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Strategic Insight

Rough Neighbors: Afghanistan and Pakistan

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Focus on South Asia over the past fifty years has primarily remained on the India-Pakistan rivalry and tensions over Kashmir. This dimension overshadowed the effect of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations on the security dynamics of the South-Central Asian region. The historical and cultural dimension of the Afghanistan-Pakistan relation has been and will remain critical in the evolving regional dynamics. After the end of the Cold War this relationship became a prime facilitator of the international terrorist network, which found its locus in the region. For the most part of Pakistan's independent history, relations with Afghanistan have been problematic and have been characterized by recurrent mutual suspicion, which sometimes manifested in policies of interference and even attempts at destabilization.

Located at the confluence of great mountains and with a turbulent history, the Pakistan-Afghanistan region was once referred to as the "cockpit of Asia" by Lord Curzon.^[1] Geography has placed the region at the crossroads of global and regional politics, strategic and particularly economic interests—as a potential conduit for energy routes (the oil/gas pipelines of Central Asia). But the war-torn region faces diverse problems of conflicting group-identities, narcotics trade, a small arms highway, money laundering, mineral smuggling and cultural clashes.^[2]

Since the events of September 11, 2001 the political landscape of the region has transformed dramatically. Pakistan made a strategic about-face over the Taliban, when her decade old "forward policy" in Afghanistan became counterproductive to her own national security. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have since returned to the mainstream of the international system. But skepticism and fear of renewed tension between them remains and both countries revitalize bilateral relations with cautious optimism. Of particular concern has been the establishment of a pro-Taliban elected government in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan. What political and security implications for the war on terrorism and for Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan will accrue from this development?

A year after the historic Bonn Agreement on December 6, 2001, Afghanistan has now embarked on a journey towards peace and reconstruction after being ravaged by war, bloody coups, and displacement of the society. In June 2002, the Loya Jirga endorsed the leadership of President Hamid Karzai. The interim administration and coalition in Kabul however remains fragile and the potential danger for a return to civil war still remains as Afghanistan undergoes a delicate transition period until 2003.^[3] For the past year Afghanistan and Pakistan have been enjoying an unprecedented level of cooperative relations. Will both

countries remain on track and for how long? Will Afghanistan and Pakistan destabilize each other this decade? What major changes have now taken place and what steps might be taken to sustain this healthy trend in the future of their relations?

This essay will analyze the security dynamics of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations in their historical framework and within the context of the ongoing war on terrorism, with an eye to the future of the region.

The Alienated Pashtuns

The *raison d'être* that soured relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan lies in the historic Pashtun divide. Ethnic politics in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) that borders Afghanistan was the biggest threat to Pakistan's internal stability at the time of independence and this threat is coming around full circle today.

Pashtun discontent goes back to the 19th century when the British created a buffer between the Czars and the British Empire in the great power game. The "Durand line" established in 1893 has been challenged by "successive Afghans as if it were a 'line drawn on water'". [4] It became a sensitive issue when the British departed the Subcontinent. The Pashtuns on the Pakistani side resided in the two western provinces—the NWFP and Baluchistan, a province that also neighbors Iran. Kabul refused to recognize the newly independent Pakistan and immediately challenged the legitimacy of Pakistan's borders. Afghanistan cast the sole vote at the United Nations against Pakistan's membership, laid territorial claim to the two provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP and expressed the hope that "natural and legal rights of freedom of the North West Frontier people and free tribes along the borders may also be established". [5] The Pashtun nationalistic fervor—known as the "Pashtunistan movement"—engendered tense relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was an irredentist movement originally begun in Afghanistan, which resonated on the Pakistani side and was mainly organized by the Khudai Khidmatgars or 'Red Shirts'. [6]

This situation provided India an opportunity to excite sub-nationalism in the newly created Pakistan, which in the 1950s was openly supported by the Soviet Union. For Pakistan, it became a Kautilian vice as Afghanistan acted behind covert machinations by India at a time when Pakistan was coping up with partition problems with India. [7] Sporadic clashes led to severing of diplomatic relations in 1955 and 1962. Pakistan's Embassy in Afghanistan was attacked in 1955, prompting Pakistan to retaliate by strangling Afghan's landlocked economy. Pakistan's border with Afghanistan was formally recognized by the United States as early as 1951 but this issue was consistently undermined and challenged by the Soviet Union. [8] Despite these frictions, Pakistan always considered problems with Afghanistan manageable. Despite Afghanistan's non-recognition of the borders, Pakistan's founding leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah reversed the British policy of stationing troops in the Pashtun areas believing that Muslims rather than the British could win the allegiance of the tribes. [9]

Throughout the reign of Afghan King Zahir Shah, Pakistan never faced a threatening military posture from Afghanistan that necessitated force deployment on the Durand Line. This pattern continued even during the two wars with India (1965 and 1971), as Afghanistan never posed any military threat to Pakistan. After the overthrow of Zahir Shah in 1973, the succeeding Daud regime not only raised the issue of Pashtunistan, but also for the first time moved the Afghan army closer to the borders, which resulted in a reciprocal Pakistani deployment. This development prompted the Z.A. Bhutto government to retaliate by supporting the disenfranchised elements in Afghanistan who had fled into Pakistan. These included Burhanuddin Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Masud and Gulbadin Hikmatyar—all of whom were to later lead the Mujahdeen against the Soviets and become part of a bitter history of the Afghan imbroglio. The 1973 coup in Afghanistan coincided with the uprising in the tribal areas of Baluchistan and parts of NWFP that was actively supported by Afghan Intelligence agencies (KHAD). Throughout the 1970s the Pakistan army was busy fighting a bitter insurgency in the province of Baluchistan. Several tribal leaders (Sardars) fled and sought refuge in Afghanistan. Thus relations in the 1970s began with each country supporting the other's dissidents on a *quid pro quo* basis.

By the late '70s, Pakistan had settled its insurgency problems in Baluchistan and the Pashtunistan problem was largely overcome before the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.^[10] But the Soviets installed a communist regime that was openly hostile to Pakistan. In 1981, a Pakistani airline was hijacked to Afghanistan, allegedly by Al-Zulfikar, a terror organization led by sons of Z.A. Bhutto against the Pakistani military regime of Zia-ul Haq. The Afghan government of Babrak Karmal encouraged the hijackers.^[11] By then it was no longer just a Pakistan-Afghan regional affair, the region had become a battlefield of the Cold War. The conflict attracted the attentions of not only the United States, the Soviet Union, and China, but also the Saudis, who sought to inject their Wahhabi ideology. This prompted Iran to enter the rivalry by exporting its own revolutionary Islamic ideology. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan became turf for Wahhabi and Shia battle. The seeds for sectarian violence were sown as the Jihad to oust the Soviets raged on. As a result, a complex web of covert engagement enveloped the Pakistan-Afghan region.

The Rise and Fall of the Taliban

The Taliban factor that menaced the region did not emerge in a vacuum. After a decade of war and the defeat of the Soviets, the United States and the rest of the world abandoned Pakistan and the Mujahideens. The resulting power vacuum plunged Afghanistan into a bitter civil war. The continuation of the Najeebullah regime posed a threat to Pakistan at a time when the Kashmir uprising had led to a serious stand off with India. Pakistan now by itself tried to secure a friendly government in Kabul as a prize for its support for liberating Afghans from the Soviets. Mujahideens found their way into Pakistan causing internal problems, and further into Indian-held Kashmir. Pakistan supported the Kashmir struggle at one end and also attempted to forge a broad-based alliance to settle the Afghanistan problem. India, Iran and Russia meanwhile supported the Tajik- Panjsheri factions (notably the Burhanuddin Rabbani). Civil strife continued in Afghanistan, reducing Kabul to rubble. Essentially it was a battle between the Pashtuns (mostly led by Hikmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami, a key ally and then favorite of the Inter Service Intelligence—ISI) and the Panjsheris (led by Ahmed Shah Masud—the "Lion of Panjsher") that had entered a stalemate phase.

The Taliban—student militias—came from seminaries (Madrassah) mainly based in the tribal areas in South and Eastern Afghanistan and in the Pashtun belt of Pakistan—NWFP and Baluchistan, notorious for their ferocious independence. By the mid 1990s the Taliban were a cult-like organization, a peculiar hybrid of the Wahhabi-Deobandi schools of thought that had made inroads since the early 1950s. The Wahabis played an active role in the late '70s and early '80s when they provided massive funds for the Madrassah schools. Many of the Taliban were orphans of the "Afghan Jihad" against the Soviets. The Taliban cult was propped up initially with the support of the civil government of Benazir Bhutto, then in coalition with the Deobandi Jama'at-ulema Islam (JUI) led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman—now the elected opposition leader at the Center in Islamabad and whose protégé is now the chief Minister in the NWFP. The Taliban was known to be brainchild of the interior Minister Naseerullah Babar, himself a Pashtun and ostensibly driven by incentive to open up a trade route to Turkmenistan via Kandahar.^[12]

The success of the Taliban in establishing writ in the Kandhar province and the continued infighting in the north of Afghanistan and Kabul significantly weakened the fledgling Rabbani regime. Ironically, in June 1996 after some 10,000 casualties between themselves, Hikmatyar became the Prime Minister of Afghanistan under the Rabbani Presidency. This unnatural alliance barely lasted a few months. It was then that Pakistan agencies—in particular the ISI—shifted support from Hikmatyar to the rising Taliban. In October 1996 to the surprise of all, the Taliban overthrew the Rabbani regime and established a semblance of law and order after a devastating period of civil war.

In November 1996, the civilian President of Pakistan sacked the government of Benazir Bhutto and thus ended the reign of the government that had spawned the Taliban. From then on the Taliban regime grew apace with the support of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. This brought a clash of interests with Iran, which was becoming increasingly concerned as the Taliban continued to consolidate power in Afghanistan and in the process actively repressed ethnic and religious minorities especially the Shia Hazara. Iran found sympathy in India and some Central Asian countries that had earlier seen a historic opportunity for a

trade outlet once Afghanistan freed itself from the yolk of the Soviets. Since then Afghanistan became a pawn in the hands of regional neighbors and the war torn society suffered immensely.[\[13\]](#)

It was around this period that Osama bin Laden and others quietly arrived as "guests" of Mullah Omar. Their arrival went unnoticed against the backdrop of a twenty year flow of mercenaries and religious fighters in and out of Pakistan for the "global jihad."

By the late 1990s the Pakistani establishment grew weary of the Taliban and the presence of the global Jihad network in Afghanistan. Pakistan found that the Taliban had transformed from a subservient political client into an independent regime that had become something of a Frankenstein monster for Islamabad. Focused on its own internal political divisions and on its now-nuclear rivalry with India, a weakened Pakistan was unable to manage the Taliban. In 1998, Osama Bin Laden struck U.S. embassies in East Africa, and the United States responded with cruise missile attacks. Meanwhile the Taliban's incivility culminated in the destruction of the Buddhist statues in Bamyan. Pakistan was clearly frustrated. But abandoning the Taliban could mean anarchy on its border—tantamount to opening a second front. In the process of trying to bring Afghanistan out of its isolation, Pakistan became increasingly isolated itself.[\[14\]](#)

Given this backdrop, when the Taliban regime was ousted from power in the fall of 2001, it was good riddance of a bigoted regime that freed both Pakistan and Afghanistan. However in the eyes of the Pashtuns—the largest ethnic group in the population of Afghanistan—it spelled the retreat of the Pashtuns from political power for the second time this decade after dominating the country for nearly 300 years. [\[15\]](#)

When Operation Enduring Freedom commenced in October 2001, an influx of refugees into Pakistan and Iran began. Both countries blocked entry of the displaced persons. Nevertheless about 200, 000 were able to enter Pakistan. But nearly 2 million were displaced persons and they remained within Afghanistan.[\[16\]](#) Most of those suffering displacement were Pashtuns, and as the war shifted eastwards towards the Pakistani border, the sympathy of the tribal Pashtuns was a natural outcome. To add insult to injury, Kabul was allowed to be captured by the Northern Alliance. Further, the Northern Alliance—dominated by the Panjsheris, historic archrivals of the Pashtuns—captured the key posts in the interim government.

The Refuge Behind the 'Pashtunwali' Code

One significant factor that influenced the behavior of the Taliban as well as the tribal Pashtun areas was the "Pashtunwali code." This code demands blood vengeance, has a strong focus on hospitality, bravery, chivalry and defense for the honor of women[\[17\]](#). One key obligation under this code is to provide protection—even at the peril of their own lives—to individuals who seek shelter or refuge in the tribal area. In fact, Mullah Omar used this antiquated custom as an excuse to shelter Osama Bin Laden and other "guests" that had taken refuge in Afghanistan.

Since December 2001 as Operation "Enduring Freedom" pushed towards Eastern Afghanistan into areas that overlapped with the tribal Pashtun belts of Pakistan, which are characterized by a rugged terrain, new complications arose for the military operation. The Al Qaeda terrorists and Taliban renegades took refuge in these areas, the abode from where most of them came from. The Pashtunwali code provided subterfuge for the tribal Pashtuns and their political sympathizers for sheltering and protecting the fleeing Taliban and Al Qaeda. In reality the behavior of the Pashtun tribal areas reflected ongoing rivalry with the Panjsheris of the Northern Alliance.



Pashtun areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Elections in Pakistan: The Impact on Afghanistan

Pakistan's Supreme Court gave President Musharraf a three-year mandate to return to democratic and civilian rule by October 12, 2002. He set up a road map and returned to a "controlled democracy". The election results in the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan brought a potpourri of the religious parties—the Muttahida Majlis Amal (MMA)—into power. Tensions between Islamabad and the Provinces are likely to surface at some point. The results in the two provinces were not necessarily an endorsement of the Taliban ideology or its style of governance, but resentment of the perceived injustice meted out to the Pashtuns in Afghanistan. Some extremists even see the hands of the Pakistani establishment covered with Pashtun blood. For the first time an external factor impacted the results of domestic elections in Pakistan. [\[18\]](#)

Two questions are now a source of anxiety and concern. First, how will the election outcome affect Pakistan's support for Operation Enduring Freedom? At present some 60,000 Federal forces in Pakistan are deployed to hunt down the terrorists. The challenge for Pakistan now will be to delineate the role of the Federal government (defense and foreign Affairs) and the domain of the Provinces (internal law and order). At the time of this writing, tension between the Center and the Provinces has surfaced following an isolated incident involving a U.S.-Pakistani troops clash due to misunderstanding and miscoordination. The United States had received firm assurance of a continued policy of cooperation but at the operational level there is much need for coordination to avoid similar incidents.^[19] However, the NWFP government will likely continue to protest and will raise anti-American sentiments simply to rub against the Central government.

The second question is that given the sympathy of the Peshawar government with the erstwhile Taliban, will Al Qaeda and the Taliban exploit the situation? The terrorist elements will continue to seek refuge in the tribal areas and to form sleeper cells. Trouble is bound to brew in the Provinces, which would evoke response from the security forces. In turn this might exacerbate Center-Provincial tensions. The Pakistan government has done well so far to maintain law and order. But if it deteriorates, the Center will be forced to consider the option of dissolving the NWFP government as an extreme measure. Such a development would probably result in destabilization across the Pashtun tribal areas of Pakistan and may well resonate into Afghanistan's Pashtun belt.

Threat Perceptions: The Strategic Dimension

In the strategic realm, despite the myriad complexities, Afghanistan does not loom large in Pakistan's overall threat perception. India continues to remain the primary threat. Pakistani security officials have constantly struggled to balance and cope with the ideological and the military challenge posed by India. India continues to regret the partition and has poised 80% of India's armed forces towards a potential conflict with Pakistan, including nearly half a million deployed in Indian-administered Kashmir.

In its security calculus, Pakistan perceives India seeking a "strategic envelopment," a policy of manipulating events in Afghanistan and Iran to elicit anti-Pakistan responses so as to cause political and security problems for Pakistan. The foremost objective of Pakistan has been to establish a friendly government in Kabul that at the minimum does not pose a second front in the event of a war with India. Two misconceptions about Pakistan's security objective in Afghanistan have persisted. The first misconception is about the notion that Pakistan would use Afghanistan as "strategic depth" in the face of an attack from India. An extension of this notion is that Pakistan would use this "depth" as a "safety deposit" for strategic arsenals that may be vulnerable to India. This loosely defined concept is more of a stretch in strategic imagination, conjuring up an outmoded image of a Napoleonic maneuvers—trading space to fight back. Military strategy in this day and age especially in the nuclear context has changed the environment and also the concepts of war fighting. At best, Pakistan may find a friendly Afghanistan providing a "strategic relief zone" for limited logistic sustenance and back up in the event of future war with India.

The strategic depth notion is simply divorced from reality and lacks military appraisal of the basic situation. Pakistan's life-line communications lie perilously close and parallel to its border with India. Pakistan will cease to exist if it allows a deep thrust by India into its territory. Moreover, Afghanistan has always been quasi-hostile, too unstable and tribal for any sane leader to contemplate putting strategic assets in that place. Recently General (retired) Aslam Beg—to whom this strategic depth notion was attributed—has clarified his statement in a conference in Tehran:

The need for strategic depth—a strategic partnership between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan—was misunderstood as an imperative only for geographical space ...to say that the strategic depth concept was developed to gain territorial space in case of war with India has no military logic, nor does it conform to the operational policy of Pakistan, which is to defend its borders and defeat the enemy if he attempts to violate Pakistan's territory.^[20]

The second misconception about Pakistan's objective in Afghanistan is that Pakistan has an ideological agenda. That Pakistan sought a forward policy with the aim of "recreating a Sunni Muslim space between infidel 'Hindustan', heretic [because of adherence to the Shia branch of Islam] Iran and Christian Russia." [21] Zia-ul Haq is accused of dreaming of a Pakistani-led Islamic bloc of nations fulfilling a Pan Islamic utopia. It may be possible that Zia-ul Haq in one of his unguarded moments may have expressed such a wish. But to say that it was translated into a stated policy objective or given as policy directives or even proclaimed by Zia in any formal speech or given as a serious assertion would be a gross overstatement. The fact is that Zia-ul Haq—despite full U.S. support during the Soviet war in Afghanistan in the 1980s—primarily faced threat and crisis from India. In addition he faced serious domestic challenges. It seems implausible that his regime could have seriously thought of a "Sunni space" anywhere, given the fact that Pakistan neither had the capability nor respite from India to contemplate an expansionist policy.

The apparent "forward policy" followed in the 1990s in Afghanistan was of a defensive nature aimed at seeking a friendly government so as to prevent a second front. Pakistan overstretched by getting swept with the tide of the Taliban success and was then dragged into a "march to folly". After the demise of the Soviet Union, Pakistan's major interest shifted towards an economic agenda. Afghanistan was seen as an indispensable conduit for Central Asia's natural resources. Much before the Taliban surfaced Pakistan made strenuous efforts by brokering a Peshawar accord to establish a "broad-based" government in Kabul. It was hoped that the potential of economic prosperity and trade rewards would instill incentives to bring an end to Afghanistan's ethnic war. In anticipation of providing key access to and from the energy rich Central Asia, Pakistan embarked upon constructing an ambitious road and communication network, hoping to facilitate trade and transit. However, the ethnic rivalry and distrust proved historically too deep for dividends to be achieved. The meddling of the regional and non-regional states further compounded it.

The Role of the International Community

The broad objectives of the international coalition in Afghanistan are twofold: to eliminate the terrorist networks of Al Qaeda and to reconstruct the failed state. These two objectives are mutually reinforcing. Clearly the accomplishment of these two goals would greatly benefit both Afghanistan and Pakistan. To assure Afghanistan's viability, the political process of ensuring good governance and reconstruction must proceed concomitantly. Pakistan will be required to play a critical complementary role in this endeavor. The U.S. military strategy so far has succeeded in dismantling the physical infrastructure and draining the financial network of the terrorists considerably, but the Al Qaeda leadership is still intact. The rebuilding process is far from over. Four interconnected political and security gaps are evident in Afghanistan that resonate in Pakistan and pose new challenges in the region.

First, the current security perimeter is restricted only to Kabul and its surrounding area. The efforts to train and create a national army may well take eight to ten years. This is a daunting task for which timelines cannot be easily set even though Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan, gave an upbeat assessment recently which reflected steady progress in the country. [22] The Pakistani Government is galvanizing full support for the Karzai regime because the best security guarantee to Pakistan's Western frontier lies in Karzai's success. His strong personality combined with less rigid younger Panjsheris provide a hope for moderation and the realization that Pakistan can play a crucial logistical role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. For instance, Pakistan is helping in rebuilding the Jalalabad-Kabul highway under the aegis of the European Union. But there is also a tension of an immediate nature in Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. A large number of Pakistani prisoners are still held by some factions of the Northern Alliance. It is alleged that the regime is holding them as bargaining chips for extracting support and favorable policy from Pakistan.

The second major area of concern remains the ethnically skewed political structure in Kabul, which could ultimately lead to Pashtun rebellion. Vice President Fahim is seen as only a "heart beat away" from the Presidency in the event of anything happening to President Karzai. [23] The restive Pashtuns in and around the Durand line and in Pakistan may well rise in sympathy. Should a civil war break out again in Afghanistan, its spillover into Pakistan cannot be ruled out. Forced into alienation and division by history

and now marginalized by a combination of turn of events, there exists a danger of the resurfacing of the Pashtunistan movement. This could imply a new kind of a civil war with profound implications both for the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as the war on terrorism. By implication this would play right into the hands of the terrorists.

The third major factor is the role of the warlords in Afghanistan. In this transitory period in which the Karzai regime has little in the way of a national security apparatus, the warlords rein supreme. The hold of the warlords will need to be systematically marginalized.

The fourth and most profound impact is the role of the outside actors in the Afghanistan. Several countries—Russia, India, Iran and some Central Asian states—are actively playing a negative role outside the purview of the Bonn process. In Iran President Khatami is moving in tandem and cooperation with Pakistan in supporting the Karzai government as manifest in the recent visit to Pakistan. However there are hardliners in Iran who would want to continue with the old game of supporting warlords and factions and consider Pakistan as rival vis-a-vis Afghanistan, and who are still suspicious of the Saudi role.^[24] Iran is pitching its bid, by constructing a road from Chahbahar Port in the Persian Gulf through Iran's Baluchistan area to link up eventually with Kandahar in the hope of "breaking the monopoly of Pakistan". Afghanistan is currently sustained primarily through the Karachi-Quetta/Peshawar routes—Bolan and Khyber passes respectively—which has provided Afghanistan with trade and transit with the outside world for centuries.^[25]

Russia remains involved with the major warlords. One such warlord, Rashid Dostum, was recently on a shopping spree for arms and equipment from Moscow. Russia believes it has its own experience and expertise in Afghanistan and must reestablish its interests. Given the history, Pakistan is very uncomfortable with this development.

India is a major proactive player now. It is providing well-coordinated military supplies to the Northern Alliance thorough the air base in Tajikistan. This includes weapons, equipment and spare parts aimed at strengthening those elements that had become the sworn enemies of Pakistan during the Taliban's rule. Fear in Pakistan is that despite Afghanistan's changed policies, some elements still hold a grudge against Pakistan and would be willing to do India's bidding.^[26] This would bring the India-Pakistan rivalry into the Afghan imbroglio.

Steps Ahead

No easy solutions are available to the Pakistan-Afghan problems and it will certainly be a long road to a durable peace in Afghanistan and for mutual trust to build. However in the immediate to mid-term, several principles should guide the international community's pursuit of stability for the region:

- First is the *preservation of integrity of Afghanistan*. The biggest threat that might compound the Afghan imbroglio would be the revival of the question of greater Pashtunistan or irredentist claims. To prevent chaos, the international community should ensure that the current borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran are officially recognized by all and internationally endorsed. The sooner this is achieved the better it will be for all actors. Afghanistan's public acceptance of the Durand Line would herald a truly new era in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations.
- The second principle is to *balance the structure of the government in Kabul* so as to reflect the genuine demographic makeup of the society. Moderate Pashtuns should continue to be encouraged to form part of the central government in Kabul. This will be the critical step to preventing vivisection or unrest in Afghanistan and its spillover into neighboring areas.
- Lastly the most important step is to *establish a ban on the transfer of weapons into the region*, except under the aegis of the United Nations. No country should be allowed to provide military assistance directly to any faction or warlord. Regional rivalries must be kept out of Afghanistan,

and the role of each regional country must be demarcated in terms of its influence, proximity and impact. All assistance must be routed through the U.N. process. The recently signed Kabul Declaration has sought pledges of non-interference from several states. This welcome move, however, must not be of solely declarative nature. Its implementation must be overseen by a multilateral commission composed of all parties interested in the stability of Afghanistan.

These three principles will be crucial to bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan as the war on terrorism continues to unfold and reconstruction plans are carried out. The international community must act now and work closely with the Karzai and Musharraf regimes to help manage problems as they arise and to keep foreign rivalries and military assistance out of the region.

For more topical analysis from the CCC, see our [Strategic Insights](#) section.

For related links, see our [South Asia Resources](#).

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2. Richard A Matthew "[Environmental Stress And Human Security In Northern Pakistan](#)", Report by ECSP, issue 7 also abridged version produced on AVISO 10 report of July, 2001.
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4. For a commentary see Vartan Gregorian, "The Yearnings of the Pashtoons," *New York Times*, Nov, 15, 2001, PA 31 and earlier work by the same author *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*.
5. Dennis Kux, "The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies" (Washington DC) 2000, p. 19.
6. The issue of the "Pashtunistan" resurfaced in the context of the war in Afghanistan 2001. Pakistan's sensitivity goes to its origin and the nexus between Afghan and Indian intelligence agencies that had developed roots within the nationalist political party National Awami Party (NAP) whose founder Abdul Ghaffar Khan was famously known as the Frontier Gandhi. Pakistan always believed India was undermining her security with the covert networking of KHAD, the Afghan intelligence agency that in turn had worked with the Soviet KGB who wanted to punish Pakistan for its alliance with the United States. Together they helped create disorder amongst dissenting tribes in the volatile Western provinces of Pakistan that neighbored Afghanistan. In addition India fanned dissidents in Sindh Province and exploited the thousands miles distance in East Pakistan, effectively undermining Pakistan's quest for national unity.
7. Kautilya was the "Hindu Machiavelli", a statesman and philosopher from about 300-250 B.C. who wrote a classic treatise on policy in which a "neighbor's neighbor was its natural enemy and thus one's natural friend." For reference of Indian machinations see Kux, p.42.
8. Kux, pp 19, 42-43 and 81.
9. Kux, p.42.
10. See Rodney Jones "The Prospects for State Failure in Pakistan: Ethnical, Regional, and Sectarian Fissures", Paper for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, May 01, 2001.

11. The hijackers, who were earlier greeted by Mir Murtaza Bhutto, killed Tariq Rahim former ADC to Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at the Kabul airport. His body was thrown from the plane.
12. See details in Rashid, *Taliban*.
13. See details in Rashid, *Taliban*, Yale University Press and in Mary Anne Weaver, *Pakistan: in the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2002.
14. Weaver cites President Musharraf's frustration with the situation.
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18. Assertion by Mr. Asad Hayat, Pakistan Embassy official in TV program "Awaz" , in a local channel MHZ on November 24, 2002.
19. Response to a question by Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. special Envoy to Afghanistan, in a seminar " [A Rough Neighborhood: Afghanistan and its Neighbors](#) " held at the Woodrow Wilson Center for scholars, Washington DC , November 15 , 2002.
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