AFGHANISTAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUES AND ITS IMPACTS ON PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The precarious situation of Afghanistan has so many causes, but some of the Afghanistan domestic political issues have dire impacts for its security as well as for its adjacent neighboring states, especially for Pakistan. Despite so many Afghan domestic political issues, some of the major matters are; the emergence of the Taliban, and their positionin in the affairs of the state. The second problem for Afghanistan is the issue of the Afghan Refugees and its rehabilitation and third the growth of poppy cultivation and measures of the national unity government (NUG) for its eradication. The paper will put into consideration the above domestic political issues in Afghanistan and its impacts on Pakistan.

Key Words

Domestic Political Issues, The Taliban, the Afghan Refugees, Drug Trafficking.

Introduction

Afghanistan is facing numerous domestic political issues, alike everlasting strife, profound corruption, deep-rooted social obscurantism, fragile rule of law, vicious ethnic strife, stability (1929-1978), and uncertainty (1979-2001), warlords and Islamic extremism as well as restrained Islamic practices. Strong tribal structure, weak infrastructure, rocky geography, poverty, and lack of education. Afghanistan from the last hundred years to date passed through many disorders and foreign influence (Mongol, Safavid, Persian, Mughal, Russian and British empires) swing forth and back a couple of times.

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In the 1970s economy of Afghanistan was going improved due to the significant foreign influence of investment and aid. Such as the completion of Great Ring Road and Salang Pass of 1964. In the 1990s Afghanistan restrained by two-decades-long fighting divides the country among the religiously conservative Taliban in the South and North under the control of warlords like Abdul Rasheed Dostum and Ismail Khan (Veen, 2016). Rising insurgency and anxious political changeover further worsened an already turmoil situation of Afghanistan. International military troops drawdown in 2014 left the fragile security environment and the Taliban fasten expanded its presence countrywide. National Unity Government is also weak to tackle the issues of governance, finance. Civilian and military casualties, as well as conflicts, continue to grow (ICG Report, 2017). In 2017 first time economic freedom graded, over the past decade, the country achieved much development. Construction and agriculture contribute well to the country's economy, in 2016 Afghanistan became a member of the World Trade Organization. However, the political situation still uncertain and remained challenging. Rule of law lopsided across the country, even the government is unreliable to provide necessities that eroded public trust. Systematic corruption has destabilized the efficiency of courts, banking system, and other economical sides of the country (The Heritage, 2017).

Among some of the shared Afghanistan domestic political issues the paper will through the light in detail some major bilateral issues among Pakistan and Afghanistan which destabilized both states relations, they are: Rise of the Taliban, issue of Afghan refugees, the growth of poppy cultivation as a growing drug mafia in Afghanistan and cross border infiltration on Pak-Afghan border are some of the major domestic political issues which not only destabilize Afghanistan but have direct security implications for Pakistan, as well as having negative consequences on both countries relations. The Taliban members defeated the Soviet forces, most of them got training in refugee camps of Pakistan. The Taliban emerged in 1994, became the pre-eminent politico-military force controlling almost 90% of the Afghanistan area (Good hand, 2003). Mujahidin united under the

leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar¹. Within a short period after executed Najibullah and his brother, the Taliban captured Kabul in1996. Imposed strict rules of Shariah mostly on women. After captured Mazar-e-Sharif by the Taliban, it seemed that a civil war like the situation will never end. But the country's turned towards another round of war after the sudden attack of 9/11 on US soil (McCauley, 2002).

Osama laid the foundation of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1989, influenced by the teaching of his teacher Abdullah Azzam a Palestinian, teacher of Islamic studies at Jeddah University (McCauley, 2002). Osama Bin Laden had arrived in Jalalabad, Afghanistan in 1996 before the Taliban had control of that city. However, after captured Jalalabad by the Taliban Osama bin Laden, the Al-Qaeda leader considered by the Taliban their grateful guest and a strategic coalition were forged between the Taliban and Osama bin Laden. In the meantime, the United Nations recognized the close partnership between these two groups. The 9/11 attacks on the United States by Al-Oaeda organization led the US efforts to overthrow the Taliban might under Operation Enduring Freedom. Under UN security council resolution number 1386, established International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF under full might toppled the Taliban government in Afghanistan, the Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar fled from Afghanistan (Report, December 2011).

Some 30, 000 Arabs fought with the Mujahidin with the financial help of America and Saudi Arabia. There was a 75 percent special discount on flights from Riyadh to Jeddah for Arabs Mujahidin (McCauley, 2002). Afghanistan became a base for training of Islamic militants, these undergoing training were not only for Muslim states, but some western countries also joined the Al-Qaeda organization. The

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¹ The Taliban leader born near Kandahar into a poor landless family. He stopped his madrassa studies due to Soviet intervention on Afghanistan on 1979. He fought against pro-Russian government of Najibullah (1989-1992). He was a charismatic leader among the tribal chiefs to settle the disputes among the peoples. During 1994 almost 12, 000 young Afghani and Pakistani students of madrassa joined the Taliban movement under his banner (McCauley, 2002).

Afghan jihad now turned into world jihadi origination and fought against every un-Islamic deed. Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda organization became famous during the bombing of US embassies of Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the heinous attack of 11 September 2001 on the US soil (McCauley, 2002).

Pakistan along with Saudi Arabia plays as a mediator role to influence the Taliban for governmental set-up. In 1992, under Peshawar Accord a set-up for the interim government was signed under the leadership of Mujahidin leadership Sibgatullah Mujaddadi, followed by Burhan Uddin Rabbani. In 1993, Rabbani signed Islamabad Accord, following attacks by the Hezb-e-Islami group of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The Accord called for the power-sharing between Rabbani and Hekmatyar till the 1994 election. In 1994 Rabbani's term ended but he refused to step down. Meanwhile, during this time, another group in southern Afghanistan mainly from the Mujahidin formed another organization, within a short period the Taliban captured Kabul. Rabbani and Hekmatyar signed another contract to share authority among strengthened sectional antagonistic of increased Taliban presence (Report, December 2011).

Taliban Rule 1996-2001

The Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar seized Kabul in 1996 and declared Afghanistan as an Islamic state. Pakistan along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban régime in Afghanistan. The only group in Afghanistan to deny the power and authority of the Taliban was the National Islamic United Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan popularly known as the (Northern Alliance) controlled about fifteen percent of Afghanistan area. Northern Alliance was an organization of several guerrilla groups, under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Masood. Masood is popularly known as an anti-Soviet military leader and as a defense minister in the Rabbani government all through 1992 (Report, December 2011). Throughout the Taliban rule, Afghanistan was seriously under civil war-like situation and the country faced internal turmoil.

The Fall of Taliban

Till 2001 the Taliban controlled most parts of Afghanistan, which was in Pakistan's interests to curtail the Indian influence and secure its strategic depth policy in Afghanistan. But the UN sanctions on the Taliban due to its antagonistic strategies obliged Pakistan to alter its Afghan policies (McCauley, 2002). Russia wanted to encircle Pakistan for which falsifying a new strategic partnership agreement with India- Iran, and Russia. On the other side, Pakistan's support towards the United States was to get access to Central Asian oil and gas reserves as a tangible reward from the US (McCauley, 2002). Central Asia and Russia together produce around one ten of the world's oil and almost one-third of its natural Gas (McCauley, 2002).

The Taliban government was toppled in 2001 by US sudden attack on Afghanistan. An interim setup of 30 ministers was established on 5th December 2001, after 9 days of talks in Bonn (Germany). Portfolios awarded to different ethnic groups in which eleven of them go to Pashtuns, eight to Tajiks, three to Uzbeks, and five to Hazar's. Defense, Foreign Affairs and Interior ministry go to Northern Alliance. Hamid Karzai a Pashtun leader took the chair of interim setup. Loya Jirga (the Afghan Parliament) was responsible for new constitutional and 2004 general elections arrangements (McCauley, 2002).

Bonn Agreement, 2001-2004

After toppled the Taliban by the US attacks under Operation Enduring Freedom, several political, regional, and ethical groups signed an agreement in December 2001. Popularly known as the 'Bonn Agreement' which the main purpose was to install a transition governing structure and paved the way for a national reconciliation program and lasting peace in Afghanistan. Bonn agreement realized the need for broad-based set up in Afghanistan, in which all the groups would be included in talks. Even those who not get the opportunity to talk in the United Nations (Report, December 2011). The Taliban were not presented in Bonn talks, some groups didn't want to reengage the Taliban in the Afghanistan reconciliation process. But internal peace without the Taliban support is everlasting. Instead of the Bonn

agreement which listed some of the key Taliban members, fighting continues among the coalition government and the Taliban.

The United States declared an end to 'major combat operation' afterward, the Taliban launched insurgency attacks. 2004, Afghanistan's new constitution was approved with a strong and democratic presidency to bring different ethnic groups on table talks. Hamid Karzai a Pashtun leader under the presidential election of 2004 declared the President of Afghanistan for the term of five years under the new constitution. President Karzai took several measures for reconciliation with the Taliban. Due to the presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, Karzai was not able to make his own decisions completely. Like, in December 2006, Karzai announces general amnesty for the Taliban and offered them to take participate in the Afghanistan reconstruction and reconciliation process. But coalition forces enforced Karzai to retract the statements because of the Taliban's inconsistent actions against the coalition forces. In 2006, Karzai termed to Mullah Omar and Hekmatyar to return peacefully to Afghanistan. Despite such efforts, Karzai got less achievement as a negotiator over the Taliban (Report, December 2011).

Due to Afghanistan's devastating situation, the Afghan government came under growing domestic criticism, not only for growing the Taliban position but for its internal division. Since then, it cleared on the ISAF forces that the security of Afghanistan can't be elevated without the help of US forces. But the presence of US troops was not acceptable for the Afghans local community and the Taliban leadership. The number of US forces in Afghanistan which was 100,000 in 2011 decreased at the number of about 9,800 which important aim was to assist and train Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) under the 'Resolute Support Mission'. The US asserted that the Taliban still not possess the threat to Afghan political stability. But the death of the head of the Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor by US unidentified airstrikes once broke the talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban (CRS, 16, September 2016).

Afghan Refugees Problem

The migration of the Afghans was a great problem, particularly for Pakistan and Iran. Law and order situation, unemployment, prolonged war, and insecurity were the main reasons which compelled the Afghans for migration (CSRS, 2015). In the early days of Soviet invasions, anti-insurgency methods have led to a deliberate form of 'migratory genocide'. To face suppressive policy, offer no choice rather than submission, almost five million Afghan refugees (the world's largest refugee population) have fled to Pakistan, Iran, and somewhere else in pursuit of accommodations. Almost one Afghan in three, as the war drags on, refugees keep coming. The first Afghans came to Pakistan, northwest Frontier province within weeks of 1978 communist coup. In April 1979, almost 100,000 Afghans' families crossed the border. Pakistan stretched out their greatest help to the Afghan refugees by accommodating them on their land. Vast numbers of who blended with the urban populations, giving rise to problems of crimes and law and order situation in Pakistan (Khan, 2011; p. 52). As indicated by sources 3.7 million Afghan refugees came to Pakistan. As a result, the number of inhabitants of former NWFP now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa KPK increased from 1.9 % per year to 9.2% in 1972-81, and the population of Quetta (Baluchistan) expanded at the rate of 7.2% from 3.44% to 4.04%, thousands of them have Pakistani documentation and residents of different urban areas permanently have free choice of movement, residence and business in Pakistan (Arif & Mansoor, 2011; p.28).

Its accommodation was a complicated task for the government of Pakistan. In Geneva Convention to elevate relief requirements, Pakistan asked for the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). An emergency aid of \$ 10.3 was released for the one-year assistant program, to cover 185,000 thousand refugees till September 1980. The Soviet direct assault increased the growth of the refugee population in Pakistan, almost 300,000. Such a substantial number migrates, activated many relief organizations like, Save the Children Fund, The League of Red Cross Societies, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Church International Service, Australian Relief Care, UNHCR, and other international relief agencies rose to nearly \$100

million. Apart from the United Nations, twenty-eight international and voluntary agencies were involved in the Afghans rehabilitation process. (Girardet,1985). Within weeks 3 million Afghans half of the population of Switzerland, sought refuge in Pakistan. Some of them live in private houses in towns of Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, Quetta, and Baluchistan, while some took asylum in relative's houses. The Pakistan government has allowed them to move freely to those living in official refugee villages and holding a ration card or entitled to UNHCR assistance. By the end of 1984, 100,000 Afghans had been housed in different areas of Pakistan. UNHCR in 1984, estimated annual relief for Pakistan nearly \$500 million, well over \$1 million per day (Girardet, 1985).

Political opponents of the President Zia dictatorship have seized on the refugee issue. That most of the Baluchi and Pashtun nationalists to be sponsored or penetrated by the KGB and KHAD, while to turn the situations in its favor. It is an open secret that Afghan refugee's camps, fleeing from Soviet Union terror, in Northwest Frontier now (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan was not just humartians havens for Afghan citizens. But many guerillas fighters used the camps for resistance movements, between Peshawar and Quetta, more than dozens of political parties were free to operate through publicity, politicization, and logistical support for the partisan fronts inside the country (Girardet, 1985).

In 2000, the population of Afghanistan was 25.8 million. There were different ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The largest group was Pashtuns who account for 38 percent of the Afghan population. Almost 1.3 million were killed during the Soviet Union war of 1979, and about 6 million fled to Iran and Pakistan. According to the United Nations, November 2001 estimation that there were 2 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan (McCauley, 2002). Returning of the Afghan refugees started once again soon after the terrorist attack of December 16, 2014, on Army public school Peshawar. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, almost 91485 Afghans were returned to their country from January 1 to June 30, 2015. Most of the Afghans went through Torkham and Spean

Boldak Ports. This estimation shows a 418% increase as compared with 2014. While the unregistered Afghan refugees were registered; these register Afghan refugees also returned to their home by 2015 but can stay in Pakistan until their cards will be extended or renewed. Their fate still uncertain, to give extension in Pakistan or by a forced return to their country (CSRS Report, 2015).

The security situation in Afghanistan has reached an adverse point since the US intervention in Afghanistan. A series of terrorist attacks killed thousands of the people, just in the month of May-June 2017 a sequence of horrifying attacks killed 100 and wounded almost 500 peoples. The entrance of the truck bomb in the Kabul Diplomatic Enclave a sensitive area is a question of million dollars on the face of Afghan security forces (Khan, 2017). Afghanistan claimed the responsibility of such attacks on Pakistani based Haqqani networks, while the Haqqani network did not recognize the responsibility of the above-mentioned attacks. Such blame directly indicates the Afghan government's failure on the part of state security.

Drugs Production and Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan

Drug production and drug trafficking have great effects as well as causes for political instability. They flourish under weak sates and withstand that weakness by financing insurgency and warlords. It also intimidating the official of enforcement agencies and security forces. Drug malfunctions are connected to deficiencies in security and governance. Many counter-narcotic efforts were taken for political and administrative stability, but not successful in the case of Afghanistan (P. Caulkins, et al. 2010). During the 1970s, the poppy was cultivated over half of Afghanistan, 28 provinces giving 250 MT of opium for export (Hyman, 1992). In 1989, under ISI and CIA umbrella Pakistan also became a major opium manufacturer, almost produced the same quantity as of Afghanistan (Maley,1989). To combat drug production Western countries provided \$100 million of aid to Pakistan which gave positive results and production decreased to 24 MT in the year 1997 (Rashid, 2000; p. 121).

Afghanistan a major producer of illicit opium production, directly involved in the processing of heroin (Marsden, 2002). Afghanistan produces almost 350 tons of heroin annually, almost 75 percent of world supply. Western European country's annual consumption of heroin is almost 120 tons in which 80 percent emanates from Afghanistan. Especially, the land and atmosphere of Jalalabad and Helmand are well suited for growing of poppy production. Which provides almost one-quarter of the world's production (Marsden, 2002). The production of Afghan drugs during 2015 as compared with 2016 decreased to some extent.

The opium trade is a profitable one in Afghan terms, approximately, 85% of all seized heroin in the UK produced from the Afghanistan opium (Good hand, 2003). After oil and arms trade, drug trade constitutes the major attractiveness in international trade. After the US attacks on Afghanistan in 2001, they considered that terrorism and drug trafficking are interlinked to eradicate terrorism, drug production must be stopped in this regard. Nonetheless from 2001 to date drug production increases instead of decrease. Drugs also have great implications for Afghanistan. The country is at risk of a considerable spread of HIV due to unsafe ways of using drugs i.e. injections of drugs, needles, and syringe (P. Caulkins, et al. 2010). Due to cross border with Afghanistan, drugs from Afghanistan very easily smuggled to Pakistan which critically affected Pakistani society. United Nations should have emphasized on Afghanistan for the eradication of opium production and its smuggling to Pakistan and the entire world (Chaudry, 2017).

Measures for its Eradication

The inauguration of the new Afghan government in Afghanistan, after the fall of the Taliban regime in Bonn conference, new Afghan President Hamid Karzai fully concentrated on the eradication of opium production. He said that fighting against drugs, smuggling, and production are his priorities. Several institutions i.e. the counter-narcotics department of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health, and Ministry of Agriculture are institutions that were set up for the eradication of drug production, but still, Afghanistan

produced almost 90% of the world's opium. In this regard, the Afghan government has not been successful, they are of the view that foreign force is directly responsible for its failure because insecurity is the main hurdle in the way of drug eradication.

In 2016 the increase of opium production turned the attention of the Afghan government towards the switch of poppy cultivation. In this regard, the lower house of the Afghan parliament (Wolesi Jirga) summoned Minister of Counter Narcotics, public health, and Interior Affairs minister and asked about the reason behind the growing influence of poppy production in Afghanistan. The concerned authority was of the view that many steps were taken to control this issue i.e. arresting drug smugglers, ban of poppy production, destruction of lands under poppy cultivation, etc. Drugs are more dangerous than terrorism, in the entire world daily 100 people killed by terrorist accidents, while 500 peoples killed by drugs in the entire world daily. Millions of people are affected using drugs in different diseases like Cancer and HIV, which is a great human disaster that needs strict measures for the eradication of such evil from our society (Chaudry, 2017).

Trade Relations among Pakistan and Afghanistan

As per trade relations among Pakistan and Afghanistan are concerned, general laws and regulations makes it compulsory to provide transit trade facilities to landlocked adjacent neighbor states. After independence both states took bilateral transit trade along with many hitches. Trade had great potential for Afghanistan through Pakistan sea roots to access international markets. Similarly, Pakistan also wants to explore the ways of trade with CARs republics through Afghanistan. Till June 2011, transit trade among Pakistan and Afghanistan going through 1965 transit trade agreement. However, with the advancement of new developments in trade and shortcomings in old one, the 1965 transit trade agreement was seemed outdated. To resolve trade issues meeting of the two concern departments were held on different occasions. Consequently, a remarkable document was signed on 10th October 2010 in Islamabad. The new agreement resolved many trade issues, like biometric system, easy visa system for truck

drives and one conductor and trafficking device on transport system. Railway line from Quetta to Baluchistan to link with Kandahar and Peshawar to Jalalabad was also part of APTTA (Kakar, 2010). The new afghan Transit Trade also allow Afghan trade with India through Pakistan via Wagah border. But Indian products can't go through Pakistan for trade with Afghanistan (Mayor, 2009). Despite of Indian factor so many other issues also need to be tackled with the passage of time. Only then transit trade can progress among the two states. Because APTTA can not only improve the bilateral relations but it will also provide additional transit corridor towards Central Asian states. Growing Indian presence in Afghanistan in the farm of trade is also a concern for Pakistan. As India is the second most significant destination of Afghan goods. For which India constructed Chahbahar fort in Iran, now most of the Afghan trade shifted from Pakistan to Iran with India and rest of the world.

Cross-Border Militants Infiltrations and Border Security Measures

After the end of the Taliban rule in 2001 in Afghanistan, thousands of the Taliban militants cross the border. Which created law and order situation for Pakistan because these border areas used by the Afghan guerrillas as a safe heaven. Cross border terrorism destabilized Pakistan's security and a wave of suicide side attacks and violence destruct the lives and property of Pakistan's civilians. After assumption of power by Afghan national army and Afghan security forces in Afghanistan a significant increase was observed in border attacks from both the sides. Causing the death and casualty of thousands of civilians and military man. Such dramatic upsurge of outbreaks resulted the closing of Pak-afghan border on many occasions.

To resolve border management issues both states took many bilateral meetings, in 2015 Lt. General Hidayat ur Rehman paid visit to Kabul, and discussed matters related to border security specially at two points Torkham and Spin Boldak (Dawn, 2015 January 20). Afghan side publicly opposed such move from Pakistan side, but Pakistan were of the view that fencing is undergoing in Pakistan's own territory not on Afghanistan soil. In Pakistan's view such border measures are

beneficial for both the states security, it will also reduce the risk of smuggling and illegal crossing (The Express Tribune, 13 June 2018)

To eradicate such menace of extremists' attacks, Pakistan's army started the fencing of word's most porous Pak-Afghan border, its construction started in 2016 which will be completed till the end of 2020. In 2600 km border fencing area almost 1250 km of construction work already completed and out of 843 construction work of 233 border forts accomplished on different points to check the illegal activities, leading to an improved security situation in the region. The Pak-Afghan border fencing has expressively contributed counterterrorism and will prevent cross-border movement that enable the terrorists to launched illegal states activates against Pakistan and Afghanistan. On the hand more than 50000 thousand peoples crossed the border daily from both the sides. Unrestricted movement and such flow of the people originate many issues, even insurgent activities also took place in the name of trade (Khan, 2015). With border fencing such movement will be monitored.

Conclusion

Regardless of convergence and divergence in the relations both states rely on each other for transit trade. Due to allegations and counter-allegations transit trade stopped many times, which created hurdles for both the states. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, successive Pakistani governments were desperately keen to open direct land routes for trade with the Central Asian Republics. The growing civil war in Afghanistan in the wake of 1990s drove the Pakistani policymakers with a strategic dilemma. Further, to reestablish relations with Afghanistan and access to Central Asian Republics markets was another issue.

Due to terrorism, cross border infiltration, Afghans Muhajir (Migrants) problem and the cultivation of poppy has direct impacts on hostile terms of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Cross border terrorism also destabilized Pakistan's security. Terrorist accidents across Pakistan launched different military operations in Pakistan's tribal belt to eradicate the menace of terrorism and their hidden camps.

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