



Policy Brief
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Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: An “Unembellished Veracity”

The burning of Pakistani flag, right after the seventy-two hours of the Pakistan Independence day, at the Chaman border by a group of Afghan demonstrators in an unfortunate episode as it damaged the already flagging bilateral relationship. While celebrating their 97th anniversary, the Afghan protestors started pelting the Friendship Gate with stones, smashing windowpanes of the building and shouting slogans against the Pakistan.

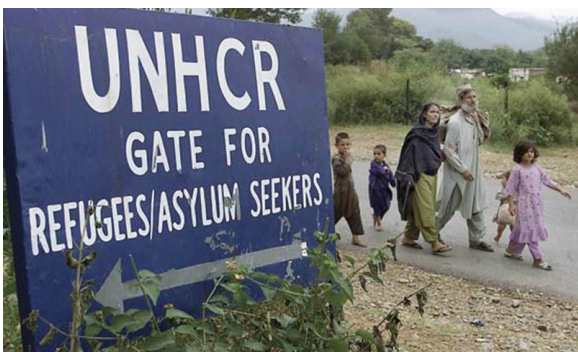


The Afghan protest occurred right after the protest in Pakistan against the Modi’s statement about Baluchistan which led to a massive public response in Baluchistan and was supported by strong words from Foreign Office and provincial assemblies of Gilgit-Baltistan. The ultimate purpose of this protest is to oppose

Pakistan and support Indian government and Prime Minister's statement regarding Baluchistan. The event has eventually resulted in the closure of the border for an unlimited period with trucks loaded with NATO supplies stuck on both sides of the border.



Pakistan has hosted Afghan refugees numbering in millions for decades, and accommodate hundreds of thousands of people who were left homeless as a result of the war that was not in their first place. But instead of being obliged, Afghanistan always dovetailing with Indian statements regarding Pakistan.



On the recent Modi's statement on Baluchistan, Mr. Karzai claimed that since Pakistan is free to make statements about Kashmir and Afghanistan, India is free to do so about Baluchistan. Backing the Indian PM, Mr.

Karzai has also fanned non-existent flames by equating Indian oppression in Kashmir with Baluchistan which is not only inappropriate but also an immature act on his part. This sort of back-up statements is becoming a regular feature now.



The border incident grounds these words with a sense of proximity and tension, and the fact that the stalemate is in its second day goes to show that. The Pakistani Government must be careful to keep these two issues apart. Modi's intention is to divert attention from the unrest in Kashmir, by dispensing irresponsible statement regarding Baluchistan, and the rise in noise regarding the province serves just that purpose.



The shadowy affairs between these three immediate neighbors in South Asia will have direct implications on the peace, security,

prosperity, and stability of the whole region. India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan must understand that creating policies on delusions and supported by unrealistic rhetoric will excavate mistrust. Instead, they must pursue rapprochement by addressing differences between them, strengthening state-to-state partnerships, and further confidence building measures.

The “Bugbear” in 7th SAARC Conference

The 2016 SAARC summit was called for practical solutions to address the challenges on controlling cybercrimes, transnational organized crimes to ensure future for the youth, women and children. Furthermore, it stressed the need for improving monitoring system, exchange of information and exchange of technology to fight these common social evils within the region. But the continuous tension between the SAARC members has diverted the actual purpose of its creation and the agenda of promoting political and economic cooperation in the region is now far behind.



The SAARC meeting was clouded in controversy over the absence of Bangladeshi Home Minister Asad-uz-Zaman Khan Kamal, as well as the escalating tension over Kashmir. On the other hand, the participation of India’s Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in the Ministers’ conference is a highly commendable development for both Pakistan-India ties as well as regional stability.



Similarly, his immediate departure from the SAARC meeting, after the debate on contentious issues of terrorism and Kashmir, is a big question mark. It is high time for both the countries to realize that how their persisting cold war held back the regional summit from achieving any significant progress for several decades. The conference held in Kathmandu was twice postponed in 2002 because of this very rift in relations, and 12 years later, at the inaugural session of the 18th SAARC summit, a lack of pleasantries prevailed between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At the present time, it is very necessary for Pakistan to initiate a process of dialogue to clear its stance in all military and diplomatic affairs that affect its neighbors or other countries. Both Pakistan and India have long designed their foreign policies on the lines of existential security, driven by paranoia over survival, and now they should start pushing for collaboration and stability instead.

Pakistan must raise global attention towards the atrocities being committed in Kashmir, while paying heed to other important matters pertaining to its own progress. The dismal state of human development in South Asia continues to be dismissed by both Pakistan and India, while indicators of poverty and hunger paint an abysmal picture. Now, member states must focus on economic liberation and well-being of a country's citizens, which can only be achieved by establishing regional connectivity and trade ties.



Pakistan needs active trade partners to survive the prevalent cutthroat competition in world market and SAARC appears to be an excellent

platform for it to make new business allies. Pakistan has been a strong advocate of stepping up regional efforts to ensure energy security through sharing of indigenous sources and shared the perception that connectivity is always critical to the progress and prosperity of the region. Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has committed to jointly working with SAARC member countries to fight terrorism, corruption and organized crimes.

SAARC region is blessed with tremendous human and natural resources, so it can provide a platform to optimally harness the regional potential for peace and prosperity for Pakistan. Pakistan has always been supportive of initiatives taken by SAARC to advance its ideals and objectives as enshrined in its charter. Therefore, it would be a good start for both SAARC and Pakistan to reconsider their priorities.

Dynamics of Four-Nation Counter Terrorism Alliance

A new quadrilateral counter-terrorism alliance has been unveiled by Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan on 3 August, 2016. The announcement about the new four-nation mechanism, known as Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM) in counter-terrorism, came as top commanders from the participating countries

gathered in the Chinese city of Urumqi for the inaugural leadership meeting.

The meeting was attended by General Raheel Sharif, COAS Pakistan Army; Qadam Shah Shamim, CGS Afghan National Army; General Fang Fenghui, Chief of Joint Staff Department of Central Military Commission; and Major General E.A. Cobidrzoda, first Deputy Defence Minister and CGS Tajikistan armed forces.



The QCCM was a Chinese initiate, but General Raheel Sharif actively contributed to its establishment. For this purpose, he visited Afghanistan and Tajikistan in March 2016.

Raheel Sharif visit to Kabul on that occasion coincided with that of General Fang, who was also there for talks on the alliance. The participant countries agreed that terrorism and extremism are serious threat to regional peace and stability and therefore they initiated a framework to cooperate for tackling these threats. Under this agreement these states would cooperate in evaluation counter-terrorism

situation, clue verification, intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism capacity building, counter-terrorism joint training exercises and personnel training.



Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan agreed that QCCM should adhere to the doctrines of UN charter and other universally recognized principles and norms of international law, especially those on maintaining peace and security, safe-guarding independence and quality with mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. These states emphasized that the formation of the QCCM was not intended to target any other state or international organization.



China's counter-terrorism project is meant to

address the growing threat of militancy in the region. China is worried about ISIS gaining a permanent foothold in Afghanistan, and establishing links for Uighur militants.

Furthermore, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, militant groups have increased operations and the whole region is suffering from challenging security issues. Therefore, this initiative is very significant for Pakistan as in December 2015 Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that China was seeking a leading role for Pakistan to resolve conflicts in Afghanistan. QCCM will not only boost the regional security but it will help Pakistan and China to increase their involvement in the Afghan peace process as well as to secure their economic interest in the region.



