it Uzbek, be it a group of Turks, be it group of Taliban, none to be allowed for challenging the writ of state. For the very purpose the APC is stepping stone to held peace talks with Taliban. But the unresponsiveness of other side is dismay because Taliban leaders are continuously perpetrating against the state. (Khar, 2013) To my mind the biggest folly, the biggest challenge for the state is to allow non-state actors entry and their survival within the state. (Khar, 2013) This has raised countless questions from our immediate neighbours, extended neighbors and from all over the world, besides it has deteriorated internal security, peace, law and order situation and above all Pakistan equanimity has been

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destroyed. Pakistan can no longer afford such horrendous challenge to persist any more so peace talks is the only viable policy option in this regard.

Government has adopted policy for FATA settlement and various developmental works are in process. However, government should take numerous measures to neutralize forces creating likely hurdles so that insurgency could be curtailed. (Noorani, 2013) Furthermore, people of FATA should decide whether they want to become an independent province, to merge with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or remain with same status. (Sherpao, 2013) There can be positive change in FATA when Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US will on the same page and India stops her covert activities in FATA and KPK. (Aziz, 2013)

### **Pak-US relations**

The US and Pakistan have been very actively involved in Afghanistan for the last thirty years. It is therefore understandable that they must have developed linkages and vested interests in that country. For Pakistan it is even more important because we are so closely linked with Afghanistan both culturally, ethnically as well as historically. Without the involvement of Pakistan and the US it would be difficult, almost impossible, to resolve the situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan will benefit immensely if there is peace and stability in that country. Trade routes will open up not only to CARs but also to Europe. For the US as a super power it is also important because it seeks a safe and honorable exit from Afghanistan.

The turmoil in Afghanistan cannot come to settlement in spite of expenditure and troops surge or exit unless and until the Afghan ruling class and the US-led coalition get the essence of main factors leading to this tussle. Peaceful withdrawal can be feasible only when negotiation and reconciliation succeeded between Taliban groups and Afghan government. The US should seek for negotiation or cease fire as there can be no other way around.

The US must be with all-inclusive negotiation with all Taliban groups and Afghanistan government because excluding any group will upset the apple cart. Pakistan policy makers are opposing multiple preconditions for negotiation. The US must shun her stubborn attitude and should adopt flexible role to give peace a chance. As the US has policy option of political solution for Afghanistan so strong Taliban groups like Haqqani network must be taken on board.

Obama has sensed the pivotal significance of Pakistan in Afghanistan end game. Presumed connection of ISI with Taliban is guarantee of Pakistan leverage on the eve of exit which will definitely secure Pakistan interests. Pakistan role is palpable in curbing terrorism along the US, the headway in decapitating Osama Bin Laden had become possible only by cooperation of Pakistan's intelligence. The U.S wants Pakistan to launch operation in North Waziristan in order to curb non-state actors. Pakistan has launched operation Zarb e Azb in North Waziristan in June 2014 due to which the situation has been cleared to the greater extent.

The current conflict is on drone strikes because the U.S. has been violating Pakistan's sovereignty by continuing Drone Attacks in the Tribal belt of Pakistan. On the other hand Pakistan demands that Drones should be operated by Pakistan but the US is headstrong in her covert predator war on Pakistan's soil. The US is even against preordained intelligence sharing in this regard. There is resentment in Pakistan about the US unilateral raid against militants but the US is not taking these concerns in consideration. To cap it all Pakistan ,as hope against hope ,is coaxed about civil nuclear deal on Indian style with the US but it is also a damp squib.

### **Friendly relations based on mutual respect.**

The US-Pakistan relations remained roller coaster in recent past with perpetual blows. The US mostly behaved arrogantly in major incidents and Pakistan sovereignty has been infringed. Nonetheless, Pakistan is significant ally in war on terror but an unknown gulf of mistrust exists in bilateral relations. There is need to overcome trust deficit in order to achieve the common goal of curbing militancy. Whether the matter is of US allegation about Pakistan military and ISI or the US dictatorial stand on strategic aspect, it should be transformed into mutual respect. The US should take proper standpoint of "strategic" notion regarding Pakistan so that Pakistan is at ease in keeping regional interests intact. Furthermore, negotiations are to be carried out in atmosphere of mutual respect, negotiators must convey respect both at national and

personal level (Schaffer, 2011: 167) so that to build up great national image. The US and Pakistan negotiation depend on their cultural, structure of authority and geopolitical position.

#### **Countering challenges due to drone attacks**

Drone attacks will die their own death once the truth come to the forefront. It is still not clear whether Pakistan government allowed these attacks or not. In any case they should end with the departure of US forces from Afghanistan. Pakistan should never try to confront US on this issue and down the drone. This may give an excuse to US to destroy our vital assets. (Yusaf, 2013) We (Pakistani) should do it only when we are strong enough to do it and the world opinion is with us. Furthermore, according to 18<sup>th</sup> amendment the foreign policy subject belongs to federal government rather than provincial. So it is something absolutely wrong on the part of KP government to block NATO supply line. Every country live according to own national interests that how to safeguard these interests. (Khar, 2013) Recently, the matter do not belong to NATO working in Afghanistan, rather it is the time of their exit, to vacate Afghanistan, it is transition time so it is the time for Pakistan to secure short term political gains. Pakistan's security has been directly connected with the drone strikes, but the drone issue can be countered by highlighting it on visits to the US and conducting dialogues on the matter demand sound bases.

#### **Economic and defence relations**

Since 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom, Pakistan is assisted by the US financially by \$ 2 billion per year. (Cohen and Callet, 2007: 7-19) The security assistance by Coalition Support Fund (CSF) comprised military assistance (helicopters, air-assault training), counter narcotics programs. The US aid come through CIA, Department of state, Department of justice and other agencies to support counter-terrorism, internal security and developmental programs. (Fair and Chalk, 2006) The US has disbursed \$16 billion aid to Pakistan in order to secure Pakistan support as key ally in subjugating terrorism. In 2013, the US Secretary of the State John Kerry on his visit to Islamabad stated that due to Kerry Lugar Berman Bill starting in 2009 the US has paid \$3.5 billion to Pakistan. Due to US assistance, 1000 MWs have been added to energy sector. (Sheikh, 2013)

#### **Safe guarding Pakistan interests in US dominated West**

Politically the US can mould policies of major powers Europe, Japan and Russia in Pakistan's favor. In case of conundrum with Pakistan, the US can access Saudi Arabia and China to resolve tension. Pakistan needs strong foreign policy as well as national security policy in order to fully safeguard the regional and international interests. If contemplated the recent scenario then the GLOC blockage is not reasonable because NATO is not confined to the US only, it comprised forty two countries, so annoying all of them is horrendous for Pakistan. Resultantly, there can be dire consequences to Pakistan foreign policy.

#### **Tri-lateral Relation**

##### **Role in resolving Afghanistan turmoil**

All the three countries are stake holders because the US besides physical occupation is spending money while Pakistan has been affected by the Afghan's turmoil to the great extent. The three should work together to address the situation by using trilateral mechanism. (Sherpao, 2013) Pakistan and Afghans are circumscribed by escalated militancy and their security is in dire straits. Albeit Pakistan has leverage on Afghan Taliban but cannot forcefully bring them to the negotiation tables. These three states can solve Afghanistan problem but unfortunately they have gruesome doubts and mistrust. (Shah, 2013)

For the U.S., Pakistan's cooperation is needed to control movement of insurgents across the Pak-Afghan border which is both ways. (Rizvi, 2013) If the US wants to avert Afghanistan from becoming the militants hub the Pakistan leverage must be protected. The US must instigate International backing to compel Pakistan, Afghan Taliban and their opponent to come to lose federal system based compromise, which can only prevent Afghanistan from further turmoil.

The regional countries, especially those sharing the borders with Afghanistan have a greater role with reference to Afghanistan. Pakistan needs to cultivate them on the issues relating to Afghanistan. The U.S. role cannot be excluded altogether because it will maintain some military presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan seeks economic assistance from the U.S., the World Bank and the IMF. Therefore, there is no question that Pakistan can abandon terms with either the U.S. or the neighboring states of Afghanistan. Both are important for different reasons. Pakistanis official since long have proposed that the only viable US policy

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for Afghanistan peace can be negotiation with Taliban but the US neglected political settlement for military option and instead alleged Pakistan for having militants safe haven.

The resistance in Afghanistan refuses to accept the Afghanistan constitution, its parliament, president because they assert that these institutions were created when the country was under foreign occupation. No solution would be acceptable to the resistance that is not predicated on the complete withdrawal of coalition forces.

As contemplate the gruesome mistrust on sides of US and Afghanistan, it can be settled only by mediation of UN which will lead them to peace process. After grounds have been set forth then both sides must consent to UN secretary general for political settlement.

There must be fulfillment of four conditions for negotiation leading to draw down according to Henry Kissinger as: "a cease-fire; withdrawal of all or most American and allied forces; the creation of a coalition government or division of territories among the contending parties (or both); and an enforcement mechanism".(Ahmad, 2012)

### **Safe guarding our internal and regional interests while engaged in above**

Pakistan foreign policy advocates friendly relations with all regional countries as inside Afghanistan, Pakistan must secure regional interests. There can be convergence of regional interests as for example Iran's foreign policy is having revolutionary power. (Todge and Redman, 2011: 18) Pakistan Iran pipeline (IPP), which is worth \$ 7.5 billion is major planning for energy import to Pakistan as it will facilitate Pakistan with 7.8 billion cubic meter of gas from Iran's South Pars gas field. Both countries are envisaging trade from scant \$ 1 billion in 2011 to \$ 5 billion in 2015. (Tehran Times, 2011). Relations of Pakistan with Iran are troubled due to Shia-Sunni tussle and diverse Afghanistan's sects. Iran is averse to Taliban and any headway for peace talks. Iran is sided with Northern Alliance having political, strategic and economic interests. This situation has turned relations of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran more acrimonious. Moreover, Taliban have grappled for demeaning Shia Hazara minority as had done in 1998 by defeating them in Mazar-e-Sharif. (Toby and Nicholas, 2012: 189) For keeping the US on tenterhooks, Iran has disbursed million of dollars to Karzai and Iranian officials there. According to New York, 700,000 has been paid to Karzai, which has been agreed in October 2010. (Filkins, 2010)

Iran is cautious about Pakistan and Afghanistan new trends. Moreover, Iran is hostile to the US/NATO presence on Afghanistan soil, which has trembled security and for that cause Iran is supporting even the Taliban with latest equipment. Iran should ensure all inclusive set up based on regional consensus because the stability of Afghanistan is in interests of all regional countries.

China is also interested in Afghanistan's mineral resources and deemed Afghanistan an outlet for CARs natural resources. China is averse to the presence of the US/NATO in Afghanistan in general and about her outreach to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in particular.

Pakistan wants China to have operational role in Gwadar Port in the Arabian Sea West of Karachi, and that China naval bases must be upgraded in it for Chinese use. Albeit China is hesitant in flourishing formal bases which is somewhat obverse to the US and India. China in order to be hegemon in the region after the US exit can be depended on Pakistan because both have hostile terms with India and will like to counter India influence in the region. (Garver, 2001: 188) Pakistan has supported and is still with likely efforts for security in Xinjiang, Tibet and Taiwan while China has always backed Pakistan on Kashmir.

China has earnestly requested Pakistan for controlling Uighur separatist in tribal areas of Pakistan. For securing Pakistani interests, China is not opening Wakhan passage to NATO because it will deprive Pakistan of revenue generation. China is uneasy about Indian influence in Afghanistan. In post-Drawdown China will grapple for own security and for having neutral policy towards all regional countries. As contemplated India's role in Afghanistan, she is closely allied to Northern Alliance and is covertly assisting anti-Taliban elements with financial and logistical aid by India's intelligence agency, RAW. In post-2014 scenario, New Delhi would be sided along Iran and Russia as all the three are sided with Northern alliance. However there are some problematic aspects as Moscow is opponent to NATO in Afghanistan, and India new trends in strategic aspects with Washington are enough to abstain cordial terms of India and Moscow. India and Iran

relations are also adversarial due to India three times voted against Iran in International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). But India-Afghan-Iran are launching trade and transit mainly to take Afghanistan away from Pakistan as an outlet to sea. India is mainly concerned about Pakistan's leverage in Afghanistan and the rising Taliban power due to reconciliation is nightmarish to her interests.

Afghanistan instability is detrimental to both Pakistan and India as Pakistan and India cooperation is indispensable for Afghanistan's economy as the TAPI is in doldrums due to prevailing Afghan insecurity. A good initiative in this regard could be joint project of road construction in Pashtun-dominated areas of Khost, the city of Gardez in Paktia and Nangarhar.

CARs and Russia are of main significance to Pakistan, especially in Afghanistan perspective. A Stable Afghanistan is guarantee for beneficial trade relations with CARs but the drawdown is also matter of concern to them because militancy can be instigated in these countries. The US decrease involvement in Central Asia will calm down Russia and China apprehension. CARs and Russian policy options about Afghanistan will revolve around Afghanistan security, political set up, the supply of aid to Afghanistan, opium production in Afghanistan, Afghan Tajik and Uzbek part in their countries, beyond 2014 military presence in Afghanistan and undoubtedly CARs stability. CARs would be averse to reconciliation with Taliban. They are doubtful of covert US dealing with Pakistan and Pashtun for safe exit rather than with Tajik and Uzbek.

### **Image of Pakistan as an important and responsible regional member**

Mere change of policies will not do. We need to remake ourselves, politically, economically and socially. Instead of always blaming "outsiders" for our problems, we should have the courage to admit that there is something fundamentally wrong with our governance patterns and the system based on feudalized elitist political culture. Pakistan peace is connected not fully with Afghanistan's stability rather it is based on own strong and balanced foreign policy. (Amin, 2013) Our systemic aberrations are the root cause of our governance failures. According to Victoria Schofield, Pakistan is internally unstable due to weak institution, where civilian incapability has always paved the road for military intervention. The military is overwhelmingly present in administration, economy and civil society. This leverage of military has always been justified by geographical insecurity mainly due to arch rival, India. The reason being mentioned there is weak economy, mainly tax exemption directly leading to fiscal deficit, corruption menace is impeding foreign investment and in return lower growth in both public and private sectors. Moreover, ethnic strife is enhanced specially in Baluchistan, Karachi and Hyderabad which have deteriorated law and order situation. To the great dismay, in Pakistan the religion is taken in different perspective in order to fulfill the motives of different actors. Blasphemy provision of constitution is troubling for minority in the mentioned period with occurrences of so many cases in this regard. To cap it all, Pakistan has always remained paranoid to India. By contemplating these grounds elections alone will not make any difference. The rotten status-quo system itself must change. Reason, not self-serving emotion should be our yardstick. We must fix the fundamentals of our state and governance. We need to regain our lost sovereign independence. (Ahmad, 2013)

Not only FATA, Baluchistan is also home of violent activities, bomb blasts, land mafia, extortion, random killing and acts of sabotage at key installation. These radical elements are striving to target government places and to challenge state writ by all means. Pakistan ruling class in the garb of nationalism has always muddled the true nature of federalism on the basis that it will ignite separatism. Provincial autonomy has remained the ongoing problem because the delegated powers have not rightfully transferred. In Baluchistan out of 250 rival Sardars only Bugti, Mengal and Marrisardars are opponent to the government.<sup>1</sup> The matter of fact is that Baluchistan main resistance revolves around ethnic issue, economic deprivation and political marginalization. The Baluchi are least represented in military and bureaucracy. No doubt that Baluchistan is poorest province of Pakistan but it has the enormous wealth of natural resources. These natural resources stretched from natural gas, vast ores and petroleum deposits but the latter two are unexploited due to various reservation by Baluch's sardars. Their main grievance is that all the benefits of these explorations go to federal revenue with minimal share for Baluchistan provincial government. Keeping this in consideration the 57 KM of road construction for exploration of oil was blocked by Baluch Peoples Liberation Front (BPLF), now only the army can resume its control. (Harrison, 1981: 167)

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<sup>1</sup> Among myriad Baluch's Tribes, Bugti, Marri and Mengal are largest Tribes and are in Opposition of government.



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In Baluchistan Gwadar Port, Mirani Dam and Saindak Copper Project and mega infrastructural projects can boost Pakistan economy. Mirani Dam could bring 33,000 acres land to be fecund in Turbat area, Coastal Highway will channelize transportation leading to tourism, more than that Gwadar as port would an outlet for Afghanistan, China and Central Asia. (The Dawn, 2004)

While the US engagement in Afghanistan is with end game so in this scenario our preference should be Regional/Neighboring countries. We should maintain good relations with US but should finish our dependence on any super power. (Shah, 2013) For the U.S., Pakistan's cooperation is needed to control movement of insurgents across the Pak-Afghan border which is both ways. (Rizvi, 2013)

Pakistan's institutions should behave responsibly in order to escape from infringements on sovereignty which have been occurred in recent past. Operation Neptune Spear of May 2 is ample manifestation of it. It resulted due to complicity, overbearing of military and intelligence and dereliction of duty. The thing of foremost importance in this regard is to curb militancy and extremism which have trembled national security. In this regard Anti-Terrorist Act, Qanoon-e-Shahadat Order (law of evidence) related provision should be revisited in order to succumbed the escalating militancy. The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) should be made a reality. The infancy of this authority depict an hearted effort towards terrorism. Criminal Justice System (CJS) should be strengthened for channeling impartial and random trials and to secure law and order. As currently politicization of police system has affected the overall structure and functioning of this institution with respect to appointment, transfer, posting and disciplinary matters. There is need to review it by ensuring impartial, capable and dutiful staff for national stability.

### Conclusion

The US interests in Afghanistan have not been served fully in South Asia and there is no any apparent victory hence the US will altogether withdraw. Although Taliban momentum has been lowered but yet they are not complying with the terms and conditions of the US for dialogues. Hence the US military engagement is stretched beyond timeline 2014.

The resolution to Afghanistan's conflict is possible only if the US is interested in stability of Afghanistan. The US should persue following objectives as to obstruct foreign militants, progress towards pluralism, guaranteeing human rights and protection of minorities. Pakistan should strive for bringing consensus around these points.

Pakistan's foreign policy should be based on that scenario on following basis; to facilitate the US exit, neutral stand in Afghanistan, to escalate diplomatic relations with regional countries like India, Iran, China and Russia.

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