

ASIA'S CHANGING HISTORY: INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

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Indians in Afghanistan and Pakistan, although lucky to live in the neglected neighbourhoods, are victims of hostile and discriminatory state persecution and local environs. Historically acknowledged as one of the centres of Indian civilization, where Buddha himself had travelled, Afghanistan has substantially dithered from India in recent times. . Once a bustling centre of Hinduism and Buddhism, the remnant of these two religions is a rare sight in the country these days. People of Indian origin in Afghanistan are now dwindling and diminishing, and their conditions palpable and precarious. Across the Hindukush, Pakistan, the very heart of India till the mid-20th century, holds the dubious distinction of persuading an intolerant approach towards India since its creation. A professed Islamic state, Pakistan's prejudice towards minorities, even against some Islamic sects, is reflected even in its constitution. Created after an artificial vivisection, it shed its secular character rather too soon to embrace Islam. Immediately after the vivisection, all non-Islamic living mortals, especially the Hindus and Sikhs, in the country were designated as unwanted. Not so long ago a cherished land of Hinduism and Indian civilization, Afghanistan and Pakistan are now nightmares for persons with Indian roots. In this paper, I have analyzed three basic issues. Firstly, the paper discusses India's intimate civilizational contacts with the region and how the course of history has changed over a period of time. Secondly, I have tried to identify those catalysts, which were responsible for the abrupt and indiscriminate mutation of the hardcore ideologies in Pakistan and Afghanistan that has dislodged India from the two countries. Finally, the paper sheds some limited light on the contemporary time and events, which have had a bearing on the changing history of Asia.

Key words: Asia's history, India, Afghanistan, Persian, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism

Methodology: The methodology adopted for this paper is a mix of historically descriptive and an empirically explanatory model of research with suitable use of cutting-edge technology in appropriate segments. The three specific research issues introduced in this abstract are not followed in an orderly way, but as per the appropriateness and convenience of flow of the paper. The model also emphasises on the combining of literary sources with oral information.

Civilizational Contact

While dealing with regional relations especially Diaspora, it often happens that, researchers fall prey to the historical entanglement and are entrapped into the pull of delineation of history. However, unlike the Indian Diaspora in far-flung and detached countries, where the Diaspora is rootless and a result of transplantation, regional Diaspora shares stronger intimacy and civilizational interaction with its roots. This obvious engagement and its later dissociation necessitates explanation. Pakistan, an integral and interior portion of India until the recent past, is a 20th century construct and therefore the civilizational contact part of this paper is Afghanistan centric. The earliest documentation of Afghanistan in Indian scripture is in *Rg Veda* that mentioned Gandhara once.¹ The ancient epic Ramayana informs us that Pushkalavati and Taxila were named after the two sons of Bharata, the brother of Rama.² Mahabharata, another ancient epic, is liberal in describing India's intense engagement with Gandhara.³ In the Bamiyan hill range, many noble images and statues were made by Hindu Rajas, especially by the five brothers or *Pandavas* of Mahabharata fame. When the *Pandavas* mortgaged the whole of their empire to *Durjodhan*, their uncle's son, in order to pay him their gambling debts, he immediately banished them from the area for a period of 12 years. The poor *Pandavas* chose their ground in Bamiyan, and spent their unhappy days in making these magnificent statues, which they and their followers worshipped for a long time.⁴ Archaeological reiteration of India's civilizational acquaintance with Afghanistan is abundant. Shortughai, deep inside Northern Afghanistan, bears the testimony of the Indus Civilization's extended bazaar. Scholarly remarks about this early colonization of Afghanistan are intriguing, which speaks in volume about the resemblance of India in its entirety. 'Not one of the standard characteristics of the Harappan cultural complex is missing from it (Shortughai site)', said Bernard Sergent.⁵

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¹ GRIFFITH, R. T. H. and. Shastri, J. L. *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, Hymn CXXVI, p. 87.

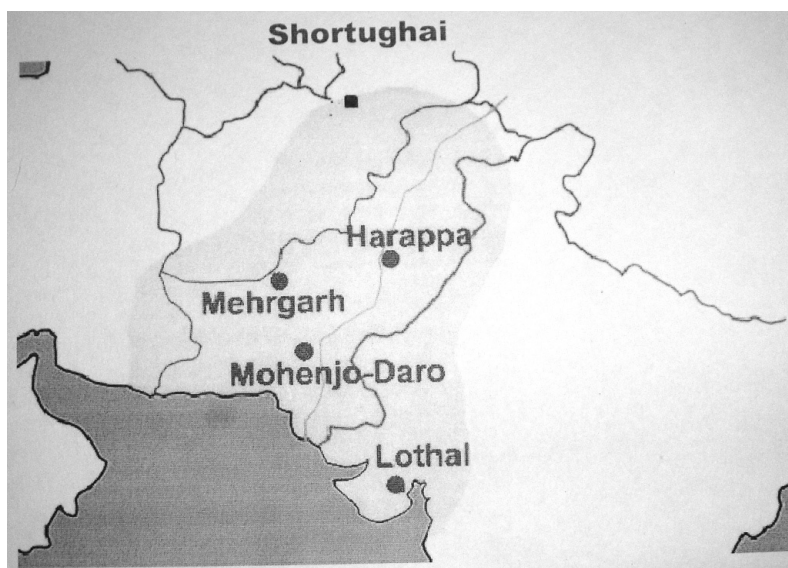
² Pushkalavati is present Charsadda (on the confluence of Kabul and Swat rivers) and Taxila is the a garble word for the original Sanskrit name Takṣaśīla (Takshashila). The administrative influence of both cities, now in Pakistan, stretched till Afghanistan; DUTT, Romesh C. *The Ramayana and Mahabharata*, p. 153.

³ VYASDEV. *The Mahabharata*. Hymns - 257, 326, 503, 691, 1110 and 1188.

⁴ LAL, M. *To Balk, Bokhara and Herat*, p. 50.

⁵ SERGENT, B. *Genèse de l'Inde* (Genesis of India), 1997.

Fig. 1 Indus Valley Civilization indicating Shortughai site



(Source: Prepared by the Author, 2013)

Archaeological ruins present in Afghanistan inform us about the strong wave of comprehensive contact during the era of Gautama Buddha. Some accounts suggest that, during his search for the truth, Buddha himself had travelled in parts of Afghanistan. What is Afghanistan today was then, and for long periods afterwards, a part of India.⁶ During the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (340 – 298 BC), when Buddhism was thriving, Seleucus, the general of Alexander who had inherited the countries from Asia Minor (Turkey) to India, crossed the Indus with an army and invaded India. He repented very soon for his rashness and instead of gaining anything he had to give up a good part of Gandhara, Afghanistan, up to Kabul and Herat, to Chandragupta.⁷ After this event, India's administrative control was firmly established over Afghanistan. Ashoka the Great stretched the empire farther into Iran and left an impeccable moral authority in the province by way of some rock edicts in Kandahar and Laghman.⁸

⁶ NEHRU, J. *Glimpses of World History*, p. 28.

⁷ Ibid, p. 59.

⁸ CARRATELLI, G.P. and Garbini, G. A Bilingual Graeco-Aramaic Edict by Asoka: The First Greek Inscription Discovered in Afghanistan.

The pious Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsiang) reached India overland through the modern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan route. He followed the same route during his return journey as well. His account 'Si-Yu-Ki' covering the period 629 to 645 AD is the all-embracing encyclopaedia about India's interface with Afghanistan.⁹ When a Korean monk, Hui-chao arrived in Afghanistan in 827 AD, he reported that the King of Bamiyan was a Buddhist. It was not until the 11th century that the Ghaznavids established Islam in the Bamiyan valley.¹⁰ With the decline of Buddhism, Afghanistan slipped from the proximity of Indian influence. That was the time when the Indian way of living, prevailed for centuries, and started facing challenges in the region. This paper asserts that 'religion is the first of a group of catalysts, which initiated the process of detachment between the two cultures'.

During the Seventh century AD, Afghanistan's Buddhism, and India's Hinduism faced a new and common challenge – the sword of Islam. Arab armies conquered Persia in 643 AD, attacked Kabul in 650 AD and subsequently overwhelmed Siestan. Although, many of their attempts failed, by the year 654 AD, the Arab armies had swept through Afghanistan to arrive at the Oxus River at the border with Central Asia. They brought with them their new religion – Islam. However, like India, Afghanistan those days was a fragment of land pieces, which were under the control of various kings and chiefs. Therefore, it was natural for the predatory neighbours to carve up parts of the country. The kingdoms of Kabul and Zabul had valiantly defied the Arabs for over two centuries and the Shahis dynasties, who ruled portions of Kabul and the old province of Gandhara resisted Islam till the 11th century.¹¹ Kabul's boundary in those days included the modern area of Lamghan, Jalalabad, Peshawar and Charsadda in the South, bordering Kashmir in the North and Persia to the West. Zabul kingdom started from the South of Kabul and North of Balochistan comprising the upper valley of the Helmand River with Seistan forming a part of this kingdom.¹²

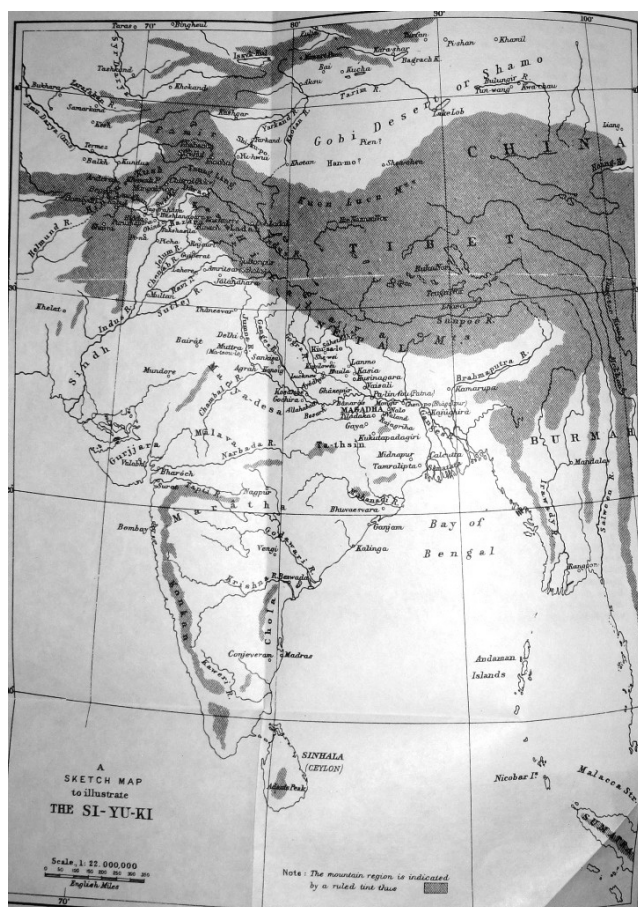
⁹ TSIANG, H. *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*. Translated by Samuel Beal, Vol. I, pp. 286 – 291.

¹⁰ RASHID, A. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, p. 68.

¹¹ STEIN, M. A. *Kalhana's Rajatarangini: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, pp. 106 – 108.

¹² SINGH, J. *Jinnah: India-Partition Independence*, p. 3.

Fig. 2 Xuanzang's Travel in India, 629 – 645



(Source: Stanford's Geog. Establishment, London in Samuel Bell's translation of Si-Yu-Ki)

Under the Persian Samanid dynasty, which lasted from 874 AD to 999 AD, Afghanistan was part of a new Persian renaissance in arts and letters. This association proved beneficial for Indian-Afghanistan relations as the Persian language later reached India and brought the two countries closer again on a linguistic basis. The Ghaznavid dynasty ruled from 977 AD to 1186 AD and captured North West India, Punjab and parts of Eastern Iran.¹³ Genghis Khan's Mongol hordes started the destruction of major Afghan cities like Balkh and

¹³ RASHID, 2001, pp. 8 – 9.

Herat in 1129 and dead bodies piled up mounds. In the next century Timur, a descendant of Genghis Khan, created a vast new empire across Russia and Persia which he ruled from his capital Samarkand. Timur's son Shah Rukh moved the capital of the Timurid Empire to Herat in 1405. So Afghanistan withstood the turmoil for long periods and received invader after invader like India. For the next 300 years the Eastern Afghan tribes periodically invaded India, conquered Delhi and created vast Indo-Afghan empires.¹⁴ These were the peculiar periods of domination and counter-domination of each other's territories.

Fig. 3 Areas presently form as Afghanistan is fully integrated with India.



(Source: Wikipedia)

Gandhara and the Era of Islamic Expansion

India's contact with the sword of Islam was a mix of triumph and devastation. India met the advance of Islam around 632 AD, when the pious Xuanzang was on his educational pilgrimage to India. The description of India in those days used to include Afghanistan as well.¹⁵ He noted that the city of Bokhara, which

¹⁴ RASHID, 2001, pp. 8 – 9.

¹⁵ Hiuen Tsiang came to India via the present Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and returned through the same route as well.

lies 20 miles Northeast of present Mazar-e-Sharif, was called *Little Rajagriha*.¹⁶ This was probably in consequence of the numerous Buddhist sites in its neighbourhood, vying in that respect with the Magadha capital.¹⁷ Xuanzang had liberally described about the rich presence of Buddhism and Buddhist art around the Bamiyan Valley.¹⁸ When Xuanzang reached Gandhara, known at the present time the district of Peshawar, the province was not only depopulated, but more than half ruined by the evils of war. Gandhara always had so much to endure from being on the high road of all the conquerors of India. But the worst invasions were yet to come and Gandhara at least remained Indian in manners and language during the travels of Xuanzang.¹⁹

Although the Arab armies reached the foothill of India soon after the death of Hazrat Muhammad, penetration within the heartland remained an uphill task for nearly a century. The sword of Islam had to wait another three centuries to establish an Islamic empire. A mere entry into India's North West invited heavy casualties and six desperate attempts. The volley of attacks and defeats endured by the Arabs makes interesting reading.

The first attempt was made in 632 AD. The *Chachnama*, a contemporary historical epic, recorded that during the reign of Caliph Omar, the Bahrain based Mughera Abul Aas led the first Indian assault, a naval expedition, on Debal.²⁰ He was killed by the Raja of Debal and when Abu Musa Ashari, the governor of Iraq, received news of this debacle, he wrote to the caliph that 'he should think no more of Hinduism'.²¹

But the Arabs never sat quiet and in the Caliphate of Caliph Osman, Hakim bin Hailah Abdi, a poet and orator, was sent out to reconnoitre the approaches to Sindh. He reported back: 'Its water is dark; its fruit is bitter and poisonous; its land is stony and its earth is saltish. A small army will soon be annihilated there, and a large army will soon die of hunger.' By the time the report reached Damascus, Makran and Gandava (below the Bolan Pass) were already under tenuous control of the Arabs. But Abdullah bin Amir, the governor of these regions, was advised against an attack on Sindh by the Caliph after the reconnaissance report had been received. And so, years were to pass until the next attempt was made during the Caliphate of Caliph Ali in 660 AD. Coming

¹⁶ TSIANG, 1884, p. 44.

¹⁷ The capital of Magadha, the seat of Mauryan dynasty of Chandragupta and Ashoka fame, was *Rajagriha*.

¹⁸ TSIANG, 1884, pp. 49 – 54.

¹⁹ FOUCHER, A. *Notes on the Ancient Geography of Gandhara*. Translated by H. Hargreaves, p. 2.

²⁰ Ancient Debal is modern Karachi in the Sindh province.

²¹ ISMAIL, Kāzī. *The Chachnama: An Ancient History of Sindh, Giving the Hindu Period Down to the Arab Conquest*. Translated from the Persian by Mirza Kalichbeg Fredungeg, 1900.

by way of Panjgur,²² the Arab force was successful at Kalat, but news of the assassination of the Caliph resulted in its withdrawal without the expedition reaching its logical end. A second expedition ended cheaply and inconclusively.

In 664 AD, an advance for the third time was made during the reign of Muawiya. A 4000 strong Arab contingent under Abdullah bin Sawad struck at Kalat only to be routed by the mountaineers of Kalat. The Arabs retreated to Makran to save their lives. Although the Chachnama detailed about a fourth attack, it did not favour us the year when. Rashid bin Omar led the attack against Kalat and fell in the battle. His troops crushed and for the next 12 years no attack plan organized. In 680 AD, the commander of the army in Makran, one Manzir bin Harud, was sent by the Caliph on plundering sorties against Sindh to make good the expenses of the failed expeditions. This unfortunate commander succumbed to diseases, dying on his way to Sindh.

In the reign of Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik and governorship of Hujaj bin Yusuf in Iraq, the fifth expedition was undertaken against Sindh. Commander Buzail bin Tahfa led a small force by sea and marched to Nerun (Hyderabad). Buzail was killed by Raja Dahir in combat outside the walls of Debal. Quickly another expedition led by Obaidullah bin Nabhan was organized but his death in battle causing the invaders to withdraw.

Five battles, all resulted in defeat, did not demoralized the Arabs as Islam was on its ascendance. In 711 AD, Hujaj appointed his son-in-law Mohammad bin Qasim as the general and petitioned caliph Walid that it was necessary to free the Arab prisoners languishing in Sindhi prison. Walid demurred, however, saying that there had already been too many casualties. He said, 'The people (of that country) are cunning and the country itself is very distant. It will cost us very large sums of money to provide a sufficient number of men and arms and instruments of war, and will require unusual skill and might to carry on the war, not to mention enormous provisions. This affair will be a source of great anxiety, and so we must put it off; for, every time the army goes (on such an expedition) (vast) numbers of Mussalmans are killed. So think no more of such a design.'²³ Hujaj wrote back, 'I undertake to pay back into the royal treasury double the amount spent on provisions and other items of expenditure for the army (in Iraq)'. After this assurance permission was granted and Debal was conquered in 711 AD, when Raja Dahir, engaging Mohammad bin Qasim, was killed in an open battle. Islam made its fierce entry into the frontier of India.²⁴

²² A district of West Baluchistan.

²³ ISMAIL, 1900, p. 76.

²⁴ Ali Kufi (13th century Arab Historian) tells how the virgin daughters of Raja Dahir upon being presented to Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik misrepresent out of malice: that they have already spent time with MbQ. Upon this, the incensed Caliph orders for the

Until 711 AD, although the spreading influence of the Caliph began touching the land frontiers of Hindustan, none of the three Caliphates – the Rashiduns,²⁵ the Umayyads and the Abbasids succeeded in moving farther in land.²⁶ The invasion of Sindh in 711 AD was sixth attempt and five earlier attempts were routed with great loss of Arab life and investment.²⁷ Nearly a century after their first attempt, the Arabs succeeded in reaching to the frontiers of India and another three hundred years spent before India's long struggle against an ascendant Islam ended in 1026 AD. Curiously, during the same time Mahmud of Ghazni Islamized Afghanistan except the Kafiristan region.

For more than 200 years, the Turkic dynasties of Ghaznavid, Ghurid, Mamluk, Khalji, Tughlaq, and Sayyid ruled Delhi before ceding the empire to the Lodi dynasty of Afghanistan. Extraordinary changes occurred in India after the onset of Islamic army, which came as primarily for loot of the inestimable wealth of the land. In this era, India's westward contact became synonymous with the invading Islamic armies and departing troops with enormous treasure. Its riches travelled through the words and letters to the Afghans, who are now adapted to their new religion, an Islamic life, and the desire to imitate the usurpation of their Arabic counterparts. Soon, the Afghans replaced Arabs to raid India for survival, living, conquest and dynastic rule in that order.

Babar's victory over the feeble and contemptible Afghan Sultan of Delhi in 1526 begins a new epoch and a new empire in India – the Moghul Empire. Descended from Genghis and Timur, Babar had a very small army, but he had the new artillery which was then being used in Europe and western Asia. Babar was barely four years in India when he died. He recorded in his memoir that, 'The empire of Hindustan is extensive, populous, and rich. On the east, the south, and even the west, it is bounded by the great ocean. On the north, it has Kabul, Ghazni, and Kandahar. The capital of all Hindustan is Delhi.'²⁸ It is interesting to note that the whole of India was looked upon as a unit by Babar,

hero to have himself sewn in a fresh cowhide and dispatched back to the capital. He arrives dead and Walid gloats over the corpse. From Ahmad al-Balázuri's *Futūh al-buldān* we know that upon his return to Iraq, MbQ hardly received a hero's welcome. His kinsman and mentor Hujaj bin Yusuf had fallen from favour and on the orders of Walid, MbQ was imprisoned where he succumbed to torture.

²⁵ Rashidun means 'Rightly Guided Caliphs'. The time of the first four Caliphs following the death of Prophet Muhammad is called as Rashidun Caliphate.

²⁶ The Rashidun Caliph ruled from 632 – 661 AD, although their authority was not recognized. Umayyad Dynasty ruled from 661 – 750 AD. In 750 AD the Abbasids defeated the Umayyads and transferred the capital of the Caliphate from Damascus to Baghdad, thereby shifting the empire's centre from Syria to Iraq. Abbasids ruled the Islamic Empire from 750 AD until the Mongol conquest of the Middle East in 1258 AD.

²⁷ RASHID, Salman 'The Chachnama'. In *Express Tribune*, January 18, 2013.

²⁸ BABER. *Zehir-ud-din. Babernama*. Translated by William Erskine from Jaghatai-Turki, 1826, p. 310.

although when he came it was split up into many kingdoms.²⁹ With a brief interval, Moghul rule lasted for a period of 181 years.

Babar's description of Hindustan included Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar. The territories were effectively remained with India's Arabic, Turkic, Afghan and Mongol rulers, though from time to time, for brief interregnum, its ownership changed hands. When Islam was dominating India, Afghanistan itself was under the control of Arabs, Turks and Mongols. For six hundred years, Islam tried to establish its foothold in Afghanistan but that was disturbed by the Mongol invasion led by Genghis Khan in 13th century. After that for more than 300 years, wandering hordes of Mongols, Turks and later Uzbeks rendered life in it too strenuous for the barbarous Afghans, who were pushed about the country or projected into India. It was not until the 16th century and the early part of the following century that the Uzbeks were forced beyond the Hindu-Kush and the vacant lands that existed in all districts were available for the Afghans to occupy.³⁰

The domination of Islam continued in India for more than 730 years. Hinduism subdued for sometime only to raise its head later. But Afghanistan succumbed to the sword of Islam. Buddhism and Hinduism waned from that country only to be vanished in subsequent time. Islam and artillery acted as catalyst of change for the new developments in both the countries. Although 'loot of treasure' and 'plunder of everything' come their way and not 'religion' was motivating thrust behind their invasion of India,³¹ it was an ascending 'Islam' through its commanders (Caliphate), which provided guidance, scaffold and legitimacy to keep them moving despite centuries of failures. Therefore, Islam acted as catalyst until the Moghul time when Babar introduced artillery, another catalyst as this paper argues. Accompanying these invasions, came a new experience for India, conversion of the unbelievers to Islam, until a time arrived when, finally, Islam itself got transformed by India, intermeshing with it and ultimately being absorbed by it as an integer.³²

Afghanistan as the Key to India

Afghanistan owes too much to India and even the origin of the name of the country can be traced to classical Indian language Sanskrit. Presently, 42

²⁹ NEHRU, 2004, p. 351.

³⁰ TATE, G. P. *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch*, pp. 14 – 15.

³¹ SYKES, P. *A History of Afghanistan*, p. 188.

³² SINGH, 2009, pp. 4 – 5.

percent of Afghan population calls them as Pushtuns,³³ from the language they will speak. Some experts, mostly led by British historians, believe that it is not till the reign of the Sultan Abouseid that certain eastern writers speak of them under the name of Afghan, which they believe is only the plural of the Arab word Feghan.³⁴ The word Afghan was applied to them because they were always in a disunited state amongst themselves, and continually addressing their complaints to the sovereigns on whom they were dependent. Nevertheless the name was but little used till the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, who, tired with their incessant lamentations, ordered them henceforward to be called by that designation – Afghan only.³⁵ However, Pakistani travel writer and historian Salman Rashid contested this lamentation theory of British historian³⁶. Using cutting edge technology and philological analysis, he provided a different but more acceptable interpretation of the name. He said Herodotus' *'The Histories'* of 5th century BC called the Pashtuns in the name of 'Paktyike'. This word Paktyike, he said, was a Grecian mispronunciation of Pakhtun in its classical form. The word comes down to us as the name for the Afghan provinces of Paktiya and Paktika. Rashid further asserted that the word 'Afghan' comes from the Sanskrit root of *ashv* meaning 'horse', which becomes *asp* in ancient Persian. The genetic term for these horsemen was Ashvaka in Sanskrit and Aspagan in Persian. Their country was where the usual mode of transportation was the horse, perhaps more so than in ancient India, thus the ancient land of the Paktyike became Aspaganistan in Persian. And thence to Afghanistan.³⁷

The natives of India have known the Afghans for centuries under the name of Pathans and Rohillas.³⁸ Many Afghan adventurers stayed back in India, as in Rajputana, Central India, and in the fertile lands on the left bank of the Ganges, there was a very strong Afghan element in the population. The country in which they settled became known as Rohilkand,³⁹ the country of the Rohillas. Rohilla seems to be an Indian term and the less honourable Afghans identified themselves as Rohilla or a Hillman.⁴⁰

³³ Indian ancient literature the Vedas calls the Afghans as Paktues and Pakthas. The Afghans call themselves as Pakhtan from which Pathan (and also Pashtun) originated.

³⁴ Means Noise, tumult.

³⁵ FERRIER, J. P. *History of the Afghans*. Translated from the original unpublished manuscript by Captain William Jesse, p. 6

³⁶ In a scholarly conversation with the author historian Salman Rashid informed that 'Ferrier does not seem to know his front from the rear. Feghan – the n ending being nasal – is Persian and not Arabic. This is some pure and simple rubbish about the Pathans being called from the constant complaints they made'; March 29, 2013.

³⁷ RASHID, Salman. Pakhtun. In *Express Tribune*, November 11, 2011.

³⁸ Roh in Pashtoo signifies mountain, and Rohilla are inhabitant of mountains.

³⁹ Presently, Rohilkhand is the geographical area comprised of half a dozen districts of northwestern Uttar Pradesh.

⁴⁰ TATE, 1911, p. 23.

Abul Fazl, the eminent scholar in the court of Moghul Emperor Akbar, noticed Hindi as one of the 11 languages spoken in the province of Kabul.⁴¹ Kabul and Kandahar were rightly recognized to be the keys of India by the Moghul Emperors.⁴² In most part of the history it was witnessed that the ruler who held Kabul and Kandahar also controlled Delhi since the land route to Delhi run through these two cities. From the time of Moghuls, emperors of Delhi had realized the necessity of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer state against attacks from the Shahs of Persia to the West, and from the Uzbek rulers of Bokhara to the North. The British, who succeeded the Moghuls, confronted the same problem during their time in India, as Russia became the successor of Bokhara. This buffer state premise has hardened the Afghans, who view every foreign power including India with suspicion. A byproduct of this suspicion is radical ideology and intolerant behavior for outsiders.

Moghul Emperor Akbar had much trouble with the turbulent tribes who lived in the vicinity of the Khaibar Pass. To strengthen the Moghul position along this vital highway, the Khaibar Pass was made fit for wheeled transport and forts were constructed to guard the route. But the problem of Afghans continued till the reign of Akbar's great grandson Aurangzeb in 1667 – 75. The virile Afghan clans, unable to gain a living from their barren lands, and aided by the advantageous terrain, have always considered highway robbery an honourable profession.⁴³ Moghul Emperors paid subsidies to various border chiefs that under Aurangzeb, amounted to an annual expenditure of 600,000 rupees to guard the all-important route between Peshawar and Kabul. This allowances system is continue even today as Afghan President Hamid Karzai pay allowance to the local tribal chief in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Since robbery and raid are part of Afghan life and never considered a crime, foreigners or persons of foreign origin automatically became the first target of such forays. One reason of Afghans behaving hard against Indians is their old behavior as a raider.

Most part of Afghanistan is barren and desolate. Only 10 percent, of the whole area is cultivated, owing to a variety of causes, of which 'the varying quality of the soil, the precarious supply of moisture supplied by nature, and the nomadic proclivities of the population are the more important'.⁴⁴ After the unification of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Durrani clearly and rightly recognized that constant attacks on surrounding states, especially India, were most desirable, if only to provide plunder and food for his poor turbulent subjects

⁴¹ ALLAMI, Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, translated by Col. H. S. Jarrett, pp. 399 – 400.

⁴² SYKES, 1940, p. vii, 5.

⁴³ SYKES, 1940, pp. 306 – 307.

⁴⁴ TATE, 1911, p. 8.

whose rivalries and feuds, unless they were occupied abroad, would have constituted a serious danger to the stability of his kingdom. Therefore the Afghans had undertaken regular and precision incursion against India. Even now, the supply-demand condition in the country is almost identical. Resultantly, the behaviors of Afghans appear as hardcore and fundamentalist. Vested interest exploits this behavior against India as Pakistan pit the Afghan radicals in opposition to India.

It was amazing that even during most part of the Islamic rule India and Afghanistan maintained their close relationship but not after 1739, when Nadir Shah made himself the ruler of Persia. Suddenly he swooped down from the northwest of India and after much killing and plundering, walked off with enormous treasure. Nadir Shah brought his dominions right up to the Indus. Thus Afghanistan was cut off from India. From the days of the Mahabharata and Gandhara, right through Indian history, Afghanistan was intimately connected with India.⁴⁵ It is now cut adrift.

After the drifting apart of Afghanistan, the country never remained the same for India. It has developed its own empire and established its own rule. Upon the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747, the Afghan tribes decided to repel Persian rulers and elected Ahmad Shah as monarch, who assumed the title of Dur-i-Durran or 'Pearl of Pearls', and the Abdali tribe consequently became known as the Durrani.⁴⁶ When Ahmad Shah ascended to the throne of Kandahar, Afghanistan of that day was fragment of land pieces divided among the rulers of Persia, India, and other central Asian countries. He made every attempt to unify Afghanistan by way of conquest. With strong determination he won and merged the territories of Kabul, Ghazni, Khurasan, Herat, Meshed, Seistan, Nishapur, Balkh, Badakhshan and other provinces North of the Hindu Kush, thereby completing the new kingdom as it is today. The Durrani are also known as Sodozai clan. Later the Sodozais were succeeded by Barakzai clan, who ruled the country for some time.

Peshawar or ancient Gandhara also fell into the hands of Afghans. The Afghans of the Barakzai clan are as little familiar as anyone with the antiquities of a country, which they have occupied for comparatively less time and where their first care was to drive out or exterminate as completely as possible the few inhabitants alien to their faith. In 19th century when under the rule of the Sikhs and their successors the English, Gandhara again became part of India, it was all too late to revive the past. In the presence of the inscriptions of Ashoka, cows are slaughtered and it is 'Pashtu' that is spoken in the birthplace of Panini!⁴⁷

⁴⁵ NEHRU, 2004, p. 373.

⁴⁶ SYKES, 1940, p. 353.

⁴⁷ Panini was the famous author of *Ashtadhyayi*, the 4th Century BC Sanskrit grammar treatise; FOUCHER, 1915, p. 2.

After establishing his power at home, Ahmad Shah led several expeditions into India from 1748 to 1767. But those attacks were more than mere predatory raids.⁴⁸ The Durrani utterly defeated a great host of Marathas at the old battlefield of Panipat in 1761 to become the master of the North of India. But in the moment of their triumph Ahmad Shah had to face trouble and revolt among his own people and he returned home.⁴⁹ After that, the British occupied India and redefined its relations with Afghanistan. The 'famous traveler William Moorcroft' was the first person of English descent to travel into Afghanistan in May 1824. Moorcroft wrote extensively about the many Hindu localities, Hindu officers and Hindu ministers in Northern Afghanistan even under Afghan rulers.⁵⁰ Five years later another British officer Sir Alexander Burnes travelled to Afghanistan along with his Persian interpreter Mohan Lal Kashmiri of Kashmir descent. Both of them tell us the rich presence of Hindu edifices as well as Hindu population in Afghanistan. Mohan Lal observed that the 2000 Hindu population of Kabul had large families and they are known by their robes, and by their painted foreheads, which are marks of pious Hindus. Their shops are spread over all the streets and bazaars, while their Mohammedan neighbours, though they are prejudiced against them, treat them very tolerantly.⁵¹

The spread of Russian empire in Central Asia upset the nerves of the British and as early as 1839 the British in India made an entirely unprovoked attack on Afghanistan. But the Afghans resisted the attack. However backward the Afghans may be in many respects, they love their freedom and will fight to the last to preserve it.⁵² And so Afghanistan has always been a 'hornets' nest' for any foreign army that invaded it. A whole British army suffered destruction and defeat. Nearly 40 years later, in the 1878 second Anglo-Afghan war, to a large extent history repeated itself. The British took some measures of retribution and again withdrew from the 'hornets' nest'. But for many years afterwards the position of Afghanistan was peculiar. The British would not allow the Amir of Afghanistan to have any direct relations with other foreign countries as per the Treaty of Gandamak of May 26, 1879, and at the same time they gave him annually a large sum of money.⁵³ In 1919, there was a third Anglo-Afghan war

⁴⁸ MAJUMDAR, R. C. RAYCHAUDHURI, H., DATTA, K. *An Advanced History of India*. Part 2, pp. 527 – 529.

⁴⁹ NEHRU, 2004, p. 373.

⁵⁰ He met Atma Ram, the Hindu chief minister under Mir Muhammad Murad Beg of Kunduz; MOORCROFT, William and Trebeck, George. 'Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab in Ladakh and Kashmir, In Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara 1819 – 1825', p. 419.

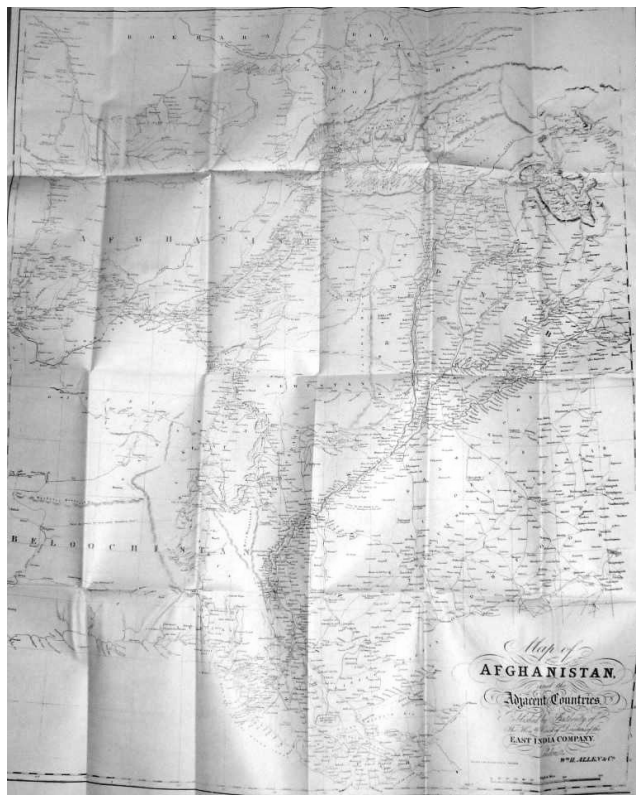
⁵¹ LAL, M., 2011, p. 42.

⁵² DALRYMPLE, W. *Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan 1829 – 1842*, p. 3.

⁵³ NEHRU, 2004, p. 478.

which resulted in Afghanistan becoming fully independent with full control on its foreign relations with other countries.⁵⁴

Fig. 4 A Dithering Afghanistan



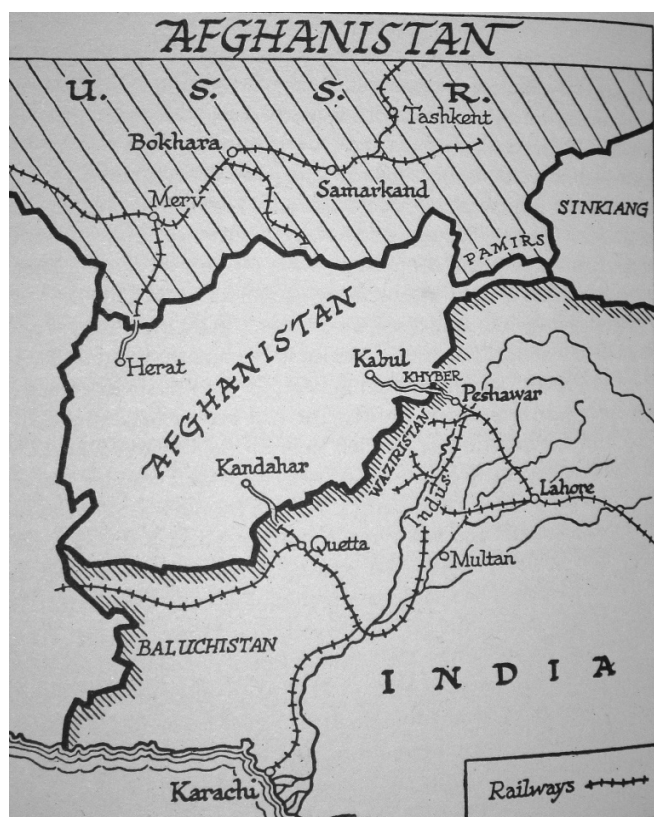
(Source: Map of Afghanistan and the Adjacent Countries, published by Authority of the Hon'ble Court of Directors of the East India Company, London, W.H. Allen & Co., 1811)

Afghanistan had to depend on the British rulers of India essentially because of the position of the country. Landlocked and resource poor, Afghanistan's easiest way of communication with the outside world was through India. There were no proper communications in those days in the Russian territory to the north of Afghanistan. Later, when Soviet government developed communications, both

⁵⁴ NEHRU, 2004, p. 907.

by building railways and encouraging air and motor services, dependency on India reduced.⁵⁵ So communication network and the development of supply arteries in the northward and westward direction snapped the civilizational contact to a considerable extent. Development of communication link with other countries acted as catalyst in delinking the two countries.

Fig. 5 A barren, desolate and distant Afghanistan



(Source: Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, Penguin Publication, 2004)

⁵⁵ NEHRU, 2004, p. 906.

India and Afghanistan are neighbors, but racially they are akin, for the old Aryan stock dominates the two countries. Culturally, they have had much in common in the past. Persian was the language of the learned in northern India until the onset of 20th century and even now it is popular, especially among Muslims. In Afghanistan Dari Persian⁵⁶ is still the official language along with Pashtu, the popular language of the Afghans. Persian, the lingua franca of the two countries binds them together for a considerable period. For five centuries prior to the British rule, Persian was the second language of India and sole 'official language' during the time of the Moghuls.⁵⁷ The British introduction of English, which replaced Persian in importance in India, provided the final deathblow to the age-old India-Afghanistan contact. Therefore, language, in this case Persian, acted as the final catalyst to dislodge India from Afghanistan.

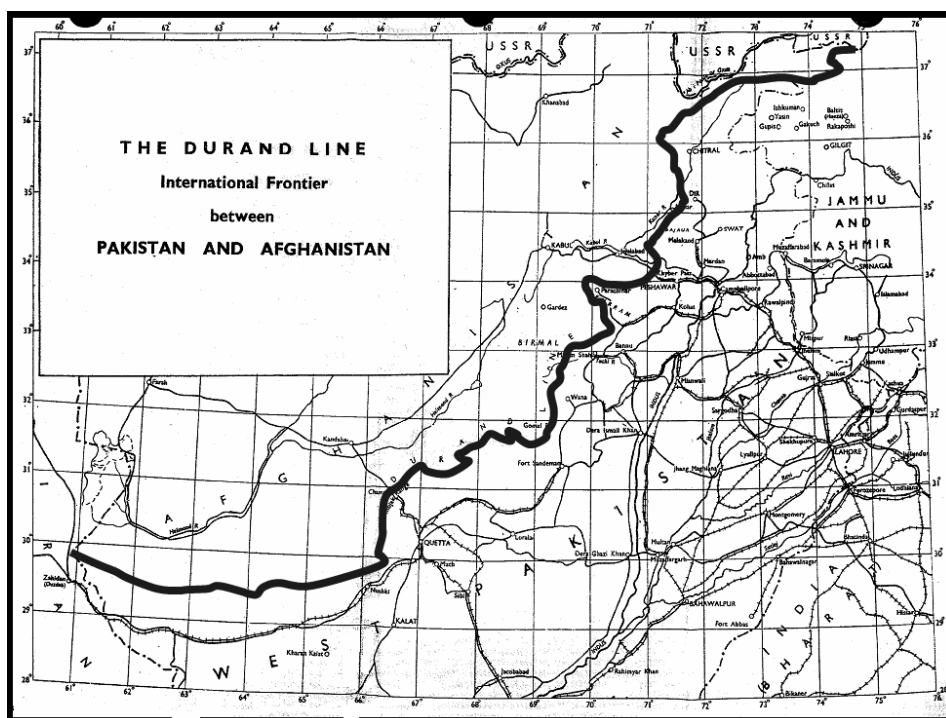
The Change and Significance of Afghanistan

After the treaty of Gandamak, the British government of India controlled the foreign policy of Afghanistan until 1919. During that time Britain wanted to draw a boundary line with Afghanistan for the safe-keeping of their jewel in the crown 'India' from the predatory lurch of Russia. There was another reason, which weighed behind the necessity of drawing an urgent boundary with Afghanistan. The ungovernable tribes of Afghanistan, especially the Pashtun, were a comprehensive headache to the British, as the tribes were opposing British sway in and around Afghanistan. Therefore, to get rid of the troubled tribes Britain devised a way out and divided their collective strength by way of a division through the erection of a border. Considering his precarious condition, Amir Abdur Rehman was also anxious for such a demarcation of Afghanistan's boundary with British India. This effort ended up with the erection of the Durand Line, the boundary line between Afghanistan and British India, which became a dispute encyclopaedia from the outset.

⁵⁶ For political reason, Persian in Afghanistan is known as Dari. In mid-20th century Pashto language was promoted to replace Persian as the court language. As a compromise in 1958 the term 'Dari' was adopted officially for the Afghan version of Persian; OLESEN, A. *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Volume 3, p. 205.

⁵⁷ CLAWSON, P. *Eternal Iran*, p. 6.

Fig. 6 Durand Line: The Last Nail in the Coffin



(Source: Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand, P.C., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.: A Biography*, London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1926)

Amir Abdur Rehman suggested three joint-commissions, one for the Khyber Pass area, one for the Kurram Valley area and one for the Baluchistan state, to erect the border line. The British Government agreed to his request and employed numerous commissions for this purpose. In earlier 1854, Britain entered into a treaty with the Khan, the ruler of Baluchistan, in order to defend its territories against an external invasion from Central Asia and Iran. Baluchistan was neighboured by Persia and Afghanistan on one side and British India on the other. The Sistan (Iran)-Baluchistan boundary was demarcated by British officer Maj. Gen. Sir Fredrick John Goldsmid in 1871 – 1872.⁵⁸ But the boundary was not entirely accepted by either party. In 1895 – 1896, to resolve

⁵⁸ GOLDSMID, F. J. *Eastern Persia: An Account of the Journeys of the Persian Boundary Commission 1870 – 72, 1876.*

the dispute, the British government appointed Perso-Baluch boundary commission with Col. T.H. Holdich as its chair. Holdich's job was to demarcate the line between the seas to the Iran-Afghan border.⁵⁹ At the same time, in 1895 – 96, another boundary commission was running its course – that was the Afghan-Baluch boundary commission under Capt. A.H. MacMohan. The Afghan-Baluch or MacMahon Line covers the area from New Chaman to the Perso-Baluch border. Messed up with the anxieties of boundaries and reports of too many commissions, Viceroy Lord Elgin asked Mortimer H. Durand to resolve the issue once and for all. By this time, Baluchistan was fully integrated with British India. The Durand agreement was signed on November 12, 1893 and the boundary commission concluded its job in May 1896.⁶⁰ The boundary demarcation started from Chitral to the Iranian border. After the conclusion of the treaty, the Viceroy allowed many small changes to the boundary line to appease the Amir. This commission actually superseded all previous commission's demarcation line on the Afghan-British India border. Nevertheless, the Durand Line, which was fragile and easily stretchable to either side, with numerous changes, acted as the international boundary to divide Afghanistan and Pakistan after the birth of Pakistan on August 14, 1947. This line was the last nail in the coffin of India-Afghanistan dissociation.

By virtue of the division, while India was absolved from the disputed legacy of the Durand Line, Pakistan automatically inherited a complex and potentially troubling boundary line with Afghanistan. The Durand Line, which was drawn against great geographical odds and against local tribal wishes, was basically meant to shield the British government from the predatory design of Russia and to divide the ruthless and intransigent Pashtun tribes. Since the prime motto of the boundary line was to divide the tribes, it never followed geographical or natural features but was rather drawn artificially in the midst of settlements and provinces by constructing Border Pillars. Armed resistance from the tribes against the border; difficulty in constructing the Border Pillars in inaccessible areas; and the absence of exact survey maps of the region made the border line disputed from the very outset. Pakistan, which inherited the troubled border and since it considered herself as the successor state of British India, accepted the Durand Line as an international boundary and wanted to settle the question with Afghanistan once and for all. But Afghanistan believed that the agreement was a vestige of colonial domination and the terms were agreed under unequal terms, and elapsed with the departure of the British. Therefore, after the British

⁵⁹ HOLDICH, T. H. *The Indian Borderland, 1880 – 1900*, p. 314.

⁶⁰ Durand Line Agreement, Agreement between Amir Abdur Rehman Khan, G.C.S.I., and Sir Henry Mortmer Durand, K.C.I.E., C.S.I, November 12, 1893, Kabul.

departure, Afghanistan refused to accept the Durand Line and pressed its claim inside Pakistan.⁶¹

Meanwhile, Pakistan developed congenital differences with India and both countries descended into war immediately after their independence. On the question of the Durand Line, although India maintained that it had no objection to the agreement, Pakistan viewed India's policy through the prism of suspicion.⁶² Since Pakistan considered its Eastern neighbour as hostile, it was natural for the country to wish for a friendly if not a pliant government in Kabul. This led to the evolution of a flawed Pakistani policy 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan. Pakistani military strategists argued that Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan would give the country 'strategic depth' against its primary enemy India.⁶³ Pakistan's elongated geography, the lack of space, depth and a hinterland denied its armed forces the ability to fight a prolonged war with India. Theoretically speaking, it was a proactive defensive strategy of security 'strategic depth' in the west to counterbalance the conventionally superior India by strengthening diplomatic and military relations with Afghanistan and the Arab world to the extent that in the worst-case scenario of war with India, Pakistan's army high command could move westward and use Afghanistan as a strategic line against India.⁶⁴ In the 1990s in addition to the 'strategic depth' Pakistan wanted a friendly or client government in Afghanistan because from there Kashmiri militants could be trained, funded and armed against India.⁶⁵ So despite India's historical ties with Afghanistan and despite the latter's keenness to maintain a good relationship with India, Pakistan's new ambition played as spoilsport in maintaining an India-Afghanistan bond. Pakistan tried to use Afghanistan against India, but unable to install a client government till Mohammad Najibullah was the president of the country.

During the Afghan war of 1980s, Pakistan's military ruler Gen. Zia-ul Haq promoted Deobandi and Salafi-Wahhabi's brand of Sunni Islam in Pakistan. Deobandis are followers of Darul Uloom Deoband, named after a place in Uttar Pradesh, India from where the Deobandi Islamic Movement started during 1866. Deoband is a Sunni religious movement and its followers adhere to the Hanafi⁶⁶ school of Sunni jurisprudence. Likewise, Salaf means predecessor or forefather. The first generation and the two generations that followed after the

⁶¹ TYTLER, W. K. *Fraser. Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, pp. 308 – 311.

⁶² HARRISON, Selig S. *Nightmare in Baluchistan*, 1978.

⁶³ BHUTTO, B. *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, p. 194; SAIKAL, A. *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, p. 352.

⁶⁴ BHUTTO, Benazir interview to Nayan Chanda. In *YaleGlobal*, August 9, 2007.

⁶⁵ RASHID, 2001, p. 186.

⁶⁶ One of the four Sunni jurisprudences.

Prophet Mohammed had passed away were called al-Salaf – the predecessors. As per Salafism the first three generations of Muslims were pure and unadulterated, and, hence their interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah is best and must be followed. The other brand of Islam promoted by Gen. Zia was Wahhabi. Inspired by Arabic Islamic scholar Muhamad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Wahhabism advocates purging Islam of what is considered impurities. Wahhabi theology treats the Qur'an and Hadith as the only fundamental and authoritative texts. So essentially, all these three sects follow orthodox Islam with various degrees of rigidities and flexibilities and with different interpretations of the Holy Quran.⁶⁷

Pakistan's militant organizations affiliated with these ideologies established a series of *madaris* (plural of *madrassa* means Islamic seminary) across Pakistan.⁶⁸ As war devastated Afghanistan from 1979 for a decade, they fled to Pakistan and enrolled themselves in *madaris* for education and for shelter. Jalaluddin Haqqani, the dreaded Afghan warlords, was a product of Darul Uloom Haqqania *madrassa* of the North West Frontier Province, which is affiliated with the Pakistani radical party of Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (S). Likewise, the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar was educated at an obscure *madrassa* of Afghanistan, but took the job of a *madrassa* teacher at the Binory Mosque near Karachi. Mufti Muhammad Shamzai, the former chief prayer leader of Binory mosque introduced Mullah Omar to Osama bin Laden at the Binory Mosque during the early 1990s. The mosque is affiliated with the Jamaat-e-Islami party of Pakistan.⁶⁹ Meddling by the Pakistan army and its Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) in the affairs of the Afghans, the ISI's poor portrayal of India and infusion of raw religious passion into the mind of Pashtun radicals against India prepared a perfect stage for an anti-India platform in Afghanistan.

After the fall of Najibullah in April 1992, the Mujahideen took control of Kabul and Burhanuddin Rabbani of the Northern Alliance became the President of Afghanistan. The illustrious Ahmed Shah Massoud of the Northern Alliance became the defence minister. During the years of the Northern Alliance-led rule, although India shared good rapport with the alliance leaders, India's intimate historical bonding with the country was on its waning trajectory. During this period Pakistan employed its Afghan clients like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani to gain ground in Afghanistan and use the country as a training ground to train guerrilla forces to unsettle India in Kashmir. In 1994, students of Afghan descent from the Pakistani *Madaris*, rose to rule Kandahar. Two years later, in September 1996, they captured Kabul.

⁶⁷ For details see the upcoming RATH, S. K. *Fragile Frontiers: The Secret History of Mumbai Terror Attacks*, 2013.

⁶⁸ COHEN, S. P. *The Idea of Pakistan*, p. 162.

⁶⁹ COHEN, 2004, pp. 190 – 191.

These new usurpers were famously known as the Taliban, the plural of *Talib* that means student. Since the Taliban were taught, trained, sheltered and funded by Pakistan, they were accommodative to the wishes of Pakistan. With the Taliban at the seat of Kabul, Pakistan got a pliant government, which allowed it to bully India from Afghanistan. Consequentially, India's presence in Afghanistan was endangered and its ancient common contact snapped rather abruptly. Nevertheless, the anti-Indian attitude of the radical forces of Afghanistan, especially after the fall of the Najibullah Government in 1992 further spiralled when the Taliban took over in September 1996, this had a relatively short history and a shabby background. The period starting from 1979, when the Afghan war started, till the end of the Taliban rule in 2001, India's interaction with Afghanistan received setback after setback.

Strong evidence of the persecution of Indians in Afghanistan can be ascertained from the fast declining numbers of Indians. During the late 1980s, there were about 500,000 Indians scattered across Afghanistan.⁷⁰ By the year 1990, the number had been reduced to a mere 45,000⁷¹ only to be reduced further to 30,000 by the end of 1992.⁷² For ages, the country's Islam was moderate and based on the Sunni Hanafi tradition – a tolerant religious and legal movement, popular in South Asia and named after its founder Abú Haníf. But after the mujahedeen led civil war and the rise of the Taliban in 1994, most Indians fled for their safety from country. By 1998 the number reached a dwindling 1200 families with about 6,500 Sikhs and Hindus.⁷³ During the Taliban period and even after the US attack on Afghanistan in 2001 there was no visible improvement in the revival of ties. The continuous and steep rise in violence against the Hindus and Sikhs; the onset of neo-fundamentalist intolerance towards Indians; and the absence of support from any source evaporated the numbers to approximately 2,000 Sikhs and approximately 100 Hindus in 2011.⁷⁴ Lone Sikh senator in Afghanistan's current parliament Mr. Avtar Singh explains about the absence of government aid to the minorities of the country.

⁷⁰ Reuters, Times of India, November 22, 2006.

⁷¹ Report of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, 'Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iran', Chapter 2, 2001, p. 7.

⁷² SL and Others (Returning Sikhs and Hindus) Afghanistan v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, 2005, United Kingdom; Asylum and Immigration Tribunal / Immigration Appellate Authority, 7 October 2005, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/43fc2d7911.html>, accessed on 16 March 2013.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ International Religious Freedom Report for 2011, Afghanistan, Section I. Religious Demography, 'Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor', Department of State, Government of USA, 2011.

The vows of those Hindus and Sikhs living in Afghanistan are not less considering the fact that government funding for Sikh schools is scarce and there are no schools for Hindus. While the government funds Islamic religious activities, religious edifices of Hindus and Sikhs are treated as business enterprises and taxes are charged as par business entities in the country.⁷⁵ It is amazing that even under such a hostile and discriminatory environment, Indians are still sticking to their Afghan roots and staying the course in the country.

With an intention to reignite common civilization heritage and sentimental affection, Afghanistan entered into a strategic agreement with India in October 2011, the first such pact between Afghanistan and any country. The agreement, experts believe, symbolized Delhi and Kabul's special bond and laid the foundation for structured bilateral relations.⁷⁶ During the past five years, nearly 1500 Indian workers have travelled to Afghanistan to work on various development projects.⁷⁷ Apart from the Indian Embassy in Kabul, India maintains four more consulates in Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat. Nevertheless, they are not useful in installing confidence among the people with Indian roots, and Indian assets and lives are still under constant threat.

Pakistan: A New Landmass

After assuming power as Pakistan's first governor general, Mohammad Ali Jinnah pleaded that religion should be a personal matter and not a state matter. But this call defied Jinnah's own diatribe against the Hindus on the basis of which he earned independence for the new landmass called Pakistan.

Jinnah died barely 13 months into Pakistan's independence and his successor Liaqat Ali Khan was killed in October 1951. This was the period when a plethora of political parties started surfacing in both East and West Pakistan with the Muslim League gradually losing relevance.⁷⁸ Furthermore, this was the time when the military began to intervene in politics. Two issues decided Pakistan's relations with India. The first issue was its claim on Kashmir and the other was the country's military-militant collaboration and their inveterate hatred of India.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ MORADIAN, D. 'A Perfect Match Struggling to Survive'. In *The Hindu*, August 15, 2013.

⁷⁷ Emigration Services Division, Annual Report, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India, 2011 – 12, p. 58.

⁷⁸ On August 14, 1947, Pakistan was comprised of West Pakistan (present Pakistan) and East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) separated from each other by about 1,600 kilometers of Indian land.

Pakistan has 2.7 million Hindus in a Muslim-majority population of 180 million.⁷⁹ They represent those who chose to stay after the sectarian blood bath that accompanied the 1947 partition of the subcontinent at the end of the British rule. After partition, the Urdu-speaking Muslims of Northern India went in large scale and populated vast expanses of Pakistan. But the migrants from India are termed as *Muhajir* by the locals. Not only the Hindus who remained in Pakistan suffered from the Islamic zeal of Pakistan, but the Muslim migrants from India also never melded completely with them as the old taint *Muhajir* never faded. Pakistan systematically opposed each of its founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision of Pakistan within no time of his death.

In its 65 years, Pakistan has had three constitutions, those of 1956, 1962, and 1973. Each of the subsequent constitutions has hardened its outlook in ascending order towards non-Muslims and outsiders (read Indian). The 1956 constitution for example, assigned different rights of citizenship to Muslims and non-Muslims as the latter could not become prime minister or president in Pakistan.⁸⁰ Similarly, Gen. Ayub Khan supported the Ulema against the Jamaat-e-Islami in his 1962 constitution, which further radicalized Pakistan. In the 1973 constitution, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared the Ahmaddia sect as non-Muslim and hardened Pakistan's stand against its minority. Pakistan's constitution is based on the Hanafi interpretation of Islam, which is further divided between Deobandis and Bareilvis. But the colonial legal system and customary law (*urf*) is popular in most areas of Pakistan, with wide regional variations. The anti-minority tone and tenor of its constitution has become a perpetual source of anxiety for the minority of the country. Originally designed as a mild penalty of one year of imprisonment for blasphemy, in 1982, Gen. Zia-ul Haq changed it to life imprisonment before introducing the death penalty for the same offence in 1986.⁸¹ These measures are meant to bully the non-Muslims, especially Indians, so that Pakistan became a complete Islamic nation.

The subject Indian in Pakistan – normally takes a religious turn and the persecution of Indians and Hindus in Pakistan is wrongly viewed as persecution of persons of Indian origin. Nevertheless, such issues have received little scholarly attention. Because of the umbilical connection, terminologies like

⁷⁹ LAKSHMI, Rama. 'Hindus from Pakistan flee to India, citing religious persecution'. In *Washington Post*, August 15, 2012.

⁸⁰ Constitution of Pakistan 1956, Government of Pakistan, March 2, 1956.

⁸¹ Only seven cases of blasphemy were registered in undivided India and Pakistan from 1927 to 1986, according to a group of Pakistani Christians. The National Commission for Justice and Peace says that in the last 25 years, 1,058 cases of blasphemy were registered in Pakistan. Of the accused, 456 were Ahmadis, 449 were Muslims, 132 were Christians and 21 were Hindus; Akbar Patel, 'Pakistan's Blasphemy Law', *Express Tribune*, August 12, 2012.

‘Person of Indian Origin’ (PIO) do not hold meaning for the Indians living in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Due to this, India’s Diaspora in Afghanistan and Pakistan is a contested subject. The genesis of the Person of Indian Origin card scheme lay in the long-standing demand for dual citizenship by persons of Indian origin, who have obtained citizenship of foreign countries.⁸² The PIO card scheme has been in operation since March 31, 1999.⁸³ However, while defining the meaning of the term ‘Person of Indian origin’, the government of India barred the two countries from the outset, Pakistan and Bangladesh, from the purview of PIO. On August 19, 2002, Afghanistan was barred from the inclusion of the list of countries where PIO is not applicable.⁸⁴ Systematic threatening of its Hindu population has become a norm in Pakistan where the Hindus have no choice but to adopt Islam or vacate the land of Islamized Pakistan.

Conclusion

Despite India’s new bonhomie with Afghanistan and in spite of the poised circumstance, considering Pakistan’s unchanged age-old rivalry with India, the conclusion of this paper is delicate. A leading economic powerhouse in Asia, it is natural that people with Indian roots in Afghanistan and Pakistan look towards India at a time of grief. The eyes of those victims normally and with great ease survey the huge landmass of South Asia with which they inevitably connect their many fabled stories – grand and grotesque – told by their ancestors. But their expectations have rarely ever been addressed; their genuine grievances have seldom been taken up; and their old awes the danger attached to the lives in a foreign land continue without an end.

On October 22, 1998, the miniscule Hindu population of Kandahar complained about the Taliban social code issued two months prior, which

⁸² Report of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, Chapter 24, ‘Interim Report on the Persons of Indian Origin Card (PIO Card) Scheme’, Government of India, p. 359.

⁸³ ‘PIO Card Scheme’, Notification, Gazetteer of India: Extraordinary, Part – I, Ministry of Home Affairs, March 30, 1999; ‘PIO’ means a person –(i) he/she at any time held an Indian passport; or (ii) he/she or either of his/her parents or grandparents or great grandparents was born in and permanently resident in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 and other territories that became part of India thereafter provided neither was at any time a citizen of any of the aforesaid countries (as referred to in 2 (b) above); or (iii) he/she is a spouse of a citizen of India or a person of Indian origin covered under (i) or (ii) above.

⁸⁴ Ministry of Home Affairs, ‘Notification No. 26011/4/98-F.I’, Government of India, August 19, 2002.

required the Hindus of the city to wear a distinctive yellow piece of cloth.⁸⁵ Initially, the order was partially implemented in the city without any strict enforcement. Unhappy with the partial implementation, Maulavi Mohammad Wali, the minister for the Promotion of Virtues and Prevention of Vice, issued a religious decree seeking that 'the Hindus and Sikhs should wear a Yellow marker to distinguish them from other Afghans and that they should place a sign over their homes, shops and businesses marking them as Hindu and Sikh'.⁸⁶ This was one of the examples of the worst treatments meted out to persons with Indian roots in Afghanistan. A couple of motives encouraged the gullible Taliban to impose such a strict code. Firstly, Pakistan wanted to see the last vestiges of Hinduism disappear from Afghanistan and secondly, the Taliban was fed with the prospect that such a move would certainly convert the Hindus and non-Muslims into Muslim. To meet the second motive, Muslims at large were strongly encouraged to avoid using Hindu-Sikh shops, and ever more vigorous efforts were made to 'persuade' them to see the error of their ways and to become Muslims. Sikhs and Hindus soon found themselves being required to make financial contributions to the *jihad*. During this entire ordeal, India never stood with the Afghan Hindus and Sikhs.

India's protest was ritualistic and near mute. However, the strongest protest came from the United States House of Representatives, which approved a New York Democrat Eliot L. Engel authored bipartisan 'Sense of the Congress' non-binding resolution by a vote of 420-0 on June 14, 2001. Not only this, several congressmen wore yellow badges with the inscription, 'I am a Hindu', in solidarity with the minorities in Afghanistan.⁸⁷ Such acts have never been seen in India.

⁸⁵ 'Taliban impose new code for non-Muslim Afghans', Afghan Islamic Press, AFP, October 23, 1998.

⁸⁶ 'Hindu household is required to put a two meter yellow cloth on his house so that the identity is known. Hindus and Muslims cannot live in the same house. Hindus, living in such a house, have been asked to leave within three days and vice versa. Any violation invites prosecution. Heads of Hindu places of worship have been asked to prepare a list of such places/houses where Hindus and Muslims are living together. Hindus cannot build new prayer houses. They have been asked to conduct prayers in existing ones. Places of worship once destroyed cannot be rebuilt. Hindu men cannot wear turbans, while Hindu women should wrap their body with a big yellow chadder with two small holes near the eyes. Hindu women can go to markets but they should wear an iron necklace and their body should be wrapped in yellow 'chadder'. No Hindu can keep arms. 'Taliban Seeking fatwa to enforce dress code for non-Muslims', May 21, 2001, AFP; Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) in September 2004, UNHCR

⁸⁷ HANIFFA, Aziz. 'US lawmakers say: We are Hindus', June 14, 2001, Cited on October 13, 2012, available at <http://www.rediff.com/us/2001/jun/14us1.htm>.

The Taliban decree was also motivated by Bin Laden, who encouraged Mullah Omar to prove his Taliban credential that no other religion was allowed under the rule of the pious Taliban. Mullah Omar was lured to such a mindless instigation in 2001 as well, although on a different scale. On February 26, 2001, the Taliban leader issued a decree ordering the destruction of the colossal Buddha statues in Bamiyan because they 'may be turned into idols in the future'. Earlier in July 1999, Mullah Omar issued a decree that said 'The government considers the Bamiyan statues as an example of a potential major source of income for Afghanistan from international visitors therefore Bamiyan shall not be destroyed, but protected.'⁸⁸ India's protest to the impending destruction was customary and there was no effort to stop such an act. But endeavour to stop the Taliban from destroying the giant statues came from an unusual circle, Pakistan's ISI. A few weeks after the resolution was passed to destroy the Buddha status, on March 1, 2001, Gen. Pervez Musharraf had written a four-page letter in Pashto to Mullah Omar, asking him not to blow up the statues. ISI Director Lt. Gen. Mehmood Ahmed had secretly visited Kandahar and personally read the letter to the illiterate Mullah Omar, but to no avail.⁸⁹ On March 2, 2001 the destruction started.

There are other structural impediments available in India, which refrain the Indian government from aiding persons with Indian roots in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the event of persecution, the Pakistani Hindus see India as the first destination to flee. But their march into India faces legal intricacies as India does not have a national refugee law. India deals with arrivals from neighbouring countries on an *ad hoc* basis. Thousands of Pakistani Hindus who have come to India since 1990s have still not received Indian citizenship. Indians from Pakistan often complain maltreatment after their return to India. '*Kafir wahan, Pakistani yehan*' (kafir, we are called in Pakistan and Indians in India call us Pakistani)⁹⁰ is the common complaint. India does not have a specific statute dealing with refugees that put them before the omnibus Foreigners Act 1946, an archaic piece of legislation that governs the stay and exit of non-nationals as a homogenous category. A 2004 amendment introduced by the erstwhile National Democratic Alliance government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee prescribes stiff imprisonment for any foreigner who enters without valid papers or who overstays his or her visa.⁹¹ As a result, the Hindu refugees from Pakistan are liable under the law to arrest and eventual deportation.

⁸⁸ HARDING, L. 'How the Buddha got his wounds'. In *The Guardian*, March 3, 2001.

⁸⁹ RASHID, Ahmad. *Descent into Chaos*, p. 409.

⁹⁰ Lekhi Ram, a migrant from Peshawar as told to a gathering in Jaipur, India, August 29, 2011.

⁹¹ Editorial, 'Wanted a Law for Refugees', *The Hindu*, August 24, 2012.

With the growing and flexing economic muscle of India, the country required to be more sensitive on the issue of persons with Indian roots. It is time to be a little more assertive, diplomatically at least, when the time demands.

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