



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**A New Hadrian's Wall: Managing Pak Afghan Border Security,  
Diplomatic and Economic Dimensions**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The interactions between Pakistan and Afghanistan are driven by mutual socio-cultural and economic benefits. Nevertheless, Durand line has remained the bone of contention between two countries since the established of Pakistan. However consistent rise in cross border militancy, smuggling and terrorist attacks has forced Pakistan to take measures to avoid such a scenario. The main objective of this study is to find a well-orchestrated system to stabilize, manage, and control Pak-Afghan border. The qualitative research method is applied to conduct a critical and comparative analysis based on secondary data. Study findings suggest that to ensure economic interdependence and security on both sides of border, two neighbors should extend hand of cooperation to bring peace and stability in the region. There is need for further research to understand the benefits of cooperation between two countries and opportunities for mutual economic progress

**Introduction**

Victor Hanson opined, "Between Friends, unfenced borders enhance friendship; among the unfriendly when fortified, they help keep the peace." The Durand line between Pakistan and Afghanistan is one such border. The bitter history of rivalry and animosity dates back to 1947 when Pakistan was created. Afghanistan not only laid claim on a vast territory of Pakistan, refused to accept the international border as a legitimate border, it also voted against its membership in the United Nations. Over the years, on more than one occasion Afghan forces aggressed into Pakistani territory, attempted to instigate a rebellion against Pakistan (Khan, 2008) and continuously challenged the veracity of the Durand Line. (Qassem, 2007) Due to strong bond between Congress and the Monarch in Kabul that dated back prior to the partition in 1947, Pakistan suspected that Kabul's hostility against Pakistan had its root in its closeness to India and that Kabul is doing all this in cahoots with New Delhi. (Liwal, 2010) Like the issue of territorial claims, Afghan propaganda of a separate Pashtun land did not gain much local and international support. Moreover, the tribes expressed no real enthusiasm about the issue, having settled down on their side of the border. (Ibid) The fact that Kabul and Islamabad were in two different

camps in the ongoing Cold war added to this. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided Islamabad an opportunity to change this. Islamabad not only fully supported the Afghan resistance but also opened its doors for the incoming Afghan refugees who were allowed to go anywhere in Pakistan. More than 3 million refugees settled in Pakistan. The Afghan jihad and the presence of Afghan refugees adversely affected the state and people of Pakistan. Post-Soviet withdrawal and cold war, Afghanistan once again became a theatre of competing regional and extra-regional interests and suffered a decade long civil war. The new century witnessed Afghanistan going into further turmoil when post 9/11, America attacked Afghanistan. Pakistan was caught in the eye of the storm. Once again, the 2,611 km long border with Afghanistan became the focus of global attention. Durand line, the Pak-Afghan border has always been a contentious issue between the two countries as well as unique: a total of 11 out of 34 Afghan provinces border three federating units of Pakistan, erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Balochistan predominantly inhabited by Pashtun tribes. There are 22 divided villages split between Pakistan-Afghanistan border, 16 of which are in Balochistan, and 6 in erstwhile FATA and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

Since 9/11, Kabul as well as the International actors have accused Islamabad for not doing enough especially in not letting the Taliban and other such elements to enter its territory and find refuge there. At the same time, Pakistan claimed and shared proof of terrorist activities being planned and executed in Pakistan through Afghanistan. The issue of stronger border management and control is repeatedly brought up. It is a fact that Kabul neither has the will nor capacity to manage its side of the border. More so, in keeping with its hostile relations with Islamabad and hostility for supporting the Taliban regime, Kabul keeps contending the status of the Durand line and claims Pakistani territory as its own. Yet, it protests that Islamabad is not doing enough.

The core objective of this research is to analyze Pak-Afghan border and its management, analyze security and economic implications with respect to border mismanagement for Pakistan and the impact of border fencing on Pak-Afghan border management. For this, the questions addressed were: how Pak-Afghan border has been managed since independence, impacting the dynamics of the region since decades? And how and why mismanagement at Pak-Afghan border leads to serious economic and security implications for Pakistan? 2017 is taken as the focused year for how the situation was before it and after because Pakistan started fencing the border in 2017.

The paper is divided into six parts: first part looks at the theoretical debates about borders and border management. The following sections cover different aspects of Af-Pak relations with particular focus on the border issues. These include: an historical overview, economic and security concerns on Pak-Afghan border, violence in Pakistan in linked with the Pak-Afghan border post- 2017, economic interdependence as a tool of secure and controlled Pak-Afghan border.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Borders hold certain significance in international relations (Passi, 1998). As per the International law, borders are the condiment that govern the internal laws of, establishes a writ of a state, and regulates its external relations. The Westphalian state

system iterates the concept of state sovereignty and non-interference in its affairs by outside force. According to International law, a defined territory is a key prerequisite for a state to be recognized as a de jure state.

This study utilized the conceptual framework of border management for comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. (Willis, 2010) The basic assumption of border management is to control the illegal activities within and outside the country. In this context, border management describes three core functions: *Interdiction*, *Deterrence* and *Exploited Networked Intelligence*.

### **Interdiction**

Interdiction implies the disruption of illegitimate activities like flow of people and goods from one state to another without legal approval. There are different categories of interdiction, and its level varies with the specific kind of illegal activity undergoing. For instance, the phenomenon of terrorism, drug trafficking, weapon trafficking and human trafficking are required to be looked in with respect to the various levels and different agencies throughout the border. In view of the rate of interdiction, Pak-Afghan border's situation is considered to be alarming due to a porous border. Though, it is assumed that the situation has changed after initiation of fencing project by Pakistan on its own territory, yet there would be certain comprehensive mechanism required to practically assess and lessen the rate of interdiction with respect to this border in terms of drug, weapon and human trafficking.

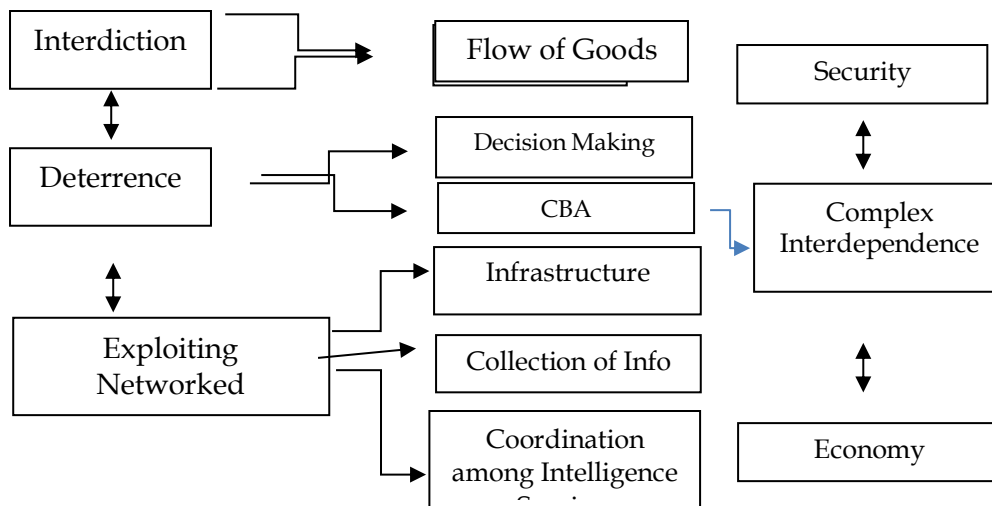
### **Deterrence**

Deterrence is the process of persuading terrorists, smugglers, and criminals to not make an attempt for allegedly crossing the border. The form and shape of deterrence varies with time and space and is directly linked with the decision-making process regarding crossing the border with respect to cost benefit analysis in order to dissuade the terrorists and criminals to take certain course of actions. Deterrence at the border region is contextual in nature with respect to time and space as socio-political environment of the people across the bordering countries play a significant role and is required to be analyzed by decision makers for effective utilization of time and resources in context of border management.

The conceptual framework of border management including the phenomenon of deterrence was applied to the Pak-Afghan bordering region before and after the fencing project for comprehensive understanding of the wholesome situation with respect to countering terrorism and other criminal activities and socio-economic situation. Historically, decision making regarding management of the border remained a weak area due to multiple reasons and has faced consequences. Several trade agreements have been signed between the Pakistan and Afghanistan but factually these were never effectively implemented as the size of illegal trade remained very high throughout their history.

## Exploiting Networked Intelligence

For effective border management, the role of intelligence sharing cannot be over emphasized. It plays a vital role in countering the illegal activities including terrorism, crime, flow of people and goods without the legal documents. The component of exploited network intelligence is regarding the process of collecting information involving biometric system and biographic system, effective coordination among intelligence services in the bordering countries, joint exercises and networked use of intelligence in operational domain. Keeping in view the particular realities, the practices may be considered as different for the different regions. Apropos, the Pak-Afghan border becomes an interesting case, if looked in with this specific component of the border management as Governments across the border not only have weak intelligence coordination but also are involved in blame game indicating notion of mistrust. The diagrammatic elaboration of the conceptual framework is as follows: -



Conceptual Framework: Conceived by the principal author

## Pak-Afghan Border and Violence in Pakistan - Post 2017

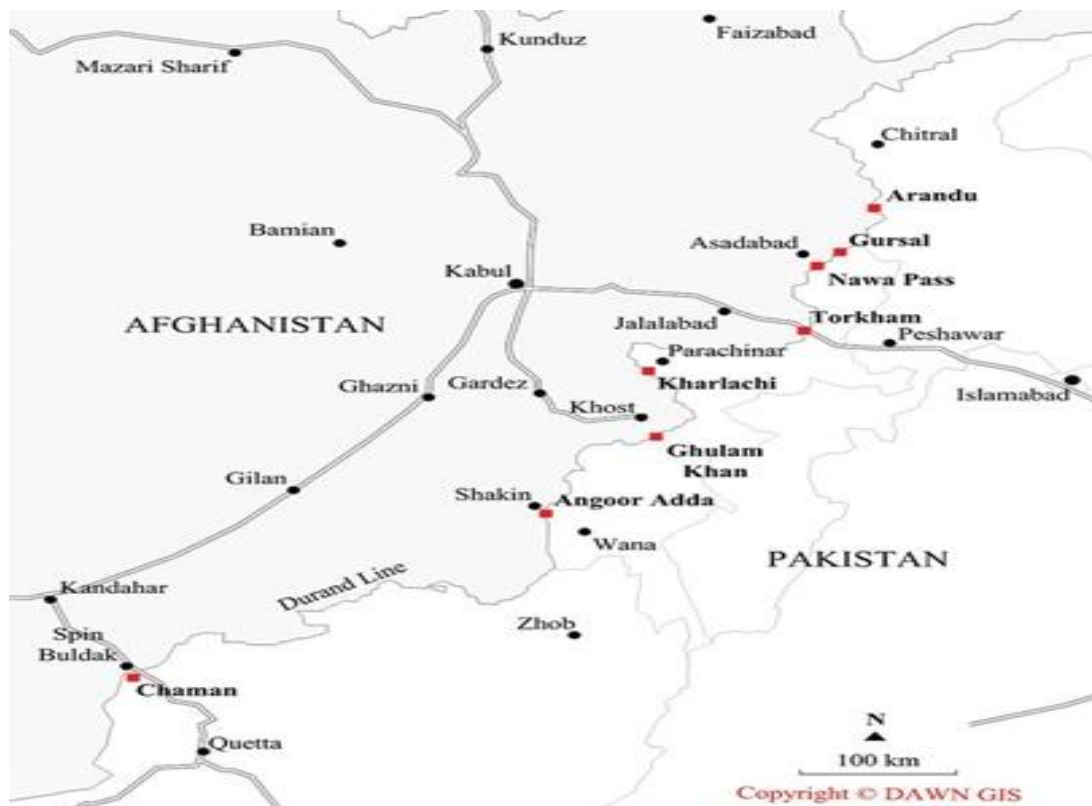
In early 2017, Pakistan began the first phase of its unilateral border-fencing along the Pak-Afghan border. (Zia, 2017) The Pak-Afghan border due to its porous nature and its enormous length is difficult to monitor and secured by the security forces. This is one of the core reasons, why terrorists, extremist, drug traffickers and smugglers have frequented this border and made use of the border population and the unstable situation to carry out their objectives. The 2014 Army Public School (APS) attack put the whole of Pakistan into a new gear. The result was the nationwide launch of IBOs, elimination of ban on death penalty and expediting already commenced Operation Zarb-e-Azb to eradicate and bring out the militant, terrorist and extremist elements residing within the society. (Javaid, 2015) Those who survived the operation escaped to and took up sanctuaries in Afghanistan. In 2017, to further its efforts against the extremist and terrorists' outfits residing in different parts of Pakistan, particularly in the tribal areas bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, two operations namely "Operation Radd-ul-Fasad" and "Khyber 4" were launched. (Zia, 2017) Islamabad also took a decision to fence the border to ensure its security

and stop the Afghanistan based terrorists to stage further attacks in Pakistan. In 2017, Pakistan military began the fencing of the Pak-Afghan border. By December 2018, work on 233 of 843 forts and fencing of 802 out of 1,200 km priority one areas was completed. It was reported that more than 83% of the fence along the Pak-Afghan border has been completed in 2021 (Ahmed, 2021).

### **Border Crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

There are about 100 routes which are being frequently and unfrequently used at Pak-Afghan border. However, only a few of these routes are notified whereas many of these are prone to smuggling. Around 20,000 to 35,000 people cross the Chaman and Torkham border points on daily basis comprising legal immigrants, traders, NGOs members and NATO assets. In addition, by using other routes, around 7000 to 9000 unlawful crossings also take place on daily basis. This continues to happen despite heavy presence of border posts held by Pakistan Army and a few by the Afghan National Defence Security Forces (ANDSF) and Afghan Border Police (ABP) who also enjoy the support by NATO / RS Mission. The best solution to this predicament is to constitute an effective, joint and integrated border management.

While Torkham and Chaman (also called as Spin Boldak) are the major and established boundary crossing points between Pakistan and Afghanistan, other major crossing points include Arandu in Chitral, Ghulam Khan in North Waziristan, Angoor Adda in South Waziristan, Nawa Pass in Mohmand, Gursal in Bajaur and Kharlachi in Kurram Agency (now Districts).



Source: Dawn Newspaper (2016) <https://www.dawn.com/news/1281514>

## **Fencing on Pak-Afghan Border**

Pak-Afghan border start from the alpine region of the Sarikol range of Pamir Mountains in the north and continues to move south-west until it reaches the Iranian border along the Koh-i-Malik Siah near the Helmand River. The border passes through the rugged mountainous ranges with several hideous terrains along the path, yet Afghanistan being a land-locked state is dependent on its exports from Pakistan. While the fencing of the border had been proposed by Pakistan in President Musharraf era to halt the illegal flow of people from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Afghanistan opposed the idea and continuously highlights the border as controversial. (Zeb, 2006) Initially, Pakistan started fencing its border with Afghanistan in 2007 but only managed to fence 35 kilometers of the boundary.

APS attack in December 2014 forced Islamabad to devise a comprehensive National Action Plan (NAP). As per NAP, Islamabad also announced new border initiatives in June 2016. Fencing began on 27 April 2017 from the Big Ben Check post. Boundary line to be fenced with Afghanistan along KP was around 1230 km while the boundary line alongside Balochistan was around 1381 km. Khyber Agency, Bajaur and Mohmand agency were fenced in the initial phase of the project and 539 km of fencing was completed by December 2018. Moreover, around 700 border check posts as well as forts were constructed in KP. These posts were interlinked and were equipped with modern gadgets for 24/7 surveillance of the border. In 2018, around 1900 Afghan nationals and 600 Pakistanis were apprehended attempting illegal border crossing. Around 900 km border of the total 2611 km long border was fenced by January 2019. Major General Baber Iftikhar, DG ISPR, while talking with media in January 2021, shared that more than 83% of the fence along the Pak-Afghan border has been completed (Ahmed, 2021).

## **Impact of Fencing Pak-Afghan border**

### **Political Impact**

Political and diplomatic relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan remained strained even after the commencement of the border fencing. As US withdrawal from Afghanistan is also being discussed for the past few years and several meetings between Kabul, Afghan Taliban, United States, China, Russia and Pakistan haven taken place to discuss the post-US withdrawal power structure in Afghanistan, political engagement between the two states remained passive. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani continue to accuse Islamabad for instability in Afghanistan and openly support the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Pakistan which, obviously do not go well with Islamabad. Pakistan, on its part accuse Kabul of funding and supporting the anti-Pakistan movements as well as backing the terrorist incidents inside Pakistan alongside India. It believes and claims to have evidence of NDS and R&AW collaboration against Pakistan. (Zeb, 2020) On November 14, 2020, in a joint press conference with DG ISPR, FM Shah Mahmood Qureshi shared evidence of use of Afghanistan's soil against Pakistan for terrorism. It was disclosed that Indian intelligence official Colonel Rajesh, who was employed at the Indian embassy in Afghanistan, was the mastermind behind the plan to establish the consortium between BLA, TTP, BLF (Balochistan Liberation Front) and BRA (Baloch Republican Army), as a letter in Dari was shown to media which revealed that Col Rajesh had four meetings with commanders of these terrorist

organizations to "synergize their efforts and upscale terrorist activities in metropolitan cities (Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar) in November and December". It was further shared that India was trying to form a link in Pakistan with ISIS by creating "Daesh-e-Pakistan". (Dawn, 14 November 2020) Once Pak-Afghan border is completely fenced, with a new power structure in Afghanistan, active political engagement between the two countries can be expected in terms of improving ties and bilaterally coordinated border management. The phenomenon of exploited networked intelligence can be implemented once both states agree to facilitate proper border management and intelligence sharing mechanism.

### **Economic Impact**

Fencing of Pak-Afghan border has seriously impacted the legal as well as illegal economic engagement between the two states. Legal trade of Pak-Afghan border has dropped to half since the fencing of the border has started. Moreover, illegal trade has also been adversely impacted. The Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) signed in 2010 has yet to materialize into its true potential. There are a number of reasons for this: firstly, the agreement has several loopholes that need to be addressed. After the recent developments, perhaps a revisit to this agreement would be a feasible idea. Secondly, all relevant stakeholders such as intelligentsia, government, business community and representation from all the civil and military departments that are working on Pak-Afghan border must be taken on board when this renegotiation takes place. One major reason of the ever dropping volume of trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan lies in the fact that as Pakistan has strictly made a compulsion for the Afghans to enter in Pakistan with the legal documents and illegal entry to Pakistan has been banned from all the entry points. Pakistan may have to re-visit its Afghan visa policy in context of a broader and diverse border management framework once fencing of Pak-Afghan border is completed and American forces withdraw from Afghanistan. Pakistan certainly needs to boost its trade volume with Afghanistan as economic interdependence with Afghanistan in the future could lead to stabilizing the relationship.

### **Resistance from Afghanistan during fencing period**

Kabul has opposed and resisted the fencing of the Pakistani side of the Pak-Afghan border. Government of Pakistan, its armed forces and the general public have continued to face serious external pressures. Incidents of firing from the Afghan side became quite frequent. Shortly after border fencing was initiated, a Pakistani census team was attacked near the Chaman border on May 5, 2017 resulting in 9 deaths and 40 injured. This occurred soon after the terror attack on the Pakistani Sufi shrine in Sehwan Sharif that resulted in a month long closure of the border. In another attack that occurred in 2018, Afghan forces attacked the Pakistani forces working on plugging the gaps in the border fence near Kurram Agency and killed two FC soldiers.

### **Terrorism Trajectory Post-2017**

According to reports published by Islamabad based Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), the trends of terrorist incidents have declined since 2017.

In 2017, four places of worship were targeted. The earliest and the deadliest attack of 2017 occurred in a Sufi shrine of Lal Shabaz Qalandar in Sehwan Shareef in Sindh on 14 February 2017 killing 88 devotees and injuring 343. Islamic State (IS) active in and operating from Afghanistan since 2016 accepted the responsibility for it. The other three attacks were on a church in Quetta, Jhal Magsi and an Imam Bargah in Parachinar, Kurram Agency. Other terror attacks were carried out in Parachinar market, Kurram Agency, twin blasts in Turi Bazar, Agricultural Institute Peshawar and the attack on the Senate Deputy Chairman in Mastung, Balochistan. The attacks on security forces were carried in Lahore, Karachi, Pishin & Chaman and Peshawar.

During the same year, IS conducted 37 attacks in Afghanistan. The militants attacked both Shiite and Sunni mosques. Many of the attacks carried out by the members of the group who were based in the provinces closer to Pakistan's border such as Khost, Helmand, Nangarhar, and Kandahar. Incidentally, before or after the attacks were carried out in Afghanistan, the group would also carry attacks in Pakistan. The most targeted place was Quetta. For example, four attacks were carried out by the militant group in Afghanistan, including the border areas such as Khost and Kabul; in the same month Mastung and Quetta were targeted by two attacks in Pakistan. In June 2017, five attacks were carried in the Jalalabad, Kabul, Sar-e-Pol and Achin district. In the same month three attacks were carried out in Quetta. In August, two attacks in Afghanistan and one in Quetta, Pakistan was carried out. In October, three attacks in various areas of Afghanistan were carried out and one in Jhal Magsi district of Pakistan.

2018 was more forgiving than 2017 (PIPS, 2019) primarily due to the successful execution of operations Radd-ul-Fasad and Khyber IV to eradicate terrorist hideouts in the tribal areas. As result of both border fencing and the grand operations that were launched, the graph of terrorist attacks went down to 45% in 2018. The number of terror attacks fell from 19 in 2018 from 35 in 2017. This was primarily due to the efforts of Pakistan Army through various operations and government's decision to implement the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2015 and also due to State's decision to fence the Pak-Afghan border.

### **Comparison of Drug-Trafficking - Pre and Post-2017**

Of the severest threats along the Pak-Afghan border, movement of drug traffickers remains among the top three. According to international sources 50 % of Afghanistan's GDP is made up from narcotics. According to different estimates, about 3 million Afghans are believed to be dependent on narcotics and drug trafficking directly for their income (UNODC Report, 2017). Afghanistan is the main source of almost 93 % of world opium posing a serious health and security threat to the people of Pakistan as well as other countries.

Drug-trafficking saw a jump in Pakistan in the 1980s with the number of drug addicts reaching to one million. By 2017 the number rose to a whopping 5 million. Pakistan became a hub and hot point for drug sellers and drug traffickers. (Andreas, 2018) According to the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNDOC), 40% of the opiate produced in Afghanistan either find its way in the nooks and cronies of Pakistan or transited to China, Africa and Europe.



In 2017 alone, in a countrywide operation conducted by Pakistan's Anti-Narcotic Force (ANF), 1338 drug traffickers including 27 foreigners were arrested and 164.06 metric tons of drug was seized. According to a Foreign Policy report published in 2018, approx. 700 people die every day in Pakistan due to drug overdose. Drugs are a deadlier poison effecting young and vulnerable Pakistanis. This problem has an Afghanistan connection. All major drug lords are Afghanistan based and are the most powerful non-state actors in Afghanistan.

Taliban in Afghanistan were known for their support of opium production in Afghanistan. The provinces such as Kandahar, Helmand and other seven provinces that are adjacent to Pakistan's tribal areas are known to be strong holds of Taliban and the biggest of opium crop in Afghanistan is planted in the Helmand province. Due to the porous nature of the border and poor border management previously by Pakistan and still by Afghanistan, these drugs have found their way in the hands of young population of both the countries.

Another major reason of drug trafficker having a very strong mafia lies in the fact that they have been able to infiltrate across the border illegally. This would be addressed once the fencing is complete.

### **Economic Interdependence as a Tool of Secure and Controlled Pak-Afghan Border**

The trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan predates 1947. After the independence of Pakistan, in 1965, in order to facilitate trade between the two countries, the 'Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement' (ATTA) was signed which was revised in 2010 and renamed as the 'Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA).' The agreement pertains to Afghanistan's external trade through Pakistan. As per the agreement both countries would not levy custom duty, or any other charges on the trade goods in transit at national, provincial or municipal no matter what the destination. The agreement allows Afghanistan to import and export from two ports of Pakistan i.e. the Bin Qasim Port and the Karachi Port. Similarly trade from Pakistan to Afghanistan is done through the Peshawar-Torkham and Chaman-Spin Boldak routes.

### **Brief Overview of Economic Relations**

In the past, Pak-Afghan trade relations have suffered due to the strained bilateral political relations. Whereas, to compensate the losses suffered by different businessmen and to ameliorate their living standards, the people living at the border provinces have opted for illegal trade. Over the years, illegal trade, unlawful cross border movement of people and smuggled goods along the porous border increased. These factors further aggravated already existing bilateral resentments. Moreover, the high tariffs imposed by Pakistan on some 120 of the 741 exports items further raised the temperatures within Kabul and the public thereof. The Afghan Trade Transit (ATT) has proved to be a sore point. Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of creating complications in transit trade route rules by making it more complicated. Pakistan holds Afghanistan responsible for smuggled goods that reach the markets of Pakistan under the ambit of ATT. This reflects the influence of politics dictating the economic relationship instead of both focusing on mutual benefits. There is mercantilist relationship when it comes to trade relations between the two. Due to the prevalent

hostility, political mistrust and distrusts, economics is often used as a tool to further the respective state's political agenda. The sufferers are either the traders or the common man who has to buy either substandard or high-priced products.

The Pak-Afghan trade can be divided into three broad categories

- The transit trade under APTTA.
- The bilateral trade.
- The illegal trade that has become more popular post 9/11 due to strict policies of both governments and high tariffs being placed on different products.

As discussed, economic relations are at the mercy of the political relations between the two. Time and again, Afghanistan blamed Pakistan for its stringent trade policies and not providing Kabul with trade facilitation policies as per the APTTA. To the contrary, Pakistan holds Afghanistan responsible for the smuggled goods and illegal trade by Afghan traders under the cover of Transit Trade. Pakistan argues that its local market and businessman do not get a chance to thrive and establish themselves indigenously due to the inflow of cheaper and illicit products in the market. This results in the country's fall in the international market as well. Moreover, due to these illicit trading tactics by Afghan traders, Afghan government has not been able to regulate the route which badly impacts Pakistan's economy. In such an environment, how can economic interdependence lay the ground to build trust between the two countries and help secure the Pak-Afghan border.

Post-9-11, trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been inconsistent, resulting at times in closing of the Torkham and Spin Boldak crossings. However, Pakistan still remains the number one trade destination for Afghanistan. Being a land-locked country, Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistan for most of its trade. Moreover, the close proximity and a long border makes the country far more attractive for the Afghan businessmen to import and export from Pakistan due to low route costs. On the other hand, Pakistan also needs Afghanistan for its own transit trade route to reach the Central Asian market, not only due to the country's energy demands but also because these countries represent the future of an untapped market with huge opportunities for investment and revenue generation.

Bilateral trade and Transit Trade between the countries have not reaped the benefits that two neighboring countries could potentially have gotten. Instead, increasing trust deficit effected the trade between the two states from 2011-2014. According to official figures, the illicit trade crossing into Pakistan from Afghanistan in 2014 reached \$1.0 billion (Taye & Ahmed, 2021). One reason for this humongous figure is the 150 percent increase in tariffs by Pakistan. To avoid custom duty taxes, levy taxes, the traders have opted for illicit trading. These measures led Kabul to look for alternative routes to fill their trade deficits. Similarly, Pakistan, due to the non-cooperating attitude of Afghanistan has been looking for alternate routes to reach the Central Asian markets.

Due to the unfavorable attitude of Afghan officials for trading with Pakistan due to political differences, bilateral trade agreements and bilateral economic interdependence may not prove fruitful. Although Afghanistan is engaged in trade

with many countries through air, yet it is not as sustainable and convenient as it could be with Pakistan. A key starter in such a situation could be the Central Asian Regional Cooperation (CAREC), and bilateral programs such as the Chinese initiative under OBOR, and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The programs such as the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) can also help in the long term to both Afghanistan and Pakistan to develop deeper bilateral ties in the future.

### **Trade Facilitation**

In order to have long term trade ties, trade facilitation is an important factor to play its role not only in the bilateral relations but also with other actors in the region. Afghanistan has long demanded trade facilitation from Pakistan.

The geographic proximity of Pakistan to Afghanistan provides, for the later, several opportunities to ameliorate its trade balance vis-à-vis trade with Pakistan bilaterally and multilaterally. There is also a need for looking in to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline to ensure greater economic interdependence through energy projects. Moreover, inclusion of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, who have shown great interest individually in the Afghanistan Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement (APTTA), can also help with greater transparency and working of the agreement. The two double landlocked have also been looking for alternative routes that are shorter. Practical access to Eurasian market and the warm seaports of Karachi and Gwadar will reduce the interested states' transit cost massively. This also provides Afghanistan with a purpose and incentive to introduce better border management, trade policies and better monitoring policies and increase in tariffs due to increased demand and competition in the market. There is also a need to renegotiate and revise APTTA for better integration policies bilaterally and regionally, to facilitate trade between the two countries and beyond.

### **CPEC and the Chinese Role**

China an economic giant with immense international influence can also help Pakistan and Afghanistan to build up better relations and develop mutual trust. (Abdullah, 2018) China shares friendly relations with both. Moreover, China's One Belt One Road can provide the push to Afghanistan to gel in the politics of South Asia. Afghanistan possess enormous deposit of minerals worth \$ 1 trillion which could be very beneficial for Beijing's industry. More so, the investment of China vis-à-vis CPEC can also help boost the local afghan industry. In the light of above, China is better positioned to compel the two states to introduce better security and domestic policies which in the long run, could result in the much-required mutual trust building.

### **Conclusions**

In 1947 when Pakistan was created, Afghanistan not only challenged its existence by claiming territory, refused to accept the international border and voted against Pakistan's membership in the UN. From 1947 to 1980s, both countries were at loggerheads. It was expected to change after Pakistan actively fought for Afghanistan's freedom against Soviet aggression however the developments that took place in 1990s, and in the first decade of the 2000s proved it to be a misnomer.

Since 9/11, the border lost even its soft nature due to the deteriorating security situation, launch of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), and the international community's demand from Pakistan to do more. Pakistan opted for strict security measures and border management policies, restricting the movement across border in order to curb the militants and terrorism blazing on both sides. Anti-Pakistan element in Kabul in cahoots with other regional sympathizers blamed Pakistan for all ills in Afghanistan in total disregard of the ground realities. It also accused Pakistan for providing safe haven to different militant outfits escaping the GWOT in Afghanistan. More so, Afghanistan asked Pakistan for strict border management measure while simultaneously refusing to recognize the border. To control the cross-border movement of terrorists and to keep a check on illegal movement, Pakistan as per its prerogative under the International Law began fencing of the Border in the April of 2017.

A lot needs to be done to improve Pakistan relations. Above all both sides need to accept the reality that their destinies are bound together. Pakistan cannot become a regional trade and energy hub, a corridor and gateway to Central Asian region and bear the fruits of the CPEC. Afghanistan cannot become a viable state without a friendly and supportive Pakistan. While it is in the interest of Pakistan to have a stable and economically viable Afghanistan, it is in the interest of Afghanistan not to be Asia's Denmark where regional countries can fight over their rivalries and wars. Without Pakistan on its side, Kabul would continue to suffer while hurting or isolating Pakistan won't serve its purpose. (Zeb, 2017) Both countries should accept this and workout their own version of *adverse partnership model*. (Zeb, 2013) For this, an integrated and stabilized intelligent mechanism is necessary which help in quick and timely contact between the two countries. Intelligence sharing is an important aspect of this mechanism. Another important step is creation of conducive environment of acceptability by the political leadership within respective countries to have tolerant approach towards others opinions. Borders define sovereign states, and Afghanistan, being a sovereign and independent state should accept its defined border to uphold its sovereignty and prevent undue 'interference' from external elements.

Border Management framework needs to be implemented across Pak-Afghan border comprehensively. Islamabad and Kabul need to work closely to manage and regulate the management of border as a secure border will lead to a formal economic interdependence between the two states. Until and unless the border is completely secure and managed by security forces of both the states, the phenomenon of interdiction, deterrence and exploited networked intelligence is not applied; economic interdependence might remain a myth for both the states.

Pakistan has the right to finish the fence permissible by the international law under the Geneva Convention on law of treaties 1969. Kabul on its part, should also take security measures on its side of the border to make the circle tighter around militant elements. The border fencing by Pakistan does not mean that there will be any hurdles for the families, businessmen and students living on both sides of the border but it will actually regulate the flow. Pak-Afghan border fencing has certainly regularized certain issues such as flow of people as well as trade across both the states, yet the issues are not completely resolved. Secondly, once the network of terrorists and drug traffickers will be broken through mutual cooperation of state authorities, it will be much easier to halt terrorist attacks in both the states. Lastly,

economic interdependence not through bilateral ties per se but through multilateral programs, multilateral treaties, involvement of international institutions and actors such United Nation, WTO or regional institutions such as SCO or regional program such CAREC, can put that extra pressure on both sides.

A fenced border would address Kabul's misgiving about militants crossing over to their safe havens on the Pakistani side. Objecting to the fencing could be explained only if one accepts that Kabul still has territorial claims over Pakistani territory. In this case, it becomes a matter of national security of Pakistan. Islamabad-Kabul's future is interconnected and mutually dependent. While Islamabad has to be a bigger brother, Kabul must also take into account that geographies are permanent and so are neighbors.

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