



**STUDYING ABOUT THE INDIA POLICY IN REFERENCE TO
AFGHANISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: - Policy, India, Afghanistan, Regional, Country

I. INTRODUCTION

This study is the follow-up to an upcoming research that will examine India's foreign policy more broadly, and it focuses on India's approach to a variety of other nations. The study lays up the economic, political, and social context of India's interactions with Afghanistan. India relies on a peaceful Afghanistan for its own safety, but the nation has been excluded from many post-9/11 Western-led talks about the country. After hearing that Western troops will be leaving Afghanistan in considerable numbers by 2014, many Indian policymakers felt justified in continuing their own parallel, bilateral involvement with the country.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

DevakiNandan et al (2021) This article provides an outline of the strategic and economic significance of Afghanistan to India in the twenty-first century. The geopolitical and security situation in south Asia has worsened since the United States pulled out of Afghanistan and the Taliban retook Kabul. India, Afghanistan's neighbor, is a staunch advocate for a government run by Afghans. The report will also make some suggestions on Afghanistan's role in international efforts to promote peace, security, and economic growth.

Jin WANG (2017) Supporting the Afghan government that was founded after 2001 is a top priority for India, a key power in South Asia. However, India has been severely damaged by the political and security issues that have arisen since the United States announced it would be withdrawing its armed forces from Afghanistan. There is a threat to Afghanistan's security, and there is also a threat to the country's political stability. Despite more than a decade of counterinsurgency efforts spearheaded by the United States and Afghan security forces, the

Taliban and other Islamic extremist organizations remain a potent political and security force throughout Afghanistan. After Hamid Karzai's two terms as president, a new unity administration led by Dr. President Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer, was created, indicating probable divides and uncertainty on the political level. India, in the face of these new threats, is taking two approaches: on the one hand, it is attempting to maintain its "soft measures" to protect its interests in Afghanistan, and on the other, it is strengthening cooperation with international organizations and other regional states to create favorable conditions for the stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Although India has made great strides in recent years, it still confronts a number of difficulties due to the unstable political climate and deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan.

Muhammad Imran et al (2020) Afghanistan is completely encircled by the Hindukush mountain range, which traps any would-be invaders from the east, west, north, or south. It's a vital land link that links South and East Asia with the rest of Asia. In the 19th century, the region we now call Afghanistan served as a buffer zone between imperialist Great Britain and Russian expansionism. Afghanistan was a battleground between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, which took place mostly in the 20th century. The withdrawal of Soviet soldiers triggered a decade-long civil conflict in the nation. Although the United States and other Western powers paid little attention to the nation in the 1990s, regional players backed their preferred friends. To represent their interests in the fight, Russia, Iran, India, Pakistan, and the Central Asian governments all picked interconnected proxies. The study's overarching goal is to examine the geopolitical potential of Afghanistan and the geostrategic struggle between major international and regional players in the country. This paper serves as a case analysis of the geopolitical factors surrounding Afghanistan and Pakistan from a South Asian political viewpoint.

Muhammad Amjad et al (2019) Afghanistan has one of the world's most desirable locations, at the crossroads of Central, Middle, and South Asia. India is only one of several countries that have long been interested in the country because of its strategic position and rich natural riches. India has been trying to improve ties with Afghanistan for decades for a variety of reasons. India's foreign policy is shaped by a number of variables, including its antagonistic ties with Pakistan and its aim to gain access to the Central Asian Republics at the expense of Pakistan. Pakistan, drawing on its own history, sees India's continued interest in Afghanistan as part of a calculated plan to utilize the country as a proxy warzone in its conflict with Pakistan. Terrorist acts in Balochistan have been linked to operations orchestrated by India's RAW in Afghanistan. It is thus not as straightforward as is frequently made out to be that India intends to invest in Afghanistan in order to repair the country's infrastructure. India secretly seeks to cause trouble for Pakistan. When the Taliban regime collapsed, India's participation in Afghanistan rapidly grew in an act of aggressive insanity. India's meddling in Afghanistan is an indication that it wants to use Afghan territory to retaliate against Pakistan. India hopes to challenge Pakistan's regional hegemony by participating in the Afghan conflict. The impact of India's presence in Afghanistan on neighboring Pakistan will be the subject of this investigation. The research seeks to provide light on the underlying motivations for the rapid expansion of Indian and Afghan ties, and to assess Indian initiatives in their regional context.

III. INDIA AS RESPONSIBLE REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER

In recent years, India's policy toward its neighbors has shifted. The 'Gujral philosophy' of non-reciprocity, which emerged in the mid-1990s, expressed the belief that India, as the dominant regional power, owed it to its neighbors to help and accommodate them without necessarily expecting to reap any advantages in return. From the late 1990s forward, this approach faltered as

the BharatiyaJanata Party administration focused on India's global rather than regional significance. India's Afghan policy is often defended on the grounds that it reflects India's renewed commitment to its regional role after the shift to a Congress Party-led government in 2004. India justifies its involvement in Afghanistan by saying that the country's progress in social and economic areas is essential to maintaining peace in the region.

There is a lot of overlap between the rivalry and tensions in Afghanistan's, India's, and Pakistan's trilateral ties. At first, the United States was wary about Indian engagement in Afghanistan, mirroring Pakistani worries about the situation there. As a matter of fact, it's a well-known fact that the United States understands the importance of the Indian subcontinent. After the evacuation of most Western forces in 2014, India is very unlikely to deploy troops to a security role, and it has no desire to take on a unilateral security role in Afghanistan. The failure of the peacekeeping operation to Sri Lanka in 1987–1990 still lingers in people's minds, and they know that sending troops there again will inflame tensions with Pakistan. But it has announced new initiatives to improve training for Afghan police and soldiers. India is still not quite convinced of the West's long-term commitment to Afghanistan. However, the presence of Western soldiers in Afghanistan has been seen as beneficial to India's development efforts and soft-power projection in that country. The situation in Afghanistan on the ground will determine its future course of action. Delhi's initial universal worry has been replaced by a stoic acceptance and resolve to pursue its lasting interests in Afghanistan, as noted by C. Raja Mohan.

Indian business interests

A partnership of seven Indian public and private sector enterprises won a competition to construct the Hajigak iron ore mine in Afghanistan, which would be the biggest single Indian operation in

the country, with an expected investment of \$6.6 billion. The consortium, headed by Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), has pledged to construct the mine, a six million tonne steel facility, and an 800MW power station, and is now lobbying the Indian government for approval of the project. To put this in perspective, the value of six million tons of steel is around \$3.3 billion, whereas Afghanistan's gross domestic product in 2011 was estimated at \$20 billion by the World Bank, an estimate inflated by the presence of huge numbers of ISAF soldiers. Afghanistan's GDP was \$2.7 billion in 2001. It is predicted that two billion tons of iron ore may be found in the Hajigak mine.

Obviously, the project's security is a key concern. It is proposed that iron ore and finished steel be transported to India through road or a yet-to-be-built railway via Iran. It's unclear whether the Indian government would provide funding for the building of the railway that would link the Iranian port of Chabahar with Afghanistan. India must proceed carefully in its dealings with Iran to avoid angering the United States, but it seems for the time being that it intends to utilize Iran as a transit country.

On the other hand, passing via Pakistan would save money, and the country gives the impression that it is serious about the potential financial rewards of permitting transit commerce. If ties were to mend, the possibility of using Pakistan as a transit point would arise as an additional confidence-building move. Despite concerns expressed by certain members of SAIL's management, it seems that the Indian government actively supported the proposal (the consortium also includes NMDC, Jindal Steel, and Ispat). As part of its "economic diplomacy," the Indian government actively seeks out investment proposals from Indian companies.

IV. AFGHANISTAN'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO INDIA

Historical ties and relationship with the Taliban

India stresses its deep cultural ties to Afghanistan dating back thousands of years. India's cultural claims are bolstered by the widespread acclaim given Bollywood films and its stars. President Hamid Karzai, like many other prominent Afghans, received some of his education in India. According to a number of surveys, India has widespread support in Afghanistan, unlike Pakistan, which is widely disliked there. Afghanistan is assisted by the fact that it does not share a border with India, which causes conflict with the United States since most of Afghanistan's commerce goes via Iran. However, many of India's smaller neighbors are threatened by it. Even before 9/11, India had deep-seated animosity for the Taliban.

Moreover, India has claimed that the Taliban had ties to the Pakistani military and InterServices (ISI) for a long time before this became common knowledge in the West. The 1999 hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight 814 caused significant alarm in India. The hijackers redirected the jet to Kandahar, where the Taliban are widely believed to have stood watch to foil any potential Indian rescue mission. The Indian authorities subsequently freed three Islamist extremists in return for the captives. Masood Azhar, the Jaish-e-Mohammed's founder, and Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the kidnapper and killer of American journalist Daniel Pearl, were among those arrested.

Indian strategy in Afghanistan is driven by Pakistan.

The United States, Pakistan, and the Afghan government all saw India's early involvement in post-Taliban Afghanistan as an attempt to weaken Pakistan. While this may have been the case at one time, India now recognizes that Pakistan has a 'special interest' in Afghanistan that is more pressing than its own. The pursuit of peace and security in Afghanistan has replaced anti-Pakistani

sentiment as India's top foreign policy priority. More crucial than nurturing a government in Afghanistan that leans towards Delhi more than Islamabad is preventing the restoration of an Islamist administration that may offer strategic depth to Pakistan and Kashmiri terrorists. Afghanistan has the potential to serve as a confidence-building measure between India and Pakistan in recent years, especially after an Indian consortium secured the Hajigak mining rights (see below). All three nations stand to gain monetarily if Pakistan permits the passage of iron ore. As a result of this upgrade, communication between India and Pakistan may improve. It is possible that the transit commerce between Afghanistan and Pakistan may serve as a model for future trade between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. India may also choose to pass via Iran, therefore having Pakistan's participation is not strictly necessary.

Despite Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's best efforts, relations with Pakistan have deteriorated in recent years. However, with Pakistan facing a number of economic and security challenges and a worsening relationship with the United States, the prospects for an economic-led rapprochement are growing. Pakistan has promised to offer India Most Favoured Nation status, despite the fact that economic relations between the two nations are presently restricted. However, since this promise was made, progress toward implementing it has slowed. Indian leaders have come to acknowledge the dangers posed by a politically and economically weak Pakistan.

V. MAPPING INDIAN ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Indian government activities

India understands that regional stability depends on Afghanistan's social and economic progress. In order to formalize a framework for cooperation in the following areas, President Karzai signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement during his visit to India in 2011. These areas include: "political

& security cooperation; trade & economic cooperation; capacity development & education; and social, cultural, civil society & people-to-people relations." 7 India is the biggest unconventional contributor and fifth largest bilateral donor, after the US, UK, Japan, and Germany, under this framework, having committed just under \$2 billion to Afghanistan and spent approximately \$1 billion. The majority of Indian help falls into three categories: emergency relief (including food aid), infrastructural development, and capacity building. In terms of cost, six projects stand out:

- Food assistance to primary school children and construction and rehabilitation of schools (\$321 million disbursed),
- Supply of 250,000 tonnes of wheat,
- Construction of a power line from Pul-i-Khumri to Kabul (\$120 million),
- Construction of the Salma Dam Power Project (\$130 million)
- Construction of the parliament building (\$27 million disbursed; budget \$178 million), and
- Rehabilitation of Delaram-Zaranj road (\$150 million).

Aid biscuits made from fortified wheat amounted to around 500,000 metric tons of wheat. Every day, two million Afghan schoolchildren get cookies manufactured by the World Food Programme. India and Afghanistan could not come to terms on who would pay for transporting the wheat, and Pakistan blocked the wheat from passing through its borders after the shipments were announced in June 2011. By the end of March 2012, Pakistan has cleared the way for 100,000 metric tons of wheat to move into the country through Karachi by road and train. Since Afghanistan picked up the wheat in Kandla, India, technically Afghanistan rather than India was utilizing Pakistani territory for transportation, which made the decision possible. Pakistan's lack of transit rights caused comparable delays in the electricity distribution line, necessitating one of India's biggest airlift missions.

VI. CONCLUSION

There are several facets to India's relationship with Afghanistan, including military and security, whereby India seeks peace and prosperity in Afghanistan despite the shadow cast by Pakistan. While there is a developing military cooperation with Afghanistan, it is still rather low profile. However, depending on events in Afghanistan and Pakistan's actions, this might change dramatically. Positively, there is social and economic involvement, with Indian enterprises investing and the Indian government launching development initiatives. To normalize Afghanistan in the eyes of the region, India has taken the lead in regional engagement under the Istanbul Process. The safety of Afghan citizens is obviously crucial to the success of this endeavor. Trading linkages through Pakistan make more sense and would operate to create trust between India and Pakistan, but India is aiding in enabling these ties via Iran in an effort to lessen Afghanistan's dependency on Pakistan.

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