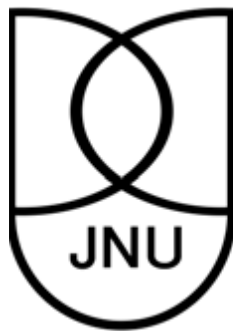


Impact of NATO Presence in Afghanistan: A Study of India's Response to 'Af-Pak' Policy

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY



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I declare that the thesis entitled "Impact of NATO presence in Afghanistan: A study of India's Response to 'Af-Pak' Policy" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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Kamlesh Atwal

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1- Introduction

The Afghan conflict has reached its thirty-sixth year. This three-decade-old conflict has not only changed regional politics but has also significantly impacted global politics. After 11 September 2001, the United States of America led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) launched a war on Afghanistan to wipe out the Al-Qaeda terrorist network and to overthrow the Taliban government that protected it. The US's 'Global War on Terror' is now reaching drawdown nearer. But this proposed drawdown falls short of expectations as the US failed to transform this 'good war' (Afghanistan) into a success because of greater importance to the Iraq war in 2003. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) made only limited progress and by the spring of 2003 there was a revival of Taliban activity. However, the US and NATO forced Taliban and Al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan pushing them into Pakistan. Since then the violent insurgency has been gaining ground on both sides of the border.

Under these circumstances, when US President Barack Obama assumed office, his administration reviewed US's Afghan policy. On 27 March 2009, Obama announced the outline of a new Af-Pak Strategy for Afghanistan, which restricted the focus to defeating Al-Qaeda (not Taliban), but emphasized looking beyond fighting terror in Afghanistan and linked Afghanistan and Pakistan together (White House Blog 2009). There were some strategic obstacles for campaign's success. The foremost has been the degree of corruption in the Afghan government, which undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of this infant democracy. The second is falling public and political support for the war and austerity measure in NATO states, which undermines ISAF credibility in the political endgame to the war. The third and the most riling one is the sanctuary in Pakistan from where the main insurgent groups- Quetta Shura Taliban, the Haqqani Network and Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) are able to direct and regenerate forces (Chaudhuri and Farrell:2011). This inherently limits the effectiveness of the ISAF military campaign in Afghanistan. Under all these circumstances, the international conferences in London (January 2010) and Kabul (July 2010) emphasized transition as a key strategic goal. The communiqué following the Kabul conference stressed that transition 'should' be completed by 2014 (Chaudhuri and Farrell: 2011).

The US has also signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Afghan government in Kabul to assist in expanding the Afghan national security forces ANSF to 350,000 to take responsibility for Afghan security. In the given circumstances since violence on the ground has increased, it is difficult to believe that the weak Kabul government will be able to provide security or hold Taliban at bay. Although, time and again NATO leaders have sent out a clear message of financial and political support for Afghanistan 2014 onwards (BBC News 2012). With support for the war declining in NATO capitals, the political mood has turned against it. This is the all-important context of the 2014 deadline.

Within these debates, India has been of the most vocal supporters of continued NATO engagement and has given Afghanistan more than \$2 billion since the US-led invasion in 2001 overthrew the Taliban regime, which sheltered anti-Indian militants. The Government of India wishes to do more to help develop Afghan capacity, especially concerning development cooperation (Reddy 2011). New Delhi seeks a policy framework in Af-Pak that accords with its regional strategic interests and reflects a reassessment of its geopolitical limitations in a realistic way. Politically, India is preparing to engage in any formulation of government in Afghanistan (Bhadrakumar 2011a). Under this approach, it seems India would accept some of Pakistan's legitimate interest in Afghanistan. During his visit to Kabul in May 2011, the then Prime Minister Singh for the first time expressed his support for Karzai's peace plan for reconciliation with the Taliban (Bhadrakumar 2011b). India has legitimate interests in Afghanistan, and it wants that Pakistan should not be able to exercise a veto over it. Moreover, India seeks to limit Pakistan's influence over any emergent regime in Afghanistan and to ensure that no regime emerges in Afghanistan that is fundamentally hostile toward India. It is, therefore, a central concern of India to foster good relations with the Pashtun majority in Afghanistan, especially now as that majority holds, at least, nominal power in Kabul (Howenstein and Ganguly 2009:132). The rise of Islamist militancy on both sides of the Durand Line also relates strongly to the rise in militant capabilities in Kashmir and across the Line of Control. India is keen to prevent the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from being able to use the Af-Pak region as sanctuaries and training camps for terrorists operating against India and Central Asia. India's future strategy is based on the assumption that Pakistan should dismantle its terrorist infrastructure and opt for settlement of differences through dialogue (Bhadrakumar 2011c). From an

Indian security perspective, 'strategic depth' and 'strategic encirclement' is scenario created to justify Pakistan's presence in Afghanistan. Pakistani military strategists argued that a puppet Afghan state would give Pakistan 'strategic depth' against its primary enemy India¹. Pakistan's truncated geography, the lack of space, depth and a hinterland denied its armed forces the ability to fight a prolonged war with India (Rashid 2001:186). This is the real strategic concern, since the presence of the Pakistani state as an actor in Afghanistan's politics, and a pro-Pakistan government, directly affects India's security, economic and energy interests in the region. The other serious concern is the use of Afghan soil as camping and training grounds for militants, which the Pakistani Army could exploit asymmetrically against India while keeping them out of its reach. In post-2014, India would like the pro-India administration in Kabul to disagree with Pakistan's much needed 'strategic depth' against India. Kashmir is a crucial factor in Indian's Af-Pak policy because this region has the potential to jeopardise the stability in Kashmir through militancy as it did in the past. Historically, the Jihadist movement in the Af-Pak region was focused entirely on supporting the regional strategy of the Pakistani military establishment; to liberate Kashmir from India and install a Pashtun government in Afghanistan (Jacob 2009). The Pakistani support to Taliban formed a part of a strategy to use them in Kashmir, as said by the Mullah Omar in 1998 "we support the jihad in Kashmir", (Rashid 2001:186). The Kashmiri dissidents, Pakistan Army and the Hurriats and other political outfits in Kashmir had managed to 'internationalise' their cause and garnered significant levels of sympathy for it, and the Indian state was being pushed into a corner (Jacob 2009). The occurrence of 9/11 event changed the entire game in favour of India's Kashmir position. Since then, Kashmir conflict has lost its priority status in the eyes of the international community. Although Obama's initial inclination to include India or more specifically Kashmir, in Richard Holbrooke's mandate has quickly discarded, thanks to New Delhi's timely and

¹ There are arguments that in Pakistan's case, notion of Afghanistan as a 'strategic depth' is not the valid one, because Afghanistan is not fulfils the Pakistan's any requirements for the polity-military terms. As V. R. Raghavan wrote in *The Hindu* (November 07, 2001) that in military terms, 'strategic depth has some meaning if it refers to a region that provides safety and resources to an army or a country. But here is enormous hostility for Pakistan from Afghanistan, in the most part of their history. More or less it is Islamabad's illusion that it could settle a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul or resolve the Afghan conflict in its favour. In the similar way international community has doubt the concept of 'strategic depth; as former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton says that Islamabad's policy of strategic depth has been proven wrong and no longer valid (Dawn, June 23rd, 2014).

effective intervention (Gharekhan 2010). Now it seems that the ‘phase of Indo-Pak conflict’ in Jammu and Kashmir is in decline, at least for the time being (Jacob 2012).

India’s Af-Pak policy has also been determined by the world view of India’s strategic elites, who have been much influenced by the new world order led by economic affairs (Cohen 2001:43). For them, the Af-Pak region has the huge potential of trade, business and transit hub in near future. India’s strategic interests in the region are directly linked to its economic growth and energy needs of the future. Consequently, a stable Afghanistan is vital not only for access to the energy-rich Central Asian states but the significant economic and trade potential of the region as well (Aneja 2011). But challenge before the South Block and the security establishment in the months and years ahead shall be to embark upon a complex diplomatic exercise, where engagement with the US on a limited but cogent agenda, primarily concerning energy security and international terrorism, does not infringe upon New Delhi’s freedom to manoeuvre and bond significantly and independently with the other major regional stakeholders, including Iran, Russia, China and the Central Asian Republics (Aneja 2011). Moreover, the wide convergence of Indian interests in Af-Pak with those of other key regional actors provides an occasion for India to apprehend its region as an opportunity, rather than constraint. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) offers a promising avenue by which India can offset some of its anxiety surrounding the possibility of a security vacuum, and can work to achieve several of the objectives that remained elusive throughout its engagement with US-NATO and Afghanistan (Norfolk 2012). By entering into an association led by China, India can address a wider and more acute strategic priority like pressurizing Pakistan into cooperating in Afghanistan. Increased cooperation with the SCO will also improve India’s access to Central Asian energy reserves and markets. Another possibility is the revival of the old silk route that has become a major component of the Obama administration’s strategy to secure Afghanistan’s future beyond 2014 (Mohan 2011).

1.1.1- Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

This study is an attempt to define the major policy vectors that India has persuaded in Afghanistan with the aim of not only the redefine the South Asia regional order but also

engaged extraneous factor affected the South Asian regional security complex. The NATO presence in Afghanistan has helped India end its decade-long isolation in Afghanistan. As a rising power, India has also sought to make its presence felt by adopting a more pro-active role in its extended neighbourhood and forging economic, military and institutional linkages. Initially, Obama Administration's 'Af-Pak' term did not go down well in New Delhi because of the withdrawal plan and a reconciliation call with 'good Taliban'. But in the later stage, India seems more realistic and understands the limitation of NATO and regional implications. In 2014, when it was confirmed that the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will no longer remain in a combat role and will be handing over security responsibilities to the ANSF, this made the Indian state establishment a little worried. But at the same time, it was clear that at least the American and British forces would not withdraw from Afghanistan as announced because of regional geopolitical and strategic interests. On the other hand, the different non-state actors including Taliban have taken advantage of the vacuum created by NATO combat withdrawal from the ground. The new Afghan unity government has been facing resistance from different quarters since the very first day in its office. The challenge for Kabul authority comes internally from those people who are marginalised from power or externally from actors like Pakistan. Pakistan's situation is determined by many factors, including the clash of its state institutions, financial crisis, religious radicalization, and the political tussle between the army and the political establishment. The emerging situation in the Af-Pak region will directly impact India's security and long-term aspiration to play an important role in the international arena. India's Af-Pak policy would be the litmus test for its aspiration as a great power and strategic culture.

This work analyses the role of NATO in reterritorialization of conflict. Further the study examines various options for India in the possible emerging scenario in the Af-Pak region. This research also looks into the functional or instrumental features of India's Af-Pak policy from diplomacy to regional lobbying. In this process, the study of Pakistan and Afghanistan's domestic politics, their relations with each other and the emerging situation in the region and beyond would be analysed. This research seeks to explore the prospect of regional security complex as a path towards a South Asian response to the Afghan conflict. This study focuses on the post-9/11 security developments in the region.

1.1.2- Research Questions

How did India respond to the NATO war efforts in Afghanistan?

How does India's regional security concern condition its response toward NATO presence in Afghanistan?

How have India's geopolitical interests matured during the period of NATO intervention in Afghanistan?

What was India's reaction to Obama's Af-Pak policy and to which extent it addressed India's long-term concern in this region?

How does India's state identity get redefined in evolving regional security scenario around Af-Pak region?

How has India met the challenge of Pakistan's linking of Kashmir issue with the Afghanistan situation that has implications for its post-2014 Afghanistan policy?

1.1.3- Hypotheses

1. India has vital geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in Af-Pak region and this remains facilitated under NATO.

2- NATO-India partnership has impacted wider South Asian regional order, amid India's rising profile in Afghanistan.

1.2- Dehyphenating the Af-Pak

The Obama administration's neologism term Af-Pak, suggests that America now views Afghanistan and Pakistan as effectively interconnected. It is the acceptance of the history of this part of the world by the Western power which it usually neglected earlier. Under this new understanding of the region, Afghanistan and Pakistan are to be treated as a single theatre of war and diplomacy. "We often call the problem AfPak, as in

Afghanistan-Pakistan. This is not just an effort to save eight syllables. It is an attempt to indicate and imprint in our DNA the fact that there is one theatre of war, straddling an ill-defined border.” (Safire 2009). This term has been popularized by late Richard Holbrooke, the Obama administration’s special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Geography may not be destiny, but it has set the course of Afghan history for millennia as the ‘gateway for invaders’ spilling out of Iran or Central Asia and into India: Alexander the Great, Mahmud of Ghazni, Chinggis Khan, Tamerlane, and Babur, to reference some of the most notable illustrations (Barfield 2010:01). During this period, Afghanistan was part of many empires ruled by outsiders and the centre of a couple of its own (Barfield 2010:01). “Afghanistan, which was invaded and ruled by a series of foreign dynasties for more than a thousand years, became famous as the “graveyard of empires” in the nineteenth and twentieth century after forcing the withdrawal of both the British and Russians in a series of wars.”(Barfield 2010:03). After a decade of the NATO-led Afghan war, when it seems the US and its NATO allies are in a face-saving arrangement this new concept of Af-Pak has been introduced which in fact is not actually new. If someone looks at the recent history of the last six to seven decades of this region, it is clear that the problems of the region are interconnected. Notably, Afghanistan-Pakistan and even India have somehow been related to each other directly or indirectly. For example, the NATO failure in defeating the Taliban is simply because the Taliban crossed the Durand Line and took shelter in the lawless tribal area of the Pakistani side. Similarly, the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan was a phenomenon that cannot happen without the institutional and social support by the Pakistani state and non-state actors. The real and assuming Indian fear also has been behind the Pakistani ‘design of Afghan conflict’ which reflected in the notion of ‘strategic depth’ in-terms rise of Mujahedeen and Taliban. Dehyphenating the term Af-Pak is an attempt to look these areas in a holistic manner that goes beyond the simple state-centric approach to a regional outlook.

There is an ancient Hindu mythological concept regarding the oneness (dehyphenating) of the Af-Pak- India. According to it, this entire region was controlled by the kingdom of Kurukshetra. For example the great Hindu “epic Mahabharata in describing that great pre-historic Mahabharata war was not only unquestioningly assumes the oneness of the

vast sub-continent, but also looks upon the lands of Bactria and China, beyond its greater mountain ranges, as outlying frontier regions, inseparable, inalienable and natural parts of the Indian sub-continent” (Ahsan 2005:08). The concept of the ‘unity and indivisibility’ of the vast, limitless sub-continent is thus ancient and rooted in history which has been called a myth by the notable Pakistani scholar and politician Aitzaz Ahsan (2005) in his famous script ‘The Indus Saga’. Ahsan gives his logic against the oneness of this region, which stretches from the Pamirs in the north to the Cape of Comorian in the south from the Gwadar in the west to the Assam in the east, and from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. Modern Af-Pak-India is also seen as single a physical, political and cultural unit by many historians, geographers and spiritual leaders including Shankaracharya and Vivekananda. Against this notion Ahsan (2005) argues that only three ‘Universal States’ the Mauryans, the Mughals, and the British welded these regions together under single empires for only five hundred years out of six thousand years. But this research emphasises these three empires, especially the British to understand the modern border, colonial legacy and statecraft, the Mughals and Mauryans to understand the culture and religion which later shapes the identity of the state of this region.

1.3- Understanding Af-Pak Region through Historical Prism

Af-Pak border or territory is not very clearly defined even today, as there are controversial issues regarding the empire driven boundary. The simple reason behind this is that this area has cultural linkages which went millennia ago when human settlement and civilization began to flourish in this part of the world. Not only Afghanistan and Pakistan, but India, Central Asian states, Iran and China have an important historical role, to understand the nuance of culture, tribes, languages and ethnicity of this area. The history of this part only recalls the geopolitical importance of this region then and today. The following part of this chapter will rediscover the empires, who ruled this part of the world and the boundary of modern Afghanistan comes into existence. This Af-Pak area is not new; it is pre-historic. So this part of the world as a room for the cross-border interactions was relatively old. Historically, it would be more appropriate to call this region Af-Pak-Indo-Iran-Central Asia.

On the basis of history, geography, cultural influences and anthropology, Afghanistan may be divided into three sections. In the north, the plains of Afghan extended from Iran to Pamir and were largely influenced by Turkestan and always exposed to invasions from Central Asia. The west of Afghanistan, which politically and culturally influenced by the Iranian culture and empire centred on the city of Herat, including the mountainous central part of the country (Frye 1946:200). Kandahar, Ghazni, Jalalabad, and the frontier territory are strongly influenced by Indian manners and customs (Frye 1946:200). This part had created different empires, which ruled the South Asian continent and also ruled by some Indian empire vis-a- vis. The Kabul region is the meeting place of the three cultures (Frye 1946:200).

Af-Pak-India has a close interdependence of history and geography, therefore, it is worthwhile to understand the region as a whole before the emergence of the current nation-state. Today's Af-Pak was the frontier of the Indian peninsula and also the ancient highway of trade, human migration and foreign invaders throughout history. Anthropologically, it is impossible to set a limit on the number and variety of the people, who in these early centuries, either migrated, or were deported, from west to east through Persia to Northern Afghanistan, or who forced southwards into Baluchistan (Holdich 1910: 07). Till Alexander the great the Indus itself seems to have been the boundary which limited the efforts of migration and exploration. But it was soon crossed by the Turkish-Afghan nomads in the eleventh century. The simple logic to the fascination towards this part of the world for the Western and the Central Asian races can be understood by the accessibility of the best natural resources of wood, water, fertile land and climate, which were the determining factors in the direction of the great human processions. According to the great British geographer, Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich-

There was an easy high-road from Mesopotamia through Persia to Northern Afghanistan, or even to Seistan, and not a very difficult one to Makran; and so it comes about that migratory movement, either compulsory or voluntary, continued through centuries, ever extending their scope till checked by the deserts of the Indian frontier or the highlands of the Pamirs and Tibet (Holdich 1910:9).

Afghanistan has ever held the landward gates of India. We cannot understand India without a study of that wide hinterland (Afghan, Persian and Baluch) through which the great restless human tide has ever been on the move (Holdich 1910:22).

1.3.1- Af-Pak Region in Pre- History Period

It is very clear now that this part of the world has the origin of the oldest civilization. The archaeological finding of the Indus civilisation in the cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro in the 1920's and subsequent excavations in India and Pakistan, revealing an extensive urban culture in the northern and western parts of the Indian subcontinent which includes today's Af-Pak-India (Thapar 1996:11). Harappan objects and sites were located in a widespread area from Badakshan in Afghanistan to northern Maharashtra and from the Ganga-Yamuna Doab to Baluchistan (Thapar 1996:17). Excavations in Baluchistan indicate that some settlements there go back to the seventh millennium and continue to the first millennium (Thapar 1996:12). Once again, there is a variety of cultures that emerge at this time, some with no ostensible links with other regions, some with continuities with the Harappan and some with evidence of the arrival of innovations from elsewhere. Settlements in Baluchistan suggest links with Central Asia and Iran in the second millennium B.C., interestingly the overlap between the late Harappan and a subsequent independent culture that of the Painted Grey Ware-occurs in Punjab and Haryana (Thapar 1996:13). Archaeological evidence from the third millennium BC confirms wide-ranging, land contacts between north-western India, southern and eastern Iran and the Oxus region, and maritime contacts with Oman and Mesopotamia (Thapar 1996:32).

1.3.2- Alexander the Great's Invasion in Af-Pak-India

The Indian campaign of Alexander the great progressed in early May of 327 B.C. from the passage of Hindu Kush Mountain over the Khawak and Kaoshan (Smith 1924:119). In the June of this year, Alexander passed through probably Jalalabad and rest of his army through the Valley of Kabul River. Two years before his Indian campaign he had secured upon present Afghanistan and then set out for his Indian movement (Stein 1927:423). According to archaeologists and historians, there is good reason to believe that Alexander's power extended present district of Hazara, east of the Indus to Peshawar (Stein 1927:438). It assumes that the material civilization and culture

predominant in that region in Alexander's time was the semi-barbarous Pathan tribes holding the barren hills from the Mohmand country down to Waziristan (Stein 1927:424). Alexander himself had campaigned in the Swat valley and moved across the hill range into the Peshawar valley. He is said to have marched to the Indus and received the submission of the city of Peukelaotis, where he placed a Macedonian garrison. This city has long ago been identified with Pushkalavati, the ancient capital of Gandhara, close to the present Charsadda on the Swat River and northeast of Peshawar (Stein 1927:437).

Alexander's forces made a bridge over the Indus, although there have been different opinion concerning the location of that bridge (Smith 1924:63). After that he captured the then state of Taxila modern Rawalpindi district. The ready submission of the ruler of Taxila explained by the fact that they described Alexander's help against their enemies in the neighbouring powerful state who had governed by the king whom the Greek called Poros, roughly coincident with the modern districts of Jihlam, Gujarat (Smith 1924:64). According to Fosco Maraini "Taxila was one of the great metropolises of Asia; a vast market where Roman glass could traded for Chinese silk, the furs of the barbarous northern Hyperborean for jewels from the kingdom of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). It was also, of course, a famous centre of university studies, known for both it's philosophical and its medical schools" (Schofield 2003:21). After Taxila, Alexander with his army advanced eastwards, crossing the river Jhelum to defeat King Porus. With the help of Taxila King Alexander's army had reached in Indian soil in March 326 B.C., which no European invaded had ever before. He then crossed the Chenab and Ravi, but his troops would go no further (Schofield 2003:21). There are different views regarding his retreat from India. Some scholars called it a mutiny of its soldiers who recruited from Bactria or Persia. Some claimed that Alexander's personnel were scared of the unknown dangers ahead and were not prepared either morally or physically to venture across the Ganges, which they believed to be 'some four miles wide' and deepest of all the Indian rivers (Schofield 2003:21). Some blame the famine like situation and lack of food supply. Therefore, a large part of Alexander's army returned by sea via the Indus in a fleet of several hundred ships. But he crossed through today's Karachi. It was a desperate march, shrinking his army still further in spite of the arrival of reinforcements. He died in Babylon possibly of poison soon afterwards in 323 B.C. (Schofield 2003:22). But Alexander's premature death destroyed the fruit of his conquest of Indian land.

Within three years of his departure, his officers had been destroyed the fruits of his well-planned and successful enterprise, and almost all shadow of his rule had disappeared (Smith 1924:117). India remained unchanged. The wounded of the battle had quickly healed. But the cultural effect can still be seen on art, architecture and anthropology in this region. Even today one can see in the valleys of northern Pakistan's mountain range the sign of the descendants of Alexander the Great and his invading armies (Walsh 2011). These can be seen in the tiny Kalash minority who claim, from oral history, that they are the direct descendants of Alexander's generals. Their claims can be justified by observing similarities between Kalash and Greek culture; including common deities, architectural details, music and fair skin².

As far as Alexander's withdrawal is concerned, it set the ground for another player to make their presence felt in this region. Alexander's achievement in crossing the Hindu Kush lay down an example for future invaders. Some scholars argue that it was the post-Alexander Af-Pak region where people believed that the existence of small states was not in the wider interests of the country. This might be the reason that some other Great Asian empire emerged in this region (Narain 1965:163). The second indirect result was the rise of the Yavana power in Bactria and its ultimate expansion and rule over modern Afghanistan and Western Pakistan for about one hundred and fifty years (Narain 1965:164).

1.3.3- The Mauryan Empire and Buddhist Link of Region

Afterwards Alexander's death, there was anarchy among those garrisons of Greeks left behind in the Af-Pak region. The 'War of the Successors' gave the opportunity for the Mauryas under Chandragupta from modern Bihar to conquer the north. Between the 325 and 320 B.C., perhaps in 322 B.C. the throne of Magadha accession by the

²The Kalash culture has survived on valleys of northern Pakistan's. Historians argue over the legitimacy of the Kalash's claim, from oral history, that they are the direct descendants of Alexander's generals. We can find many similarities between Kalash and Greek culture including common deities, architectural music and fair skin. For more see on BBC News-"In pictures: Kalash spring festival" http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/05/south_asia_kalash_spring_festival/html/2.stm

Chandragupta, who assumed the command of the native revolt against the foreigner and destroyed the Macedonia garrison, which established by Alexander (Smith 1924:45-46). Before the rise of the Mauryan Empire, the kingdom of the Nandas stretched across almost the entire Ganges plain and had its centre in the Magadha, which had been among the earliest kingdoms dating to the sixth century B.C. (Thapar 2006:290). According to Romila Thapar (2006), this kingdom was also associated with considerable wealth accumulation from the systematic collection of revenue. This helps them to keep an army so large that it is thought to discourage the soldiers of Alexander the Great from continuing the Greek campaign eastwards. The young Chandragupta soon overthrew the Nanda kingdom on the advice of his Guru Kautilya. In this way, Magadha became the hub of the Mauryan Empire roughly between 321 to 185 B.C. (Thapar 2006:290-91). Mauryan Empire was a neighbouring successor to the Achaemenid Persian Empire to the west of it. Territories on the eastern frontier of the Persian Empire in the Indus plain were the western frontier lands of the Mauryan. The chronological hyphen between the two empires was Alexander (Thapar 2006:291). On the otherhand, Alexander' successor and Chandragupta's counterpart Seleucus of Greeks were unable to hold on to Af-Pak. After two decades of Alexander's death, his empire had been pushed back well into Afghanistan, give up to Chandragupta at the cost of 500 elephants (Schofield 2003:22). The rise of Mauryan Empire has seen by the Western scholars as the first time in the history of the region an invasion from the east instead from the west.

The first king of Mauryan Empire, Chandragupta was the first sovereign Indian emperor, who extended his kingdom from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea by controlling almost entire sub-continent and in addition to eastern Afghanistan. While Chandragupta was engaged in the consolidation of his empire his rival the general of Alexander, Seleukos was laying the foundation of his power in Western and Central Asia, and preparing to attempt the recovery of Alexander's Indian conquest (Smith 1924:124). In the following motivation, Seleukos crossed the river Indus in 305 B.C., but the Chandragupta was too strong that Seleukos compel to the humiliating treaty. Under this treaty, he was compelled to abandon all through of conquest, but he was to surrender a large part of Ariana to the west of the Indus and Kabul, Herat, Kandahar. After this treaty, the range of the Hindu Kush Mountains in this way becomes the frontier between Chandragupta's provinces of the Heart and Kabul on the south and

Seleukidan provinces of Bactria on the north (Smith 1924:126). According to Vincent A. Smith (1924), “The first Indian emperor, more than two thousand years ago, thus entered into possession of that 'scientific frontier' sighed for in vain by his English successors, and never held in its entirety, even by the Mughal monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” Although after the war and treaty with Seleucus there was a matrimonial alliance between these two states. Seleucus conveyed an ambassador, Megasthenes, to the Mauryan capital at Pataliputra (modern Patna), where he wrote his Indian observations on the famous book *Indica* (Thapar 2006:292-293).

His son Bindusara succeeded Chandragupta, and then Bindusara's son Ashoka who was the most remarkable of the Mauryan kings. The territories of the Mauryan Empire were at their most extensive during Ashoka's reign. These come to our knowledge by tracking the location of his degrees in different parts of the sub-continent and by the languages and scripts in which they had written (Thapar 2006:293). The inscriptions of Ashoka's preaching has been found in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, Kandahar and a cluster in south-central India. On the basis of these inscriptions and edicts, one can easily draw the boundaries of Ashoka's empire on the map. Modern Af-Pak and almost entire India was the part of Ashoka's empire. As a convert to Buddhism, he did much to spread the religion through his personal and professional capacity. Ashoka sponsored the spreading of Buddhist ideals into Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, West Asia and Mediterranean Europe.

Assuming the vastness of the Mauryan Empire, the question arises as to how at that time the Mauryan rulers managed the administrative affairs of this empire. Certainly, it was a skillful and tough job to unite so vast an empire. As far as the administrative issue of Mauryan Empire is concerned, Thapar divided it into three categories, first, there is the single metropolitan state, second the core areas and third the peripheral areas. The second of the three administrative categories which known as 'core' is relevant to this study because it includes modern Af-Pak. They were not colonies but were often the centres of provincial administration. These lay beyond the Ganges plain and were located in parts of the north-west, western India, the southern part of the peninsula and the east. They indicated by clusters of Ashokan edicts engraved on rock surfaces. The area is passing from the north-west to eastern Afghanistan, for example had a

population of Prakrit, Greek and Aramaic speakers and the edicts written in all these languages.

The core areas were economically active but differentiated. Their economic potential was exploited and restructured to support the empire. In the north-west the nodal points in the overland exchange between northern India and west and central Asia were the cosmopolitan centres where the edicts located. In Afghanistan, the major centres were Kandahar and locations in the northeast of the country. Edicts inscribed at Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra seem literally to point towards the routes to Central Asia (Thapar 2006:297-299).

Today's cultural dilemma and nuance of the Af-Pak region cannot interpret without understanding multiculturalism of this part of the Mauryan time. During this time, the Himalayas did not have a religious, political and economic boundary. Buddhism was the principal religion that was practiced in this part of the world, and the Buddhist monasteries have welcomed the travellers who passed through here (Gordon 2008:14). India was the main heartland of Buddhism from where with the help of various kings it had reached in another part of the world. Buddhism was one of the major religions in Afghanistan during the pre-Islamic era. The religion was widespread south of the Hindu Kush Mountains. Buddhism first arrived in Afghanistan in 305 B.C., when the Seleucid Empire made an alliance with the Indian Maurya Empire. Balkh was the famous Buddhist centre at a time and was in direct connection with the Buddhist cities of Eastern Turkistan. And Buddhism itself, when it left India, went northward and flourished exceedingly in those same cities of the sandy plain where the people talked and wrote a language of India for centuries after the birth of the Christ (Holdich 1910:502-503). This fact has proved by the recent exploration in Afghanistan like Mes Aynak, a magnificent Buddhist city, which is the most important archaeological discovery in a generation. As more information slowly emerged from the ground, it became clear that the site was a major Buddhist settlement, engaged from the first century B.C. and to the 10th century A.D., at a time when South Asian culture in the form of the Buddhist religion and Sanskrit literature were spreading up the Silk Route into China. Chinese scholars and pilgrims were heading southwards to the Buddhist holy places in the Gangetic plain: Sarnath and Bodh Gaya, and the Buddhist university and library of Nalanda, the greatest centre of learning east of Alexandria. Mes Aynak was clearly an important stopping-off point for monks heading in either direction (Dalrymple 2013a). During this period, Afghanistan was the epicentre of classical

globalisation: centre on the trade route from Rome to China, traders came to Afghanistan from all over the world.

One of the centres of this process was the region of Gandhara, whose centre lay around Peshawar in the North-West Frontier province of Pakistan. This Buddhist civilisation was later cross-fertilised by new influences brought by the Kushan who succeeded the Bactrian Greeks as rulers of Afghanistan while adopting much of their culture (Dalrymple 2013a). Kushan was Buddhist in religion. They left behind a legacy of finely built and richly designed Buddhist monasteries such as Mes Aynak in the area between Kabul and Peshawar. After Ashoka, the unity of the Mauryan Empire did not survive. The North West frontier of India was continuously attacked by the newly independent states (Parthia, Bactria) which emerged from the revolt against the mighty Macedonian empire. For nearly two centuries after the beginning of the nomad and Parthian invasion, the northern portion of Indian borderland, comprising the valley of Kabul, the Swat valley, some neighbouring districts of Peshawar and Punjab remained under the local Greek princes (Smith 1924:250).

1.3.4- Formation of Kushan Empire and Af-Pak

After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, Af-pak region was volatile because of consistence attacked from Central Asian nomads. These attacks also come through Scythians (Shakas), another tribe of Caucasian nomads, led to the decline of the Indo-Greek kingdom (Ahsan 2005:86-87). Their incursion into modern Af-Pak was the result of series of developments which happened in Central Asia. It was Huns, who pushed Shakas down the Oxus to the Aral Sea, and then south-eastwards into the Kabul valley and on the plains of Indus. Through this constant movement and hard-bitten conditions, these tribes necessarily adopted militant aggression. The Yueh-Chi was one such tribe, and the Kushan was one of the branches of it (Ahsan 2005:87)

After more than two centuries of the fall of the Mauryan Empire the Kushan dynasty, the leading clan of the Yueh-Chi (Chinese origin), unified southern Central Asia with the Af-Pak and Northern India and hold it for more than two centuries (Chattopadhyay 1975: xx). They appear to have imposed a uniform state apparatus over this whole

expanse of territory (Grenet 2012:01). It appears that the Kushan state had created by the application of force that helps to uphold the authority on a vast swath of land from the Balkh to Bengal. At least, for a century the Kushan state comprised parts of Central Asia, modern Afghanistan and almost the whole of Northern India. The most significant feature of the Kushan state is its multi-coloured nationalities (Chattopadhyay 1975: xxii). The state inhabited by the different creeds and races as the Greeks, Sakas, Pahlavas and indigenous people Hindu and Buddhist. The controlled territory owned by the Kushan Empire was some important historical place like Bactria, Parthia, Kabul, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Balkh, Helmand, Khost, Ferghana Valley, Jalalabad, Peshawar, Taxila, Kashmir, Mathura, Allahabad, Kauasmbi, Sarnath, Pataliputra and Sanchi (Chattopadhyay 1975: xxii). According to Ahsan, the Kushan state comprised the Indus and the Oxus together in one empire, the parameters of whose geographical expanse were natural ones. Kushan Empire was likely one of the world's largest ancient empire, with its summer capital in Afghanistan and winter Parashapara, near Peshawar (Ahsan 2005:88).

There is considerable confusion regarding the precise date of Kushan Empire. British geographer and archaeologist of British India have argument and counter argument over the period of Kushan Empire (Kennedy 1912; Fleet 1913; Marshall 1914). According to J. Kennedy (1912), there was a Kushan kingdom in India before A.D. 50 and, as a matter of fact, in the first century. And in connection with the silk-trade that existed in that same century between China and Syria via Khotan, North-West India, Kabul, and the head of the Persia. There is an understanding between some scholars like Luders and J. F Fleet who argue that there were two separate kings, Kanishka-I and Kanishka-II that led to the confusion regarding their time (Fleet 1913:98). Most of the knowledge about the Kushan dynasty came through the archaeological findings in the region which were interpreted by geographers and historians. The archaeological findings of near present-day Peshawar shows that "Chinese pilgrims travelled to India in the fifth to eighth centuries CE to visit Buddhist holy sites and to search for original manuscripts. While on their way, near present-day Peshawar, they saw a huge *stūpa* (height more than 200 meters), which was said to have erected by the Kushan Emperor Kanishka the Great" (Loeschner2012:01).

The archaeological and literary records of the Kushan age, overwhelmingly religious in character and they prove that Kushan ruler had tolerated and respect shows for all religious faith (Chattopadhyay 1975:155). Despite the content on *Shiva* as a part of its monument, the influence of Greek and Iranian had revealed in different buried material. It is clear that the state had promoted the Buddhist religion particularly the great Kushan king Kanishka, who in the later stage converted himself into Buddhism (Chattopadhyay 1975:160; Ahsan 2005:88). Kanishka also encouraged the Buddhist missionary activities abroad and under his patronage the monks from Balk and Samarkand travel the Silk Route to China (Chattopadhyay 1975:166). According to Kennedy (1912)-

Buddhist Kanishka convoked the fourth great Buddhist Council, the Council held in Kashmir, which gave uniformity and official approval to the doctrines of Northern Buddhism and led to its adoption by the Yue-che, who in their turn became enthusiastic propagators of the faith, diffusing its light among the nomads of Central Asia and introducing it to the know ledge of the cultured Chinese (Kennedy 1912).

There is wider and long-term political, cultural and economic implication of the Kushan Empire in this region which can see even today. The Kushans, due to their vast empire had controlled a strategic portion of the Silk Road. From the mid-first century to the mid-third century A.D., when the Kushans controlled the mainstream of trade, Buddhism spread to China and other Asian countries via the Silk Road (Liu 2010:42). Handling the international trade that converged on their domain required them to learn how to read and write many different languages and scripts and to accommodate many different religious practices (Liu 2010:42-43).

There is also some political strategy to be learnt by today's government of this region (Af-Pak) from the Kushan Empire. Ruling a sedentary society with enormous cultural diversity was a challenge the Kushans met very well. If Kushan handled all this diversity in ancient times so well, then today's Af-Pak policy makers can draw considerably from their experiences. The question arises as to how did the Kushans modified themselves from nomadic conquerors into the successful rulers of a so diverse society (Liu 2010:43). Unfortunately, there are not much-written records about this. But the fragmentary sources reveal that the Kushan kings relied on existing local institutions, such as caste hierarchies, traders' unions, and religious establishments, to manage daily affairs. They also adopted parts of the political and cultural legacies of

previous rulers of the areas they now dominated, including the Persians, Greeks, Parthians, and Sakas (Liu 2010:43). The Kushans conveyed with them the beliefs and social structures copied from centuries of living on the plain, and they mixed many of those customs in with the sedentary life of Hellenistic Bactria. After the Kushan army crossed the Hindu Kush Mountains, the regime also included Indian principles and practices, including those of the Brahmanical Hindus, Jains, and most important by far Buddhists (Liu 2010:43). The booming commerce in the Kushan held areas of the north-western India attracted many believers from the eastern Gangetic plain, as well as some other parts of India. The Kushans synthesized diverse practices into a unique state that became the economic as well as the cultural heart of South and Central Asia for at least two hundred years (Liu 2010:45).

1.3.5- Delhi Sultanates and Islamization of Region

Nothing in the history of the world is more surprising than the rapid spread of Arab conquests in Africa, Western Europe and Asia at the close of the seventh century. Although their influence in politics, language and culture had also soon vanished. But the Arabs, as traders had remained an important part of the Indian surrounding. The renowned British geographer, Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich with the help of his ground mapping and exploration argues that “Between the beginning of the eighth century and that of the eleventh century the whole of the Indian north-west frontier and its broad hinterland, extending to the Tigris and the Oxus was much traversed and thoroughly well known to the Arab traders” (Holdich 1910:193). The withdrawal of the Arab in India is mainly due to the Afghan, the Turks and the Mongol. Mahmud of Ghazni put the finishing setback to Arab domination in the Indus Valley when he destroyed Multan about the beginning of the eleventh century and completes the final downfall of the Khalifs (Holdich 1910:192-193).

The Delhi Sultanate, which was Afghan-Persian was established in 1206 by the Muhammad of Ghor and famously known as Ghori of Afghanistan, and it continued to flourish for the southern part. The Delhi Sultanate ruled South Asia (Af-Pak-India) for over three centuries (1206-1526 A.D.). This Sultanate, which ruled from Delhi, basically belonged to five dynasties of Turk- Afghan origin ruled the Mamluks, the

Khaljis, the Tughlaqs, the Sayyids and the Lodhis. The period of Afghan dominance in India was one of significant importance both politically as well as culturally (Ud-Din 1962:45). It created a new synthesis culture in India where a lot of Persian and Afghan characteristics mixed with traditional Indian feature. Islam as a state religion spread rapidly during this time. Islam entered India before the Delhi Sultanate from Malabar (Kerala) on the west coast through the Arab traders in a peaceful manner. The Arabs, in fact, had been trading since pre-Islamic days and then embraced Islam after the Prophet began preaching (Engineer 2004:71-82). However, as far as north India was concerned Islam entered into north India through the invasion of Muhammad bin Qasim and it later followed by many other invasions, including those of Mohammed Ghori and Mahmud of Ghazni (Engineer 2004:71-82). The history of the Delhi Sultanate till Babur's conquest of Delhi in 1526 was one of empire building as well as of continuous wars of succession, murders and bloodshed. In the meantime, in 1398 Timur had crossed the Indus and occupied Delhi without much problem and had looted the area (Dasgupta 1975:241). There was the immigration of many thousands of Turks, Afghans, and Iranians into the subcontinent from the thirteenth century onward, and it continued in Sultanate period. This led to the construction of a new rich cultural synthesis society and was an important condition for the evolution of India into a modern nation. Peace and economic stability were promoted and there was a remarkable progress in the study of arts as well as sciences. During the Delhi Sultanate, great works were produced not only in literature, theology, history but also in medicine, astronomy and music. It is therefore, interesting that although political factors led to the fall of the Lodi Afghans in 1526, the cultural achievements of their period proved permanent and provided a solid foundation on which the Mughal emperors handsomely built (Ud-Din 1961:25-39). Babur defeated the last Lodhi Sultan at the Battle of Panipat in 1526, but the Afghans under Sher Shah Suri retook the throne in 1538 from Babur's son, Humayun, and continued to enjoy authority till 1555 when Humayun was able to re-establish Mughal rule (Ud-Din 1962:44).

1.3.6-Mughal Empire and its control over Af-Pak-India

In the history of Muslim India, the Mughals hold the place of pride. Their rule of more than three hundred years extended over most of India and shaped the architectural and cultural face of Islam there. The Timurid (half Turkish and half Mongol), ruling elite

of Central Asia, were forced from their ancestral homeland in Transoxiana (Samarqand) in the sixteenth century when Uzbeks invaded it. They were called the Mughal Empire (1526-1857) and established themselves as the new rulers of a region roughly comprising modern northern India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is important to understand the emergence of the Mughal Empire which helps to explain today's territorial artificiality and human migration in this part of the world. In the early years of the Timurid exile and displacement the young and ambitious prince, Babur managed to maintain a limited royal court in Kabul, although it remained impoverished and under constant threat of invasion (Balabanlilar 2012:02). Once he secured control over Kabul, he proceeded from the south and captured Khandar. Further, Babur seized Farghana in Badakshan (Uzbekistan) then turned his attention to the search for territory and economic stability. Babur and his refugee army of Timurid continued to raid south, eventually winning a decisive victory against the Afghan Lodhi king of northern Indian at Panipat in 1526 and established as the new rulers of this region (Balabanlilar 2012:02). It was not only the political elite but common Central Asian refugees from Afghanistan were also attracted towards the new capital Agra and later Delhi which promised sanctuary, land and wealth (Balabanlilar 2012:03). Under Babur's grandson Akbar, the Mughal empire reached Orissa and Bengal in the East, Lahore and Baluchistan in West, Kabul, Kandahar and Kashmir in Northwest and most of Afghanistan except the western part which was under the Persian Empire (Seddon 2003:179). Around 1500, today's Afghanistan was equally divided between the then three Empires which all have Turkish roots: the Safavids in Iran, the Mughals in India, and the Uzbeks in trans-Oxania. The Uzbeks held the cities on the plains north of the Hindu Kush (Maimana, Balkh, and Kunduz). India's Mughal dynasty held Kabul, eastern Afghanistan, and down through the Khyber Pass to Peshawar. The Iranian Safavid dynasty held Herat and the Helmand region of Seistan (Barfield 2010:93). Somewhere in 1600, there was resistance against imperial rule among the Pashtuns, of today's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP), an area in the Mughal sphere of influence, where tribes adamantly rejected all attempts at direct control (Barfield 2010:94). It was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century when both the Iranian and Indian empire had got into periods of rapid military decline that the Pashtuns started to play an independent political role (Barfield 2010:95). Counter this notion the Mughal Empire has provided the offer like paying subsidies for the right to use the Khyber Pass. There was a revolt against the Safavid Empire, and it failed to control it. The failure of

the Safavids to control their Afghan frontier opened them to attack by the Ghilzais Pashtun in the Safavid capital of Isfahan and killed royal family. But the Ghilzais Pashtun proved incapable of consolidating their rule (Barfield 2010:95-96).

After the decline of Safavid Empire, there was a tribal resurgence in Iran where Turkish groups from Khorasan came forward, most notably Nadir Shah Afshar. Nadir Shah had created a powerful but short-lived empire. For the first time, an Iranian king attacked India. He defeated the Mughals and then destroyed Delhi in 1739 (Barfield 2010:96). Historians of India are of the view that Nadir Shah's incursion was a devastating setback from which the Mughal dynasty never recovered (Tucker 1998:207). Nadir Shah's state collapsed after his execution, but the eastern half of his state claimed was by one of his military officers, Ahmad Khan, who was his associate during his rise, an Abdali Pashtun, who was proclaimed Shah of the Durrani Empire in 1747 (Barfield 2010:97). Therefore, weak Mughal ruler has not able to cross the Indus. Ahmad Khan focused most of his attention in India in the east. Beginning in 1748, Ahmad mounted eight campaigns against India over the next twenty years. In spite of beating the Mughals and taking Delhi, Ahmad kept that dynasty in power and even defended it later from a powerful invasion from the south by the Marathas (Barfield 2010:99). But he could not control India from Afghanistan, Sikh rise in Punjab and Delhi still was ruled by the Mughal king.

There is an important question regarding the identity of Mughal Empire because they came through Central Asia, ruled Indian subcontinent and they have enormous Persian influence. Richard Foltz's (1998) in his book *Mughal India and Central Asia* argues that at least at the elite level, there was a strong sense of sharing a common heritage with Central Asia. The continuous flow of trade and travellers between Central Asia and Mughal India was proof of this argument. Mughals had the vast empire that needed special capacity and knowledge of statecraft to run its affairs. Historians, like Rushbrook Williams and R. P. Tripathi, consider that the institutions and mutual relations of kingship and nobility in the Mughal Empire essentially derive from the Turko-Mongol tradition (Ali 1978:39). To run the empire smoothly and manage the diverse and multicultural subjects, Akbar introduced some new measures that gave the much-needed legitimacy to the empire. Akbar created composite nobility by removing the dependence of the sovereign on the Muslim nobility alone. Akbar had non-Muslim

nobles in his regime, and he was very tolerant of other religions (Ali 1978:38-49). The legacy of Mughal emperors notably Akbar for India was the sense of “a political uniformity and a sense of larger loyalty” (Habib 1997:8). Politically unified, a centralized India was also the legacy of Mughal rule.

Nadir Shah’s attack was a setback for the Mughals which they never recovered from, paving the way for European powers to become established in the subcontinent in the next few decades. But it is not only a fact of the decline of the mighty Mughal Empire but also a series of other facts. The new economic arrangement was not favourable for the Mughal Empire. The Great Silk Road no longer carried the great caravans, and this must have clearly impoverished its material relation with Central Asia. Another reason was a purely military one, where the Mughal army was lacking behind the European armies in technological changes like making artillery (Ali 1975:388-390). The world had rather changed between 1500 and 1700, there was certainly the rise of Europe as the centre of world of commerce, with its dominance of the New World and the High Seas, and its total monopoly of the transit routes, like the Cape of Good Hope (Ali 1975:387). After the decline of the Mughal Empire, it was the British who took an interest in this region by occupying the frontier areas and gradually developed their hold in north-westward. The British also set their eyes beyond the frontier hills in Afghanistan. It is Afghanistan in its relation to India, political, commercial, or strategic; as the case may be that filled the mind of British soldiers and statesmen of that time (Holdich 1910:05).

1.4-The British Invasion of Afghanistan and the Creation of a Buffer State

Modern Afghanistan came into existence in 1747, between the rivers Oxus and Indus, which previously was the part of Indo-Mughal and the Safavid-Persian empires. As far as its statehood is concerned, it was quite different from the modern states. It was a “loose confederation of chieftaincies, or localised autonomies that come to recognise the superior authority of one of their own in a grouping of small polities” (Saikal 2004:17). It was Ahmad Shah, former commander of the Persian king Nadir Shah, who is considered to have founded the modern state of Afghanistan in 1747. The founder of Afghanistan has also had Indian links; his family came from Multan in the Punjab and

had a long tradition of the service of the Mughals. (Dalrymple 2013:9). After Nadir Shah's assassination, Ahmad Shah came to Kandahar and successfully gathered the rival Abdali and Ghilzai Pashtun tribal chiefs from the boundaries of present Afghanistan (Saikal 2004:19). It was a *Jirga* of Pashtun (traditional tribal assembly), held in Kandahar, which pronounced Ahmad Shah as the first Afghan king (Anwar 1998:04). However, the decision to make Ahmad Shah the king of this meeting, which went for nine days, was not so easy. There were two favourite candidates for the head of this new state, namely Ahmad Shah Saddozai and Haji Jamal Khan Barakzai. Age seniority, the number of fighters on each side and tribal traditional found the *Jirga* itself in a deadlock. Then, following the *Jirga* tradition, a non-Pashtun holy man appeared in *Jirga* and selected Ahmad Shah as King and all the members, including Haji Jamal Khan accepted the verdict of this holy man (Anwar 1998:04). It was the same holy man who awarded the title of '*Durr-i- Durran*' or '*Durrani*' (Pearl of Pearls) to Ahmad Shah. Therefore, this was the first dynasty who ruled the Afghanistan called Durrani and it made its capital in Kanadhar (Rasanayagam 2005: xiii). From here it is clear that Durrani is no such sub-tribe group within Pashtun. According to Afghan scholar Amin Saikal, "Ahmad Shah during his two and half decades ruled swiftly managed divided Afghan tribes from Persian and Mughal domination, to consolidate them into a macro-society and to distinguish them as an identifiable independent political unit within an expanded territory of present-day Afghanistan" (Saikal 2004:19). In view of the current chaos in Afghanistan, one must appreciate Ahmad Shah's skill of managing this statehood where the Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Baluchis and Khorasanis maintained ethnic peace and political alliance in the new state. Ahmed Shah had expanded Afghan state from today's Pakistan to river Beas. He had challenged Mughal and Maratha rulers of India time and again. In the third war of Panipat, he defeated an army of Marathas thrice its own size, which changed the balance of power in India (Anwar 1998:5). After this the Marthas never recovered from this defeat and Mughals were also so weak they could not control India. Ahmad Shah at the height of his power had made eight successive raids on the plains of North India to acquire more and more terrain for fixing the boundaries of this new Durrani Empire, but his death rendered this task incomplete (Dalrymple 2013:9). Ahmad Shah died in 1772, till then his empire covered all of today's Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Iranian Khorasan, and the former Mughal areas of Sind, Punjab, and Kashmir (Barfield 2010:99).

The Ahmad Shah Empire had no successes for a long period because the structure of Ahmad Shah's rule was very weak, where only four major Abdali or Durrani tribes were the part of the core. The Alliance with rival Ghilzai on the periphery did not last for very long after Ahmad Shah's death (Saikal 2004:22). It was the personality and charisma of Ahmad Shah instead of any institution mechanism that believed behind his empire. Therefore, his death had created a power vacuum and somehow was the death of his empire, although his successors tried to hold it for some time. Ahmad Shah was succeeded by his older son Timur Shah, who moved capital Kandahar to Kabul (1775–1776) because his authority had challenged by his own sub-clan and revolts from other tribes and ethnic groups. Although to subvert these continuous revolts he made some treaties with neighbouring kingdoms like the Bukhara Emirates. These revolts and troubles continued until his death in 1793. This disruption increased under the rule of his son, Zaman Shah (1793-1800), despite his success in upholding the Afghan empire within more or less the same boundaries (Saikal 2004:23).

During the period of Zaman Shah, the Durrani Empire had shrunk and more and more provinces that were earlier the part of the Ahmad Shah Empire become autonomous. His influence from provinces like Balkh in the north and Sindh and Baluchistan in the east almost eroded. On the Indian side the Punjab rose as an independent kingdom under the Sikh. Zaman Shah lost his control over the several Pashtun regions. He faced constant hostility from his own brothers Mahmud at Herat and Shuja-UI-Mulk at Peshawar (Hussain 2005:23). Amidst these troubles, Zaman Shah had his eyes upon the Indian conquest to restore the ancient glory of Ahmad Shah's empire, but for that he had to confront the British who by then had established themselves in northern India (Hussain 2005:23).

On the other hand, the British company administration in India was aware of Zaman Shah's intentions. There were no reasons to believe that the company administration was not aware of the history of this subcontinent, where all foreign invasions came through Afghanistan. Considering this fact the then British Governor-General, Lord Wellesley in 1798 seeking an alliance with Iran's Shah; sent his envoy Mehdi Ali Khan to Iran. This made a new alliance between Britain and Iran (Hussain 2005:23-24). But the Afghan political situation was very volatile, and again there was a succession dispute for the throne. In the process, Zaman Shah was removed by his brother Mahmud

in 1800. The beginning of the nineteenth century was very unstable for Afghanistan as far as political affairs were concerned. Afghanistan had politically fragmented between different Pashtun tribes. "Fragmentation of power and civil wars ravaged Afghanistan almost constant between 1801 and 1834" (Saikal 2004:25). There was rivalry between the family members, where one brother conspired against others for power. Following this line Zaman's full brother Shuja-Ul-Mulk captured the throne from Mahmud in 1803. However, in 1807 Shuja-Ul-Mulk was compelled to leave Peshawar from Kabul by Mahmud. He ruled Kabul till 1818 when one sub-clan of Muhammdzai overthrew him in Herat. There was an internal power struggle within Muhammdzai and in 1826, Dost Mohammad controlled Kabul (Hussain 2005:24). But all these conflicts and civil wars led to the collapse of the Afghan Empire that was created by Ahmad Shah. The Mirs of Sindh, the Khans of Baluchistan and Uzbek in the north, ran away from Afghanistan. From the north the Amir of Bokhara invaded across the Amu Darya and took control of Balk, Punjab and Kashmir were taken by Sikh king Ranjit Singh (Rasanayagam 2005: xiv). Hence, Kabul lost most of its non-Pashtun areas. During the rule of Dost Muhammad, Afghanistan had attracted major regional powers for consolidation of their empire. There were the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh, who saw Afghanistan as one of its Indian provinces and they had already ruled over Peshawar as a part of Punjab. On the western border of Afghanistan, the Russians had arrived in Central Asia. The Persians started their campaigns to retake Herat. From the south, the British Indian Empire saw Afghanistan as a frontier line to protect their huge empire (Barfield 2010:111).

On the other hand, Calcutta and London were very eagerly looking at the larger geopolitics of this region where two other European colonial powers, Russia and France also moved eastward. Cables of company administration and the writings of the British press highlight that there was a wave of *Russophobia* in Calcutta and London (Dalrymple 2013:52). For saving its Indian colony from these powers, the British wanted some alliance kind of arrangement with Afghanistan.

In 1834, the then Governor General of India Lord Auckland entered into talks with Shah Shuja, then in exile in India, and with the Sikh ruler of Punjab Maharajah Ranjit Singh, who had gradually advanced into Afghan terrain in northern India. The talk was

about their support in a joint military endeavour against Afghan Amir Dost Mohammad Khan. These three parties' understanding had converted into a treaty in 1838 which promised Shah Shuja would be the next king of Afghanistan. On his part, Shah Shuja would accept permanent posting of British troops in Kabul. Parts of Afghanistan, comprising areas that later came to be known as the North-West Frontier Province were promised to Ranjit Singh (Nawid 1997:587). Therefore, the British had sent an envoy, Alexander Burnes to Afghanistan and appeared to have possible projects of their own in the country. According to Dalrymple (2013b) a hawkish cable from Kabul in 1838, by the British political officers managed to encourage Lord Auckland, the then governor-general of India, to invade Afghanistan to replace the popular ruler, Dost Mohammad Khan, who was allegedly oriented towards the Russians. The British had accused Khan of being pro-Russian. His real sin, however, was that he would not sign a treaty with the British, which granted him nothing but 'loose promises' (Dupree 1976:508).

To implement this treaty on reality, the united force moved to Kabul and on 7 August 1839, they reinstated Shah Shuja on the throne of Afghanistan (Nawid 1997:587). This British invasion called the first Afghan war in which the British displaced Dost Mohammad Khan from the throne of Kabul in 1839 and established Shah Shuja, a puppet of the British in Afghanistan. Shah Shuja's affair with the Afghan crown began and the British remained peaceful until 1841. The situation deteriorated in 1841, when the British representative in Kabul, William MacNaughten, took charge of government affairs, and it became apparent that the king was only a dummy. MacNaughten's unilateral interference in Afghan internal affairs created problems between the king and the British. There was a conflict regarding the rise of import duties by the Shah Shuja administration. The British had also initiated missionary activity in Afghanistan by issuing a Persian translation of the Bible. Though, the occupying British and Indian troops soon faced the hatred of the Afghan people. It was very clear to some sections of the Afghan population that the real power was in the hand of British instead of Shah Shuja. Therefore, revolt against the foreign rule broke out in the Pashtun tribe. *Ulema* and religious clergymen raised the *Jihad* against the British. Opposition to British occupation arose in Kabul and spread swiftly to the other part of Afghanistan. The role of religious leaders was noticeable all over the war by preaching *jihad* against the British. The uprising against the British and their puppet Shah Shuja gained momentum and caused the downfall of the British and the death of Shah Shuja. Some British and

Indian military personnel were killed in the rebellion. MacNaughten and his assistant, Alexander Burns, were also killed, and communication with India was almost cut off (Nawid 1997:588, Rizwan 2005:29-30). Thus, the first Anglo-Afghan war seems a disaster from the British point of view. In this situation, the British retreated from Kabul in 1842. After the British-Indian withdrawal, Shah Shuja was murdered. As in 1869, Talboys Wheeler, the assistant secretary in the British Foreign Department in India, wrote that “British occupation of Afghanistan was an incident that excites more painful feelings than any other episode in the history of British India, excepting perhaps the mutiny of 1857” (Nawid 1997:588).

As far as the British Afghan invasion is concerned there are different interpretations regarding the causes, course and consequences of the war depending upon who is writing the narrative. The writings of British writers and historians argued for the protection of India against Russians. On the other hand, the Afghan sources glorified the Afghans in fighting against the foreign invaders. These writing also exposed the dishonesty of the British in their dealings with the Afghans, the Amirs of Sind, and the Persians. These writings, which had been written in Persian and Pashto also criticized British for their insensitivity towards Afghan customs and religion (Dupree 1976:506). After the withdrawal of British forces from Afghanistan, there was chaos, in this situation the British offered for Dost Mohammad Khan to re-establish his rule over Afghanistan. He returned to rule Afghanistan for another twenty years. He recognized the reality that the British were the new rulers and Afghanistan must adjust their policies according to the given circumstances. As a qualified ruler, he had cooperated with British and acquired financial aid (Barfield 2010:117). Dost Mohammad by the end of the twenty years of his second term in 1863 had regained control of almost all of today’s Afghanistan (Barfield 2010:127). Here in North India, native Sikhs lost their empire after the two wars with the British and then Punjab and other Sikh holdings became part of British India. Since then Afghanistan had become British-Indian’s immediate neighbour in the east. British policy toward Afghanistan during this period, notably termed as one of “masterly inactivity.” (Barfield 2010:128).

There was serious suspicion and alarm among the British, regarding the Russian expansionist policy in the Central Asia. In the history of Central Asia, it was rapidly advanced made by the Russia between 1864 to 1869 than any time they took thereafter in that area. In this period, Russians occupied Khojend, Khanate of Khokand, Khanate

of Bokhara, Samarkand and also established the new Province of Turkestan. These activities on Russia's south-eastern frontier had been seen by the British Empire as the reflection of forthcoming events on India's the north-western frontier. This apprehension can be seen in the writings of an influential member of the Secretary of State's Council for India, Sir Henry Rawlinson on Quarterly Review of October 1865. In his piece, he argued that,

If Russia continued to press on to the line of the Oxus River, we on our side should secure a strong flanking position by the occupation of Kandahar, the southern principality of Afghanistan, and even of the city of Herat in the distant west. What we clearly needed was a series of 'first-class fortresses in advance of our present territorial border and on the most accessible line of attack (Thornton 1954:204-205).

In the given circumstances, it was accepted that forward school (or Bombay) would be a better option, which was there from the time of first Afghan invasion. It was Sir Bartle Frere, Chief Commissioner of Sind from 1850-59; Viceroy's Council, 1859-62; and Governor of Bombay, 1862-67 who became the chief spokesperson of the forward school (Bombay), but Viceroy Sir John Lawrence had refused his advice in 1867 (Thornton 1954:206). British political establishment were divided on the reality of Russian threat. Under the influence of the 'masterly inactivity' school, Lawrence had not recognized any favourite in the succession fight between Dost Mohammad's sons. Even in this time Lawrence's policy for Afghanistan was based on neutrality. He was still in favour of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer zone between India and Russia (Tripathi 1973:8). His neutrality for the Afghan front is commonly known as masterly inactivity. The phrase first appeared in an article, 'The Foreign Policy of Sir John Lawrence', in the *Edinburgh Review* in July 1867 (Thornton 1954:204-207). On the other hand, in Afghanistan, Sher Ali had emerged ultimate successor to the crown by overcoming his brothers. Before quitting his office in 1869, Lawrence gave up his policy of inactivity, by recognizing Sher Ali as Amir and supporting him by sending thousands of pounds. It cannot be denied that Lawrence's policy proved effective in acquiring harmony and goodwill with Afghanistan (Tripathi 1973:9). The new Viceroy of India Mayo had also followed the existing policy of his predecessor to support for the ruler in Afghanistan (Thornton 1954:207). In March 1869, Amir Sher Ali met with Lord Mayo in Ambala and asked the government of India to ensure the security of his kingdom amid of Russian advanced towards Kabul. But instead of any assurance

against the foreign attack, he was given arms and money by British India. The dispatch of British officials and diplomat at that time suggest that both European powers, on each side of Afghanistan were seeking a neutral zone (Thornton 1954:208-212). Mayo felt that a pledge of common non-interference through an accord, would be worthy to both Britain and Russia, and would be better suited for both powers. At the same time, British was looking for the scientific frontier to protect Indian from any invasion.

When tough diplomacy and bargaining for a sphere of influence in Afghanistan were going on, Russia focussed on Khiva. In November 1869, Russian armies had built a base on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. Even in these conditions for a mutually accepted arrangement, talked has moved on. But finally the British and Russian 'liberal diplomacy' failed to solve the Central Asian question, although in the larger arena, it gave this issue a fresh appearance (Thornton 1954:213-218). This was accepted by the Secretary of State for India, Salisbury when he wrote to the Viceroy in June 1877 that, in the past, diplomatic arguments with Russia had proved to be almost worthless (Williams 1980:216).

Till 1876, in both capitals, voices were raised promoting a more forward policy in Central Asia and caution against the danger from hostile advances by the other. It was at the time (April 1876) when Lord Lytton appointed as Viceroy of India who advocates of a forward policy (Barfield 2010:129). Over the three years the British government officials answer these questions; make it clear to the Russians that a 'thin red line,' would be drawn, beyond which Russian advance would not be tolerated. But, where the line should be on the ground was a bigger question (Williams 1980:218). There were diversities of opinion within the British establishment about this proposed line that never seems a reality. Communication between the British Ambassador at St Petersburg, India Office, Lytton and London had one thing in common which was fear of Russian influence in Afghanistan and its implications for India (Williams 1980:220).

Therefore, by 1876, there was pressure on both the Russians and the British to define their relative spheres of interest in Central Asia to their advantage. However, this was not easy. Both governments were yet to decide where the line between them should drawn (Williams 1980:223). Lytton desired to protect India's northwest frontier by obtaining either a control over Afghanistan's foreign relations or supervisor over the

Khyber tribes. One should not forget that Lytton had given charge of India by the British government to protect it from Russia's Central Asian Empire (Klein 1974:99).

The negotiation in Simla, between British India and Amir's representative, was not cordial. Afghanistan did not accept an English Resident or Agent in Kabul. The other hand British government demanded that Amir should stop communicating with Russia and accept British officers in his territory (Jafri 1976:8). The Amir refused a bargain which seemed dangerous to the British. Lytton thought it a "serious calamity" that Sher Ali might have "irrevocably slipped out" of British hands (Klein 1974:104). The talks were still in progress, and the British Indian army started its mission to Afghanistan (Jafri 1976:8). The British military had attacked Kurram, Qandahar and Kabul in November 1878 (Nawid 1997:590). This military engagement lasted for about six months and is called the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-79). Against the British attack, Amir asked for help from Russia, but they refused. Consequently, Amir fled, and after an illness, he died in 1879 at Mazar-I-Sharif (Tripathi 1973:14). Yaqub Khan, the son of Sher Ali, took charge and obliged to sign the Treaty of Gandumak in May 1879. This treaty provided a permanent British mission in Kabul and surrendered the Khyber Pass and Kurram Valley and to British India (Nawid 1997:590). But this was not the consequence of the second Afghan war. Many of the consequences were there in Afghan environment, which had been neglected by the British policy makers. The freedom loving Afghan people violently revolted against the British Regiment in Kabul, which caused the death of Sir Louis Cavagnari and numerous other British officers (Nawid 1997:590). There were some other violent attacks on British platoons in Afghanistan. The then Amir Muhammad Yaqub abandoned and decided to go into exile in India. In the lack of political guidance, the clergy once again became the main power in organising the Afghan people against the British. In February 1880, the *jihad* led by the clergy reclaimed energy and prohibited General Donald from proceeding in Kabul (Nawid 1997:590). In this situation by July 1880, British were looking for the withdrawal from Afghanistan. For a face-saving exit, they needed someone who could negotiate on the behalf of Afghanistan to terms of a settlement and also makes it acceptable to the Afghan people. Therefore, Abdur Rahman Khan, a nephew of former Amir Shir Ali had become the new Amir of Afghanistan (Nawid 1997:590).

As for the second Anglo-Afghan war, as far as the larger British policy was concerned, it was influenced by the forward school which favoured an expansionist policy on

India's northwest frontier to reduce any Russian threat. A number of contemporary Indian and British historians, like Bisheswar Prasad, Maurice Cowling and D. P. Singhal have placed the responsibility of the second Anglo-Afghan (1878) almost entirely on the Viceroy Lord Lytton's personality (Klein 1974:97). After World War II, understandings of the origins of the Afghan conflict possibly were influenced mainly by two factors: first extreme acts of Western imperialism and expansion in Asia; and second, the Afghan war was necessary to achieve the security of British India (Klein 1974:97).

After second Anglo-Afghan war negotiations between Britain and Abdul Rahman Khan lead to the complete withdrawal of British military. With Abdul Rahman Khan, British-India relation with Afghanistan was stabilized at least for the time being. Now the British had control over Afghanistan's foreign policy (Nawid 1997:591). Both European powers, Russia and Britain made a joint boundary commission for defining Afghan border. Through this mechanism, they could make their area of influence and remote the possibility of a clash between two empires. So an Anglo-Russian boundary commission was formed to fix the north western frontier with Russian Central Asia. In 1895 an additional commission was formed for the frontier in the North West. But these commissions didn't have Afghan representation (Rasanayagam 2005:10).

The objective of the British imperial policy vis a vis Afghanistan has changed in the twentieth century. The British imperial power was not as powerful as used to be in nineteenth century. The rise of new powers like Japan, Germany and the United States changed the world politics. Therefore, in 1907 Britain and Russia arrived at a settlement that calmed their differences in Asia. Russia also lost interest in Afghanistan and after the Russian Revolution; Russia had gone from this region for four decades (Fromkin 1980:947).

Once it was confirmed after both Anglo-Afghan wars that Afghanistan could not directly be controlled by either the British or Russians, both these parties moved from the concept of 'Buffer Zone'. Both British experiences in Afghan wars were very bitter where they lost their soldiers and economic resources. Here it is important to note the British domestic politics, which also somehow affected its imperial Afghan policy. The Anglo-Afghan war was also a debatable political issue in the domestic election in Britain in August 1841 and April 1880 respectively. After each Afghan war, the pro-

'forward policy' government was replaced by the political party who opposed it. The new governments, of Robert Peel in 1841 and William Gladstone in 1880, each dismissed the Governor-General or Viceroy of India, who had ordered an offensive against Afghanistan (Saikal 2004:27).

According to Saikal (2004), following reasons were behind Russian and British desertion of plans of total subjugation of Afghanistan. First, if one of them were to colonise Afghanistan, then there was the possibility of full military confrontation, which neither side seemed to want. Second, Afghanistan then had none of the economic resources that might have made it adequately attractive to be colonized. Third, the relative independence of any control of the centralized system and aggressive nature of the Afghan tribes made conditions highly negative to foreign invaders (Saikal 2004:26-27). The modern border of Afghanistan is the result of two empires, Britain and Russia. There were lengthened diplomatic correspondences in St. Petersburg between these two empires, and the Russian Government accepted the definition of the territory of Afghanistan, as proposed by the then British-Government of India. Through this arrangement, Afghanistan achieved greater security with respect to the northern boundary (Eastwick: 1879:16).

1.4.1- Understanding Durand Line

If we look at the current border conflict worldwide, it seems that the conflict around the Durand Line is most notorious. Most of the commentators blame the Durand Line for the current Afghan crisis. It is not only blamed for Afghan crisis, but instability in the Af-Pak region and terrorism promotion throughout the globe is also attributed to Durand Line. The problem regarding the Durand Line is multi-dimensional, geopolitical, ethnographic, legal, territorial, economic and military (Omran 2009:177). More than a century ago, it was the British administrators in South Asia who tried to settle it for their imperial interests. As mentioned above, till 1880 the British had determined that recognised boundaries needed to be established between Afghanistan and British to save their Indian colony from the Russia further advance. In this process the then Indian Foreign Secretary, Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, sent for negotiates to Afghanistan in October 1893. There had not been a clearly thought-out proposal presented by the British for a particular line. The Afghan Amir laid an ambitious frontier suggestion, and the British advocated a very different boundary line that would

consist of Waziristan in British India. Consequently, there was a lot of bargaining in the negotiation. (Omrani 2009:184-185).

Initially, the Afghans agreed that Dir, Swat, Peshawar and Chitral should be the part of the British territory. In return the Afghans provided some strategic assets, particularly Asmar, which gave them access to Nuristan and several of Afghanistan's eastern areas. At the eleventh hour, the fate of Waziristan was decided by splitting it. The Durand Line, as defined between 1893 and 1896, was drawn all the way from the Persian frontier to Wakhan (Omrani 2009:185). There was huge confusion because there were areas represented on the map which did not exist on the ground and vice versa. In the process of designing the Durand Line many villages and agricultural lands got divided. Therefore, Fraser-Tytler says the Durand Line is one with "many defects and few advantages" and Louis Dupree believed it was "a classic example of an artificial political boundary cutting through a culture area" (Omrani 2009:186). Later the then Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman claimed that he was being forced to act against his will and appealed to the British frequently not to comprise the hill tribes within their frontiers (Spain1961:169).

According to the 1893 Treaty, Abdur Rahman promised not to try to project his influence over the border. But he invited the tribesmen from the British areas to Kabul and gave them honours, money and weapons. Later the British wanted to extend their control into the tribal areas. Several tribes resisted this attempt, some of them claiming they were subjects of the Amir (Spain1961:168). The people in the British tribal areas, around the Durand Line, did not like the idea of being under any kind of British dominion. So a revolt against the British control rose all over the area in 1897. To pacify it British needed 60,000 regular troops in the tribal regions (Omrani 2009:187). The region between the Durand Line being administered by the British remained something of a "no man's land" until 1901 (Spain1961:169).

The creation of the Durand Line had not resolved the frontier problem between the British-India and Afghanistan. The local tribes and Afghan Amir never accepted it. In 1919, Amanullah, the new Amir of Afghanistan, launched the Third Afghan War for the purpose of recovering some of the lost territories. Some Afghan tribes joined the fight against the British. The formal war between Afghanistan and Britain ended with the Treaty of Rawalpindi on 8 August 1919. According to this treaty, Amanullah

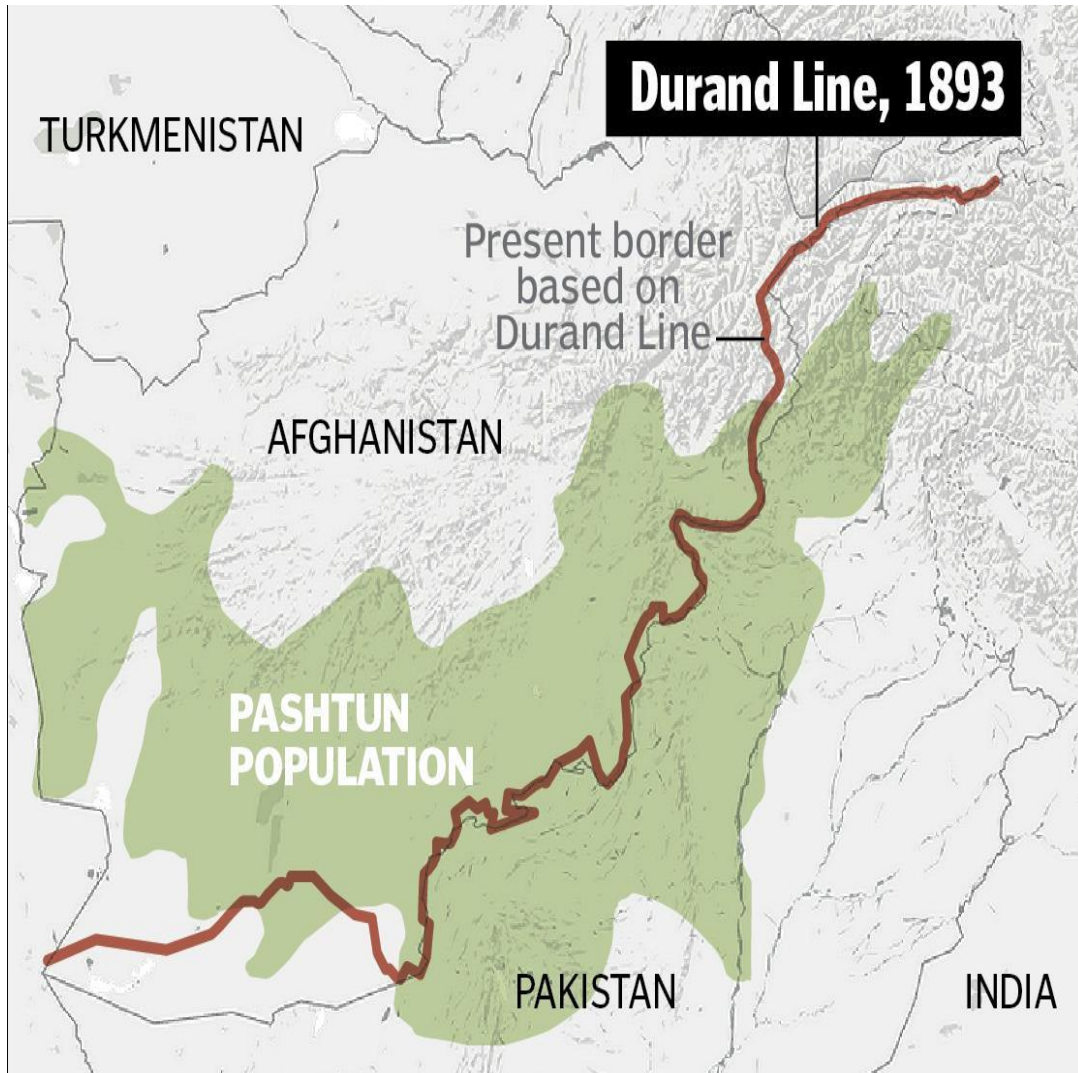
accepted the Durand Line and the British recognition Afghanistan's independence in foreign affairs in Amanullah kingship (Spain1961:170). The legality of Durand Line had been consistently challenged by the Pashtun population living around it. One such event occurred in 1928 when a general rising of the tribes on the Afghan side of the border toppled King Amanullah. After more than a year of chaos, Amanullah was succeeded by a cousin, Nadir Shah, who was carried in victory to Kabul mainly by the Wazirs and the Mahsuds, most of whom were from the Indian side of the Durand Line (Spain1961:170). This event shows that the Durand Line was not a barrier for the freedom loving tribes. There was another important event occurred on the eastern side of the Durand line, when in 1930 a new political organization formed. Inspired by the Mahatma Gandhi's Congress Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan agitated a movement called, "Khudai Khitmatgars" for freedom from British rule (Spain1961:171).

The British departure from South Asia had created many problems, and the Durand Line was one of them. The status of areas around the Durand Line remained as was, under the British Empire. Under the partition plan, the British arranged a special referendum for the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP). But the voters of NWFP had been given only two options, either opting for India or Pakistan. In NWFP, the Pashtun political identity was so strong that it found itself uneasily coexisting with the demand for Pakistan (Tablot 1998:81). Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his party boycotted the referendum, as long as it did not give a third choice, "Pathanistan", an independent or at least autonomous Pathan (Pashtun) state (Spain1961:171). In this referendum, more than 99 per cent people opted for Pakistan, although only 50.99 per cent of the voters used their voting choice. So it was the legal basis, for the incorporation of NWFP into Pakistan. During the partition of the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan opposed the accession of NWFP into Pakistan. The Afghan government challenged the legality of NWFP's merger in the state of Pakistan. Its representative to the United Nations (UN) declared in September 1947 that this country did not recognize the NWFP as part of Pakistan and voted against Pakistan's entry into UN (Hussain 2005:44).

Afghans have maintained this position, irrespective of who has been in power in Kabul. That was the first and foremost bone of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan because Afghanistan claimed that NWFP historically and culturally belonged to Afghanistan. Instead of welcoming the formation of an Islamic nation in its

neighbourhood, Afghanistan was the only country who opposed Pakistan's entry into the United Nations. This hostility later became more intensive.

Map 1- Durand Line



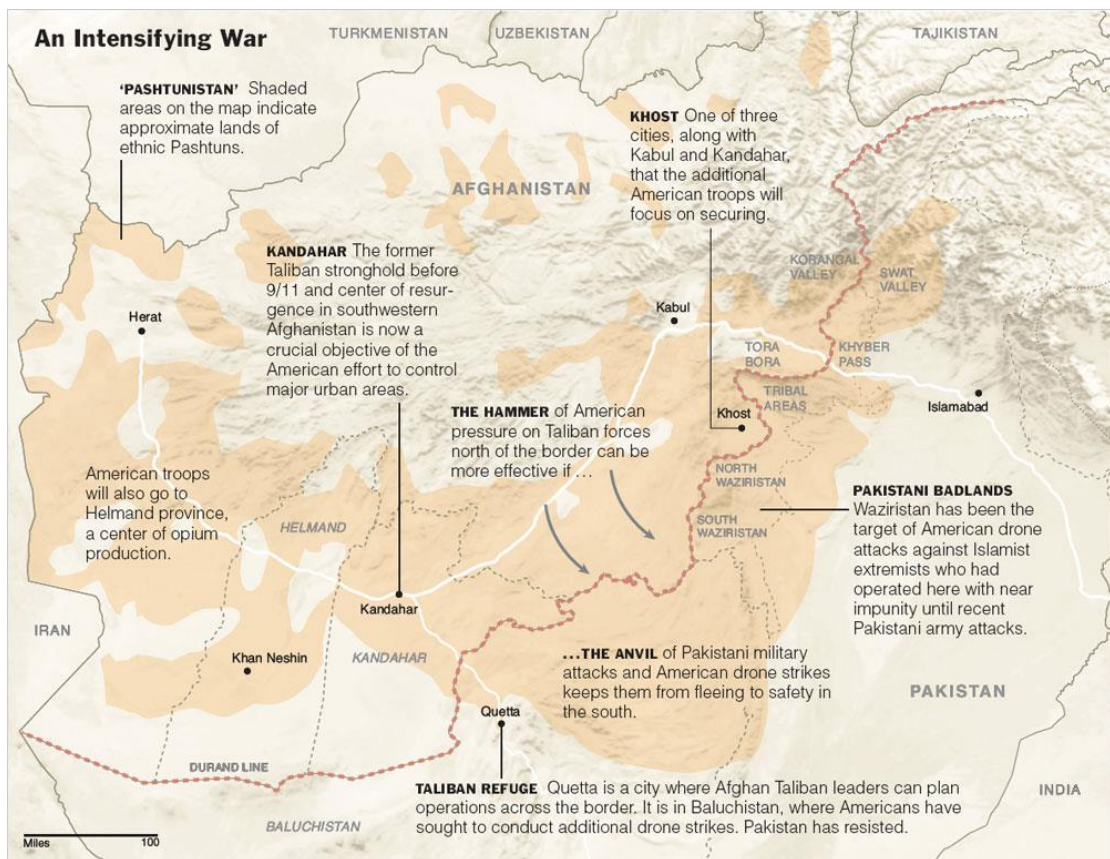
Source- Luke Knox, The Boston Globe

1.4.2- The Pashtunistan Issue

Pashtunistan, the land of the Pashtuns or Pathans, lies on both sides of the Durand Line, the frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pashtun question is multidimensional. It is an ethnic, political, and geopolitical problem. It is the core of Afghan nationalism. Pashtun lands beyond the border in the east make the conundrum of nation building in Pakistan itself. Both the Pashtun and non-Pashtun elites have instrumentalized it in the two countries, although in a contradictory manner, for

domestic political purposes. In Afghanistan, all rulers who belong to the Pashtun ethnic group, use Pashtunistan issue time and again for their legitimacy. And the other side, Pakistan's Afghan policy has been cautious on Pashtunistan issue. The Pashtun question has been a source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the creation of Pakistan in 1947. According to Afghan sources, Pashtunistan consists of the area west of the river Indus up to the Afghan frontier representing a territorial claim against Pakistan's Baluchistan Province and the tribal regions which are now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Qureshi 1966:99).

Map -2: Pashtunistan Tentative Map



Source-The New York Times (2009)

In the current context, Pashtunistan has been defined by *The New York Times* reporter Scott Shane (2009) who writes,

“That land is not on any map, but it’s where leaders of Al Qaeda and the Taliban both hide. It straddles 1,000 miles of the 1,600-mile Afghan-Pakistani border. It is inhabited by the ethnic Pashtuns, a fiercely independent

people that number, 12 million on the Afghan side and 27 million on the Pakistani side. They have a language (Pashto), an elaborate traditional code of legal and moral conduct (Pashtunwali), a habit of crossing the largely unmarked border at will, and a century-long history of foreign interventions that ended badly for the foreigners” (Shane 2009).

On 12 November 1893, Mortimer Durand and the Amir of Afghanistan Abdul Rahman signed a treaty over the line of demarcation between British India and Afghanistan (Dupree 1973:485). The validity of this treaty has questioned on several occasions by successive Afghan governments before 1947. After the creation of Pakistan, successive Pashtun led Afghan governments backed Ghaffar Khan’s demands for Pashtunistan to be carved out of the territory of Pakistan. Kabul’s demand was supposedly in support of the right of the Pakistani Pashtuns for self-determination. But in reality, it was grounded in a firm assumption that Pashtunistan entity would be closely linked to Afghanistan (Saikal 2010:13). Afghanistan never recognized the Durand Line as an international border. Afghan scholars claim that they have a long association with the Pashtun areas on the basis of historical, linguistic, genealogical and cultural lines. Some called that the Durand line is a line rather than a boundary. Nabi Misdaq (2006) argues that the agreement has signed under the war and economic blockade (Misdaq 2006: 297). The return to Afghanistan of the Pashtun areas situated on the Pakistani side of Durand Line has been a perennial Afghan demand. Zahir Shah, the late king of Afghanistan, late President Muhammad Daud, who deposed Zahir Shah; and the successive Communist leaders all maintained the old Afghan claim on Pashtunistan. The Pashtunistan issue became the principal source of dispute with Pakistan, although its intensity has varied over time. In 1951, the first serious crisis occurred when Sardar Daud Khan, the Afghan defence minister, infiltrated Afghan troops as ordinary tribal into Pakistan’s tribal area (Anwar1988:32). When Khan was chosen as Prime Minister in 1953, there was an indication that he would play the Pashtunistan card to exploit the sentiment of Afghan masses, and he did it. Pashtunistan was his main agenda of foreign policy. In 1955, there was a serious border clash between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the issue of Pashtunistan which led Pakistan to close the Karachi port for the landlocked Afghanistan (Anwar1988:35). In the same way, in 1962, a border dispute erupted between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the latter again closed the Karachi port for Afghanistan’s goods and transition (Anwar1988:36). From these narrations, it seems that Kabul had made the choice rather than Islamabad. Judging by public statements,

Pashtunistan has become the single most important issue of Afghan foreign policy (Spain 1954:37). After the Saur Revolution, the communist leadership also used similar rhetoric repeatedly. On one occasion, when it appeared that the Afghan opposition was establishing its bases on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line, the first Communist leader of Afghanistan, Noor Muhammad Taraki, did propose to Pakistan's military dictator Zia Ul-Haq that Afghanistan would recognize the Durand Line as the international border between the two countries if Pakistan stopped helping the Mujahedeen (Anwar1988:78). It was the Pashtunistan issue, which created the initial problem between them, and later the list became protracted as it included Pakistan's one unit plan. Although, it was Pakistan's internal matter, it became detrimental to the Pakistan-Afghan relations, leading to an economic blockade of Afghanistan. Pakistan consisted of two units till 1971, East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan was the Bengali dominated area where the Muslim League was not a key political power. West Pakistan constituted the area of Sind, Baluchistan, NWFP, Karachi, and some princely states and tribal areas. Muslim league was defeat in East Bengal in the 1954 election which created fear that it might lose its power in West Pakistan too. In order to perpetuate itself in power, the Muslim League mooted a proposal for the One Unit plan in West Pakistan (Kaur1985:79). In October 1954, the constitution assembly was dissolved, and the central cabinet reconstituted. Then government integrated the administrative unit of West Pakistan into a single composite province (Kaur1985:79). It meant the West Pakistani state had no autonomy, under the One Unit Plan. The establishment of One Unit Plan was the first step towards the consolidation of the Pakistani state. While the provinces and the states in West Pakistan were being merged into one unit. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan headed an agitation against the One Unit, but he was arrested in 1956 by the government of his brother. At his trial on 3 September 1956, Ghaffar said that he was advocating an autonomous Pathan province of Pashtunistan, not an independent state (Qureshi 1966:99). Even other provincial leaders from NWFP, Sind, Baluchistan and East Pakistan, rejected this idea and expressed their fear of Punjabi domination. There was the argument from the supporters of this plan that once the bill would passed the issue of Pashtunistan would be settled automatically. But the decision of integration of West Pakistan into one unit, which forced the Pashto-speaking areas into an unwilling alliance with West Pakistan, predominated by the Punjabis led to hostility and a new tension in its relation with Afghanistan (Kaur1985:86-87). This plan was criticised not only by provincial non-Muslim League leaders but also by the

Afghanistan leadership. The plan of the Pakistan Government to merge into one unit the provinces and states of West Pakistan was criticized by the Afghan Prime Minister, Khan, in a speech broadcast over Radio Kabul on 29 March 1955 (Qureshi 1966:99). Demonstrations, reported to be officially inspired, followed in Kabul, Jalalabad and Qandahar. Pakistani flags were pulled down and insulted, and the Pashtunistan flag was hoisted on the chancery of the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul (Qureshi 1966:114). However, the Pakistani government took a serious note and called the Pashtunistan demand as a stunt of Afghanistan (Kaur1985: 86). Then there were a series of protest and blame game from both sides. After that, Pakistan and Afghanistan called their consulates from each other country.

1.5- Summary

This chapter concludes by observing the significant role of geography in the course of Afghan history. It was an imperial driven border, which created problems in Af-Pak that are still enduring. This chapter apart from the introduction of thesis attempts to quick review of the history of the sub-continent. The subsequent sections found that the problem of Afghanistan and Pakistan are interconnected. Languages, religions and ethnicity, had created a unique bond that challenge the mighty empires in this region. Therefore, in the course of history, Afghanistan became the convergence of diverse culture as well as the political system. This chapter founds that India alone with Iran, Central Asia and Af-Pak were the part of great civilizations and empires that influence each of these. But it was the European imperialism which established the modern nation-state in this region and broken the millennium old long continuity within the region. The study found that ruling a sedentary society with enormous cultural diversity was a challenged that Kushans and Mughal met very well. Observing the history and comparing the contemporary chaos, this chapter founds that the policy makers of Af-Pak region may learn certain political strategies to govern their state from their past. This chapter also establishes that there had long continuous flow of trade and travellers between modern Af-Pak-India and the surrounding area. The European imperialism has broken this continuity. India's biggest dilemma in the last seven decades has emanated from its north-western regional which this study call Af-Pak. It remain a challenge for India to restore the historical continuity.

CHAPTER 2

NATO's Role in Reterritorialization of Conflict

2.1- Introduction

This chapter looks at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) engagement in the reterritorialization of conflict. In the following pages, the chapter analyses the geopolitics of the 'Af-Pak' region that goes some decades back. The term reterritorialization is used for the geographical or territorial concept to elaborate on how geography of a particular region has been reorganized, and how the border is acquiring new roles and definitions. The concept of reterritorialization offers a method to express the way in which territoriality plays its role in the development of cross-border activity. But in this part of the world the definition of reorganized or changing border does not mean Europe and the Western world. In Western literature reterritorialization as a concept used for the globalization, which reconfiguration of territorial systems that is multi-scalar and flexible, where the state is not vanishing but controlled differently. The reterritorialization process in this part (Af-Pak) has not been driven by the market or the free flow of trade. As discussed in the first chapter, history, culture, ethnic similarity and race are the features make this part as one entity. For a long time, this entire region remains under one or another empire. At 1947, when the British Empire left Indian subcontinent, the new states, new boundaries and new political system developed in these areas. These were the modern national states Pakistan and Afghanistan with a defined boundary. But the boundary between these two was a constant debatable and an issue of conflict in the following decades. As a loose border, which wasn't strictly observed as a boundary by the local community, it was still accepted by the international community, both states and its institutions. It was the NATO or more specifically 'US war on terror' which directly or indirectly reterritorized these landscape. Due to this war the Durand Line or border seems to disappear between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The human migration over the said border had reached the maximum level when armed groups (like NATO, Al-Qaeda and Taliban, etc.) and unarmed people crossed it. The war activities of the last decade largely challenged the jurisdiction of the state not only in border areas, but the large chunk of their territory is out of respective state. NATO combat forces, drones attacks, the formation and the

movement of new Taliban forces like Pakistan-Tarik- I-Taliban, Haqqani network, Western secret agents and Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) have facilitated to reterritorialization this landscape.

In the case of Af-Pak, the reterritorialization is a very peculiar one because the political and military landscape in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been transformed radically since 11 September 2001. Here the question is how the landscape changed and who has been responsible for changing it? To answer these complicated questions, we have to look Afghan War from the 11 September 2001. In this process, all important actors in this decade-long conflict must be studied. The history of this conflict goes in back three and half decades. But the starting point to understand ‘NATO’s role in reterritorialization of conflict’ will start from the United States’ invasion in Afghanistan.

2.1.1- The United States led Afghan Invasion

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States’ (US) government rapidly recognized Osama Bin Laden as their key suspect. The leader of the Islamist terror group al-Qaeda first denied participation in 9/11 and did not claim responsibility until October 2004. After nine days of the horrible attack US President George W. Bush addressed the Congress and blamed it on al-Qaeda. He stated-

The leadership of al-Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan, and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country. In Afghanistan, we see al-Qaeda's vision for the world. By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder. And tonight, the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taleban: Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al-Qaeda who hide in your land. Release all foreign nationals including American citizens you have unjustly imprisoned, and protect foreign journalists, diplomats, and aid workers in your country. He further stress to close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating (BBC News 2001c).

Further, Bush said that “these demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate” (BBC News 2001c). Bush also indirectly declared war against its enemy without waiting for their response. In the same speech in the Congress, he said,

“Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime...” (BBC News 2001c).

The Taliban publicly condemned the attacks. They called for restraint and demanded evidence from the US regarding Bin Laden’s alleged involvement. However, when the US pressurised it by sending armed forces near Afghanistan it changed its response. The then Taliban’s envoy to Pakistan Abdul Salam Zaeef made the offer at a news conference in Islamabad that the Taliban would detain Bin Laden and try him under Islamic law if US made a formal request and presented them with evidence. The White House rejected this offer (CNN 2001). In response to this, Bush said that “The Taliban has given the opportunity to surrender all the terrorists in Afghanistan and to close down their camps and operations. Full warning has been given, and time is running out” (CNN 2001). On 7 October 2001, after 26 days of the attack on US soil, Britain and US launched a powerful bombardment of cruise missiles and long-range bombers on Afghanistan. The US made it clear that it wanted to overthrow Taliban by providing military aid and “developing relationships with groups in Afghanistan that oppose the Taliban regime” (Tyler 2001).

On 28 September 2001, United Nations’ Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1373 endorsed the UNSC’s condemnation of the terrorist attacks and confirmed that such acts constituted a threat to international peace and security (UNSC Resolution 1373, (2001). But, while criticizing the attacks, the UNSC did not permit a military operation. NATO war in Afghanistan was a military mission in the initial stage which had the aim of overthrowing the Taliban regime. But a military choice always has its limitations. Any super power simply could not destroy one country. The endearing power has its moral obligation to maintain normalcy and address the humanitarian issue of the seized country. The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 was the first of a series of agreements designed to reconstruct Afghanistan following the U.S. incursion.

Under UN patronages, delegates from four different Afghan factions (the Northern Alliance, Peshawar Front, Cyprus Group, Rome Process) and world leaders met in Bonn (Germany) to design an ambitious agenda for the Afghan transitional government to run the country, which would guide Afghanistan towards national reconciliation and peace. Under this arrangement power-sharing council was to be headed by Pashtun tribal leader Hamid Karzai (BBC News 2001). Under this Accord, the most benefitted

was the Tajik minority or the Northern Alliance which has controlled total 17 out of the 30 cabinet posts, including the three most powerful ministries (BBC News 2001). The most important part of the Bonn Accord was an annexure to the agreement that requests the UNSC to consider authorising the early deployment of a UN mandated force. These forces would assist in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas (BBC News 2001). This was the first important step when the “war and terror” got UN approval, and it concentrated on the Afghan nation building by the premier world agency. Officially from then US and UK’s Afghan war became NATO’s mission.

2.1.2- NATO’s Afghan Mission

On the evening of 12 September 2001, just 24 hours after the terrorist attacks on the US, the members of NATO appealed the treaty’s mutual defence guarantee for the first time in the alliance’s 52 years (Gordon 2001:90). The NATO Allies expressed their solidarity with the people of the US by invoking Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (NATO 2011). According to this, an attack on one ally would be treated as an attack on all. The sympathy for the US after the attack was unprecedented. NATO members’ firm declaration has been followed by many more offers of useful military help for the war in Afghanistan. US had gathered one of history’s most impressive global coalitions with NATO for the fight against Taliban and al-Qaeda (Allin and Simon 2004-05:7).

As discussed above, the annex of the Bonn Agreement visualized the establishment of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to look after the security matters around the Kabul. Under this spirit, the UNSC Resolution no-1386 was adopted on 20 December 2001. This resolution taking note of Bonn Accord and requests of Interim Afghan Government, from an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (UNSC Resolution 1386, 2001). Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, an ISAF was an establishment to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul, and it’s surrounding areas so that the Afghan Interim Authority, as well as the staffs of UN, can operate in a secure environment. This resolution also calls upon the member states to contribute personnel, equipment and other resources to the ISAF (UNSC Resolution 1386, 2001). Under this guidance in January 2002, the first contingent of foreign peacekeepers was deployed. On 11 August 2003, NATO has took leadership of the ISAF operation, ending the six-month national alternations. The

NATO alliance became accountable for the command, management and planning of the force, including the provision of a force commander and headquarters on the ground in Afghanistan³. Earlier the ISAF had jurisdiction over Kabul only, but in October 2003, the UN extended ISAF's mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan (UNSC Resolution 2003, 1510). It means from October 2003; NATO-led ISAF has a mandate for the security of entire Afghanistan.

2.2- Instruments of Reterritorialization the Conflict

The process of reterritorialization has not a natural one. There must be some agent and method that led it. In the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan, it has been done by several factors. Sometimes it seems very complicated, and one cannot surely argue which factor is the prominent one. If we look at the history of this part, it shows that it is a historical process which has been going through last three and half decades. But it is also true that the US-led 'war on terror' has intensified the entire process. The following section discusses all possible reasons that are directly or indirectly behind the reterritorialization of this conflict.

2.2.1- The Role of History in Reterritorialization of Conflict

A similar conflict had been faced by Afghanistan in between 1975 to 1989 which extended till the rise of Taliban in 1994. This was the first time when the border seemed irreverent, and thousands of people cross the Durand Line on a regular basis. There was a massive migration on both sides of the border. It included millions of refugees, armed militias, agents of state secret services, money, drugs and a huge amount of weapons. It happened when the then superpower Soviet Union came to rescue its' ideological supported government of People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). This step was seen as cold war rivalry by NATO members, particularly the US. The US with its cold war allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia got a great opportunity to avenge its humiliation in a similar proxy war in Vietnam. Pakistan found it a 'God send' opportunity to settle its score with Afghanistan. The Soviet intervention provided the

³ See more for NATO (ISAF) Afghan mission- <http://www.rs.nato.int/history.html>

first attempt for Pakistan to settle the Afghan irritant. To understand Pakistan's problem with Afghanistan, it is important to understand the history of partition of the continent. The creation of Pakistan resulted in igniting bitter territorial disputes between this state and its neighbours, both east and west. At the west, Muslim Afghanistan opposed the inclusion of largely Pashtun inhabited North West Frontier (NWFP) into Pakistan. It clearly revealed that the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations were very hostile from the first day of Pakistan's formation. This hostility is closely linked with the Pakistani state making process. It is a state-building process that impinges upon Afghanistan, and this created problems between them since the 1950s during the earlier days of Pakistan's independence. Principally it was the 'colonial boundaries and inadequate stateness' that created problems with Afghanistan (Ayoob 1995:47). The rise of Pakistan was based on the Islamic identity and thus stood for the definition of the state exclusively along theological lines (Buzan 1991:78). On the other hand, Afghanistan's identity was based on tribal confederacy under the principal ethnic group, the Pashtuns. Pakistan saw this ethnic identity as an important threat to its national organisation of territory as the same ethnic group shared common historical linkages across the Durand Line. It divided the Pashtun population into two parts across the border. Pakistan was carved out of five provinces of British India plus some princely states. The provinces were Punjab, Sindh, East Bengal, Baluchistan and NWFP. In NWFP, the Pashtun political identity was so strong that it found itself uneasily coexisting with the demand for Pakistan (Tablot 1998:81). During the partition of the Indian sub-continent, Afghanistan opposed the accession of NWFP into Pakistan. Even a few members of the political elite of NWFP had supported Afghanistan including the Frontier Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgaran. The Afghan government challenged the legality of NWFP's merger into the state of Pakistan. Its representative to the UN declared in September 1947 that his country did not recognize the NWFP as part of Pakistan and voted against Pakistan's entry into UN (Hussain 2005:44). Afghans have maintained this position, irrespective of who has been in power in Kabul. That was the first and foremost bone of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan because Afghanistan claimed that NWFP historically and culturally belonged to it. Instead of welcoming the formation of an Islamic nation in its neighbourhood, Afghanistan was the only country who opposed Pakistan's entry into UN. This hostility later became more intensive.

It led to the problem of Pashtunistan, the land of the Pashtuns or Pathans, lies on both sides of the Durand Line, the frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pashtun question is multidimensional. It is an ethnic, political, and geopolitical problem. It is the core of Afghan nationalism. Pashtun lands beyond the border in the east make the conundrum of nation building in Pakistan itself. Both the Pashtun and non-Pashtun elites have instrumentalized it in the two countries, although in a contradictory manner, for domestic political purposes. In Afghanistan all ruler who belong to the Pashtun ethnic group, uses Pashtunistan issue time and again for their legitimacy. And on the other side, Pakistan's Afghan policy has been cautious of the Pashtunistan issue. The Pashtun question has been a source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the creation of the Pakistan in 1947. According to Afghan sources, Pashtunistan consists of the area west of the river Indus up to the Afghan frontier representing a territorial claim against Pakistan's Baluchistan Province and the tribal regions which now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Qureshi 1966:99).

Afghanistan never recognized the Durand Line as an international border. Afghan scholars claim that they have a long association with the Pashtun areas by historical, linguistic, genealogical and cultural lines. Some called that the Durand Line is a line rather than a boundary. Afghan Scholar, Nabi Misdaq (2006) argues that the agreement has signed under the war and economic blockade (Misdaq 2006:297). The return to Afghanistan of the Pashtun areas situated on the Pakistani side of Durand Line has been a perennial Afghan demand. Zahir Shah, the late king of Afghanistan, late President Muhammad Daud, who deposed Zahir Shah, and the successive Communist leaders all maintained the old Afghan claim on Pashtunistan. The Pashtunistan issue became the principal source of dispute with Pakistan, although its intensity has varied over time. In 1951, the first serious crisis occurred when Sardar Daud Khan, the then Afghan defence minister, infiltrated Afghan troops as ordinary tribal into Pakistan's tribal area (Anwar1988:32). When Khan was selected as Prime Minister in 1953, there was an indication that he would play Pashtunistan card to exploit the sentiment of Afghan masses, and he did it. In fact Pashtunistan was his main agenda of foreign policy. In 1955, there was a serious border clash between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the issue of Pashtunistan which led Pakistan to close Karachi port for the landlocked Afghanistan (Anwar1988:35). In the same way in 1962 a border dispute erupted between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the latter again closed the Karachi port for Afghanistan's

goods and transition (Anwar1988:36). From these incidents, it seems that Kabul had made the choice rather than Islamabad. Judging by public statements, Pashtunistan has become the single most important issue of Afghan foreign policy (Spain1954:37). After the Saur Revolution, the communist leadership also used the similar rhetoric repeatedly. Therefore, it is clear that all successive Afghan governments created a problem for Pakistan by raising these two issues. PDPA government has introduced reforms in Afghan social and economic field. These reforms were opposed by the orthodox landlords and local cleric and violent resistance began. The communist government reacted aggressively to whoever it opposed. Under these circumstances, the orthodox leadership ran away to Pakistan. Pakistan welcomed them and gave them sanctuaries and weapons. It was the first time when the cross-border confrontation increased. The Islamic leadership attacked the Afghan government from the safe haven in Pakistan. When the Islamic revolt could not control by the PDPA government, it asked help for from the Soviet Union. Under the 'Brezhnev Doctrine', Soviet Union sent its Red Army to assist the PDPA government. The high handedness of the Red Army created much resistance in Afghanistan and across the border. Then US took advantage of this condition by making an alliance with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and offering help to Islamic resistance. But it is important to understand that Pakistan had a great contribution in uniting the Mujahedeen parties at this juncture. Most observers agree that it was Pakistan which forced them to make 'Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedeen' (also known as the Seven Party Mujahedeen Alliance) (Saikal and Maley 1989:42). These all Islamic parties operated from Pakistan notably from Peshawar. In the process of established a friendly government in Kabul, Pakistan instrumentalised the Mujahedeen group to achieve it strategic goals. At the beginning of the Soviet departure, Pakistan relied on the military option. Later Pakistan used Mujahedeen parties in different kinds of government formation in Afghanistan. Mujahideen parties were the most vital instrument of Pakistan's geopolitical design. From the Saur Revolution till the emergence of Taliban, Pakistan supported the Mujahedeen Parties. These Mujahedeen parties were mostly the political resistance unit, which as an organization made their appearance in Peshawar. Pakistan wanted to manage the Afghan conflict to its advantage, for that Islamabad need some united resistance structure. Therefore, Pakistan helped to shape central political units that were earlier a spontaneous but divided resistance movement. These units operated from Peshawar in Pakistan and established their entire network there.

In the Afghan conflict, Pakistan was the main source of finance for Mujahedeen, which came from different channels. The most significant source of finance was the aid and assistance that came from the West, and Islamic countries. Most of this aid and assistance was directly under Pakistan's control. Therefore, aid was distributed through the Pakistani supply network, according to their interests in Peshawar-based parties (Dorrnsoro 2005:139). Apart from these aids Pakistan also diverted humanitarian assistance to its favoured groups particularly Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-I Islami. Another important instrument which Pakistan used in Afghan conflict was the Pakistani Army and its well-known intelligence agency (ISI).

With the help of all these factors, Pakistan found success against the mighty Red Army when Soviet withdrew. But Pakistan was not successful in its goal to establish a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul. On the other hand, the end of the cold war changed the geopolitical situation of this region and the inefficiency of Mujahedeen to take over Kabul, changed Pakistan's strategy. These particular events motivated Pakistan to change its strategy in Afghan theatre. In the given situation, Pakistan favoured a group that had socio-political and financial links with Pakistani state and society. The Jamiat-i- Ulema-i-Islami (JUI) ran the network of Madrassas along the Pashtun belt in the NWFP and Baluchistan where it offered young Pakistanis and Afghan refugees the chance of a free education, food, shelter and military training (Rashid 2000:89). Most of these Madrassas were in rural areas or nearby the Afghan refugee camps. They had been run by 'semi-educated mullahs' (Rashid 2000:89). Although, JUI as a political party had won a few seats in the elections to the National and Baluchistan Assemblies, they had remained in opposition to governments (Rasanayagam 2005:144). In 1993, the situation changed when it became the part of a coalition government that run by Pakistan People Party (PPP) of Benazir Bhutto. Jamiat-i- Ulema-i-Islami had played a pivotal role in its advocacy to the Taliban (Dorrnsoro 2005:245). Its leader, Fazal-ur-Rehman was appointed the chairman of the National Assembly's Committee for Foreign Affairs, a position that enabled him to influence Pakistan's Afghan policy. He established close links with the Army, the ISI and with the Interior Minister retired General Naseerullah Babar. Rahman in his capacity, the Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, built up an extensive network in West Asia to acquire both moral and financial support for Taliban (Rasanayagam 2005:144). It showed that Taliban formation was very calculated and strategic step from

Pakistani state establishment. Pakistan in the process of Taliban formation had given all material and military assistance to them. After the initial success of Taliban, Pakistani interior minister Naseerullah Babur took the credit for the Taliban's success telling journalists privately that the Taliban were their boys (Misdaq 2006:180). According to Amin Saikal, 'the godfather of Taliban' was essentially Babar (Saikal 2004:230). In the Afghan conflict, Pakistan was the key actor who initially provided all support including financial, military, and moral. Pakistan converted the international bridge against anti-Soviet resistance movement to the Taliban rise. All these activities like the movement of resources and material went through the Durand Line. In this situation, it can be easily assumed how the border and landscape reorganized were for this specific requirement.

2.2.2- The Bush's Iraq Adventure

The Bush administration adventure in Iraq war is interpreted differently by different scholars. Some Western writers explain it as a pursued of Al-Qaeda, others as US responsibility of democracy promotion. There is one school of thought which believes it was nothing noble but the narrow American interest which was motivated by the vital source of oil, a strategic resource and, moreover, an industry in which the Bush administration is very much rooted (Ettlinger and Bosco 2004:250). Some important strategic events and White House activity before the Iraq war clearly show that something similar to a grand strategy was going on. After 9/11 the UN had declared a 'war on terror'. In September 2002, the Bush Administration released 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America'⁴. This document recognizes the changed character of "enemies", entailing "shadowy networks" rather than large armies. The approach of Bush administration was seemed very dangers after the 9/11 which looked beyond the Afghanistan and advocated for the "free and open societies on every continent" (Ettlinger and Bosco 2004:252). In the first half of 2002, after the fall of the Taliban, the Bush administration started setting out what could properly describe as a 'neo-conservative strategic doctrine' (Schmidt and Williams 2008). It was moved out in a sequence of speeches by the president himself, including his famous 'axis of evil' State of the Union address, and in the National Security Strategy document

⁴The National Security Strategy, September 2002, The White House Website, [Online: web] Accessed 3, September 2015, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/>

of September 2002 (Allin and Simon 2004-05: 9-10). Six months after this document, regime-changed Iraq war was initiated. Some scholars argue that the Iraq war was a part of earlier Republican strategy, and it was necessary for the sake of the neo-liberal economic model.

The war against Iraq was undertaken in the Bush administration to achieve a military goal established by Dick Cheney as the Secretary of Defence in the earlier (senior) Bush administration, specifically, the dismantling of 'rogue states' such as Iraq; it would also accommodate US business interests that underwrite the neoliberal agenda (Ettlinger and Bosco 2004:252).

Was the war in Afghanistan and Iraq the only solution to the pursuit of the American goal? These two wars not only led to a blood bath and political instability in this part of the world but also created an anti-America or anti-West rhetoric in the Muslim world. According to Kishore Mahbubani (2008) there could be other political and diplomatic strategy that could have solved any of its problems with the Islamic world. As during the cold war, strategic thinking of smart geopolitical experts like Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski assisted America to conquer the Cold War without firing a shot. In the case of Afghanistan and Iran with the right diplomatic posture, America could achieve similar success with the new strategic challenges it faces (Wehner, Mahbubani, Gordon 2008:78).

Iraq war not only diverted resource from Afghanistan, but it created an ideological, moral buster for fundamentalists or jihadists against the Western powers and the US. It gave the global jihadists a wanted crucial point and an emotional issue in their struggle against the US. The March 2003 US-led invasion which toppled Saddam Hussein's regime, scripted for violent conflict where diverse groups became hostile for power. At the same time, Iraq became an attractive battle front that weakened terrorist campaigns elsewhere notably in Afghanistan (Hegghammer 2006:11). According to terrorist experts, the Iraq war negatively impacted the 'global war on terror' world-wide. It created frustration within the Islamic world regarding the aggressive American foreign policy priority. There is a consensus among the Islamic scholars that the Iraq war has facilitated recruitment by Islamist militant groups (Hegghammer 2006:11). That may be one of the prominent reasons that help the resurgences of militant activity in Afghanistan and Pakistan against Western interests and their sympathisers. A look at the suicide attack after the Iraq war in Af-Pak region shows that it increased

dramatically. The Iraq war had a serious setback for those who wanted normalcy in Afghanistan. The negative effect of this war had seen in operational level when the US diverted troops to Iraq rather than consolidating its victory in Afghanistan. Taking advantage of this waiver al-Qaeda and Taliban reorganized itself in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Politically, Iraq war justified Bin Laden's argument that the primary enemy of the Muslim world is the US (Byman and Pollack 2008:56). Four years after the Iraq invasion there was a civil war kind of situation prevalent where Shia and Sunni slaughtered each other (Byman and Pollack 2008:56-57). By early 2007, the conflict had already created more than 2 million refugees who could spread instability to the neighbouring regions. Today the emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and civil war in the vast land of Iraq and Syria, is the legacy of 2003-Iraq War. This fact has been accepted by the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair who used to be the key allies of the US during the 2003 Iraq invasion, after 12 years (Chulov 2015). When Blair was asked whether the Iraq invasion had been the "principal cause" of the rise of ISIS in an interview with Fareed Zakaria on CNN, he said that he saw merit in the argument that the Iraq war was to blame for the rise of ISIS. He said, "I think there are elements of truth in that," (Watt 2015). Iraq war effects have influenced Afghan population particularly the Taliban fighters and the radical minds. For the Afghanistan operation, Iraq war meant that there were fewer US Special Operations forces in Afghanistan and it best suited for regaining Taliban.

2.2.3- Taliban Resurgence

Another most significant factor that works as a catalyst for reterritorialization is the resurgence of Taliban in both sides of Durand Line. As discussed in the previous subsection, it was the US Iraq war that absorbed most of their resources there. In this situation, Afghanistan found itself in a vacuum as far as security is concerned. It helped Taliban to regain its control in the southern part of Afghanistan. The Taliban had driven from power in 2001 more than 15,000 Taliban fighters were killed, and most of the leaders managed to escape to Pakistan. Over the next two years, the fighters rebuilt the movement, which became active again at the beginning of 2003. First they upraised in the south and the east of Afghanistan which are predominantly Pashtun habitats. But this time the Taliban were better organized, using more sophisticated equipment and applying their knowledge of guerrilla fighting to disrupt the Afghan government in the

insurgency-hit southeast Afghanistan (The Dawn: 24 September 2003). Taliban resurgence has worried US officials. In 2003, in congressional testimony, senior defence and state department officials admitted that two years after US-led forces overthrew the Taliban from power in Kabul; they came back to the Af-Pak border. At the same hearing, State Department Coordinator for Afghanistan William Taylor admitted to concern at a “deteriorating security situation along the Afghan-Pakistan border” (Aljazeera: 17 Oct 2003).

Map-3: Af-Pak Conflict Zone



Source- BBC News (2011b)

The renowned Pakistani writer Ahmed Rashid (2010) called the uprising of Taliban as a nationwide movement. He called it more than just an “Afghan phenomenon; it is now a regional phenomenon, with Taliban groups active in Pakistan and some areas throughout Central Asia” (Rashid 2010:356). Today the Taliban is the reality of Afghanistan and the most powerful political and military power in this country. This

fact is accepted by the NATO, Afghan administration and worldwide. The Taliban phenomenon continues to grow in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

There are many reasons for Taliban's revival in a very short time. The first and most popular argument is that Pakistan's state institutions and powerful army had given Taliban leaders sanctuary and technical help to re-emerge. This view has accepted by Indian, Western scholars and even some Pakistani scholars like Ahmed Rashid. The second factor which helped in Taliban's revival as discussed above, was the divergence of the resources in Iraq war. The third factor that is normally missed from all these debates is Taliban's relations with other transnational actors. There is a very interesting piece of work by Kristian Berg Harpviken (2012), which argues that Taliban movement was always a transnational network with little regard for state boundaries, where the main religious authorities would be in Pakistan. Harpviken suggests that the Sunni religious leadership has not been structured in terms of tightly ranked groups, but rather operates in loose networks based on personal loyalties. According to Harpviken (2012) Taliban should be seen as a combination of 'integral part of a transnational terror network' and the same time as a 'genuinely local movement'. The Taliban re-emergence is a classic case of reterritorialization of conflict where people have been recruit from the both sides of the border. The current returnees are the refugees, Afghan people living in exile in Pakistan and new people itself from the Afghanistan helped to its resurgence (Harpviken 2012:211).

Taliban did not resurge in Afghanistan alone but also shows its deep impact on Pakistan. Pakistan's emerging Taliban was undoubtedly encouraged by the virtual success in Afghanistan, and members of the movement had a background in madrasas where they had studied together with Afghan students under the same (largely Pakistani, sometimes international) teachers (Harpviken 2012:213). Pakistani Taliban; the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had officially designed in late 2007 when almost thirteen separate groups joined. Many of these groups similar historical background that goes two decades back. Some of them had fought alongside Afghan resistance in the 1980s, or with the Afghan Taliban in the 1990s (Harpviken 2012:213). From these points it clear that Taliban resurgence has a great role in reterritorialization the conflict or vice- verse.

2.2.4- Failure of Afghan & US- NATO- ISAF Administration to Deliver

It is supposed the failure of US- NATO- ISAF and Afghan administration to deliver in this civil war-ravaged country. The Bonn-I and UNSC Resolutions have given the mandate to these transnational alliances for delivering the basic immunities and reconstructing in this war-prone nation. That was the responsibility even on Hamid Karzai's Kabul administration, which had been given mandate by Afghan people twice. But today one can easily conclude that, these alliances and Kabul administration have failed to achieve their primary objective. This failure was the success of Taliban, al-Qaeda, warlords and like-minded people and organization of Af-Pak, who want the conflict to remain for their survival. This entire scenario helps the reterritorialization of the conflict. Today not only Afghanistan but most of Pakistan is facing the heat of this conflict where fundamentalism, religious and ethnical intolerance and militarization of society are increasing.

Here the question arises as to why US-NATO-IASF and Afghan administration failed to deliver after a dozen years. The objective of particular sub-section is to find out the answer to this frequently asked question. In order to understand this one must begin at the reconstruction debate in the post-conflict state of third world countries. Identifying the legacies of conflicting states R. Luckham (2004), characterized these feature as-

governance vacuums, or the disappearance of normal public administration in all or part of the national territory; the rule of 'un-law', including the breakdown of police and judicial systems, widespread human rights violations, and impunity for the perpetrators; the breakdown or absence of democratic accountability mechanisms; extreme political and social polarisation; 'societies of fear', which normalise violence and human rights abuses; systematic redistribution of power, wealth, and status in favour of those who control the gun or can profit from war economies; and the dis-empowerment of minorities, women, refugees, and a wide range of other groups (Luckham 2004).

All these features seem accurate for Afghanistan in most of last three decades. Luckham (2004) further says that, despite these legacies, the starting point for reconstruction cannot and should not be a simple return to pre-war normality and the reconstitution of the state in its previous form. The war and its legacies create new political realities, which must be recognised and adjusted for in peace-building. To explain regionalised conflict, he argues that some states' authority is undermined by the growth of regionalised conflict. He adds the Afghan conflict in this category, called it a set of

complex links between the war in Afghanistan and the insecurities of its neighbours. In such cases, post-conflict reconstruction often has to be approached as a regional, not a purely national, endeavour. The fundamental priority in Afghanistan is not simply to reconstruct the state and its monopoly of legitimate violence. It is also to establish a legitimate public authority, sufficiently independent of the occupiers to enjoy public respect, and sufficiently inclusive to draw wide support from the diverse ethnic and religious communities of each country (Luckham 2004). The international community and, in particular, the US-led NATO coalition is regarded more as part of the problem than of the solution. Democratisation and state reform too are necessary, but only likely to succeed if they are home-grown and based on some recognition of the powerful political and social forces, including radical Islam, that have emerged from the wreckage of the state. The writer here is against the kind of reconstruction taking place in Afghanistan, saying that the problem remains that reform tends to be conceived in terms dictated by the major donors and international agencies, prioritising the usual formula of liberal democracy, good governance, and economic liberalisation. Instead, he further suggests that there should be an inclusive nation building, so as to reconstitute national citizenship on a more inclusive basis, while also recognising and respecting religious, ethnic, gender, and other societal differences (Luckham 2004:481-508).

Following the same line Astri Suhrke (2007) argues that the post-war reconstruction programme in Afghanistan contains the seeds of radical social change. This led to tensions of the present reconstruction project in light of the experience of similar programmes launched by Afghan communist rulers and their foreign supporters. The central argument is that the conflation of post-war reconstruction with a broader agenda for development and modernisation has brought out a wide range of tensions associated with social change (Suhrke 2007). Simultaneously the prominent foreign role in the undertaking has increasingly had negative effects. As a result, the entire project shows signs of severe contradictions that are adding to the problems caused by the growing insurgency (Astri 2007:1291-1308). So the functioning of the US and its allies created a problem instead of the solution in Afghanistan. This fact also recognized by Saikal (2010), who argues that five key factors have interacted inauspiciously to contribute to this situation. They are- the mosaic nature of the Afghan society, an inappropriate political system that has subsequently led to poor governance, the flawed US and NATO political and military strategies, the prominence of Afghanistan's narcotics trade

and some systemic counter actors, chief among them being the Taliban. According to Saikal (2012), the reconstruction would come through only if there is a change in the US policy by placing a greater emphasis on reform. He also criticized Western power to more stress on democracy promotions. According to him, democratization is one aspect of a multidimensional project of peace-building. It cannot be separated from other dimensions, such as economic, social, political and cultural components (Saikal 2012:217-234). Mentioning the Afghan historical experience, Saikal (2012) argues that a strong presidential system of governance has not worked in Afghanistan. It would be an opportune time for the UN to push for the establishment of a diversified, party-based parliamentary system of governance.

There are some Western military strategies like taking help from the warlords and armed groups to defeat Taliban. This strategy had led to the militarization of Afghanistan. The US military policy of arming militias and community police forces around the country, which he predicts will constitute a destabilising pool of 'guns to hire' for warlords and drug kingpins, when their American paymasters would have gone. "Warlordism is a great threat", Rashid (2012) writes. If we forget US and NATO for a while, even then there was a legitimacy problem with the Karzai government which governed the Afghanistan for almost fourteen years. The 2009 presidential election has not only failed to grant any legitimacy to Karzai, but also brought the legitimacy of the whole regime into question. The massive electoral fraud also intensified ethnic tension, particularly in the north. Furthermore, it demonstrated Taliban's military strength and boosted their morale (Lafraie 2011:469-489). The same event has been repeated in the 2014 Presidential election. There were severe corruption and nepotism charges over the Karzai administration. It was one of the strategic obstacles for campaign's success. The charges of corruption on the Afghan government undermined the legitimacy and effectiveness of this infant democracy (Chaudhuri and Farrell 2011). For instance, the Kabul Bank scandal has shown that the new institution is facing danger not from Taliban but from within the system. It has estimated that the players included in the Kabul Bank case have close ties with Karzai's inner circle, many of whom have profited from the crony capitalism (Rosenberg and Bowley 2012). The Karzai administration was not very cooperative in its response to investigations on all these charges. There was pressure from the US and NATO to act on these grievances. In spite of years of advising by American advisers, Karzai's government has been very

slow to prosecute any high-level corruption case. Over the past decade with tens of billions of dollars of assistance and support goes into the pocket of narrow business and political elite (Rosenberg & Bowley 2012). According to *The New York Times*-

Once the NATO coalition commander told Mr. Karzai that NATO investigators had found that the Afghan officer had stolen tens of millions of dollars' worth of drugs from the country's main military hospital, an institution he ran and where Afghan soldiers regularly died from simple infections because they could not afford to bribe nurses or doctors to treat them (Rosenberg and Bowley 2012).

This fact was even recognized by the White House and there was a debate in 2010, about whether to make Karzai, a more central player in efforts to root out corruption in his own government, including giving him more mistake of graft investigators and notifying him before any arrests (Mazzetti and Nordland 2010). Over the corruptions charges, there was a lot of argument and counterargument from both sides that spoiled the relationship between West and the Afghan Administration. Once on alleged corruption charges, the then UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown told Karzai that he will not put UK troops "in harm's way for a government that does not stand up against corruption" (BBC News 2009a). From the above points, it is clear that the US, NATO-ISAF and Afghan administration failed to deliver on the ground.

2.2.5- War over "Afghan War" within Different American Institutions

There are views and facts which reveal that the different American institutions were bitterly divided on the mode of operation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This fact has extensively been documented by journalist Rajiv Chandrasekaran in his book *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. It shows a clear division in US government and its dysfunctional bureaucracy that have blocked NATO efforts to defeat the Taliban insurgency and bring stability to Afghanistan (Chandrasekaran 2012). According to Chandrasekaran (2012) one hand, Pentagon favoured a broad counterinsurgency program, on the other hand Obama's administration in the White House wanted a narrower effort directed at avoiding Al-Qaeda from recapturing a foothold in Afghanistan. Even some personality as taken their own action that was quite different from these two. Holbrooke, Obama's special representative for Af-Pak, followed the third strategy, trying to negotiate an end the Taliban uprising, which has been supported neither by the White House nor the Pentagon. These different views

were not only shown on the ground but even in the Obama's "war cabinet was too often at war with itself". Chandrasekaran (2012) in his script reveals that these rivalries led to the ineffectiveness of the State Department and US Agency for International Development (USAID) in reconstructing Afghanistan.

This fact was also recognized by retired General Stanley McChrystal, who authored the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. McChrystal after his retirement wrote that "Obama's first year in office was marked by creeping mistrust between the White House and the Pentagon over Afghan war policy, with repeated requests for more troops fuelling the suspicion" (Alexander 2013). Obama initially approved 17,000 additional troops, but the Pentagon soon had to come back to ask for 4,000 more. When McChrystal became commander of international forces later that year, he conducted a strategic reassessment and sought 40,000 more. The rising mistrust ultimately played a role in McChrystal's resignation. In June 2010, the McChrystal stepped down after *Rolling Stones* magazine ran an article entitled "The Runaway General" in which it quoted members of McChrystal's staff disparaging top White House officials and allies. McChrystal was summoned back to Washington, where he resigned (Alexander 2013). This kind of conflict has also been seen between the White House and the State Department. These things always impact the morale of soldiers and officers who have worked on the ground negatively.

2.2.6- Pakistan as an Instrument of Reterritorialization the Conflict

Pakistan is an important actor in the entire Afghan conflict which has attempted to influence the conflict in its favour but also largely been influenced by it. Some scholars, policy makers, even Karzai occasionally blamed himself for the insurgency in the Pakistani army and ISI. In fact, it was the sanctuary in Pakistan from where the main insurgent groups- Quetta Shura Taliban, the Haqqani Network and Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) are able to direct and regenerate forces (Chaudhuri & Farrell 2011). This process naturally limits the outcome of the ISAF military campaign in Afghanistan.

As the NATO's end game nears, Pakistan continues to support the group along with key allied networks such as the Haqqani network led by Jalaluddin Haqqani actively. In an unprecedented move, in September 2011, Admiral Michael Mullen, the outgoing

chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, described the Haqqani network as being a “veritable arm” of the ISI. According to C. Christine Fair (2012), American lawmakers are slowly coming to recognize that Islamabad will never sacrifice its efforts to manipulate Afghan affairs as long as Pakistan remains ensnared in a conflict with India as long as Pakistan fears that Afghanistan will allow India access to its territory and developmental programs to the detriment of Pakistan’s perceived interests. To prevent such a future, Pakistan has sought to ensure that it has a dominant role in any Afghan settlement with the various government and anti-government forces. Pakistan wants a greater role in the peace process to ensure that any settlement in Afghanistan will have Taliban representation that will be favourable toward Pakistan and will help limit India’s footprint along the border (Fair 2012:100-113). According to Fair, the US-India strategic partnership has led to increased uncertainty for Pakistan. India, under the US security umbrella and with US approval and encouragement, has re-ensconced itself in Afghanistan. The US strategic partnership with India signals to Pakistan that America’s long-term partner in the region is India (Fair 2012:100-113). Pakistani anxieties have deepened because of India’s expanding footprint in Afghanistan. This has even been recognized by McChrystal, who argued that “while Indian activities largely benefit the Afghan people”, they exacerbate regional tensions and encourage Pakistani countermeasures in Afghanistan or India (Chaudhuri and Farrell 2011).

Pakistan is today is facing a serious dilemma regarding its Afghan options. A Taliban-run Afghanistan would not be ideal from Pakistan’s perspective. The last Taliban government was an embarrassment to Pakistan on some occasions. However, Pakistan would vastly prefer the Taliban over an Afghan government with close ties to New Delhi (Schaffer 2010:233-239). Pakistan has worked tirelessly to secure its strategic goals in Afghanistan: minimising India’s influence and maximising its own. Pakistan twisted arms to prevent Turkey from inviting India to the Istanbul Conference on Afghanistan that preceded the meeting in London (Schaffer 2010:233-239).

2.3- Impact of Reterritorialization the Conflict

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that NATO with Afghanistan and Pakistan have been closely responsible for the reterritorialization of the conflict. History also plays its role in reterritorialization. This reterritorialization has not given any advantages to any party that are the part of this process. This process has only

created a man-made disaster. The real losers in this process are the innocent citizens of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Still no one can predict when reterritorialization would be beneficial for this part of the world as in Europe and North America. Reterritorialization has had some serious impact on the behaviour of actors as discussed in the following pages.

2.3.1- Reconciliation and Talk with Taliban

When you cannot defeat your enemy than talking is part of the face-saving mechanism, which has been true in the case of Afghanistan. It might have been the British, Soviet or now the American, all follow the same path. After so many years of counter-insurgency programmes, there was an acknowledgement in early 2010 that complete reliance on a military strategy is not going to work in Afghanistan. Therefore, there must be some other solution to the problem in Afghanistan. But any reconciliation debate is unfair, without the participation of Taliban in any future reconciliation process. After a long hesitation, the Obama administration on 1 December 2009 categorically came out in support of efforts by the Afghan government to open the door to those Taliban, who abandoned violence and respected the human rights of their fellow citizens (Chandra 2011). According to Vishal Chandra (2011), the American turnaround has to be seen in the context of the time frame given in the revised strategy for withdrawal of coalition troops from Afghanistan beginning mid-2011. The Obama administration continues to back Karzai's efforts to reach out to the Taliban leadership. It has induced an added sense of competitiveness between an assertive Kabul and an equally assertive Islamabad for control over the reconciliation process with the Taliban. Though both Kabul and the West have been trying to reach out to the Taliban leadership based in Pakistan, even roping in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Turkey in the process, Pakistan has so far ensured that all efforts routed through Islamabad (Chandra 2011:836-848). Given Washington's growing policy differences with both Islamabad and Kabul, the three countries may find it difficult to work together on the issue within the tripartite arrangement in times to come. Recently, Saudi Arabia too has expressed its unwillingness to mediate between Kabul and the Taliban despite Kabul reiterating the need for a Saudi role in the process (Chandra 2011:836-848). Still nothing is very clear regarding the reconciliation talks with Taliban. There are numerous questions as who are talking to Taliban under what conditions or whether the Taliban leadership would agree in power sharing agreement with Kabul government.

One does not know how the situation would evolve in coming four to five years as the Afghan conflict is likely to get more regionalised (Chandra 2011:836-848). According to Ashok K. Behuria (2011) reconciliation has become the most popular word in Af-Pak strategy. He argues that the reconciliation has been projected as an important element of the process of a phased military disengagement by international forces from Afghanistan. But it is very tempting to find a way of mainstreaming the Taliban forces by engaging them in a power-sharing dialogue with the Kabul administration, despite the poor record of the earlier efforts like the programme Tahkim-i-Sulh (National Programme for Reconciliation). In 2005, the indirect mediation by Saudi Arabia as well as assurances of help and support from Pakistan, could not bring the Taliban to the table (Behuria 2011:386-390). Even then NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen acknowledged that the Taliban were not keen on reconciliation. Apart from this, there is a huge trust deficit among the countries of the region. Therefore, Afghanistan for them is a field of competition rather than cooperation. Behuria (2011) predicts that hard-core Taliban are unlikely to talk. Afghan government may be talking to some ex-Taliban or low-level Taliban operatives. But this may not work in the long run. Given Saudi Arabia's refusal to mediate and the inability or unwillingness of Pakistan to persuade the top Taliban leadership to join the talks, the prospects for a consensual deal that can work are very remote (Behuria 2011:386-390). At present, there is utter confusion regarding the talks with Taliban, though the new mediator, China is striving hard to bring them to the negotiation table.

2.3.2- NATO Withdrawal Plan

Once it was confirmed that NATO could not win this war, it was decided that they would have to withdraw from Afghanistan sooner or later. The Obama administration is stressed about the fiscal deficit and the strategic over-commitment embodied in two ongoing wars. The condition of US economy was not very solid. The president's terms sheet stated that in future if nearly 100,000 troops remain in Afghanistan, the total cost for this option in Afghanistan is about \$113 billion per year (Allin 2011:47-68). Obama's speeches and interviews conveyed the necessity to restore a balance between international commitments, on the one hand, and American capabilities and resources on the other, a requirement that he thought his predecessor had virtually ignored (Allin 2011:47-68). So the austerity is a real and limiting condition of international politics for the foreseeable future. Although there are the options as, to give up military

assistance to a country like Egypt (\$100b) and transfer it to Afghanistan (Allin 2011:47-68). But it didn't find a realistic outcome under the given circumstances. There were human costs too. American combat fatalities in Afghanistan rose from 155 in 2008 to 317 in 2009, topping out at 499 in 2010, the year of the surge. It also creates pressure to call back all troops from Afghanistan (Allin 2011:47-68). It was hard to conceive that US will continue to fight a war in Afghanistan with 100,000 troops for another five years without a broad consensus that it is essential to US strategic interests (Allin 2011:47-68).

Nevertheless, NATO allies were refusing to provide adequate forces on their part because European leaders find it difficult to ignore their public opinion to support decade-long Afghan war. In the context of the global economic crisis, European states have reviewed their defence expenditure as the austerity measure. UK was effective, therefore, the first Western state to undertake a complete defence and security review in the 'age of austerity' (Cornish and Dorman 2012). Within NATO members, there were differences of view over alliance's exit strategy from the Afghan end game, all of which had previously agreed on 2014 as the target date. Even before 2014 all had been announcing different times for the withdrawal of combat forces from Afghanistan (Dorman 2012). It is the larger background where at the end of 2014, NATO decided to end its combat mission in Afghanistan. Although, they have remained there for other proposes which they called training and support mission for the Afghan army from 1 January 2015 (BBC News 8 December 2014). It was a paradox that when NATO-led ISAF was planning to withdraw its combat mission from Afghanistan, violence erupted across the country. At the beginning of 2015, there were about 13,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan under a new, two-year mission named "'Resolute Support'" (Aljazeera America 2014). It is believed that most of the remaining troops are American.

2.3.3- Uncertain Future Ahead

The Afghan situation had deteriorated as the date of withdrawal was approaching. William Maley (2012), highlights the contradictions between two events. One hand NATO has announced the transition plan and on the other hand the key anti-Afghan government elements- the Taliban's "Quetta Shura" the radical "Haqqani network," and the Hezb-e Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmaytar, intensified their attacks on targets in the north and east of Afghanistan. They also made greater use of targeted assassinations

of prominent Afghan figures, as well as mounting some mighty assaults in Kabul (Maley 2012:88-99). The proposition that a political settlement is needed to end the war in Afghanistan has not gained increasing attention in recent time. For their part, Karzai and many Afghan political elites lacked a genuine commitment to reform, calling into question the viability of a state-building. Much before the transition in Afghanistan a report was published by The United States Institute of Peace in 2011, clearly saying that there is a missing workable political strategy for future of Afghanistan. According to this report, the insurgency shows no signs of subsiding; external resources are fuelling conflict through a war and aid economy. The Afghan political elites lack a genuine commitment to reform (Jarvenpaa 2011). All these elements are crucial for restoring peace and state building in Afghanistan. In the end, the report concludes a danger proposition by saying that even the best Afghan army and police units are barely capable of operating on their own and often lack the will to challenge the insurgency (Jarvenpaa 2011). The situation remained more or less the same after five years. According to Maley, Pakistan would be able to continue meddling in its neighbour's affairs despite mounting evidence that it was undermining any prospects for stability in Afghanistan (Maley 2012:88-99). Another problem was built within the Afghanistan political space. The Afghan domestic political system is not working properly, and there are continuous disputes between different institutions (President's office, election commission, Wolesi Jirga). Afghans increasingly confronted a political environment in which the president's ability to manipulate the political system has been limited by both his lack of personal authority and his inability to offer patronage for the long run (Maley 2012:88-99). It has been applicable for both Karzai and the current President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani. After Burhanuddin Rabbani's assassination, the Afghan government publicly abandoned the idea of seeking direct reconciliation with the Taliban till the mid-2015. Instead, the most appropriate option they found was to deal directly with Pakistan (Maley 2012:88-99). Such a reorientation made obvious sense in the wake of Mullen's public linking of the Haqqani network to the ISI. The Ghani administration's attempt to invested vast amounts of energy and political assets in repairing ties with Islamabad has not shown any radical improvement yet. On the current situation, the prospects for any resumption of negotiations appear to be poor.

Rashid (2010 a) was not very optimistic about the future of Afghanistan even in 2010. None of the attempts at rebuilding the Afghan state over the last decade have worked. Rashid asks what assurance is there that they will work in future. The dates and debates in the White House tell only half the story. Afghanistan is going through a series of crises. Exploring his ground knowledge about the fragmentation of Afghan social fabric Rashid (2010 a) says that the non-Pashtuns are broadly against any peace deal with the Taliban. Fourteen years after 2001, the divisions between the Pashtuns and the non-Pashtun nationalities that make up the complex weave of the Afghan national carpet are worse than ever. The non-Pashtuns mistrust talks with the Taliban. Despite several attempts by Kabul to arrange a national consensus, the non-Pashtuns are deeply suspicious that any deal will only strengthen Pashtun hegemony in the country and further reduce minority rights. As a result, non-Pashtun leaders from all the ethnic groups have launched political and grassroots movements to oppose talks with the Taliban. Meanwhile, the Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, and Turkmen minorities have achieved advantages that cause immense resentment among the Pashtuns. For the first time, the Tajiks and Hazaras dominate the upper officer class in the army and police even though US training and recruitment includes a strict parity between all ethnic groups. Tajik and Uzbek warlords have become so rich and powerful in the north that they now barely listen to Kabul (Rashid 2010a). At the end of 2015, the event of Afghanistan suggests that Afghanistan's situation after the withdrawal of NATO is no better. In some cases, it is worse than ever. The Kunduz has been captured by Taliban so easily and rapidly. That indicates the deteriorated situation on the ground where Taliban has controlled vast territory. There is the growing threat of ISIS, which is making inroads into various provinces (Mohmand 2015). The rising uncertainties rightly portrayed by *The Guardian*, in its editorial—"There are echoes of the US retreat from Iraq in today's Afghanistan" (The Guardian 9 Aug. 2015). But at the same time there are some rays of hope as a new Afghan middle class has grown in the last decade.

2.4- Summary

From the above discussion, it seems that rather than a solution NATO engagement has negatively impacted the wider region. NATO's fourteen years of Af-Pak policy have made the region more volatile and uncertain as ever. The possibilities of any terror activities in the region and beyond remain as before. The Af-Pak region has faced severe consequences of NATO engagement. Tens of thousands of people have lost their

lives in the drone attacks, air strikes, suicide bombings and terror activities. NATO's Afghanistan mission has gone beyond its state boundary. Pakistan as a society has been dramatically radicalised and militarised through this mission. Beyond Af-Pak, Central Asia and West Asia have also been negatively influenced by NATO's Afghan mission. The Kunduz incident after the withdrawal of NATO combat mission has shown the vulnerability of Afghanistan as a functional state to control its jurisdiction. At this time, it is hard to predict how the reconciliation between the different groups will go. The survival of state authority and legitimacy is the biggest challenge in coming years. It can be concluded that NATO has instigated re-established a new conflict instead of a holistic resolution of the existed Afghan problem.

CHAPTER 3

India's Af-Pak Policy: Continuity and Change

3.1- Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to see India's Af-Pak policy after independence to the contemporary period. Afghanistan and Pakistan are two independent and sovereign nation-states. Therefore, their separate existence cannot be undermined and they have to be dealt with separately. It has already been discussed in the previous chapters that there are certain issues, which are associated with both of them. There is nothing specific as India's Af-Pak doctrine or nomenclatures. However, there are some important issues which are correlated with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Whenever India makes a policy for one of these countries, it considers the other one in the calculation on particular issues. Due to the shared history, geography, identity, culture and the Afghan conflict over the last four decades these two states seem to intertwine on specific issues. This part is an attempt to discuss India's foreign and security policies, which are interrelated with these two states directly and indirectly. Therefore, it focuses on how India's current engagement in the region takes inspiration from its past; and what are the new emerging trends in India's larger foreign and strategic policy regarding this region. This chapter also looks at how India's engagement with Afghanistan has affected the trilateral relationship of Afghanistan-India-Pakistan. For this it is important to understand the British legacy on India's Af-Pak policy.

3.2- India's Af-Pak policy: The Legacy of British Raj

As a successor state of the British Raj, India after independence has faced the greatest dilemma for its security. It is appropriate for India to follow the British policy in the subcontinent, which has been developed over the century by some of the greatest minds with greatest resources. The structure of defence and security, which was established by the British, was well tested and reliable. As for the geography, it has changed much after the partition of the subcontinent. There are new encounters and realities due to the partition, but India still is away from the scientific frontiers. In this case, it's worthwhile to understand the Raj heritage that influences India's Af-Pak policy. C. Raja Mohan (2014), argues that British Raj's policy is the determining factor of contemporary Indian

foreign policy (Mohan 2014c, Mohan 2014d). It also seems true for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The British had created a very complicated arrangement in South Asia, which helped the Raj to prevent the external power to come in the subcontinent. It was a challenge for the successor Indian state to follow the British strategy in the wake of tragic partition (Mohan 2014c, Mohan 2014d). The Raj had signed a treaty with the three Himalayan kingdoms in the nineteenth century that would protect India from external threats. Much like the Raj, first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru believed in the importance of sustaining Delhi's dominance in the subcontinent and preventing other powers from meddling in its neighbourhood. Nearly seven decades after independence, this proposition continues in India's foreign policy (Mohan 2014c, Mohan 2014d).

In 2002, the then Indian External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh at a conclave organized by *India Today* quoted extensively from Lord Curzon's celebrated 1907 Romanes lecture on frontiers'. On this, Mohan wrote in *The Hindu* "why should the imperialist vision of Lord Curzon outlined nearly a century ago in British India; be of any significance to New Delhi's foreign policy?" (Mohan 2002). In this background, some scholars suggest that the political context might have changed, but geography has not. Mohan argues that as India is growing stronger, it will certainly call upon to play a greater role in the region. The real question is not whether but what kind of a role? (Mohan 2002). Certainly, it cannot be like the imperialists or the hegemon as some seen in the context of Indian foreign policy⁵. In today's globalized world interdependence and technology have made frontiers irrelevant. In this case Lord Curzon's emphasis on the significance of fixing the boundaries, regarded in the context of expanding empires, remains very relevant for India. Stable borders can make India's frontiers into zones of economic cooperation rather than bones of political conflict (Mohan 2002).

⁵ India has been assumed by few scholar as the regional hegemon of South Asia. This assumption relies frequent when neighbouring states blamed India for propagating its bullies in different issue. Islamabad continues blamed India for hegemon role and in the recent years Kathmandu has doing the same. New Delhi itself identify as regional hegemon when they sees the South Asian region as its sphere of influence. But few Indian planner are nor comfortable with the regional hegemon because they acknowledge India as the global power instead of regional. For more see- Hilali, A. Z.(2001), "India's Strategic thinking and its National Security policy", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 5 (September/October 2001) and Mitra, Subrata K. (2003), "The reluctant hegemon: India's self-perception and the South Asian strategic environment", *Contemporary South Asia*, 12:3, 399-417,

According to George K. Tanham (1992) apart from geography, culture and history; it was the Raj which influenced the character and direction of the modern Indian strategy. He further argues that the involvement of the British Raj provided India a geopolitical frame of references that continue to influence present-day strategy (Tanham 1992:1). Tanham argues that the British Raj contributed to Indian strategic views, by passing the new geopolitical concept in this region like the need of 'Buffer State' in the northwest part of India. It was the imperial policy made in London, but purely in consideration of India's defence. London gave the Raj a significant autonomy, agreeing on them to the strategic defence of India from an Indian perspective (Tanham 1992:25). For the British Raj, the most important factor was the security of India.

"The 'defence of India' question was unique and was perhaps the single most important strategic problem to confront British soldiers, statesmen and strategists throughout the nineteenth century" (Preston 1969:58). The North West Frontier presented the only strategic boundary that Britain had to defend for its largest interest. On one hand through it, the Raj could protect its Indian Empire and on the other hand, they could achieve potentially a title of great military power in European continental tussle (Preston 1969:58). To achieve this strategic solution, the Raj in its initial years worked through political agents, treaties, aid and assistance. But later it converted into direct military confrontation known as Anglo-Afghan wars. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Franco-Russia design in India, as assumed by the British, both in Calcutta and London was the important factor that influenced British policy towards North West Frontier or India's defence. The British Empire had concerns over the safety of its Indian colony. It was the development in the first decade of the nineteenth century when the contending imperial powers Britain, France and Russia had eyes over Asia to extend their respective Empire. Therefore, the Eastern Question compelled the British to take a close look at Afghanistan and its surrounding (Tripathi 1973:v-2). This was the larger framework, where the Raj had developed its Afghanistan and North Western Frontier policy. But as the period of British Imperialism had continued more than a century, consequently there were uncertainties and complexities in their unitary policy. There were different schools within the British power circle to deal with this complexity.

British interest was renewed in this part of the world when in 1807 the Persia signed the treaty of Finkenstein with France. Under this condition, Persia agreed to accept a French military mission in its capital. In the same year, Napoleon made the treaty of

Tilsit with Russia (Tripathi 1973:2). These political developments created alarm for the British Empire. To counter them, the British also made some arrangement with Persia as “Preliminary Treaty” in 1809, but the Shah of Persia had to sign the Treaty of Gulistan with Russia. The treaty of Gulistan had started the rivalry between the Russia and Great Britain. The loss of Persian prestige by France has given the British the opportunity to make some agreement, like 1809; and the Treaty of Tehran in 1814. The Treaty of Tehran was given anti-Russian inclined to the British policy in Persia. Later this led to the enmity between these two European imperial powers. England was trying to build a zone of defence extending from Tehran to the heart of Central Asia. In contrast, the Russian secure advance in the east posed danger to British India. Russia expanded the ground under its control to the south by conquering and occupying Central Asian kingdoms and northern parts of Persia (the Caspian provinces and the towns of Darband and Baku) (Nawid 1997:586). In this background, to protect its huge Empire, the British led the policy and diplomacy where Kabul, Herat and Tehran assumed great importance.

Czarist Russia on its part had shown an aggressive policy towards the south and collapsed Persian power. Under the treaty of Turkmanchai in 1828 Persia surrendered some of its provinces and agreed to commercial privileges for Russia. This led to a conflict with Herat and Afghanistan and introduced a new factor in British policy (Tripathi 1973:3). From 1832 to 1857 Herat became the main object of Persian design. Ahmad Shah, the ruler of Persia, was encouraged by the Russians to compensate for losses in the northwest by grabbing Herat, which at the time was ruled by Kamran. In 1837, the Russian was supported by the Persian military to attack and besiege Herat (Nawid 1997:587). The British were had concerned that if the Shah of Persia grabbed Herat, then he would have targeted Kabul and Kandahar. Ultimately, it would help Russia to penetrate into Afghanistan without any effort. When Persia threatened Herat with the help of Russia, the British became worried about their designs on Afghanistan. In this situation, the policy of ‘preserving the independence and securing the friendship with the Afghanistan’ was the strategy of the British government (Tripathi 1973:4). The British in order to accomplish its strategy, sent a mission under the Burnes but it failed to achieve the proposed outcome. It was the unfriendly attitude of the British Indian government, which approached the Amir of Persia. As discussed in the first chapter, it

caused the first Anglo-Afghan war. Then in similar conditions the second Afghan war took place.

It was 'Russia's post-Crimean policy of Eastern conquest' which led to insecurity for the Raj. The Russian Empire had conquered Tashkent, Samarkand and Khanates of Central Asia, which was seen by the Raj as deliberately designed to bring India under the Russian influence. Russia had constructed a web of railways that was connected Central Asia to Russia's Caucasian and seemed a threatening implication for British India's defence and security (Preston 1969:62). The makers of Indian defence policy during the Raj had the crucial justification of the Anglo-Afghan War, which was the core of its strategic problem until 1875. It was the danger of Russian dominance among the Afghans, of border raids on the North West Frontier. There were some Afghan attacks, perhaps solidified by Russian detachments, arms and money and followed by penetration into the plains of Punjab and a widespread revolt- the danger of ignition, rather than of direct invasion of India (Preston 1969:62). In the given circumstances, to make a rational defence policy for its North West Frontier vis-a-vis Afghanistan was a challenge for the Raj. Therefore, there was a dilemma within the imperial establishment on how to deal with 'Oriental guerrilla warfare'. Regarding this, there were broadly two schools. The first school favoured an appeasement-like policy of 'masterly inactivity', officially articulated by Sir John Lawrence in 1868 and largely functional by his successors Mayo and Northbrook, which said that since all threats were distant and chimerical, internal military consolidation and a refusal to participate in trans-frontier diplomacy were the intelligent doctrines. This school favoured Indian defence policy along on this line. Consequently, the Indian defence policy during this doctrine was the positive isolation of the buffer states. As a lesson learned by the Raj, since the Anglo-Afghan wars that it adopted a policy of non-interference, or "'Masterly Inactivity'" (Preston 1969:62-63).

The second school for India's defence was known as the forward one. This was reverse from the first school and more assertive as far as the cross- frontier was concerned (Preston 1969:62-63). One of the prominent figures who favoured this school was Sir Charles Mac Gregor. He published a treatise on *Mountain Warfare: An Essay on the Conduct of Military Operations in Mountainous Countries* in 1866. In this essay, he favoured the best method of defending a mountain frontier consisted of a defensive-offensive strategy.

After 1947 when India emerged as a main successor state of the Raj, it had very limited experience and resources to make Indian 'strategic and defence policies. Therefore, it was natural to adopt the successive Raj policy. But as the partition was a new phenomenon, there is nothing remains to learn from the Raj experience (Tanham, 1992:22). But Waheguru Pal Singh (1996) in the response to the Raj legacy argues that the scholar who is advocating the Raj legacy is more generous to contributions made by the Raj. According to him, much overhyped strategic legacies of the British Raj have their roots in the Mughal origins and practices (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:20). It can be argued that apart from some valid points against the Raj legacy, its influence in India's foreign and security policies, particularly in Af-Pak case, cannot be ignored.

3.3- Crucial Factors Determining India's Af-Pak Policy

There are always some factors that influence the foreign policy of a particular country. Concerning India's Af-Pak policy, these are the following feature shaping India's choice. According to Harsh V. Pant (2009), four key guidelines that shapes Indian foreign policy in recent years are: the changing global balance of the power, the emerging global nuclear order, terrorism and India's pursuit of energy security (Pant 2009:12). Out of these four, the latter two are directly related to Af-Pak region.

3.3.1- Geography

In realistic terms the state is a military organization, whose objectives are to struggle for power. Power has different means and objective, but among them the geographic objectives are enormous. The geographic achievements, which will proliferate the state's relative military strength, are the oldest and the most determined. There are several types of geographic objectives, in terms of foreign policy. Most important is the expansion of territory, resolving frontier and looking for a buffer zone to protect the state (Spykman and Rollins 1939:391). One of the important objectives of foreign policy is maintenance of the political boundary that divides two governmental and administrative systems (Spykman and Rollins 1939:396).

Geography has profoundly affected Indian strategic thinking and strategy. It is the geographical setup that assumed a threat from the northwest, for Indian defence. In the case of the Af-Pak region, it is a political boundary defined by the imperial power. It is

unfortunate that the frontier zone became a zone of struggle, instead of an area of cooperation. The particular setup of geography has failed to keep India secure (Tanham 1992:2). It is also meaningful to note that before independence, it was the alien invaders who through this part invaded India. According to Tanham (1992) the defensive apparatus of the Raj, which had secured India was no longer there (Tanham 1992:22). After partition, a 'hostile state' has emerged on the same northwest. Now it is not a question of rare invasions, but continued hostile regimes in the neighbourhood, that use different kinds of warfare models against India. There may be a debate on the perceptions, the amount and the nature of the threat from the northwest at the given time. But no one can ignore the role of geography in India's larger foreign and security policies.

It is the legacy of the British to look for a frontier that would protect India's heartland from trouble from another part, but at the same time one cannot restrict to economic interdependence and prosperity. When the other regions (Europe, North America) are removing the obstacles of a frontier and moving towards the path of economic fortune; it seems Af-Pak region has created a dilemma for India's prosperity. There is nothing like a scientific frontier in today's world. As argues by Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins (1939), the "natural frontier, its fake scientific basis, has been more confusing than helpful, and a study of frontier changes over the last five thousand years" (Spykman and Rollins 1939: 398). Therefore Af-Pak geographical setup makes it India's concern and also an opportunity to look beyond its region. Where geography as a frontier protects from the hostile powers, the same also creates security concern if it ill defined. In India's case, the Af-Pak region was the greatest concern for the centuries remains so, but in a different way.

3.3.2- Security and Unity of India

The framework of Indian foreign policy was evolving during the national movement led by Nehru world vision for a new country. But the tragic event of partition, of course created prolonged fight within the region and there was simply no prior outline that help to understand that conflict. This conflict caused a somewhat greater concern for building up the defence to discourage attack. Therefore, much of India's military strategic thinking has been articulated in the environment of protecting territory (Mehta

2009:216). As far as the determining factors of India's foreign policy are concerned, it is the pursued to advance its security. This idea of security is largely defensive in nature and deterring attacks on India (Mehta 2009:223).

According to Pratap Bhanu Mehta (2009), India's territorial worries gave rise to three durable complexes. The first is to reiterate even more strongly the idea that South Asia was a zone of India's supremacy. The second complexities forms the circumstances where it will be nearly impossible to bargain over territory with any of India's neighbours. Third, the issue of territoriality has also given rise to an unsatisfied desire for identity. (Mehta 2009:216). In the case of South Asia, many of the states have suspension on a fear of the other to secure their identity, and it continues to cast shadow over India's approach to the world. Even as India rises high to look at the world, South Asia will firmly dictate its vision (Mehta 2009:217). South Asia is the main challenge and threats to India's national security and defence. India's perceptions of national security and defence strategies have been largely concerned with regional threats. India's security strategy and attitude have developed by keeping this assessment in the notice. India's defence policy has been influenced by a number of regional factors such as Pakistan, China, nuclear weapons and Kashmir (Budania 2003:88).

The Af-Pak as a region has certain elements, which have been challenging India's internal security & unity, and stopping India from reaching out to Central and West Asia. As Tanham discusses, "Indian regards security in terms of the strategic unity of the subcontinent" (Tanham, 1992:22-24). India seeks its supremacy in it surrounding therefore, against any interferes of other power in the region. Internal security is the primary concern for India, but it is the Pakistan that has challenged India on this front. Kashmir is the classical case of how India sees a close relation between internal security and outside antagonism (Tanham, 1992:22-24). Therefore, Indian never compromised on Kashmir.

In the twenty-first century, non-traditional security threat is the greatest challenge for nation-states as seen in the case of terrorism. Since the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the world community is getting afraid of threats from the non-state actors, mostly terrorists which have the capabilities of carrying on large-scale operations (Budania 2003:79). Be it the attack of 9/11 in the US or 26/11 in India, they are challenging the state's power through terrorism. As for India's security, it seems the most pressing threat right now. But when non-state actors are used by the state for proxy war, it

becomes dangerous to prevent them. India is facing this danger in Kashmir. According to Praveen Swami (2007), Kashmir *Jihad* has claimed well over 40,000 lives till 2007⁶. He further says that there is merit in the argument that the culture of *jihad* was strengthened by the revolution in Iran and resistance against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. As for *jihad* in Kashmir, it began with the war of 1947–1948 and continued until the early 1960s, waged by small groups of Pakistan-backed covert operatives, whose principal objective was to bring pressure to bear on political processes in Indian-administered Kashmir (Swami 2007:145). The situation had radically changed when the Soviet Union invaded in Afghanistan. Pakistan could play the *jihad* card openly with the protection of another superpower, the US. For India, too, the Afghan war would have deep concerns: this war was the vessel in which a new phase of Pakistan's *jihad* in Jammu and Kashmir started. To Pakistan's strategic establishment, proxy war could be operated where it was not possible to win the direct war against a hostile power. Comparatively it has low budget and due to the Afghan *Jihad* a large number of trained *jihadis* were available. According to Swami, "as a result of events in Afghanistan, Pakistan's strategic establishment would soon arrive at a significant conclusion: that it could do to India what it had done to the Soviet Union in Afghanistan" (Swami 2007:145).

Apart from Kashmir, it was the Khalistan issue which threatened India's territorial integrity. It is another case where an internal secessionist movement has a link with an external power, operating from the same Af-Pak region. From the early 1980s, a movement of the Sikh right mission for the establishment of a theocratic state called the Khalistan, had been gathering momentum in Punjab. Its influence rapidly increased in the Punjab during the summer of 1984, when Bhindranwale the leader who was

⁶ But there is another perspective to look the terrorism debate in India which highlight that the so-called 'Islamic *Jihad*' is not the biggest threat in terms of the death toll. Pakistani columnist, Raza Rumi argue that some sections of the Indian media and the political elite have exaggerated the fear and threat of religious extremism. Citing 'The Global Terrorism Index' (GTI) he writes in The Express Tribune that "religious extremists were responsible for only 14 per cent of the total deaths in India that occurred due to terrorism. Maoist groups were responsible for 41 per cent of such deaths, while separatist groups in the northeast were responsible for 25 per cent of deaths". But this research is not accomplished to deal with terrorism larger debate. We are looking here the perceptions and the established notion of Indian security debate vis-a-vis Af-Pak. Yes these perceptions may challenge as other realistic arguments. See for more- Raza Rumi, Global terrorism - myth and reality, the Express Tribune, 3 December, 2015, Accessed on 5 December 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1003336/global-terrorism-myth-and-reality/>

running this movement had initiated a low-intensity campaign of terror, targeting political adversaries. In these circumstances, an operation conducted by Indian Army called 'Operation Bluestar', against the separatist movement started at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. But Indian Army personnel were challenged with lethal arms by the extremist from inside the temple. An armoured personnel carrier brought in to provide some cover to the troops was hit by an RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade, a weapon which according to Swami "widely used by Mujahedeen forces in Afghanistan but one until then not known to have been possessed by Khalistan terrorists"(Swami 2007:146). Pakistani intelligence agency had introduced some level of communication with key figures in the Khalistan movement as early as the 1970s. The post-Bluestar security situation in Punjab had deteriorated. From 1990 to 1992 were the most violence afflicted years in the Khalistan war, where total death tolls had reached 13411, including civilians, terrorists and security forces (Swami 2007:146). Rifles like the AK-47 and AK-56 commonly appeared in Punjab. Terrorist groups came to be armed with RPG-7 rockets, machine guns, sophisticated technology such as night-vision apparatus, Dragunov sniper rifles and wireless transceiver sets. All these equipments were supplied to Pakistan's intelligence services during the Afghan war for forward distribution in Afghanistan. Pakistani support for the Khalistan movement was proved by the fact that 26 percent of the Kalashnikovs detained in Punjab were seized along the India-Pakistan border itself (Swami 2007:148). Swami (2007) thought different evidence proved that Pakistani intelligence personnel had directly participated with the Khalistani groups. In a similar way Punjab has emerged as one of the notorious places in India, for the narcotics from 1984, which has trafficked through Afghanistan via Pakistan (Swami 2007:149-150). Narcotics and drug habits within youth became a political issue in Punjab during 16th general election in India (Pandher 2014).

Another security threat for India was the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region or particularly in the irresponsible hand. This proliferation also has links with the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan's involvement in the anti-Soviet operation. In response to Pakistan's desire to acquire nuclear weapons or particularly the "Islamic bomb" in April 1979, the US enforced the 'Symington Amendment', legislation that authorised sanctions if Pakistan was found to be ignoring its non-proliferation objectives. But when Pakistan emerged as the frontline state against the anti-Soviet operation, US lifted the Symington Amendment, and it helped Pakistan to restart its nuclear weapons programme. Due to anti-Soviet *Jihad*, Pakistan by 1982, succeeded in

enriching uranium between 1983s and 1984, for an atomic weapon (Swami 2007:151). Over the years, nuclear weapons have changed the balance of power in the region. Not going to much debate of the nuclear weapons and its consequence in the region; this discussion focuses on how it is one of the issues which is a remaining the real threat to Indian security. Both Pakistan's nuclear programme and insurgency in Kashmir and Punjab are threats to India's security and integrity. These are associated with the Af-Pak region. The Afghan war (1979-1989) which was followed by a civil war had negatively impacted the Indian security dynamics. It was the time when the triumph over the Soviet Union had celebrated by Pakistan and its mujahideen allies. This unprecedented victory over the Soviet Union had motivated the *jihadi* elements and Pakistan's security establishment to apply these warfare techniques against the much superior India. It was the time when Kashmir had faced bleeding insurgency, which still continues but at different magnitudes.

From the above debate, it is clear that Af-Pak as a region has been the most important foreign policy priority over the years. This region has challenged India's security and unity. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that due to continued engagement in this region, India has not been able to reach out to other parts of the world. This area remains an obstacle to India's quest for great power. If this is the case, then defiantly Indian would have a greater understanding or strategic doctrine regarding face this complex region. But the fact is that, India doesn't have any strategic doctrine or strategy for this region. Is it possible an area from where India has faced continued war (direct and covert war) remain without a proper strategy? Several scholars argue that it is not only the case with Af-Pak but in larger prospective, India doesn't have a strategic doctrine.

Tanham (1992) in his essay "*Indian Strategic Thought*" argues that India doesn't have any strategic doctrine and vision with regard its security and foreign policy. He writes that India also has not serious strategic planning institutions to make these crucial policies (Tanham, 1992: 52). Some Indian scholars agree with the Tanham's thesis that India has a lack of strategic though. K Subrahmanyam (2000) has advocated that the lack of strategic planning and vision must be "attributed to India's uneasiness with power and its lack of will to power" (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:22). Subharamanyam accepted the theory that Indian has a lack of security tradition. Subrahmanyam criticised the Indian bureaucracy and political class for its insincerity regarding the security issues

and problems which India faces even after five wars with its neighbours. He is surprised by the fact that India as a nuclear weapons state has no significant debate on the vital security issue. His frustration is also targeted upon the political structure, where the security issue is never widely debated nor education regarding it given within the political parties. The particular member of parliament (MP) become members of Parliamentary Standing Committees on defence and foreign matters, but there is no institutionalised mechanism for them being able to gain more knowledge and background in these fields (Subrahmanyam 2000:1562-63). Even today no political party leadership applies itself to educate its members and on international and national security issues. (Subrahmanyam 2000:1562-63). This statement is more or less true in the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan where the threat perception has appeared real in many ways. If terrorists would have reached through nuclear weapons, then it will be one of the most dangerous scenarios for India. As far as the Af-Pak region and Indian security is concerned, one should not forget that the north-west route was always the invader road historically. In today's world there is a remote possibility of conventional war from that side when both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons. As said of Pakistani Army Chief General Musharraf in April 1999, "he predicted that while nuclear and conventional wars were unlikely the probability of proxy wars was on the rise" (Subrahmanyam 2000:1563). Even then there is the possibility of non-conventional war from that side, which is going for last two decades.

A majority of the scholarship assumes that India's foreign policy and strategic thinking do not have an overall model (Mehta 2009:210, Pant 2009). Therefore, there is no real articulate body of thoughts, scholars do give a rather standard account of the nature of Indian strategic thinking. Regarding this two prominent schools, normative and realistic, have emerged (Mehta 2009:210). These both schools have their existence together in the process of making Indian foreign and security policies. The legacy of normative approach is much influenced by the Indian national movement, while the realistic approach seemed the legacy of British Raj and enveloped through the ground realities after the independence as like the war with Pakistan. This kind of dilemma was faced by India even in the case of Af-Pak region. The realistic school of thought argued for a more assertive engagement in the region, particularly vis-a-vis Pakistan. They were even in favour of Indian military engagement in Afghanistan and a covert

operation to challenge Pakistan's 'strategic depth' notion⁷. They are critical of Indian's Pakistan policy and argued an assertively challenging though different approach. On the other hand the idealistic school favoured the dialogue with Pakistan and favoured India's soft policy in Afghanistan through creating a favourable constituency with Afghan population by reconstruction and developmental project and it engaging. There are views that argue that India has the tradition of strategic thinking but in a different way. Countering the argument that India lacks a tradition of the strategic thinking, Sidhu (1996) replies that India has a tradition of oral history and communication. He advocates that the lack of formal writing on the strategic issue could not be viewed as the absence of strategic thought. Another Indian scholar Amitabh Mattoo (1996) agrees with Tanham regarding military strategy (Bajpai and Mattoo 1996:23).

3.3.3- The Kashmir Factor

Kashmir is relevant to the above discussion in terms of the geography and security of India. This factor predominately influences Indian foreign and security policies. Kashmir is the most problematic territorial dispute between India and Pakistan which goes back to 1947. It is not only a territorial dispute, but has a question of identity for both of South Asian powers. The Kashmir conflict has larger implications for the entire Af-Pak region. Like the Durand Line, it is also a legacy of the British where they failed to manage a peaceful and politically suitable partition (Cohen 2002:33). From 2001, the Kashmir situation has changed in India's favour due to structural changes in the region and over the years India argued that the issue facing the international community in South Asia was no longer "Kashmir" but terrorism. India's stand on Kashmir is that

⁷The current Indian National Security Adviser Ajit K. Doval is the prominent figure of this school with some academician who are working in the western base institutions. As Doval once said ".....When we come in defensive-offense, we start working on the vulnerabilities of Pakistan. It can be economic, it can be internal, it can be political; it can be international isolation, defeating their policies in Afghanistan, making it difficult for them to manage internal political lands security balance. It can be anything". See more- "The Doval doctrine", Frontline November 13, 2015. Harsh V Pant from King's College London also has favour greater military engagement in Afghanistan. See- <http://news.rediff.com/column/2009/oct/13/india-must-deploy-troops-in-afghanistan.htm>, Accessed on 2 December 2015.

they refuse to talk about Kashmir until terrorism is stopped by Pakistan (Cohen 2001: xvi).

For the last seven decades, Pakistan remains a constant threat for Indian security and integrity. Pakistan claims that partition was poorly carried out. Hence, Pakistan still makes a claim on Kashmir and its interaction with India is influenced by it. The same argument is also applied on India's Pakistan policy. The simple logic behind Pakistan's attitude is based on the theory which argued that Hindus and Muslims are two nations. Therefore the subcontinent was divided between these two nations. It is the reason that Pakistan wants the Muslim predominated Kashmir in its control, to legitimise its claim that Pakistan is supposed to be the homeland of South Asian Muslims. Pakistan not only speaks on behalf of Kashmiri Muslims but it also voices on the behalf of Indian Muslims, and Pakistan's act is assumed to be a threat to India's integrity. Now Pakistan has assisted Islamic 'jihadists' who not only pursue the freedom of Kashmir but the liberation of all of India's Muslims (Cohen 2002:38).

There is a more threatening security dilemma for Pakistani part, as they assumed threat from much powerful India. The most prevailing explanation regarding Indian threat perception within Pakistani strategic community is that, since independence there has been an intensive Indian effort to crush their state (Cohen 2002:38). The war of 1971 was a classic example that somehow justified their perception. Therefore, the Pakistani army has taken the predominant role to protect its country against the so-called 'Hindu India'. The most important aspect of Pakistani thinking has influenced the army's tradition of geopolitics, rather than the two-nation theory or ideological explanations of the conflict between India and Pakistan as suggested by the South Asia scholar Stephen P. Cohen (2002). Pakistan like the other theological state Israel, pursued security alliances with various outside powers (Cohen 2002:38-39). According to Cohen (2002), India emphasise that Pakistan wants the Indian threat to sustaining its unity, and he found an element of truth in this argument. The Kashmir conflict helps as a national integration issue and for a time being resolved Pakistani differences between the dominant province, Punjab, and the other smaller provinces of Pakistan where unrest and separated movement going on. India as an enemy is also useful to divert the Pakistani public from other domestic concerns. These are the issues which are partially true because there remains a real conflict between the two states over Kashmir (Cohen 2002:39).

Kashmir is both a source and the consequence of the India-Pakistan puzzle. It has strategic, territorial, ethnic and religious dimensions. In the case of Kashmir, it is hard to tell where domestic politics ends and foreign policy begins (Cohen 2002:45). Kashmir has the great geopolitical dimension for both, India and Pakistan, because of its topography. It is not only the line of control, even China holds significant territory claimed by India (Cohen 2002:47). One should not forget the Pakistani attempt to resolve Kashmir conflict in its favour through different means. Tribal invasion, the legal argument in UN, wars, diplomatic alliance with US, China and Islamic states and organisations to create pressure, but Islamabad failed over the decades (Haqqani 2003:42). Therefore, Pakistan found proxy war relatively easy and useful against mighty India. After the defeat of 1971 and the mobilisation of the population on the ethnic ground, Pakistani military leaders are looking for the Islamist militants on as an instrument of regional influence particularly in Afghanistan and India (Kashmir). This strategy was later funded and supported by Saudi Arabia and the US notably after the Soviet's Afghan invasion in 1979. It was the time when Pakistan emerged as the launching pad of Mujahedeen against the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan. Under the Pakistan army rule, Zia-Ul-Haq transferred the skill of covert operation learned in Afghanistan into Kashmir for 'liberation struggle' against India (Haqqani 2003:45).

Kashmir insurgency rose from 13 August 1983, where a bomb blast at a Srinagar restaurant was followed by one more at a Srinagar stadium two days later that targeted a celebration of India's independence. But the Kashmir conflict was internationalised after October 1983 when a young group of demonstrators waved Pakistani flags and booed the Indian cricket team while playing a match against the West Indies in Srinagar (Swami 2007:157). The year 1984 saw a noticeable intensification of terrorist violence like an explosion at the Kashmir University Library in April. Later in the same year the Farooq Abdullah government was fired from office by Jammu and Kashmir's Governor Jagmohan Malhotra, a bureaucrat who was very close to Indira Gandhi. Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) saw its first communal riots in February 1986, in the form of attacks on Kashmiri Pandits who owned homes in the south Kashmir town of Anantnag (Swami 2007:157-160).

It was the mismanagement and wrong policy of India and J&K government that has created space for Pakistan to operate comfortably. There was Indian fault in not dealing with the local issues with sensitivity. There was an electoral malpractice in the 1987

election that according to scholars laid the foundations for the terrorist violence that started from 1988. According to this argument, when Kashmiris were deprived of power through the ballot box, they turned to the Kalashnikov (Swami 2007:160). Pakistan had supported the insurgents from different parts of the world including the Kashmiri youth against India. As observed by Indian scholars “The origins of this uprising were home-grown and could traced to a process of growing political mobilisation against a backdrop of steady institutional decay” (Ganguly, Pardesi 2009:10-11).

When in the last stage of the war in Afghanistan at 1988, Soviet troops had begun to pull out, Pakistan had diverted some amounts of material for use in J&K. Hundreds of Kashmiri youth went to Pakistan for training in early 1990. Here India again charged to Jagmohan, who had a one-point agenda of the restoration of New Delhi’s authority, by any means. He ordered the Indian Army to facilitate in support of the state’s power. It created a counter-reaction from the rebels when on 21 January 1991, masses of armed men come onto roads. They challenged Jagmohan’s new, approach. Violence erupted between protesters and armed forces that led the killing of several protesters (Swami 2007:165). These killings electrified the movement against India in Kashmir. At that moment, Kashmir faced the youth uprising against the India. The youth were asking for self- determination, and there was a feeling of ‘Kashmiriyat’. Larger part of the population was on the road asking for ‘*Azadi*’ (freedom), and India responded to it with an iron hand which alienated Kashmiri masses from India (Haqqani 2003:46). In response to the insurgency, India operated a counter-insurgency with massive troops’ deployment in Kashmir. India used its armed forces, and its own counter-terrorist squads made up of ex-terrorists to counter the Pakistani sponsored terrorists whom they called freedom fighters (Cohen 2002:47-48). Since the uprising of 1989, the situation in Kashmir has become a bloody standoff. After one year of the insurgency, Pakistan had successes in internationalising the Kashmir issue (Haqqani 2003:47). The impact of this insurgency was far reaching, and India’s major city faced record violence through terrorist activity. The valley also became a violent place, and there was mistrust between Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits (Cohen 2002:49).

Till the beginning of 1980s the Islamic character of the movement had not evolved. But there was the Pakistani support to the Kashmiris in their fight against India. Pakistan’s

role in this time was very important to sustain the movement. According to Swami (2007) -

Pakistan's ISI seems to have been stimulating itself for a regeneration of the jihad in Jammu and Kashmir ever since 1984, around the same time when it had intensified its support to Khalistan terrorist groups. According to an authorised biography of General Akhtar Abdul Rehman, the ISI Director-General, who commanded its operation in Afghanistan, General Zia-ul-Haq assigned the task of planning the jihad to the Amir of the *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Jammu and Kashmir, Maulana Sadruddin (Swami 2007:163).

Pakistan's Kashmir policy, much like Afghanistan, was also in control of the Pakistani army even in the days of elected government in Islamabad. There was some constructive improvement in the relationship between both nations when they were headed by Nawaz Sharif and Atal Bihari Vajpayee respectively. But the greatest damage happened soon after the Vajpayee's Lahore visit of February 1999. Till May of the same year, India and Pakistan were fighting over Kashmir again, this time in Kargil (Haqqani 2003:48). A small scale war where India used its air power led Pakistan to retreat from the hills with some domestic consequence. The Musharraf, who was responsible for this misadventure in the Kargil, rose to power by toppling Sharif's civilian government. He later in the capacity of the head of the Pakistani state, came to Agra in 2001, for a summit with his counterpart. The summit failed on the Kashmir issue without any joint statement by the both governments (Haqqani 2003:48).

There are well-established links between the Afghan civil war and insurgency in Kashmir. The Afghanistan and Kashmir conflict is interconnected (Cohen 2001:317). During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Kashmiri presence at the training camps in Pakistan was noticeable. Many Indians feared that the US departure from Afghanistan could free up thousands of equipped, violent, radicalised extremists once again, to Kashmir, as they did after the Soviet departure (Mashal 2011). Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* wrote that "Kashmir is the reason Pakistan started utilising militant groups as not only proxies but more specifically as "weapons" against India, in what is commonly known in security circles as Pakistan's "Bleed India" campaign" (Haqqi 2012). *Dawn* further reported that "ISI still allows Afghan and Central Asian terrorist groups to operate from Pakistani soil and refuses to clamp down on the anti-Indian terrorist

groups operating from the Punjab province, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba, which launched the 2008 Mumbai attacks” (Haqqi 2012).

3.3.4- Quest for a Place in the Community of Nations

As India is economically rising, its aspiration to become a great power is also intensifying. As the global balance of power has shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the rise of India and China is a new reality. Today India has seen a responsible power with significant hard and soft power combination. The largest democracy, pluralistic society, one of the fast moving economies, responsible nuclear power and important military power brand India as a great power. The Centre Intelligence Agency (CIA) has categorised India as the key state in the international system and forecasted that by 2015, India will appear as the fourth most significant power. Now Indians themselves are proclaiming India as an emerging power (Pant 2009:1-2). Great power positively shapes the regional and global politics for its own advantage. Therefore, as Harsh V. Pant (2009) writes “India’s global and regional ambitions are rising, and it is showing aggressiveness in its foreign policy, which has not been forth before” (Pant 2009:02). Cohen (2001) decade ago argued that “India’s general standing in the international community has been enhanced; it is no longer seen as a predictable and reticent state, but a country that other powers have to understand and accommodate” (Cohen 2001:xv). Till the end of 2015, India has recognised as a rising power and this confidence has motivate to opt for a more assertive foreign policy strategy.

There is an unprecedented desire to reach out to different regions by the Indian government which was till now ignored or unable to reach due to the limitation of resources, in terms of India’s foreign policy. This is specifically reflected by the use of the term ‘extended neighbourhood’ in their foreign policy formulations by the Indian governments (both NDA & UPA) (Scott 2009:107). Basically, this idea was a response to the critics, who argue that India’s foreign policy is South Asia or neighbourhood oriented. Under this thought, India would project its hard and soft power in the extended neighbourhood. As for its scope, it has become “the abstract umbrella for India; eastwards, southwards, northwards and westwards; among what some have called an omni-directional ‘360-degree vision’ of the prospects available to India outside South Asia” (Scott 2009:107). The area of ‘extend neighbourhood’ has not been clearly define,

but roughly includes Central Asia, West Asia, the Gulf, South East Asia, East Asia, the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region (Scott 2009:108). Geo-economic reflexions are an obvious component of India's extended neighbourhood concept. In the last decades under the '*Manmohan Doctrine*' special stress was given to economic growth and it was considered a key determination of Indian foreign policy. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh himself explained that "our approach to the wider Asian neighbourhood has been so influenced by economic factors" (Scott 2009:108-109).

The 'extended neighbourhood' has a vast region, for the purpose of this research, the focus is only northward region. Thus, we can assume if Afghanistan is considered a part of South Asia even then it is a part of this concept because of its geostrategic location. India cannot instrument its relations at least with Central Asia and Gulf till it includes Afghanistan. Therefore, a larger connectivity and transit route through Afghanistan help India to achieve its economic growth targets in the near future. Afghanistan can emerge as the transit route for energy pipelines from Central and West Asia. Energy is a largely substantial aspect of India's trade in its extended neighbourhood (Scott 2009:110). After the end of the Cold War, India wanted to engage in this region, which has cultural relation with India. Over the years, India is engaging with Central Asian Republics on a bilateral basis and also under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). India eagerly engaged with Tajikistan because of its proximity to Afghanistan. Both states have common interests and concerns in Afghanistan. Taliban does not suit for their interest. Therefore, they supported the Tajik group, Northern Alliance in the 1990s. There is unique security cooperation between them in post 9/11 scenario. In 2007, India had developed the Ayni airbase, now shared between the air forces of Tajikistan, Russia and India (Scott 2009:129).

According to Stephen F. Burgess (2009), India's relations with South Asia over the last sixty years have been largely unilateral and hegemonic. To justify his thesis he gives the example of the following-Goa (1961), Sikkim (1974), intervention in Sri Lanka (1987), and the creation of Bangladesh (1971), where India unilaterally operated to its advantage. Burgess further argues that "India use hard power in South Asia, but has established a reputation for the use of soft power and multilateral leadership through UN and Non-Aligned Movement" (Pant 2009:231). The US during the cold war

opposed India's leadership in South Asia but now encourages it. The US also accepted and acknowledged India's ambition to be a great power in Asia (Pant 2009:275).

As India is turning into one of the world's fastest-growing economies, it has more resources and options to show its power projection in the region and worldwide. The reconstruction in Afghanistan, which has a value of more than US \$2 billion, and engagement in Nepal after the recent earthquake are examples of it. The maturity of the Indian democracy to deal with all complex issues with legitimacy makes it more confident. According to Cohen (2001), India's elites have also revealed a flexibility that has been lacking in other complex, multi-ethnic, multinational states such as Yugoslavia, Pakistan and the former Soviet Union. India's soft power approach like-cultural factors, Bollywood, Yoga, spirituality and pluralism have rich its profile. In many ways, India has "emerged" as a major power (Cohen 2001:300-09). Therefore as a rising power India is looking beyond this region. Af-Pak is a classical case that would determine India's status in world politics. Explaining India's current Afghan engagement, Pant (2014) argues that India wants to establish its credentials as a major power in the region that is willing to take responsibility for its neighbours. Therefore, India's post-2001 Afghan engagement is seen as the aspiration of its larger political, economic and military ambition since the end of Cold War (Pant 2014).

3.4- Partition and India's Af-Pak Policy

There is a long history of the relationship between India and Afghanistan before 1947. The new dimension was added, when the Indian subcontinent was divided and the new Islamic state of Pakistan emerged between them. Afghanistan, which was considered as a buffer state during the Raj period, now became physically distant from India by the creation of Pakistan. With limited resources, at the beginning India's foreign policy at large global scale was known as 'active neutrality' (Levi 1951:49). This policy had advantages as it provided India a greater autonomy to play its leadership role in Asia. Through neutrality, India could avoid antagonising the world powers. Nehru as the architect of Indian foreign policy was very much a pragmatist, who knew that in a sovereign nation-state system, a nation's survival is the principal aim of foreign policy (Levi 1951:49-52). The north-west frontier immediately after the independence appeared to be a serious threat to India's security. At that time, the Kashmir issue was revolving mainly around strategic concerns. As for Afghanistan, it was "viewed as a

lever against Pakistan and a buffer against Russia” (Levi 1951:49-52). An article written on the debate of Indian foreign policy for the *Far Eastern Survey* by Werner Levi (1951), argued that the Indian attempt to establish close ties with Afghanistan was determined by Kashmir and the Pakistan factor (Levi 1951:52).

Nevertheless, Afghanistan’s relation with Pakistan was not harmonised at the very beginning, so Afghanistan looked to India as an ally against Pakistan. In this manner, Pakistan as a strategic factor naturally arose in the relationship between India and Afghanistan. Since 1947, due to the birth of Pakistan, India lost direct access to Afghanistan. India and Pakistan from the very first day were contesting for territorial gain in Kashmir. Similarly, Afghanistan and Pakistan were disputing for Pashtunistan. The Indian government was not able to extend its support favour of Pashtunistan. India feared that, if it does so, then its case in Kashmir would be troubled because there were similar demands for self-determination there (Jafri 1976:27). Apart from the territorial dispute, the creation of Pakistan had a devastating effect on Indo-Afghan trade. The landlocked Afghanistan before the partition used the Indian port to warm water access, now it is using the same port but under the Pakistan’s jurisdiction. Similarly, India has also depended on Pakistan for a transit route to reach into Afghanistan. Pakistan denies sea access to Afghanistan and land access to India respectively, whenever its relations with them are antagonised. Pakistan finds itself in a critical security situation on both the eastern and western frontier, but it has a special geographical significance in the bilateral relations between them (Jafri 1976:27-28).

There are a lot of similarities as well contradictions between their relations in the post-independence era. For instance, independent India signed its first treaty of friendship with Afghanistan in January 1950, but Afghanistan was the first and the only country who opposed Pakistan’s entrance to the UN. As for the ideological premise, in the initial years Afghanistan followed India’s position on non-alignment while Pakistan aligned itself with the US (Jafri 1976). In the later part of the Cold War, India and Afghanistan found themselves close to the Soviet Union, while Pakistan remained an important partner against communism.

India and Afghanistan needed others’ support against Pakistan. Pakistan was always sensitive towards Pashtunistan as India was for Kashmir. Afghan rulers always raised the Pashtunistan issue for the domestic purpose on the international platform and

Pakistan found itself in irritation with a relatively small neighbour. The demand of Pashtunistan originated on the Indian soil during the British rule in 1931. Mahatma Gandhi had a special sympathy with this issue. On 22 June 1947, the local unit of Indian National Congress Party in Bannu under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi adopted a resolution defining an independent Pathan state as one- "Which will have a Pathan constitution and be framed on the basis of Islamic conceptions democracy, equality and social justice" (Jafri 1976):70). But when Pakistan was officially declared as a new state, the Indian government abstained from saying anything on Pashtunistan. Although once Nehru said in the Lok Sabha,

We are also interested in the future of many of the frontier areas and the people who inhabit them. We are interest in them, whatever the political and international aspects may be, because we had close bonds with them in the past and no political change can put an end to our memories and to our links (Jafri 1976:70).

Apart from this statement India remain more or less abstained in Pashtunistan issues. According to Hasan Ali Shah Jafri (1976), there were following factors behind India's action. First, the prominent figure of Pashtunistan issue Gandhi was no more. Second, the Indian leadership had no time to think about this issue because of internal problems like communal tension, accession of princely states and the Cold War in the external world. Third, at that juncture India wanted a friendly Pakistan, therefore did not raise Pashtunistan issue. Fourth as Jafri (1976) elaborated, the Indian government did not appreciate the strategic importance of the Pashtunistan in relation to the Kashmir. The other important reason for India's silence on Pashtunistan was influenced by amoral factor, where till 1947 India itself recognized Durand Line (Jafri 1976:70-76). India's official interest for Pashtunistan was revived after the war with Pakistan in 1965. In the Lok Sabha the then Deputy Minister for External Affairs announced "India's full support for the legitimate aspirations of the Pashtun people" (Jafri 1976:72).

The Kashmir issue in reference to Indo-Afghan relations has a great geographical significant. Afghanistan has a common border with Kashmir from the north to the Gilgit near the Wakhan Corridor, but now it is the part of 'Pak Occupied Kashmir'. Apart from the geographical continuity, there are ethnic links between Afghanistan and Kashmir. According to James W. Spain (1954), there were some Pashtun Afghan tribes involved in the tribal incursion in Kashmir during 1947-48. There is an assumption that

the Pashtuns had an affiliation feeling over the inclusion of Kashmir into their homeland (Jafri 1976, Spain 1954). Later Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan also said that Pakistan had stimulated the tribal *Lashkar* to attack Kashmir in order to give more autonomy and better monetary returns. But the Afghan government on its part opposed the Kashmir *Jihad* by depriving it of the status of *Jihad* (Jafri 1976:81-82). Afghanistan was never convinced with India's position on Kashmir. Whenever the Kashmir issue was raised in UN General Assembly by Pakistan, Afghan delegates in UN didn't join it. Afghanistan has always been a champion of self-determination because it gave it leverage over the Pashtunistan issue. But in the case of Kashmir, which has the same issue of self-determination being raised by Pakistan, Afghanistan never interpreted in that way, for the sake of Indo-Afghan relations. Jafri perceives Afghanistan's attitude as a slightly pro-Indian bias (Jafri 1976:82-84).

All through the 1970s, India had become a negligible actor in the global order due to its poor economic growth and its diplomatic limitations. India's influence more or less persisted to the South Asia only. The same tendency was visible when the Soviet Union invaded in Afghanistan in 1979. The US paid limited attention to Indian sensibilities and anxieties when it made Pakistan its partner against the Soviet Union (Ganguly, Pardesi 2009:10). Pakistan had received a substantial fiscal and military price for such support. To counter US-Pak alliance, India entered into a military cooperation with the Soviet Union. On India's part, it was forced to consent silently to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (Ganguly, Pardesi 2009:10-11). At that particular time, India found the region going into superpower new battleground. In the mid-1980s, Rajiv Gandhi made an attempt to improve and balance relations with both the Soviet Union and the US. But India found itself isolated in the end, neither the Soviet Union nor the US respected their relationship with India above their respective regional and global priorities (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:173). In this phase of the Cold War both superpowers worked in effect towards the settlement in Afghanistan, and India's interests were, by and large, neglected (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:173). During the entire Cold War, beginning from mid-1950s, India had a warm relationship with the Soviet. India received enormous economic and military assistance from the Soviet Union. According to CIA estimates, between 1954 and 1983 the Soviet Union has given US \$3.2 billion, for civilian purpose and US \$10 billion of military aid by 1987 to India. The relationship

was raised to a new level of confidence with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, 1971 between them (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:174).

It was the Soviet invasion in December 1979 which created a dilemma for India. As stated above, India didn't want anyone's interfere in its neighbourhood as part of the Raj legacy. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan upset the balance of power in the subcontinent. The US had given a US \$2.5 billion military aid package plus military hardware like F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:175). It created strong objections in New Delhi, which was already concerned about the progress of Pakistan's nuclear programme. India's concern was about the balance of power in Asia. In these circumstances, Gandhi was certainly unhappy about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. She had spoken of her reservations repeatedly to the Soviet Union. However Gandhi publicly approved the Soviet invasion (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:175). In the beginning of 1980s, India also tried to improve its relationship with the US which observed by the Soviet Union as a worrying factor. Leaders of India and the US visited both capitals to strengthen their respective ties. Even in these conditions "India sided with the USSR 80 percent of the time, and only 20 percent with the US; As US State Department study concluded in 1983" (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:176). There is an interesting account when the Soviet Union allegedly provoked India to take advantage of Soviet presence in Afghanistan. In 1982, the Soviet envoy in Kabul, FirkitTabeev, suggested to his Indian colleague that, India should take advantage of the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan to proclaim control over all of Kashmir at Pakistan's expense. Naturally, the Indian leadership disallowed the idea (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:176-77).

As discussed earlier, India was always uncomfortable with any power intervening in the South Asia. This position remained throughout the Cold War, even when pro-India Soviet was in Afghanistan, India found itself in a dilemma. This was proved when Rajiv Gandhi on his US visit, according to Radchenko (2011), assured Reagan that "India does not want the Soviet Union to have a foothold anywhere in South Asia" (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:179). Till 1985 relations between Indian and US improved much, when both had agreed on the technical cooperation, opening a way to US computer exports to India (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:179). As for Af-Pak region, the Gandhi government found it overtaken by events and almost abandoned by

the Soviets by 1988–1989. The Soviet Union did not support Gandhi’s attempt to play Pakistani card until that time. Meanwhile, the relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union was enhanced to resolve the Afghan settlement. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan under the Geneva Accords and a timetable for the pullout of troops was signed in April 1988. Afghanistan was left at the mercy of the Mujahedeen, who had been greatly influenced by Pakistan (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:184). According to Radchenko, the Geneva Accord of 1988 was a disappointment to India’s efforts to project it as a regional and global power and a negotiator between the East and the West. New Delhi was apprehensive that after the Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan would convert into a fundamentalist country with a huge mileage to Pakistan. Concerned by this realism, Gandhi in a conversation with Gorbachev in July 1987 argued that “if Afghanistan becomes a fundamentalist country or if the Americans have a strong influence there as in Pakistan, Afghanistan will not be a truly independent country, and this will create problems for us” (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:184). This sentiment also reflected on the communication between Gorbachev and Afghan leader, Najibullah, when Gorbachev writes that Indians do not want a Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:186). When it was confirmed that a political settlement was unavoidable, New Delhi urged the Soviets to, at least, include provisions for pressuring Pakistan, for not using scrap of the stockpiles of weapons left by the Soviet Union. India had the fear that these weapons could be used against it by the Mujahedeen. As argued by the then India’s defence minister, K. C. Pant, that “if terrorists got their hands on the US delivered stingers and used them against the civilian (presumably Indian) plane, there would be chaos” (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:186). But Soviet Union disapproved India’s argument due to the fear that Pakistan would make the same demand to disarm Najibullah’s government in Kabul. India by 1989 was sidelined in the Afghanistan settlement. Gandhi was taking the same position to eradicate Pakistan influence in Afghanistan. In an interesting account Radchenko (2011) articulates, that Gandhi was thinking of an Indo-Afghan war on Pakistan which would be launched in case Islamabad gambled on using force to upset the Najibullah government in Kabul. This was also revealed when Gandhi shared his views with Mongolia’s President, Jambyn Batmunkh, stating his readiness to intervene to save Najibullah from Pakistani aggression (Kalinovsky and Radchenko 2011:186). But fortunately, this aggression never took place. After the comeback of a democratically elected government in Pakistan, India-Pak relations had improved for a

while, when in July 1989 Gandhi went to Islamabad. But after that Gandhi faced electoral defeat in 1989. The impact of Afghan situation reflected in Kashmir where the security situation had seriously deteriorated.

To sum up, this was India's Af-Pak policy just after the independence. The pattern of the relationship between India and Afghanistan has not been so much two-sided as tri-lateral with Pakistan constantly acting as an overriding variable. As for the Cold War and India's Afghanistan policy, it seems very confusing. Due to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, Cold War was extended to India's corner. The Indian government never openly criticised the Soviet Union for the Afghan invasion, and did not even approve its invasion. Tanham in his article "Indian Strategy in Flux" claimed that many Indians feel it might be better if the Soviet Union had continued, as it would back a secular government in Kabul (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:117-118).

3.5- India's Post-Cold War Af-Pak Policy

India's Af-Pak policy has to be understood in the context of the global-political structure and its impact on the foreign policy of India. The end of the Cold War had a much less noticeable effect on India than it did in any other part of the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a disturbing jolt for India. Therefore, India's foreign policy maker forced a far-reaching readjustment of its foreign policy (Ganguly 2004:41). In the post-Cold War period, there was a radical strategic change in India's strategy when it agreed to closely work with the US (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:121). Some immediate changes, a contrast to Cold War period, included more constructive in global multilateral institutions as the World Trade Organization, full diplomatic relations with Israel, an attempt to improve relations with China and 'Look East' policy (Ganguly 2004:43-44).

But there are some structural adjustments in India's politico-economy which have consequences beyond the region. The economic reforms or liberalisation began in early 1990s. This increased the economic growth to almost twice of what it was in the Cold War era (Pant 2009:23). Economic growth and received resources have given India a more assertive option to fulfil its desire to become a great power. The developing of nuclear weapons as demonstrated by the nuke test in 1998, was an example of this phenomenon. Burgess (2009) outlines the departure of the superpowers from South

Asia and how it shaped an opportunity for India to shift from “defensive unilateralism and hegemony to forward-looking, multilateral leadership in South Asia” (Pant 2009:238). He further by giving the example of India’s initiatives of free trade within SAARC (1991) argues that India enthusiastically wanted to increase trade in South Asia. To reach beyond South Asia is also a factor, which considers Af-Pak as a significant priority for the new political elite. This elite was a part of the structure, where economic consideration was an important factor.

In the post-Cold War scenario, India’s strategic priorities remain the same as Tanham suggested; India’s unity and territorial integrity. Now Pakistan was involved through low-level conflicts after the much celebrated success against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. This low-level of proxy war through the help of veteran Mujahedeen into Kashmir was more costly and complicated for India (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:121-128). To challenge it, India developed counter-insurgency tactics with the help of its armed forces. But India had no overall strategy for its internal security (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:121). So the biggest challenge for India came from the Af-Pak region. Afghanistan’s instability was an alarm for India. Af-Pak region’s instability and the hostile political establishment were an obstacle for India to reach Afghanistan and Central Asia. In post-Cold War, India didn’t have too many options in Afghanistan. It was Pakistan who had an advantage over India in Afghanistan.

In the post-Cold War period, Pakistan’s Afghan policy appeared confused, and essentially relied on the unrealistic assumption of establishing a pro-Pakistani regime in Kabul and expanding towards the newly independent Central Asian states. In this phase, ISI emerged as the chief architect of Pakistan’s Afghan policy. Najibullah’s government was on the verge of collapse and in 1992 there was a power vacuum in Afghanistan. The Mujahedeen factions started to fight each other for control of the country. The Afghan leaders were unable to form a consensus due to ‘continuing meddling and interference of Pakistan’ (Dorransoro 2005:217). The installation of a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul, and to create a Muslim region capable of standing against India economically, demographically and perhaps even militarily was the main geopolitical aim of Pakistan (Weinbaum 1994:159).

During this period, the Pakistani establishment had backed those Afghan parties that had an ideological solidarity with Pakistan or seemed strategically important for it.

Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-i Islami, was the most favoured one by the Pakistani establishment, among all the Peshawar base parties, because he identified himself closer with the Pakistan's Jamat-I-Islami. Hezb-i-Islami rejected all 'nationalist ideology and proposed a confederation with Pakistan' (Dorransoro 2005:157). Hekmatyar was expecting to march triumphantly into Kabul once the communist government fell. This was also the plan of Islamabad. But the pace of events that proceeded the fall of Najibullah government made Islamabad support Rabbani-Massoud. Pakistan supported Massoud because he stood out as the 'strongest and the most disciplined and visionary' (Saikal 2005:206) among all the commanders. It was the time when Massoud and its alliance controlled the most of Afghanistan territory. So in keeping with these facts Pakistan accepted Rabbani-Massoud leadership, and was heavily involved in brokering the Peshawar deal. According to Angelo Rasanayagam (2005), under the pressure of US and some other Muslims countries, Pakistan led the parties to negotiation table at Peshawar Accord. During the power-sharing arrangement, Pakistan did its best to participate Hekmatyar, and with the Pakistani effort Hekmatyar got the Prime Minister post. On the other hand, Pakistan had played a key role in the elimination or isolation of the Maoist, Hazaras, Shias and other nationalist parties within the Afghan resistance, because they represented a potential threat to Pakistani domination (Dorransoro 2005:145). During this period, Pakistan also blocked UN's efforts to mediate for a solution to the crisis.

But when Pakistan did not get the desirable response from Rabbani-Massoud government it again changed its strategy. As Saikal (2004) writes "Islamabad could not possibly expect the new Islamic government leaders, especially Massoud to subordinate their nationalist objectives to help Pakistan realise its regional ambition" (Saikal 2004:220). That was the reason that after a short honeymoon with the Rabbani government, Pakistan became hostile to it, and continued support for Hekmatyar's military action against the Rabbani government. After Peshawar, Islamabad Accord met the same destiny. In these conditions, Pakistan again helped Hekmatyar, who made a new alliance with the Uzbek Commander Abdul Rashid Dostum to attack Kabul. In the beginning of 1994, after they failed to install a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul, Pakistan's interest was no longer with the mujahideen groups. Therefore, Hekmatyar's failure to achieve what was expected of him prompted the ISI to come with new surrogate force (Saikal 2004:221). In the post-Cold War era, superpower rivalry had

been removed from the world politics, but it hardly changed the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As Shah M. Tarzi (1993) rightly argued Afghanistan was a 'Hobbesian State of Nature'. The country was facing the bloody civil war that was incredible in the history of region.

Within a 24-hour period in August, 3,000 residents of Kabul died in a barrage of rocket fire; in the months following, the world's single largest internal refugee flow took place during which an estimated 700,000 people fled Kabul to escape rocket and artillery shells raining indiscriminately on residential neighbourhoods(Tarzi 1993:165).

Post-Cold War Afghan civil war poses a danger to the territorial integrity of Afghanistan as a nation-state. The Afghan society has been divided between the Pashtun majority and non-Pashtun minorities, for control of the country. Historically Afghanistan has been ruled by the Pashtuns. The Afghan civil war of the 1990s was the first instance in Afghan history, where Tajik and Uzbek forces ran the government in Kabul. This has caused concern among Pashtun tribes, who were losing power. This ethnicization led the massacre of one tribe by the other (Tarzi 1993:170). It was the time, where all four regions of Afghanistan (northern, southern, western, and central) were administered by four distinct regimes operating freely of one another. The global situation has radically changed in favour of a political settlement in Afghanistan till the beginning of 1992. Already in the previous year (1991), the US agreed to stop arms supplies to their proxies and the prospects for a political settlement of Afghan conflict (Tarzi 1993:172).By 1992, there was a dramatic shift in Pakistan's policy which by then departed from its previous policy of trying to set up an Islamic government in Afghanistan. After the failure of Jalalabad offence against the Najibullah government, Pakistan found mujahedeen option non-reliable. The impression that a Mujahedeen Islamic government would serve Pakistan's national interests also grew uncertain. If the civil war went for long then Pakistan would be forced to deal with the problem of housing a lasting refugee population (Tarzi 1993:173). But the Najibullah government had been collapsed by the Mujahedeen and they fought with one another to seize Kabul.

On one hand Afghan civil war continued, on the other hand Indo-Pak rivalry continued in the region. Kashmir insurgency of 1989 had led to the degeneration of relations between India and Pakistan. India blamed Pakistan for the insurgency in Kashmir. These two neighbours, because of the Kashmir insurgency had reached the threshold of war in the summer of 1990 when India intensified its military presence along Pakistan's

borders (Shakoor1992:48). It was the US which through its special envoy had pacified the explosive situation in the region. According to the Pakistani assessment, the post-Cold War situation had changed in India's favour, as the US overcame its Afghanistan related hesitations about India. Now the US wanted to take benefit of India's delinking from the Soviet Union (Shakoor1992:57). According to Pakistani assessment, the US' intimacy with India and disaffection from Pakistan in the post-Cold War period ended the process of normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan (Shakoor1992:59). The Indian factor always determined Pakistan's Afghan policy. At least a pro-Pakistan Afghanistan would be a better option from the regional perspective.

Regional balance of power also determined Pakistani geopolitical objectives. Pakistan's geopolitical dream was to reach out to the landlocked countries of Central Asia, which would help Pakistan to make a Muslim alliance and dominate the region. It was a strategic vision of the ruling elite in Pakistan since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the early 1970s till the emergence of Taliban. At the end of the Cold War, the opening up of the energy-rich but landlocked Muslim Central Asian republics heightened the importance of Pakistan's geostrategic location in the exploitation of these resources (Hussain 2005:177). The Taliban was a product of this strategic vision. A friendly government in Kabul was to provide the much needed strategic depth against India and a land bridge toward Central Asia. In the post-Cold War period, Pakistan rushed to Central Asia to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union as it saw itself as the main player in the region. Under all that background, the Taliban was the best choice for Pakistan. Taliban was not a Pashtun nationalist movement. "Taliban's movement was founded on a fundamentalist ideology opposed to all nationalist pretensions" (Dorrnsoro 2005:267). Contrary to others, Taliban did not have any relation with another country, excluding Pakistan. It was the best geopolitical option for Pakistan in the post-Cold War situation that could help it to counter Indian, Iranian and Russian influence in Afghanistan (Hussain 2005:171). The Taliban had social and ideological links to institutional elements within Pakistani society (Rasanayagam2005:181) that also provided much material support during their rise to power. Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islami (JUI) led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman, which was part of Bhutto coalition government (from 1993), played a pivotal role in its advocacy to the Taliban (Dorrnsoro2005:245). Rahman, Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, built up an extensive network in the West Asia to gather both moral and

financial support for Taliban. JUI had a series of madrasas in Pakistani tribal area, from where the Afghan refugees were recruited to Taliban. It shows that Taliban formation was a very calculated and strategic step for Pakistani state establishment. Apart from that, Pakistan used sizable numbers of its Pashtun-based Frontier Corps in Taliban-run operations in Afghanistan. Rashid (2001) says that Pakistan had helped the Taliban decisively by allowing them to capture a crucial arms dump outside Spin Boldok (Maley 1998:81). Against the Taliban, India along with Russia and Iran militarily and financially supported the Northern Alliance, which belongs to non-Pashtun ethnical groups and operates in the northern Afghanistan (Rashid 2001).

Just before entering the new century, on 24 December 1999, an Indian aircraft was hijacked by a Pakistani terror group, Harkatul- Mujahideen to Kandahar and then subsequently protected by the Taliban (Joshi 2010:20). In return, India had to hand over some of the notorious imprisoned terrorists to Afghanistan. This event had showed India's helplessness in dealing with the security threat from Af-Pak region. In totality, India remained isolated from Afghanistan and there was no improvement of relationship with Pakistan. Till the end of the twentieth century, India's profile has increased but with limited access to Af-Pak region.

3.6- Indo-US Convergence on Af-Pak

Even before 9/11, India and the US were coming closer as the Bush administration took office with the objective of "transforming relations with India" due to various reasons. India also responded positively, for instance, when it supported the new US missile defence plan on 1 May 2001 (Malik 2003:104). India was the delight country as for the US-NATO war in Afghanistan is concerned. Western scholars analysed India's support for the war on terrorism as a further step in the reconciliation with the US that had started in the final years of Bill Clinton's presidency (Kux 2002:94). The relations between these two democratic countries was not so coordinated in the last five decades due to various reasons. The greatest improvement in the relations, however, came in mid-1999 when the Clinton administration forcefully intervened in Pakistan to pull out its military from Kargil. It was followed by a five day successful India visit by Clinton in March 2000 (Kux 2002:94-95). The George W. Bush Administration also exhibited the same approach after taking office at the beginning of 2001. In India the NDA

government headed by Vajpayee portrayed the two nations as “natural allies”. According to the Denni Kux (2002), perhaps there is growing consensus in India, that better ties with the US will help India attract foreign investment, accept a greater global role, and ensure US support in case of Pakistan (Kux 2002:94-95).

After 9/11, there was significant increase in diplomatic contact and coordination between them. India received Bush administration’s priority when its role was mentioned in ‘U.S. National Security Strategy’ 2002 as “US interest required a strong relationship with India... we share an interest in fighting terrorism and creating a strategically stable Asia” (Malik 2003:104-105). India responded positively when Vajpayee called both countries as “natural allies”. The September outbreaks underlined terrorism as a threat to both countries and outlined mutual security interests in the region. That was an important context where India fully supported the global war on terror (WOT) to the best of its capacity. The Indian response was surprised many, when it share intelligence information on the Al Qaeda, gave overflight rights, refuelling and repair of US fighting aeroplane. India also offered harbour facilities in Cochin and Bombay for US marine vessels. The then US representative of India, Robert Blackwill, said that the WOT has “transformed” U.S.-India relations (Kux 2002:95). Both the states during the WOT greatly strengthened dialogue and improved collaboration on sensitive issues such as Afghanistan and Pakistan (Kux 2002:96). The most significant impact of Indo-US partnership has seen in the security sector. There has been talk on arms supplies to India by the US. It was a deep concern of India to see Pakistan as important allies in the WOT, whom New Delhi blame for terrorist activities. Some Indians were also afraid that the US would turn a blind eye to ongoing ISI support to cross-border terrorism in Kashmir. The US administration also understood India’s concern and assured the then foreign minister Jaswant Singh, “that India’s terrorist problems would not ignored, but that it was first necessary to prosecute the war in Afghanistan” (Kux 2002:97-98).

The US returned by suspending sanctions forced in reply to India’s nuclear tests in 1998, and military-to-military contact was re-established (Malik 2003:106). Although for the US, it was natural to choose Pakistan for the delivering operation ‘Enduring Freedom’ because of its location and association with Afghanistan. India was disappointed in the failure of American pressure to stop infiltration by the Pakistan base terrorist in India. But, India was pleased to see the loss of Pakistan’s ‘strategic depth’

after the collapse of the Taliban in Kabul (Malik 2003:107). The most important convergence between India and the US vis-à-vis Afghanistan was the toppling of the Taliban government and US presence in Afghanistan. Even though Pakistan is an important US partner in WOT, the Indo-US relationship has warmed greatly after 9/11. In 2005, India and the US established a nuclear deal for energy purpose. This deal has given recognition by the US that India is a nuclear power. Ignoring critics who argue that the Indo-US nuke deal would threaten NPT, the Bush administration answered by saying that India is an emerging great power with a democratic setup, and will do no harm to proliferation. Both have also gone ahead in trade and commerce, as the US Department of Commerce arranged its largest-ever economic mission to India, intensifying the commercial negotiation between the two states in November 2006 (Drezner 2007:41). According to the 2006 National Security Strategy, “India now is poised to shoulder global obligations in cooperation with the United States in a way befitting a major power” (Drezner 2007: 42).

Therefore, India was advocating US presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014. The US also observed that India’s role is essential for the success of the Afghan mission. The US during its presence in the sub-continent also worked to pacify Indo-Pak enmity, which would have otherwise derailed its Afghan mission. Therefore, when India mobilised its armed forces around the Pakistani border, in response to the suicide bombers attacked India’s parliament on 13 September 2001, it became a worrying factor for the US. It could have posed a negative impact on WOT; therefore Bush administration jumped into action. Understanding India’s concern the US put Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-i-Taiba on its list of foreign terrorists. Under American pressure, Pakistan also took some steps, which were called a ‘major policy shift’ regarding its affairs with terrorism by US (Kux 2002:99). According to Burgess, the US support for India’s position against terrorism in Kashmir helped increase Indo-US cooperation (Pant 2009:243). The US and India has gone beyond the Afghanistan. Both are gone miles ahead during the Afghan war. According to Mohan (2013), the following two arrangements are defining features of Indo-US relationship. India and the US have signed a ‘ten-year defence framework’ in May 2005. This arrangement opened the door for essential defence cooperation from weapons’ sales to joint missions. The second arrangement was the much talked indo-US nuclear deal which ended India’s nuclear isolation (Mohan 2013:22).

The stage two of the Afghan war was of grim concern for India, where the US quickly turned its attention to Iraq, and Afghanistan moved to the back burner. Many of the senior US political and military officers who had been responsible for the success in Afghanistan went to Iraq (Peterson 2014:131). Taking advantage of this condition, Taliban and Al-Qaeda continued to assemble to design and often take sanctuary across the border in Pakistan. That was the most dangerous security threat for India. Thus, some Indian scholars are very critical of the Indo-US strategic convergence in Afghanistan. They think that US is fighting its war, so India should not rely too much on the US for its security. The criticism started with Pakistan's role in the WOT. Losing Taliban was a setback for Pakistan's larger calculation, but Islamabad had enormously benefit from western presence in the Af-Pak region. The close US ties with Pakistan since 9/11 have brought the regime of Musharraf extensive benefits, including international legitimacy and the lifting of US sanctions. It also helped financially in terms of debt relief, massive volumes of economic and military aid and access to sophisticated technology. More importantly for Pakistan, the US role was helpful in reducing tensions with India (Hathaway 2008:11). US reliance on the Pakistani security establishment despite accusing the ISI of supporting the Haqqani network has been a worry for New Delhi (Pant 2014).

Apart from Pakistan, Iraq war was also a serious concern for India, which badly affected the success of the Afghan mission. There is a predominant view among American scholars that the war in Iraq was a strategic error (Gordon 2004:146). They argue that the threat from Saddam Hussain's Iraq was not imminent as the Bush administration's assumed. The two main justifications then given by the Iraq war supporter were Hussain's so-called weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programmes and his suspected associations with al-Qaeda turned out to have been highly hyperbolic (Gordon 2004:147). The Bush's Iraq adventure had alienated its allies and misdirected intelligence resources that negatively impacted the success of Afghan mission and more specifically WOT. Later it proved that Hussain's Iraq had neither WMDs nor substantial proof of cooperation with al-Qaeda (Gordon 2004:147). Therefore, Iraq war didn't have any relation with WOT. Instead, it promoted terrorism in the entire region.

Another issue where India and the US had a difference of opinion in Afghanistan was Obama's drawdown plan. It was a setback for India that it was not consulted regarding the US exit strategy in Afghanistan. Under the US-NATO security umbrella, India has

invested huge monetary and human resources in Afghanistan. In post-2014 Afghanistan, India found itself in a dilemma. There is another issue regarding India's strategic autonomy in foreign and regional policy as well. As the Obama administration announced the US rebalancing strategy or more commonly toward 'pivot strategy' in Asia pacific, it is necessary for New Delhi to look it critically. Over the last few years, US wanted India to take up a greater role in Afghanistan while earlier the US was opposed to Indian involvement in Afghanistan. Some scholars think it has been the US great game plan in Asia. The Bush administration in his first term was convinced that China is a possible competitor. They also supposed that the US must build a stronger partnership with India, a potential balancer against China. Therefore, Bush had successfully changed the foundation of the Indo-US relation by stressing the importance of building a new balance of power in Asia (Mohan 2013:22). The historical agreement as discussed above (ten-year defence framework and nuke deal) as seen by Beijing was aimed at containing China. Obama's declaration of a strategy to rebalance Asia has intensified the triangular dynamic among Washington, Beijing, and New Delhi (Mohan 2013:22). The realists in New Delhi's policy establishment have no problem recognising the geopolitical significance of the US as pivotal to Asia. But India should not forget the geography of the region where China is a prominent actor. Therefore, it is a challenge for the Indian policymakers to choose strategic autonomy and prioritise according to their national interest. In short, this sub-section argues that despite concerns regarding Pakistan's approach, defining terrorism differently, Iraq war and strategic autonomy, India has greatly benefited from US presence in the region. It was the US-NATO presence which ended India's long isolation in Afghanistan.

3.7-Post 9/11 a Window of Opportunity for India's Af-Pak Policy

India, which has close historical and cultural ties with Afghanistan, today finds itself in an uncomfortable security environment due to the structural shift of decades-long regional arrangement. A similar situation had emerged when the Soviet Union left Afghanistan at the end of the Cold War. Suffering the past-experience of drawdown and current withdrawal of NATO combat forces will have potentially far-reaching implications for India's homeland and its regional position. India has reasons to worry over the prospect of a security vacuum in the coming years (Joshi 2014).

India responded swiftly to 9/11 events by offering full support for the US' WOT. It was the terrorism and Pakistan factor which motivated India to give unconditional support to the US (Kux 2002:94). The first phase of engagement since 2001 is classified by Pant (2014), as 'A Soft Engagement' where India followed the spirit of Bonn-I and helped Afghan rebuilding through most an innovative foreign policy commitment. After 2001, India has engaged and strengthened its humanitarian and soft power project under the NATO's security umbrella. India is one of the most vocal supporters of continued NATO engagement and has given Afghanistan more than US \$2 billion since the US-led invasion in 2001 overthrew the Taliban regime, which sheltered anti-Indian militants. Training of Afghan officers, giving aircraft, buses, making roads, electric transmission lines, schools, parliament building, hospitals, to fellowships for education in India have been included in it. India's non-government organisations (NGOs) are also reaching out to common Afghans and helping them in capacity building. From the hundreds of these initiatives, one example is the Aga Khan Foundation, which has been working in Afghanistan since 1995 in the field of healthcare, education, financial services, mobile telephony, agricultural productivity, building community development councils and village organisation (Business Standard 2014). As the southern areas are highly volatile and controlled by anti-India groups, therefore, the foundation has distributed assistance from Tajikistan through an affiliate. This particular group is working with the Indian government and the World Bank to carry development support at the community level and till today has reached more than 2.5 million people (Business Standard 2014). The Indian government and its functionaries are working hard towards capacity building by establishing different institutions. For example in 2013, India decided to build a national institute of mining in Afghanistan as part of its reconstruction activities. Singh offered to construct this institute on his official visit to Afghanistan (Haseeb 2013). Different Indian institutions are also doing their best to train Afghan officials and students to help them in capacity building in their respective field. For instance, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research has been offering short-term training programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) to Afghan students from 2013. This fully funded programme by the Ministry of External Affairs aimed to improve the qualification and skills of persons who are already employing in government establishments (ANI 2013). This helped create an Indian constituency among the Afghans, proved by the fact that 74 per cent of Afghans holds a favourable view of India compared to only 8 per cent of Pakistan (Pant 2014).

India's investment in Afghanistan's development projects can be called one of Delhi's most innovative foreign-policy moves of the last decade.

India's 'soft power' has its limitations in front of hard power on the ground and it failed to achieve any substantive foreign policy dividends due to lack of a coherent policy (Pant 2014). New Delhi found itself in 'marginalized' in phase-II as the strategic space shrank over the years (Pant 2014). India was isolated in the London conference (2010) where the concept of 'good Taliban' emerged for reconciliation and Pakistan has gained ground with Western consent (Pant 2014). India's engagement has created a lot of consideration in the Western world. It has proved counterproductive as for Pakistan is a concern. India had paid the cost of its Afghan affair by losing its men in terrorist attacks in Kabul and Jalalabad. Over the last decade, it was the third time in a row at 2008, 2010 and 2014 that *jihadis* had tried to blow up Indian government buildings in Afghanistan. These attacks are symbolic of the Taliban and probably Pakistani interests over India's deepening engagement in Afghanistan (Sheikh 2014).

The emerging situation in Afghanistan has been seen by India as the comeback of Taliban, which is of course against Indian interests. India over the years has stood against a reconciliation with Taliban and argues that drawdown is a face-saving exercise. The proposed drawdown plan was the biggest setback for the India's larger strategic calculation when it found decade-long investment going into ruin. India has revealed its concern over NATO's exit strategy but the US, and its NATO allies did not take India's concern seriously (Pant 2014). India, over the last decade, made enormous economic, political, and strategic investments in Afghanistan, therefore, it has a profound concern in ensuring that NATO forces stay. For instance, India has won bids to the Hajigak iron ore mine and has an ambitious US \$10 billion investment plan for the project and a railway track that will link Bamyan to Iran's Chah-bahar port (The Hindu 2013a). There are several examples where India's aid and assistance directly benefited the common Afghan masses. India's biggest dilemma is to maintain the goodwill of Afghan people which has scored through its humanitarian assistance.

NATO's combat withdrawal has necessarily created a vacuum in a different way. It may be positive in some ways, such as Taliban demanding the NATO withdrawal before the reconciliation consensus. This vacuum has been greatly managed by the new Afghan administration. But it cannot replace the US-NATO. The outgoing system in

Afghanistan had the resources and capacity to influence regional and domestic actors in favour of its Afghanistan policy. It is true that India or any other regional power cannot fill the vacuum created by NATO departure. There is one school who is favouring India's military engagement or a more robust option in post-2014 Afghanistan (Doval 2014). This school is much stimulated by strategic interests to defeat Pakistan on Afghan soil by depriving it of 'strategic depth'. According to this particular school, India could fill the security vacuum left by the US, advance its regional interests, and compete with its Chinese rival for influence in the country (Darlymple 2013).

To recover from the losing Afghan terrain, India came out in the third phase that Pant (2014), describes as 'India fight back' when Singh made a two-day visit to Kabul and both countries agreed to a 'strategic partnership' in 2011. Now India is helping with the capacity building of Afghan security forces. At the same time, Karzai-US and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have deteriorated and India is taking advantage of it and consolidating its engagement with Kabul (Pant 2014). The Singh government become more assertive when Kabul announced the establishment of a joint commission to give Pakistan military a formal role in reconciliation talks with insurgents (Pant 2014). India helped Afghanistan gain much needed 'strategic autonomy vis-a-vis Pakistan. On the other hand, India has earned a great respect in the Afghan political circle. Now they are looking towards Indian help at this crucial juncture. With the US estimated to leave behind only 10,000 troops by the end of 2014, the Afghans are looking to strengthen their armed forces with big-ticket military hardware from India, including Russian-origin fighter jets and tanks. But cautious of displeasing Pakistan, the UPA-II government had told the Afghans that India would not be in a position to fly this apparatus over Pakistani airspace. According to *The Hindu*, Afghanistan is optimistic that India, under the Modi government, will emerge as a major player in filling the security gap in the war-torn state (Aneja 2014). But after Ghani became president, Afghanistan has not been making such demands due to the Pakistan's concern.

Again in the fourth phase after Ghani has become president, there is a sense that New Delhi is fast losing its carefully cultivated decade-old influence in Afghanistan. Compared to his predecessor, Ghani has been unenthusiastic towards India (Pant 2015). It is unclear if the Indian government will choose to play a greater role in Afghanistan. The emerging scenario in South Asia amid of NATO withdrawal has created a dilemma

for Indian strategic community and South Block. It seems they are very confused regarding the future course of action in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, India has no alternative view or policy framework regarding the emerging situation in Afghanistan. India is distrustful of a political settlement with Taliban observed as cruelly hostile to Indian interests. India's position has influenced by the fact that Taliban is the proxy of the Pakistani security establishment. Taliban has never been directly hostile to India's interests during its rule in Kabul. Another anti-India militant group did the terrorist tanning camp and the hijack of Indian Airlines in 1999 with the help of the Pakistani security establishment. Then why are India's so worried about Taliban comeback through power sharing arrangement?

There is one school that advocating talk with Taliban (Joshi, 2014). This presumed notion has created the greatest dilemma for India's Afghan policy. Some commentators have suggested that India should militarily engage in Afghanistan to fill the vacuum created by the NATO disengagement and must defeat Taliban. From the current reconciliation process, it is clear that each party in the Afghan conflict accepted that the Taliban has an important power and it cannot be ignored. India's policy-makers could easily emerge from a self-made Afghan dilemma if they understand why the US reconciled with the same Taliban which they were supposed to eliminate. Following this approach, India is trying to reach out to the Taliban leader. For instance, the Taliban leader Abdul Salam Zaeef had been granted a visa to India and made an appearance at an event in Goa amidst reports that intelligence agencies wanted to understand the situation in Afghanistan and explore India's role in the unfolding situation (Dikshit 2013, The Times of India 13 Nov 2013). After the initial hesitation somehow India also supported the talks with Taliban at an official level. In 2011 Singh on his Kabul visit made a leap of faith about the controversial issue of reconciliation with the Taliban. In essence, New Delhi feels that if reconciliation is the collective Afghan wish, India will go along with it (Bhadrakumar 2011). According to Bhadrakumar (2011), it is an eminently realistic position. It brings the Indian stance in line with the mainstream Afghan thinking. India supported Afghanistan's reconciliation process with the Taliban but it must respect the legitimacy of the Afghan government and should be within the internationally accepted "red lines" (The Hindu: 2 July 2013). The new Indian government is also making an effort to reach out to Afghanistan. Foreign Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Afghanistan on 10 September 2014 and inaugurated

the new chancery complex in Kabul from which the Embassy has started operating since July 2014. She pointed out that this was the strongest statement of 'no exit' policy by India (MEA 2015a). Indian and Afghan authorities are working with each other regarding early completion of Salma Dam, New Afghan Parliament building and Doshi Charikar Project (MEA 2015a).

3.8- Summary

India's Af-Pak policy is acknowledged to a region, which situated towards its north-west. This region historically linked with India. Therefore, the post-partition situation was an artificial arrangement and broke the long continuity between India and Af-Pak region. Therefore, it was best suited for India to rely on the earlier policy, which the Raj had. Security, integrity, a desire to recognise a great power and Kashmir were the factors which from the very beginning were a concern for the region. When Cold War shifted in the region, India isolated from the Af-Pak. In post-Cold War, Af-Pak became a nightmare for India's security and territorial integrity. The US-NATO WOT, provided unique opportunity to ended India's long isolation in the region. In these circumstances, India worked under the US-NATO security umbrella in Afghanistan, which was a concern for Pakistan. So many analysts identify Afghanistan became a new battleground between these two neighbours. India has invested huge monetary and human resources in Afghanistan. But the lack of any coherent policy in the background of NATO withdrawal plan shows India's dilemma. Again it seems as if India is as confused as the Raj between two contrary schools: forward or masterly inactivity. India has its own limitation in the region due to geography. It was the decade-long Karzai administration which made India a favoured choice in Afghanistan. The historic democratic transition in Afghanistan was not as historical for India. The new Kabul administration moved towards Islamabad and China, influenced by the realistic ground realities. The political reconciliation has given Pakistan a huge advantage over India to decide the future of Afghanistan. For the time being India is not the key player in Afghanistan's affairs. But India's capacity and influence in the region simply cannot be ignored. The situation is still unfolding, but India is obviously losing out on its cordial relations with Kabul and long investments in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 4

Regional Stakes and Challenges in Af-Pak Region

4.1-Introduction

This chapter investigates the role of regional powers in establishing a peaceful arrangement in Afghanistan. This requires some theoretical inquiry and a historical survey of the region. It is important to know the views of neighbouring and regional countries about Afghanistan, and how they approach the current situation in Afghanistan. It is equally relevant to know the perceptions of the Afghan people about the surrounding world and how they see themselves in reference to the Afghan problem. It is significant to know the concerns of regional states from Afghanistan, before knowing their response the post-withdrawal scenario.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Najibullah regime in 1992 marked the opening of Afghanistan as an unstable state. The vacuum created by the world powers was immediately filled with the aspirated regional countries, which led to the collapse of the Kabul government and the beginning of civil war. According to Haroun Mir (2010), from 1992 till 2001, Afghanistan had been a place for proxy hostilities between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on one side, and Iran, India, and Russia on the other side. Bonn 2001 created hope for a new beginning for the Afghan people. But the international community failed to achieve the stated objectives.

A regional solution to Afghan problem has been accepted internationally as the primary element to stabilise Afghanistan. In the absence of US-NATO, this idea has predominantly prevailed in global politics. This was even recognised by the US itself when they supported the Istanbul process. However, a regional solution was an important part of Obama's Af-Pak strategy. The Bush administration has largely ignored the 'regional solutions' or strategy since the 'operations enduring freedom'. In the initial years after the Bonn -2001, more stress was laid on the area around the Kabul. Later the objectives of the international community were to maintained security, reconstruction, and good governance. But till 2010, it was clear that the US and NATO had not achieved what they promised a decade ago. Consequently, in the background of the Western drawdown, there have been increasing demands in recent years for

regional states and organisations to engage in Afghanistan. Before examining the regional approach, it is worthwhile to learn from some theoretical work on the region and regional conflict.

4.2- Understanding Region: A Theoretical Inquiry

Regions in the words of William R Thompson (1973) are “geographical proximity, regularity and intensity of interaction between actors to the extent that a change at one point in the subsystem affects other points, internal and external recognition of a group of states as a distinctive area, and a size of at least two and probably more actors” (Ayoob 1999:249). The regional approach of the international politics has emerged more prominently in the globalised world. The regional approach is useful to understand regional conflict and cooperation in international relations. In the Cold War period, regions and regional orders occupied a smaller place in international relations theory. Now regions are one of the important factors in the understanding of world politics. “Not only have regions become substantially more important sites of conflict and cooperation than in the past, but they have also acquired substantial autonomy from the system-level interactions of the global powers” (Buzan and Waever 1993, Acharya 2007). Regions are not only a geographical construct, but they also have historical, cultural, social and economic interdependence. According to Mohammed Ayoob (1999) “post-cold war does signal that conflict management within regions will be driven largely, by regional considerations and must be undertaken primarily by states belonging to the region” (Ayoob 1999:247). Such conflict management cannot succeed unless there is consent within a particular region.

An important characteristic of the Third World conflict is the intertwining of domestic and regional issues. Most of the conflicts are the products of the state-making process, which is still continuing in the post-colonial states. The early stages of state making, as put by Ayoob (1999), engage the almost expected use of violent means by the state as it attempts to enlarge and consolidate its jurisdiction over contested demographic and territorial space. In response to state’s violence, there has been counter-violence on the part of those populations, who are resisting the expansion of the state. This is the element that facilitated civil wars and secessionist movements. Sometimes these movements are so dominant, and they create greater, and more instant threats to the

security of the states than does the external enemy. Ironically, instead of state making, this process is converted into state breaking (Ayoob 1999:250-51). The state building process in the Third World is not an isolated process. A state has to realise upon the neighbouring countries for territorially and demographically. Further, Ayoob argues that Third World states invade on the state-making activities of other states in their neighbourhood, especially those immediate to them. This is due to 'colonial legacies' (arbitrarily drawn boundaries) and of the 'inadequate stateness of Third World states' (Ayoob 1999:251). The colonial legacies and inadequate stateness have created frequent interstate conflicts in post-colonial regions, which fundamentally challenge the regional order. In these conflicts, the population of respective states have also engaged because of ethno-linguistic or ethno-religious links. These populations have undermined the legitimacy of post-colonial boundaries, therefore, conflict spill in the neighbouring states. The intensity has increased, when in interstate conflicts, one party invites the extra-regional power to involvement in its favour (Ayoob 1999:251).

Ayoob (1999) found a major link, between the state-making process in Third world states and the regional balance of power. Accordingly, the more the balance tilts in a particular state's favour, the easier it is for that state to improve its state-building by effectively asserting its rule at the expense of neighbouring states over contested territories and populations (Ayoob 1999: 251). But the global balance of power or international structure is also impacted, apart from domestic constraints on regional dynamics. Taking advantage of global balance to enhance their own state and government, regional states' elite intertwine between global, regional and domestic dynamics. For example, in cold war era, Ayoob (1999) proved that, domestic and global factors impact upon the regional conflict and security of a particular region (Ayoob 1999:252). In the post-Cold War period, the principal motivating factor of regional conflict is not necessarily the global balance of power. In the post-Cold War period, the value of particular regions is judged by great powers according to their utilitarian provisions. As for the autonomy of regional dynamics, it is observed as an illusion by Ayoob (1999) because great powers involvement in regional security complexes has remained in the post-Cold War period. Now great powers engage through 'low involvement' in a regional conflict, according to their national interests.

The decolonization process in the Third World, particularly in South Asia, had made new autonomous regional security complexes (RSCs). These new RSCs are based on

interstate enmity and many of them were born in conflict. Although, the Cold War defined an intense bipolar structure at globally, much of the Third World was structuring itself into equally extreme RSCs. Again in the post-Cold War era, change has emerged in RSCs. There was no ideological issue between the superpowers, therefore the nature and intensity of global power interference has also significantly changed. In this condition, regional security management has become more 'operational autonomous'. As for security, the post-Cold War world could have been divided into two parts: first 'zone of peace' that comprised the western world and the second 'zone of conflict' constituted from the Asia and the Africa (Buzan and Waever 2003:17-19).

Irrespective of the period, great powers get involved in the regional security complexes from time to time on a different model and pretext. Sometimes this intervene is the full-time military engagement, or otherwise through the proxy or armed and financial help. Great power intervention has converted worst case scenario when they undermine the regional culture, political or economic linkages of a particular region in Third World countries. Afghanistan and Somalia are two classic cases where the great power's irresponsible behaviour intensified it beyond the regions. In post-Cold War era, US-led Western intervention in Third World states has seen by Ayoob (1999) as the similar theme, where great power may be capable of imposing peace on the region for the time being, but there is constantly the danger of such peace betrayal once the involvement has finished (Ayoob 1999:252). In these interventions, the great power or its alliance has the obligation of providing collective security and welfare. "It does so because it perceives clearly that its security and welfare cannot be separated from that of the region as a whole, since it cannot withdraw from that particular region for economic, security, and cultural imperatives" (Ayoob 1999:253).

Afghan conflict is the by-product of the cold war but remains active in the post-Cold War too. Afghan conflict is too complex to understand within a single theoretical framework alone. The end of bipolarity will not have a great impact on the Afghanistan, as for conflict solution was concerned. The Afghan conflict is also a case, where its regional location and internal links, have sustained the conflict for the last four decades, regardless of international structures. Therefore, it is appropriate to look at it through the regional dimension. In the post-Cold War world, the regional level of security has become more independent and recognised for an understanding of a particular conflict.

“The relative autonomy of regional security constitutes a pattern of international security relations radically different from the rigid structure of superpower bipolarity that defined the Cold War” (Buzan and Waever 2003:3).

Therefore, the RSCT is an important mechanism to understand the regional conflict and its links with the international structure. It offers a conceptual framework that provides a foundation for comparative studies in regional security. According to this theory, “most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters”(Buzan and Waever 2003:4). In the international system, most of the states are principally concerned with the capabilities and intentions of their respective neighbours. Although regional security complexes have been linked to the global structure, even so they have a substantial degree of autonomy from the global power setup. RSCT is a mixture of neorealist and constructive theories. Even contradictory to the neorealist augment of regional links with the global structure, RSCT surveyed the neorealist background of confined territoriality and distribution of power. The political processes which constitute the security issues, have taken from the constructivist approach to international relations (Buzan and Waever 2003:4).

There are basically three important theoretical understandings to observe the post-Cold War international relation: *neorealist*, *globalist*, and *regionalist* (Buzan and Waever 2003:6). *Neorealists* try to find the source of conflict in the structure of international system relatively rather than the region and the state level (Rajagopalan 1999). Neorealism is a state-centric and power polarity theory to explain international relations. This perspective is used to understand the regional stakes in this chapter. Neorealism gives a useful interpretation to understand India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan in the later part of this chapter.

Second, the *Globalist* perspective, which is an antithesis of the realist (realism and neorealism) school, normally stresses on the transnational and international political and economic linkages. Some scholars call it the ‘deterritorialisation of world politics’ (Buzan and Waever 2003:7). There are different approaches to the role of the state in the globalist theory. But all scholars agree on the essential role of non-state actors, like multinational organisations and NGOs beyond the state boundaries in the globalist approach. It is an important part of the understanding of regionalisms in the region.

In this chapter, the emphasis is on the third method, which is the *regionalist* approach. It is an apt approach because, as stated by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003), “in the post-Cold War world the regional level stands more clearly on its own as the locus of conflict and cooperation for states and as the level of analysis for scholars seeking to explore contemporary security affairs”. Buzan and Waever (2003) claim that regional level of security was continued significant. There is a change in the regional perspective in the post-Cold War because superpower rivalries have not penetrated the region. The regionalist approach contains elements of both globalism and neorealism but gives priority to a lower stage of investigation (Buzan and Waever 2003:7-10). RSCT contains a model of regional security that explains developments within any region. According to Buzan and Waever, this theory stresses that

security regions form subsystems in which most of the security interaction is internal; states fear their neighbours and ally with other regional actors, and most often the borders between regions are - often geographically determined - zones of weak interaction, or they are occupied by an insulator (Turkey, Burma, Afghanistan) that faces both ways, bearing the burden of this difficult position but not strong enough to unify its two worlds into one. The concept of insulator is specific to RSCT and defines a location occupied by one or more units where larger regional security dynamics stand back to back. This is not to be confused with the traditional idea of a buffer state, whose function is defined by standing at the centre of a strong pattern of securitisation, not at its edge (Buzan and Waever 2003:41).

The significance logic behind emphasising on the regional level security is that the national security of any nation is not autonomous. The national security of a particular state, often determined by the condition when “own state at the centre of an ad hoc ‘context’ without a grasp of the systemic or subsystemic context in its own right” (Buzan and Waever 2003:41). In a region, states connect so closely that their securities cannot be measured separately from each other. A region is a place where global security and national security get interchanged. Though the definition of regional security complex theory has been modified by Buzan and his co-authors in the subsequent years, the main concept is “a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another”(Buzan and Waever 2003:44). It defined by enduring patterns of amity and enmity in a particular region.

Regional security in South Asia is largely defined in terms of the military-political method. The security dynamics of a particular region is influenced on all- domestic, regional, and global levels. But in the case of the Asian super-complex the interregional level is growing importance relative to the others, and bipolar structure at the regional level is declining as Pakistan loses position in relation to regional power India (Buzan and Waever 2003:101). Buzan and Waever (2003) found that Indo-Pak antagonism is at the centre of the South Asian RSC. Three wars, low-intensity warfare, nuclear arsenal and accusing each other for domestic violence in their respective country are the part of this antagonism. According to these scholars, the small states in the region, in one way or another are tied to the regional security complex, because of their economic and societal linkages with India. These smaller states together with Pakistan cannot challenge India. Therefore, they all are more comfortable operating with India. Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh for different reasons depend on India (Buzan and Waever 2003:103).

The South Asian RSC was also reasonably well separated from Southeast Asia RSC from Burma and Gulf RSC from Afghanistan. Major wars within all these three RSCs tend not to spill over into neighbouring complexes (Buzan and Waever 2003:103). According to Buzan and Waever (2003), South Asia's regional dynamics were strongly autonomous and there was no radical shift in the Cold War. Pakistan did attempt to balance India by becoming Cold War allies of US and seeking ties first with Iran, and later with Saudi Arabia during the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan. However, it hasn't worked. India also went to the Soviet, but the South Asian RSC had remained bipolar (Buzan and Waever 2003:103-105). The post-Cold War period has seen some significant changes in the South Asian RSC. At the same time, there was some continuity on all levels. At the domestic level, the political violence in the states remained the same and spread over to the regional level in South Asia. Kashmir insurgency in India, LTTE sponsored Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka, Pakistan's ethnic insurgency in Baluchistan are examples of post-Cold War national violence and its impact on the region (Buzan and Waever 2003:105-108).

The most important interplay has emerged in the inter-regional level. In the post-Cold War, there is the interplay between South Asia and the West Asian RSCs. Afghanistan as an insulator plays an important role in the interplay between South Asian, West Asian and Central Asian RSCs. First the Soviet intervention and later Soviet withdraw

vacuum motivated all Afghanistan's neighbours to enhance their RSCs. The Afghan civil war created a 'minicomplex' where the regional states intervened on the internal revelries (Buzan and Waever 2003:111). The main forces participating in this complex were Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Central Asian Republics.

Table 1-Afghan 'Minicomplex'

Intrastate ethnic group	State level support	Interregional level
Pashtun, Sunni Islamic forces (Hizb-e-Islam, Taliban)	Pakistan	Pakistan supported by Saudi Arabia in this cluster (South Asia +Middle East RSC)
Hazara Shi'as	Iran	Gulf RSC
Uzbeks	Supported by Russia and Uzbekistan	Central Asian RSC
Tajiks	This group supported by Tajikistan Iran and India	Central Asian RSC+ South Asia RSC+ Gulf RSC

Source - Buzan and Waever 2003:111

The nature of Afghan 'minicomplex' sustained the conflict for so long. The regional hostility and the ethnic bonds made it more complex and sustained. From the 1990s till today, every one of Afghanistan's neighbours have an interest in containing the spread of terrorism, religious extremism and the narcotics trade. Post-9/11, all regional and Western states want to prevent the terrorist activity from Afghanistan to their respective territory. Rivalry in the Gulf over Afghanistan is continuing between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Radical Islam has been spreading since the 1990s beyond the Afghanistan in Xinjiang and Kashmir.

Some important points regarding the Afghanistan as analysed by Buzan and Waever (2003:112), are- first, Afghanistan cannot be hegemonised or occupied by any neighbouring state alone. The Soviet and NATO decisively verified the resisting power of Afghanistan against external occupiers. Second, all of the bordering or regional states

have more serious security concern from Afghanistan. Third, because of its ‘chaos power’ Afghanistan lacks the power to unite wider security dynamics. In the following background, a weak Kabul government will be trying to balance among both the local warlords and the external powers.

It can therefore be argued that, post-Cold War, South Asia has shown continuity, at the domestic level. The violent, chaotic and fragmented situation in Af-Pak is an example of this structural continuity. In the same way, at the regional level, the pattern of amity and enmity remained largely similar, between Pakistan-Afghanistan and India-Pakistan. In the post-Cold War era, India considered more hegemonic in the region, in spite of Pakistan’s nuclear reach. The war in Afghanistan (2001) strengthens India status in the Asian super-complex. At the inter-regional level, India became a significant power while South Asian boundaries remain more or less the same. At the global level too, there is continuity in the general outline of outside intervention in the region. Now, instead of Soviet Union, it is China along with the US which is highly engaged in South Asia (Buzan and Waever 2003:126).

4.3- Cold-War Structural Legacy and Regionalisation of Conflict

As discussed in the first chapter, Afghanistan as a modern state arose as a buffer arrangement between the imperial powers. The superpowers on both sides, the north and the south, respected the Afghan neutrality for their own advantage. In the last decade of the Cold War, both superpowers intervened in Afghanistan (in different ways) and it got converted into a conflict zone. This pattern remained so for almost the last four decades. It was the internal political tussle between the domestic actors, which intensified into the regional conflict when the Soviet intervened in 1979. Before 1978, Afghanistan had little significance for the US or Western security concerns. After the Soviet intervention in 1979, US armed the Mujahedeen, who were fighting against the Soviets and the Afghan government. A US covert operation to support Islamic organisations with the help of Pakistan was the largest lone task in the history of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The Afghan mission was a key module of the “Reagan Doctrine,” which was designed to turn round pro-Soviet regimes globally (Gibbs 2006:239-242). The recent document suggests that the aim of the Soviet Union was not to make Afghanistan a communist country. Western writers disproportionately

highlighted the fear of Soviet presence. The recent researches suggest that it was not a threat to Western security or a more generalised act of regional aggression (Gibbs 2006:259). Whatever the arguments over the Soviet and later US involvement in Afghanistan in the last decade of the Cold War, it had larger implications. The Soviet invasion not only contributed to disintegrate of the Soviet Union but also created extensive international and regional consequences that endure today (Brown 2013:87).

Soviet's ten years Afghan involvement was the greatest crisis of the Cold War, which has had larger consequences, not only during the Soviet years but beyond that in South Asia, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and to some extent in China also. The regional dynamics had changed after the Soviet intervention because the regional states became intensely involved in the Afghanistan, which was earlier known to be a neutral zone. Every country had its own apprehension in response to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. On the West, Iran was not at all pleased with the Soviet presence and largely watched from the corner. Iran like Pakistan was forced to deal with the refugees, who fled from Afghanistan to neighbouring areas. While Iran also supported some Shia rebels, it was too little in comparison to Pakistan. As far as the Soviet Central Asia is concerned, it had little impact during the Soviet time, but in post-disintegration all three adjacent states have affected by the Afghan civil war. Tajikistan civil war erupted (1992-1997) almost at the same time as the Afghan civil war (Kalinovsky 2013:23). The key external actor in Afghan conflict was Pakistan, which saw Afghanistan as a hostile state, before the Soviet intervention. It was the Saur Revolution, which established Pakistan through the Islamic parties in Afghan internal affairs. Superpower hostility in Afghanistan made Pakistan a frontline state in Afghan affairs and it continues till today. Pakistan emerged as an important actor during the Soviet intervention and then played a role in the Geneva Accord. The Geneva Accord made a face-saving exit possible for the Soviet Union. Once the Red Army left the Afghanistan, the US also disengaged from the region. The regional countries operated by their proxies to fill this vacuum and a new 'Great Game' had emerged in Afghanistan (Mir 2012:133). This led to the Afghan civil war, where these regional states having engaged through their own syndicates. Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Central Asian Republics have directly engaged and influenced the Afghan conflict. The legacy of this period still continues in one form or another. The involvement of so many regional actors made the Afghan conflict a complex scenario from the Cold War period until today. This is

the legacy of Cold War that provided Pakistan a golden chance to settle Afghan irritant in its favour. Pakistan's Afghan engagement was inspired by the notion of "strategic depth" against the arch rival India (Rashid 2002:186-187). Therefore 'Soviet-India-Afghan axis' was the worst case scenario for Pakistan. By supporting Afghan *Jihad*, Pakistan was capable of reaching the wider Muslim world beyond South Asia (Kalinovsky 2013:25). But instead of a settlement, it has negatively impacted on Pakistan's own security and integrity.

Pakistan's determining factor-India was also not comfortable with the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Before the Soviet invasion in 1977, the then Indian Prime Minister, Morarji Desai and his Pakistani counterpart, Zia-Ul-Haq had spoken with one voice on the need for the Soviet Union to stop interfering in Afghanistan. India from the very beginning had the position that no one should interfere in Afghanistan. But Pakistan's renewed relations with Washington after the Soviet intervention, pushed India away this stand and support Soviet's Afghan operation. India abstained from the UN resolution condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan but makes a stand that outside powers should not interfere with training and arming the rebellious to create instability in Afghanistan (Kalinovsky 2013:26). Indian support for the Soviet Union was encouraged by the two facts; first Pak-US alliance and second India could not support the Islamist resistance movement managed by Pakistan against the secular Kabul government. Indira Gandhi as a Prime Minister had shown a great interest in Afghanistan, but she refused India's proactive role as asked by Brezhnev during his New Delhi visit in 1980. India had its domestic concerns, if it engaged in Afghanistan, then its Muslim minority would go against the government's deed (Kalinovsky 2013:26). The Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan converted it to an interregional conflict that impact on all surrounding regions. The response of regional countries was quite different in comparison to the other contemporary Cold War conflicts. US involvement against the Soviet, through the Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and China had made it spill in the surrounding regions. The vacuum created by the Soviet departure was much harmful beyond the Afghan border. The Central Asian republics (Fergana Valley), Russia (Chechnya), India (Kashmir), China (Xinjiang) and Af-Pak itself have been facing the consequences of this violent Cold War legacy. Therefore, these regions are still suffering from the militarisation and legitimisation of violence in the larger state discourse. The hostility of the Cold War had created mistrust between

the regional states and they engaged through their proxies to achieve their narrow interests.

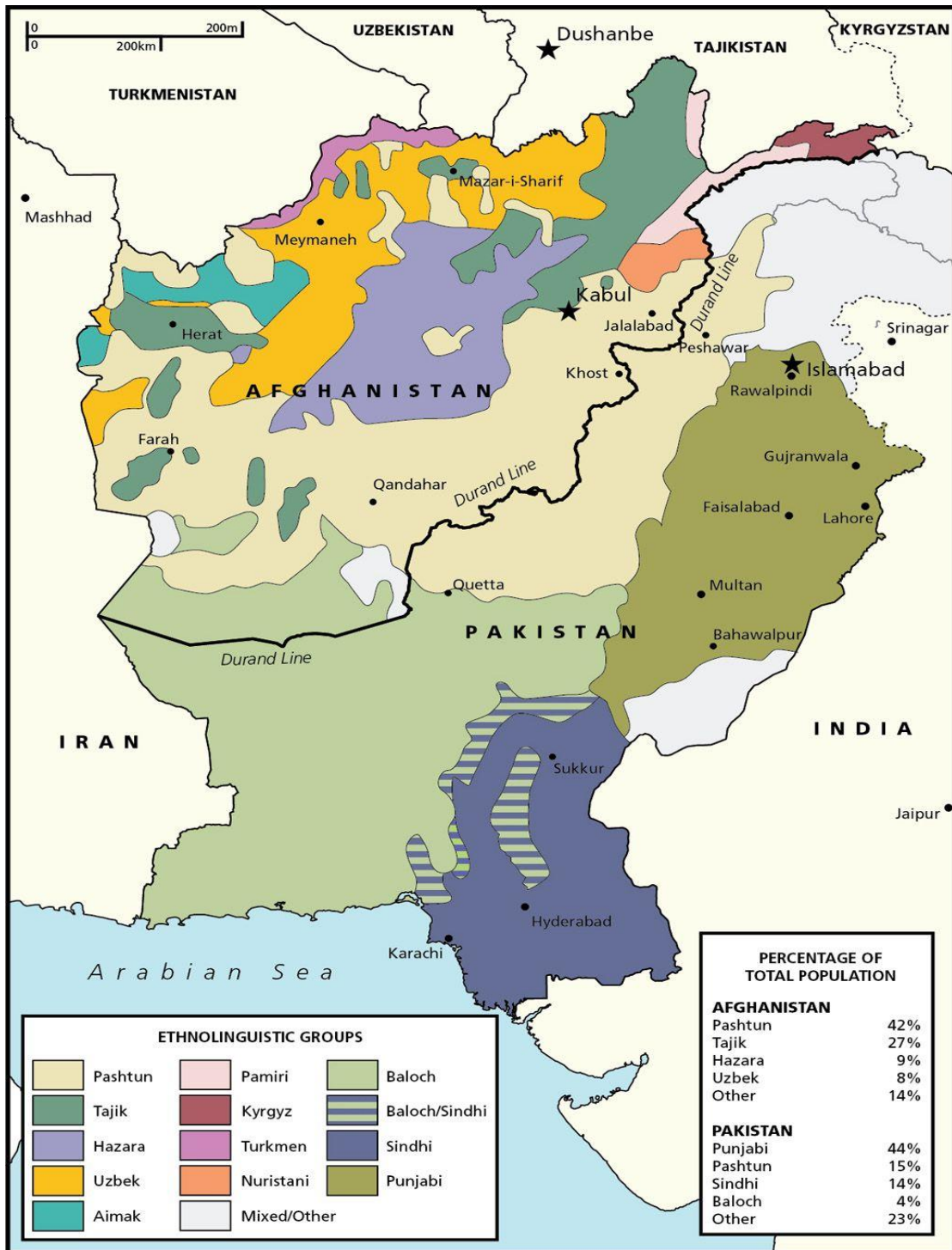
4.4- Afghanistan's Response to the Region⁸

Afghanistan is a diverse country incorporating diverse 'micro-societies', whose members hold a wide range of views about their neighbours. But there was no single view because of the diverse population in Afghanistan based on the ethnicity. These ethnic groups have cross-border ties with the neighbouring countries. As the map below demonstrates all neighbouring countries have had ethnic connections with the Afghan population since the formation of the Afghan state in the mid-eighteenth century. According to Amin Saikal (2013), Afghanistan is "a weak state in dynamic relations with a strong society". Afghanistan is known as a country of minorities made by numerous micro-societies that were headed by "strongmen", who are now known as "warlords" (Saikal 2013:41). Most of these micro-societies share common ethno-linguistic or sectarian linkages with Afghanistan's neighbours. The majority of Pashtuns have kith and kin relation with Pakistan while Tajiks have common links with Iran and Tajikistan. The Uzbeks have an ethnic connection with Uzbekistan and Turks have a similar relation with Turkmenistan. Many Shiites have a sectarian connection with Iran. These affiliations display that the Afghan central authority has been accommodated by the periphery. But this cooperation is based on minimal interference by the centre in the periphery (Saikal 2013:44-43). Among the Afghan population, some ethnic Pashtun groups are well inclined towards Pakistan and many of the non-Pashtun clusters.

The Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Aymaqs and Tajik avoid Pakistan interference in Afghan internal affairs after the Cold War. Therefore, they looked to Afghanistan's other neighbouring countries for their affinity and cooperation (Saikal 2013:41-42). Over the last four decades, the Afghan war has not changed much of the relationship between centre and periphery. The antagonism between different ethnic groups has sharpened due to external interference. Before discussing any regional cooperation's possibility and emerging mechanism, it is worthwhile to know how Afghans see their neighbours.

⁸This idea borrows from Amin Saikal's article "Afghanistan's Attitudes towards the region" in "The Regional Dimension to Security: Other Sides of Afghanistan (2013)", edited by Aglaya Snetkov and Stephen Aris.

Map-4, An Ethno-linguistic map showing different language and cultural groups across Af-Pak Region:-



Source- National Geographic⁹

⁹ See- “Afghanistan and Pakistan Ethnic Groups”, National Geographic, [Online: Web], Accessed 17 May 2015, URL-http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/maps/afghanistan-and-pakistan-ethnic-groups/?ar_a=1

The most important neighbour, Pakistan, has been seen as responsible for most of the Afghan problems. Pakistan is viewed as the main obstacle to achieving stability and security in Afghanistan (Saikal 2013:43). The anti-Pakistani sentiment is dominant mainly among the non-Pashtun population and political organisations. The Shiites have also held the same view about Pakistan. This notion about Pakistan survives, even though the supporters of this ideology accept the reality that Afghanistan has no choice but to live with Pakistan. The Jami-i- Islami Afghanistan (JIA) and Hazara people's Islamic Party (PIP) as a political organisation are too critical of Pakistan's Afghan policy. Some important public personalities have the same attitudes toward Pakistan are the present CEO of Afghan unity government and former foreign minister (2001-2005) Abdullah-Abdullah; former head of the Afghan Directorate of Intelligence Amrullah Sakeh (2001-2010); late Burhanuddin Rabbani and ex-Speaker of Wolesi Jirga, Yunus Qanooni (Saikal 2013:44). However, mostly Sunni Pashtuns have sympathetic attitudes towards Pakistan. When a controversy regarding a tape that highlighted relations between militant and Pakistani security establishment in early 2006 in Kabul erupted, *The New York Times* reported that "anti-Pakistan sentiment has been rising in Afghanistan" (Gall 2006). At the end of 2013, Asia Foundation, an international organisation released the important findings of its longest operating public opinion poll in Afghanistan, titled *Afghanistan in 2013: A Survey of the Afghan People*.

This survey, apart from various critical issues, highlighted that Afghan public opinion assumed that 'interference from Pakistan' is one of the two biggest problems facing Afghanistan (The Asia Foundation 2013). The anti-Pakistani feeling has prevailed mostly on the middle class and urban cluster inhabitants. This particular feeling was also witnessed on various social media platforms like Facebook and blogs. For an instant, a group that called itself 'Afghan National-Reconciliation' created on Facebook followed by four thousand friends, who are very aggressive against Pakistan's Afghan policy¹⁰. Most of them are very critical of Pakistan as one writes "...The 60 year old nation of Pakistan has its eyes for centuries old Afghanistan as its fifth state. As an Afghan, I will honour to be dead than to accept Pakistan rule my beloved ancestors' home...."¹¹. The anti-Pakistani anger has also been publicised on the Afghan streets,

¹⁰ See the whole profile at URL- <https://www.facebook.com/krn9117>, [Online: Web], Accessed on 15 March 2014.

¹¹ Ibid.

whenever there has been some border conflict or when there were terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. For instance, as *Dawn* reported on 16 May 2007, “after a sequence of border clashes, hundreds of Afghans took to the streets shouting anti-Pakistan slogans” (Baloch 2014). In a similar manner on October 2011, many Afghans protested against the Pakistan army’s shelling of border town and the assassination of former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani. As Hina Baloch (2014) reports the protesters openly accused Pakistan’s intelligence agency of plotting Rabbani’s murder. More violently, on 8 May 2013, eleven Afghans were killed during an anti-Pakistan protest in Kandahar. Therefore, the common political narrative in Afghanistan can barely be illustrated as Pakistan-friendly (Baloch 2014). The young generation has a very anti-Pakistan inclination. The political class also criticised Pakistan for its support to the militants and for conducting secret missions inside Afghanistan. For example, once the deputy interior minister Abdul Rahman of Karzai government in his testimony in front of the Wolesi Jirga made the accusation that “ISI have joined hands with the Iranian spy agency in provoked the Haqqani network and other militant groups like Lashka-i-Taeba, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to increase attacks and kill dominant Afghan individuals” (Zaheer 2012). In the background of the reconciliation process, there were frequent visits of Pakistani political and military officials in Kabul in the recent years, these numerous visits have been seen by Tufail Ahmad (2015) as if Pakistan continues to think of Afghanistan as its colony. He observes that “Pakistan looks at Afghanistan with the colonial intent” (Ahmad 2015).

After Pakistan, Iran is the second most significant neighbour country. Just like Pakistan, it has also earned both sympathy and criticism in Afghanistan. Again, here the sectarian identities play a role. The Shiites or Tajik clusters have pro-Iran inclinations while the Sunni groups disgusted Iran. Some of the Pashtun leaders believe that it is Iran behind the anti-Pakistani element in Afghanistan. There is another popular belief that Iran has its own regional ambitions to make a Shiite alliance. Therefore, they engaged with the Afghan’s particular group. The most powerful critics of Iran are Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and Fazel-ul-Rahman. Sayyaf used to be a Mujahideen leader with anti-Iranian inclination during the anti-Soviet jihad. He had the close link with the Saudi Arabia, now headed a political party, the Islamic Dawah Organisation of Afghanistan (Saikal 2013:44).

The Central Asian republics have been worried regarding the Afghan situation. These states have maintained clans' relations with ethnic Afghan minority groups. In the case of Uzbekistan, some clusters of Afghan inhabitants (except Uzbeks group) remain suspicious of Uzbekistan, because of its relation with the Afghan Uzbek warlord, Abdul Rashid Dostum. Dostum, the veteran of anti-Soviet Jihad has been known as the leader of the Uzbek community and an image of a spoiler for the non-Uzbek community. In the changed atmosphere, he leads a political organisation name *Jumbish-e- Milli-yi* Afghanistan. He was the political adviser to the former President Karzai (Saikal 2013:45).

According to Saikal (2013), an equal variety of doubt goes to Russia and India. Russia was seen by most of the Afghans through the Soviet prism. There is also a negative image of India, especially for those people who have a natural bond of the affinity or Pakistan's sympathisers. But India is one of the countries which has more supporters in Afghanistan than any other country in the region, thanks to its soft power image within the common Afghans. A poll survey conducted by Kabul-based Afghan Centre for Socio-Economic Opinion Research (ACSOR) and commissioned by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), American Broadcasting Company and German Broadcasting Company (ARD), in 2009, illustrated that India was way ahead of all other countries, including the US (DNA 2010). India has earned the tremendous goodwill for its soft power in Afghanistan by developmental activities it has undertaken in this war-torn nation, as it has been voted the most favoured country, getting 71 per cent votes in this opinion poll, while Pakistan was viewed favourably by only 2 per cent of the people (DNA 2010). This fact is also endorsed by a Pakistani research scholar Ayesha Malik, who went to Kabul for a research trip and her Afghan colleague told her that "maybe it would be better if you say you're Indian. Here, people like Indians" (Malik 2013). Saudi Arabia has some favourable views among the rural Sunni groups. China has very faded images among the common Afghan people because of its low profile and no ethnic and linguist relations. But China has emerged very optimistic in outlook within the power corridor in Kabul due to its economic reach and capacity in recent years. This may be an important factor in the future, when China can play a bigger role. The indication has also come from both sides as current President Ghani has visited China for his first abroad visit as a head of the state. Apart from the states impression, it is essential to know, how the Afghan people's response for reconciliation

efforts. Taliban are supported by 32.6 per cent in urban and 25.6 per cent rural areas predominately in the south, but only 2 per cent in the north. Taliban is the proxy of other countries has accepted by 45 per cent of respondents. As far as the negotiation is concerned, 62.9 per cent in the south of Afghanistan has the desire for a peace agreement with the Taliban in compare of north's 28 per cent (Afghan Citizen Perception Survey 2014). However, there are limits to the evaluation of public perceptions in an oriental society through western tools (such as survey, public opinion). In the Afghan case, there is so much divide among the population that make prediction difficult. Afghanistan has been seen widely divided by north- south and rural-urban cleavages. But even so public opinion matters, particularly in a transitional society.

4.5- Stakes and Role of Relevant Regional States

From the above discussion, the role of regional states appears equally essential as the internal one in Afghanistan. This section explores the concerns, objectives and operating model of almost all regional states. This will help for shaping any regional mechanism for Afghan conflict resolution. The various states have been examined individually in the following section.

4.5.1- Pakistan

Pakistan's role in Afghanistan is so intense that now it is usually called Af-Pak. Pakistan is the only country that has a major territorial dispute with Afghanistan. The long border (Durand Line) has never been officially rectified between them (Mir 2012:134). Pakistan has eagerly persuaded its Afghan policy on the belief of a particular outcome, but over the four decades, it has failed to achieve that. Instead of a positive outcome, Afghanistan became an unstable factor in Pakistan's existence. It is due to Pakistan's unrealistic expectation from Afghanistan to counter its own insecurity in the region. On their part, Pakistan has played a dual policy by neglecting long-term consequences for its own sake. Therefore, Pakistan is somehow trapped on the Afghan front desiring an unrealistic outcome. This has affected Pakistani society and the state cohesion at large. Unfortunately, Pakistan and its Afghan policy-making institutions have learnt nothing from their mistake in Afghanistan. The relations between these two states hardly remain

cordial, except in the short Taliban era, in the last seven decades. In earlier chapters, the history of it has been discussed in larger detail. But it is important to remember that the national identity and territory were the main issues for the tussle. Later conflicting alliance, ideologies in the Cold War determined the relation between them. But both have stood on opposite sides.

To evaluate Pakistan's role in Afghanistan or the possible regional solution, one must understand the factors and goals, which determines Pakistan's Afghan policy¹². The first important factor is remaining the territorial integrity of Pakistan by countering the demand of a state called 'Pashtunistan' for Pakistan's Pashtun ethnic population. The issue of Pashtun nationalism became a serious threat to Pakistan, which had lost half of its population and 35 per cent of the territory in a similar conflict arising from Bengali nationalism in 1971 (Gregory 2013:64). The second factor that determines Pakistan's Afghan policy is to minimise India's weight and presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan has been always very sensitive to the Indian presence in Afghanistan. The third factor from the Pakistani point of view is the much talked 'strategic depth' provided by Afghanistan in the case of war with India. The fourth factor, which influences Pakistan's Afghan policy, is the desire of a pro-Pakistani or, at least, a friendly Kabul government. The fifth factor, which Pakistan has achieved twice in Afghanistan is to use it to attract the political and economic backing of regional and superpower, particularly the US (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:26, Gregory 2013:64). Although there are some other issues, like Pakistan's desire for access to Central Asia and the suppressed secessionist movement in Baluchistan, which has direct links with Afghanistan (Gregory 2013:65). But all these issues are correlated, and therefore, make Afghanistan one of the foreign policy priorities for Pakistan. To achieve these objectives, Pakistan exceeds its limits in Afghan affairs by interfering in its internal matters. Pakistan has made the deliberate effort to exploit Afghanistan's ethnic differences for its strategic purposes through 'cross-border clientalism'. The promotion of only Pashtuns-Islamist ethnic groups was the strategy throughout the Afghan conflict that created animosity between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:26).

¹² 'Pakistan's goals in Afghanistan', this idea has taken from the article written by Marvin G. Weinbaum & Jonathan B. Harder (2008) on 'Pakistan's Afghan policies and their consequences' from Contemporary South Asia.

Like the 1980s, Pakistan again became the frontline states in Afghan front after 9/11. This led Pakistan to reverse its earlier Afghan policy to support Taliban publically. But on the ground Pakistani state supported Taliban, now hiding on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line. The post-Taliban Karzai administration that emerged after Bonn 2001 had been assumed as pro-India by Pakistan. The Pakistani concern has also been driven by the Bush administration's new South Asian policy. The newly elected Bush presidency wanted a good relationship with India. They sent Ambassador Robert Blackwell as the American envoy to New Delhi. Blackwell selected Ashley J. Tellis who earlier developed intellectual architects of 'dehyphenated policy' in South Asia, as his advisor. Tellis in his earlier work, while he was in RAND, argued that the US should decouple India and Pakistan. He believes that the US relations with each country would be directed by an objective consideration of the essential value of each country to US interests. A new important feature of the Tellis theory was that the US would identify that India is going to become a major power, and therefore, there must be cooperation between these powers beyond South Asia. One more feature of South Asia was that Pakistan recognised a state in serious crisis, that must help (Tellis 2008, Fair 2012:246-47). Considering this, the Bush administration had shown a more positive attitudes towards India. Pakistan, despite huge monetary and strategic advantages, has played a double game with the US. Ironically, the Pakistani society and state institutions are more 'anti-America' despite billions of US dollars of defence assistance alone with civilian aid and investment in Pakistan (Fair 2012:243).

Washington's pursuit of dehyphenated relations with India and Pakistan, and failure to follow through on early promises to Pakistan, made it more likely that Pakistan would again return to a policy of supporting the Taliban and increase Pakistan's dependence upon Islamist terror groups to prosecute its security interests (Fair 2012:243).

Therefore, around 2003, Pakistan took the decision to support the revival of the various Afghan Taliban groups in its tribal land. The main four factions that emerged through this process are- Quetta Shura (Balochistan), the Peshawar Shura (NWFP/KPK), Gerdi Jangal Shura (Northern Balochistan) and Miranshah Shura (FATA) (Gregory 2013:67). Even knowing this, the US-NATO failed to force Pakistan to stop these forces from rising because as Shaun Gregory (2013) points, NATO was largely dependent on Pakistan for its transit route, airspace, intelligence information through the ISI network in Afghanistan and the safety of the nuclear arsenal. The situation became complicated

when Afghan Taliban, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups and Islamist extremists (like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) inside Pakistan formed a new indigenous group titled the Pakistani Taliban or Taliban-e-Tharik-e-Pakistan (TTP). All these actors were unhappy with Pakistani support to NATO; therefore, they turned against Pakistan along with Western forces. These groups now have also posed a great threat to the Pakistani state itself. This situation created an interesting circumstance, where Pakistan wanted to cooperate with US-NATO to fight against the TTP and al-Qaeda but maintained Afghan Taliban for future settlement in Afghanistan. Thus, in dealing with the Afghan Taliban, US and Pakistan interests went against each other (Gregory 2013:68). Therefore, Musharraf's government maintained a close relationship with those Afghan insurgents and Islamist groups who had been sympathetic to the Afghan Taliban and can be useful in Afghanistan and Kashmir for Pakistan's interest (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:27). These militants have very good support in the tribal areas and the majority of people do not view them as enemies. This is the background to Pakistan's dual policy towards Afghanistan or more specifically WOT. The US-NATO attitude regarding the Iraq war and then later the Afghan withdrawal plan has also motivated Pakistan to dependent heavily on Afghan-Taliban. The Pakistani army, which drives its Afghan policy has been supporting the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani or Hekmatyar by believing that these groups can manage the vacuum created by the NATO withdrawal in Pakistan's favour (Gregory 2013:69). Pakistan beyond these groups also has considerable influence over 'Punjabi Taliban' group as Jasih e-Mohammed, Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen and Lashkar-e-Tobia. Through these groups, Pakistan has also reached Afghanistan for special purposes like attacking India's interests. Islamabad has also developed relations with some less moderate political parties inside Afghanistan such as Jamaat-i-Islami and more recently the Islamist Difa-e-Pakistan (Gregory 2013:70).

Pakistan's support to these Islamic groups, instead of the Karzai government, can be best understood by the dilemma it faced to maintain its national identity and cohesion. Pakistan is supporting these groups to neutralise and subvert Pashtun nationalist sentiments (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:28). As discussed in earlier chapters Pashtun nationalism was a territorial threat to Pakistan, and Afghan ruler used this issue time and again. During the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, Pakistan's assistance to Islamic resistance forces was one of the key parts of the Islamabad strategy to dilute the nationalist forces in Pashtun-majority areas along the Durand Line. The ISI controlled

the anti-Soviet resistance movement in such a way that the leftist and secular parties, some of which had championed of a Pashtun nationalism, were deliberately excluded from the alliance and benefited from assistance. Only radical Islamic groups have received the assistance that came from the Western and Arab world through the ISI network in Peshawar. Later, when Mujahedeen failed to deliver on Pakistan's expectation, it created Taliban. Islamabad was expecting that these acts would stifle secular Pashtun nationalism. Pakistan's dual policy in the wake of current discourse should be evaluated on this basis. Still Pakistani state establishment, particularly its army believes that the Islamic militant would be an asset in all these matters: - further settlement in Afghanistan, to suppress the Pashtun nationalism and an instrument against India. Therefore, Pakistan allowed and re-established Taliban leader Mullah Omar in northern Baluchistan, the Haqqani network or family in North Waziristan and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami in the Bajaur Agency (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:29-30). The ISI over the last decade has been accused of facilitating these militants. In spite of great foreign stress, Pakistan has done virtually nothing against the Afghan Taliban present in Quetta and Peshawar, which still operates from its soil. Pakistan has a very selective approach against the militants. The Pakistani army has been operating against only those tribes of TTP, who are against the Pakistani states (Grare 2010:19-20).

Pakistan's Afghan policy has a deep impact on Pakistan itself. Pakistan allowed militants to regroup in its land despite the radicalization of its population. Pakistan's Afghan policy depends upon the non-state actor from the time of Soviet intervention has led to the radicalisation of the Pakistani society at large. Pakistan is facing a huge cost for its Afghan policy socially and economically. The support for the Mujahideen in the 1980s set the ground for a continuing radicalisation of the population in the (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) KPK and tribal areas, as well as a widening of the differences among Pakistan's ethnic groups. This radicalisation of Pakistani society has also widened the gap between Shi'as and Sunnis. Pakistan's Afghan policy established religion as a more central factor in the Pakistani society, public life, state and most importantly in politics. First Afghan *jihad* and later the backing up for the Taliban regime resulted in the usurpation by Islamist militants of the conventional secular tribal leadership (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:30-32). Now, instead of *Malik* the *Mullah* leads the tribal society in the name of religion. These tribal areas over the years

constituted the global Islamic connection for jihad beyond the Af-Pak region. The Pakistani state is working hard to establish its jurisdiction over these tribal areas. In September 2006, the Pakistani government did a ceasefire through the North Waziristan accord. According to this accord, Pakistan agreed to the removal of army checkpoints and troops from the area, and in return the tribal leaders promised to root out the foreign fighters and prevent cross-border infiltration by militants (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:30-33). This is one example, out of several similar accords in the militants' terms. It is easy to assume how the people in this region are living out of basic welfare state remedies. Therefore, the possibility of being radicalised in the absence of modern education and interaction would be a most probable scenario. Pakistan's four decades long Afghan policies and their impact can be summarised as they have come at the cost of the country's political stability and social cohesion. Pakistan's policies are responsible for the ethnic split, deteriorating economy, increasing religious extremism, and a shrinking of the state's legitimate authority. Pakistani military strengthens its position in all fields at the pretext of the Afghanistan situation. In formulating its Afghan policies, Islamabad has turned a blind eye to internal radicalisation and the long-term impact on governance inside its border (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:37). Therefore, it is very clear that Pakistan is the most important, but also the most detrimental actor in Afghan affairs. Despite numerous jeopardies affecting its state and society, Pakistan has not deserted its ambitions in Afghanistan. Hence, the future of Afghanistan will continue to be determined by the Pakistan's strategies.

4.5.2- Iran

Bordering on the western side of Afghanistan, Iran is another Islamic state that has historical, cultural, linguistic and sectarian relations with Afghanistan. Tehran's Afghan policy has been based on its geo-strategic interests, where Afghanistan's geographical and geopolitical situation make it an important factor in Iran's foreign policy calculations (Mir 2012:135, Haji-Yousefi 2012:65). Therefore, the presence of great powers in Afghanistan has brought a grave threat to Iran's security. Iran also looks Afghanistan as a land bridge to Central Asia, where it has cultural and geo-economic interests (Haji-Yousefi 2012:65). There is a regional competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia to achieve in Afghanistan. Their old sectarian Sunni-Shia hostility creates space in Afghanistan for their respective sectarian influences (Mir 2015). Iran had faced a dilemma when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan. It was the time when the

new Islamic Republic of Iran faced some grim external problems because of the Iran-Iraq war. To counter the Red Army, the US and Saudi presence in Afghanistan was the worst security scenario for Tehran. During the anti-Soviet *Jihad*, the Iran had supported different Afghan groups affiliated to Tehran, such as the Shiites. After the Soviet withdrawal, Tehran supported governments of Mojaddadi and Rabbani (Haji-Yousefi 2012:66). The sectarian difference has been manipulated by both Iran and Saudi Arabia in their strategic rivalry in Afghanistan. For Saudi Arabia, Pakistan has always been a very important friend. Afghan people had a memory of the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the 1990s, which caused devastation and violence in the Kabul (Mir 2015).

The Iranian regime judged the rise of the Taliban as one of the most important post-revolution threats to its national security. The Taliban movement, like Saudi Arabia, was based on the Sunni sectarian identity. Therefore, it was assumed to be against Iran. Besides, the Taliban received support from Tehran's rivals Saudi Arabia and the US. The massacre of around 2000 Shiites in Mazari Sharif and the killing of 8 diplomats and one Iranian television correspondent by the Taliban militia moved Iran-Taliban relationship to a crucial stage and even led the two countries to the threshold of war in September 1998 (Haji-Yousefi 2012:67). Amir M. Haji-Yousefi (2012) describes following five factors that confirmed Taliban is hostile to Tehran's interest.

- 1-Taliban has strengthened Salafi and Wahabi radicalism in Afghanistan.
- 2-Taliban had blamed for massacred thousands of Shiites in Afghanistan.
- 3- Under Taliban regime there was increased production of narcotic drugs and it's trafficking through Iran.
- 4-Taliban policies and violence created by it had led escalating flood of Afghan refugees to Iran.
- 5) Once Taliban Killed Iranian diplomats.

Therefore, 'Operation Enduring Freedom' was a great opportunity, for Iran's Afghan policy. Iran supported the US-led invasion because of its hostility to radical Sunni Taliban, but Tehran has opposed the continued presence of US- NATO forces on its eastern border. Iran was gravely influenced by the Afghan conflict when it

accommodated thousands of refugees on its land during the Soviet invasion. There are eight million officially registered Afghan people living in Iran, but according to Human Rights Watch, there at least two million undocumented Afghans (Rubin 2013). Iran has serious concerns about drug trafficking and migration through western Afghanistan's long and rough border. Western countries had apprehensions regarding the Iran, due to its anti-Western attitude. Iran confirmed its willingness to help the US in its move against Taliban by closing its borders so Al-Qaida fighters could not run away through Iranian land and also return any US troops forced to land in the Iranian terrain during the invasion. Iran also asked its allies, Northern Alliance in northern Afghanistan to assist the US war against the Taliban, and cooperate with Islamabad to form an extensive coalition government in Kabul (Haji-Yousefi 2012:68). Iran positively responded to US-NATO's Afghan strategy in the initial years. Post-2001, Iran supported the Western-backed Karzai government because Tehran assets, Shias was well represented and their interest remained preserved. By 2002, Iran along with Iraq and North Korea were placed on the "axis of evil" list. Therefore, the Bush administration's unilateral policies had led to the reinforcement of the second approach among Tehran policy makers, which measured the US presence in Afghanistan as a major source of threat (Haji-Yousefi 2012:69). As a result, Iran prefers a "no winner policy" whose aim is that neither the US-NATO nor the Taliban forces should win the battle in Afghanistan (Haji-Yousefi 2012:74).

Iran also was in a dilemma at some point of time when it called for a withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, but at the same time it has not been able to afford the luxury of chaos in Afghanistan. Iran in the process of revival of its influence in Afghanistan had "rented" Karzai as his office has been receiving open-handed cash payments from Tehran (Milani 2010). Karzai had publically confirmed this claim. For the US, Iran's Afghan policy closely related to its strategic contest with the US, both in Afghanistan and beyond (Milani 2010). It also believed that Iran has gained a sphere of influence in the Herat region of Afghanistan in the last decade. Till 2010, Iran was among Afghanistan's top five trade partners and has committed some US \$660 million to Afghan rebuilding. According to an American academician Mohsen M. Milani (2010), Tehran has cultivated good relations with most key players in Afghanistan like Ismail Khan, Hekmatyar, Northern Alliance, the Hazara Shiites and some elements of the Taliban. US also blamed Karzai for playing up Iran against the US to receive major

grants from both (Milani 2010). After Obama's drawdown plan, Tehran's role is relatively important. In a significant move for the first time in October 2010, Iran has sent an envoy to a meeting of an international group on NATO's strategy for transition in Afghanistan. This international contact group was formed in April 2009 after Obama recommended that it should comprise of Iran and other adjoining countries (Nordland 2010).

In mid-May 2015, a delegation of Afghan Taliban arrived in Iran to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, headed by the Muhammad Tayyab Agha, who is liable for Taliban's political office in Qatar (The New York Times 2015). The political observer noticed this shift as Iran accepting the logic of "my enemy's enemy is my friend" (Qaidaari 2015). Iran's interest in challenging the US in the region has shaped common ground between the Taliban and Iran. Recently there is some pragmatic change noticed in Afghan Taliban's strategic action. The Taliban spokesperson acknowledged that the visit of the Taliban delegation in Iran was purported to strengthen good relations with other Muslim countries, especially the neighbours who are very significant. Highlighting Taliban's foreign policy for coming years, Taliban spokesperson said "we have learned that we should have had affairs with other countries so that we could speak our thoughts and reasons to them to encounter the misinformation against us" (Qaidaari 2015). The rise of Islamic State (ISIS) in northern Afghanistan is another emerging challenge for both, Iran and Taliban. Iran is threatened by the rise of ISIS in West Asia. Like Iran, the Taliban is also threatened by ISIS, because it is seen by the Taliban as an alternative to them in Afghanistan. ISIS and the US are the common enemies of Iran and Taliban and, therefore, they can cooperate to fight against them in Afghanistan (Qaidaari 2015). As for the regional process, Iran has shown some positive attitude when it advocates a regional solution to the Afghan problem because it would also benefit through this process (Haji-Yousefi 2012:69). The possible regional solution definitely would replace the US from the region and this is the most desirable outcome from Tehran's point of view. Any regional solution opens a new opportunity for Iranian energy trade in South Asia.

4.5.3-India

India's objective and role in Afghanistan have been extensively discussed in the previous chapters as well as the following chapters. Therefore, this sub-section only

focuses on the regional angles of India's Afghan policy. There is a wide perception that India's Afghan policy has determined by its rivalry with Pakistan. Without any doubt, it can be argued that Pakistani threat perception has over occupied in the Indian public sphere. Strategic analysts and commentators have also been influenced by this factor when they observe Afghanistan. There is some validity for Pakistani factor in general and particularly in the Afghan case. Pakistan's location breaks the long continuity of the subcontinent. Pakistan has brought aggressive outside power into this region such as the US during the Cold War, some Islamic states and recently China (Tanham 1992:31). The Islamic card has been used by Pakistan against India, like the *Jihad* and 'Islamic nuclear bomb' have also been seen as a threat to a secular India (Tanham 1992:31-32). The Pakistani strategy over the years has been perceived as a sensitive threat to Indian national unity. Some commentators argue that India has no significant strategy against Pakistan and it led a very expensive arms race (Tanham 1992:35). Four full-scale wars and two decades-long covert operations between India and Pakistan have not brought about any solutions. It is common perception in India that since the Soviet departure, Pakistan is using Afghanistan as a strategic tool against India. However, scholars like Amitabh Matoo (1996) argue that the Pakistani threat has always been exaggerated (Bajpai and Matoo 1996:22)

Gautam Mukhopadhaya (2010) said that there is an extreme political contest between India and Pakistan in Afghanistan at present, driven by real or imagined security concerns (Mukhopadhaya 2010:27). He further argues that India's larger interests in Afghanistan expand beyond Pakistan. India has an aspiration for increased trade, particularly energy for its rapidly growing economy through Afghanistan, and cultural ties with Central and West Asia. India's traditional routes to reach Central and West Asia are expensive and it finds itself at a disadvantage vis-à-vis China (Mukhopadhaya 2010:27). India's growing energy desires require the diversification of its energy resources and Central Asia is an essential solution for it. For India the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline has the potential for new opportunities for regional collaboration, resulting in better development, and security (Embassy of India, Kabul 2006).

India has serious security concerns from Afghanistan. The return of violence or the Taliban is seen as a security threat for India. In the beginning, India was very suspicious of the reconciliation efforts. India's concern was that the transition process might

become Pakistan-brokered and not Afghan-driven. India has serious reservations about making the Taliban a part of the reconciliation process. The basic Indian argument was that such a move has given the legitimacy to the Taliban and another insurgency (The Hindu 2011). But later, as the global acceptability increased for reconciliation with Taliban, India has softened its stand. As discussed in the third chapter, the Kashmir insurgency was directly linked to Afghanistan. Pakistan sponsored terrorism has mushroomed in the unstable Afghanistan. Therefore, India would like a stable, strong and self-sustained Kabul government. India has shown eagerness to work with like-minded countries in Afghanistan. But India's strategic community remains suspect on Pakistan's role in Afghanistan.

India is the only regional country which wants NATO long presence in Afghanistan. India has shown great willingness to work with the US, Russia and Iran for Afghanistan's long-term stability. From the very beginning, India supports the inclusion of other regional actors, such as Iran, Russia, Central Asian republics and itself rather than relying only on Pakistan (Mukhopadhaya 2010:29). India would agree to accept some of Pakistan's valid concerns if it could be sure that Pakistan's role would help to stabilise Afghanistan. As for a regional solution, according to Mukhopadhaya (2010), India feels the lack of an appropriate regional or international environment that brings together all major stakeholders in this attempt (Mukhopadhaya 2010:31). Until the end of 2014, instead of any regional mechanism, India pursued its Afghan policy on its own. But there is a strong inclination on India's part for regional actors to be involved in any future Afghan settlement process. India also believes that any regional approach should have a strong economic foundation (Mukhopadhaya 2010:31). For instance, in the recent years, India has shown a flexible attitude towards the participation of Taliban in the reconciliation process.

India's interests and policies are generally in convergence with US-NATO alliance, Iran, Russia and the Central Asian republics, and to some degree with China, but not with Pakistan. India has slightly different concerns from Iran on the role of the US. India's difference with China on the Afghan front is related to China's tactical support for Pakistan (Mukhopadhaya 2010:31). Russia and Central Asia have more or less same concerns as India. Therefore, with the rising Pakistani role in reconciliation with the Taliban, India found itself in a great dilemma. According to Harsh V. Pant (2014), India's comeback strategy is 'Forging New Alignment' with Russia and Iran similar to

the 1990s when these three had a convergence of interests in Afghanistan. Moscow and Tehran are equally concerned about the return of Sunni-dominated *jihadists* in Kabul. India is working with these two countries on some contingency plan. A rapprochement between the US and Iran would create some diplomatic space for India to work with Iran in Afghanistan (Pant 2014). In India's view, preventing terrorism, fundamentalism, extremism, narcotics trade and sustained a stable and peaceful Afghanistan that facilitates trade in the entire region would be an ideal model for any regional process. These should be the basic points for any negotiations. That is the official position of India regarding the situation in Afghanistan.

4.5.4- Saudi Arabia

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has provided Saudi Arabia an opportunity to engage with Afghanistan, which doesn't share borders with it. Saudi Arabia has an exceptional place in the heart of most Afghans as the place of Islam's divine sites. In addition, Saudi Arabia openly supported the Afghan Mujahideen in their struggle against the former Soviet Union (Mir 2015). A significant number of Saudi citizens, including 'Royal Court' and the religious organisations aggressively supported anti-Soviet *jihad* (Boucek 2010:45). Osama Bin Laden was one of them, who travelled Afghanistan to participate in the fight against the Soviet Union. Riyadh supported the Taliban movement because they believed that radical Sunni movements could challenge the revolutionary Shia doctrine in the region (Mir 2015). Saudi Arabia was among the three countries that officially acknowledged the Taliban regime in 1996. Riyadh enjoyed influential relations with Afghanistan, prior to the terrorist attack on the US. The 9/11 attack was a serious blow to Saudi prestige, as most of the attackers belonged to its territory¹³. In the last decade and a half, Riyadh has come to be identified with Islamic extremism and terrorism. The most embarrassing situation for Riyadh was that, both Sunni regimes of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein were overthrown by its ally, the US (Yamani 2008:143).

The larger foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is primarily concerned with containing the so called Iranian 'Shia threat' and the rise of a 'Shia crescent' extending

¹³There were 19 men affiliated to al-Qaeda involved in hijacking activity for 9/11, attacks. 15, out of the 19 were citizens of Saudi Arabia. (CIA Document : "DCI Testimony Before the Joint Inquiry into Terrorist Attacks Against the United States", Date June 18, 2002, Website https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2002/dci_testimony_06182002.html)

from Iran to Lebanon (Yamani 2008:153-56). Riyadh's larger engagement in West Asia has been driven by this ideology. Under King Abdullah, the foreign policy in recent years has maintained a central role for Saudi Arabia within the Muslim world (Boucek 2010:46). Saudi Arabia's actions in the Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia and Palestine are part of this strategy. Saudi Arabia has provided generous monetary support and assistance to post-Taliban Afghanistan as the 'Saudi Development Fund' has already spent at least US \$500 million in Afghanistan s (Boucek 2010:46). Apart from material assistance, the Kingdom has also been involved in cyclic resolutions and negotiation efforts between the Kabul government and the Taliban. Riyadh on its part has shown great interest to coordinate peace talks with the Taliban. Saudi Arabia initiated the much talked about Doha negotiations in January 2012. That led to the opening of an office of the Taliban representative in Qatar's capital. Saudi Arabia had facilitated the meeting between the Taliban and Kabul government but the talks failed (Abi-Habib 2012). This shows that Saudi Arabia has remained an important player as for reconciliation with Taliban. The Kingdom's Afghan policy is supposed to be handled by Prince Miqrin bin Abdul Aziz, the head of the General Intelligence Directorate, the Saudi foreign intelligence agency (Boucek 2010:47). Interestingly, both Pakistani and Saudi Afghan policies have been operated by their intelligence agencies. It is the Pakistani interior ministry rather than Foreign Affairs that charges the Afghanistan, likewise, the Saudi Ministry of Interior has a very strong interest in Afghanistan.

As for Riyadh's role in Afghanistan, it has greater legitimacy in the Islamic world, particularly in the eyes of Pakistan. Considering this, the US, which is a close ally of Riyadh, after the initial problem regarding Afghanistan, is now closely working towards reconciliation. The US through its Riyadh embassy is conducting some important Af-Pak initiatives. Riyadh has a profound understanding of Afghanistan and the several actors in the country are very close to the Saudi Arabia, such as Hekmatyar and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf (Boucek 2010:49). Thomas Ruttig, a former UN and European diplomat, observed that Riyadh in comparison to Tehran is less active in Afghanistan due to its late arrival. But Saudi Arabia's key driving force is clearly to oppose the significant influence of Iran (Bezhan 2012). Iran, in contrast to Saudi Arabia, has had a vastly noticeable presence since 2001. Iran like India has isolated in Taliban-led Kabul government, but Saudi Arabia along with Pakistan was one of the few countries that

had diplomatic relations with the Taliban government. Post-2001, Iran has built on its material and cultural links with Afghanistan by investing millions in infrastructure, including roads, railway and power projects (Bezhan 2012). However, Saudi Arabia remains an important player in the larger picture because of its capacity to bring Taliban into the negotiating process.

Another factor is that Pakistan and the US; both have a close alliance with the Riyadh. Their alliance during the anti-Soviet *Jihad* had closely worked and would have the possibility of repeating history. In the recent days, Saudi Arabia has shown interest in brokering settlement talks with Taliban (Bezhan 2012). Riyadh with a pragmatic approach used Taliban for its strategic interest. In the mid-1990, Taliban was also promoted by Saudi Arabia for its common sectarian Sunni identity. But Riyadh betrayed Taliban during WOT by becoming an important ally. There is betrayed feeling in some section, of the Taliban as Saudi establishment arrested and detained a former Taliban representative in 2001. Again Riyadh has changed its strategy on the western line, as it is attempting to broker a deal between Taliban and the Afghan government.

There is one interesting account showing how Iran and Saudi Arabia are working hard to reach out to Afghanistan for soft power influence. Iran built a university known as *Khatam al-Nabyeen Islamic*, opened in 2006 in western Kabul. It belongs to the *Shi'ite* religious school and campus has a mosque, classrooms, and dormitories for its 1,000 Afghan students. It was built at a cost of approximately US \$17 million by Tehran (Bezhan 2012). To counter this; Saudi Arabia announced in October 2012, that it would build a massive multimillion-dollar Islamic complex in Kabul which it would invest US \$45-100 million. This Islamic complex will feature a university, a hospital, a sports hall, and a mosque (Bezhan 2012).

Since assuming office, Ghani has occupied very close affiliation with Saudi Arabia and has sought Riyadh's involvement and support in the peace process with Taliban (Mir 2015). Riyadh has also positively responded to this call. It will be interesting to see how Saudi Arabia influences the Taliban for reconciliation and how other regional powers would accept this outcome, particularly Iran.

4.5.5- Russia

Russia's Afghan policy has been influenced by threats to its mainland and the Central Asian neighbourhood from Afghanistan. Still the former Soviet Union's traumatic experience has determined Russia's Afghan policy. Russian leadership has long seen eye-to-eye with the West on Afghanistan. Russia was firmly against the Taliban prior to the West. Russia believes the Taliban and al-Qaida are larger regional and global threats than Iran (Steele 2010). Militants skilled and sheltered in Af-Pak region have the potential to destabilise Central Asia, Chechnya or Russia's other Muslim-majority provinces. Therefore, the Russian president Putin was one of the first global leaders to criticise the 9/11 attacks and support the US war for overthrowing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But there was a sharp difference between Moscow and the West on reconciliation efforts with the Taliban. Like the Central Asia republics, Russia has believed any solution would involve appeasement (Steele 2010). It is the Russian predicament in Afghanistan that the Moscow is less enthusiastic to see US withdrawal, but would not like to engage militarily in Afghanistan.

Moscow perceives two major threats from the Afghanistan: first is the passage of instability in the Central Asia through the revival of the radical Islamic movement in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The second threat to the mainland is the drug trafficking from Afghanistan. Russian yearly consumption of heroin (70 tonnes) is a little less than the consumption of the rest of Europe (88 tonnes) (Trenin 2010:71-72). Just like Iran, Russia also actively supported the removal of Taliban from power in the wake of 9/11. But the growing hostility between US/NATO and Russia has diminished Moscow's support for the US-led coalition in Afghanistan. Despite Taliban's antipathy, Russia does not have a very clear policy in Afghanistan. There is an argument in some quarters that Russia is playing the Taliban card for military access to Central Asia. According to Dmitri Trenin (2010), Russia has been playing on Central Asian apprehension that Afghanistan will again become a base for their domestic extremism, in the hope of increasing Moscow's own military and security occurrence in the region through Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (Trenin 2010:73). Whatever the validity of this argument, Islamic radicalism remains a threat for Central Asian republics. There is one interesting competition emerging in the economic sphere between Russia and China. Central Asia and Afghanistan are the ground for this rivalry,

as China is ahead of Russia. This would also be an important dimension of Moscow's Afghan policy as Russian companies lost the bid for the Ainak copper reserve against China. In the same way, Russian giant Gazprom is on the quest to block a proposed gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and an oil pipeline from Pakistan's Gwadar to China (Trenin 2010:73).

Moscow publicly supports the NATO-US efforts to stabilise Afghanistan, but Trenin (2010) wrote that some high-ranking Russian officials would privately like to see the US fail in Afghanistan. There are numerous voices in Moscow regarding the Afghanistan policy. Some want Russia to send troops to stabilise Afghanistan, but others remind them of the Soviet history. One school supports a strategy of watching the Afghan situation from the sideline. Another group advocates a strategy for the counter-revival of Taliban by all means, including by following NATO-US mission. They think that coalition successes in Afghanistan would also be in Russia's interest (Trenin 2010:75). Russia has cultivated good relations with the Kabul government and certain local warlords in northern Afghanistan. Russia wants to play a role in Afghanistan, but its limitation, like lack of direct access and sectarian and ethnic links are the main obstacle to this desire. Even so, Russia made some efforts to reach Afghanistan through multilateral forums like CSTO. In this regard, Russia has long demanded NATO to start alliance-to-alliance relations, but NATO has shown little interest in it (Trenin 2010:76). Therefore, Russia has engaged in Central Asian states, by posting a Russian motor rifle division in Tajikistan on the Afghan border. Russia has also established a small air base at Kant, Kyrgyzstan (Trenin 2010:76). There was extensive writing in the Russian media during 2013, noting that Moscow is fearful of NATO withdrawal by the end of 2014, because of the negative implications for Russian security interests in the region and beyond. Russian observers do not believe that Afghan armed forces can effectively deal with a resurgent Taliban. Russia realises any possible comeback of the Taliban as a revival of the *ihadists* in its backyard. This will have a possible negative impact on the Central Asian secular government by the replacement by radical Islamic (Katz 2014). Certainly this would be a serious threat to Russian regional ambitions. But Russia doesn't have a contingency plan in post-NATO Afghanistan. Neither does it want to engage due to the bitter historical memories of Soviet humiliation nor to advocate the replacement of NATO by CSTO, or Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) forces, where it has a greater say. To counter the

spillover impact from Afghanistan, under CSTO, Russia is negotiating with the Central Asian republics, but the rivalries between these states make it tough to implement such arrangement (Katz 2014).

Today, Russia is an important power that can favourably work for a regional solution because it has harmonised relationships with all important stakeholders in the region. Moscow had no larger disagreement with NATO over Afghanistan either. Russia has no opposition to Indian and Iranian presence in Afghanistan. Russia also enjoys cordial relation with the Islamabad and Riyadh. There is no antagonism between Moscow's interests in Afghanistan and those of any other key regional actor. The Russian pragmatic policy spectrum lies amid 'passive and active support' for US-NATO policies (Trenin 2010:80).

4.5.6- China

The rising superpower China is increasing its influence in Afghanistan, as the Western powers are moving from there. China's rising Afghan engagement should be seen in its larger aspiration to become a great power in the emerging global order. China's entry into Afghanistan is late, US-NATO urged for Beijing's earlier engagement. But, it seems China was waiting for the right time to enter Afghan affairs. China's recent public posture that it is mediating peace talks between Taliban and the Kabul government, is taking a genuine leadership role in the region, which is geopolitically sensitive and significant (Small 2015). To replace the entire Western world in Afghanistan in pursuit of peace, is a challenging task for China, despite knowing the fact that US-NATO has failed to deliver peace after fifteen years of engagement. In its larger foreign policy, China has gained self-confidence over the decades. China's mounting economic and military supremacy, increasing political power, and growing contribution to regional multilateral institutions are key developments in Asian politics (Shambaugh 2005:64). China's new proactive regional attitude is reflected in all these areas- economic, diplomatic, and military. China through its skilful diplomacy has created a good image among some of its neighbours. This goodwill has been earned through diplomacy, aid and assistance. Beijing has also managed to resolve all its land border disputes, except with India (Shambaugh 2005:66). Building strategic partnerships, intensifying of bilateral economic ties and engaging in regional organisations are important pillars of the new Chinese strategy in Asia (Shambaugh

2005:72). This may be the reason not only Pakistan and Afghanistan want to China's proliferation in the Af-Pak, but the US is also endorsing it. The US has also given its consent for Chinese Af-Pak plan. As an Afghan scholar, Barnett Rubin, who has engaged with the US government to board China on Afghanistan, said in an interview with *The New York Times* "there is a need for China to become a partner of the U.S. in its wide non-combat roles. The American hopes that China will become a full-fledged colleague in international efforts to support and stabilise Afghanistan" (Wong 2015b). China over the years has emerged as a responsible actor by becoming an important part of global negotiation on some burning international issues, like talks on North Korea, Iran nuclear talk and disputes between the two Sudans. However, these initiatives have been started by other global powers and China was merely an international actor (Small 2015). Therefore, China's new aggressive strategy has surprised foreign diplomats and some of its own experts (Small 2015). China is also working with its 'all weather friend' Pakistan regarding Afghanistan. China has urged the Pakistani government to carry out armed operations against militant safe havens in the autonomous tribal region and make possible a political resolution in Afghanistan (Small 2015).

China's growing economy and quest to become a superpower required the resources and market worldwide. Afghanistan as a transit route has been a very promising land for energy appetite Beijing. China is the only capable country regarding expertise, economic resources and the geographical linkages, and it would like to follow the African and Central Asian success story in Afghanistan (Dhaka 2014:97). Therefore, the most important factor that determined China's Afghan policy was the economic consideration. Moreover, China perceives South Asia as its new 'Goeconomic Frontier' (Dhaka 2014:97). The China-Pak 'Economic Corridor' plan worth US \$46 billion has proved this thesis. The particular energy and infrastructure project, which has been signed in April 2015, highlights China's economic ambitions in Asia and beyond (Reuters 2015). According to Rubin (2015), larger regional economic initiatives, such as the Silk Road Economic Belt (both overland and maritime) and the Pakistan Economic Corridor are major investments in regional economic integration. These initiatives can go together in creating an economic incentive for cooperation around and in Afghanistan that has not existed before (Wong 2015b). China's engagement is also observed to promote its massive infrastructure and trade investments in what Beijing calls a 'Silk Road Economic Belt' across Central Asia. But

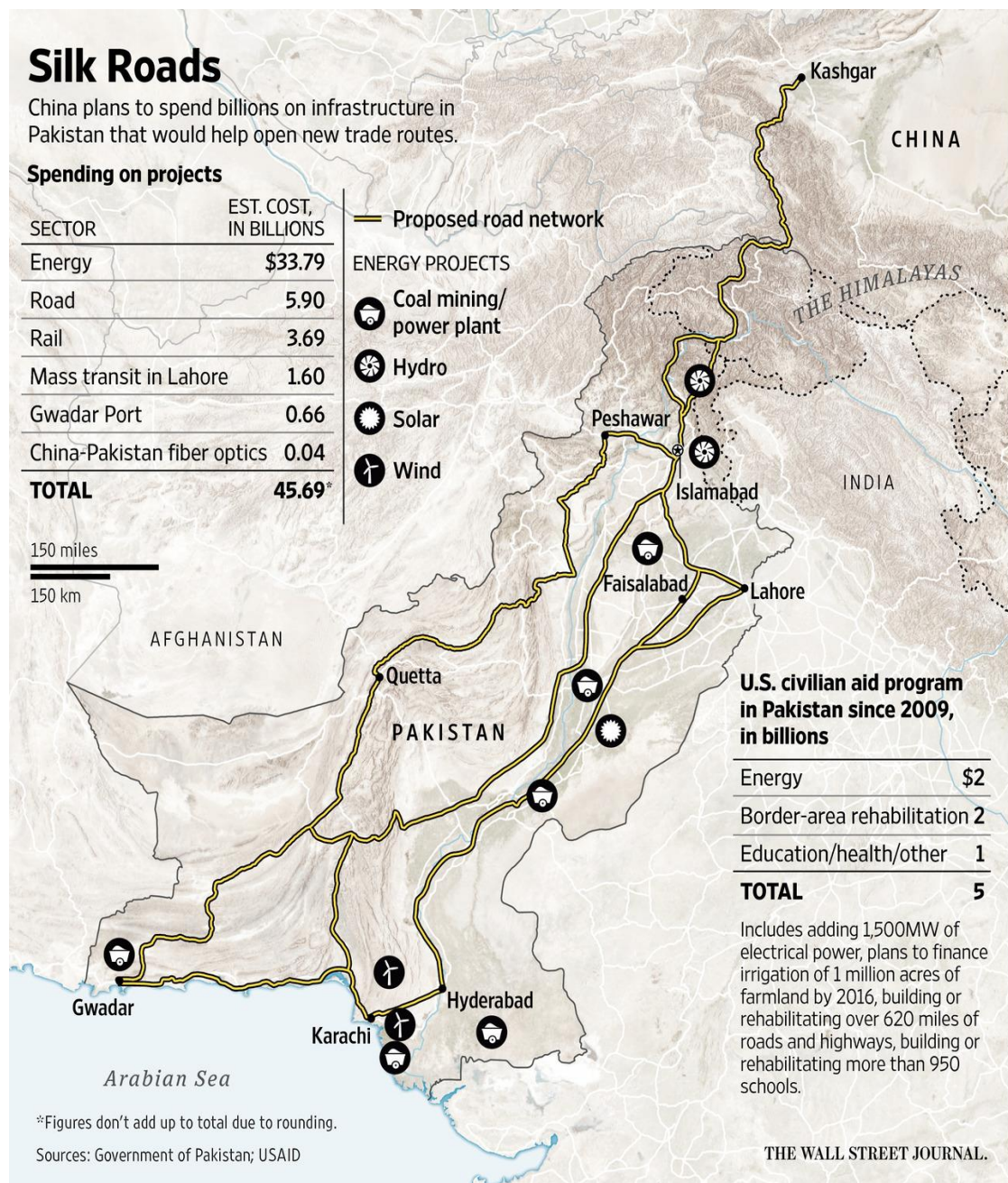
China's can only operate its main investments in Afghanistan like the Aynak copper mine, and oil fields in the Amu Darya basin, when there is peace and stability in the region (Wong 2015a).

China's engagement in the Af-Pak region has been based on the philosophy that without economic enlargement and stabilisation, this region would destabilise security on China's north-west border. This corridor also aims to develop the Muslim-majority north-west province of China, by connecting it with Gwadar, a closer passage than any Chinese coastal port (Shah 2015). Today, China can alone manage the growing economic requirements of the Afghan state whereas Western aid has been dropping. The major objective of China's Afghanistan policy is to secure an Asian bargain for maintaining its hegemony in its neighbourhood and through Afghanistan it can maintain its geo-economic interests in Central Asia and strategic interests at home in Xinjiang (Dhaka 2014:98). The second motivating factor in Beijing's Afghan policy is the threat of extremism and separatism in the western Chinese province of Xinjiang. Though post-2001, China keeps a very low profile in Afghanistan it has taken advantage of the WOT to suppress the Uighur irritants. The separatist movement in Xinjiang has been seen as a real territorial threat by China. As *The New York Times* reported the leader of the Turkistan Islamic Party, Abdullah Mansour seeks to free Xinjiang from Chinese rule. Mansour in a telephone interview with Reuters said that the Uighurs were training in the mountainous tribal areas of Pakistan and planning "many attacks" on China (Wong 2015a).

The post-2014 dynamics has provided a unique opportunity for China to manage the vacuum created by the NATO withdrawal. The economic confidence on China's part is also a catalytic factor behind China's assertive Afghan move. There is also a positive signal from Kabul as the new President has chosen China for his first state visit after taking office in the less than a month that move underlines Beijing's "significant importance for the war-torn country" (BBC News 2014). Rubin, who served for four and a half years as a senior adviser to the American government's special representative for Af-Pak, confirmed that Ghani has also asked that the US and China make Afghanistan into the best example of their cooperation (Wong 2015b). China apart from the mineral exploration and trade route has promised to help build the Kunar hydroelectric power plant, as well as road and rail links to Pakistan. Some of the Chinese assistance will also help Pakistan at the same time because of its location. But

the unstable situation in Afghanistan is the biggest hurdle for China to exploit the mineral and other activities. Earlier Chinese announced investment plan, like copper mine and railway link near Kabul has been put on hold partially because of violence in Afghanistan (Dawn: 2015 a). In the recent years, China has reached out to Taliban in its efforts to play peacemaker in Afghanistan. It has been widely circulated in media that from 2013 there were talks going on between Taliban and China.

Map 5- Proposed China -Pak Economic Corridor



Source –The Wall Street Journal, 21, April 2015.

These meetings were initiated in Pakistan and further China's special envoy to Afghanistan, Sun Yuxi, had travelled to Peshawar, to meet Taliban representatives in the first week of 2015 (Wong 2015a). China relatively refrains from Afghan affairs, but as the vacuum is clearly visible in Afghanistan, any chaos would have serious implications for China's own security and its strategic calculations in the region. Therefore, China is more enthusiastic to take on larger responsibility (Wong 2015a).

4.5.7- Central Asian Republics

The rise of five new Central Asian republics after the Soviet disintegration has added a new factor in the Afghan conflict. Out of five states, three new Muslim inhabited states Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have shared a total of 1900 km border and ethnicity with northern Afghanistan (BBC News 2013). But the Soviet legacy has given a different outlook to the Central Asian people and political elite in comparison to 'conservative and regressive Afghans' (Rais 1993:920). All Central Asian political elites were trained as Soviet officials, therefore their ideology is quite different from their contemporaries in South and West Asia. They perceived that the Islamic movement in their surrounding areas is a destabilising factor when they are looking for a new political identity (Rais 1993:920). The new Central Asian elites are very authoritarian in nature as they never allowed emerging political opposition in their new states. In this background, Islamic opposition has emerged in all Central Asian republics and it challenged the secular regime. For instance, in May 1992, opposition democratic and Islamic parties led to a reshuffling of the existing government in Tajikistan. But the opposition failed and the old regime backed with the help of neighbouring Uzbekistan returned to power. The Uzbek President Islam Karimov was concerned about the Islamic party coming into power in the neighbouring states, as he banned Islamic outfit in Uzbekistan (Rais 1993:920).

The revival of the Islamic movement in form of rising Taliban and ISIS have threatened the status-quo favoured political elites of Central Asia. There is no doubt that radicalism is a threat to any state and civilised society at large, but it cannot be the ground for denying the political freedom. Afghanistan has been frequently revealed as a threat to the Central Asian Republics. Since their formation, the Central Asia states have a common interest in Afghanistan in preventing the rise of extremism and cross-border infiltrations of militants (Mir 2012:135). The possible spread of violence, extremism,

terrorism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan have been seen as major security issues in CARs. The present political elite, who have been governing these states for decades, have referred to these threats from Afghanistan since before 9/11. However, some observers have believed that the main threats to the Central Asian regimes are internal and that external dangers are used to brand the opponent and strengthen images of the current government as a supporter of stability and security (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:312). Afghanistan and the Central Asian bordering states are closely interlinked with each other. Conflict in each country has affected others through the spill over impact of violence and refugees. For example, during the Tajikistan civil war, 70,000 Tajik refugees reached northeastern Afghanistan and the Afghan-Tajik Mujahedeen leader Ahmad Shah Masud, had also been engaged in the Tajikistan internal affairs (Rais 1993:920). Tajikistan has come under serious pressure to accept Afghan refugees. Dushanbe also had part of the anti-Taliban alliance, before 2001 (BBC News 2001b). There is a tendency among Afghan tribes to look for their similar affiliations in neighbouring states if there is an internal tussle between other tribes for domination in Afghanistan. Therefore, Kristin Fjaestad and Heidi Kjaernet (2014) argue that “just as much as Central Asia has a role in shaping the fate of Afghanistan, so has Afghanistan played an important role in shaping Central Asian state identity” (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:313).

The presence of US-NATO in the region has radically changed the regional scenario. The NATO presence in Central Asia in 2001, just after a decade of the independence of these states has put Central Asia on to the global stage. Afghanistan poses both a threat and an opportunity for the Central Asian states. The threat has been driven by the spreading violence, terrorism and narcotic, but economic integration has promised a great opportunity. During the NATO operation, two routes emerged to enter and maintain supply of cargo in Afghanistan. The first route was from the Arabian Sea via Khyber Pass largely dependent on the Pakistan. A second alternative route for NATO supply from Central Asia to Afghanistan is the ‘Northern Distribution Network’ (NDN) (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:314). This route has acquired profit for the Central Asian states regarding aid, assistance and payments from the NATO. Strategically NDN has given the advantages of these states due to their geographical position. More importantly Central Asian regimes take advantage of such international backing to reinforce their position towards internal adversaries (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:314).

The Centre Asian states have been enormously benefited by the NATO presence in Afghanistan in the last fifteen years. The current NDN has a potential to convert into a trade route. The NATO passage, though this route has opened a new angle for both great powers; China and the US to the revival of Silk route. Therefore, Afghanistan can signify an opportunity for the Central Asian states. The idea of the New Silk Road provided a possible foundation for better regional relations and collaboration, through investments in infrastructure and increased regional trade (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:315).

Post-2001, Afghanistan has provided great opportunities for material benefits and new roles for CARs. All Central Asian republics have provided different kinds of aid and assistance to Afghanistan, even Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which are major aid recipients themselves. The directly bordering Central Asian states that are often described as a fragile and even failing states have underlined humanitarian support and infrastructure assignments. These CARs, with their limited resources, have supported the Afghan students to arrive and study in their respective national institutions (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:318). Most of the work has been done on their similar identity ethnic group areas. For instance, the bulk of assistance from Turkmenistan goes through in Turkmen-populated areas in Afghanistan. Fieldwork done by Fjaestad and Kjaernet (2014) in Tajikistan reveals that Dushanbe is helping Afghan people in their capacity-building in a sector like education and health (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:319). During the last decade, Afghanistan has become well connected through the Central Asia. Although the route already existed, now it has been upgraded. In a historic step in 2011, a train has run for the first time on Afghanistan's connecting the Uzbek border and the northern Afghan city Mazar-e-Sharif (BBC News 2011a).

Central Asia due to its massive mineral deposits has fascinated global powers from the beginning. When the US-led coalition invaded Afghanistan to search Bin Laden and his network, there were some unique theories about the real reasons for the Afghan war. The propagators of these theories have seen US engagement in the region as simply beyond defeating terrorist. A few in West Asia have seen it as the extension of the clash of civilisations against the Islamic world. But there are some groups who have seen it purely in terms of long-term economic and political goals (BBC News 2001a). Supporters of this theory have suddenly noticed the significance of Central Asian oil and gas and they have gone further by saying that economic considerations offer the

major stimulus for US and Western interests in Afghanistan (BBC News 2001a). It was a hypothetical theory about the Western engagement in the region, no one has proved or rejected the validity of this argument. But the fact remains that the valuable fuels in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have magnified international energy companies (BBC News 2001a). Over the last decade, this idea has been used to motivate all regional actors to cooperate in Afghanistan for peace. If peace and stability were to be achieved in Afghanistan, then new pipelines could be built in the region. Through these energy networks, the entire region would be incredibly benefited. This logic has been accepted by the Central Asian government and now they advocated for operating some old projects.

According to Rashid (2013), in recent years IMU and other radical militant groups have been trying to set up a base in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz and the border town of Emam Sahib (BBC News 2013). Under the NATO mission, there had been fighting between the IMU and US-German troops, who were based in this region. Now the Badakhshan province in Afghanistan's north-west, which has a border with Tajikistan, is a part of the intense militant activity (BBC News 2013). Some Pakistan-based militants like Pakistani and Afghan Taliban, LeT, the Islamic Jihad Union and IMU are believed to be from numerous groups, showing their interest in operating from Central Asia. The militants are trying to secure the entire north-eastern corridor of Afghanistan the provinces of Kunar, Nuristan and Badakhshan (BBC News 2013). Rashid (2015) notice that the ISIS would challenge secular regimes in Central Asia republics as they are mounting their activity in Tajikistan-Afghanistan border (Rashid 2015). According to Rashid, the IMU and their allies are trying to set up new bases along the Afghan border nearby to Central Asia (BBC News 2013). In recent years, the clashes between the militants and Central Asian security forces have rapidly increased. In responding to an increased threat from Afghanistan, Tajikistan's armed forces are setting up a new base near the Afghanistan border. Uzbekistan on its part is working towards technical improvements at its border posts for enhanced communication with one another (Kucera 2015).

Among all Central Asian states, Tajikistan is the weakest state in the region and facing a threat from the Afghan side. As far as Afghan reconciliation is concerned, the international community can learn from Tajik government's reconciliation process 'Tadjbakhsh' which worked in this civil war (1992–1997) faced country (Fjaestad and

Kjaernet 2014:320). Tajikistan as a full member of the SCO and part of the SCO working group on Afghanistan has adopted Istanbul, Kabul and Almaty declarations. Tajikistan has also participated in various confidence-building measures established in 2005 (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:320). Turkmenistan has largely isolated itself from regional affairs, but the Turkmen regime had regular contacts with the Taliban before the US-led invasion. Turkmenistan eagerly wanted to sell its hydrocarbon reserve via Afghanistan (BBC News 2001b). Despite its neutrality, Turkmenistan has allowed humanitarian aid to be delivered by land and via over-flights and granted refuelling right to NATO forces (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:321). Turkmenistan quickly wants to construct proposed 'Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India' (TAPI) natural gas pipeline, which has been stopped due to instability in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan in comparison to its neighbours is a bit slow as it does not have a part in the confidence-building measures and has only adopted the Kabul Declaration (Fjaestad and Kjaernet 2014:322).

Fearing the post-withdrawal situation, CARs are looking for other options to protect their interests in Afghanistan and within their space. Therefore, they are looking for other powers and options, as Tajikistan's legislative body ratified an agreement with Moscow to extend Russia's bases and troops in Tajikistan for the next three decades on 1 October 2013. Russia has 6,000 troops stationed in three places to protect Tajikistan's boundary with Afghanistan (BBC News 2013). All Central Asian states want a political solution to the Afghan conflict before the pulling out of all NATO troops from Afghanistan. These states want peace within Afghanistan or a 'regional arrangement' among countries adjacent to Afghanistan (BBC News 2013). The Central Asian states have positively participated in all regional mechanisms, including the 'Istanbul Process'.

Therefore, in the post-withdrawal scenario, all these states would like to be part of any regional mechanism. It may be beyond CSTO or SCO. These states would not have the luxury to keep a low profile in Afghan affairs. The CARs have no ideological issue or baggage, which may prevent them from accepting any regional mechanism. They may cooperate with any of these great powers- China, Russia and the US as long as their regimes remain protected. Therefore, as Farkhod Tolipor put, their future policies will be shaped by their elites and 'presidential perceptions and apprehensions' (Snetkov and Aris 2013:169).

4.6-Region Approach and Cooperation

The landlocked Afghanistan's geostrategic position makes this state attractive for all regional countries in Central, South, West and East Asia. All four Asian regions are rich in one respect or another, like human resources, mineral, capital and energy. Afghanistan as a route may transform the regions' economic activity. The recent discovery of one trillion US dollars of minerals in Afghanistan can be a catalytic factor for regional economic activity. The regional cooperation here is a possibility, which may not only change Afghanistan's future but would deliver economic prosperity beyond Afghanistan. It is a hypothetical situation in the least integrated region. But the regional rivalry and volatile state of affairs in the Af-Pak region make it a remote possibility.

The Afghan war has failed because it is a regional problem, which was undermined by the Western power at least in the first decades. Analyst like Rashid (2010) argues that this is a regional problem and has been a growing acknowledged since 2009, that the conflict in Afghanistan cannot be treated in isolation (Rashid 2010:356-357). As stated above the Obama administration has made some significant changes in its Afghan policy and lobbied hard to secure increases in non-US coalition forces. Apart from the transition (NATO to ANSF) and dismantling of al-Qaeda, an important pillar of Obama's Af-Pak policy was the larger stress on the need for a regional approach. The Bush administration in its closing days also recognised the importance of the regional approach (Mathews 2010:01). But there is still ambiguity about the term "regional approach". At the end of Bush tenure, this approach meant tackling the problem of Pakistan by stopping its support to the Taliban, the Hezb-i-Islami, and the Haqqani network (Tellis 2010:85). Obama's change of the White House led to more modest goals centred on building a stable state. In this modest goal now al-Qaeda was the only enemy and the new administration would promote reconciliation dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The 'regional factor' was recognised and approach by the Obama administration when it developed a regional strategy commonly known as Af-Pak in 2009. A significant goal of Obama's new policy was to pursue a regional approach that would address the larger security issue concerning at the very least Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Iran (Tellis 2010:85-86). Till 2010, it was understood that peace in Afghanistan would only come through a regional agreement (Rashid 2010:356-357). The NATO countries have also accepted that they have to bring the

neighbouring countries to agree mutually to create a coherent strategy for a stable Afghanistan (Rashid 2010:360).

But the Obama administration never specified the exact meaning and strategy of this new regional approach, much like the Bush administration. Regarding this phase, some say that Afghanistan's neutrality should be respected, while others say that regional states should cooperate instead of focussing on their narrow or sectarian interest and that this would convert Afghanistan into a hub of economic meeting point among diverse regions. This would be a sum-sum game for all regional and great powers. The idea of a 'silk route' as propogate by both the US and the China would be a point of convergence here. But the complexity of world politics, regional security complex and uncertainty in domestic level in Afghanistan make it a tough task to achieve. According to Tellis (2010), the term regional approach has given following four diverse ideas with the subsequent objectives:-

Table-2- Ideas of regional approach and objectives

	Idea	Particular Objective
1	Expanding the Afghan theatre to include Pakistan	Synergize the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns
2	Integrating Afghanistan and Pakistan	Defeating extremist Islam in the greater South Asian region
3	Incorporating Afghanistan's and Pakistan's main regional neighbours into a cooperative effort	Stabilising South and Central Asia;
4	Unifying the previously separate security complexes of South and Central Asia	Transforming Afghanistan into a region-wide trade and transit hub

Source-Tellis 2010: 86

Considering Afghan complex social-political realities, the Obama administration has introduced the Af-Pak policy. But the Pakistani state has continued to play a double role in Afghan front. Pakistan has real security concern from both flanks of its land, even if the creation of Pakistan and its own policies are also responsible for it. Despite this, Pakistan argued that India poses a real existential threat, therefore instead of Af-Pak it should have been "AfPakIn". There was a common perception in the Western world and more specifically in Washington under Holbrooke's command that India

should be part of a regional solution as the term “InAfPak” has evolved (Tellis 2010:86). The administration’s desire to include New Delhi into a regional solution to settle existing Indo-Pakistani disputes has by no means vanished. India has firmly resisted its inclusion in this scheme (Mathews 2010:2). Pakistan was disappointed by being including it alone while India was out of the larger strategy. It was in Pakistan’s interest to include India in ‘Af-Pak’ because that would have forced India to settle the Kashmir issue. Pakistan also wants to stop India’s active participation in Afghanistan, which is perceived by Islamabad as a threat in its sphere of influence. There was a common argument that Pakistan has played a double game because it wants to counter India through a friendly Afghanistan. Af-Pak strategy was described by the then US National Security Adviser General James Jones thus, “we have several countries, but we have one theatre.” Jones further called that this war is a “common struggle” that required “concerted action” from both states Afghanistan and Pakistan (Tellis 2010:90). The official statement of the initial years stressed that the Obama administration is going to approach the Afghan conflict as a regional problem (Tellis 2010:90).

In its second review at the end of 2009, the Obama administration came to the conclusion that Pakistan has to move forward not only as an instrument for achieving US aims in Afghanistan but at least as an equal priority. Ultimately the term “Af-Pak” was dropped because of its insensitive effect in Pakistan (Mathews 2010:2). First-time regional approach’s operating possibility was articulated in the following words of David Petraeus, Commander of U.S. Central Command-

It’s not possible to resolve the challenges internal to Afghanistan without addressing the challenges especially in terms of security related to Afghanistan’s neighbours. A regional approach is required.... [The Coalition] will have to develop and execute a regional strategy that includes Pakistan, India, the Central Asian States and even China and Russia along with perhaps at some point Iran (Mathews 2010:3).

But the hard reality is that the regional countries have their bilateral disputes with their neighbours. They have their competing interests in the region. Despite this background, there was an important and new beginning at the London conference on 30 January 2010. To challenge the Afghan task, the London conference noted that “regionally-owned and steered initiatives stood the best chance of success” (Tellis 2010:94). This conference for the first time urged for the role of regional organisations such as SAARC, SCO and others to work on regional basis. The regional organisations in this

part of the world are different from the Western alliance because of the zero-sum game arrangement between diverse regional states within the organisation. Regional organisations have failed to respond positively to this call because of the regional security complex. More importantly, all regional states do not have the same goal in case of Afghanistan. Following is the assessment of Tellis (2010), regarding the competing national goals of regional states in reference to Afghanistan:-

Table 3: Analysis of National Goals in reference of Afghanistan

	Eliminating al-Qaeda	Defeating the Taliban and preventing its return to power by force	Building an effective central Afghan state	Inspiring Afghan-Pakistani settlement	Sustaining economic reconstruction of Afghanistan	Positioning Afghanistan as trade and transit corridor	Limiting narcotics production in Afghanistan	Fighting spread of Taliban ideology from Afghanistan
Pakistan	√√√	@-Ω	Ω	√√√	√ *	@-Ω	√√√	√ *
India	√√√	√√√	√√√	√√√ *	√√√	√√√	√√√	√√√
Iran	√√√	√√√ *	√√√-√	√- α	√√√	√√√	√√√	√√√
CARs	√√√	√ *	√√√ *	α	√√√ *	√√√ *	√√√	√√√
Saudi Arabia	√√√	@-Ω	@ α	√√√	√	α	α	Ω
China	√√√	√ *	α	√ *	√	α-√	√ *	√√√ *
Russia	√√√	√√√ *	√√√ *	α	√√√ *	α-@-√	√√√ *	√√√
NATO	√√√	√ @	√ @	√√√ *	√√√	√√√ *	√√√	√√√

Key

Strongly Convergent	√√√
Moderately-to-Weakly Convergent	√
Ambivalent Undecided	@
Opposed	Ω
Indifferent, Uninterested	α
Low Impact or Qualified Preference	*

Source: Exactly as demonstrate by (Tellis 2010:103)

The above table suggests the strong convergence between the NATO and Indian interests in Afghanistan. Among regional states, Iran and India have similar national goals regarding Afghanistan. Iran like India and the US wants the Taliban and al-Qaeda to be dismantled. Iran like India has engaged in the reconstruction of this war-torn nation. The situation has changed much since Tellis presented this argument in 2010. Now almost all states have agreed to a reconciliation with Taliban. India also publically supports the Afghan government’s reconciliation efforts with Taliban. The objectives

of regional states do not often converge with US aims, particularly Iran, China and Russia. Therefore, they have not responded favourably to Obama’s call for a regional solution. India is the only regional country, which somehow identified that its goal in Afghanistan is best protect by US-NATO presence in the region. Tellis (2010) states that “India alone pursues goals that are identical to those of the United States, almost matching it in the intensity of convergence” (Tellis 2010:102). The most important state in Afghan affairs, Pakistan has been the contending interest of those the US and its allies have. Ironically, another Islamic state, Saudi Arabia, which historically stayed US’s closest ally, also has competing interests in Afghanistan. Like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia is not concerned about the spread of Taliban ideology beyond Afghanistan, instead they would like to facilitate the radical Sunni Taliban to spread. Riyadh has done little for reconstruction in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Its current policy is to counter the growing Iranian influence in Afghanistan. Riyadh and Islamabad have little concern about the consolidation of the Kabul Central Government.

Table 4: Mapping Convergence interests of Regional States in Afghanistan

CONVERGING INTERESTS
United States–India***
Pakistan–China***
Pakistan–Saudi Arabia***
Pakistan–United States*
India–Iran***
India–CARs*
India–Russia*
Russia–Iran**

Key-Intensity of Competition or Convergence: High * Moderate ** Low ***

Source: As demonstrate by (Tellis 2010:117)

As for economic integration, China has recently emerged as a promising actor. But India and US have doubts about its role in Afghanistan. China has remained low profile as far as the political and economic reconstruction is concerned. Just recently, its interests were revived, when it became clear that Afghanistan would be economically viable through the discovering of minerals.

4.7-The Obstacle in the Regional Solution¹⁴

According to Saikal (2013), the main obstacles to regional cooperation are regional political rivalries and major power geopolitical competition (Saikal 2013:49). There is a regional antagonism between different sets of regional states, India-Pakistan, Iran-Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan-Iran. Apart from regional contention, US relations with regional countries like Iran and Pakistan are also a major obstacle to a regional solution. In the above dimension, Pakistan has emerged as a major factor. It has tribal, political, geographical proximities and clients inside Afghanistan; therefore Pakistan is the most vital factor for any possible regional solution. Within all regional states, Pakistan as the most important actor has a profound role in the endgame (Pant 2014). Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan have affected its relations with other countries. Pakistan's policies on the Afghan front, like an alliance with the US or dependence on militants have deepened suspicions on other regional states; India, Russia and Iran. Pakistan also operates its Afghan policy through India's prism (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:34-36). The most intense rivalry regarding Afghanistan is between these two South Asian states.

Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan are mainly related to India, and Islamabad has managed nearly every other dimension of its regional policy through this angle. Surprisingly, the refugee issue counts second for the Pakistan, which has largely affected Pakistani society for decades (Grare 2010:17). Pakistan has suspects that India and Afghanistan's friendship would trap Islamabad into two fronts of the war. Hence the entire game of accusations against India, such as India promoting terrorism and interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs through Baloch and Wazir, had prevailed. There

¹⁴ Here this idea borrows from Amin Saikal's chapter 'Afghanistan's Attitudes towards the Region' from the edited book 'The Regional Dimensional to Security': The other sides of Afghanistan (2013).

are conspiracy theories in Pakistan’s discourse, which blamed Indian consulates in Afghanistan for working against Pakistan’s interests (Grare 2010:17). Pakistani attitudes toward other states in case of Afghanistan are partly cooperative, partly confrontational with Iran and the US, and zero-sum with India (Grare 2010:21). In Pakistani perception, whatever India does in Afghanistan is a tactic against Pakistan, despite the fact that India is the most important regional actor to assist in reconstruction. India is dependent on Iran for goods and logistics, travel through Iranian land. Therefore, Tehran is seen by Pakistan more or less as part of the Indian equation. Iran also has concerns about the Pakistani side providing bases for the US in the region (Grare 2010:21). The table given below, made by Tellis (2010), has demonstrated the competing interest of regional states.

Table 5: Mapping competing interests of regional states in Afghanistan

COMPETING INTERESTS
Pakistan–Afghanistan***
Pakistan–India***
Pakistan–Iran**
Pakistan–United States***
Iran–Saudi Arabia***
Iran–United States***
CARs–Pakistan*
Russia–Pakistan*
Russia–United States**
India–China*
Russia– China*

Key-Intensity of Competition or Convergence: High *** Moderate ** Low *

Source: Exactly as demonstrate by (Tellis 2010:117)

Pakistan wants Taliban as a part of the Kabul government and, therefore, they are the ones who have saved and provided a secure haven to them for the last decade in Pakistan. As Musharraf once said in New York, “Kabul must share power with the extremist group Taliban and block Indian influence if it wants peace in the country” (Dawn 2015 b). In this regard, Pakistan saw current Ghani’s stand as favourable because he inaugurated reconciliation between the Taliban and his government. In the words of Musharraf, “Ashraf Ghani is a balanced man,.....and a great hope” (Dawn 2015 b). Pakistan’s state establishment viewed Karzai as a harsh critic of Pakistan, who led Afghanistan for 14 years, and his government was very close to India (Hodge and Shah 2015).

Pakistan continually blamed India for the insurgency in Baluchistan as Musharraf said that India had provided weapons, training and equipment to ethnic Baloch separatists inside Afghanistan, which shares a border with southern Afghanistan (Dawn 2015b, Hodge and Shah 2015). Pakistan is certain that the insurgency in Baluchistan has deep Indian involvement, with Afghan association. Islamabad alleged that India financially helped the Baluch rebels. According to Weinbaum and Harder (2008), “Pakistan has no strong proof of material backing from India passing through Afghanistan, and exaggerates an Indian presence in the border regions”. Ironically to allege a foreign hand in the internal matter has become almost a routine in South Asia and all countries have followed this standard practice to divert from the internal problems. But Pakistan has horrific memories of the mid-1970s when Baluch rebels groups were welcomed in Afghanistan after running from Pakistan (Weinbaum and Harder 2008:29-30).

Musharraf also acknowledged in an interview to *The Wall Street Journal* that India and Pakistan had been engaged in a long-running proxy war in Afghanistan. To justify Pakistan’s position, he said, Islamabad’s role in promoting the Taliban and similar militant groups operating in Afghanistan was a legitimate counter balance against India there (Hodge and Shah 2015). It was a rare case, where a top Pakistani official, even a former army chief and president accepted this theory officially (Dawn 2015b). Musharraf further said that these militant groups had a tool to counter India’s influence in Afghanistan and claimed that Bush “knew that I am not playing a double game” with Washington (Hodge and Shah 2015).

Another important factor as an obstacle in regional solution is the US policy in the region. US policy is not seen as reliable by the regional countries like Iran and China. US interests in the other regions like West Asia have diverted its attention from Afghanistan. It is the failure of US power that they were unable to compel Pakistan to cooperate in Afghanistan, despite huge assistance. Rather than working together, their relationship in recent years is at an all-time low. The post-9/11 years have been one of the most difficult times for Pakistan, as it was closely associated with the WOT and became the centre of global scrutiny. For the second time in recent history, Pakistan became a frontline state in the Afghan conflict that provoked violence and militancy within Pakistan and some critical policy choices for Pakistan itself. Observing Pakistan's state of the economy, society and political instability somewhere between 2010- 2012 observers thought that Pakistan has reached a point of 'great flux'(Fair and Gregory 2012:173).In foreign affairs, Pakistan's relations with the US were equally strained, due to the Afghan war. Not only was the democratic government criticised for corruption and other domestic mismanagement but the army's image was at an all-time low in a recent decade. Army and civilian government's position had been defamed, when in May 2011 the US Navy SEAL killed Bin Laden in a unilateral operation¹⁵ inside the military cantonment town of Abbottabad. But the Pakistani civilian government lost a golden opportunity to take advantage of greater civilian control over the army and the ISI. Instead, Pakistan's government blamed the US for violating its sovereignty (Fair and Gregory 2012:173-74).

Apart from the Abbottabad incursion, the Raymond Davis matter, US drone attack and Pakistan's support for the Taliban had increased tensions between Pakistan and the US. The situation became worse when US/NATO executed a faulty attack on the Pakistani border checkpoint at Salala that killed 24 Pakistani army personnel. Responding aggressively Islamabad closed down the transit route for NATO military supply from Pakistan to Afghanistan and forced US to vacate Shamsi airfield. Growing outrage led the US to cut its military aid to Pakistan (Fair and Gregory 2012:174). These events reveal that the relationship between Pakistan and the US was deteriorating in the

¹⁵ An American investigative journalist, Seymour M. Hersh in his 10000 words article "The Killing of Osama bin Laden" on 'London Review of Book' (Vol. 37 No. 10, 21 May 2015) claimed by extensive quoting of both named and unnamed sources, that SEAL raid which killed Laden in Abbotabad was known to senior generals of Pakistan's army and ISI. For more see <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v37/n10/seymour-m-hersh/the-killing-of-osama-bin-laden> Accessed on 25 May 2015.

background of Obama's drawdown decision in December 2010. At the same time, US bargained with Taliban to end the conflict. It sent out the wrong message as many regional actors became suspicious about the prospect of civil war in Afghanistan. Pakistan in recent years in a very pragmatic way shifted its hope from the US to rising superpower China. According to Lisa Curtis, Pakistan is rethinking its regional relations and, in particular, has begun to restructure its dealings with China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran in the expectation of fading partnership with the US in the wake of US drawdown (Fair and Gregory 2012:177). Pakistan has also started to build long-term regional relations that will reduce its dependency on the US, in the context of intensifying Chinese power and fading American reach. An important element as Curtis assesses, "will remain Pakistan's ability to play its 'friends' off against each other – the US against China, and Saudi Arabia against Iran (Fair and Gregory 2012:177).

As for any regional mechanism for Afghan solution, Pakistan has shown little interest, except to the level that can serve Pakistan's interest. Therefore, Pakistan has diluted the attempt of SAARC for any regional cooperation in Afghanistan, where India normally dominated but was enthusiastic about Afghanistan's association in SCO because China can counter the Indian influence there. Pakistan seems very comfortable with the China's regional engagement in comparison to that of the US (Gregory 2013:70). In April 2015, the official 'Economic Corridor' plan between China and Pakistan worth US \$46 billion was signed (Reuters 2015). But Pakistan even before that announcement supported China's influence in Afghanistan. According to Gregory (2013), Pakistan would see China acquire a stronger role in Afghanistan. Islamabad has officially shown its commitment, as a Pakistani foreign ministry statement says that "Pakistan will work with China to support the Afghan peace process", after talks between Chinese, Pakistani and Afghan officials in Kabul (The Wall Street Journal 2015).

Pakistan's behaviour over time shows that Islamabad is unlikely to accept compromise in a regional process in Afghanistan, if such a process underwrites Indian influence in Kabul. If India would have given much weight, then Pakistan more likely out of the regional development as it did in the Istanbul summit in 2011. Pakistan can work as a spoiler to counter a regional solution if it feels that its interest has not been well addressed (Gregory 2013:71). Once the US and Afghan government under Karzai initiated peace talks with Taliban by isolating Pakistan in this situation, Pakistan as a spoiler reacted by arresting some key Taliban leaders who had a role in the said

negotiation (Gregory 2013:77). Pakistan's role in the Af-Pak region cannot be ignored due to their cultural, societal, economic, ethnic and religious linkages. The past, present and future of Afghanistan and Pakistan are closely interlinked with each other. Pakistan has not only created the Taliban in the mid-1990s but even its security apparatus maintained a close relationship with it even during the WOT. All Taliban fragments including Omar and Haqqani(s) are still operating from Pakistan. Pakistan as a state can push them for negotiation due to its deep reach inside Afghanistan. Peace and reconciliation are not only important for Afghanistan, but also for Pakistan. Pakistan cannot bear another civil war in Afghanistan. Instable Afghanistan would be the most serious security and unity threat for Pakistan itself. There are two dimensions of Pakistan's Afghan policy, one short term and another one is the long term. For the short term, Pakistan may accept some short of regional arrangement, but for the long term Pakistan would like to maintain its monopoly on Afghan affairs. But there is another dilemma; Pakistan cannot manage Afghanistan alone. It does not have the capacity to do so. There are serious challenges for the Pakistani establishment to come with a single and long-term Afghan policy, where all actors within Pakistan agree. There always has been a divide between the armed forces and the civilian government, on Pakistan's Afghan policy. The second challenge is to unite all Taliban factions and make them agree to the peace process.

According to Pant (2014), there is a remote possibility of a regional solution. All neighbouring states have their peculiar interests which are quite opposed to others (Pant 2014). There is a common assumption in the West that only Islamabad and Rawalpindi can bring the Taliban into the political mainstream. Therefore, Washington has made a tactical agreement with Pakistan that it will leave Pakistan's nuclear programme alone in exchange for cooperation on Afghanistan (Pant 2014). Facing a serious threat to its state existence, the Pakistani army still wants to retain its control over negotiation through the Taliban and other militants. Even after recognising that the Afghan problem has a regional nature, the Obama administration has not achieved much success due to the regional differences (Rashid 2010:361). The causes of regional tensions that have hampered any regional solution in last few years are- tension between India and Pakistan in the wake of 26/11 Mumbai attack; the worsening relations between the US and Iran on nuke issue; the escalating tensions between the US and China; and also the

poor state of the relationship between NATO and Russia after the clash in Georgia and Ukraine.

4.8- Summary

The regional approach is the most significant for Afghanistan and the larger region. In the words of Mir (2010), it would serve Afghan national objectives consisting of achieving internal stability, maintaining peace, friendly relations with neighbouring countries, and acting as an economic hub between South, Central, West and East Asia. Therefore, the regional approach not only brings much-needed peace but would also fulfil the national objectives of this country. More importantly, most of Afghanistan's problems are related to the neighbouring countries like terrorism, violence, refugee, narcotic traffic and obstacle for economic opportunity. Ideally, the regional approach can stop the destructive capacity of neighbouring countries and convert it into cooperation. Regional states are also facing similar problems, hence the regional approach is supposed to be an opportunity to solve them for all. For any regional solution, the hostility between different regional states should be short out. Otherwise, one has anxiety over other's role in Afghanistan. Unfortunately the enmities between India-Pakistan, Pakistan-Afghanistan are the legacy of colonial powers. On the other hand, Iran-Saudi antagonism is not only based on the sectarian identity, but for regional hegemony. The Central Asian Republics disagree over Moscow's desired sphere of influence in its backyard. Despite these problems, there are common opportunities that remain unexploited. Afghanistan as an integral part of South, Central and West Asian can play an important role at the junction of the three regions. It would be a win-win situation for all regional states. Knowing the potential of this factor, some of the countries have started their strategy in this direction. The most important mechanism of any perfect regional approach should free trade and transit by reviving the old Silk Road. China and US have mentioned this idea several times but in accordance with their own strategy. Some regional projects like energy (oil, gas and electricity) transportation from Central Asia to South Asia, or Iran to South Asia can contribute to the development of the region. More significantly, these projects have been continuously discussed for decades. These projects would not only help Afghanistan through transit surplus but the importers and exporters will both profit from low transit costs.

In the same way, the building of railroads and highways connecting South Asia to Central Asia, as well as China to Iran, would be another promising regional economic project. The water conflict has increased multiple times between Central Asian republics in recent years. A common water management system would be crucial for building confidence among Afghanistan's neighbours as its snow-covered mountains are a major source of water for Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and Iran (Mir 2010:9-10). Recently search mineral in Afghanistan would be incentives for the two gigantic economies of our time. In exchange, Afghanistan would receive foreign direct investment, infrastructure and employment. The most dangerous threats of terrorism, extremism and narcotic trade can only be curtailed by a regional mechanism. Thus despite many obstacles, there are new opportunities that can attract regional states for agreement in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 5

India's Engagement with the Afghan State

5.1- Introduction

State is not a unitary identity. It is comprised of many complex actors such as the bureaucracy, armed forces, political organisations, civil society, media, and, of course, public opinion. Therefore, this chapter deals with India's engagement with key Afghan institutions like Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police, President's Office, Parliament and Loya Jirga; in shaping the future of Afghanistan. In a modern polity, state's interaction with its counterparts has extended beyond power corridors. Now public perceptions about other states also matter a lot. India in an innovative way diversified its engagement in the larger Afghan polite-social landscape. This strategy ensures the complexity and diversity of Afghanistan. However, this kind of engagement has its limitations in compare of real geo-political concern. But India's geographical limitations and historical experience have made the current engagement the best model in the given circumstances. Knowing its own limitations and regional complexities, New Delhi has chosen its strategy in Afghanistan. It is based on the winning the Afghan hearts through its "soft power" approach¹⁶. Indian policy makers believe that only presence in Kabul power corridor cannot achieve the desired outcome in an unpredictable nation. Therefore, constructing a favourable constituency is a useful option in Afghanistan, where India has historically had good cultural influence.

India's increasing influence in Afghanistan has been seen by the former Under-Secretary General of UN, politician and author Shashi Tharoor as "soft power" that he once described as the country's "greatest asset" in Afghanistan (BBC News 2009). In the given circumstances, it is believed that instead of an assertive role, India must engage in different ways in Afghanistan which are viable and acceptable to all parties concerned.

¹⁶Soft power is a concept developed by Harvard University base academician Joseph Nye, where he define soft power as the ability to attract and co-opt rather than force. Here he more stress on the cultural factors and political values, in pursuit of the desirable outcome in foreign policy. For more on soft power see the Nye's books- 'Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics' (2004) and 'The Future of Power' (2011).

5.2- India's Political Engagement

India was the one of the happiest countries, when Taliban was overthrown from Kabul. In post-Taliban Afghanistan, New Delhi engaged overwhelmingly for a constructive solution in its favour. India politically engaged in breaking the power deal in Bonn 2001. The then External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh expressed India's flourishing engagement with the new rulers of Afghanistan as a bright success story (Sudarshan 2002). Indian officials did a great attempt to include the Northern Alliance¹⁷ leaders in the new Kabul government with a visible power share. It has been proved by the fact that three Northern Alliance leaders in the interim administration of Karzai were in New Delhi for one week, just days before the government was sworn in on 22 December 2001. Interestingly, one of them, Yunus Qanuni, the then interior minister in the interim government, flew back directly from Bonn to New Delhi with India's special envoy, S.K. Lambah, and then on to Kabul, again with Lambah (Sudarshan 2002). Qanuni made an impression on people with his forceful speech and negotiating skills in Bonn. He is believed to be one of the successors of the legendary Tajik-Afghan commander Ahmad Shah Massoud (BBC News 2004). Just before the signing of the Bonn-I declaration on 5 December 2001, India with the US, Russia, Germany and Iran had a last-minute midnight discussion on whether there was going to be a declaration or not (Sudarshan 2002, Lambah 2011). It shows that India had politically engaged in the most important meeting for 12 days at Bonn, on the future of Afghanistan. Just after the 'Operation Enduring Freedom' India reassured its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan by reopened its embassy in Kabul and consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad; later New Delhi opened consulates in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. These missions helped India to make contact with local leaders and implement its assistance and investment plans on the ground (Hanauer and Chalk 2012:14).

Even a week before the Bonn meeting, India had stepped up its political engagement in Afghanistan, when the Indian ambassador in Tehran, P S Haer led a delegation to Herat, while the Indian ambassador in Tashkent, Bhaskar Mitra led a similar mission to Mazar-e-Sharif. It was assumed that they met the Northern Alliance leaders, Ismail Khan and

¹⁷The Afghan Northern Alliance officially identifies as the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan. This group has mainly comprised by non-Pashtun ethnic groups and has history against the Pashtun dominance in Kabul whether it Mujahedeen or Taliban. Post-Bonn they has proportionally well represented in Kabul Government.

Rashid Dostum (The Economic Times 2001). On 21 November 2001, Lambah led a mission to Afghanistan, and India's Liaison office become active in Kabul (MEA, Annual Report 2001-02:1). After the Bonn Agreement, India also participated in a UN-sponsored group of 21 countries on Afghanistan held in New York twice, first in November and then in December 2001. India has attended almost all the meetings on Afghanistan's future just after the new government was established in Kabul:- like the senior official meeting on reconstruction and assistance held in Washington on 21 November 2001; "Preparing for Afghanistan Reconstruction Conference" in Islamabad from 21-29 November 2001; the meeting of Steering Group for Assistance in the reconstruction of Afghanistan in Brussels on 20-21 December 2001; and the ministerial meeting of the Steering Group for Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo on 21- 22 January 2002 (MEA, Report 2001-02:1). Beyond unilateral engagement, India talked with other regional powers such as Russia and Iran to help the new Afghan government. To show its symbolic support to new the establishment Singh led an Indian delegation to Kabul to attend the inauguration of the new Afghan interim government in Kabul. Responding positively, the interim government's senior ministers visited India one after another including the defence and interior ministers. The Indian government in its initial response under then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced a line of credit of US \$100 million and 1 million tons of wheat for Afghanistan. In a humanitarian response to the Afghan situation, India in the very first year of the interim government sent teams of doctors and medical staff to Kabul and Mazar e Sharif. India had also organised a camp for amputees for fixing artificial limbs in Kabul in 2001 (MEA, Annual Report 2001- 02:01-2).

Politically, India has been part of almost all negotiations and initiatives taken for Afghan interests. India is much more deeply involved in the regional diplomatic coordination on Afghanistan. India hosted the January 2014 ministerial meeting of The International Contact Group on Afghanistan, which has more than fifty countries and regional organizations (Ayres 2015). India eagerly engaged in the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in 2011 and following the spirit of this process, India hosted the Senior Officials' Meeting of the Istanbul Process in New Delhi in January 2014 (MEA 2014).

India's most significant political stand was supporting political reconciliation in Afghanistan. In the beginning, India had opposed reconciliation efforts with Pakistan-backed Taliban. But once India found itself isolated in the multinational talks on

Afghanistan's future, it radically changed its stand by supporting reconciliation with Taliban (Hanauer and Chalk 2012:15). Under the second United Progressive Alliance government (UPA-II), till mid-2011, India took the stand that if reconciliation is the collective Afghan wish, New Delhi will go along with it. New Delhi would, however, wish that the peace process is "Afghan-led" (Bhadrakumar 2011). Then India Prime Minister. Manmohan Singh in his historic Afghan visit acknowledged support for the Afghan reconciliation agenda. According to former diplomat M.K. Bhadrakumar, who has very keenly observed the region, India's support for the Karzai-led reconciliation was an "eminently realistic position" (Bhadrakumar 2011). He further writes in *The Hindu* that it brings the Indian position in line with the mainstream Afghan thinking. No state at the moment has difficulty seeing the wisdom of reconciling with the Taliban (Bhadrakumar 2011). India had gone beyond unilateral efforts when it talked with almost all the political delegates visiting India about the Afghan situation (Dikshit 2011).

Under Singh, Indian leadership had shown the greatest political commitment when, Singh had stayed overnight twice in Kabul; first in 2005 and then in 2011. It was a time when security was such a big issue that no head of state would like to stay for long hours in Kabul. On 28-29 August 2005, Singh was the first Indian prime minister to visit Afghanistan 29 years after Indira Gandhi's visit in 1976¹⁸. Singh was the first head of state to visit the Afghanistan for more than a day since the Taliban government had overthrown in 2001 (Srivastava 2005). Singh's visit came despite apprehensions about his personal security, which he reportedly overruled (Srivastava 2005). Again in May 2011, he visited Afghanistan and as a rare honour addressed a joint session of parliament (BBC 2011). His visit in the words of Bhadrakumar (2011) "was imbued with the political symbolism that India has the grit to follow-up on its commitments". It would have gone well in the local sensitivity of India as a gentle neighbour and committed friend who cares genuinely for the Afghan people (Bhadrakumar 2011).

India also supported Afghanistan's entrance into South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as then External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, visited Kabul in January 2007 to request Karzai to attend the 14th SAARC Summit to be held

¹⁸ Embassy of India, Kabul, Website, "Indo-Afghan relation, Bilateral Visits", [Online: web] Accessed 11 April 2015, <http://eoi.gov.in/kabul/?0357?000>

in India. In the same year, Afghanistan became a member of SAARC (MEA, Annual Report 2006-2007). In the wake of the NATO drawdown, the year 2011 was important as Indo-Afghan relations reached a new altitude. This year was historic in the way that India and Afghanistan signed a notable accord on 'Strategic Partnership' during the visit of Karzai in October 2011. It was the first such agreement signed by Afghanistan with any country (MEA Annual Report 2011 -12). The year 2011 was significant not only for Indo-Afghan Strategic Agreement but also for India's new commitment to an increase in India's aid commitment to Afghanistan by US \$ 500 million. After this India's total aid post-9/11 reached US \$ 2 billion (MEA Annual Report 2011-12:2).

5.3- India's Humanitarian Assistance or Development Cooperation

As a developing country, India has its own economic concerns, even so New Delhi is assisting other developing countries as well. Development assistance is an important component of India's foreign policy. But India's Afghan engagement is not identified by the Indian government as humanitarian assistance. Normally, Western notions of humanitarian assistance include civilian population affected by armed conflicts (Meier and Murthy 2011:6). The Indian government called it the 'development cooperation' instead of humanitarian assistance. This sub-section looks at India's engagement with the Afghan people.

India's engagement in Afghanistan is a classical case of humanitarian assistance. This assistance also indirectly helped the Afghan state in becoming peaceful, healthy, educated and having skilled citizens. At the end of the day, any state is largely responsible for the welfare of its people. The citizens of this war-torn national had not received the essential state support for socio-economic upliftment, due to violence, Civil War and the state's limited penetration in the life of common Afghans. But last fifteen years have seen a radical improvement in the living standard, due to international community efforts. India is one of the countries, which believed that the empowerment of the Afghan people to maintain peace is in its interest. As a developing country, India has its challenges, to uplift its people from the poverty and miseries. But in the last decade, India's rising economic profile has motivated New Delhi to introduce a most innovative tool in its foreign policy mechanism. There is consent within the Indian state establishment and the political spectrum that humanitarian assistance as a tool provides

promising opportunities for India. India's experience such as in Sri Lanka has turned it away from the military approach. India's hegemonic image within the region makes New Delhi comfortable with the aid and humanitarian diplomacy. India's voluntary economic assistance in the developing countries is characterized by the New Delhi as "development cooperation" not a foreign aid (Saran 2014:02). The Annual Report of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has a separate sub-section termed as 'development cooperation', where it has mentioned foreign aid and assistance.

Development assistance is an important element of India's foreign policy. India's rising economic profile stimulated its external 'development cooperation' in developing countries. India has increased its development cooperation radically in its scope and exposure in the past few years. The development assistance comprises of "lines of Credit, grant assistance, technical consultancy, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, educational scholarships and a wide range of capacity-building programmes including short-term civilian and military training courses"(MEA Annual Report, 2014-15: xvi). The MEA has established the Development Partnership Administration (DPA), its foreign aid agency in 2012, for proper and speedy implementation of economic aid and assistance. The purpose and objectives of DPA is establishing procedures for efficient managing of Indian development projects through the stages of the model, instigate, implementation and completion (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:162). This new agency, DPA has a considerable budget of US \$15 billion to spend over the next five years. The DPA will manage the supervision of India's foreign development projects (Price 2013:1). India from early years of its independence has engaged in aid and assistance bilaterally and through multilateral channels. It maintains an impressive record of working with the United Nations (UN) peace mission. Recently, India became a donor to the World Bank's Trust Fund for South-South learning (Price 2013:2). India offered support to other states through training and capacity-building with the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation scheme (ITEC), which was founded in 1964 (Price 2013:2). India has joined the international coordination of donors, by becoming part of the 'Nepal Development Forum' and 'the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund' (Price 2013:2). DPA has also monitored the Afghanistan development projects by the priority areas identified by the Afghan government.

Ambassador Shyam Saran, in his Harvard speech, has given an ideological background for India's economic assistance in the Global South. He believed that the philosophy of

this deed got inspiration from the India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru as much of the foreign policy ideas. According to Saran (2014) "after India's independence Nehru put forward the view that despite India being a poor country, it had an internationalist responsibility to share its modest resources and capabilities with other developing countries that were then emerging from the yoke of colonial rule" (Saran 2014:3). Therefore, such cooperation is the solidarity with the developing countries in the south. This cooperation helped India to acquire the unique experience. India's development cooperation is unique in this sense that here priorities set by the partner country, which is not the case of North-South cooperation. In the words of Saran, India does not impose any conditionality to its economic support nor bypass the governmental mechanism in the partner country in implementing the assisted projects (Saran 2014:05). Y.K Sinha, the then Joint Secretary of MEA in a seminar revealed the 'non-intrusive' nature of India's assistance agenda in Afghanistan, where India does not dictate priorities, does not give unsolicited advice. On India's approach towards Afghanistan, Sinha said, "whatever we have we would like to share with our friend" (Sinha 2012).

India's motives for providing relief to other countries have been seen by Claudia Meier and C.S.R. Murthy (2011) as a desire to promote friendly relations through such assistance. Their studies mention the humanitarian assistance to all nations including the global north in the time of nature disaster. Some scholars view the cultural and spiritual background of India behind the humanitarian assistance to other states. All religions flourish in India, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism advocate solidarity with the distress (Meier and Murthy 2011:06-07). MEA found humanitarian assistance as "a goodwill gesture".

India is engaging deeply in South Asia through its aid programme as Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan are major recipients of Indian aid. Bhutan stands first as a recipient of Indian aid. India is going to provide a lot of aid in terms of grants and loans for the hydro-power project in Bhutan (Price 2013:3). In return Thimphu would sell electricity to India. Therefore, here aid mutually benefited both states. But this is not the case with Afghanistan. India has not mutually benefited in Afghanistan. India is so extensively invested too much capital even when there is a risk to its personals. Apart from so many other objectives discussed earlier, India has a strategic interest in the following projects. India's engagement in Afghanistan is also part of its larger Af-Pak

strategy. The Pakistan factor has also determined some of its reconstruction efforts. The building of a road linking western Afghanistan to the Iranian port of Chabahar has provided a substitute route not only for Indian goods to travel to Afghanistan but even a new alternative for Afghanistan (Price 2013:5). Afghanistan would have to find an alternative of the Khyber route, for warm water port through this route. So, Afghanistan would become less dependent on Pakistan from the said link.

In 2014, two important infrastructure projects, sponsored by the Indian government had been completed- the construction of 218 km road from Zaranj to Delaram in Nimroz province and the construction of 220 KV Transmission Line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul together with a sub-station in Chimtala (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15: iv). It is also expected that the Afghanistan's new parliament building would be completed soon, which is a symbol of pluralism and democracy between these two states. It is going to be delayed, due to difficulties in identification of implementing agencies. According to MEA Annual Report of 2014-15, Salma Dam in Herat Province is progressing, and its completion is expected shortly (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15: iv).

India has been providing high protein biscuits to Afghan school children through the World Food Programme's school feeding program since 2003 (MEA Annual Report 2011 -12:1). India has also given wheat as required by Afghanistan, such as one million tons of wheat in 2008 (Meier and Murthy 2011:17). India has also contributed to international humanitarian organizations as in 2002 when India promised one million tons of wheat for several years for a school feeding program in Afghanistan. At the time, it was the single largest pledge to the World Food Programme in the history of the organization (Bijoy 2009, Meier and Murthy 2011:28). On a clear humanitarian ground, till 2015 India has delivered 2.5 million tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:163).

There are five medical missions (IMMs), run by Indian doctors that are located in Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat, the same cities where the Indian consulates are. A team of 15 Indian doctors and 15 paramedics have been deployed for these IMMs (MEA 2008). These IMMs are treating several hundred patients daily. In addition, patients are also provided free medicines supplied by India (MEA 2008).

Table 6 -Larger infrastructure projects under Development Cooperation

S. N.	Project	Nature	Location	Status
1	Construction of a 218 km highway	Highway infrastructure	Zaranj to Delaram near Iranian Border	Completed and handed over to Government of Afghanistan
2	Construction of 220 KV DC transmission line	Electrification infrastructure	Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul	Completed and handed over
3	220/110/20 KV sub-station	Electrification	Chimtala to bring power from the Northern border to Kabul	Completed and handed over
4	Reconstruction of Salma Dam	Power cum-irrigation project	Herat province	Nearing completion
5	Construction of Afghan Parliament	Symbolic and also capacity building	Kabul	Has completed on 25 December 2015
6	Construction of two electric sub-stations	Electrification Infrastructure	Doshi and Charikar	Completed
7	Setting up of five toilet cum-public sanitation complexes	Public Health and Sanitation	Kabul	Completed and handed over
8	Upgradation of telephone exchanges	Information Technology	11 different Afghan provinces	Completed and handed over
9	Expansion of national TV network by providing an uplink from Kabul	Establishment of National Broadcaster	In all 34 provincial capitals	Completed and handed over

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Report 2011-12

According to Meier and Murthy (2011), India does not distinguish between areas with usually closer ties to India (the north) and areas with Pashtun majorities, with whom New Delhi has fewer relations (Meier and Murthy 2011:17). India has helped in the medical field by sending medical staff, medicines and establishing a hospital. One such example is commissioning the Indira Gandhi International Children's Hospital in Kabul. (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:163). The revival of Indira Gandhi Child Welfare Hospital is the best case of India's humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, the foundation stone of which originally had been laid by King Zahir Shah in 1967. Now

India has upgraded it and it is one of the best children-related healthcare centres in the entire region (Sharma 2009). India in 2011, offered medical treatments to Afghan citizens in Indian hospitals over the next three years which has implemented through the Afghan Ministry of Public Health. India also shared its expertise in the rehabilitation and professional upgradation of the National Malaria and Leishmaniasis Centre of Afghanistan (MEA, Annual Report 2011-12:02). India has provided ten ambulances to increase the capacity building in Afghan medical sector. India has also reached out to Afghan people during the natural calamity on the humanitarian ground. On 2 May 2014, when a hill collapsed due to heavy rain on a remote village in Aab Bareek area of Badakhshan, the Indian Prime Minister announced financial assistance for relief and rehabilitation of US \$1 million (IANS 2014).

5.4 India's Role in the Capacity Building of Afghan State

The Indian government has intensely helped the Afghan state, institutions and people over the last fifteen years to develop their capacity building in the respective field. India through its state agencies, institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other non-state agencies has been engaged in this task. This helped not only to enormously facilitate the Afghan state but the common Afghan masses. Capacity building through skills development of Afghan citizen is the core of this idea. "Skills development and capacity building" has been identified by the Indian government as one more key area of priority in Afghanistan (MEA 2008). It is challenging but significant for the long-term sustainability of state by established institutions. Therefore, the Indian government from 2006-07 onwards has given 500 short-range Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training programmes for Afghan nationals annually (MEA May 2008). In order to develop the capacity building of Afghan state, 30 Indian civil officers are also being debuted under the GoI/GoA/UNDP Tripartite MoU (MEA, 2008). They are working under different Afghan Ministries. There are other major skilled development projects, such as CII project for training 3,000 Afghans in the trades of carpentry, plumbing, welding, and masonry. One such project operated by NGO SEWA, for technical assistance to Women's Vocational Training Centre in Bagh-e-Zanana (MEA 2008). According to MEA-

India has engaged in several projects, which largely affect the common Afghan. some of them are follow:- gifting of vehicles (400 buses, 200 mini-

buses, 105 municipality and 285 army vehicles); telephone exchanges in 11 provinces to connect them to Kabul; national TV network by providing an uplink from Kabul and downlinks in all 34 provincial capitals; renovation of Habibia School; digging of 26 tube wells in north-west Afghanistan; setting up of 5 toilet-cum-sanitation complexes in Kabul; rehabilitation of Amir Ghazi and Quargah Reservoir dams, solar electrification of 100 villages, etc. (MEA 2008).

On September 2004, India and Afghanistan had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute of the MEA of the Republic of India and the Institute of Diplomacy of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Islamic State of Afghanistan (Embassy of India, Kabul 2004 MoU). This particular document said about the cooperation in exchange of faculty and students through exchange programmes. Foreign Service Institute of India would help the capacity building of Afghan counterparts. It has enormously helped the new Afghan state to train its diplomats for facing the realities of the contemporary world. The External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division organized training for 30 young journalists from Afghanistan in March 2013 to capacity building among media organizations (MEA, Annual Report, 2013-14:159).

In a similar way, India and Afghanistan have signed two different MoUs for cooperation on 24 February 2005, one in the fields of Media & Information and other in the Civil Aviation. Both these MoU had vital for Afghanistan's capacity building in respective fields. First stresses on training for Afghanistan media persons in India, technical help for broadcasting Kabul TV and for the establishment the Afghan Cinema Academy. The civil aviation MoU committed that the Indian government would entirely re-establish Afghan civil aviation sector by providing required experts for Airport Management, Air Traffic Control, pilots, navigation experts and engineers. Under this arrangement India also promised to provide training to Afghan personnel in civil aviation in Civil Aviation Training Centre, Allahabad, National Institute of Aviation Management and Research, New Delhi and Central Training Establishment, Indian Airlines, Hyderabad (Embassy of India, Kabul MoU, 2005). The Election Commission of India (ECI) is in the process of capacity building for an independent Afghan Election Commission shared its experience, skills and expertise with its Afghan counterparts. A group of election officials from Afghanistan has received training at the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM), the training and resource centre of the ECI. A unique course known as "Capacity

Development for Election Management” has been designed for Afghan officials. The course has been planned with support from the MEA (Election Commission of India 2013). There were 30 Indian civil servants in the deputation of under Capacity for Afghan Public Administration (CAP) programme. (MEA, Annual Report, 2013-14).

India for achieving long-term dividends has invested greatly in the revival of the education system. The education sector has emerged as a vital area of cooperation between India and Afghanistan. There may be some inspiration from Karzai, who received his higher education in India. Therefore, thousands of the Afghan students are receiving education in various Indian institutions. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), a body of MEA, has accommodated 1000 university scholarships annually for Afghan nationals. Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has given 674 scholarships annually. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi has hosted the students of the Afghanistan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University (ANASTU) at Kandahar. India has also supported ANASTU by contributing books for library and apparatus for laboratories (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:163).

Not only students but the Afghan political class have also been receiving the advantage of Indian experience. The Indian democratic system seems most reliable in Afghanistan’s neighbour. Taking advantage of it, a parliamentary delegation comprising 94 out of the 102 MPs from the Upper House (*Meshrano Jirga*) of the Afghan Parliament visited India on 11-17 February 2013. According to MEA, they were visited India to experience Indian parliamentary procedures at the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training, New Delhi (MEA, Annual Report, 2013-14). India already provided practical assistance for elections like conducting of elections, training election monitors, and electronic apparatus like electronic voting machine. But, India has never accepted the democracy promotion theory. India respects the state sovereignty and is opposed to forcing values on other countries (Price 2013:8). Various Indian agencies, including the Flag Foundation of India, has sponsored to build a massive Afghan Flag in Kabul, which jointly inaugurated by Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Karzai on 10 September 2014. India also declared US \$1 million for the construction of a national public park around the flag (Embassy of India, Kabul).

Table7- India's Capacity Building Initiatives in Afghanistan

Nature/Sector	Project	Location	Remarks
Education	Reconstruction and Renovation of the Habibia School	Kabul	Assistance in setting up of a computer lab at Habibia School
Scholarships	Award of 500 ICCR long-term university scholarships	For study in India; undergraduate and post-graduate degrees	Now the number of scholarships have increased 1000
Vocational Training	500 short-term Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) vocational training slots for Afghan nationals annually from 2006-07 onwards	Indian institutions in India	Three years back, both ICCR and ITEC slots were increased to 675 annually
Administrative Capacity	Deputation of 30 Indian civil servants	In different Afghan ministry at Kabul and other part of Afghanistan	This programme is under the UNDP Capacity for Afghan Public Administration
Vocational Training Centre	Setting up of an India-Afghan Vocational Training Centre	Afghanistan	for training 3,000 Afghans in skilled fields like plumbing, welding
Women's Vocational Training Centre	Indian NGO, SEWA run vocational training to 1000 women under India's assistance programme	Bagh-e-Zanana in Kabul	Setting up training to established Cottage Industry
Public Transport	Donation of 1,000 buses	For Kabul and other municipalities	With provision for maintenance support, training and infrastructure
Agri-Education	Up gradation of the Agricultural Department of Kabul University	Kabul University	Providing scholarships for the study of Agricultural Sciences
Agricultural	Donation of 500 tractors for Afghan farmers		Provision of seeds and other assistance for the agricultural sector
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage	A grant of US\$ 10 million for preservation and Revival of cultural exchanges		
Mining	Assistance in setting up an Afghan Institute of Mining.		
Training of Afghan Diplomats	A special four-week course for 20 diplomats from Afghanistan was organized in April 2006.	In Foreign Service Institute Of MEA, New Delhi	

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Reports of 2011-12; 2006-07

State building capacity through community-based projects is an important area, where Indian government with Indian NGOs are operating in small development projects. These projects covered areas such as agriculture, rural development, education, health and vocational training. These efforts are directly impacting on community life. With the Indian assistance, the third phase of small development projects was launched in November 2012, will take account of additional projects of US \$100 million (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:163).

5.5-India's Role in Security and Sustainability of the Afghan State

To show solidarity with Afghanistan, India was the first state to sign a security pact with Afghanistan, the 2011 Strategic Partnership Agreement (Ayres 2015). Under this landmark and first such agreement with any foreign state, Afghanistan strengthened already established security ties. Training of Afghan National Security Forces and giving them arms are an important set up to strengthen the Afghan state. The ANA was formed in December 2002. The basic idea of forming the ANA was based on the re-centralisation of control over the periphery against the autonomous warlords or local power broker (Giustozzi 2012). In the initial years, Afghan army personnel were not equipped with heavy arms like tanks and artillery. Till the end of 2009, ANA was poorly trained. Since 2009, more stress has been given to training ANA by US-NATO's Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A). The quality of ANA training improved when a new mechanism known as NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) introduced. CSTC-A and NTM-A are the two organisations responsible for training ANA and later the police too (Giustozzi 2012). India in this process has emerged an important Afghan ally, who is helping to train Afghan security forces.

There has been a long tradition of training the Afghan Army officials (Stratpost 2013). Before the Afghan civil war, India trained Afghan army officials from 1974 to 1982, as many as 37 Afghans were there for one-year training as cadets at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) (The Hindu 2013b). The ANA officers have reassumed training since 2007 in National Defence Academy (NDA) and IMA from 2011. Many officers, who passed out till 1982, from these Indian institutes, have got leading jobs in the ANA and

government. The Afghan army personnel are undergoing specific courses at the Artillery School, Devlali; the Mechanised Infantry Regimental Centre, Ahmednagar, and the Infantry School, Mhow, apart from in the IMA and the NDA (The Hindu 2013b). The cadres of the ANA and police have received training in diverse Indian institutions, across the country. Principally, India under the Strategic Partnership Agreement of 2011 agreed to train, equip and build the capacity of the Afghan forces (Gokhale 2011). Under the strategic partnership, India has increased its training of Afghan army and other security personnel (Wright and Stancati 2014). Quoting Ashok Mehta, a retired Indian general, *The Wall Street Journal* writes that India is training Afghanistan's army since 2007 when two platoon-sized infantry units took sessions in India (Wright and Stancati 2014). Hundred Afghan officers had been commissioned at IMA since 2010 to 2013 (Stratpost 2013). The single largest batch of fifty-eight Afghan officials was commissioned in December 2012. Apart from IMA and NDA, India has also trained 160 Afghan officers at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) at Chennai, so far (Stratpost 2013). In 2014, India improved the figure of Afghan officers training in India to nearly 1,100 from previous year's 574 (Miglani 2014).

Under Karzai, New Delhi and Kabul have agreed to intensify defence and security cooperation to enhance the effective capabilities and mobility of the Afghanistan Security Forces (Dikshit 2013). The Karzai administration was looking to strengthen their armed forces with big-ticket military equipment from India, such as Russian-origin fighter jets and tanks, which are vital to command and control (Aneja 2014). On his New Delhi visit, at December 2013, the then Afghan President, Hamid Karzai said to journalists that "We hope to have an army to defend Afghanistan through its resources and its citizens. To that objective we are being helped by India" (Dikshit 2013). In his official visit, Karzai had given a wish list of military equipment as well as sought greater cooperation in building up battle-capable Afghan forces (Dikshit 2013). But cautious of upsetting Pakistan, the then UPA-II government had told Kabul that India would not be in a situation to fly this equipment over Pakistani airspace in case it required repair in Indian military establishments, as stated in *The Hindu* (Aneja 2014). But the British news agency *Reuters* reported from the unnamed MEA official, that India can't give them the military hardware, for all varieties of reasons including the lack of spare stocks (Miglani 2014). However, New Delhi has made some attempts by negotiating with a Russian firm to supply arms as asked by the Afghan government, but

no equipment was delivered before Ghani's decision to hold (Swami 2014). There were reports which suggested that India opted for a 'third party option' under, which it will pay Russia to supply military equipment (Miglani 2014).

It believed that upset with India's failure to deliver long-promised military aid, Ghani told New Delhi that he desires to return his predecessor Karzai's request for assistance (Swami 2014). But there was also the Pakistani angle on Ghani's choice to place Afghanistan's arms-aid demand on hold. Ghani believed that the outreach to India would destroy Kabul's relationship with Islamabad, without getting any benefit in return. But in a fast-changing events at December 2015, India has given four Mi 25 attack helicopters to Afghanistan¹⁹. It marks the first time New Delhi has gifted offensive ability to Afghanistan. It remain a sensitive topic in the past due to strong protests by Pakistan.

Over the years, India is counting provide light military hardware to Afghan security forces. India has donated fifty 4-and-a-half-ton trucks to ANA's 1st brigade in 2005. India also delivered Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) manufactured three military Cheetal choppers to Afghanistan in April 2015. The three Cheetal helicopters were unarmed and have a utility role and their pilots, and the technicians had already been trained by India (Pubby 2015).

India has reached out to other regional powers to develop the capacity of Afghan security forces. *Reuters* had quoted an Indian bureaucrat saying that India had talks with Iran, China, and Japan and to discover ways to support Afghan security US \$4 billion a year demands (Aneja 2014, Miglani 2014). India has firmed up a far-reaching deal with Russia to supply arms to the troubled country under which New Delhi will pay for the military equipment that will be sourced from Moscow (Samanta 2014). India through Russia may separately supply its range of Kalashnikovs, the Indian financing will largely focus on artillery guns, air support in the form of choppers and even armoured vehicles, including tanks (Samanta 2014). According to *The Indian Express*, Russia arms and ammunition, have already been executed (Samanta 2014). India's has also offered to provide training for Afghan police officers but in India (Bhadrakumar

¹⁹ For the recent defence deal see the following -Manu Pubby (2015), "Mi 25 attack helicopter gifted by India to Afghanistan reaches Kabul 3 more to follow", *The Economic Times*, 22 Dec, 2015

2011). In response to a question in the lower house (Lok Sabha), the Minister of the State in the MEA, V. K. Singh said that over the last three years, India has instructed ANA forces as per the requests received from the Afghan authorities and based on India's capacity. The minister did not disclose the number of personnel receiving training in India. But he told the house that India is helping in capacity building and skill enhancement of ANSF personnel (MEA 2015b). On the training front, the Indian position remains the same. While trying to meet Afghan demands for more seats here, the government is still against setting up any facility in Afghanistan and posting instructors there (Samanta 2014).

5.6-India's Engagement with Afghan Economy

India is the fifth-largest bilateral donor to the Kabul with US \$2 billion in support. India is the second largest market for Afghan goods which accounts for 27 percent of Afghan exports (Ayres 2015). But India promises a bigger market for Afghan economy if the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement implements in future. Apart from the committed Indian government and its public sector, Indian private sector plays a crucial role in increasing business ties. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) deal with the regional chambers of commerce consultation that was established as a confidence-building measure under the Istanbul Process, a platform for regional dialogue (Ayres 2015).

Afghanistan, after Bhutan, is the second most important recipient of funds from the Plan component of MEA's Budget in 2014. Afghanistan received Rs. 550 crores in the non-plan budget of MEA of India in 2014-15 (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:209). In the same way Afghanistan with Rs. 676.00 crores that account for 10.78 percent of India's total aid and loan budget, was the principal beneficiaries of India's Technical Cooperation Programmes in the financial year 2014-15. Here too, Bhutan is ahead of Afghanistan in receiving aid from India (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:243). In 2003, India and Afghanistan signed a 'preferential trade agreement' that reduced duties on Afghan exports (Hanauer and Chalk 2012:16). Afghanistan is exporting a large variety of products to India at zero import duty after signing a trade agreement (Bajoria 2007). New Delhi is stimulating Afghan exports by the early finalisation of a US \$50 million Buyers Credit Line to promote exports and attract Indian business to Afghanistan (MEA, Annual Report, 2011-12:2).

India is also promoting trade in Afghanistan through FICCI. There was a roadshow on investment, organised by FICCI, Indian Embassy in Kabul, and some other international NGOs in Ahmadabad on 15 April 2014. An 'Afghanistan Investment Forum' was organized in Mumbai on October 2014 by a private firm based in Ahmadabad with the support of Navi Mumbai Chamber of Commerce and TFBSO, the USA. FICCI and Afghan Chamber of Commerce & Industries (ACCI) are in partnership with the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry in different fields. India has also helped the Afghan company to increase their business in India. Therefore, 24 Afghan companies encouraged to participate in the 34th India International Trade Fair-2014 (MEA, Annual Report, 2014-15:1-2). Many public sector units are engaging in Afghanistan such as Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC) and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL).

5.7-Summary

From the above discussion, it is clear that India's Afghan engagement is multi-dimensional. India has extended beyond the state-centric approach, where capital to capital engagement dominates. New Delhi has reached beyond the Kabul power corridor through its innovative policy. According to MEA, India's assistance programme has spread in entire Afghanistan and covered economic and social developmental activities. The Afghan population has benefited from Indian aid and assistance programme. India's capacity building and development cooperation have created a favourable constituency in Afghanistan. Therefore, one can argue that the larger design of India's aid diplomacy has given some dividends. At the same time, it is also true that soft power has its limitation in compare of hard power. But it is also the fact that India's engagement in Afghanistan has been strategically cultivated by acknowledging the geographical obstacle. Some of New Delhi's engagements are a part of the soft power strategy. That kind of policy is acceptable on a global scale where it is a predominant view that India's active engagement has a factor that demoralised Pakistan from acting on the Afghan front. India's soft engagement can give an assurance to Pakistan that New Delhi is not doing anything that is against Islamabad. It can ultimately reduce stress between India and Pakistan. That would be a positive development for the Af-Pak region.

CHAPTER 6

The Post-2014 Scenario and India's Options and Strategy

6.1-Introduction

The year 2014 is considered a watershed year in the recent history of Afghanistan owing to two important transitions that took place at the end of that year. First was a domestic political transition from the thirteen-year-old Karzai administration to a new Unity Government through a democratic election process. Second, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) ended its 13-year-long combat mission by transferring responsibility for security to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (Sood 2015a). The timelines of both transitions were known since 2010. Nevertheless, the transition was not smooth as anticipated from the very beginning due to the instabilities and uncertainties on the ground. The post-2014 scenario is not completely favourable as per India's larger strategic calculations. In terms of relations between the respective capitals, then Kabul and New Delhi have both shrunken in their mutual political space. It is not only in the engagement of respective capitals, rather the pace of India's ambitious development projects have also lost pace. The focus of this chapter is on the factors that compelled post-2014 Indian foreign policy establishment to turn cold on the Afghan front, especially when New Delhi has emphasised on an assertive foreign policy initiative. At the same time, the Kabul administration has also lowered the level of expectation as well as engagement with New Delhi, with whom it had signed its first strategic partnership agreement in 2011. This chapter is also an attempt to analyse the circumstance that emerged after the NATO-withdrawal which have led New Delhi to rethink its erstwhile policy under the NATO security umbrella. Even before 2014, when the London conference²⁰ set the stage for reconciliation with Taliban and the Lisbon²¹ and Chicago Summits²² proposed the

²⁰London conference on Afghanistan was partially about the "transferring primacy" to Afghan forces and "talking to the Taliban". For more on London Conference, 2010 see- Paul Reynolds (2010), BBC, Aims of the London conference on Afghanistan, 28 January 2010, accessed 13 March 2015, URL- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8480368.stm

²¹Lisbon summit (2010) was the first NATO summit proposed a timetable for handing the Afghan security to ANSF that supposed to begin in 2011 and ended in 2014. It also set the timeline for NATO's combat operations to an end by 2014.

²²The leaders of the NATO-member countries in Chicago meeting (2012) have approved NATO's combat troops would be withdrawn by the end of 2014, with only training units remaining. For more on

withdrawal, New Delhi had confronted with the new reality. NATO had failed to achieve the desired results after thirteen years of battling in Afghanistan. Most importantly, the NATO could not persist for an infinite period.

NATO's combat withdrawal has created a security vacuum in Afghanistan. At the same time, the historical democratic transition has also led to speculations about political stability in Afghanistan. Within these two transitions, the second phase of Taliban revival (first was in 2003) has made the Afghan situation grim. The deteriorating security atmosphere, the fiscal constraints and political uncertainty regarding the reconciliation have made Afghanistan a fragile state. Nevertheless, there are some encouraging signs like the emerging middle class, improvement in the condition of women, workable central government and the initiation of security management by Afghan themselves. But all these achievements have notable to halt the rising violence and poor socio-economic condition of the Afghan masses. New Delhi found itself isolated from the new political arrangement and the larger reconciliation process. Though not a favourable situation, but New Delhi accepted the emerging state of affairs. India as a 'rising power' aggressively advocates its new role in the 'New World Order',²³ but does not possess any significant influence so as to change the course of these events. Rather than influence its neighbourhood, India found itself reacting to the fast-evolving events in Af-Pak. With this background in context, this chapter attempts to investigate events in the post-2014 period and till the end of 2015. By underscoring the existing circumstances and the history of the Af-Pak region, this chapter explores India's expected strategy with possible diverse options depending on the fluctuating regional and global atmosphere.

Chicago summit see- BBC News, Nato endorses Afghanistan withdrawal timetable, 22 May 2012, accessed on 3 September 2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-18154227>,

²³Here 'New World Order' denotes to the tectonic shift in the world politics in the twenty-first century from Atlantic to Asia. In the New World Order China and India are an emerging economic and political power pose a challenge to the American domination. In this time they are aggressively engaging in world stage by replacing the old one. Therefore, China and India would like to reform the global institutions on the bases of contemporary relatives. For more see - Drezner', Daniel W. (2007), "*The New New World Order*, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2007.

6.2- Post 2014 Emerging Situation in Af-Pak

Violence in general and terrorism in particular has continued to present the biggest threat to peace and stability in the region. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), has revealed the grim picture of Af-Pak region. According to GTI, in 2014, 57 per cent of all terrorist attacks occurred in five countries: Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Syria (GTI 2015:15). Afghanistan scores 9.233 on a scale of 10 to remain the second most terrorism-affected country after Iraq, while Pakistan with a score of 9.065 remain fourth after Nigeria, out of 124 states (GTI 2015:10-11). Afghanistan and Pakistan have been featured in the list of top-ten states with the maximum number of deaths from terrorism for each year in the last ten years. Af-Pak including India are in the exclusive club that have suffered from terrorism over an extended period of 13-14 years (GTI 2015:15). This data emphasises that terrorism has remained a significant issue in Af-Pak even at the end of 2015. The GTI report has also confirmed that 2014 was the deadliest year for Af-Pak. According to this report “Afghanistan had the third largest increase in deaths in 2014 with 1,391 deaths, being 45 per cent advanced than in 2013. The Taliban killed nearly 50 per cent more people in 2014 than the earlier year, largely targeting the police through explosions” (GTI 2015:19). The deaths toll has decreased in Pakistan by 596, or 25 per cent in 2014. The reason of it, as pointed out by the GTI report, is the fracturing of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) following the death of its leader Hakimullah Mehsud in November 2013 (GTI 2015:19). According to the GTI, in 2014, the Taliban, which is the primary focus of the proposed peace negotiation, remains one of the most deadly terrorist groups in the world. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, Taliban was accountable for about 75 per cent of all terrorism-related mortalities in Afghanistan. In 2014 alone there were terrorist attacks in 515 different locations in Afghanistan, clearly highlighting the extensiveness of violence across the state (GTI 2015:21). Non-government organisations like the Amnesty International also accepted that there was “growing insecurity” throughout the country. According to the 2014/15 report of Amnesty, the Taliban and other armed insurgent groups were accountable for more than 74 percent of all civilian fatalities, with 9 per cent casualties attributed to pro-government forces. An additional 12 per cent of casualties occurred during ground engagement between pro-Afghan government forces and the Taliban and this could not be attributed to any group (Amnesty International 2015: 50). The areas around the

Durand line have witnessed the most intense fighting and also highest casualties. Kabul is the deadliest capital in the globe, experiencing 206 deaths from terrorism in 2014, the highest recorded in the last 15 years, virtually all being carried out by the Taliban (GTI 2015:31).

Various US government agencies have accepted the grim situation in Afghanistan. According to a report of US Department of Defence, in the second half of 2015, the overall security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated with an increase in effective insurgent attacks (Department of Defence, US 2015:1-2). The Defence report acknowledges the presence of Islamic State in the eastern province of Nangarhar. The *Pentagon report*, in its second section 'Threat Assessment,' found that "Afghanistan faces a continuing threat from both the Afghan insurgency and extremist networks, including the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and to a lesser extent al-Qaeda, and other insurgent and extremist groups, which continue to attempt to reassert their authority and prominence"(Department of Defence, US 2015:16).

Recognising the vulnerability and threat around the Afghanistan, US envoys now travel only by helicopters for meetings even inside Kabul (Rashid2015). According to *The Long War Journal*, till the end of December 2015, the Taliban controlled 37 districts in Afghanistan and was fighting to gain dominance over another 39, out of total 398 districts. According to this journal, about one-fifth of Afghanistan is controlled or contested by the Taliban (Roggio 2015). The dangerously fluid situation in Kabul has also been recognised by the Russia's Afghan expert Andrey Serenko, according to whom, after the end of the 13-year ISAF mission in Afghanistan, the situation in the country remains "extremely unstable" and without external support controlling the security situation is a difficult mission. Serenko also argues that the Afghan security forces are suffering heavy damages, adding that upto 30 Afghan security personnel die every day (Sputnik 2015).

The most important actor in the resolution of the Af-Pak conflict is Pakistan, which has also remained a part of the problem in the post-2014 scenario. At the end of 2015, there is a comparative improvement in Pakistan's internal security situation in comparison to last year. On the external front, Islamabad has re-established relations with both its neighbours India and Afghanistan. China is motivating and helping Pakistan to start a new round of dialogue with Taliban and the Afghan government. A section of the

Pakistani civil society has also been emphasising that the Pakistan establishment take more concrete steps to end terrorism. As discussed in previous chapters, Pakistan is also a victim of terrorism. One event that compelled the Pakistani security establishment to act forcefully against this threat was the 6 December 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar. This attack brought a dramatic change to Pakistan's policy (of both the military and civilian authorities) against the home-based terrorists. Ahmed Rashid (2015) argues that there were some far-reaching consequences of this attack for the country. After the attack, Rawalpindi and Islamabad have a consensus at least on the need to tackle the homegrown terrorists operating from the tribal belt of Pakistan. Therefore, the Pakistani army intensified the already launched June 2014 military campaign to clear North Waziristan of terrorist elements. By 2015, army operations have extended in areas such as the Khyber and Kurram tribal agencies in the border regions (Rashid 2015). This policy succeeded in gaining results on the ground, in the form of considerably reduced frequency of terrorist attacks. Due to counter-insurgency in the tribal belt of Pakistan, the insurgents moved across the border into Afghanistan, increasing security instability in the latter. However, the Pakistani security establishment remains very selective in its approach towards dealing with the terrorist groups because of their strategic utility. In this process, terror groups operating from Punjab have been left untouched. These comprise the leading "extremist group in the country, Lashkar-e-Taiba, which has gone through several name changes and now ostensibly carries out charity work" (Rashid 2015). To punish the terror outfits, anti-terrorism military court benches were established in 2015, but they remain highly controversial due to alleged human rights violations. In 2015 alone, more than 300 people have been handed capital punishment. In the name of fighting terrorism, the military establishment has strengthened its position in Pakistan's public space. Rashid (2015) calls it a risky situation for the future prospects of Pakistan, as the army prolongs its writ not only in counter-insurgency but also in the legal system, watching and controlling the media, influencing the appointment of key officials as well as determining the country's foreign and security policy (Rashid 2015).

The recent aggressive policy of Pakistan, particularly in its tribal region, has also created a problematic humanitarian situation. Due to warfare between security forces and the militant groups, local people have had to leave their habitations. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in

August 2014, there were 714,548 registered internally displaced people (IDPs) due to the ongoing security operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The North Waziristan insurgency has further displaced approximately 500,000 people in Pakistan (UNHCR 2015). The number of IDPs till December 2015 would be even higher. Rashid (2015) states that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province alone has about 1.2 million IDPs still in need of rehabilitation (Rashid 2015). Apart from the real-politick of the situation, it is grave challenge for Pakistan to resettle these people or create suitable conditions for the return of these IDPs to their homes. At another level, this level of displacement may act as a major cause of extremist recruitment in the near future. The Mujahedeen fighters in the 1980s and the Taliban in 1990s recruited in the similar refugee and displacement camps around the Durand Line. Unfortunately, the state-centric politics has neglected the plight of IDPs from the larger debate of Af-Pak. This research too, in keeping with its focus on strategic concerns, is more centred on terrorism, geopolitics and strategic interest of particular states rather than the issue of human displacement. Apart from the issue of displaced families, the situation has not changed much in Pakistan. According to *IntelCenter's* list of "Top 10 Most Dangerous Countries," Pakistan was placed as the world's eighth most dangerous country.²⁴ This has negatively effected the prospects of financial investment, tourism and other related activities.

A peaceful resolution to the Af-Pak crisis cannot be achieved unless mutually trustworthy and cooperative relationship is established between Pakistan and Afghanistan, changing the current scenario of mistrust. This mistrust is a barrier for any successful reconciliation process. The origin of this mistrust is a historical legacy that goes back to the formation of Pakistan in 1947, and is reciprocated in both countries. Afghan public opinion is highly suspicious of any reconciliation efforts with Taliban carried out through Pakistan. According to Barnett R. Rubin (2015), this scepticism is because Pakistan has long treated Afghanistan as a client state (Rubin 2015). The Afghan public opinion has remained anti-Pakistan even in recent times when President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani started the talks with Pakistan. Rubin (2015) also endorses the impression that the Afghan President is taking a risk by proposing to improve Afghanistan's antagonistic relations with Pakistan on the hope of peace in return. In the

²⁴ For more see -IntelCenter website, <http://intelcenter.com/reports/charts/cti/>, [Online: Web] Accessed 17 December 2015.

aftermath of huge protests in Afghanistan after the killing of half a dozen Hazaras, some analysts argued that the protesters were conveying to President Ghani that Afghanistan should change its course instead of gambling on Pakistan's sincerity (Swami, 16 November 2015). Under the given tense situations, there is no possibility of any negotiation. The key negotiation parties; the Kabul Government and Taliban are engaged with each other in a war-like situation. Moeed Yusuf (2015) rightly states that "there is one underlying issue that need to be addressed for the peace and reconciliation process; how do levels of violence come down?" (Yusuf 2015). The sudden revelation of the death of Taliban leader Mullah Omar and the war of succession within Taliban has made the situation even more complicated. For the first time in 20 years, the Taliban are without a supreme leader, highlighting that this would have a powerful impact on the movement. Taliban is bound to transform regarding policy, integrity and tactical moves. However, there is a vulnerability; if the Taliban fragments into diverse branches than reconciliation would become even more challenging (The Express Tribune, 23 August 2015).

A survey conducted by *The Asia Foundation* (2015) to gauge public opinion suggests that overall optimism has decreased among the Afghan people as compared to 2014. The survey states that there is a rising concern over insecurity and a struggling economy within the Afghan people. According to this survey, most frequently mentioned national problem is insecurity (42.7%), up from 34.1% in 2014 and at its highest level since 2007, while the most frequently cited local level problem is unemployment (31.2%) (The Asia Foundation 2015). According to Rashid, the Afghan government's credibility with its people has fallen as it lost more countryside regions to the Taliban in 2015 (Rashid 10 December 2015). This political uncertainty has a negative impact over the economic sector as well. Due to political uncertainty, Afghanistan is far from reaching its true potential in the economic sector, as promised by the revival of the historic 'silk route'. This fact was recognised by The World Bank as well, when its Vice-President for South Asia Region, Annette Dixon stated that "we need to accept that the transition process has affected Afghanistan much more severely and its economic growth is weakening and fiscal management to be difficult" (Dixon 2015). According to the World Bank, over one-third of the Afghan population lives below the poverty line and over half is vulnerable. The recent household survey identifies that

poverty has increased during the transition process, mainly due to less employment prospects (Dixon 2015).

There are certain positive developments as well. As Rubin (2015) argues, perhaps it is the first time that there is a more favourable regional environment than ever before. There is positive change between Pakistan and Afghanistan at least among the political elite after Ghani become president. The US-Iran rapprochement has positively improved the region dynamics that allowed Tehran to work with Washington as far as the Afghanistan issue is concerned. Most noticeable change include the anti-government protests of November 2015, witnessing “tens of thousands of women, children and men, marching in the largest mass demonstrations Afghanistan has ever seen” (Swami 2015). Swami (2015) characterised it as “something strange in a new Afghanistan that is rising from the fields where the Taliban soaked in blood” (Swami 2015). These protesters were angry with the Taliban and Islamic State for the beheading of seven Hazaras, including two women and a child. This was seen as the biggest show of anger against theocratic fascism led by the social media-inspired youth (Swami 2015). On the issue of these particular protests, Amrullah Saleh, a former intelligence chief who is now an opposition politician says that

We see the emergence of a new society in Afghanistan... There are a number of reasons for this: education, economic opportunity, the fear that the Taliban might take power again. The emergence of a national media, as well as digital platforms, have breathed life into a genuinely pan-Afghan identity (Swami: 16 November 2015).

At the end of 2015, the larger strategic and security scenario in the Af-Pak region is not encouraging. However, one important understanding to have emerged amongst all important actors is that a political solution is the only workable formula. Therefore, a dialogue process continues to be supported although with frequent interruptions. Nevertheless, Afghanistan is a unique case where the parties in the negotiations are still fighting. Hence, it is almost impossible to predict what would be the outcome of this process.

6.3- Post-2014, Most Probable Scenarios in Af-Pak²⁵

²⁵Here the inspiration to survey the most probable scenarios has been taken from the article “A guide to Afghanistan in four scenarios” by Shanthie Mariet D’Souza, *The Hindu*, 12 June 2013.

Post-2014 technically indicates an infinite period, but for the purpose of this thesis a one-year period has been surveyed. This period recognises 2014 as a milestone when the security of the state has largely been handed to the Afghans, although there continue to be some exceptions where NATO helps Afghan security forces to counter larger threats. The Taliban uprising had changed the proposed NATO departure mission for the immediate future, still 2014 was the year when the political and military transition happened. 2014 is significant because Afghanistan was expected to sustain without external support or interference, and protect its sovereignty. Therefore, this section attempts at imagining probable scenarios in the one-year period till end of 2015. These scenarios could also be the basis for India's future engagement in Af-Pak.

6.3.1- Status Quo or Low-Intensity Civil War

The existing situation in Afghanistan is no less than a low-intensity civil war. There is a possibility of this situation sustaining for coming few years. In such a scenario, peace talks and insurgency will continue. The rationale for this hypothesis is driven by the fact that there is a wide gap between the goals and objectives of both; Taliban and the Afghan government (Masood 2015). It seems unrealistic that Taliban will be a part of the current government and accept the current constitution. Instead of Taliban, it would be more unacceptable to the non-Pashtun groups who are predominately part of government and security establishment.

The other problem is regarding the Taliban's inconsistency. It is clear that Taliban is not a cohesive entity and there are wide differences between diverse groups and cadres. In a similar manner, the Afghan government itself is a victim of paralysis due to internal power struggles between President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah (Masood 2015). There was no consent between these two key Afghan Government figures on the Cabinet Ministers just after the formation of the Unity Government. In this political scenario, a breakthrough will take considerable time and patience. Till then the current state of affairs will continue along with a low-intensity insurgency. It may be possible that some Taliban rank will become the part of the government through dialogue as happened during the Karzai regime, when few Taliban leader became the part of the government after the removal of the Taliban government from Kabul. However, it is doubtful that such a

development would pacify the Taliban movement. In the current circumstances, the most like scenario is that the Afghan security forces, with continuing assistance from the remaining NATO forces, would continue to fight to prevent the Taliban from capturing more cities. In this situation violence would continue, as is going on for decades, but would not worsen enough to threaten the Kabul government (D'Souza 2013). This situation will most likely persist in 2016.

6.3.2- Civil War²⁶

The Soviet departure from Afghanistan in 1989, left the government of Mohammad Najibullah in power in Kabul. Soon after the Soviet depart, Afghanistan had faced a civil war (1989-1994). This was the most destructive period in recent Afghan history. Within five years after the Soviet withdrawal, more than 100,000 Afghans had died and more than 600,000 had become refugees (Khalilzad 1995: 152). After the Soviet departure, Afghanistan ranked very low as a global priority because the US desire to defeat Soviet had been achieved and, more significantly, the Cold War had ended. When NATO announced its withdrawal plan, many were reminded of that history. It is logical to compare the Soviet departure to the proposed NATO withdrawal. The civil war occurred because there was a power vacuum after Soviet departure and, more importantly, the Mujahedeen or the warlords had not agreed to a power sharing arrangement despite several attempts by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Precisely similar situation exists in Afghanistan at present. In 1989, the Mujahedeen were fragmented and could not be convinced by Pakistan, similar to the present day Taliban and other anti-government militias. Pakistan has made several attempts to bring the Taliban and other groups to the negotiations; they even signed the Peshawar and Islamabad Accords

²⁶In some of the literature, civil war is recognised when fighting falls below a certain benchmark such as less than 1000 battle death per year in five consecutive years. But it is not a widely accepted norm. For more see-Badiey, Naseem (2014), *The State of Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, James Curry, US. Here the term 'civil war' is used to signify extreme violence by the government forces, anti-government forces or the resistance groups for political control through war which ultimately goes against its own population. It is very hard to distinguish between different kinds of political violence. There is not very clear definition or no consensus on the measurement of civil war (Sambanis 2004:814). But here the term civil war indicates a particular period of 1989-1994, where in a government existed in Kabul, but the rest of the country was divided between different groups which were fighting to capture power in Kabul. But no one could win, because of complex nature of power. For more see- Sambanis, Nicholas (2004), "What Is Civil War?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(60): 814-858.

to form an Interim Afghan Government, but it did not work. Thus, reviewing history, it can be argued that there is a similar probability of civil war in Af-Pak.

In addition, if the Afghan government further weakens due to an internal political tussle between Karzai and Abdulla or due to further capture of territory by Taliban, then a Civil War would be even more likely. Unfortunately, there has been no attempt to resolve the bitterness between the diverse ethnic groups. Under such circumstances, it cannot be imagined that the Taliban would surrender arms (Masood 2015). Moreover, the ‘culture of guns’ still exists, and is causing insecurity in areas that were once safe and secure a few years back (Rahim and Bruton 2015). The violence in the countryside is not only between the anti-government forces and the ANSF, but also between different others groups known as “gangs of bandits” which are causing havoc in parts of Afghanistan. According to Zakia Sangeen, a member of parliament for Parwan province, “It looks like a battlefield when you visit some of the villages,...Everyone carries around their weapons, even farmers on their fields carry AK-47s” (Rahim and Bruton 2015). The gun culture is so predominant in Afghanistan that the Ghani government was forced to impose a ban on toy guns to curb the culture of violence. The Afghan government wants to decrease the influence of such toys on vulnerable young minds (The Guardian 2015). The NATO and Afghan administration played a major role in promoting the already serious situation of weaponization of Afghanistan instead of countering it. The Afghan government under Karzai had taken help from warlords to maintain order and its legitimacy. Even the NATO used these warlords to counter the Taliban. (Jalalzai 2011). The warlords’ private military networks seem the biggest challenge to the country’s reintegration as an operational state. Even the criminals have their soldiers that also affect the state’s potential to maintain peace (Jalalzai 2011). In case of large-scale territorial conflict, these warlords and criminal gangs could start fighting for control of their areas, leading to a full-fledged civil war. Within this debate, Ahmed Rashid (16 December 2015) portrays a very pessimistic future,

Afghanistan is probably worse off today than when foreign forces intervened in 2001...Afghanistan is now regarded by most western leaders as an old problem, one that dogged their predecessors, one that they don’t want to confront. But expect to hear more about Afghanistan over the next year, because a bad situation is turning much worse (Rashid: 16 December 2015).

The emergence of ISIS has been a new attraction for the global *ihadists*. The Af-Pak region is a fertile recruiting ground for the ISIS in the backdrop of Osama bin Laden's death and the inability of Ayman al-Zawahiri to maintain a fully functional al-Qaeda organisation. Renowned Af-Pak analyst Rahimullah Yusufzai (2015a) argues that Afghan and Pakistani Taliban have established the Khorasan unit of the ISIS and even captured a few districts in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province (Yusufzai 2015a). It may create further complications in Af-Pak if the ISIS would replace al-Qaeda and lead Afghanistan to a civil war. Such extreme situation can arise in the event of the current government losing its credibility due to a strong rivalry between the President and CEO and the Taliban gaining most of the Afghan terrain. This fear has engaged the powerful warlords and power brokers to call for regime change by different means. In this situation, Afghan society could fracture along ethnic and tribal lines with regional powers assisting their proxies. (D'Souza 2013). For the time being it is not probable, but the scenario may occur in coming 2-3 years if the low-intensity war continues.

6.3.3- Afghanistan would Emerge from the Debris

Lyse Doucet (2014) once appropriately wrote, "Optimism, not a word you have heard a lot in Afghanistan..." (Doucet 2014). Although she specifically used these words to cite a particular event in Afghan history. Nevertheless, there are some positive signs emerging from Afghanistan, which promise a stable future ahead. It has been discussed extensively that Afghanistan is going through a transition period. It is very common to observe such kind of instability in any infant democracy. The radical social change that has occurred in last fourteen years in the wake of NATO-Taliban debate should not be ignored. There has been a rise of a new generation in these fourteen years, which has received technical and Western education through the newly established school, colleges and universities. They have seen a new environment where amenities of Western-inspired life has attracted them in diverse capacity. This trend has developed in urban centres like Kabul, where incomes are higher than in the rest of the country and exposure to Western ideas and styles is greater (Ayres 2013). More importantly, the minorities are in better condition than ever. The improvement in women's condition has been significant. These all sections would not support the undoing of the fourteen years progress in the socio-economic sector. As discussed earlier, there are demonstrations against the government's specific policies that signify that the political system has given space to the opposition. "This time, the generation that has come of

age in the last decade of international engagement have new weapons to hold their leaders to account” (Doucet 2014).

Despite the rivalry between Ghani and Abdullah, it is a sign of maturity of new Afghan political system where two rival ethnic leaders share power for the larger good. In this sense, the 2014-Presidential election was a historic transition. It is historic because, in the Afghan history, power has rarely transferred peacefully (Doucet 2014). Although, there was a months-long political crisis over 2014-Presidential election results, when the two powerful camps were adamant that they had won (Doucet 2014), but that kind of crisis exists in some very old democracies as well. After more the one year of election, the government is running smoothly. This acknowledges one the biggest success in terms of securing the future of Afghanistan. Voting in between the insurgency also seemed a historical achievement. Regardless of threats from the Taliban, seven million out of twelve million qualified voters cast their ballots (Mahdi 2014).

Against the common perception and official announcement of NATO withdrawal, it is now clear that NATO troops will remain in Afghanistan. In a recent move, NATO has agreed to keep about 12,000 troops in Afghanistan through 2016. There would be roughly 7,000 American troops and 5,000 from other NATO member states on the Resolute Support Mission that provides advice, training and assistance to Afghan security forces (Washington Post 2015). Further, NATO is reportedly pushing forward with a funding drive to help the country through 2020. These NATO forces would prevent Kabul from collapsing against the insurgency. Chinese resurgence on the Afghan front and its capacity to influence Pakistan for a workable formula is also positive development. In the recent times, it has also been observed that Pakistan and Afghanistan are eager to sort out their mutual problems. The positive pressure from Pakistani society on its government would be a dividend on the Af-Pak front.

Chinese proposals of financial aid and investment in the near future could be an important step towards stabilising the Af-Pak region. Unlike the US, none of the neighbouring countries have any serious concerns regarding Chinese presence in Afghanistan. All regional powers like Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Central Asian Republics have welcomed Beijing’s Afghanistan engagement. India would also like to see a stable Afghanistan even if China gains influence while doing so. Pakistan, since

2011, has been advising China to expand its profile in Afghanistan as a replacement to the US (Mehta 2014). After Ghani's first foreign visit to Beijing in 2014, China appointed its special envoy for Af-Pak. China has also signed the "Afghanistan-China Deepening Strategic and Cooperative Partnership," that enhanced Beijing's economic investment as well as enlarged its security assistance (Mehta 2014). China has promised US \$327 million contribution over three years, in addition to US \$200 million given earlier. The larger logic is that China might have replaced NATO to fill the vacuum created by the latter's decline.

At the same time, the dialogue process is going on. Reconciliation is a long drawn out process which may work, but would need some time to implement. In a positive move, the self-claimed new supreme commander of Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, did not rule out the possibility of a peace dialogue with the Afghan government (Yusufzai 2015b). The rising effect of the ISIS in the region should also contribute towards encouraging the Taliban to talk with the Afghan government (Masood 2015). It may be possible that following a negotiated political settlement, a particular group of the Taliban could return to Afghanistan under a power-sharing plan (D'Souza 2013). In this arrangement, Taliban might be allowed to govern some key provinces as well as retaining some influence in the national government. Like the Nepalese Maoist rebels who had fought for an almost decade with the government in Kathmandu and later through reconciliation became the part of the government, the Taliban might also choose to share power, but this process will take a long time to transform into a reality.

6.4- Post-2014 India's Options

At 2014, after the new administration's take over in New Delhi and Kabul, relations has gone into a cold phase. India has been very low profile by not sending to its External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul in September 2015. While other regional powers Iran sent its cabinet minister and Pakistan its NSA in this foreign minister-level conference. Ironically, India and Afghanistan have held only one meeting of the Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) in 2012, since Karzai and Singh signed the historic Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2011 (Haidar 2015). It had been reported by *The Hindu* through an Afghan official, that Afghanistan has made four requests since January 2014

for SPC but India has not responded positively. Indian officials in New Delhi confirmed they had received “at least two to three written requests, and several oral requests had been raised as well” (Haidar 2015). It shows the trust deficit between these two new administrations post-2014. Apart from trust deficit, it was the change of events which restrained India from engaging actively. The Indo-Afghan Strategic Agreement (2011) placed India in a security role post-2014, but US unwillingness to irritate Pakistan led New Delhi to prevent any significant development. The entry of Ghani made the situation distinct from India in comparison to that of Karzai (Sood 2015a). Former Indian diplomat Shyam Saran (2015) argues that Ghani was led to believe by the US and China that compromise a lead role in Pakistan would improve the prospects of peace and economic recovery in his country. Therefore, Ghani was convinced by these two powers that a shift away from India was a valuable price to pay (Saran 2015). As far as the post-2014 scenario is concerned, the larger picture is not clear where India can operate under a very concrete doctrine. From the above discussed three larger scenarios, India has to make its policy by observing the ground conditions. But there must be flexibility regarding India’s options in Af-Pak. There are diverse opinions regarding India’s course of action on the Af-Pak front. Two predominate opinions that are circulating in New Delhi are the following-

6.4.1- India’s Aggressive Option: Forward School

Much has been said about the legacy of the British Raj and its two competing schools-forward and masterly inactivity school. The forward or Bombay school has favoured an expansionist policy on India’s north-west frontier to reduce any threat. In the post-2014 scenario, there is one group of Indian analysts and the officials who favoured India’s aggressive foreign policy engagement in the Af-Pak region. They propagate that India should take an advantage of Pakistan’s weakness in Afghanistan. They say that India should cultivate relations with those Taliban’s leaders who have bitter relations with Pakistan. As Rahul Roy-Chaudhury (2011:244-45) argue, if India is to maintain a say in the political future of Afghanistan, or to escape being forced from the country, it needs to reach out silently to Taliban’s Quetta *Shura* and other selected militant groups, to assess views towards India. Though once India attempted to reach out to some Taliban as discussed in previous chapter but it didn’t work out. Once Taliban had also given the signal that they might talk with India. In June 2012, in an unexpected way, Taliban appreciated India’s stand on Afghanistan by saying that India has done well to

resist US calls for greater involvement in Afghanistan (Miglani 2012). Taliban's website wrote with reference of the then US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta's New Delhi visit to encourage India to take a more active role in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO troops. Taliban was happy with the media reports that India refused Panetta's appeal. Taliban also said that they won't let Afghanistan be used as a base against another state, addressing doubts in New Delhi that Pakistan-based anti-India militants may become more inspired if the Taliban return to power (Miglani 2012). Whatever the case was, New Delhi is not very comfortable in talking with Taliban. Even though officially India has recognised the peace process between Taliban and the Kabul government. But it seems Indian security officials and commentators do not appear happy with this idea. They are raising the validity and sustainability of reconciliation process. As Suhasini Haidar (2015) writes officials in Delhi and Kabul have told *The Hindu* that India is far from comfortable with the "direction the talks are taking," saying that "all red lines have been violated so far" (Haidar 2015). The term 'red line' was given by Karzai in 2010 as a framework for reconciliation. It means that the talk should be an 'Afghan-owned, Afghan-led' process and endorse the Afghan constitution. It was a pre-condition for talks that had also been recognised by the Indian government led by Singh. Now Indian officers cited the 'red line' to show their anxiety as the talk is facilitated by the Pakistani government and with senior ISI officials sitting there. Therefore, Indian officials said it was "far from Afghan-owned, these talks seem to be ISI-controlled and ISI-led," (Haidar 2015).

There have been growing signs that the Taliban leadership is seriously fragmented into two hostile groups. Some Indian strategic commentators like Nirupama Subramanian (2015), believe that there is emerging a division between the Afghan-Taliban leadership regarding the reconciliation talk after the announcement of Mullah Omar's death. In mid-2015, a new round of talks has begun under the new Afghan administration. In this phase Islamabad and Beijing have emerged as "guarantors" and play a "constructive" role in the Afghan peace process (Subramanian 2015). As it was a new initiative, the changed Taliban leaderships have been asked to join. In this process, these negotiations excluded those Taliban representatives with whom the US had a connection in 2011-12 under the much talked about Doha round. It was believed that the leadership based in Doha were seen as more "uncompromising and independent-minded, which did not endear them to Pakistan" (Subramanian 2015). Therefore, the Doha group has its

resentment for not being inviting to the said talks. After Mullah Omar's death, the Taliban divisions are clearly reflected in the succession fight. Within different groups of Taliban, it would be a challenging job to reach an agreement. One can easily understand the Pakistani dilemma to unite all groups for a workable solution. Thus at the moment, when the second round of talks has begun after months of pause in December 2015, it is extremely difficult to predict its outcome. The continuous attacks in Afghanistan on the eve of dialogue have revealed deeper factionalism within the Taliban. There are many dissatisfied Taliban commanders who feel bitter about Pakistan's interference like Mullah Baradar, who was detained by Pakistan in 2010 (Subramanian, 31 Jul 2015). It may appear promising to those Indian commentators who favoured that New Delhi might engage with Taliban. According to Subramanian (2015), it is likely that India might see the factionalism as an opportunity to get back in the Afghan game. This argument has its validity because New Delhi found itself isolated post-2014 in Kabul. There is a view that in the post-Omar circumstances if the divisions within Taliban grow more, it might provide opportunities for New Delhi to engage with independent-minded factions (Subramanian, 31 Jul 2015). But one cannot forget the geography as a constraint in India's choice to counter Pakistan through Taliban. According to Saran (2015) trusting Pakistan would not work for any peace in Afghanistan because Pakistan has lost its control over Taliban. Therefore, Pakistan has hidden the death of Mullah Omar's for a long time otherwise, its capacity to bargain would have declined. Now Pakistan has limited and declining influence over a dividing Taliban. In this scenario, it would be possible that disappointed with Pakistan, the Kabul government can escape from reconciliation. Here Saran (2015) wants India should engage with Kabul at the highest level (Saran 2015). Another Indian former diplomat M. K. Bhadrakumar (2015) agreed with Saran's argument saying that the failure in reconciliation is expected since Pakistan was never really sincere about the peace talks. Bhadrakumar stated that "Saran has presented a fairly accurate picture of the prevailing mood within the Indian foreign and security policy establishment" (Bhadrakumar 2015). There is one factor that make this proposal a distance dream; that is the attitude of the current Indian government that ignored Afghanistan in its foreign policy priorities till the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 December 2015 visit to Kabul. Although in his visit Modi has not taken any unique steps in case of India's Afghan policy. India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval is one important official in the Indian establishment who believes morality doesn't have any role in the

statecraft. His aggressive posture and principles might be considered on that measure. He did not “hesitate to roll up his sleeves and get into action” (Noorani 2015). Doval asserts that-

Pakistan is a neighbour which continues to bleed us. What if we get highly vulnerable domestic situation?”.... Defining India’s defensive-offense approach, he said that, “We start working on the vulnerabilities of Pakistan. It can be economic, it can be internal, it can be political; it can be international isolation, defeating their policies in Afghanistan, making it difficult for them to manage internal political lands security balance. It can be anything (Noorani 2015).

It would never be simple to replace Pakistan which has a 2,250 miles border and decades old nurtured strategic relationship. Therefore, this option has very limited scope to be implemented in the near future by the Indian government.

6.4.2- Making Balance: Masterly Inactivity School

India’s post-2014 options in the Af-Pak are based on a realistic assumption. It appears that Indian policy maker realise the ground realities. It means they recognise the challenge of geography in the case of Afghanistan. New Delhi has to accept the geopolitical reality of the subcontinent, particularly the proximity of Pakistan with Afghanistan. Pakistani army and ISI have invested huge resources in Afghanistan. Throughout the years, Rawalpindi has maintained the relationship with the Taliban-Haqqani by playing a dual game against the WOT. Pakistan’s Afghan policy was based on the assumption that after the NATO retreat, Islamabad would dominate Afghan affairs. New Delhi has to understand the Pakistani strategy. India has accepted that Pakistan will be the leading actor in any future settlement of the Afghan conflict. This fact has also been recognised by US-NATO, China, Russia and other powers.

Indian strategic analysis argues that in any peace settlement, Pakistan would make sure its “strategic depth” notion alive against India. According to C. Raja Mohan (2014), the notion of “strategic depth” did not originate in the Pakistani army but is a legacy of the British Raj. When British India extended up to the Indus, the advocates of a “forward policy” suggested that Calcutta (Kolkata) must look beyond the natural riverine border, seek influence in the tribal areas, and make Afghanistan a strategic buffer against European opponents (Mohan 2014). As discussed the Raj had paid a huge price

regarding Anglo-Afghan wars for this aspiration. Pakistan's security establishment accepted this desire as in toto after partition. Like British India, Rawalpindi believes Pakistan's security needs a puppet regime in Kabul. Pakistan, as the successor state on the north-western frontier, inherited the same geography, but not the vast resources that the Raj had. According to Mohan (2014) "partition, therefore, has given Islamabad much power to disrupt Afghanistan, but not enough to construct a stable order. This tragic story of the Great Game is unlikely to change..." (Mohan 2014). Whatever the consequence of Afghanistan-Pakistan settlement, India has to remain a silent observer. It means if Islamabad pursues the forward policy as it is due to its geographical advantage, then New Delhi has to search for alternatives. Mohan (2014) said that India should choose the course of "masterly inactivity" in these conditions. As discussed earlier, under the influence of the 'masterly inactivity' school, Lawrence had not recognised any favourite in the successor fight between Dost Mohammed Khan's sons. Lawrence in 1868 and his successors Mayo and Northbrook realised that since all threats were distant and chimerical, internal military consolidation and a refusal to participate in trans-frontier diplomacy were the intelligent doctrines. According to Mohan (2014), "masterly inactivity" was certainly not about inaction, as its name suggests. It was about the virtues of "strategic patience" (Mohan 2014). Therefore, rather than being inactive, India should vigil and consolidate itself for any possible threat from the northwestern front. Mohan suggests India should follow the 'masterly inactivity' towards Afghanistan at the current juncture because New Delhi is in no position to compete with Islamabad in Afghanistan. India cannot replace NATO, although China has been trying to replace NATO. Therefore, India must welcome the current dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan. India's good relations with Pakistan would help in this regard where both countries can share their concern through others if they have to maintain communication (Mohan 2014). Therefore, the most appropriate and safe strategy on the Af-Pak front is to acknowledge the danger of being pro-active. In this situation, India must improve its bilateral relations with both Kabul and Islamabad. India should engage through development cooperation that largely benefited the Afghan population but also take Islamabad into confidence.

6.5- India's Trilateral Alliance Strategy in Af-Pak

In the given condition, when it has acknowledged that Pakistan has a genuine role in Afghan settlement, New Delhi's unilateral approach failed. Therefore, beyond bilateralism would be a workable option for India's Af-Pak policy. Yet, the India-Afghan relationship is not a simple bilateral engagement (Pattanaik 2012:569). Pakistan will always be a factor. The logic of going beyond bilateralism is that India alone cannot influence its surroundings in the given circumstances. In the existing context of strategic ambiguity, India has no option but to strengthen its multiple arrangements with regional states. Therefore, multilateralism seems an opportunity which may work in Af-Pak. According to A. Z. Hilali (2001), since independence, New Delhi has shown a continuing preference for bilateral as opposed to multilateral initiatives, at both global and regional levels. Indian policy makers for a long time thought that "bilateral advantages outweigh any gains that might be derived from dealing with neighbours, particularly Pakistan, multilaterally" (Hilali 2001:741). Andrew Latham (1998) defines India's approaches toward multilateralism as "thinking unilaterally, pursuing issues bilaterally, and posturing multilaterally" (Latham 1998:145). India's apathy for multilateralism has been reasonable historically where New Delhi has failed to take a leadership role in the Non-Aligned Movement. The second reason to avoid multilateralism according to Latham (1998) is the Indian self-perception that India is a global rather than a regional power. But in the last decade, this perception has changed because of the changing global politics. India is utilising multilateralism as a tool in trade and climate dialogues. Here in the case of Af-Pak, Indian strategic communities find multilateralism as an effective instrument in the background of post-2014 scenario. New Delhi during the Afghan civil war or in its aftermath had worked closely with Moscow and Tehran to manage its influence in Afghanistan by helping Northern Alliance. Indian officials also indicated its frankness to engage in multi-sectorial trilateral projects with other partners (Norfolk 2012). Through this approach, India could sustain its presence in Afghanistan after 2014 when Taliban may well be a part of the government in Kabul. This part is an attempt to evaluate the possibilities of following three hypotheses. The reason to arrange particular states in the following alliance are driven by their objective and historical role in the region.

6.5.1- US-India-Pakistan Alliance

The US is still the most important power in the region and beyond. By keeping almost ten thousand NATO troops in Afghanistan, Washington has given the signal that it is not going to muddle the decade-old investment in the region. Therefore, US with its cultivated links would remain for a long time. It might be possible the new administration would be more aggressive after Obama's departure from the White House. But for the time being the US is there, and its mighty air power and troops are helping the Kabul government survive. Even the Kabul administration forced Obama to keep more troops. Many in Washington, who have worked with the Afghans over the past several years, were opposed to the US pulling back just when it had an Afghan leader Ghani, who proved to be a willing partner (Rosenberg 2015). The new Afghan administration willingly wants help from US and its NATO partners. The US military has repeatedly marched in most of 2015 to support Afghan armies fighting against the Taliban by launching airstrikes. That assistance seems very vital for ANSF in fighting against the Taliban to stop them from capturing the strategic landscape, despite Obama's announcement that the US war in Afghanistan had ended (Rosenberg 2015).

The US has a great say in Pakistan because of its economic assistance despite deteriorating relations in the wake of NATO combat withdrawal. Pakistan's current army Chief General Raheel Sharif in his November 2015 visit to the US alleged being pressurised by the Pentagon to restart the peace process in Afghanistan (Rubab 2015). That is the reason, after his return from the US a new process has started with Afghanistan in the background of the 'Heart of Asia' conference. This is also true in the case of India, where Washington's pressure worked and New Delhi restarted composite dialogue process with Islamabad. Here the basic argument is that the US can board India-Pakistan on the issue of Afghanistan. There is an assumption that Pakistan and India are playing the new game in Afghanistan for their influence.

The challenge for the US for the last thirteen years was to convince both India and Pakistan that their interest is the same as that of the US, peace and stability in Afghanistan. It is the failure on Washington's part that it has failed to do so. The simple logic is that the rivalry is so structured between New Delhi and Islamabad that no one can persuade them that a stable and peaceful Afghanistan will be a win-win situation for them. There might also be some fault in the Western engagement in the region where

they undermined that a region problem required a regional solution. Counterinsurgency cannot bring peace and reconstruct any society or state for that matter. New Delhi and the Washington have faced many similar security challenges like violent extremism and terrorism to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to regional instability. The US and India for the last decade have been cooperating in defence and also consult and share views on all major regional and international security developments (Panetta 2012). Therefore, they do not need any special framework to work in Afghanistan. It seems very natural for both them to work together.

Alyssa Ayres (2015) argues that Washington should encourage Indian efforts to assist Afghanistan in areas of Indian expertise like democracy, economy, and civilian security. India can help to prevent destabilisation in Afghanistan by helping in other fields. Ayres (2015) underscore that in this case Pakistan may object but “Washington should make it clear to Islamabad that Indian support for Afghanistan's stability- especially without ‘boots on the ground’- poses no threat to Pakistani interests and should not be disrupted” (Ayres 2015). Writing ‘Policy Innovation Memorandum’ for the Council on Foreign Relations, Ayres (2015) maintains that sensible proposals for Indian partnership in Afghanistan without military engagement on the ground should not be subject to a Pakistani veto. She gives a unique but practical solution that reduced one suspicion on other activities by saying that “to alleviate Pakistani anxieties, the United States should encourage New Delhi and Kabul to be transparent with Islamabad on their joint efforts” (Ayres 2015). She further writes India has no problem with the Chinese presence in Afghanistan but is uncomfortable with China-Pakistan alliance in Afghanistan (Ayres 2015). Post-2014 Af-Pak, there is a great possibility for both US and India to cooperate on several issues. Both want a sovereign, independent, and functional Afghan government that prevents terrorist groups from using its territory to train and base attacks both in the region and around the world. Indo-US interests also converge in transforming Afghanistan into as a trade and transit hub. Both would like to see a stable Pakistan that prevents militant groups from operating within its territory and seeks economic and political cooperation with its neighbours²⁷. India and the US

²⁷C. Raja Mohan, Caroline Wadhams, Wilson John, Aryaman Bhatnagar, Daniel Rubin, and Peter Juul (2013), *Toward Convergence: An Agenda for U.S.-India Cooperation in Afghanistan*, May 2013, Center for American Progress, [Online: Web], Accessed on 12 November 2015, URL- <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/IndiaAfghanistanReport-INTRO.pdf>

want a political settlement of the Af-Pak problem at this juncture. It is a challenging task to assure Pakistan that these desired outcomes are also very significant for the Pakistani people. As stated in *Dawn*, the most important development, and positive in character, is the emergence of a national consensus on terrorism in Pakistan (Dawn: 07 Jan 2015). After the Peshawar massacre of innocent students and teachers, there is consent that WOT is also 'our war'. Therefore, in the recent months, Pakistan's attitude towards terrorism has changed. They are operating against some terrorist groups. It recognised the fact the terrorism as a tool of state policy should be stopped. More importantly, the Pakistani civil society is more critical to military establishment to use terror outfit as the part of state policy.

It is an encouraging signal for India and US to take Pakistan on board to settle the issue. If China is a willing partner in this process, then India and US must welcome it because China has the resources and valid reasons to settle the Afghan problem. China's intentions as discussed are to prevent extremist ideology into its northwestern province and to fulfil its energy appetite by making an alternative route for Malacca Strait. But India must avoid itself from becoming a playfield between the US and China for Washington's Pivot Strategy. New Delhi must balance its interests in Afghanistan and maintain its strategic autonomy. In any case cooperating with the US does not guarantee support to US "rebalancing" toward the Asia-Pacific region or more specifically towards China (Panetta 2012).

However, there is concern in some quarters that an outgoing Obama administration would make some compromise with Pakistan on the Afghan front (Sood 2015b). This compromise would be a danger for India's security calculation. The recent negotiations over a possible US-Pakistan nuclear deal recall some Indian analysts of the 1980s when the Reagan administration deliberately overlooked Pakistan's nuclear activities for the success of the Afghan mission against the Soviet Union (Sood 2015b, Pant 2014). If these speculations convert into reality, it may be a setback for the Indian security establishment because then Pakistan somehow comes at parity with India. But it is too early to come to any conclusion even when there is speculation. Nevertheless, there is the possibility that the US might accept some of Islamabad's demands for an Afghan settlement before the end of Obama's tenure. It seems one of the challenging hypotheses as for considering that India and Pakistan would go together in Afghanistan. That would be the situation where not only Afghan peace would be restored but India-

Pakistan can benefit enormously from this proposal. As discussed in the previous chapters that Pakistan's dual game in Afghan front largely motivated through its desire to achieve "strategic depth" against arch-rival India. Therefore, if Indo-Pak would go together, then they gain enormous economic advantage for their people. But looking the six decades of enmity and the inherent security dilemma make this hypothesis less probable. This problem is present in both countries but in different ways. Husain Haqqani (2015), Pakistan's former ambassador to the US writes that Pakistan's security establishment has been clinging to a flawed concept of parity with India. In this process, Rawalpindi ignored changes in the global atmosphere and accepted the heavy price of internal weakness to project itself as India's equal (Haqqani 2015). Haqqani accepts the prevailing notion in Pakistani security establishment that "in any case, Pakistan is India's rival in real terms only as much as Belgium could rival France or Germany and Vietnam could hope to be on a par with China" (Haqqani 2015). The role of the US by giving military utility has been very supportive to maintain the view that Islamabad could have parity with New Delhi. In a prepared remark submitted ahead of a Congressional hearing on 'Foreign Affairs', Haqqani (2015) said competition with India remains the principal consideration in Pakistan's foreign and internal policies.

By aiding Pakistan over the years- some \$40 billion since 1950, the U.S. has fed Pakistan's delusion of being India's regional military equal. Seeking security against a much larger neighbour is a rational objective but seeking parity with it on a constant basis is not (The Hindu, 8 December 2015).

Still the most important factor which determines Pakistan's behaviour in Afghanistan is India. Half of the time Pakistani generals and diplomats look at Afghanistan through an Indian prism (Ayaz 2015). As Amir (2015) wrote Pakistan will not get their Afghan focus right unless they free themselves from this 'India-centrism' because Afghanistan always had an Indian connection and will have one in future. According to Amir (2015), "we should be mature and confident enough not to let this unduly bother us" (Amir 2015). Therefore, US-India-Pakistan trilateral alliance is the distinct dream to make a workable in Afghan front, in the absence of which Indo-Pak peace cannot be restored. Even so this approach would remain a priority by given the fact that all three states of this alliance have a great stake in Afghanistan. They have invested in Afghanistan over the years. For New Delhi and Islamabad it would be unconventional but a great initiative to redefine their relations.

6.5.2- China-India-Pakistan Alliance

In the background of the US combat withdrawal from Afghanistan, its engagement in Iraq and Syria, the policy shift from that of a pivot in Asia to ‘rebalancing of forces’ in the Indo-Pacific, has greatly weakened the image of the US (Narayanan 2014). Most Asian states will find US words less reliable. Alternatively, they find China a reliable option (Narayanan 2014). Therefore, this sub-section explores India’s post-2014 engagement with China and Pakistan. It is a very unconventional approach that India, China and Pakistan can cooperate in Afghan front if Rawalpindi has no objections. India, China and Pakistan can go together which will ultimately help the regional economy. However, Pakistan and China are in a very predominant position on the issue of reconciliation in Afghanistan. Their strategic interests converge in Afghanistan. China before Afghanistan shared important strategic assets like weapons and other cooperation with Islamabad. Therefore, their cooperation in Afghanistan is the extension of their decade-long relations. But contrary to this India has hostile territorial relationships with both of them. More especially India’s larger security policies and weapon programme are determined by the threat perception of China and Pakistan. It is true in their case also. But China’s eye is on the greater goal to achieve the title of superpower for which it might integrate its neighbourhood. According to India’s third National Security Advisor (2005-2010) M. K. Narayanan (2014), “China will almost certainly continue to make every effort to enlarge its influence across Asia, and dominate its periphery”. Therefore, for Beijing, Afghanistan is a new area where it eagerly engaged in post-2014 situation after the passive of a decade.

China has made clear that it is not going to send its troops to fill the vacuum created by the NATO withdrawal. Beijing has promised to play a commercial role in rebuilding the country. It was announced in November 2015 by the Chinese Vice-President Li Yuanchao that Beijing would provide 500 million Yuan (US \$79 million) this year to build 10,000 residential apartments in the Kabul. Li further says that “China is willing to help Afghanistan formulate infrastructure plans to strengthen interconnectedness and intercommunication with surrounding countries,” (Martina and Harooni 2015 a). Beijing cannot actualise its ambitious interconnected and commercial project unless security situation improves around the Durand Line. Nevertheless, if somehow China could implement them, even then it would need a long period to harvest the advantages for said projects. But the biggest challenge remains the deteriorating security

environment in the region. Few years back China had shown interest in some infrastructure projects, but they are still in the pipeline because of the security environment. One such project was the construction of the Kabul-Jalalabad road project (106 km) which was taken by Chinese state own company around 2013 (Martina and Harooni 2015b). This project is delayed due to constant attacks over the workers who are building it. The Kabul-Jalalabad road project highlights for China just how complicated the Afghanistan situation can be. Another significant project is a giant copper mine that also remains unexploited and politicians are openly questioning Beijing's commitment. As *Reuters* reports, insurgents attacked the workers' camp several times at the start of the project. Therefore, work has stopped several times (Martina and Harooni 2015b). Beijing has also committed to building 1,500 megawatt Kunar hydropower plant and strengthening road and rail connections between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Reuters 10, Feb 2015).

As for Afghanistan, both India and China have common concerns like terrorism and stability. In a unique gesture, India and China have initiated first dialogue in Beijing in April 2013 on Afghanistan, agreeing to more closely coordinate in the lead up to the 2014 withdrawal of NATO forces (Krishnan 2013). In this particular meeting, both sides had endorsed their backing for an Afghan-led reconciliation process. Both sides had also agreed the Afghanistan issue concerns regional security and stability (Krishnan 2013). India and China have sizeable investments in Afghanistan which cannot bring returns in unstable condition. India and China both want to avoid any civil war or instability in post-2014 Afghanistan. However, China is working hard to start the negotiation process between Taliban and Kabul government that will help to operate them to ground these ambitious projects. China's diplomatic establishment has taken Pakistan into confidence in this regard. But the complexity of Taliban groups and Pakistani security establishment make this exercise a challenging task.

In the twenty-first century, China and India are the centres of world politics and the economic resurgence. They have shifted the balance of power from Atlantic to Asia. India-China is facing few similar threats as separatism or extremism, terrorism and environment decay. The rise of ISIS is also a challenge to their security. "Terrorist dynamic in the Asian region" is threatened for all China-Pakistan and India (Narayanan 2014). The ISIS would be an equal threat to China as for other two. In the first half of December 2015, ISIS released a new video in Mandarin Chinese and urged Muslims to

“wake up” and take up arms to “rebel” in accordance with Allah’s commands (Tiezzi 2015). It was a rare event in the recent years giving a clear signal to Beijing that terrorism would be a potential threat to it. Instability or low-intensity civil war in Afghanistan would be a remedy for the ISIS to recruit and operate in the region from Afghanistan. The best technique to counter any tentative threat is to make Afghanistan a stable state by helping at this crucial juncture. Therefore, Beijing and New Delhi can work together with Islamabad for a peaceful Afghanistan.

Indo-China working together in Af-Pak is unlikely. It would be a model to cooperate in their neighbourhood and beyond. But their vision and priority have little convergence or space that would make them to work together on the Afghan front. Both have a different vision regarding their future. It will depend on the condition of Af-Pak in near future. Essentially Beijing and New Delhi have different approaches to Asian security and regional stability (Narayanan 2014). Their approaches toward the regional as explained Narayanan-

China is accepted as a power economically, but it is also perceived by many Asian nations today as seeking to establish its strategic hegemony over the entire region and particularly in its periphery. In contrast, India’s priorities appear more limited, largely restricted to maintaining its strategic autonomy even while trying to sustain higher economic growth. Its preference is for multilateral pluralist groupings and economic cooperation, rather than for a policy based on power relations (Narayanan 2014).

No one can precisely predict the future of the Af-Pak region. The status of Indo-China relations has a potential to grow positively in near future because of the stake of billions of people on both sides. Although there are border issues and certain, inherent insecurity, even then not a single bullet has fired between them in last few decades. Despite different world views and geopolitical interest both governments are continuously engaging with each other. India-China bilateral trade for 2014 was raised at US \$70.25 billion²⁸. When both states have a trade of enormous volume, they have to remain friendly with each other. In this background it seems they have a potential to work together in Afghanistan. As Narayanan (2014) observes several Asian strategic experts recommend that India should resist the temptation to be a part of US-led efforts to contain China; instead it should forge closer ties with Beijing and ensure proper

²⁸See-Embassy of India, Beijing, China, “Economic and Trade Relations”, [Online: Web] Accessed 18 December 2015, <http://www.indianembassy.org.cn/DynamicContent.aspx?MenuId=97&SubMenuId=0>

management of its border tensions. This kind of voice has also emerged from Beijing itself as Chinese State Counsellor PRC, Yang Jiechi, observed that the development of the China-India strategic and cooperative partnership serves the fundamental interests of the two countries...and the two countries must work to increase strategic mutual trust (Narayanan 2014).

6.5.3- Russia-India-Iran-Alliance in Afghanistan

This proposed alliance will have a significant role if Afghanistan has a civil war. Russia, India and Iran were part of a similar alliance during the Afghan civil war when they supported the Northern Alliance, though the Northern Alliance has split and virtually vanished as an entity (Pattnaik 2012:580). Now most of the former Alliance commanders became part of the establishment. Russia, India and Iran have few common interests as a stable Afghan state, appropriate representation of ethnic minorities and not as much of influence of Taliban. Though the US and China have the similar stand, they seem comfortable with the sharing power with Taliban. Russia has disapproved the Chinese proposal to talk with Taliban due to its “policy of not talking to terrorists” (Mehta 2014). In a similar way, Iran may not desire to see a return of a Taliban on its eastern border due to Taliban’s *Sunni* identity, and its inclination towards Saudi Arabia. However, the long US presence in the region and the acceptance of Taliban as a reality has turned Tehran to support reconciliation with Taliban. Now Iran would not have a problem if Taliban became a part of the current Kabul administration (Peikar 2015). Some analysts assume that Tehran has shown a favourable stand towards Taliban due to these two scenarios (Peikar 2015). The first one is the anti-US approach where both want US exit from the region. The second is the rise of ISIS, which seems strategically uncomfortable for both Taliban and Tehran (Peikar 2015). It may be possible that Tehran would like to counter Saudi Arabia by making a possible alliance with the Kabul government if Taliban returns to power. Therefore, in recent years, Taliban leadership has reached Tehran twice as reported by media (Behn 2013, Peikar 2015). This approach is still in initial period but uncertain. Till 2012, Tehran wanted to strengthen the Karzai administration by giving it financial assistance as discussed in the fourth chapter. It had proved by the *WikiLeaks* cables when the then Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in his negotiations with India’s then NSA Shivshankar Menon had repeated that “There was no alternative to Hamid Karzai’ and called for ‘strengthening the government in Kabul” (Ramana 2012:950). New Delhi was worried

after casting its vote seeking sanctions against Iran in 2005, 2006 and 2009 at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This changed approach was defined as woken up to the fast unstable scenario in Afghanistan and India's loosening grip on Kabul in reference to Pakistan advanced. India at that phase wanted to make common cause with Iran against the Taliban²⁹.

Recalling the recent history of the region and Iran's attachment with the Afghan minority, it would not be so easy for Tehran to reconcile with Taliban. If New Delhi is not prepared to engage with Taliban, then going with Russian and Iran is a worthy option. But the three states have to wait until Taliban reconciliation talks have failed. India's engagement with Russia and Iran is strategically important because the West has become increasingly unpopular in Afghanistan (Chandra 2010:126). Therefore, taking an independence stand with the regional states would benefit the entire region.

Afghanistan is the "glue for India-Iran relations" despite the interruptions in their continuing (Ramana 2012:941). In the history of India-Iran relations, Tehran on some occasions favoured Pakistan's attitude, particularly on Kashmir. There was also a perception shared by India and Iran that Pakistan's control of Afghanistan via the Taliban regime was not in the interests of either state. (Pant 2009:254). Unlike Pakistan, both found the emergence of Taliban as a strategic debacle for their regional calculation. According to Sumit Ganguly (2012), this convergence of interests in a critical country in the region also leads New Delhi to work with Tehran. The US-Iran rapprochement would be a great mileage for New Delhi to revival its relation with Tehran, which had gone cold under the US pressure. RAND cooperation once defined "Tehran-New Delhi axis" as one of the ten international security development that were apparently not getting appropriate consideration (Pant 2009:252). Pakistan and Iran are the two countries that can provide India access to Afghanistan. Islamabad refuses to offer overland passage rights to India for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia (Pattanaik 2012:579). Indo-Pak historical enmity and geographical constraints led India to move to Iran for entry in Afghanistan. However, this is more difficult because India has no land accesses to Iran. As an alternative route, India is developing the Chabahar port and the north-south corridor to reach Afghanistan and beyond. But this was

²⁹ See- https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/82/824599_irn-iran-middle-east-.html. [Online: Web], Accessed 17 December 2015.

difficult by Iran-US relations, the two countries with whom India shares common interests (Pattanaik 2012:569).

Afghanistan and energy provide Indo-Iran a convergence of interests. Despite Western pressure India's commitment to develop the Chabahar port, Chabahar-Zaranj railway link and the 218 km Zaranj-Delaram highway between Afghanistan and Iran, are the highlight of their relationship (Ramana 2012: 947). As stated above, all these development provide India access into Afghanistan and Central Asia bypassing Pakistan. Afghanistan has been vital to reconciliation in India's Iran policy (Ramana 2012:950). India, Iran and Afghanistan already have a joint working group since August 2012 which has given much stress to expanding trade and transit cooperation, including investment, among the three countries starting with the Chahbahar Port³⁰.

The instability in Af-Pak is spoiling the economic potential of the region. New Delhi has not taken part in the negotiations on the 1,036 km Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline since 2007, mentioning security and profitable apprehensions. Instead of IPI onland pipeline, talks are being held to build a US \$4.5 billion undersea gas pipeline from Iran to Indian west coast (The Hindu: 7 Dec 2015). The scheduled pipeline from the Iranian coast via the Oman Sea and the Indian Ocean to Gujarat is offered to carry 31.5 million standard cubic metres gas per day (The Hindu: 7 Dec 2015). If the relations between India and Pakistan could remain cordial, then IPI projects may be possible. IPI would have the potential to satisfy the energy demands of these states.

Iran and Russia have the same interests in Afghanistan as India. These states want a stable, multi-ethnic, plural Afghanistan where Taliban has not in dominated position. Russia and India both found instability in Afghanistan a destabilising for their peripheral region while Iran found the "*Wahabism*" that promoted by Taliban as a threat (Pattanaik 2012:578). Afghanistan as a promising venue provides unique opportunities to these three states to integrate Central, West and South Asia. There is a proposed International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) which has a potential to integrate India-Iran-Russia into the larger Eurasians market. INSTC also provide an

³⁰ See-Joint Press Statement on Iran-Afghanistan-India Trilateral Meeting, Bilateral/Multilateral Documents, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 26 August 2012, [Online: Web], accessed 12 December 2015, <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/20380/Joint+Press+Statement+on+IranAfghanistanIndia+Trilateral+Meeting>

option to links land lock Afghanistan to warm water port, Chabahar. Replying to a question asked in Parliament, Minister of State in MEA, V. K. Singh said that since September 2000, India has been cooperating with Iran to develop INSTC that will also include participation of Russia³¹. Under this planned Corridor, India, Iran and Russia agreed to build parts of a larger project that would integrate them (Prashad 2015). Several eastern European countries and most of the Central Asian Republics joined the INSTC project. It is supposed to use the Iranian ports Chabahar to link rail and road connections to Russia via Central Asia, and to Europe via Armenia and Azerbaijan (Prashad 2015). India made substantial progress in discussions with Iran on its involvement in the development of Chabahar Port (MEA Annual Report 2014-15:49). INSTC project has frozen due to the Western sanction over Tehran. As the Iranian nuclear talk (p5+1) seems to be working, therefore, the possibility of INSTC operationalization is moving ahead. INSTC has moved a step closer to reality, with New Delhi, Tehran, Moscow and ten other nations examining a draught transit agreement (Bhaumik 2015). New Delhi seems very eager to turn the INSTC project to reality because it provides a route to reach in Russia, Central Asia and Europe, bypassing Pakistan (Prashad 2015). India conducted a successful trial run along INSTCs from 08-14 August 2014 which included Bandar Abbas-Astara and Bandar Abbas-Amirabad routes (MEA Annual Report 2014-15:49). India's participation in both Chabahar and INSTC is aimed to increase connectivity with Afghanistan and other land-locked countries of the Central Asia. In his first Central Asia visit, Modi proposed that Turkmenistan become a member of the International North South Transport Corridor (The Indian Express: 11 July 2015). In a recent development Indian and Iranian officials met in Teheran for the first expert meeting related to Iran-India-Afghanistan agreement on Transit and International Transportation Cooperation known as the Chabahar Agreement (IRNA 2015).

After one year of NATO combat withdrawal, the geopolitical situation in Af-Pak seems against Iran, India and Russia. Taliban's takeover of Kunduz even for a short while, has a threatening signal for Russia, as it is situated near the Central Asia. The rise of ISIS has the similar threat for all these three states. Moscow is alarmed that local ISIS

³¹Q.No.-1160, "Ties With Iran", 30 July 2015, *Rajya Sabha*, See- <http://mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/25549/Q+NO1160+TIES+WITH+IRAN>

elements, involving mainly Central Asian '*jihadis*', could, along with the Taliban, added instability (Arni and Kotasthane 2015). There is also the fear that the ISIS could react against Russia in reaction to the happenings in Syria. Iran has multiple threats from an unstable Afghanistan (Arni and Kotasthane 2015). Iran is concerned that a flux in Afghanistan could give a boost to ISIS. An unstable Afghanistan will also lead to an increase in the drug trade on Iran's eastern border. Iran could have faces a similar flow of refugees as it did in the 1990s, in this scenario. Analysts found that was the reason that 'provide sanctuary to a few important segments of the Taliban' in Iran. (Arni and Kotasthane 2015). India, Russia and Iran intensified consultations over the Afghan situation, particularly since the January 20 London conference when the surfaces for the reintegration of the Taliban has cleared (WikiLeaks 2013). The proposal has not gone down well in these three countries because they see Taliban's reintegration as a strategy to expand Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and growth of Islamist militancy on their borders. Moscow and Delhi are equally concerned about the Taliban uprising in Afghanistan and this issue has featured prominently in the discussions between Russian and India officials (WikiLeaks 2013). Acknowledging the current state of affairs in Afghanistan, Putin said the situation in Afghanistan was "close to critical" (Tisdall 2015). To countering the security situation and the rise of ISIS in the eastern part of Afghanistan, Russia with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) agreed to create a joint border task force. Russia is also sending military assistance, including attack helicopters, to its Tajikistan military base, home to the Russian army's 201st Motorised Rifle Division (Tisdall 2015). In recent times, Russia has shown some aggressive foreign policy initiative by engaging militarily in South Caucasus, Ukraine and Syria. It would be interesting to see Moscow manage the crisis supposed to occur in its backyard.

Just like the warm Indo-Iran or Indo-Russia relations, Moscow and Tehran have very cordial relations. Russia and Iran's strategic relations, make them natural allies in global and regional affairs. For the last two decades, anti-Americanism has been common to their policies (Tarock 1997:208). By the end of the 1990s, Russia and Iran moved towards a much closer relationship than at any time since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, based on pragmatic and strategic considerations (Tarock 1997:207). Their strategic relation are based on the mutual advantage for both. Moscow fulfilled Tehran's arms and technology demand while in return Iran had given a friendly space

to the Muslim states in Central Asia. Russia's political support when the US was attempting to isolate Iran internationally, reflected the maturity of their relationship (Tarock 1997:220). Therefore, India, Russia and Iran can cooperate on Afghanistan to protect the Kabul government in the case of insurgency. At the same time, they can make an alliance as before Operation Enduring Freedom to protect their interests in Afghanistan and beyond. But if the civil war erupts, then no one can maintain the stability in the Af-Pak.

6.6- Summary

The post-2014 scenario is not very encouraging even after the two historical transitions in Afghanistan. The situation seems very grim since the withdrawal of NATO combat mission. The Afghan state is struggling to maintain its legitimacy as the insurgency has grown multifold. The reconciliation process is not achieving popular support within Afghanistan. The Kabul government's stake is very high in a reconciliation process that seems in flux. There are several groups emerged on the ground. It would be a challenging task to accommodate them in any reconciliation process. Still, the biggest question on the Afghan front is the power-sharing arrangement. Amid the rising violence and the hostility between the different social groups, it appears threatening to believe that reconciliation and peace will be restored in Afghanistan. Therefore, India's Af-Pak options are very limited. It would be appropriate to say India is clueless at this time on the Afghan front. In the given circumstances India is largely out of the game for the time being. So it would be a challenge for New Delhi to maintain its relations with Kabul and the Afghan population. India for the time being can work with like-minded people in Afghanistan. But selecting a particular alliance for the protection of its interest in Afghanistan is a challenging task. The regional politics are very complex at this time. Afghanistan's geopolitical situation has made it the centre of attraction and also the rivalry ground of the regional states. Therefore, New Delhi has to wait patiently for an opportunity to restore its influence in the Af-Pak region. New Delhi has to cultivate its relations with all sections of the Afghan society and the actors in Afghanistan and outside. At the same time remaining vigil to counter any threat coming from Af-Pak would be logical rather than interfering in Af-Pak reconciliation.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose

(The more things change, the more they remain the same)³²

This study has examined the Af-Pak region extensively and examined India's engagement and strategies in the region. This chapter presents the findings of the study and evaluates the validity of the stated hypotheses. Afghanistan and Pakistan, two sovereign nation-states come into a single frame in terms of Indian foreign policy concerns. This study found that India's Afghan policy cannot be recognised as an autonomous variable. There is a wide perception that India's Afghan policy is determined by its rivalry with Pakistan.

Afghanistan's geographical proximity and inherent socio-economic ties should make Pakistan the natural choice for Afghanistan. But the territorial dispute and the identities of their statehood have created political differences. Pakistan is based on the Islamic identity and thus defined as a state exclusively along theological lines while Afghanistan's identity is based on tribal confederacy under the principal ethnic group Pashtun. Pakistan saw this ethnic identity as an important threat to its national organisation of territory. On the other hand the Pakistani monolithic Islamic identity is seen as a threat by the Afghan rulers. So the Af-Pak conflict is related to the state building process of both states. Rather than a friendly neighbourhood, Afghanistan and Pakistan maintain hostility over the years. Like Indo-Pak relations, these two states have had ups and downs. Instead of inclining towards Pakistan, Afghan political leaders find much comfortable with India due to historical continuity. The creation of Pakistan was the break of long continuity in the direct relations of Afghanistan and India. The images and anecdotes of Indo-Afghan historical relations have been fascinating over the years. From prehistory till the departure of British, India and Afghanistan had been directly connected. New Delhi and Kabul had not been comfortable with creation of Pakistan. There were a number of people and officials who had not accepted this new arrangement in the region. This had created a hostile relationship between Indo-Pak,

³² It is a French proverb, idea to mention here inspired by Rakesh Sood (2015), Nuclear tango in Afghan shadow, *The Hindu*, opinion, 22 October 2015.

and Af-Pak. That might be the point of convergence in the Indo-Afghan relationship where both found Pakistan an obstacle for the unity of their respective territories. Political leaders of Delhi and Kabul have been very uncomfortable with Pakistan's claim as the only country for Muslims in the region. But it is the Afghan political elites that have always played the Pakistan card for taking advantage of India. It is the finding of this research that sometimes the Afghan political elite overstates Pakistan's threat, notably the former presidents Sardar Daoud Khan and Hamid Karzai.

First, the Soviet intervention of the 1980s and later US-NATO's 'War on Terror' (WOT) reterritorialized the region, where the Raj-created Durand Line (border) became irrelevant. The reterritorialization of topography has been a very peculiar one because the political and military landscape in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been transformed radically. This led to the huge movement of people, armed forces and ammunition across the border. Therefore, Afghanistan and Pakistan in issues like extremism, terrorism, and warlords-nexus are so intertwined that one cannot be separated from the other, particularly around the Durand Line or the Pashtun inhabited areas. Post 9/11, WOT has largely ignored this reality. It led to the revival of Taliban from the Pakistani side of the Durand Line.

The Obama administration introduced 'Af-Pak policy' by recognizing the interrelation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. This research concludes that Pakistan's insecurities are so inherent that it has been uneasy with NATO's call to cooperate despite huge US assistance in terms of money and weapons. Pakistan's hostile neighbours both on the eastern and western fronts made Islamabad very insecure about any probable Indo-Afghan alliance. Pakistan has always had concern from Indo-Afghan side. It became extreme during the Cold War when the 'Soviet-India-Afghan axis' was at its worst for Pakistan. Pakistan found Karzai-led Kabul government a pro-Indian establishment. Pakistani sensitivity had further increased when Bush administration shown a more positive attitude towards India. Therefore, Pakistan, despite huge monetary and strategic advantages, has played a double game with Washington. Pakistan wanted to cooperate with US-NATO to fight against al-Qaeda and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) but maintained Taliban for future settlement in Afghanistan. South Asian regional security complex that has been driven by Indo-Pak asymmetry relations motivated Pakistan to play a dual game on the Afghan front. Pakistan, with its nurtured

relations with Taliban and Haqqaniis has been trying to control the possible outcome of reconciliation in its favour.

Therefore, this research observes that India's 'Af-Pak policy' rather than the Afghanistan policy. The background of India's Af-Pak interaction begins from the prehistory period. The flourishing of Indus Valley civilization, Buddhism and Islamism are unique cultural features of this region. It would be more appropriate to call this region Af-Pak-India³³. This region was the host of some great oriental empires like the Mauryan, Kushan, and Mughal empires. But the most far reaching consequences were drawn by the British Empire introducing the new system of defence and strategies in the region.

The British had drawn the modern border for the administrative utility of Raj. But the partition of the sub-continent has created a dilemma for India's northwest policy. India as a successor state of the Raj has no specific doctrine to deal with the new situation on the northwestern frontier. Creation of Pakistan and India's hostile relations with it has broken the historical continuity not only with Afghanistan but the larger region, which went by the northwestern route, like Centre Asia and the Persian Gulf. Therefore, India as a new independence state which has inherited the Raj legacy, finds itself in a peculiar position. The only feasible access route for Afghanistan and beyond goes from the Pakistan. So India's relations with Afghanistan depend on Pakistan. Although just after independence, the Indo-Afghan position was converted into Non-Aligned Movement and an inclination toward the Soviet Union. However, Pakistan became an irritant for both India and Afghanistan by becoming the NATO's Cold War ally. The Pakistan factor also determined India's support for Northern Alliance against the Taliban. It proved that India has always considered the Pakistani angel in its Afghan policy. There are two explanations for that. First, Pakistan's role is genuine in Afghan affairs to pacify the demand of separated statehood by the Pashtun and Baloch. In this process, Pakistan sees Indian presence in Afghanistan against its interests. Second Pakistan wants to counter India through a friendly Afghan state by achieving 'strategic depth'. Over the

³³This research is avoiding the term 'Undivided India' (Akhand Bharat) because it would be hostile to the existence of Pakistan or looking for undoing of the partition which is not pragmatic. The term 'Undivided India' is used by the 'conservative' faction in India on the reunification of the subcontinent for political reasons. For more see, p. 55 of H. L Erdman (1967), *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*, Cambridge University Press.

years, Pakistan has failed to achieve this desire because of a pro-Indian government in Kabul. The insecurity between Indo- Pak is so intense that they are suspicious of each other's engagement in Afghanistan. This research found that Afghanistan has emerged as a new battlefield for these two South Asian powers. Pakistan's support to Taliban was part of this rivalry. India's possibility to make an alliance with Russia and Iran or to build a strategic route in western Afghanistan to connect Iran are also part of this strategy. Islamabad and New Delhi perceive each other's engagement in Afghanistan as doubtful. This tendency has largely occupied the strategic commentators in both capitals.

India has always been uncomfortable with any great power intervention in the Indian subcontinent. It is the Raj legacy, where British India wanted to maintain its supremacy around the subcontinent. India from the very beginning took the position that no one should interfere in Afghanistan, New Delhi even had reservations over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But the Af-Pak has always challenged India's notion. During the Cold War, Kabul invited the Soviet Union, and Pakistan asked the US to engage in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, post 9/11, NATO's entry was welcomed by the Indian establishment. It was the first time when by breaking established convention, India welcome any external power into Af-Pak.

The study concludes that:

i) NATO-India partnership has impacted the wider South Asian regional order, amid India's rising profile in Afghanistan. Under the NATO security umbrella, India has broken a decade long isolation in Afghanistan. India is the only regional country, which somehow identified its goals in Afghanistan has best protected by US-NATO presence in the region. India's positive gesture for US presence in its extended neighbourhood was later converted into the strategic partnership with Washington. Indo-US nuke deal and favouring a long NATO engagement have impacted South Asian for the time being. However, India's close relationship with NATO has concerned China and Iran. But India has balanced its relations with the regional states and NATO simultaneously. India and NATO have similar interests in Af-Pak. But Pakistan's concern led NATO to ask India to be passive in Afghanistan. New Delhi maintained the balance by avoiding any conflicting situation. New Delhi makes itself less noticeable without reducing its influence in Afghanistan. India is the only regional country which wants NATO's presence in Afghanistan.

ii) - India has vital geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in the Af-Pak region and this remains facilitated under NATO. The geopolitical interests include a stable and self-sustained Afghan state which will not import extremism or terrorism towards India. India's quest to get entitled with a 'Great Power' status has found it uneasy from this region. The unity of its mainland, Kashmir, terrorism, energy security, and transit route are the key issues that were largely affected by Af-Pak. For the last fifteen years, there is relative less external violence in Kashmir. The issue of Kashmir has gone in India's favour. In the case of terrorism, India's stand has been approved, although terrorist activities remain as before NATO presence. India is looking more options for its energy basket, the beginning of TAPI gas pipeline was the first such instance. Another geoeconomic advantage of NATO presence in Afghanistan is the new planned International North-South Transport Corridor. India's new political elite is largely pursuing economic diplomacy to draw economic advantage for its rising economy. Therefore, Afghanistan remains in this calculation of the Indian establishment as a potential transit hub and part of 'greater regional cooperation'. But there is doubt about emerging situation as to how will India maintain its decade and half long investments and goodwill in Afghanistan.

Further, this research found that India has created a sympathetic constituency in Afghanistan. India's previous experience of engaging aggressively in internal affairs of other states has been a bitter one. In the given situation, the political elite in New Delhi have appeared very realistic by avoiding any conflict by knowing the India's geopolitical limitations. Emerging from the debate of a significant strategy or strategic doctrine, India has chosen a non-provocative strategy that may be more significant in coming years. India's through its Af-Pak policy would like to restore the old commercial linkages in the future.

This research found that Afghanistan has been the victim of regional hostility since the Soviet invasion. As discussed in the fourth chapter, there is an intertwining of domestic and regional issues in Afghanistan. Therefore, the regional solution is the most appropriate strategy to resolve this four-decades-long conflict. The Afghan conflict is purely a regional conflict where the surrounding regions of South, Central and West Asia have the roots and also the solution. This conflict has been affected by the South, Central and West Asian Regional Security Complexes. The superpower US and the Soviet Union had been given space by the regional atmosphere to operate there. Thus,

the regional solution would be long-lasting and political pragmatism. Therefore, as a rising power, India must take initiative for a regional solution because all regional states have serious security concerns from Afghanistan. In the given circumstances the Afghan conflict cannot be managed by one state alone. On its part, India has shown willingness to work with the US, Russia and Iran for Afghanistan's long-term stability.

The uncertainty of actors and rising violence has made it unable for this study to predict India's future options in Af-Pak. The violence in Af-Pak region has reached at an unaccepted level in 2015. The urban centre of Afghanistan is sustaining government control but the areas in southern and eastern Afghanistan are on the verge of collapse. Taliban has re-emerged there. This research on the basis of reports of media, US Defence Department, United Nations agencies and other non-government organisations has predicated very uncertain future ahead. Afghanistan till the end of 2015 has been facing a low-intensity civil war across the southern and eastern provinces. Taliban are now footing more ground in Afghanistan than in any year since 2001. It has also been confirmed that Taliban is not a unitary (single) identity as it has divided into diverse frictions. That makes any peace agreement or reconciliation effort much hard than ever. The Kabul government's attempt to rely more on Pakistan has not worked in 2015. There is no clear objective or goal to the much talked about reconciliation process. More importantly, how the Taliban and other militia who join the peace talks would accommodate with the current elected government will be a challenging task. In this background, there is a rising threat of ISIS on the eastern provinces. The study also recognises the important role played by China in recent years. China along with US have motivated the Af-Pak government to work for reconciliation. But China has made it clear that Beijing has no plan to send troops to Afghanistan. Therefore, it would be a challenge for the Afghan National Security Forces to maintain the urban centres which are on the verge to collapse against the Taliban. The sustainability of Afghan forces will also be a greater challenge in the coming years. In Afghan history, the Afghan Army personnel have shifted their loyalty on the ethical lines to their respective warlords. It may be possible in the coming years that the combatant switch to parties which they might perceive to be the winning side.

NATO after fourteen years of engagement realises that a military victory is not possible in Afghanistan. Globally it has accepted that there is no military solution of Af-Pak problem and there must be some reconciliation efforts. This study also observes that a

strong Kabul based government is not workable in Afghanistan. Therefore, Afghanistan should give priority to their tradition of localised governance instead of a strong Kabul government. Afghanistan has a great tradition of local body governance to run by the elder person's council. That kind of arrangement would be more practical for a localised peace.

This study suggests that India should follow the 'masterly inactivity' policy in the given circumstances. The modest mantra to protect Indian interests- don't be proactive, play low profile by maintaining the development project and sustain the unique gesture which has been continued since the last decade. New Delhi cannot overlook Afghan history where the external powers intervene in the hope of coming out well, but they all suffered. Indian officials can learn from their history where Indira Gandhi as prime minister, had shown a great interest in Afghanistan, but she refused India's proactive role as asked by the Soviets in the 1980s. New Delhi should not forget the domestic implication of aggressive engagement in Afghanistan, as the fourth chapter mentions the Muslim minority would go against the government's endeavour.

India's soft power and less visible engagement are more appropriate if democracy has to survive in the coming decade. In a democracy, no government can ignore public opinion. This research finds that India is the most favourable country among Afghan citizens. Therefore, the invisible attempt to improve the Afghan life through making schools, hospitals, road, and public transport, giving fellowships to study in India and capacity building by supporting local self-groups will work in the future.

This study advocates that New Delhi has to constantly engage with Pakistan. Peaceful relations between these two neighbours would be an advantage for Afghan peace. The Indo-Pak reconciliation can only restore Afghanistan's utility as a transit route. Projects like TAPI can only be implemented when India and Pakistan work in Afghanistan. There are more reasons to work closely in Afghanistan rather than to antagonise.

India must be prepared with a contingency plan if Afghanistan collapses into civil war in coming years. In such a situation, India has to strengthen its homeland security by keeping a close vigil at borders. India has to work on the internal dynamics by maintaining peace and harmony between all the communities. The radicalisation of any community has to be tackled strictly, otherwise it would have a negative impact on the other community.

The last recommendation on the basis of this study is that if Afghanistan faced another civil war and Pakistan does not show the desire to settle the conflict then, India must work with regional countries like Iran and Russia.

This study concludes by observing an ambiguity among Indian policy makers regarding the Af-Pak similar to the Raj. The Raj had to face a similar dilemma in its northwest frontier policy as India is facing in Af-Pak between the forward and masterly inactivity school. New Delhi's engagement in Af-Pak has been very uncertain. It seems there is an absence of domestic consent to deal with Pakistan in the last two decades. There is an ambiguous strategy to deal with this region. India and Pakistan have not had a single decade where both remained in constant dialogue. By giving combat helicopters to Afghanistan, New Delhi has broken the decade old continuity. Therefore, India's Af-Pak policy is still evolving. It would be interesting to see how an absolute majority government after twenty five years in New Delhi would pursue its Af-Pak policy.

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