



An Analysis of the Historical Relationship Between India and Afghanistan

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Abstract:

Afghanistan has significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance. Afghanistan serves as a crucial access point to Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. Historical records demonstrate that major global powers have attempted to expand their influence in Afghanistan, but have ultimately failed to do so. Afghanistan has shown itself to be a formidable obstacle for foreign forces, resulting in their defeat and demise. India made significant efforts to exert its influence on Afghanistan. The Indian government had offered assistance to the Soviet-backed democratic establishment in Afghanistan. The historical affinity between India and Afghanistan is longstanding. Afghanistan has been historically recognized as a hub of Indian culture. In addition, Buddha had also visited Afghanistan, which was a thriving center of Hinduism and Buddhism. However, in the present day, the presence of these two faiths in Afghanistan is very limited. India has provided and continues to provide help to Afghanistan. The relationship between the two nations received a significant boost following the events of September 11, 2001.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Trade, Security, India, Afghanistan

1.Introduction

The history of Indo-Afghan connections is quite ancient. Afghanistan was acknowledged as a hub of Indian culture. In addition, Buddha had also visited Afghanistan, which was a bustling region for Hinduism and Buddhism. However, in the present day, the influence of these two religions is restricted in Afghanistan. In the seventh century AD, Islam strongly opposed and resisted Buddhism in Afghanistan and Hinduism in India. In 643 AD, the Arab troops seized control over Persia, and in 650 AD, they also launched an invasion on Kabul. These military actions by the Arab army had a significant impact on Siesta. The Arab army thoroughly cleared the land of Afghanistan and successfully reached the Oxus River. (A boundary connected to CentralAsia) After establishing their presence in this area, the Arab troops also brought the faith of Islam. Nevertheless, the ruler of Kabul engaged in a destructive conflict with Arab troops that lasted for a span of two hundred years. The Shah dynasty governed some territories in Kabul and the former province of Gandhara. They opposed Islam over a period of 11 centuries. The Indo-Afghan relations have deep-rooted historical and cultural ties. This relationship extends beyond the governments of both countries and has significant historical connections between the people of the two nations. Historically, the western portion of Afghanistan has served as a conduit between India and Afghanistan. Both nations have a same historical background. In addition, despite the strategic and political scheming of all the countries in the area, the relationship between India and Afghanistan remained amicable. There has been a single deterioration in the Indo-Afghan ties. India established diplomatic recognition of the Soviet regime in Afghanistan. In addition, India provided financial assistance to Afghanistan throughout the civil war. In 1990, the Indian government funded Afghanistan with a substantial sum of US cash via the United Nations. India made a concerted effort to extend its influence in Afghanistan, and the 9/11 catastrophe in 2001 gave the Indian government with a chance to build that influence. Following the fall of the Taliban by the US and NATO troops, India was presented with a chance to establish a new era of ties with the Afghan government. India has established diplomatic ties with Afghanistan and has provided intelligence help to the Afghan government. The Indian Prime

Minister proclaimed the Indo-Afghan relations to be transparent and easily understood. Additionally, he said that there are shared characteristics in our civilizations and India would support the people of Afghanistan. India will assume leadership of the Afghan government after the withdrawal of foreign soldiers. India also supported the formation of a coalition government in Afghanistan. In 2005, India extended an invitation to Afghanistan to join SAARC, and Afghanistan officially became a member of SAARC in 2007.

Furthermore, the significance of Afghanistan in this area cannot be overlooked. India seeks to establish connectivity with Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. India has pledged to maintain its financial assistance to the Afghan government. Afghanistan relies entirely on India and the United States for its financial requirements. The Afghan administration firmly believes that, under the current circumstances, Afghanistan does not need financial assistance from Pakistan. During the Asia meeting held in Amritsar, India, President Ashraf Ghani declined the financial assistance offered by Pakistan. He recommended that Pakistan use such funds towards preventing cross-border terrorism. During the conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his endorsement of this stance in his address. India expressed concerns about the potential obstruction by Pakistan-backed anti-Indian factions in Afghanistan, which might hinder India's efforts to build its influence in the country. India has disrupted the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan while simultaneously forming a friendly alliance with the Afghan government. On several situations, Afghanistan saw this friendship as transparent and easily understood. India considered that individuals with anti-Indian sentiments are being taught in Afghanistan. Therefore, it was of utmost importance for the Indian government to counteract Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan. In addition, India also aimed to address Pakistan's ambition to establish a pro-Pakistan administration in Afghanistan. In this instance, India not only curtailed Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan, but also facilitated the establishment of a pro-Indian administration in the country. The Indo-Afghan nexus was responsible for training and funding anti-Pakistan groups inside Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan collaborated to combat the self-proclaimed Islamic extremists. Hamid Karzai visited India in 2006, during which three memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were signed between India and Afghanistan. These MOUs covered the areas of education, rural development, and standardization, namely between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Afghan National Standardization Authority (ANSA).

In 2008, an assault on the Indian embassy resulted in the loss of 58 lives and left 141 others injured. In response, the Afghan administration emphasized the strong bond between India and Afghanistan, stating that these links are unbreakable. A significant number of Indian individuals were subjected to assaults in Afghanistan. There was a belief that these assaults had the potential to impact the ties between India and Afghanistan. Despite the terrorist attacks against Indians in Afghanistan. In 2011, India increased its financial assistance to the Afghan government. In addition, India has provided Afghanistan with a financial assistance amounting to 2 billion dollars. India has now become the fifth biggest contributor of financial aid to Afghanistan after extending its assistance to the Afghan government. In addition, the year 2011 saw a significant improvement in the ties between India and Afghanistan. Upon signing the strategic agreement, Karzai emphasized that Pakistan is considered a fraternal nation while India is seen as a close ally.

2. Research Methodology

The writer applied a qualitative Method to conclude this work and got support from the existing literature, articles, and books to complete this paper. The author took help from print and electronic media and online materials to write this paper. This paper enables the readers to understand Indo-Afghan relations from the lens of history.

3. Literature Review

"Perspective on South Asian Security" by Shanthie D'Souza and Rajshree Jetly. It explains the exciting security condition of the South Asian region. Afghanistan has been a state suffering from war for almost

forty years and it is the crucial topic of this book. India's foreign policy to Afghanistan and Kabul's neighbouring state, security is the main agenda. Permanent peace and stability in Afghanistan are necessary for the whole region. It gives great importance to Kabul as New Delhi has infused money in Kabul. This writing puts light on India's foreign policy to Afghanistan (Souza & Jetly, 2012). "The New Great Game in Afghanistan: Role of India (A Pakistani Perspective)" drafted by Dr. Iram Khalid. This paper discusses the interest of global powers in Kabul. The writer highlights New Delhi's activities in Kabul after September 11; She also talks about India's investment in Afghanistan. Dr. Iram explained the ambitions of New Delhi in Kabul. Dr. Iram also spoke about the New Dehli's aspirations in the area (Khalid, 2011). "Indian Strategic Influence in Afghanistan: Realist Ends through Social Means" by Marium Kamal. New Dehli is an essential player in South Asian and global politics. India is focusing on spreading its wings through security and economy. New Dehli's existence in Kabul is increasing its soft image to get its deep-rooted international politics aims. The author described New Dehli's hold on Afghan internal matters and actions in Afghanistan (Kamal, 2019). "Delhi-Kabul Nexus: Regional Dynamics and Geopolitical Perspective (With Reference to Pakistan)" by Fazal Abbas Awan, Asia Sial Alvi and Rabia Munir. The authors stressed New Dehli and Islamabad's role in bringing stability in Southern Asia and elaborated on the Indian role in Kabul and its implications on Pakistan. This paper elaborates New Dehli's security aims, political goals, and economic ambitions in Kabul, India's intentions to reach Central Asian republics via Afghanistan. The authors also explained the US policy to contain China by using India (Awan, Alvi, & Munir, 2019). India's Role in Afghan Peace Process by Dr. Ghulam Mustafa, Aamir Junaid, Rana Basam Khan and Imran Wakil. The writers highlight the cunning character of India in Kabul. India has infused a massive amount in Afghanistan in various programs. India is trying to enhance its soft power by pouring money into Afghanistan. New Delhi has clear intentions in Afghanistan to eradicate the influence of Pakistan on Afghan society and India has got success to some extent. India is using Afghan soil against Pakistan. The writers explain the role of India and its intentions in Afghanistan (Mustafa, Junaid, Khan, & Wakil, 2020). The writers highlighted Indian aims in Afghanistan and New Delhi tries to achieve a high place in world politics. India does not want to allow Pakistan to play freely in Afghanistan. It is essential to work on India's ties with Kabul.

4. Indian Strategy of Soft Power in Afghanistan

India sought to exploit the power vacuum in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the United States. Consequently, India strengthened its alliance with Afghanistan via investments in various initiatives. These initiatives have been grouped into the following points. India is the primary donor of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. She earmarked a sum of 2 billion dollars for various initiatives in Afghanistan. She actively participates in several rebuilding projects. The individual engaged in the reconstruction of roads and air routes. Additionally, she facilitated collaboration in the fields of healthcare and the empowerment of women. Furthermore, she conducted training programs for Afghan police officers, diplomats, and government workers. In 2009, the Indian Army constructed a significant road in the rural area of Afghanistan, namely in Nimroz region. This connects Delaram to Zaranj. India constructed a dam known as the Salma power project. In addition, India has allocated more than 100 million dollars to establish a commerce link between Afghanistan and Iran via the Chabahar port. It will circumvent Pakistan, allowing India, Iran, and Afghanistan to engage in commerce. Further India allocated a sum of 710 INR crores to the government of Afghanistan for the purpose of constructing a new Parliament building. India has been endeavoring to augment the capacity of Afghan Television. In pursuit of this objective, India has generously provided the government of Afghanistan with 400 busses. On this occasion, the United States made a commitment to Pakistan that Afghanistan would not be abandoned without the necessary efforts for rebuilding. Hence, the United States has been providing assistance to India in order to facilitate its expansion of influence in Afghanistan. The Indian Prime Minister said that India would provide help to Afghanistan in enhancing its economic growth capabilities and bolstering its security.

5.Indian Strategic Interest in Afghanistan

After the incident of 9/11, the US and NATO invaded Afghanistan. This invasion had altered the political situation at Afghanistan, due to the invasion of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan the government of Taliban had no option but to run away. The US took control of Afghanistan. Moreover, achievement of US to defeat the government of Taliban in Afghanistan provided an opening to the government of India to establish its influence in Afghanistan. The government of India, during Taliban regime had no chance to increase its influence in Afghanistan. India has planned to help Afghanistan in different projects, like reconstructions projects and economic development. Furthermore, breakdown in the relations of Pakistan and Afghanistan has led to friendly relations of India and Afghanistan. blame game between Pakistan and Afghanistan is in full swing, this behavior has greatly affected the Pak- Afghan relations. the government of India also wants to create distrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan. When the government Taliban was overthrown by the US and NATO forces. This change of power in Afghanistan had provided an opportunity to the Indian government for enhancing its influence in Afghanistan, because during Taliban regime India had difficulty to enter into Afghanistan. India suddenly started diplomatic affairs with Afghanistan and Afghanistan was offered military as well intelligence prop up. the Prime Minister of India said that the relations between India and Afghanistan are like “an open book”. “He further added that the two States are having same civilization, the government of India would support the people of Afghanistan and would stand with them in any kind of situation.” In the year of 2005, India facilitated had the coalition government in Afghanistan. Moreover, the US also asked India to help Afghanistan. Further, India needs energy sources for its country, for this purpose India established its footprints in Afghanistan. India has well managed to have three countries nexus like Iran, Afghanistan and India to have access to Middle east, South Asia and Central Asia. Afghanistan serves as the gateway to these regions. Pakistan expressed concern about the growing bilateral ties between India and Afghanistan. Islamabad explicitly requested them to refrain from jeopardizing the stability of Pakistan. Afghanistan dismissed Pakistan's concerns and said that it would not have any impact on the peace in Pakistan.

India and Afghanistan formed an alliance to combat Islamic extremists. In 2006, Hamid Karzai visited India and the two countries signed three memorandums of understanding (MOUs) related to education, rural development, and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). In 2008, the Indian embassy was targeted in a violent assault that resulted in the death of 58 individuals and left nearly 141 injured. Following this attack, the government of Afghanistan responded by emphasizing the strong fraternal bond between Afghanistan and India, stating that such acts of violence cannot sever the brotherly relations between the two nations. A significant number of Indian individuals have perished as a result of terrorist activity in Afghanistan. There was speculation that the targeted assaults on Indian people in Afghanistan would result in the deterioration of Indo-Afghan ties. However, despite these attacks, the collapse of relations did not occur. India has expanded its financial assistance to Afghanistan. In addition, India has made a significant investment of 2.5 billion dollars in Afghanistan, making it the sixth largest investor in the country.

Pakistan expressed concerns over the strategic alliance between India and Afghanistan. Karzai assured Pakistan that this deal would not have any detrimental effects on their interests. In addition, he said that Pakistan is considered our sibling, but India is seen as our ally. Pakistani policymakers are well aware of the potential for the Indo-Afghan alliance to collapse. The Indian government aims to establish a prominent role in Afghanistan following the departure of international forces. India intends to exert influence over Afghan policy and has been employing its strategy of soft power to gain the support and favor of the Afghan population. India's dominant position in Afghanistan would undermine Pakistan's influence in the region. Following the 9/11 tragedy, the United States and NATO launched a military invasion of Afghanistan, resulting in significant political upheaval as the Taliban administration was ousted by the US. India has the chance to strengthen its influence in Afghanistan. India has begun actively participating in the rehabilitation and economic growth of Afghanistan. The amicable ties between India and Afghanistan may be attributed to the deterioration of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

6. United States Factor and Indo-Afghan relations

As to a study by the US Congress, India aims to counterbalance Pakistan's strategic influence in Afghanistan. The congressional report states that the Pak - US ties have been impeded by the Abbottabad assault in 2011. The report indicated India's intention to halt terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. The study also highlighted the concerns of India over the terrorist organizations operating under the auspices of Al Qaeda. These entities are seen as the primary menaces to Indian interests. India says that these organizations are connected to the factions engaged in conflict in Kashmir. India has the belief that these organizations were responsible for the attacks on Mumbai in November 2008 and July 2011. The study also said that Afghanistan wants access to Indian markets. Afghanistan seeks to benefit from India's rapidly growing economy. The documents Additionally, it should be noted that the previous President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, entered into a formal agreement with India in New Delhi. Under this deal, India would annually provide training to 600 members of the Afghan army. The government of Afghanistan was displeased with the border conflicts between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2013. Hamid Karzai responded seriously and traveled to India to purchase aircraft and other military equipment to strengthen his defense capabilities. India, at that time, rejected Afghanistan's plea. Initially, India had chosen not to participate directly in the conflict. However, Ashraf Ghani later acquired all the necessary military equipment, leading to India's direct involvement in Afghanistan. India's current objective is to confront Pakistan by using Afghanistan as a strategic platform. The United States ousted the Taliban administration. India will benefit from the absence of the Taliban, since their presence has hindered India's efforts to establish a stable presence in Afghanistan. Throughout India's endeavor to establish a presence in Afghanistan, it received support from the United States. India has been using its soft power in Afghanistan with the assistance of the United States and the international community. This also instilled apprehension in the military establishment of Pakistan. The United States has been providing assistance to India in Afghanistan. This is a significant issue that is causing considerable worry for the policymakers of Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan played a pivotal role as a frontline state in the global fight against terrorism. Pakistan has been placed at the forefront of the Taliban's list of targets. A significant number of attacks occurred in Pakistan, leading to several fatalities and hundreds of injuries. Not only civilians, but also Pakistan law enforcement organizations were targeted by many suicide strikes, resulting in significant losses. On the other side, the United States provided financial help to Pakistan to a certain degree. The United States remains dissatisfied with Pakistan. The United States has been accusing Pakistan of insufficiently addressing the issue of terrorism. Pakistan initiated domestic military operations inside the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Consequently, there was a significant amount of internal displacement. Pakistan Army forcefully expelled the Taliban into Afghanistan during these military operations. The US and Afghan troops have not provided any information or assistance to Pakistan about this matter. However, the United States continues to insist that Pakistan must take decisive measures against terrorist organizations that are active inside its borders. The United States is unequivocally backing India in Afghanistan while simultaneously accusing Pakistan of helping the Taliban. The lack of trust between Pakistan and the US has resulted in volatility in their bilateral ties. Pakistan's strained relationship with the United States has prompted it to seek new alliances with countries such as China and Russia, in order to establish alternative partnerships.

7. Conclusion

According to Gallup poll of 2010, in this one thousand People were interviewed. 50% adults had approved the performance of India's management and 44% had disapproved and 6% had refused to take part. It was the maximum approval score of India by any other state in the region of Asia. According to the study, Afghan adults like likely India's leadership than other states like Chinese or U.S. leadership. Both countries are on the road of friendship. This is in great interest of both the states.

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