



Pakistan Faces External Security Threats From Afghanistan and India Zain ul Abiden Malik*

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan's insecurity and uncertainty derive primarily from the country's eastern and western borders with India and Afghanistan. The withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in December 2014 created a leadership vacuum and political instability, potentially worsening regional security, particularly in Pakistan. Pakistan also does not want Afghanistan to fall prey to foreign intervention, especially from India, as this would exacerbate Pakistan's sub-nationalism issue. Kashmir's strategic position has been a point of contention between the two countries. Kashmir is vital to both countries because it is the source of water for most of the major rivers that flow into Pakistan. In terms of security issues with India, they are critical because the two countries have fought three wars, resulting in massive human and financial losses as well as destruction of the countries' infrastructure.



Introduction

Pakistan's insecurity and uncertainty derive primarily from the country's eastern and western borders with India and Afghanistan. In terms of Pakistan's worsening security situation, it is primarily due to the porous and windy nature of the Pak-Afghan frontier, which has created safe havens for insurgents and terrorists since their nefarious plans were realized (Iqbal, 2010; Z. U. A. Malik, Zhilong, & Rafay, 2019). It's also worth mentioning that it acts as a major economic center for Pashtuns on the other side of the border. It also caters to criminal activities, such as drugs and smuggling. Similarly, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 ushered in lawlessness, insecurity, and a state of civil war, as well as a power vacuum. Similarly, the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan within the fourteen-month time frame set out in the US-Taliban Agreement of February 29, 2020, could lead to civil war, security issues, and the resolution of deadlocks over leadership, especially the presidency, and power sharing among the country's various stakeholders. The Security Dilemma is the most important factor in deciding global politics. It sparked the First World War because both European powers were compelled by a sense of fear regarding their neighbors' alliances, despite having no intention to fight.

Pakistan is engaged in anti-terrorist operations

Pakistan's position as a frontline state in the war against terrorism after 9/11 drew international attention, making Pakistan the center of attention. Despite the fact that Pakistan is combating terrorism alongside the international community, the latter has suffered greatly as a result of the war on terror (Qayyum, 2016). After 9/11, there were 61,549 deaths and 67,011 injuries, for a total of 61,549 deaths and 67,011 injuries. When analyzing them in terms of different categories, the number of militants killed stands at 31,000, followed by civilians at 22,100, and security forces at 8,214. In terms of casualties, the

number of civilians killed stands at 40,792, followed by security personnel at 14,583 injuries, and militants at 11,415 injuries (Z. U. A. Malik, Zhilong, & Ashraf, 2019). However, it is important to note that approximately 150,000 people, mostly Pashtuns, cross the Pakistan-Afghan border on a regular basis for a variety of reasons. Pashtuns on both sides of the border meet for a variety of reasons, including commercial and noncommercial activities (Tariq & Marwat, 2015).

Pakistan-Afghan border issue

The question of the legal status of the Pak-Afghan border is at the heart of the dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in December 2014 created a leadership vacuum and political instability, potentially worsening regional security, particularly in Pakistan (Khalil, Perveen, & Ali, 2015). Because of the fragile nature of the Pak-Afghan frontier, it is critical to manage it in order to ensure the two countries' and the region's long-term stability. Certain problems, however, continue to plague the historical and legal perspectives of the frontier, which, according to the Pashtun Community of Afghanistan, will separate them from their Pashtun kin (Z. U. A. Malik & Zhilong, 2018). This relationship is shaped by two opposing viewpoints on both sides of the border: Kabul wants to use the border for its own vested interests by challenging its legitimacy, while Pakistan wants a friendly regime in Kabul to ensure that the Pak-Afghan border does not become a hotbed of jingoistic and chauvinistic Pashtun nationalism (Ahmad & Majeed, 2017). Pakistan's key concern in establishing a friendly regime in Kabul is to protect its western frontier, which is already under pressure from threats and dangers on the eastern border. Another source of concern for Pakistan is the concept of strategic scope, a phrase used in international relations to describe the idea of seeking refuge in Afghanistan in the event of an Indian army attack. So far, the concept of strategic depth has not benefited Pakistan, but has almost always resulted in the opposite situation (Rabbi, 2012). It has never been used by Pakistan, but it has always been used by Afghanistan to seek refuge in the mountains and return to Afghanistan after perpetrating terrorist acts in Pakistan. This has been evident in a number of instances, such as the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, where the attacker was said to have found asylum in Afghanistan (Mahmood Ahmad Muzafar, 2015). Pakistan has always used the idea of strategic scope to promote its national interests, but it has always played against Pakistan's national interests.

The Strategic Interests of India in Afghanistan

Pakistan also does not want Afghanistan to fall prey to foreign intervention, especially from India, as this would exacerbate Pakistan's sub-nationalism issue. Since the Taliban were dethroned from power in 2001 by US-led allied powers, India has been assisting Afghanistan (Malik, Fatima, & Zhilong, 2018). New Delhi has aided Kabul in a number of main ways, including the creation of the Afghanistan Parliament, which includes a library. It also includes rebuilding of Habibi a High School in the city of Kabul, reconstruction of the Salma Dam, now called as the Afghan-India Friendship Dam, construction of an electricity transmission line, ranging from Pul-e-Khumari to Kabul, building of a hospital named as Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health/Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital for the ailing persons equipped with a modern technology, giving financial aid to the Afghan National Agriculture Sciences and Technology University (ANASTU) in Kandahar, building a cricket stadium in Kandahar, upgrading telephone exchanges in some provinces, expanding the national television network, besides being providing the Afghan National Army with military and security training on modern lines. Whatever India has done in Afghanistan is not motivated by humanitarianism or the belief that Afghanistan is a charity case; rather, India has a strategic interest in the country. India's main concern in doing so is to limit Pakistani presence in the region and maintain friendly ties with Kabul (Khan & Butt, 2017). The building of the Zaranj-Delaram road is important not only for Afghanistan but also for India. This improves connectivity between the Iranian borders and Afghanistan's most significant thoroughfare, the Ring Road, which also serves as a connector for most of the country's major cities (Afridi, Yousufi, & Musa Khan, 2014). This road would relieve Afghanistan's burden on Pakistan, which is reliant on Pakistan for goods and infrastructure transportation due to its landlocked status. By using the Zaranj-Delaram road, Afghanistan can now have trade routes with Iran. This would be able to move goods from Daranj to the Iranian port of Chabahar. Indian institutions funded, completed, and partially secured the road's construction.

Pakistan's Security Predicament in Relation to India

Pakistan's stability is basically threatened from both its eastern and western boundaries. In the post-9/11 case, the security threat from the western frontier increased as Pakistan provided logistical support to the US and allied powers. However, security concerns about the country's eastern frontier have existed since its inception. The Kashmir problem, the water dispute, and cross-border terrorism are just a few of the factors that have led to the worst security situation in decades. Over the question of Kashmir, India and Pakistan have been at odds (Gill, 2019). Both countries have fought three wars over this problem, but no substantive solutions seem to be bringing the two arch-enemies together at any time. Both regional and international stakeholders understand Kashmir's strategic significance for both India and Pakistan (Ali, Mujahid, & Rehman, 2015). It's also worth noting that both countries consider Kashmir to be extremely necessary for their respective countries' unity.

Security Issues in the Kashmir Conflict

Kashmir's strategic position has been a point of contention between the two countries. Kashmir is vital to both countries because it is the source of water for most of the major rivers that flow into Pakistan. The major stakeholders have their own positions on the Kashmir issue, while Kashmir's role as a third stakeholder has always been ignored. India has never been able to grant Kashmiris the right to self-determination because doing so would improve Pakistan's status, as the majority of Kashmiris are Muslims (Z. U. A. Malik & Nawaz, 2014). Pakistan, on the other hand, firmly supports the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination while opposing the Indian people's position that Kashmir is an integral part of Pakistan (Fayaz, 2016). India has always used propaganda against Pakistan, claiming that she is interfering in the affairs of Kashmir, for the sake of their own vested interests. Since October 29, 2019, they have been stripped of their right to free movement and have been confined to their homes for the past eight months. In this situation, the international community and regional stakeholders remain silent about the unjustified security restrictions imposed by the Indian citizens. As a result, increased security personnel deployment along the border, armed struggle against Muslims, support for terrorist networks in Pakistan, and the brutal killing of innocent Kashmiri civilians have all led to the increased friction and security problem between the two countries (Z. U. A. Malik, Zhilong, & Mubeen, 2020). Another major source of concern is the long-running dispute over river water, especially the construction of dams and various power projects on the Jhelum River.

Dispute over water between India and Pakistan

The survival of human life depends on the availability of water. Many of humanity's needs, such as electricity, irrigation, power plants, and dams, are met by water. Unfortunately, a water dispute arose between Pakistan and India during the early stages of Pakistan's formation, but this issue was resolved in 1960 by the World Bank through the Indus Basin Treaty (Shafiq, Sultana, Munir, & Shoaib, 2019). The Water Dispute has posed a security threat to both countries. International water conflicts, according to the majority of statesmen, are more harmful than domestic water conflicts. Furthermore, water disputes in Pakistan are inextricably related to the hegemonic designs of India's upstream position, escalating tensions between the two countries. Furthermore, South Asia as a whole, and Pakistan in particular, is struggling with water shortage, which will have a huge negative effect on Pakistan's economy and social structure. According to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan is the third-fastest-growing country in the world when it comes to extreme water scarcity. Pakistan will run out of water by 2025, according to the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), with very little or no water available in the region. Furthermore, only 20% of the population has access to safe drinking water, with the remaining 80% relying on polluted water (Daud, et al., 2017). Since India is located upstream from Pakistan, it is very convenient for India to regulate the river water, causing significant losses to Pakistan. However, India has been building the Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River and the Kishanganga Dam on the Jhelum River, much against Pakistan's interests and international law norms (M. S. Malik & Khan, 2018). This is also in direct breach of the Indus Basin Treaty of 1960, which specifically separated the river systems of Pakistan and India. Not only that, but in addition to building dams, India is also storing a large amount of water, which will have a major negative effect on Pakistan's economy. This has heightened tensions between the two nations, further exacerbating Pakistan's security problem with India.

Problems with Security from the Pakistan-India border

Since the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, India has been violating international human rights norms on the border by ruthlessly killing innocent people by shelling civilians and Pakistani security posts. Both

Pakistan and India accuse and counter-accuse each other of interfering in the affairs of the other. Regardless of who is to blame, India has always intervened in Pakistan's internal affairs and attempted to destabilize Pakistan in the region (Yaseen & Muzaffar, 2018). Brutality against Indian civilians has persisted in occupied Kashmir, where they have been imprisoned in their homes for more than eight months and abused both psychologically and physically, despite the fact that Kashmir had voted for Pakistan in a plebiscite. Furthermore, by sowing discord in Pakistan, India is fueling the insurgency in Balochistan (Sultana, 2015). The arrest of Kalboshan Yadav, an Indian spy in Balochistan, is a clear example of this. He is said to have been working for the Indian army in Balochistan for many years. It is important to note that one of Kalboshan's key concerns was to establish security problems in Gawadar and to obstruct the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Nizamani, 2018; Rafay, Malik, Zhilong, & Fatima, 2020; Sial, 2014). Stopping Indian intervention in Pakistani territory would reduce the risk of a security crisis with India. Pakistan must deal harshly with such spies in order to improve Pakistan's position and mitigate the security dilemma.

Conclusion

Pakistan's security is dependent on Afghanistan and India on the external front. There has already been enough debate about the security threat posed by Afghanistan. Pakistan's security issues stem from the fragile nature of the Pakistan-Afghan border. Aside from security checkpoints, the deployment of security forces on the border has greatly aided Pakistan's security concerns. The border's windy and treacherous nature is another security problem for Pakistan, as terrorists and rebels can cross the mountains once their sinister plans have been realized. The control of terrorism and resistance between the two countries would be greatly aided by border management between the two countries. To maintain law and order on the border, it is more important than ever to appoint a joint security force made up of security personnel from both countries. In terms of security issues with India, they are critical because the two countries have fought three wars, resulting in massive human and financial losses as well as destruction of the countries' infrastructure. But this isn't the end of the story; if the big problems of Kashmir, water, and cross-border terrorism aren't resolved, another war is a distinct possibility. The most pressing issue is the conflict in Kashmir, which must be resolved as soon as possible. By addressing this hot topic, the international community and regional players will make a major contribution.

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