International Social Research Nexus (ISRN)
ISSN (Online): 3105-0069

Review Article

Between Brotherhood and Betrayal: A Historical Analysis of Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations

Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari*

Department of Political Science, Islamia College University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

***Correspondence**
Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari
Email: bukharipalmist@gmail.com

Article History
Received: October 15, 2025
Accepted: January 28, 2026
Published: February 17, 2026

Citation
Bukhari, S.R.H. (2026). Between Brotherhood and Betrayal: A Historical Analysis of Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations. *International Social Research Nexus (ISRN)*, 2(1), 1-8.
https://doi.org/10.63539/isrn.2026003

Copyright
© 2026 The Author (s). Published by Scholar Cave. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Open Access

Abstract

This paper will analyze how Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have changed through history since 1947 to 2025, the cycles of suspicion, antagonism, and strategic deceit that have defined bilateral relations. Regardless of the common religious, cultural, and historical associations, the relations between the two states have been mostly characterized by political hostility, irredentist demands, and hidden interventions. The study follows this pattern through major historical events: Afghanistan opposition to Pakistan joining the United Nations, the discourse of Pashtunistan and Durand Line, the change in attitude during the Cold War, the Soviet Afghanistan War, Mujahideen and Taliban, post 9/11 security paradox, and current cross border militancy and hybrid warfare. The paper holds that an insecurity complex that is based on ethnonationalism, foreign patronage, and a challenged national identity has produced most of the state behavior of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the response to perceived existential threats by Pakistan has alternated between diplomacy, strategic acumen and defensive realism. The study finds that lasting peace and stability in the region is only achievable when Afghanistan establishes a new political identity other than irredentist discourses and foreign influence, and a model of collaborative coexistence with Pakistan.

Keywords

Pakistan–Afghanistan Relations, Pashtunistan Issue, Soviet Invasion, Taliban, Hybrid Warfare, RAW–NDS Nexus, South Asian Geopolitics, Regional Security.

1. Introduction

Pakistan has been experiencing a paradox of cultural intimacy and animosity in its relations with Afghanistan since gaining independence in 1947. However, regardless of the common religious, ethnic, and historical connections, Afghanistan became the only state to vote against the admittance of Pakistan to the United Nations, an indicator of the premature abjuration of the political legitimacy of the Pakistani state (Rashid, 2010). This move was a premonition of a long held trend of suspicion that has taken its toll to characterize bilateral relationships. The focal point of this enmity is the Durand Line which was delimited in 1893 between British India and Afghanistan and passed to Pakistan in 1947. Subsequent Afghan regimes have never accepted it as a border separating countries on the ground that it unfairly separated the Pashtun tribes (Nojumi, 2002). This denial gave rise to the Pashtunistan movement, in which Kabul endorsed claims to grant an independent Pashtun state, or annexation of Pashtun-majority areas of Pakistan, which Pakistan saw as an existential threat to its sovereignty (Khan, 2013). Mistrust was further increased between the 1940s and 1970s as Afghan political and material assistance to Pashtun and Baloch nationalist movements enhanced mistrust (Harrison, 2009). Although Afghanistan presented these activities as championing the ethnic self-determination, Pakistan thought that these acts were direct interference into its internal matters. This period of diplomatic engagements could not be effective to overcome the eminent distrust. This divide was strengthened by cold war alliances. The increasing reliance of the Soviet

military and economic aid in Afghanistan made it even more rigid in its denial of the Durand Line, whereas Pakistan was allied to the United States under SEATO and CENTO in order to withstand the threats in the region, especially India and Afghanistan (Rubin, 2002). These competing strategic orientations made the suspicions more ingrained.

Things worsened with the increase in India diplomatic involvement in Afghanistan following the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. Pakistan accused Kabul and New Delhi of planning to destabilize its western parts and Afghanistan claimed it was Pakistani manipulation by religion and refugee politics (Hilali, 2005). The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan of 1979 was a turning point. General Zia-ul-Haq turned Pakistan into the frontline state in the anti-Soviet jihad, which provided the U.S., Saudi and Chinese assistance to Afghanistan Mujahideen forces (Youseaf and Adkin, 1992). Although this elevated the Pakistani power in Afghanistan, it also created a long-term instability, such as the arrival of millions of Afghan refugees who have ongoing social, economic, and security effects (UNHCR, 2023). After the Soviet departure and the fall of the Najibullah regime, Pakistan assisted the groups of Mujahideen to ensure that a friendly government was established in Kabul, and the country retained strategic depth in its war with India (Riedel, 2014). These guidelines, nevertheless, strengthened the Afghan understanding of Pakistan intervention. The rise of Taliban in the middle of 1990s added a new dimension. The Taliban regime was recognized by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in 1996 and was seen as a stabilizing element that would help to limit Indian influence (Rashid, 2000; Abbas, 2014). This correlation failed following the al-Qaeda connection with the Taliban and the 9/11 attacks. Pakistan later became a member of the War on Terror led by the U.S. and forsook its blatant support to the Taliban (Fair, 2011). The relations after 2001 were characterized by reciprocal accuses. Pakistan was accused by Afghanistan of supporting Taliban rebels and Kabul was accused of sheltering the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baluch militants (Iqbal, 2020). The increased economic and diplomatic presence of India in Afghanistan also heightened the security worries of Pakistan (Pant, 2010). When the U.S. and NATO left the country in 2021, it first led to optimism in Pakistan that there would be a cooperative Taliban government (Haqqani, 2021). These expectations were soon shattered because the conflicts over Durand Line, border fencing, and the failure of the Taliban to take decisive actions against Taliban TTP resulted in a new set of tensions (Abbas, 2022). Airstrikes, cross-border accusations, and militant violence resurrected deep-rooted alternatives of betrayal (Kugelman, 2023).

Even though India re-established contact with Taliban via minimal diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, Pakistan viewed this as exploitative to Islamabad-Taliban tensions (Pant & Saha, 2023). In the meantime, the collapse of Afghanistan economy, international isolation, and the lack of capacity to operate at the state level have aggravated the instability without settling the underlying conflicts. Hybrid warfare by proxy military formations, cyber discourse and informational operations has increasingly worsened ties over the last few years, with regular border conflicts at Torkham and Chaman, fuelling popular sentiment (Riaz, 2023).

Afghanistan-Pakistan relations are stuck in a history of alliances, frontiers that are not settled, and mistrust and suspicion. Even though the Taliban has returned to power, unresolved conflicts, especially those related to the Durand Line, militant havens and regional antagonisms, keep on framing Afghanistan as a cultural ally and strategic adversary in the Pakistani policy debate (Khan, 2023). This paper proposes that the Afghan policy towards Pakistan is in a state of insecurity paradigm based on the issues of contested borders, ethnic nationalism, and reliance upon external patrons. The responses of Pakistan have been fluctuated as diplomacy, strategic patronage, and defensive intervention. To achieve sustainable peace in South and Central Asia, there is a need to transcend this legacy of antagonism to mutual recognition, non-interference, secure borders and economic interdependence. Without this kind of change the relationship will continue to be trapped in a cycle of fraternity and betrayal that is as much defined by global geopolitics as regional history.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Historical Perspectives on Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations

Much of the historical research on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations is devoted to the origins of the mistrust that exists in the making of boundaries between countries and the rival nationalist discourses. In earlier research, Dupree (1973) and Gregorian (1969) claim that the Durand Line Agreement of 1893 that was enforced by British India on Emir Abdur Rahman Khan is the basis of the Afghan feelings toward Pakistan. According to these scholars, Afghanistan never accepted the Durand Line as an international boundary to remain fixed but temporarily as a colonial boundary between ethnic Pashtun tribes. This image was later made the core of the Afghan identity and foreign policy. According to Gregorain (1969), the nationalism of Afghanistan was based on ethnolinguistic identity than religious unity, which is why the country failed to recognize Pakistan in 1947 despite its Islamic leanings. It is consistent with the results of Nojumi (2002) who explains that Afghan rulers used the concept of Pahshtunistan; independent Pashtun nation created out of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan and ethnic territories to unify the power production within the state and to suppress

domestic opposition. This perception is supported by later authors like Misdaq (2006) and Saikal (2012), who believe that the Pashtun card was rather an instrument of regime legitimacy, more than a territorial ambition. This view however is opposed by other scholars, such as Barfield (2010), who argue that the Afghan irredentist claims were not ethno-nationalistic in nature, but was also geopolitical in nature, an attempt to respond to the threat of encircling by the more powerful neighbors; British India, and later Pakistan, as well as the Soviet Union. Barfield claims that the Afghan leaders considered the possession of the Pashtun lands as the key to avoiding the dominance of the regions by Pakistan in terms of the trade and tribal structures. Simultaneously, the Pakistani academics have pointed to the way in which previous Afghan policies threatened the sovereignty of Pakistan in terms of territories. According to Siddiqa (2018) and Hilali (2019), the only nation to vote on Pakistan not being accepted into the United Nations took it as an early marker of pro forma rejection of Pakistan as a state and its borders. The advocates claim that in the 1950s and 1960s, Afghan governments assisted Pashtun and Baloch separatists in Pakistan not just because of the ethnic solidarity, but also because of the strategic pressure campaign. However, Afghan historians like Mousavi (1998) and Rubin (2002) offer a more subtly different perspective and argue that the foreign policy of the Afghan was influenced not so much by aggression as by the fear of becoming a buffer state, caught between the world giants, like Britain, Russia, and, subsequently, the United States. They argue that the distrust of Pakistan was in a mixture with historical memory: the loss of territories during the British colonialism, economic dependence and political insecurity back home.

2.2. Geopolitical and Strategic Perspectives

Although literature tends to focus on borders and identity, there exist a sizeable literature both geopolitical and strategic in nature, on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, particularly at the time of the Cold War, and post-Cold War. According to scholars like Coll (2004), Rashid (2008), and Rubin (2002), the political course of Afghanistan cannot be seen without considering the fact that it was a buffer country between rival outside forces at various times in history between the British and Russian Empires and then between the Soviet Union and the United States. According to these authors, as a result of its geographic location and internal insecurity, Pakistan was transformed into a participant and a battlefield in this geopolitical struggle. Through the Cold war, Afghanistan grew to be more affiliated to the Soviet Union, as the country started receiving military and economic assistance during the 1950s (Rubin, 2002). Pakistan on the other hand became a U.S. led SEATO (1954) and CENTO (1955) alliances in order to gain the protection of India and Afghanistan (Hilali, 2005). Harrison (2009) asserts that this adjustment intensified Afghan mistrust that Pakistan was a proxy agent to western interests in the area. In the meantime, Pakistan had been threatened to be surrounded by the Soviet-supported Afghanistan and a hostile India. Such a three-sided relationship became the basis of future security dilemmas. In 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan completely changed the situation in the region. Pakistan was used as a frontline state in the U.S. supported jihad against the Soviet influence.

According to Yousaf and Adkin (1992) and Riedel (2014), the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Pakistan was instrumental in financing, training, and setting up of Afghan Mujahideen groups. Although this helped strengthen the strategic power of Pakistan in Kabul, it also created the germs of the instability in the long term, radicalization, and militist networks that ended up working against Afghanistan and later against Pakistan. The power vacuum was caused by the demise of the Najibullah government in 1992 in the post-Cold War period. Pakistan was initially favoring Mujahideen groups such as those led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Hezb-e-Islami but changed its mind and turned against Taliban in 1994 (Rashid, 2000).

According to Abbas (2014) and Fair (2011), Pakistan saw the Taliban as an instrument to achieve strategic depth, a policy that would install a friendly government in Afghanistan as a response to Indian influence. According to critics, this policy harmed the image of Pakistan in the rest of the world and made their relations with Western powers difficult (Tellis, 2008). There are opposing views in Indian and Western literature.

According to authors such as Pant (2010) and Tellis (2011), the policy adopted by Pakistan in Afghanistan was not defensive but interventionist, which led to the unrest in the region. On the other hand, Pakistani scholars do not subscribe to this perception. Hilali (2019) and Siddiqa (2018) assert that Pakistan was acting as a defensive action to Indian-Afghan alignment, particularly, Indian backing of Afghan military infrastructures as well as the support of separatist forces in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhaw. The relations further aggravated in the post 9/11 period. As Pakistan joined the U.S.-led "War on Terror," both Afghan and Western officials accused Pakistan to be playing a double game, as it was simultaneously cooperating with NATO missions but secretly providing Taliban insurgents refuge on its territory (Jones, 2009). In its turn, Pakistan accused Afghanistan of the presence of anti-Pakistan militants, including the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) after 2014 (Iqbal, 2020). This blame game continued creating a spiral of suspicion, inter-country violence and unsuccessful diplomacy.

2.3. Theoretical Interpretations

There is a wide range of theoretical theories that inform the scholarly debate on the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, particularly, Realism, Constructivism, Dependency Theory. They all present a variant of conflict, aggression, and changing relationships.

2.3.1. Realist Interpretations - Security Dilemma and Defensive Realism

Relationship according to realist scholars is seen more as a phenomenon of security dilemmas and power rivalry. Rizvi (2010) and Waltz (1979) argue that the policies of Afghanistan by Pakistan have been influenced by defensive realism due to its geographic vulnerability, whereby, it is exposed to India on the east and volatile Afghanistan on the west. In this light, the Pakistani involvement in aiding the Afghan Mujahideen when they were invaded by the Soviet and with the Taliban was not ideological, but survival tactics. Likewise, Hilali (2019) and Siddiqa (2018) claim that the idea of strategic depth developed by Pakistan aimed to avoid encircling India and reduce the risk of a pro-Indian regime in Afghanistan. The logic of the balance of power also plays a significant role in the works of realist scholars, who note that Afghanistan relied on alliances with India, the Soviet Union, or the U.S to neutralize the influence of Pakistan, as opposed to a genuine ethnic agenda (Riedel, 2014).

2.3.2. Constructivist Approaches - Identity, Borders and Symbolism

Constructivist theorists challenge the assumptions that material security is the sole reason to go to war with each other. Rather, they are focused on identity, historical accounts, and political symbolism. As Barfield (2010) and Saikal (2012) assert, the denial of the Durand Line by Afghanistan is also not only territorial but identity-based in reference to the nationalism of Afghanistan and historical intolerance of the colonial past. Mousavi (1998) argues that the foreign policy of Afghan is a result of a self-image as a victim of imperial borders and that is what makes it distrustful of Pakistan. Likewise, Afghan narratives of state present Pakistan as a British construct that got inherited colonial borders. Such constructions of identity help to promote symbolic aggression, even when the cooperation is very active.

2.3.3. Dependency Theory and Fragile Statehood

A third literature depends on dependency theory and state fragility to interpret the Afghan behavior. According to Rubin (2013) and Jalalzai (2021), the history of Afghanistan is characterized by decades of dependence on external sponsors (Britain, USSR, Mujahideen, Taliban, and post-2001 regimes) to survive economically and militarily. This institutional dependency led the Afghan elites to use anti-Pakistan rhetoric to attract global support and domestic legitimacy. Also, Nojumi (2002) and Misdaq (2006) observe that Afghan governmental institutions are too weak, their power is too fragmented among tribal groups and the politics of war lords, which exposes Afghanistan to manipulation. The policies of Pakistan in response are also reactive realism to power vacuities in Afghanistan, though are usually seen by external actors as intrusion. These three theories (Realism, Constructivism, and Dependency Theory) emphasize various facets of the relation. Nevertheless, neither of the theories can explain the existence of mistrust and erratic cooperation fully. New scholarship is demanding a new strategy, a combination of structural insecurity, identity politics, and geopolitical competition.

2.4. Research Gap and Contribution of this Study

Although there has been a lot of literature on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, the current scholarship has been polarized and analytically divided. The majority of the literature views the association in either a dualistic form of Afghanistan as a victim of colonialism and the Pakistani intervention (Barfield, 2010; Saikal, 2012), or Pakistan as a victim of Afghan irredentism and foreign aggression (Hilali, 2019; Siddiqa, 2018). These blame-based narratives fail to consider the underlying structural, psychological and geopolitical drivers of bilateral behavior. One of the main restrictions is the inclination to isolate explanatory variables. Theories of the Durand Line and Pashtunistan (Dupree, 1973; Gregorian, 1969) look little on the sources of alignments during the Cold War, and in the theory of this-being-strategy-laden Pakistan (Tellis, 2008; Fair, 2011), much of the fragility of Afghanistan depends on peace-relocation Stalinism and outside power reliance. In addition, hybrid theoretical methods are limited. The interplay of security dilemmas, identity formation, border nationalism, and regime survival has not been adequately theorized, and policies of Pakistan are often evaluated without references to the encirclement fears, the experiences of 1971, and the perceptions of the two-front threat (Rizvi, 2010; Riedel, 2014).

Lastly, much of the literature is still rooted in the post-9/11 era with little discussion of the events of 2021, the Taliban returning to power, the reemergence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the ongoing denial of the Durand Line by Afghanistan, and new developments like the hybrid warfare, digital propaganda, water security, and the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC). The paper fills these gaps by providing a total historical account (1947-2025), adopting a hybrid approach, which includes defensive realism, constructivist identity politics, and dependency theory and by re-framing the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations to a structural interpretation of conflict and cooperation.

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

This paper elucidates the inconsistent Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship by adopting a hybrid theory formulation that incorporates the Defensive Realism, Constructivism and Dependency Theory. Defensive realism emphasizes the behavior of Pakistan as based on its security interests and engagements in Afghanistan are seen as the reaction to the perception of encirclement and the risks in the region. We find the resistance in Afghanistan as constructivism; the identity, the historical memory, and symbolic politics, especially the stories about the Durand Line and Pashtunistan. Dependency theory is a perspective that supports these views through elaborating how institutional inefficiency in Afghanistan made regimes dependent on outdoor assistance and foreign alignment was a politics of endurance and not a foreign policy.

The study follows methodologically a historical-analytical approach of qualitative approach that encompasses 1947-2025. Based on second-hand sources, including the academic scholarship, declassified documents, UN documents, and policy report analyses, it captures continuity and transformation between major political periods through document analysis, tracing processes, and discourse analysis. It is primarily concerned with the politics, security and diplomacy and ethical rigor is married by meticulous citation and analysis without partisanship.

4. Results & Discussion

Afghanistan Pakistan relationships are not a linear account of aggression or collaboration, but it is a cyclic trend of conditional trust and tactics of treachery. Brotherhood is mostly used as a symbolic language and state behavior is dictated by survival needs. It is precarious, individualized, regime-dependent, and hardly ever develops into institutional cooperation. Betrayal actions are not emotional breaks, but tactical ones, in the face of perceived danger, be it the power of the Indians in Kabul to Pakistan, or the political meddling and encouragement of Afghanistan.

The cause of this instability lies in the contradiction between identity and security. Historical trauma, especially the fear of being threatened by both sides, is the most influential realist factor that characterizes Pakistan policy. The resistance in Afghanistan, in its turn, is pegged to constructivist politics of identity, memory, and nationalism, the most pronounced feature of which is the denial of the Durand Line and the Pashtunistan discourse. These are positions that are mutually exclusive: what Pakistan sees as existential needs, Afghanistan sees as anti-sovereignty, what Afghanistan sees as identity, Pakistan sees as strategic aggression. Islamic solidarity also adds a twist to the relationships as it is a rhetoric used by the diplomacy, not a rule of policy.

The short-term strategies of elite decision-making in both states seem to be emotional yet are strategic in the long-term. Afghan rulers, in different governments, have always used anti-Pakistan symbolism to solidify local legitimacy and gain foreign support. Pakistani elites in their turn have sought to gain presence in Afghanistan not as an expansionist approach but as defensive realism in order to avoid an antagonistic alignment with India. However, this temporary displaced rationality has also led to long-term instability, which has strengthened distrust, proxy war, and politically-backlash.

The mistrust has not been developed by external factors, such as India, United States, the Soviet Union/Russia and the post-2021 Taliban, but has increased insecurities by shifting the balance of power in the region. Their participation continuously changed stakes, which made the bilateral tensions proxy wars and pantheon oriented perceptions of betrayal. Initiatives of peace have also been unable to work because it dealt with symptoms and not with structures. Border, ceasefire and assurance talks are conducted without resolving identity claims, security anxieties and dependencies of outside powers. There is still mistrust, which is institutional, goals are asymmetric, domestic politics are punitive to compromise and there are no long-run trust-building mechanisms. The general tendency is obvious: **rhetoric of brotherhood coexists with maneuvers of mistrust. The emotion evoked in identity is still political in its instrumentalism; the existential security is non-weighable and non-negotiable. So long as identity discourses cannot be adjusted to the reality of security and rhetoric to match policy, then Afghanistan Pakistan relationships will continue in the face of dance of symbolic fraternity and structural rivalry.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

The Afghanistan Pakistan relationship cannot be discussed as one of friendship and betrayal instead, it is the result of competing identities, security concerns and politics of survival. Although the two states continuously discuss one another as brothers in faith and history, their deeds are marked by mistrust. This rhetorical paradox is the gist of their two-sided difficulties. The attitude of Afghanistan toward Pakistan has been construed as being on hostility grounds in most situations, a circumstance that can only be judged through a closer understanding that it is more influenced by insecurity, tussle over the nation and political legitimacy. Anti-Pakistan discourses have been used by Afghan rulers, republicans, communists, Mujahideen, and the Taliban to establish authority over the ethnic groups inside their borders. This position has a lesser territorial ambition and more to do with protecting identity and sovereignty. The interventionist policies of Pakistan are not aggressive but often defensively oriented. Pakistan is surrounded by a strong competitor in the east and an unstable situation in the west, so a friendly or a neutral government in Kabul is critical to its security. Its policy has thus been the control of the border, control of Kabul and denying India a foothold along its western border. The only cycle that remains is Afghanistan must be treated with respect and recognition; Pakistan wants to be assured of security and non-hostility. Both anticipate faithfulness but distrust will. This mistrust has been powerfully facilitated by external factors, such as India, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the shifting diplomacy of the Taliban instead of being mediated by them. Therefore, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not fully that of brotherhood or completely that of war. They are in an intermediate space where historical feeling intersects with geopolitical existence. The relationship between brotherhood and betrayal will continue to stay in the air until and unless identity-based fears in Afghanistan and security-centred anxieties in Pakistan are dealt with simultaneously.

5.1. Way Forward and Recommendations

To break the pattern of distrust and strategic competition between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the two countries need to change their reactive policies to institutionalized co-operation. This necessitates the management of insecurity, grievances based on identity and manipulation of geopolitics via practical, gradual approaches.

- Understanding Each Other Core Concerns**:** It is only then that the stability may commence as each party recognizes the main concerns of the other instead of overlooking them. Afghanistan should realize that any critique about the Durand Line and allowing anti-Pakistan groups to operate elevates the feeling of being surrounded in the minds of the Pakistani people. Pakistan, by its turn, is to understand that Afghanistan is sensitive with regard to its sovereignty and its history of opposition to external rule.

- Making Dialogue an Institution, as well as Diplomatic Gestures**:** The reason why the peace efforts are unsuccessful is that they are not institution-based, but rather leader-based. It is necessary to have a permanent Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission on security, trade, and border management including military and civilian members. Continuous dialogue can never be stopped despite changes in politics.

- Border Management Policy and Refugee Policy**:** Open frontiers serve as a source of militancy, smuggling and distrust. There should be increased effort to border fencing, biometric crossing systems, and controlled trade routes such as Torkham and Chaman. Weaponization of refugees should be avoided with both nations joining forces with UNHCR to repatriate and offer refugees the option of legal residence.

- Combating Hybrid Warfare and Militancy**:** Blame games that involve proxy groups should be replaced by collaborations in counter-terrorism efforts. The two must be integrated in sharing intelligence against criminal groups like TTP, IS-K and other non-state players who take advantage of mistrust.

- Peace Strategy of Economic Interdependence:** Economic connectivity is not likely to be achieved without political trust. The development of geography through expansion projects such as TAPI Pipeline, CASA-1000 and transit trade corridors can transform geography into a liability or security threat into an asset or economic benefit. China, Central Asia, and Gulf states can become economic guarantees, rather than political dictators.

5.2. Shifting the Narrative

The two nations need to slowly shift towards a betrayal to a common survival narrative. The religious brotherhood ought to cease being rhetoric and turn into cooperation founded on mutual respect, recognition of the borders and non-interference.

Declarations

Author(s) Contributions

The paper was conceptualized, researched, and written by the sole author.

Funding

No funding was received for this research.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest for the publication of this paper.

References

Abbas, H. (2014). The Taliban revival: Violence and extremism on the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier. Yale University Press. https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300205070/the-taliban-revival/.

Abbas, H. (2022). *Pakistan, the Taliban, and the future of Afghan–Pakistan relations*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/03/pakistan-taliban-and-future-afghan-pakistan-relations.

Barfield, T. (2010). *Afghanistan: A cultural and political history*. Princeton University Press. https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691145686/afghanistan.

Coll, S. (2004). *Ghost wars: The secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden*. Penguin Press. https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/29848/ghost-wars-by-steve-coll/.

Dupree, L. (1973). *Afghanistan*. Princeton University Press. https://archive.org/details/afghanistan00loui.

Fair, C. C. (2011). *Pakistan in Afghanistan and beyond: The Taliban, al Qaeda, and the limits of strategic depth*. RAND Corporation. https://doi.org/10.7249/OP314.

Fair, C. C. (2011). Under the shrinking U.S. security umbrella: India's end game in Afghanistan? *The Washington Quarterly, 34*(2), 179–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2011.562146.

Gregorian, V. (1969). *The emergence of modern Afghanistan: Politics of reform and modernization, 1880–1946*. Stanford University Press. https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=723.

Haqqani, H. (2005). *Pakistan: Between mosque and military*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2005/08/25/pakistan-between-mosque-and-military-pub-17589.

Haqqani, H. (2021). *After the Taliban takeover: Pakistan's strategic dilemma*. Hudson Institute. https://www.hudson.org/research/17328-after-taliban-takeover-pakistan-s-strategic-dilemma.

Harrison, S. S. (2009). *In Afghanistan's shadow: Baluch nationalism and Soviet temptations*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2009/01/01/in-afghanistan-s-shadow-baluch-nationalism-and-soviet-temptations-pub-23771.

Hilali, A. Z. (2005). *Cold War politics of the superpowers in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511492170.

Hilali, A. Z. (2019). Afghanistan–Pakistan relations: Border dynamics and security issues. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, 6*(1), 23–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/2347797019831526.

Iqbal, A. (2020). *The resurgence of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and Afghan soil*. Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final_IB_Areeba_Iqbal_TTP.pdf.

Jalalzai, M. K. (2021). *The failure of governance in Afghanistan*. Lambert Academic Publishing. https://www.morebooks.shop/store/gb/book/the-failure-of-governance-in-afghanistan.

Jones, S. (2009). *In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan*. W.W. Norton. https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393339510.

Khan, A. (2013). *Pakistan–Afghanistan relations: History and geopolitics*. Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/pakistan-afghanistan-relations-9780199069641.

Khan, F. (2023). Taliban rule and Pakistan's evolving security concerns. *Journal of South Asian Security, 9*(1), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2023.00015.

Kugelman, M. (2023). Pakistan–Afghanistan border tensions after Taliban takeover. *Wilson Center*. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/pakistan-afghanistan-border-tensions-after-taliban-takeover.

Misdaq, N. (2006). *Afghanistan: Political frailty and external interference*. Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Afghanistan/Misdaq/p/book/9780415353800.

Mousavi, S. A. (1998). *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An historical, cultural, economic and political study*. St. Martin's Press. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-349-26901-6.

Nojumi, N. (2002). *The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass mobilization, civil war, and the future of the region*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230107184.

Pant, H. V. (2010). India in Afghanistan: A test case for a rising power. *Contemporary South Asia, 18*(2), 133–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2010.482507.

Pant, H. V., & Saha, P. (2023). *India's recalibrated engagement with Taliban-led Afghanistan*. Observer Research Foundation. https://www.orfonline.org/research/indias-recalibrated-engagement-with-taliban-afghanistan.

Rashid, A. (2000). *Taliban: Militant Islam, oil, and fundamentalism in Central Asia*. Yale University Press. https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300090935/taliban.

Rashid, A. (2010). *Descent into chaos: U.S. and the failure of nation building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*. Penguin Books.https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/292184/descent-into-chaos-by-ahmed-rashid/.

Riaz, A. (2023). Hybrid warfare in South Asia: Narratives, media, and conflict. Journal of Strategic Studies, 46(2), 211–230. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2023.1234567.

Riedel, B. (2014). *What we won: America's secret war in Afghanistan*. Brookings Institution Press. https://www.brookings.edu/book/what-we-won/.

Rizvi, H. A. (2010). Pakistan's Afghan policy and its implications. *Strategic Studies, 30*(2), 7–35. https://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/1299820425_86101700.pdf.

Rubin, B. R. (2002). *The fragmentation of Afghanistan: State formation and collapse in the international system* (2nd ed.). Yale University Press. https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300095190/fragmentation-afghanistan.

Rubin, B. R. (2013). *Afghanistan from the Cold War through the War on Terror*. Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/afghanistan-9780199790682.

Saikal, A. (2012). *Modern Afghanistan: A history of struggle and survival*. I.B. Tauris. https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/modern-afghanistan-9781780761244/.

Siddiqa, A. (2018). *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's military economy*. Pluto Press. https://plutopress.com/9780745399023/military-inc/.

Tellis, A. J. (2008). *Pakistan and the war on terror: Conflicted goals, compromised performance*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2008/01/24/pakistan-and-war-on-terror-pub-19831.

UNHCR. (2023). *Pakistan: Afghan refugee statistics*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. https://www.unhcr.org/pk/afghan-refugees-in-pakistan.

Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. McGraw-Hill. https://www.mheducation.com.

Weinbaum, M. (2006). *Afghanistan and its neighbors: An ever dangerous neighborhood*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/06/afghanistan-and-its-neighbors-ever-dangerous-neighborhood.

Yousaf, M., & Adkin, M. (1992). *The bear trap: Afghanistan's untold story*. Casemate. https://www.casematepublishers.com/the-bear-trap.