

TOWARDS CROSS-BORDER SECURITY

Edited by Alexander Neill



Royal United Services Institute

OCCASIONAL PAPER

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Front cover: An Afghan border police officer in Spin Boldak (Kandahar province) guards a post overlooking the neighbouring Pakistani city of Chaman. *Photo courtesy of AP/Emilio Morenatti.*

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Contents

Foreword	iii
Preface	1
Dialogue	2
Deterrence	3
Development	4
Pakistan Border Security Problems vis-à-vis Afghanistan and Iran	6
The Post-Colonial Politics of Borders: Life on the Frontier	11
Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan: Cross-Border Security Issues and Challenges	18
About the Authors	25

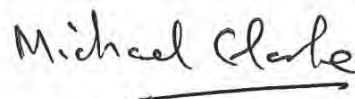
Foreword

Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Baluchistan and southern Afghanistan are currently plagued by warfare and criminal activity. Transecting these regions are transit routes of considerable strategic importance. The migration of refugees, narcotics trafficking, weapons and human smuggling and cross-border infiltration by militants in these areas exerts considerable pressure on the governments of the region in securing their borders. This not only affects inter-governmental relations but also the safe and legal transit of energy, goods and people. Regional development initiatives and the ability of governments to control the vital arteries which feed their economies suffer as a result.

In early March 2009 the leaders of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan announced a new drive to seek solutions to mutual national security concerns affecting all three countries. In this context, RUSI has launched a project aiming to provide an opportunity to explore shared unity of vision in tackling mutual threats to regional security, in particular focusing on regional trade, energy and migration issues. The ultimate goal of the discussion was to assist in forging a path ahead in order to support this trilateral initiative. In the wake of presidential elections in Afghanistan and Iran, and as Pakistan

focuses its military operations towards the FATA, NATO forces in Afghanistan are also configured towards enhanced counter-insurgency operations.

On 24–25 March 2009, RUSI in partnership with the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) convened a closed-door meeting of senior Pakistani and Afghan defence and security experts and academics in Bahrain to discuss regional cross-border security concerns. To provide further context to this initiative, this compilation of articles provides views by three regional experts and proposes recommendations on how to enhance regional cross-border security, while also illustrating the considerable unresolved problems facing the governments of all three countries. A common thread to all of these discussions remains the issue of contested boundaries between these countries. This research project demonstrates that there are compelling reasons to agree to shelve historic border disputes if there is to be any progress towards cross border security in the region. Nevertheless, there is also strong evidence to show that the peoples of these borderlands have interacted and thrived over the centuries and with the right kind of support and co-operation between regional powers, opportunities abound.



Michael Clarke
Director, Royal United Services Institute
for Defence and Security Studies
February 2010

Preface

In late March 2009, RUSI in partnership with the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) convened a closed-door meeting of senior Pakistani and Afghan defence and security experts and academics in Bahrain to discuss regional cross-border security concerns. The following is a record of the views shared and recommendations proposed by the participants.

Political leaders must have the will, imagination and vigour to eliminate threats to cross-border security via a regional approach and need to think beyond the immediate national interest. All states have made errors which have exacerbated this situation, but they must now work together to combat these threats. Afghanistan is plagued by non-state actors and terror networks, and the Taliban have gained strength because they have created a criminal market economy supported by a viable illicit network, fuelled by a burgeoning narcotic trade.

Now is the time to strengthen and protect trade routes to allow Afghanistan to prosper. Lack of education and rudimentary public healthcare in the border areas fosters the kind of resentment within the younger generation that has resulted in radicalisation and militant recruitment. There must be a drive to bring education and public healthcare to acceptable standards. Because of geostrategic precedents, Afghanistan's northern border and its small border with China are generally secure. However in the tri-border region government plans

for effective management of the region have failed, with force and the military instrument employed to solve many problems. Furthermore, in the Pashtun tribal belt a lack of civil law means that tribal justice is more often than not employed to resolve disputes.

As a result of the discussions a number of recommendations for solutions to the problems above were proposed for the consideration of the governments in question. All parties agreed that a mutual respect for territorial integrity was a basic prerequisite for any progress and, remarkably, all agreed that the issue of the border dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan should be set aside for the purposes of the discussion. Another common request was for a deeper understanding of neighbouring countries concerns and a 'grassroots' instilling of trust. There was consensus that it is fundamentally important to manage expectations from all sides in terms of capabilities, not simply to push expressions of intent with regard to border security. Remaining focused on realistic approaches and objectives was a core tenet of the deliberations as they evolved.

The recommendations of the dialogue encompassed three areas:

1. Dialogue
2. Deterrence
3. Development.

1. Dialogue

All parties called for transparency in relations at all structural levels and to make interaction and discourse as open, frequent and accessible as possible. Built into this drive to improve relations must be incentives designed to foster trust. The foreign ministries of all three countries must be fully apprised of this initiative, which ideally should have international support. The four core recommendations in support of enhanced dialogue are as follows:

1. The establishment of a regular trilateral forum along the lines of the RUSI-IPRI inaugural border security forum. This forum could be supported by an online data and opinion sharing initiative
2. An evaluation of current cross-border security measures in order to make existing mechanisms more effective
3. A list of respective national priorities to be drawn up reflecting each country's national concerns and common security threats
4. Opportunities should be explored for a dialogue between religious scholars on all sides aimed at reigning in militants in the border regions.

Non-State Actors and Tribal Engagement

Non-state actors are filling the vacuum of non-governance in the border regions, and militants have infiltrated and subverted the tribal system. While there must be engagement with local tribal leaders, a distinction should be made between militant networks and tribal infrastructure, which must be understood by international actors. The Taliban is now stronger than it was due to policy failures in Afghanistan and Pakistan. There is an argument from some quarters that the Taliban could be tolerated if its extremist elements were to be eliminated, and focus shifted towards ideology rather than affiliation. Some believe the Afghan government could strike a deal with elements of the Taliban by enforcing strong patronage and resilient conditions so that political power can be shared amongst all factions of the state.

Whatever the approach to the Taliban, a common definition for extremism should be established by the

international community and guidelines created on how to tackle it. Consequently, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan should pursue a joint strategy in combating the brand of extremism practised by the Taliban, Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates, and the illicit activities that fuel the cross-border insurgency.

The contentious question of reverting control to tribal elders in contrast to pushing the rule of law remains unresolved. The power of the elders and respect afforded to them in Pashtun tribal administration remains strong, and many support the restoration of the British colonial Political Agent-Malik-elder system of governance. Despite the inherent corruption entailed by this system, it has remained the most stable form of administration in the FATA, where political authority has changed numerous times.

From the perspective of the Afghan government, a core concern is whether any national interest exists within the border regions. Kabul insists on the fostering of a link between the various societies in the regions and the state in a manner that gives fairness and legitimacy to decisions. At the core of this requirement is respect for the UN Charter at all levels of interest, from the individual upwards. Trust exists to some extent amongst the people of these regions, but the major lack of trust is between the governments and between their institutions. The problem with this idea is the presence of non-state actors. The immediate threat is the ideology of extremist groups who must be prevented from using religion as political instruments. The Kabul government insists on primacy of the nation state and centralisation of government control over the tribal areas, and therefore opposes empowering the tribes, as has occurred in Pakistan's FATA.

The Regional Trust Deficit

If the core of the cross-border problem is insecurity then a major source of this insecurity is the lack of trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The histories of the two states supply the context: the region was unstable prior to operations by the USSR, NATO, the mujahedeen and the Taliban. The complete history

goes back over nearly three millennia. Afghanistan was originally created as a buffer state to afford a physical space between two polities that did not trust one another.

Afghanistan is a very diverse country influenced by three major cultures: Indian, Turkic and Persian, and distrust follows along these lines. If cross-border security is to be maintained it cannot be done solely on military terms, since this is self-evidently ineffective. Afghanistan and Pakistan have to change domestic perceptions of their national interests in order to achieve regional stability. The regional trust deficit can be addressed by the creation of power-

sharing agreements. However, it is questionable whether there is sufficient international will for this, particularly in the midst of a global financial crisis. Co-existence of the states is necessary, but it is impossible to simply fence off borders that will always remain porous. There is a historical precedent for regional co-existence, but it eventually failed, and focusing on the past will be highly detrimental to forging any new cross-border initiatives. While there is a compelling need to rebuild inter- and intra-community trust, regional trust-building is another dimension: confrontation between India and Pakistan has a direct effect on Afghanistan.

2. Deterrence

A shared and co-ordinated strategy is required to combat terrorists and violent extremists by matching and countering Al-Qa'ida's evolving strategy. This requires common definitions supporting a framework necessary for co-operation. This deterrence strategy should be designed to isolate the Taliban 'hardcore' and to bring the reconcilable into the political mainstream. The recommendations for deterrence in the border region were as follows:

- The establishment of joint border co-ordination centres supported by shared intelligence
- The introduction of new technologies for border control including biometrics
- The introduction of a viable immigration and visa system
- Co-operation between all sides aimed at stifling flow of funding to insurgents
- A trilateral de-radicalisation programme
- The establishment of a joint counter-narcotics unit
- Shelving the Afghanistan-Pakistan border dispute for the foreseeable future.

The Narcotics Problem

Governments in the region are to blame for failing to curb the rapid expansion of the narcotics trade since 1979. Warlords in Afghanistan and Pakistan are responsible for the \$80 million revenue in drug trafficking which supports the Taliban. There are around 65,000 drug cultivators in Helmand supplying

1,500 traffickers. This has created a black market economy involving extremist organisations leading to criminal and corrupt control of a significant proportion of the regional economies in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. While the opium trade is the major source of funding for militants and criminal syndicates, all three countries are facing major problems associated with opiate addiction. Ninety-four per cent of world opium production transits the region, 55 per cent via Iran (which has 2 million addicts), 30 per cent via Pakistan (which has 3 million addicts) and the remaining 15 per cent via central Asia.

Narcotics revenue amounts to half of Afghanistan's GDP and 2.5 million people depend directly on the production of, and trade in, narcotics. Before poppy eradication takes place there must be a replacement programme established to create an attractive and viable alternative. Suggestions for replacement programmes include the introduction of biotechnologies. Another controversial proposal has been to preserve opium production in the border areas, replacing the illicit economy with a legitimate system whereby pharmaceutical companies would match or exceed black market prices, thus severing supply to criminal elements that support poppy cultivators. Whatever solutions might be proposed, there is an immediate and urgent requirement to create a joint counter-narcotics force in the border region.

The Afghan-Pakistan Border

Pakistan has demonstrated a nascent ability in dealing with cross-border security issues and in protecting supply lines for the US-led operation in Afghanistan. However, it is facing problems with co-operation between military and security forces for providing contracted convoy protection. In addition, payment structures need to be improved for the Frontier Corps to reduce the risk of disaffection.

Pakistan asserts that it has established numerous border posts, in the process capturing and neutralising significant numbers of Al-Qa'ida and Taliban militants, and interdicting a large amount of narcotics. The Afghan National Army and Afghan

National Police however remain incapable of cross-border reciprocity. The Afghan-Pakistan border is for the most part non-demarcated, which means it is extremely porous. There are only twenty border crossing points that are used frequently, yet Pakistan is responsible for 98 per cent of all intra-regional exports.

The Durand Line is still as contentious as it has ever been, and there is an urgent requirement for both military and political measures to ameliorate the situation. There is a compelling argument to shelve the border dispute for an agreed period of time in order to bring much more pressing issues of cross-border security to the table.

3. Development

The countries in question must explore joint initiatives to bring economic development to the border region and in particular to focus on infrastructure and education. Of key concern is Afghanistan's economic dependence on external aid. Consequently, all parties agreed that priority must be given to domestic labour forces in infrastructure projects and that security should be the responsibility of local inhabitants. Recommendations included:

- Local inhabitants must become stakeholders in development projects
- All countries must explore initiatives for post-conflict rehabilitation in the border regions
- Educational exchanges between all three countries should be encouraged to stimulate education in the border regions
- The creation of secure and legal trade zones and the closure of illicit transit points.

Cross-Border Tax and Customs Infrastructure

It is through economic integration and growth that stability will be achieved in the border regions. The international community must invest and support these regional economies especially along lines of energy transit and in transport infrastructure. Private investment must also be supported.

The illegal transit of goods through Afghanistan is a principal source of conflict and mistrust. With the

lack of imposition of customs duties, criminal gangs flourish. All regional players must examine what kind of cross-border structures would garner the support of local leaders to enforce customs duties and border security. The extent to which over-reliance on revenues from customs duties exacerbates the problem should also be considered. The security of trade routes transecting border areas should be the responsibility of local inhabitants with the support of the international community. There is growing concern that the majority of development aid provided by foreign governments returns to donor economies through sub-contracting.

Energy Security

Pakistan has sizeable reserves of gas and coal in Baluchistan. Natural gas represents half of Pakistan's energy consumption. In recent years, there have been over 800 attacks and incidents of violence in Baluchistan, and Pakistan is very sensitive to the effect of these attacks on its energy security.

There is also further speculation that Baluchistan may also hold large reserves of crude oil. This region therefore is of crucial strategic importance for regional energy security. Natural gas is currently the country's principal energy source. Indeed, Pakistan has one of the world's most natural gas-dependent economies. Of Pakistan's proven natural gas reserves in 2006, estimated at 28 trillion cubic feet (tcf), as

much as 19 trillion tcf (68 per cent) are located in Baluchistan. The province accounts for between 36 to 45 per cent of Pakistan's natural gas production, but consumes only a modest 17 per cent of this figure. The greatest proportion of the province's contribution to the Pakistan's natural gas production comes from the long-operating Sui gas fields in the Bugti tribal domain, located in areas most seriously afflicted by Baluch militancy.

The state-owned Sui Southern Gas Company alone maintains a 27,542 km pipeline distribution network, sprawling across the two provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan. According to the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation 2006 report, a total of 843 attacks and incidents of violence were reported in different parts of Baluchistan, including fifty-four attacks on law-enforcement agencies, thirty-one attacks on gas pipelines, 417 rocket attacks on various targets, 291 mine blasts, and fifty abductions. In the same period, a total of 166 incidents of violence were reported in the Kohlu (Marri tribal headquarters) district, including forty-five bomb blasts and 110 rocket attacks.

Pakistan's energy sector has recently seen heavy investments from the Gulf and China and these energy transit projects remain very vulnerable to attacks by non-state actors. Multi-billion dollar oil refineries at Khalifa point near Hub (Baluchistan) and Port Qasim (Karachi), as well as plans to build a petrochemical complex city at Gwadar are underway. International Petroleum Investment Company, based in the United Arab Emirates, and Pak-Arab Refinery Limited intend to jointly establish a deep conversion refinery at Hub, expected to be completed by the end of 2010. Furthermore, Kuwait is investing in an oil refinery, naphtha cracker (ethylene processing plant) and petrochemical complex at Port Qasim, and is also looking to invest in an oil refinery and Liquid Petroleum Gas terminal project at Gwadar.

The Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline and other pipeline projects originating in the region all transect this very unstable area, and will incur very high costs for Iran, requiring considerable security measures. The secure transit of energy through these areas must be linked to the regional economies so as to support the Afghan government, which could stand to benefit

from royalties and pipeline revenue. Pipeline security should be the responsibility of the local inhabitants of the region through which the pipelines cross, providing jobs and a legitimate economy.

The Effect of Migration on Baluchistan

The influx of refugees from Afghanistan into Baluchistan has brought a great number of problems to the area. Three million refugees crossed the open border to Baluchistan in the post-war era. Accompanying this migration was militancy and an attendant 'Kalashnikov culture'. More recently the prevalence of small arms throughout society and the penetration of the region by militants have resulted in rapidly deteriorating and in some cases a complete lack of security.

The environmental impact of the refugee camps is enormous. Camp areas have become desolate creating a knock-on effect on local farmers owing to a loss of livestock and arable land. The famed jungles in the area have disappeared. Disease has increased due to migration into Baluchistan, and highly endemic diseases have spread due to the influx of Afghan refugees.

There are inherent cultural similarities between refugees from Afghanistan and with the indigenous population. Therefore the migrants settled with ease, and ad hoc permanent settlements have been established. Pakistan argues that if it were to answer calls from Afghanistan to repatriate the Afghan migrants of Baluchistan, a 're-migration' instead of repatriation would occur. The return of these migrants would result in sudden and damaging demographic pressures.

In the February 2008 elections, ethnic Hazaras originating from the refugee community from Afghanistan won three seats in Baluchistan; many districts of this area are governed by councillors originating from Afghanistan. There has been an upsurge in sectarian killings in the area due to friction between Shia Hazaras and the local Sunni majority. Drug trafficking has increased exponentially, and trade remains unregulated. There remains a desperate need for education for the Afghan refugee community.

Pakistan Border Security Problems vis-à-vis Afghanistan and Iran

Dr Nasrullah Mirza

Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, the country has always been at the crossroads of world politics, located in the playground of major powers in the pursuit of their international interests. Pakistan is fringed by a multitude of different types of boundaries, frontiers and territories; some of them are un-demarcated and un-delineated, and others include ceasefire lines, lines of control, lines of actual contact and working boundaries. This gives rise to all types of cross-border security problems, ranging from foreign infiltration to cross-cultural and ethnic affinity issues. The country shares long borders with its arch-rival India, friendly China, volatile Afghanistan, mercurial Iran, and thousands of kilometres of coastline along the Arabian Sea. Pakistan inherited boundary disputes with almost all of its neighbours, but succeeded in settling some of them. A number of claims and counter-claims remain with at least two neighbours, India and Afghanistan, as do a number of associated cross-border transit issues.

Although Pakistan does not have any conventional border dispute with India with regard to international land borders, there are disputes over the status of the princely state¹ of Kashmir (more a political and humanitarian dispute than a territorial issue), the Siachen Glacier (over demarcation of the Line of Control beyond NJ 9842, the northernmost point of the line of control) and the Sir Creek dispute (a maritime boundary issue). Pakistan also faces an internal security dilemma. It accuses its eastern neighbour India of supporting, training, arming and financing anti-Pakistani elements to launch subversive and terrorist activities, especially in the Baluchistan, Swat and FATA regions.

Similarly, the boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan (the Durand Line²) has remained disputed. Hence an alarming situation after the infiltration of millions of Afghan refugees in the wake of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, and US action against the Taliban and Al-Qa'ida in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Jihadi elements including Al-Qa'ida and its allies shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan's tribal areas, which have always remained open for such movements due to the sparsely populated nature of the region and the terrain: porous and highly mountainous with difficult access. Cross-border infiltration, human and drug trafficking, and illegal trade issues remain at the forefront of border security issues with all of Pakistan's neighbours including Iran.

Pakistan's Security Concerns: Terrorism and Trade

India has established a number of consulates in Afghanistan along Pakistan's border. These consulates allegedly engage in activities against Pakistan by providing training, arms and ammunition and financial support to subversive elements operating in the Pakistani areas of the FATA, Swat and Baluchistan.⁴ Pakistan suspects that India's desire for transit and trade routes to Afghanistan through Pakistani territory and beyond is also aimed at destabilising Pakistan. India's track record of interference in neighbouring countries, and the fear that it is already exploiting NATO supply lines into Afghanistan through Pakistan, have both amplified such concerns.

Pakistan and Afghanistan

Afghanistan's border with Pakistan (2,611 km) is the largest of all its neighbours: longer than Iran (936

¹ At the time of partition of the subcontinent there were a number of autonomous princely states not under direct control of the British Crown. These states were given the option either to join India or Pakistan. The Maharaja of the princely state Kashmir remained undecided; meanwhile India airlifted its troops and occupied Jammu and Kashmir; later Pakistan also occupied a part of it. India took the issue to the UN Security Council [UNSC Resolution No. 47 (1948)] to institute a plebiscite to determine the will of the Kashmiri people, which still has not been implemented.

² Lutfur Rehman, 'Durand Agreement: Myth & Reality', <<http://pakistanpal.wordpress.com/2009/06/23/durand-agreement-myth-reality/>>.

³ Claims about the number of Indian consulates vary; however the majority of sources confirm four consulates in addition to the embassy in Kabul.

⁴ Pakistan is concerned that Afghan soil is being used for terrorist activities in Pakistan: *Asian Tribune* 'Afghan soil being used against Pakistan: DG ISI', 13 January 2010'; Sarah Khan, 'India Destabilising Pakistan,' *Pakistan Daily*, 20 August 2009.

km), Turkmenistan (744 km), Uzbekistan (137 km), Tajikistan (1,206 km) and China (76 km). The Afghan-Pakistani border extends from the Sarikol range in the north to the Iranian border to the south-west. Out of the total 2,611 km Afghan-Pakistan border, 1,268 km runs along Pakistan's province Baluchistan, 1,229 km along FATA and 114 km along northern areas. The border came into existence when Sir Mortimer Durand, a representative of the British-Indian Government, negotiated and concluded the 'Durand Line Agreement' in Kabul in 1893 with the then ruler of Afghanistan, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan. The international community has recognised the Durand Line as the border line between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the creation of Pakistan in 1947.⁵

The border between both states (including before their creation) has historically remained open, with the border population, interacting for employment and trade. There was no major problem in terms of security before the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979. In the wake of the invasion, millions of Afghan refugees crossed the border and sought sanctuary; from there they also fought the Soviets. The situation was improved with the establishment of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, but the situation deteriorated after the launch of the War on Terror. The Karzai government and the international community maintain that militants attacking NATO forces are operating across the border from Pakistan. In response, Pakistan also levels similar accusations. There remain several core security concerns for Pakistan: the illegal crossing of people including terrorists and militants, drug trafficking, transit facilities for the US and allied forces, and Afghan-Pakistan cross-border trade.

Movement of Persons and Vehicles

There are a number of naturally created crossing points on Afghan-Pakistan border due to the porous nature of the terrain. The two established routes are Torkham in the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan and Chaman in Baluchistan. Pakistan has more than 900 posts on its side of

the border while the NATO coalition and Afghan security forces maintain only 120. More than 50-60,000 thousand people cross the border via these established crossings every day. It is nearly impossible to track every individual or vehicle, and militants, criminals and terrorists regularly transit these points. Pakistan has never denied cross-border movement but asserts that maintaining security is a joint responsibility of all forces and states involved in the War on Terror (Pakistan, Afghanistan, US forces and NATO, ISAF).

Cross-Border Infiltration and Terrorism

Pakistan asserts that its suffering has increased due to the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan as a result of failures in the War on Terror, since improvised explosives device (IED) attacks and other terrorist activities have increased in Pakistan. The militant network responsible for most of these attacks originated across the border and includes Afghan, Chechen, Arab, Uzbek and Tajik fighters who find easy access to Pakistan through the porous Afghan-Pakistan border. Pakistan's government claims to have evidence that militants in Pakistan's tribal areas are being provided weapons via the intelligence agencies of India and Afghanistan.

Drug Trafficking

After the fall of the Taliban government, opium production and its trade have reached a record high with over 90 per cent of world opium supplied by Afghanistan.⁶ In 2008, poppy production reached 7,700 metric tonnes cultivated over 157,000 hectares of land,⁷ while more than 70,000 hectares of land was used for the cultivation of cannabis. Afghanistan's illicit drug trade may exceed \$3.4 billion, equivalent to approximately 33 per cent of the country's GDP.⁸ No doubt, opium was the major source of funding for the mujahadeen resistance against Soviet occupation, and once again it has become the back-bone of the Afghan insurgency. The booming drug industry in Afghanistan is becoming a major threat to Pakistan's social fabric and national security. About 35 per cent of total drug production from southern Afghanistan

⁵ Lutfur Rehman, 'Durand Agreement: Myth & Reality,' *op. cit.*

⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Government of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter narcotics, 'Afghan Opium Survey 2008', November 2008.

⁷ Christopher M Blanchard, 'Afghanistan: Narcotics and US Policy,' Congressional Research Service, 12 August, 2009, pp. 2-8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

is being smuggled through Pakistan's Dalbadin and Chaghi (Baluchistan) areas to Gulf countries and the Yemen. The link between the drug trade and funding militancy in Pakistan and Afghanistan is a major concern across the region.

Afghan Refugees

In the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan has absorbed 4 to 5 million refugees. Pakistan still hosts about 2 million registered and an estimated 1 million unregistered refugees. Using refugee movement as a cover for border transit, Taliban militants are able to move undetected. Pakistan also alleges that foreign elements have been using refugee camps against Pakistan's interest. Unless Afghanistan provides attractive incentives and a secure environment, refugees will not return home and Pakistan's security will continue to be challenged.

Indian Involvement in Afghanistan

India is believed to be exploiting contacts in numerous consulates and a number of Afghan government departments to exert influence against Pakistan in all sectors, including trade, rehabilitation projects and intelligence. The Indian foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), has been accused of operating on Afghan soil from Indian consulates and of mounting terrorist operations in Pakistan. The government of Pakistan maintains that India uses transport routes for reconstruction in Afghanistan as cover for sabotage and subversion operations against Pakistan.

The Issue of Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade

Afghanistan, being a landlocked country, is entirely dependent on transit trade facilities from neighbouring states. Pakistan and Iran provide the most viable and economic transit routes. Informal transit trade across the Durand Line existed long before the birth of Pakistan. A formal Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) was signed in March 1965, in which Pakistan offered unilateral concessions to Afghanistan in exchange for transit facilities. Primarily, two routes, the Peshawar–Torkham and Chaman–Spin Boldak crossing points were agreed upon. Imports by Afghanistan were exempted from the custom duties, service charges, port levies and handling fees. The reverse impact on Pakistan's

industry was not envisioned at that time. As trade volume picked up, Bara bazaars (foreign smuggled goods markets) sprang up in Peshawar, the Khyber Agency, Chaman, Quetta and at Rawalpindi. The practice continued unabated for more than three decades and in 1996, upon the demand of local trade bodies, the government banned seventeen items of trade and placed them on a 'negative list'. In 2001, this list was revised and seven items were excluded from transit trade. In March 2004, on Afghanistan's request, Pakistan reduced this list to six items only. Again in August 2005, the size of the list was further cut to three items: tobacco, cooking oil and auto parts. In 2006 cooking oil was also removed from the negative list.

Afghanistan is now demanding access to the port of Karachi and the Wagah Border (an Indo-Pakistani transit route), along with the removal of the remaining two items from the negative list. Such a provision does not exist under the ATTA. The issue is two-fold: imported goods worth billions not required in Afghanistan are illegally re-routed to Pakistani markets to the detriment of local industry, incurring heavy loss to the national exchequer. Last year, Pakistani authorities registered an increase of 192 per cent in imports of just two commodities, electronics and machinery. The import figures for steel and iron jumped up by 40 per cent, while volume of imported fabrics increased by 29 per cent. Items like plastics, chemicals, tiles and other household goods were also imported in much greater volumes.

Secondly, Afghanistan's demand for transit facilities for trade with India via Pakistan is not acceptable to Pakistan as neither country has established formal transit trade agreements. Kabul's demand is perceived by the government of Pakistan as an Indian ploy, and many Pakistanis oppose a recent Memorandum of Understanding signed in Washington, DC between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The current opposition party, the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), has threatened street protests if the government does not back down on this issue. It cites Pakistan's security interests and the threat of Indian agents already fuelling insurgency in Baluchistan and the FATA, exploiting the opportunity to transport military material in Indian vehicles to

Afghanistan. There is greater worry in policy-making circles in Pakistan regarding industry, especially the automobile industry currently being subsidised by the state. While it is one of the sectors that might stand to be affected by trade with India, Pakistan could consider building the national industrial base through negotiating offsets with its neighbour. The other advantages of encouraging regional trade relations are that Pakistan's financial capacity and overall productivity would be greatly enhanced. The country badly needs to transform itself from an aid-dependent economy to a more productive and self-sustaining one. There is little doubt that trade creates self-dependence, but this should not be at the cost of an independent foreign policy. Nevertheless, interdependence based on trade could help to resolve contentious bilateral issues in the future.

Pakistan and Iran

Pakistan shares a 909 km border with Iran. Pakistan's largest province, Baluchistan, spans the harsh and rugged terrain of the entire Pakistan-Iran border. The Baluch area on either side of the border has always been volatile. Clashes between local leaders and anti-regime elements with Pakistani authorities and the Iranian regime respectively, over autonomy, wealth distribution and the sheltering of insurgents, have risen dramatically during the past few years. The relentlessly deteriorating situation in Baluchistan, which is mainly due to politico-economic reasons, has clear detrimental effects for the security and stability of both Pakistan and Iran.

Jundullah, a Sunni extremist terrorist organisation, led by Abdul Malik Regi, is active in the Siestan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. The organisation came into the limelight in 2003 after the targeted assassination and kidnapping of Iranian military personnel and government officials, who were transported to Pakistani Baluchistan. This highly mobile organisation operates from the border towns of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is also believed that the group operates under the banner of People's Resistance Movement of Iran (PMRI), and is extensively involved in criminal and sabotage activities.

Human trafficking to Europe (via Iran and Turkey) from Afghanistan is on the rise. Smugglers use

deserted tracks in Eastern Iran along the Pakistan-Iran border. It has become a major irritant for both governments, and creates obstacles for bilateral relations. Drug trafficking is another major concern for both Iran and Pakistan and both countries are making concerted efforts to curb these networks.

Criminals and dissident groups in Iran and Pakistan cross over the border, fleeing prosecution in both countries, and there is a will on both sides to jointly address the issue. Fortunately, both governments have taken new security measures such as the Three Tier Security Mechanisms, which include:

1. A ministerial commission, headed by the interior ministers of Iran and Pakistan. The agreement was signed in 2001 and the last meeting was held in 2002
2. A special security committee by the interior secretaries of both sides. The agreement was signed in 1994 and the last meeting was held in 2006
3. A joint border commission headed by the chief secretary of Baluchistan from Pakistan and the deputy governor of Siestan-o-Baluchistan from the Iranian side. The agreement was signed in 1987 and the last meeting was held in 2006.

Moreover, in the wake of deteriorating security in Siestan-o-Baluchistan and to curb infiltration, Iran has taken some strict security measures along its eastern borders. The Iranian government is constructing a 700 km long, 3 meter high wall along the length of its eastern border. The project also includes the digging of trenches and deep ditches, installation of barbed wire fencing and watch towers. The Iranian authorities have deployed additional units of regular army to strengthen security along the Irano-Pakistani and Afghan-Iranian borders. The Iranian government has allocated a total of 150 billion Tomans (around \$150 million) for the enhancement of security measures along the Iranian border. Responsibility for the security of border areas in Siestan-o-Baluchistan province has been handed over to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and Baseej forces. Forty-four per cent of Iran's borders are now under the special control of the national police, and a plan were formulated to increase this figure to 60 per cent by the end of 2009.

Recommendations

The core issue between India and Pakistan is a problem of mindset: both actors are attempting to maximise their security but are not interested in the resolution of the 'core' dispute over the Kashmir territory. Since the start of the Composite Dialogue in January 2004, India has accepted Kashmir as a dispute: there is still a need to push forward and to seek a solution to this core problem. The Indian approach to dispute management requires a shift towards dispute resolution.

The primary issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan are the historic trans-boundary ethnic and religious affinities, and the porous nature of the border. Both sides must accept and respect existing boundaries between both states and emphasise cultural and religious affinity.

In order to reduce antagonism over the Durand Line issue, the Afghan public should be made aware that in the wake of national assemblies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the Durand Line agreement, some Afghan leaders have recognised and accepted the line as an international boundary. Furthermore, since the Durand Line is a legacy of the British Empire of the nineteenth century, the UK can play an important role in explaining the historical precedent to the Kabul government. Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZ) projects need to be initiated as soon as possible when the security situation allows. ROZ projects need to be clearly differentiated between FATA as a part of Pakistan, de-linking them from Afghanistan.

The best way to eliminate the menace of the drug trade is for the US and EU to tackle demand, a reduction of which will automatically reduce overall production. Similarly, drug trafficking needs to be curbed. The responsibility should remain in the hands of states through which drug transit routes pass. However, poppy cultivation for medicinal purposes could provide poverty alleviation opportunities and benefit Afghanistan's economy. Pakistan and Afghanistan should enhance military-to-military contacts and interaction, providing training to the Afghan National Army and Air Corps. Trade relations with Afghanistan can be improved along the lines of Iranian efforts of organising small-

scale industrial and commercial exhibitions, where the interaction of both governmental and private sector industries and businesses can be facilitated.

On the cultural front, Pakistan could share its own Pashtun culture and tradition. It is well equipped to invest in Afghanistan's media sector by promoting its well-appreciated Urdu dramas, dubbed in Pashto and Dari, as well as an exchange of artists and musicians on both sides.

Above all, Afghanistan should respect legitimate Pakistani concerns over India's border activities and its presence in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's recent pattern of looking to India to balance the threat from Pakistan should be avoided. Peace jirgas should continue to be organised between the two countries to address all the issues.

The situation on the Irano-Pakistani border is not as serious. Both countries are capable of tackling problems, since they settled their border demarcation issue in 1963. The more urgent requirement is to check the involvement of foreign elements fomenting insurgencies across these borders. Nevertheless, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran are facing the common problem of religious extremism, violent fundamentalism and terrorism. The main causes of the recent degradation in border security emanate from the trust deficit between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran regarding their policies and actions to combat these challenges. All three countries must devise a joint, shared and co-ordinated strategy to counter the phenomena of religious extremism and terrorism. They must avoid a narrow focus on national interests by widening thinking to formulate a regional framework and to adopt a common approach. Mutual respect for territorial integrity is the base line for progress. The first and most important step could be to open a tripartite dialogue to devise common strategies. This could be achieved by establishing information sharing networks, evaluating current cross-border issues in order to enhance the effectiveness of existing border security measures and by defining national priorities towards the determination of future common security strategies.

The Post-Colonial Politics of Borders: Life on the Frontier

Aziz Hakimi

The highly volatile mix of unresolved border disputes, cross-border infiltration by insurgents, armed conflicts and transnational crime pose major challenges to stability and economic growth in South Asia. India's north-east border with China, the Line of Control separating the Indian and Pakistani administered Kashmir, and the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan constitute a complex regional conflict dynamic. Despite many attempts to settle their core border disputes, the governments of the region remain under considerable pressure to normalise relations, secure their borders, and generate wealth and welfare for their people.¹

The Durand Line, which separates Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the adjacent North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan from southern and eastern Afghanistan, plainly illustrates the difficulty of controlling a highly porous border under circumstances where border areas are used as staging grounds for insurgencies, anti-state activities, and the smuggling of licit and illicit goods. Since the Taliban resurgence in 2003, Afghanistan has repeatedly complained that Pakistan has not done enough to secure the border.² Pakistan has repeatedly come under pressure to disrupt the Taliban's training camps and support-networks inside its territory. The Afghan government has doubted Pakistan's sincerity in dealing with the Taliban, accusing elements within the Pakistani security and political establishment of providing material support to portions of the Taliban and affiliated militant groups, ostensibly to promote its regional interests. Pakistan has denied these charges, but General Pervez Musharraf, the former president of Pakistan, made a rare admission, before hundreds of Pakistani and Afghan delegates attending the

Pakistan-Afghanistan Peace Jirga, that support for insurgents emanating from Pakistan had indeed caused problems for Afghanistan. He pledged that his country would do more to secure peace on its side of the mutual border.³ Meanwhile, the situation in the border has significantly deteriorated.

The Taliban and their Al-Qa'ida allies' ability to maintain a foothold in Pakistan has been instrumental to their success in sustaining a cross-border insurgency against Afghan and international forces. Unless Pakistan is stabilised, Afghanistan's chances of securing a durable peace are bleak. Pakistani allegations for Indian support from inside Afghanistan to the nationalist insurgency in Pakistani Baluchistan have further strained relations between the two countries.⁴ Pakistani proposals to seal the border, by building a fence have been opposed by the Afghan government for fear of further dividing the Pashtun communities on both sides of the border and because of concerns over change in the international status of the border.⁵ Afghanistan's governments, including the Taliban regime, have never recognised the Durand Line between the two countries as an international border. Successive Afghan governments have made irredentist claims on the Pashtun and Baluch regions of Pakistan.⁶

The insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan are closely associated with the nature of political and military control in the border regions separating the two countries. Taliban and Al-Qa'ida are equally active in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The conflict in Afghanistan is no longer confined to the south and east, which still remains highly insecure. The insurgents have expanded the war to the central, northern and western parts of the country. In 2003,

¹ Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2002).

² Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: How the war against Islamic extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2008).

³ Timor Shah and Carlotta Gall, 'Afghan Rebels Find Aid in Pakistan, Musharraf Admits', *New York Times*, 13 August 2007.

⁴ R Barnett Rubin and Abubakar Siddique, 'Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate', USIP Special Report, October 2006.

⁵ *BBC News Online*, 'Afghanistan's border fence clash', April 2007.

⁶ Saikal, 2006

the Taliban controlled thirty out of 364 districts in Afghanistan. At the end of 2008, they expanded their control to 164 districts. Between October 2008 and April 2009, Taliban attacks increased by 60 per cent.⁷ In 2009, 401 American and NATO soldiers died, making it the deadliest year in the war for coalition forces in Afghanistan.⁸

The rising political and military strength of the insurgents is a serious concern for the Afghan Government and the external powers that seek to stabilise both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It has prompted renewed calls for more troops and resources to combat them. This comes at a time when public support for the war effort is waning in the US and Europe, and a rigged Afghan presidential election has increased the crisis of confidence. While Pakistan is the much larger security challenge, US options there are limited for fear of jeopardising military co-operation and inflaming anti-American sentiment. Pakistan has improved to some extent following the Pakistani military's limited success against the Taliban in Swat and South Waziristan. However, the insurgents continue to pose a major challenge to the writ and authority of the Pakistani state in FATA and Baluchistan.⁹ In the summer of 2009, parts of Pakistan remained in a permanent state of anarchy, as the Taliban took more territory and state power declined. According to some estimates, 11 per cent of Pakistan's territory is either directly controlled or contested by the Taliban. In Baluchistan, 10 per cent of the provincial territory is a no-go area because of rising insecurity from a raging insurgency led by Baluch separatists.¹⁰

Since 2004, Pakistan has made a partial effort to address the Pakistani Taliban and Al-Qa'ida threat, and control the border. Additional measures are required to improve bilateral relations and cross-border security. These include the recognition of the Durand Line by Afghanistan as the international border, the integration of FATA into the Pakistani

state, assured access for Afghanistan to Pakistani ports and transit facilities, open borders between the two countries for trade and movement of people, and agreement on both sides to cease supporting or harbouring violent opposition movements against the other.¹¹

Colonial Boundary-Making and Contemporary Disputes

Pakistan and Afghanistan inherited their long and porous border with its complex governance mechanisms from the British Empire. British concerns for the security of their Indian territories led them to make Afghanistan a buffer state between their empire and Tsarist Russia. The present day borders of Afghanistan were largely fixed in the late nineteenth century by the two rival European powers. Afghanistan's contribution to the border arrangement was minimal. While the northern and western borders have remained stable, Afghanistan's southern and eastern border has proved contentious. It has served as a source of dispute with Pakistan ever since Pakistan's creation in 1947. Afghanistan has never recognised the Durand Line as an international border. It is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. In practice, Pakistan has done more than Afghanistan to undermine the status of the Durand Line as an international border by sponsoring covert warfare as a tool of national security policy.¹² Successive Afghan governments have demanded the resolution of the border dispute on the basis of a renegotiated settlement. Pakistan's refusal to comply has prolonged tension between the two countries and at times has led to open clashes.¹³ Both countries have exploited the border dispute to interfere in one another's affairs, and in the case of Afghanistan to strengthen domestic political support for the state.

Following the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union and the ensuing war against the communist regime, Afghanistan was engulfed in

⁷ Ahmed Rashid, 'The Afghanistan Impasse', *New York Review of Books*, 16 September 2009.

⁸ ICasualties.org, <<http://icasualties.org/oef/>>, accessed 8 October 2009.

⁹ Rashid, *op. cit.* in note 7.

¹⁰ Ahmed Rashid, 'Pakistan on the Brink', *New York Review of Books*, 11 June 2009.

¹¹ Rubin and Siddique, *op. cit.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Amin Saikal, 'Securing Afghanistan's border', *Survival* (Vol. 48, No. 1, March 2006).

more than two decades of conflict and Pakistan's position as a front line state was strengthened. Its material and political support to Pashtun-dominated Islamic resistance forces, and subsequently to the Taliban, ensured that the border issue would never again be raised as a point of contention by Afghanistan.¹⁴ After the ouster of the Taliban regime and the inauguration of the internationally sponsored government of Hamid Karzai, the issue has once again become a source of anxiety for Kabul. Of immediate concern is the security, stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan, owing to a raging cross-border insurgency by the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Like his Pashtun predecessors, Karzai is not in a military or political position to challenge the status quo of the border. The Afghan government's immediate concern is instead related to the cross-border infiltration by the Taliban and Al-Qa'ida for disruptive operations in Afghanistan, and the threat that poses to the stability of the government. It has repeatedly asked Pakistan to dismantle the Taliban training camps and their support networks based in Pakistan, particularly in Quetta. The problem has been compounded by the spread of a Taliban insurgency, in a Pakistani incarnation, inside Pakistan itself. The Taliban and their allies have emerged stronger in recent years with the ability to spread chaos in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Islamabad's past support to the Taliban and Al-Qa'ida has added to the political complexities of the border, which remains insecure.

Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Complex

The Afghanistan-Pakistan cross-border issues are further complicated by relations between India and Pakistan, and India's current influence in Afghanistan. Pakistan has accused Afghanistan of allowing Indian agents based in its territory to brew trouble in Baluchistan. Afghanistan denies the charges. Such accusations from India and Afghanistan that Pakistan is supporting the Taliban have strained their bilateral relations. Pakistan has historically sought a weak Afghan state that lacks the ability and resources to seriously destabilise Pakistan. Pakistan's quest for

'strategic depth' in Afghanistan, to reduce risks to its national security from its rivalry with India, is illustrative of the continuity of colonial-era strategic policy.¹⁵ Unless such deep-seated institutional thinking is transformed, and a new conception of national security is constructed, the prospects for peace in the region are not bright.

Islamist militancy remains Pakistan's most successful strategic weapon against India's regional hegemony, including its penetration into Afghanistan. Having lost every war against its much larger and conventionally superior neighbour, Pakistan has been fighting a long-running proxy war against India in Kashmir, other Indian states, and Afghanistan. For decades, and particularly since the end of the 1980s, India's half-million strong army has been battling Kashmiri militant groups.¹⁶ The Pakistani Taliban insurgency in Pakistan, which some in Pakistan believe is supported by India, has created similar constraints on Pakistan. A large number of its forces are tied down across the border with Afghanistan, leaving its border with India exposed. There is an urgent need to resolve the Pakistan-India border disputes, which also have clear implications for Afghanistan's stability.

The border issue with Pakistan also prominently featured during the 20 August 2009 presidential election. Dr Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, a prominent Pashtun candidate, called for open borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan during a live TV debate, similar to the open border policy in the European Union. An open border policy would improve security, increase exchange and enhance economic development in both countries, he said.¹⁷ However, none of the candidates went as far as to address the legality of the border or whether Afghanistan should recognise it as an international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In private, the Durand Line issue is frequently debated among Afghan political circles. A number of Pashtun leaders have often stated that Afghanistan will never recognise the Durand Line, and as soon as it

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Rubin and Siddique, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Jones, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Dominic Medley, 'First TV debate in presidential campaign', UNAMA, 24 July 2009, <<http://www.reliefweb.int>>, accessed 13 October 2009.

has acquired sufficient military power and economic strength, it will demand the return of the Pashtun areas in Pakistan. Such reports should alarm the United States and its allies while they are helping Afghanistan build a modern army and police force, which one day could be used in a regional conflict. India has similar concerns about the United States' assistance to Pakistan to strengthen its armed forces to take on the Taliban, because in any future conflict with India, Pakistan is likely to use the expertise and military assets it has acquired from the United States. Afghanistan's refusal to recognise the Durand Line and its irredentist ambitions has meant that Pakistan has continued to fan the flames of conflict in Afghanistan. The majority of Afghans, if given a choice, would recognise the Durand Line as the international border, in the hope that the resolution of the issue would lead to long-term stability in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's Road to Long-Term Peace

Afghanistan should not place too much expectation on achieving a lasting peace by only focusing on resolving its border-related disputes with Pakistan. It must also renew its focus on seeking a political solution to the Taliban-led insurgency. Fundamentally, the problem in Afghanistan is political in nature. It is not a problem of terrorism or global jihad. The failure to reach a political solution and the absence of justice has paved the way to war. It is an internal war — essentially a civil war of ethnic and regional groupings vying for power against one another. The United States is supporting one party in this civil war. Al-Qa'ida, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate, and other regional powers support the Afghan Taliban to undermine the Western-backed Karzai government. This support is essentially instrumental in character. It is not necessary and can be avoided. It will require a sound political solution, yet current strategy pursued by the United States and its NATO allies has cast the problem in military terms.

The current thinking to escalate the conflict in order to weaken the Taliban and force them to the negotiation table is flawed. Escalating the conflict will prolong the war. That is precisely what the Taliban want and expect, since it gives them a mission and a purpose. Ending the war, not

expanding it, must be the first priority. Under the current approach, forging peace is a derivative of fighting war. The ultimate objective of the mission in Afghanistan should be 'working for peace to end the war,' rather than 'prolonging the war to win the peace.' The latter policy is neither sustainable nor winnable. Afghans are tired of war.

The first priority is to achieve a political solution and address the justice agenda, which will delegitimise the Taliban and make it unnecessary for them to seek support from Al-Qa'ida, the ISI, and other regional actors. Doing politics is safer and much cheaper than waging war. The second priority would be to reform Afghanistan's dysfunctional system of governance. The current centralised model has concentrated too much power in Kabul and very little in the villages, districts and provinces of Afghanistan where the majority of Afghans live. International donors financing Afghanistan's state building should encourage the Afghan government to initiate broad based governance reforms to this end.

Political Reforms in FATA

The conflict in FATA has forced Pakistan to re-focus on the drivers of instability there and begin to explore the contours of a political solution to the problem. The repressive policies of the British colonial regime and then decades of faulty policies of the post-colonial Pakistani state have taken its toll on the social, political and economic fabric of FATA. Most glaringly, its people have been denied the full civic and political rights enjoyed by other Pakistanis. All the social and economic indicators in FATA are the lowest compared to anywhere else in Pakistan. Illiteracy, unemployment and criminality are remarkably high compared to the rest of Pakistan. Lack of economic opportunities and corruption have deeply divided the local tribes and stunted their development. By taking on the Pakistani state and its organs of power, the Taliban have tried to dismantle these repressive structures of power and control, replacing them with supposedly more egalitarian socio-political structures influenced by their interpretation of Islam. Although the marginalisation of FATA's 4 million people within Pakistan has received wide coverage there and in the international media, the social and political

dynamics of the insurgency in Pakistan are poorly understood.¹⁸

The Pashtun nationalists in Pakistan have proposed the unification of all Pashtun regions in FATA, NWFP and Baluchistan into a new province of 'Pakhtunkhwa'. Their demand for Pakhtunkhwa is linked to their support for the recognition of the Durand Line as an international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pakistani Pashtun nationalists have maintained that the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan can be pacified if Pashtuns in both countries have uninterrupted, cross-border movement through formal recognition of open borders. This proposal, if accepted by Afghanistan, will bring major improvements to the economy and security of the borderlands.¹⁹ However, the restructuring of the Pakistani state along the lines suggested by the Pashtun nationalist is not likely to be accepted by the federal government in Islamabad.

As an immediate measure, the federal government in Islamabad should be encouraged to respond to the wishes of its people and institute a comprehensive set of social, political and economic reforms. The ultimate objective should be the full integration of FATA into the Pakistani state. Ruling by proxy, using the Maliks and tribal leaders, and relying on the function of the 'political agent' and other colonial-era institutions, has not been effective. A new strategy for stabilising this region should include the gradual dismantling of such institutions and replacing them with more democratic and accountable ones, including extensive devolution of power to the grassroots. Economic reforms and a development and reconstruction aid package are needed to revive the local economy, create wealth and reduce poverty. The recent attempts by the government of Pakistan to initiate political reforms, including changes to the Frontier Crimes Regulations, which since 1901 has been the legal regime in FATA, are wise and timely. Although these reforms are limited in scope, the new FATA Regulation 2008 and the extension of the Political Parties Act to the tribal

areas is a step in the right direction. However, the reform initiatives have encountered resistance from the tribal elders and the civil bureaucracy because they diminish their power in the tribal areas.²⁰

The Way Forward for the Region

The areas on both sides of the Durand Line and their passes and trading routes have connected South, Central, and West Asia for centuries. Transecting these regions are transit routes of considerable strategic importance, potentially the key to the security and economic prosperity of the entire region. The governments of the region and external powers have large stakes in the stability of the region. The neighbours – India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran – need to resolve their cross-border problems. They have to overcome past differences and check the violence unleashed by non-state actors. The international community in general, and the United States in particular, has to facilitate such a process through diplomacy and economic aid. Iran's co-operation is important to a broader security regime, but the United States' role in Afghanistan and Pakistan is a complicating factor. A resolution of the insurgency in Afghanistan, and US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, might ease Iranian national security concerns and improve regional co-operation.

As a sign or normalisation of relations, Pakistan must do more to improve Afghanistan's access to its ports and transit facilities. Tension between the two countries has directly affected trade relations between them and with other neighbouring countries. India's request to trade with Afghanistan through the Wagah border crossing separating Indian and Pakistan has been rebuffed by Pakistan. This Pakistani refusal has not only prevented India and Afghanistan from trading, it has also caused resentment in Afghanistan, which sees the move as a way of keeping India at bay and increasing Pakistan's influence over Afghanistan. Afghanistan has long sought to lessen its reliance on Pakistan for its trade relations with the outside world. When in 1961 relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan

¹⁸ Jason Burke, 'The Taliban may have been decapitated, but their success is not about the leadership of any one man', *Guardian*, 7 August 2009.

¹⁹ Rubin and Siddique, *op. cit.*

²⁰ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'FATA: The Way Forward', *The News*, 23 August 2009.

deteriorated and Pakistan blocked Afghanistan's transit route through its territory, not only did Afghanistan's dependence on the Soviet Union increase (with devastating future consequences) but the immediate impact on Afghanistan's economy was crippling.²¹

Pakistani opposition to the Indian request for a land route through Pakistan to Afghanistan eventually forced India to seek an alternative transit route. In 2002, with Indian help, Iran began constructing the Chabahar port in eastern Iran on the Persian Gulf. India is attempting to bypass Pakistan for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia. It is also co-operating on a highway and a railroad system that leads from this port to Afghanistan, running along the Pakistan border in the southwestern province of Nimruz, bordering Baluchistan. Pakistan sees the Indian presence in its backyard as a major strategic concern. It has also accused Indian consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad of fuelling the Baluch nationalist insurgency in Pakistan.²² Pakistan needs to be encouraged to accept the Afghan and Indian need for bilateral relations without developing existential fears about them. Afghanistan's improving relations with the civilian government in Pakistan, in particular with President Asif Ali Zardari, provides Afghanistan with the opportunity to present its case and win Pakistan's support. Iran can also influence Pakistan's thinking and benefit from a regional partnership. Iran and Pakistan must also arrive at the conclusion that their rivalry over Afghanistan and their support to the different ethnic groups in Afghanistan has prolonged the conflict there. Both countries need to realise that a stable and integrated Afghanistan is in their mutual interest. Their attempts to link the Central Asian economies to their own economies require stability in Afghanistan.

Comprehensive solutions to long-standing disputes over Kashmir and the Durand Line will not materialise any time soon, especially in view of past attempts to find a lasting solution. However, the present offers an opportunity to normalise

relations and improve cross-border arrangements for improving security and increasing economic co-operation, especially in the energy sector. The planned Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline and the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline transect this region. Governments in the region who want these cross-border energy projects to succeed will need to give priority to security over other foreign policy goals. They will be required to adopt a regional approach, and extend greater co-operation to one another in securing their borders and ending cross-border insurgencies. The United States will have to drop its opposition to Iran's energy projects in the region.

On the political front, cross-border peace initiatives such as the Afghan-Pakistani peace *jirga* must be strengthened to increase dialogue and mutual understanding among governments and their peoples. Normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan, which have been taken up in the past, have to be continued. With normalisation in relations, the opportunities for increasing economic exchange should also be vigorously pursued. Such initiatives are key to overcoming mutual concerns and forging future solutions. A regional commitment to respecting the territorial integrity of all states in the region guaranteed by international measures is a major requisite for progress in the region. The Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, signed by Afghanistan's neighbours on 22 December 2002, has already set a good precedent.²³

Recommendations and Conclusion

The problem of violent insurgency demands that both countries address their relationships, particularly in the border areas. In the short term, Afghanistan and Pakistan need to normalise their relations and jointly address the problem of cross-border insurgency, which remains a major challenge to the state's authority in both countries. Pakistan's proposal to fence the Durand Line, in response to accusations from Afghanistan that the Afghan Taliban based in Pakistan engage in cross-border insurgency, will not work to secure an essentially

²¹ Saikal, *op. cit.*

²² Rubin and Siddique, *op. cit.*

²³ Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, 22 December 2002, <<http://www.unhcr.org>>, accessed 8 October 2009.

long and porous border. The cost of fencing the border will be prohibitively high, and in comparison the benefits would be few. It will further isolate the border region and create additional obstacles to economic development. The presence of Taliban safe havens in Pakistan threatens Afghanistan's stability and the objectives of the international community there. Pakistan will have to do much more to disrupt the Taliban's command and control in FATA. Policing the border will not be sufficient, unless the Taliban safe havens are dismantled inside Pakistan. Afghanistan needs to develop its security forces to better police the border. Currently, Afghanistan is in no position to meet the resource requirements needed to accomplish this task. Pakistan's rivalry with India places limitations on its ability to secure the border. Its forces are tied up on its eastern frontiers with India. As long as the Indo-Pakistani disputes are not resolved, Pakistan cannot be expected to shift its military resources to its border with Afghanistan. Normalisation of relations with India is in the interests of all three countries. Pakistan must also be encouraged to re-think its policy of 'strategic depth', while Afghanistan needs to show greater sensitivity to Pakistan's security concerns.

Pakistan has not matched its military resolve with political and economic reforms that are needed to transform FATA from a twenty-first century borderland into a land bridge to link South Asia and West Asia to Afghanistan and Central Asia. It will also require ending the nineteenth century colonial regime in FATA, and its integration into Pakistan's national politics and administration. The extension of the Political Parties Act and legislative reforms to overhaul the Frontier Crimes Regulations is a step in the right direction. A comprehensive strategy for economic development must follow these welcome political reform initiatives. Priority has to be given to developing FATA's infrastructure, particularly its road networks. Reconstruction in Afghanistan and FATA can reinforce one another. To facilitate trade between the two countries, more border crossings should be opened. Pakistan's trade with Afghanistan now exceeds \$2 billion a year. However, currently there are only two official

border crossings: Torkham in the north and Chaman in the south.

Since the war-fighting strategy of external powers has failed to stabilise Afghanistan, only achieving a genuine national reconciliation between all the different Afghan political and warring groups can bring about a lasting peace. To generate support for a peace initiative, which will require making a historic compromise, a broad-based national dialogue is needed to facilitate reconciliation with the Taliban and other insurgents. The United States and its allies will have to pursue a more practical and less ideological approach. Its role should be to facilitate a genuine reconciliation among Afghans, but must not lead it or dictate it. The Afghan Government needs to be able to maintain its pretensions of legitimacy throughout the process.

In the long run, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the region would benefit from a recognised open border between the two countries, paving the way for trade and economic development. While the world's focus is on the region, the time has come to address this.²⁴ The Afghan Government should take this opportunity to begin a national dialogue to develop a consensus on resolving outstanding issues with Pakistan. Afghanistan will have to make a historic compromise on the Durand Line. A settlement would also strengthen democracy in both countries, and facilitate Pakistan's access to Central Asia and Afghanistan access to the Arabian Sea. The United States will have to use its leverage over Pakistan and Afghanistan to find a mutually satisfactory solution to their bilateral disputes. It should also help India and Pakistan improve their relations to reduce regional tensions, which also affects Afghanistan. Regrettably, the United States' role in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been narrowly focused on destroying Al-Qa'ida and preventing the Taliban's return to power. For the sake of regional stability, the United States will have to expand its diplomatic activities and mediate between the countries of the region to help them address their cross-border issues.

²⁴ Rubin and Siddique, *op.cit*

Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan: Cross-Border Security Issues and Challenges

Dr Maqsoodul Hasan Nuri

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a 2,500 km-long international border, known as the Durand Line. Since its demarcation by the British in 1893 to define the frontier between British India and Afghanistan, the border has been problematic; Afghanistan has refused to accept it as a legitimate international border subsequent to the creation of Pakistan. No government of Afghanistan, whether nationalist, communist or even Taliban, has conceded this. This has led inevitably to the straining of bilateral relations, undermining attempts to address border security.

The seven agencies comprising the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have a population with very low literacy rate. Of these agencies, South and North Waziristan are the least developed and have been the scene of armed clashes between the government and militants since 2003. The issues relating to border security between Pakistan and Afghanistan do not stem merely from the disputed status of the Durand Line. They are also closely related to its topography, the unequal political status of FATA, developments following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan leading to the collapse of the traditional political and administrative infrastructure in FATA, and, above all, to the post-9/11 war against the Taliban and their ally, Al-Qa'ida.

While international boundaries are generally secure around the world, the Durand Line is an anomaly. The region straddling it is sometimes dubbed the 'Wild West' of the East, marked as it is by a forbidding terrain hospitable to mountain guerrilla warfare. Successive governments in Pakistan extended British policy by ignoring the region's pathologies, and making no effort to re-negotiate the boundaries. If a delineation had been re-negotiated with Afghanistan's government at an earlier date, much cross-border militancy might have been prevented. Nonetheless, the absence

of unified political authority in Afghanistan, and the latter's unwillingness to cede Pashtun areas to Pakistan, were and will likely remain insurmountable obstacles to such a settlement.

In contrast, the frontier between Pakistan and Iran (approximately 909 km) is not disputed. But over the last few years, serious issues relating to border security have emerged. These include smuggling, illegal migration, human trafficking and more importantly, cross-border terrorist attacks carried out by an extremist ethnic Baluch organisation calling itself Jundullah (Army of God). On 18 October 2009, this outfit is believed to have carried out a bombing attack in Iran's Seistan province that killed forty-two people, including fifteen members of the Revolutionary Guards and six senior commanders. This was one of a series of attacks that have taken place over the last few years, resulting in high casualties among the Iranian security forces.

The Iranian authorities have long held the view that this terrorist outfit is based in the neighbouring Pakistani province of Baluchistan and carries out sporadic attacks against Iran from there. 'They cross into Iran illegally. They are based in Pakistan,' says Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki. Iran's Intelligence Minister Heyder Moslehi has even claimed that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate has links with the group, and that Pakistan ought to clarify its position on this. Iran's Revolutionary Guard's deputy commander has gone as far as to threaten an Iranian strike inside Pakistan against the militants.¹

This paper discusses security issues relating to Pakistan's borders with both Iran and Afghanistan – specifically the latter – and the challenges that they pose to regional security. It also discusses relationships between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. The paper will focus on post-9/11 developments, especially the

¹ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 'Iran mounts pressure on Pakistan over bombing', 21 October 2009; *Yahoo News*, 'Iran vows reprisals after bombing kills dozens', 19 October 2009.

implications of the War on Terror in which Pakistan plays a key role. Finally, efforts made to strengthen the border security regime will be outlined, together with their strengths and limitations.

I. Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Control

Pakistan's efforts to curb anti-state terrorism pre-date the 9/11 attacks on the US mainland. On 12 October 1999, the government declared that it would embark upon a phased programme to curb violent religious extremism with the following measures:

- *Co-operation with the UN*
Pakistan has followed measures taken by the UN resolutions in controlling terrorism: for example it is a signatory to ten of the twelve UN anti-terrorist conventions on suppression of terrorism bombings and signed the Organisation of Islamic States (OIC) Convention on the combatting of international terrorism.
- *Deployment of Pakistani Troops*
Following American pressure and rising violence from the Pakistani Taliban, Pakistan supplemented its Frontier Corps between 2007 and 2009, and eventually dispatched tens of thousands of troops to the tribal regions — an area where no Pakistani and earlier British troops in pre-partitioned India had ventured before. Moreover, nearly 1,000 check points monitor border traffic with Afghanistan. On the Afghan side, characterised by underdevelopment and mountainous terrain, the monitoring is much less palpable. Nonetheless, the willingness of the Pakistani security establishment to monitor the border for all cross-border militant movement will be as important as the number of troops or checkpoints.
- *Sharing of Vital Intelligence*
Through sharing intelligence with other countries (the US, Iran, Tajikistan, and China), Pakistan has been able to gather information that allows it to monitor the movement of terrorist groups. This is no easy task given the

length of the porous borders. In late August 2006, Pakistan extended important help to the UK in preventing the use of chemical explosives in passenger aircraft.

- *Establishment of a Tripartite Commission*
Participation in meetings of a Tripartite Commission comprising senior military representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan and NATO's ISAF in Afghanistan helps co-ordination of counter-terrorism efforts. The Commission meets regularly to review border security, share intelligence and collaborate on measures against IEDs. However, poor co-ordination, occasionally divergent strategies, inadequate resources, a deficit of surveillance equipment and trained staff, and non-aligned standard operating procedures of border security hamper the Commission's effectiveness.
- *Proposal for Fencing and Mining of Borders*
Former President Musharraf had proposed the fencing and mining of the Afghan-Pakistan border to curb any militants' movement.² However President Hamid Karzai did not respond positively to the suggestion. In an interview, Musharraf stated that the base of terrorism lay in Afghanistan where five Taliban commanders continued to exert political control. In his opinion, Pakistan was unnecessarily being made a 'scapegoat' for the Afghan government's own shortcomings.³ This position is vigorously contested by Kabul, and the evidence suggests that the leadership of the Taliban engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan lies on the Pakistani side of the border, in Baluchistan and North Waziristan.

Earlier, Pakistan had proposed joint *jirgas* of elders in the border regions to check any infiltration. During the recent Pakistani operations against militants in the south of the country, *jirgas* moderated between the warring parties. Nonetheless, there is little evidence as to the ability or willingness of local Pashtun people to police those of the same ethnicity in this manner.

² *Daily Times*, 'Survival of Taliban: Musharraf says fault lies with Afghanistan,' 15 November 2006, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*

- *Anti-Terrorist Pacts and Extradition Treaties*
Pakistan has concluded anti-terrorist pacts with nearly twenty-seven countries, including Middle Eastern states, Uzbekistan and India.⁴ The latest one to be signed was with the UK on 19 November 2006, following Prime Minister Tony Blair's visit to Pakistan. Pakistan has also joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as observer member, and concluded treaties with some Central Asian states. With Australia it has signed agreements for the exchange of information and intelligence, joint training, and capacity building.⁵ Yet these steps are marred by a lack of proper implementation.
- *Training of Border Police and Drills*
Border forces have to be trained, with standard operating procedures streamlined and rehearsed. At the same time, better and more sophisticated equipment is required, including night vision and surveillance devices which are required to monitor and control cross-border movement of drugs and terrorists. To this end, the government of Pakistan is training the Frontier Corps and providing better equipment. The US is providing help in this area, but the process will take time. Pakistan's threat perception has always centered on India to the east, with minimal danger perceived from the north-west. However, since 9/11 there has been increased awareness of the threat from the Pakistani Taliban, as evidenced by the army action in FATA.

On the subject of border security, the inefficacy of Hamid Karzai's central government should be noted. He is accused of fraud in the 2009 elections, and of wielding little control over the peripheral territory of the state in the south and east. Growing doubts about his legitimacy have also complicated efforts to extend the writ of the Afghan National Army in the border regions. Locals fear collaboration with a government that could be supplanted by actors such as the Taliban or affiliates, and Karzai's perceived complicity in corruption undermines his authority even further. Also, the inadequate numbers of ISAF and US forces, their lack of co-ordination, appeasement of warlords

implicated in the drugs trade, the shift in focus to Iraq in 2003, and especially America's initial military blunder of not pressing harder to seal the Afghan-Pakistan borders before military action, have all separately and together complicated border security.

America was unwilling to place a significant troop presence on the ground in the aftermath of the initial operations, and Northern Alliance commanders were repeatedly bribed into allowing Taliban fighters to escape. America also failed to pressure Pakistan into either deploying its own troops or preventing the ISI from aiding militants (and their ISI affiliates) to re-enter Pakistan. Not only was the border not closely guarded by Pakistan, the Pakistani military was implicated in actually facilitating the escape of Taliban forces. Had these factors been addressed in timely fashion, many of the Al-Qa'ida and Taliban elements would have been prevented from escaping into the FATA sanctuaries.

When the militants started openly challenging the Pakistani state, the army was compelled to act. Suicide attacks in the interior of the country proliferated. A military operation in South Waziristan, which borders Afghanistan, was also launched in October 2009. Although Pakistan has suffered a considerable civilian toll in its efforts against terrorism, its operations were belated and inadequate. The ISI is blamed for its continued support of militants that are deemed not to present a threat to the government in Islamabad; it is argued that even if it was unable to mount effective operations against Afghan Taliban members, it could have disrupted their safe havens. Moreover, Pakistan's distinction between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban undermines the security of Western troops in Afghanistan and underplays the inter-relationship of militants in the border regions.

Border insecurity is also caused by NATO forces' inadequate troop numbers, national caveats about active fighting, and the difficulties of the mountainous terrain. The autonomy of tribes and their resistance to external control, as well as possession of obsolete Russian (and now

⁴ *Dawn*, 'Islamabad, Tashkent vow to fight terror', 7 March 2005, p. 1.

⁵ *The Nation*, 'Pakistan, Australia in counter-terrorism pact', 16 June 2005, p. 1.

new) weapon stocks through drug money, is also problematic. NATO policy has also been inadequate. Drugs, for example, account for more than half of Afghanistan's economy. Despite increased foreign aid this year, the opium harvest is up by 50 per cent from last year to an estimated 6,700 tonnes.⁶ The US-led effort during 2001 and 2002 did not adequately address agriculture so as to disincentivise poppy production, making the later efforts (by the British Army, in particular), all the more difficult; this, in turn, was rooted in the American focus on Al-Qa'ida at the expense of rebuilding the Afghan economy and institutions. This was belatedly addressed, but not before funds from drug production had proliferated making many farmers livelihoods dependent on opium.

The admission by NATO military commanders that they considered the troop level of 32,500 insufficient to bring about durable law and order was also interesting.⁷ Seth James, a RAND Corporation analyst, estimated that insurgencies historically took nearly fourteen years to be defeated, and questioned whether NATO members would have the patience for such a prolonged deployment.⁸ NATO's former Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, also appealed to the EU, UN, G8 and other international organisations to accord Afghanistan a 'prominent place on NATO's radar screen' as it was 'the most important operation for the Atlantic alliance.'⁹ Moreover, he warned that if nation-building and development do not go hand-in-hand with military means in that war-ravaged country, it could constitute a 'fatal mistake.'¹⁰

In recent times, the Pakistani Taliban has sought to topple the government in Islamabad and implement

radical Islamic law. They are related, though not identical, to the Afghan Taliban. The latter insist that their activities are confined to Afghanistan and that the two groups are only related by a common opposition to US troops. The Pakistani Taliban are presently exploiting anti-US and anti-government sentiment in Pakistan, and have launched a series of high-casualty attacks across the country. With regard to the Afghan Taliban, any premature US military withdrawal from Afghanistan could have serious consequences for countries in the Middle East and especially Pakistan, if Taliban successes in Afghanistan were to give a fillip to the separate insurgency across the Durand Line.¹¹

In the meantime, there is a nagging perception in some quarters in the West, especially the US, that Pakistan is not 'doing enough' and that the erstwhile Musharraf government and groups within the military had effectively engaged with, rather than combated, Taliban elements.¹² The Karzai government is furious about such support, arguing that it undermines the viability of the Afghan state. An Afghan writer opined that 'half-hearted' attempts by Pakistan, together with the Pakistan-sponsored 'Iraqization' of the Afghan war were both contributory factors to the deterioration of security after 2002.¹³ The alleged role of the Pakistani military in abetting the Taliban has been seen as critical to the trajectory of the Afghan insurgency from 2002 to the present, and recent reports have underscored the military's deep ambivalence about opposing militants: for example the Haqqani network, who are seen as a useful hedge against India's rising involvement in Afghanistan. The British and American leaders have strongly urged Pakistan to address this issue.

⁶ *The Los Angeles Times* cited in *Dawn*, 'Karzai govt struggling for survival, says paper,' 14 November 2006, p. 15. Also see *Strategic Insight*, No. 23, March 2006, Australian Strategic Institute, pp 5-6.

⁷ *Daily Times*, 'NATO force too slim for early Afghan victory: Gen Richard,' 2 November, 2006, p. A5.

⁸ Quoted in A Mohammed, 'Afghanistan pose challenges for a new global NATO,' *Dawn*, 12 November 2006, p. 15.

⁹ *Daily Times*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ See former Ambassador Najmuddin A Shaikh, 'What next in Afghanistan?', *Dawn*, 1 November 2006, p. 6; also see in this context, former Ambassador Shahid M Amin, 'Some sobering thoughts', *Dawn*, 12 November 2006, p. 9.

¹² For a list of reasons that are impediments for pursuing a full anti- terrorism strategy, see Hasan Askari Rizvi, 'Failing top-down counter- terrorism,' *Daily Times*, 12 November 2006, p. A6.

¹³ See Musa Khan Jalalzai, 'Violence and terrorism,' *The Post* (Lahore), 28 March 2006.

II. Pakistan-Iran

Pakistan and Iran have been friendly Muslim neighbours, albeit with some irritations of late. Iran was the first country to recognise Pakistan upon the latter's independence in 1947. The heyday of the relationship was in the era of King Reza Shah Pahlavi, when both countries were staunch US allies and members of the anti-Soviet pact, CENTO. During the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971, Iran extended full diplomatic and military support to Pakistan. Relations remained cordial until the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when both emerged as so-called 'frontline states' against Soviet aggression. Both had to bear the burden of Afghan refugees — then the largest number in the world — with limited outside support.

However, relations between Pakistan and Iran began to deteriorate after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. Both countries backed opposing groups during the internecine fighting in Afghanistan, with Pakistani support for the Taliban regime souring relations. The seismic events of 9/11 led to the deposition of the Taliban regime by the use of US military force. The installation of the Northern Alliance-led government in Afghanistan assuaged Iran's concerns. Subsequently, the former president Syed Muhammad Khatami observed that with the removal of the Taliban leadership, Pakistani support notwithstanding, there was no reason for both countries not to improve aid and trade relations, and increase bilateral co-operation.¹⁴

Iran, for its part, wants to rebuild economic relations with the two important South Asian countries and wishes to see an end to the tension bedeviling Indo-Pakistani relations. It has, therefore, urged them to engage in talks and start early negotiations in order to amicably resolve their differences. Iran was the first country to contact India and Pakistan during the crisis and subsequent Indian military mobilisation in 2001-02. The Iranian foreign minister at the time, Kamal Kharazi, called for 'restraint' and 'early dialogue' in order to break the 'vicious cycle'.¹⁵ Iran had hoped that economic activities, including enhanced trade, technical, educational

co-operation, or the construction of pipelines could serve as confidence-building measures that would benefit the entire region, including the Gulf.

III. Conclusions

The 2,500 km-long un-demarcated Afghanistan-Pakistan border poses a major challenge. Border security issues have gained salience after 2004 when military operations were launched in FATA. Securing and protecting the long border is an uphill task. It requires not only a major portion of Pakistani forces to be shifted from its eastern borders, but also a change in the attitude of the Pakistani army towards the full spectrum of the violent groups. Investment in the Frontier Corps and border forces is already beginning. On the Afghan side, the Afghan National Army and police must be strengthened. Under the new 'AfPak' strategy, these issues are being addressed anew. The efficacy of the new strategy remains contested. While the Obama administration has taken some bold decisions, such as a troop surge in Afghanistan over the next few months, it also talks of a phased US drawdown starting in July 2011.

So far, the performance on either side (Pakistan and Afghanistan) in terms of border control is highly unsatisfactory, with frequent cross-border movement of militants into each other's territories. Afghans have traditionally opposed demarcated borders to facilitate freedom of movement in a territory where the majority Pashtun ethnic group straddles the border. This problem is resolvable if there is political will and external pressure on both governments to finally settle the border issues.

Terrorism thrives because of the ill-defined, porous, meandering and lengthy border that the security forces cannot effectively guard. Naturally, this allows terrorists and other non-state actors an ideal refuge. Although Al-Qa'ida has been considerably damaged vertically and horizontally, it still operates in small autonomous sleeper cells in urban centres of Pakistan that could be activated as and when required. Al-Qa'ida cells also exist in several countries, such as Yemen, and Somalia. Pakistan for its part has either killed or handed over to the US nearly 600 Al-

¹⁴ Ihtesham ul Haque, 'Resolution of Kashmir issue soon: Khatami', *Dawn*, 26 December 2002.

¹⁵ Raja Mohan, 'Iran calls for restraint', *Hindu* (New Delhi), 22 May 2002.

Qa'ida operatives in the last eight years or so, even as its efforts against the Afghan Taliban have been lacklustre. Even if the top Al-Qa'ida leadership is decimated, the movement will take time to dissipate as long as conditions of economic deprivation and foreign military involvement remain in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a noted expert on Al-Qa'ida has observed, it is an ideology that poses a 'dispersed and diffused' threat, but nevertheless is a 'learning and agile organisation' with a great 'capacity to regenerate recruits.'¹⁶ Hence, in his view, eliminating Al-Qa'ida and breaking the Al-Qa'ida-Taliban interface will require long-term commitment.

In the absence of a secure border, serious challenges will continue to haunt regional security. Since the enhancement of border security will hold the key to effective war against the menace of terrorism, some proposals are formulated below.

IV. Proposals

1. Insofar as the Afghan-Pakistan dispute over the legal status of the Durand Line acts as the main obstacle to co-operation and co-ordination on enhancing border security, the settlement of this issue should be accorded top priority. The Durand Line should be accepted as the international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with appropriate measures taken to reconcile Afghanistan to this state of affairs. In this case, direct pressure on both countries from the world community should be exerted; on Afghanistan to accept the Durand Line as the legitimate border and on Pakistan to make concessions to the Afghan concerns, for instance over traditional freedom of movement.

2. One of the prominent features of the Afghan-Pakistani border is that it is extremely porous. According to one source, about half the population of the Pakistani border town of Chaman, on the road into Kandahar, crosses the border daily into Afghanistan.¹⁷ An eventual agreement reached between Pakistan and Afghanistan, therefore, must respect the long tradition of unhindered cross-

border movement by residents of the area that neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan has the ability to halt.

3. Pakistan and Afghanistan should devise and implement immediate border-related confidence building measures involving trade, transit rights and security that would reduce the level of conflict. This would provide tangible benefits to both countries. These could be modest in scope and jointly policed, and would ease tensions even if not resolving the fundamental disagreements.

4. The existing mechanisms for ensuring border security should be strengthened and made more effective. These mechanisms include the Trilateral Commission composed of senior military officers from Pakistan and Afghanistan, ISAF, and the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell established by the US Department of Defence in August 2009. The objective of the Cell is to develop experts who will eventually rotate back and forth between the US and the region. The steps agreed upon in May 2009 between the interior ministries of Pakistan and Afghanistan to improve border security should also be fully implemented. These steps include a new system of providing identification documents to people in both countries, who habitually cross the border without any papers.¹⁸

5. The special status of FATA has complicated the issue of security on Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The process of introducing political and constitutional reforms in the region should therefore be expedited, allowing for the poor security situation and the legacy of limited central control. There are some initial moves in this direction in the wake of the conclusion of military operations in Swat and South Waziristan. A proposal for integrating the region with the NWFP, originating from the ruling party in the province, is being seriously considered by the government.

6. The issues of border security are closely linked with what is happening in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

¹⁶ Rohan Gunaratna, head of Terrorism Research Center, Singapore, as cited in 'Al-Qaeda terror threat in Asia more diffuse and difficult: analysts,' *The Nation*, 30 December 2005, p. 9.

¹⁷ 'The Durand Line: History, Consequences, and Future,' The American Institute of Afghanistan Studies and the Hollings Center in Istanbul, November 2007, p.9.

¹⁸ For details, see *Dawn*, 'Pakistan, Afghanistan plan to improve border control,' 9 May 2009.

CROSS-BORDER SECURITY

The erosion of state authority in Afghanistan has undermined the ability of the Afghan government to implement various mechanisms for border security. Similarly, border security cannot improve unless the lawless region of FATA in Pakistan is brought under control by the security forces of Pakistan. The army is now planning to set up small garrisons and is not planning to vacate the region. This will reassure the local population and prevent their intimidation by the remaining Taliban elements who have melted into the neighbouring tribal agencies. Any ongoing Pakistani military support for elements of the Taliban must cease, and international pressure on Pakistan ought to be focused to that end.

7. The same principle applies to the Pakistan-Iran border. Unless the situation in Baluchistan is normalised, it will not be possible to prevent militant groups like Jundullah operating from Pakistan against Iran. The Afghan Taliban already exploits an anarchical situation in Baluchistan, basing much of its leadership in the province. It is therefore necessary that efforts for reconciliation and normalisation in Baluchistan are expedited.

8. Reconstruction Opportunity Zones should be started on both sides. Common irrigation projects, road networks, trade and business activities and co-operation in peace-building activities must be intensified. Already there is some trade going on but it is illegal and not sufficient to produce stakeholders in good relations. The introduction of 'peace parks', as in some countries, could also lessen tensions.

9. Regional countries could also contribute to economic development in the border areas, as a prosperous and hence more peaceful Afghan-

Pakistani border will help stabilise the region. The most relevant countries are Afghanistan and Iran, which could work with Pakistan to promote development, enterprise, and other economic activity on their respective border.

10. The paramilitary forces responsible for border control and border security are underpaid, poorly equipped and under-trained. They need better salaries and capacity building through training to raise their performance. Arming them with surveillance devices and the latest weapons is of crucial importance.

11. A separate border immigration control authority should be established to prevent the surge of illegal seasonal migration from Afghanistan into Pakistan due to poor harvests and the occasional flare-up of violence in eastern Afghanistan.

12. Although such a measure seems audacious in the context of regional tensions, the implementation of energy pipelines passing through Afghanistan into Pakistan and India could still be taken up by the respective countries. This could entail the construction of respective sections of pipelines within countries in preparation for their final link up once some semblance of peace returns in Afghanistan. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline is a good model of what might be possible. Although this remains a contentious issue between Iran and India, Pakistan could make further efforts to guarantee the security of the pipeline and encourage both sides to make appropriate concessions. Although the pipeline project is dormant at present, its revival would likely produce beneficial spillover effects throughout the region.

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