

## Afghanistan-Pakistan Political Relations (1963-73)



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### Article's History

**Submitted:** 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Accepted:** 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Published:** 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### **Abstract**

History of Afghan-Pak relations reflects ups and downs. Prior to the creation of Pakistan on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947, Afghanistan asked the British that before their departure from India, they must return back those Pakhtoon dominant territories which had been annexed by British from Afghanistan. However, British quitted India without considering Afghan demand. Pakistan came into being in 1947; Afghanistan raised its territorial dispute with Pakistan. It was the first Muslim country which opposed Pakistan's entry into the United Nations Organization (UNO). In 1949, Afghanistan's *Loya Jirga* declared that they did not recognize the Durand Line as its international border with Pakistan. Many primary and secondary sources related to the proposed research are available. These sources are in English, Urdu, Pakhto, and Dari languages and available at different research centers, libraries and archives etc. located in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The present study was conducted through the traditional method of data description and analysis in a chronological order. The present study follows qualitative research design and the sub design is historical. It works in the paradigm of modern history. The article finds that the in last ten years of King Zahir Shah's rule relations between the two countries were normal as compare the premiership of Daud Khan. It concludes that the issues of Durand Line and Pakhtoonistan are the two major bottle-necks in the way of cordial relations between the two countries. More research is needed to find the positive and negative aspects of King Zahir Shah's stance of not attacking Pakistan during the Indo-Pak wars.

**Keywords:** *Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakhtoonistan, Durand Line, King Zahir Shah*

## INTRODUCTION

Modern Afghanistan, which was called the Durrani Empire before, was founded by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1747 AD. After becoming the King of Afghanistan, he consolidated his kingdom between the River Amu in its North-west and the River Indus in its South-east. He invaded the Indian sub-continent for several times during his rule in Afghanistan (1747-73). After his death in 1773, his successors became weak and his kingdom started to shrink. The first threat to his vast kingdom came from the Indian sub-continent when Ranjeet Singh (1780-1839) captured Lahore in 1799 and adopted his ‘forward policy’ towards the north-west of Punjab across the River Indus within Afghan territories. In 1818 AD, he captured Peshawar (Singh, 2014) from Afghanistan and annexed it to Punjab. By 1834, five Sikh-Afghan wars had been fought in which the Sikhs proved successful in gaining control over Afghan territories between the River Indus and Khyber Pass including Peshawar.

In 1849, British East India Company (BEIC) defeated Sikhs and annexed Punjab to the British India. As a result, the Afghan territories (already annexed to Punjab by Sikhs) also became part of the British India. Like Sikhs, British also adopted ‘forward policy’ towards Afghanistan which resulted in three Anglo-Afghan wars in 1839, 1878 and 1919 respectively. As a result, British remained successful in extending its boundary further towards north-east within Afghan territories. This British advancement stopped in 1893 when Durand Line was demarcated between the British India and Afghanistan. Officially, though, both sides agreed upon the Durand Line but Pakhtoons living across the Durand Line were not ready to accept it and they mostly resisted against it (Mahsud, 2010).

In 1947, under the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan, British decided to quit India and divide it into two separate states, India and Pakistan. By then, Zahir Shah was king of Afghanistan. His government objected over the Plan on the plea that the areas comprised of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in the British India belonged to Afghanistan, which were first annexed by Sikhs and then came under British who imposed Durand Line upon Afghanistan through a pro-British ‘puppet’ and ‘illegitimate’ Afghan ruler named Amir Abdur Rahman. In 1991, Samuel Martin Burke wrote that the Afghan government had two objections. First, they contended that the Durand Line was established under duress. Second, as the British government was going to be ceased, hence, the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921 was to be automatically null and void with British departure from India. Therefore, the Afghan government claimed that the areas between the Durand Line and the River Indus should be returned back to Afghanistan (Burke, 1991). According to Rizvi (1979), on June 21, 1947, Muhammad Hashim Khan (1885-1953) (the then Afghan Prime Minister under King Zahir Shah) said in an interview in Bombay, “If an independent Pakhtoonistan cannot be set up, the Frontier Province should join Afghanistan to get an outlet to the sea.” (Rizvi, 1979).

In July 1947, before creation of Pakistan, the Afghan government, in an official letter sent to the British government, demanded that the British government should give the right of independence to Pakhtoons of the British India or to join Afghanistan. The British government replied that the border dispute had already been solved and the Durand Line was officially recognized by both the countries as their international border (Adamec, 1974). Despite Afghanistan’s objections over the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan of the British India, Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947 and on the very next day (August 15, 1947) India also became an independent state. Soon, India became member of the United Nations Organization (UNO), and Pakistan also applied for the same. In September

1947, there was voting in the UNO for Pakistan's entry and Afghanistan was the only Muslim country in the world who opposed it. (Durrani, 2010). The Afghan ambassador in the UNO said that: Afghanistan cannot recognize the North West Frontier Province as part of Pakistan so long as the people of the North West Frontier Province have not been given the opportunity free from any kind of influence and I repeat, free from any kind of influence, to determine for themselves whether they wish to be independent or to become a part of Pakistan (UNO General Assembly, 1974).

In 1948, Afghanistan withdrew its negative vote in the UNO against Pakistan and both countries agreed to exchange their ambassadors (Durrani, 2010). Shah Mahmood Khan (the Afghan Prime Minister under King Zahir Shah) sent Najib Ullah Khan as a special representative of King Zahir Shah to Pakistan who met Pakistani officials including Governor General Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan (1895-1951), Foreign Minister Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan (1893-1985) among others and discussed the issue of Pakhtoonistan with them. According to Ghulam Muhammad Ghubar (an Afghan historian), Najib Ullah Khan wasted his time in Pakistan and gained nothing (Ghubhar, 2012).

On June 12, 1949, Afridi tribes of Tirah (Khyber Agency of Pakistan) summoned a *jirga*. In this *jirga*, they not only raised their voice for Pakhtoonistan but also recognized the name and flag of Pakhtoonistan (Farahi, 2002). *Faqir of Ipi* was ceremoniously received by the Afghan Governor of Paktia in July 1949. His chances of being accepted as a leader on the Pakistani side of the border were slight. The Young Afridi Party called *Sarishta* announced the creation of an independent Pakhtoonistan in 1949. Afghanistan government supported the decision of the tribes and Pakistan became angered on that and attacked *Mughalgai* inside Afghanistan (Qureshi, 1966). In response, Afghanistan constituted a *Loya Jirga* (Grand Assembly) which announced that the Durand Line was an imaginary Line, hence, could not be accepted by Afghans. Moreover, it also declared that all other agreements made between Afghanistan and the British India in regard of the Durand Line or Pakhtoons had become null and void with the British departure from India (Ghaus, 1999).

Since creation of Pakistan, Pak-Afghan relations has faced challenges. In the beginning of 1950s, Pakistan closed her border with Afghanistan for two months. Later on, Muhammad Daud Khan (1909-78) became Afghan Prime Minister under King Zahir Shah and Pak-Afghan relations worsened. Hence, in 1955, Pakistan again closed her border with Afghanistan for five months. Muhammad Daud Khan (was an Afghan nationalist and a staunch supporter of the idea of 'Greater Afghanistan' (extending from the River Amu in the north-west to the River Indus in the south-east as founded by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1747). He strongly supported self-determination for the people of NWFP and considered them as justified in their demand for a separate independent state of Pakhtoonistan.

In 1963, Muhammad Daud Khan was forced to resign from premiership of Afghanistan. The main reason behind his resignation was his role in tensing the Pak-Afghan relations. In this regard, King Zahir Shah was not happy with his role and wanted to get rid of him. After his resignation, Pak-Afghan relations improved which continued during the whole decade of King Zahir Shah's constitutional monarchy (1963-73) (Emadi, 1990). During this period (1963-1973) Musa Shafiq (1932-79) (the Afghan Prime Minister under King Zahir Shah) tried to solve the core issues between the two countries. Afghanistan remained neutral in both wars of 1965 and 1971 between Pakistan and India. To reciprocate friendly gesture of Afghanistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Pakistan's

first President after the fall of East Pakistan in 1971) chose Afghanistan for his first official foreign visit. Shortly after his visit, Pakistan's First Lady Begum Nusrat Bhutto also paid a visit to Kabul and agreements of economic cooperation were concluded. Hence, Pak-Afghan relations remained relatively favourable during King Zahir Shah's last decade in Afghanistan (1963-1973).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the creation of Pakistan, Pak-Afghan relations have been deteriorated due to Afghanistan's denial to recognize Durand Line as a legitimate border with Pakistan after British departure from India. This is further supported by Afghans opposition to Pakistan's entry in the UNO, Afghans claims over Pakhtoon dominant territories in Pakistan, and her support to independent Pakhtoonistan comprised of Pakhtoon dominant areas in Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan recognizes the Durand Line as its international border with Afghanistan and rejects Afghan claims over its territories.

King Zahir Shah was monarch of Afghanistan who ruled Afghanistan from 1933 till 1973. In the light of aforementioned issues, this research analyzes the Pak-Afghan relations critically and highlights the bottlenecks in relations between the two countries in the last ten years of King Zahir Shah's tenure. It aims to give the real picture of the bilateral relations between the two countries as clear as possible.

### **Scope and Significance**

Pakistan and Afghanistan are two Muslim neighboring countries. Unfortunately, relations between them have not always been cordial. Since 9/11, both of them are terrorism laden having same problems and miseries. But, they are suspicious of each other's role in their joint venture of 'War on Terrorism' and each of them blame the other for sponsoring terrorism in the region.

The whole phenomenon is not so simple. It has deep rooted and complicated historical background which needs an extensive research to contribute a value addition to the history of Pak-Afghan relations on the basis of available historical data. Though, many writers for example, Farahi, Burke, Ghubar, Andeshmand and others have written a lot about relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan generally. But, their research is missing to cover the last decade of King Zahir Shah's rule. The proposed research would be of its first kind covering ten years long phase of Pak-Afghan relations from 1963 till 1973. It would be a descriptive chronology of the said subject matter with analytical touches. It would cover the chronological causal relationship of events and role of different personalities who played a significant role in relations between the two countries.

### **Objectives of the Research**

1. To investigate the relations of Pakistan and Afghanistan during last ten years monarchy of King Zahir Shah.
2. To identify the bottlenecks in building cordial relations between the two countries.
3. To explore and explain the historical perspectives of those bottlenecks which adversely affect Pak-Afghan relations.

### **Research Questions**

1. How were the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan under King Zahir Shah?
2. What were the major bottlenecks in the way of cordial relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan?

3. How did different historical events, personalities, and policies of governments in both countries played their role in Pak-Afghan relations?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many primary and secondary sources related to the proposed research in one way or the other are available. These sources are in English, Urdu, Pakhto, and Dari languages and available at different research centers, libraries and archives etc. located in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The primary sources contain published and unpublished official and non-official documents including agreements, correspondences, reports, newspapers, diaries, and autobiographies etc. *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany, and Britain* by Ludwig W. Adamec. In this book, Adamec discussed the stances of governments of Afghanistan and the British India over the Durand Line. It also gives information about Pak-Afghan relations till 1955 covering only ten years of the proposed research.

*Da Afghanistan Saqoot* (Pakhto) by Abdul Samad Ghaus gives information about Afghanistan's relations with its neighbors and big powers including Pakistan. Mainly, Taizai has focused on President Daud's relations with Pakistan during post-1973 era. Though, as a background, he has given details of Daud's role in Pak-Afghan relations under King Zahir Shah but that's too short. *Da Assasi Qanoon Laseeza* (Pakhto) is written by Saba Uddin Kushkaki. The author was Minister of Culture and Information during King Zahir Shah's 'Democratic Decade' (1963-1973) who has provided first-hand information about Pak-Afghan relations covering only the aforementioned era. It does not cover the overall topic of the proposed research.

Another book is *Afghanistan Da Democracy Aw Jamhoriyat Pa Kalono Ki 1963-1978* (Pakhto) is written by Abdul Ghaffar Farahi who was Member of King Zahir Shah's Parliament during his Democratic Decade (1963-1973). In this book, as the book name indicates, the author has shared his experiences only about the last ten years of King Zahir Shah's government. *My Enemy's Enemy* by Avinash Paliwal is a book of India's relations with Afghanistan and with the touch of Pakistan. Paliwal discussed very shortly relations of Afghanistan with India. He highlighted the stance of Afghanistan during the wars of Indo-Pak and also the influence of India over Afghanistan.

Most of the aforementioned literature gives a lot of information about the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan generally but lacks the impact of causal relationship of events in chronological order and role of different personalities affecting the relations between the two countries. This research proposes to fill those gaps existing within the already available literature on the topic.

## METHODOLOGY

This study follows qualitative research design and the sub design is historical. It works in the paradigm of modern history. The present study was conducted through the traditional method of data description and analysis in a chronological as well as thematic order as, in the Discipline of History, data (sources) are more important than the methods. It includes the following steps:

## FINDINGS

The facts are arranged in a series of their chronological causal relationship. To draw a comprehensible picture of the collected facts in chronological order.



## **Resuming Relations and the Re-opening of Border**

After the resignation of Sardar Muhammad Daud Khan in 1963, the then prime minister (1953-63) of King Zahir Shah, Muhammad Yousuf (1917-98) became the new Prime Minister of Afghanistan under King Zahir Shah. He was the first non-royal Prime Minister under King Zahir Shah. With the Premiership of Muhammad Yousuf, a new era started in Pak-Afghan relations. The last ten years of King Zahir Shah's tenure was named as the Democratic Decade or Constitutional Era in Afghanistan. One of the reasons of Muhammad Daud Khan's resignation from the premiership was his tensed relations with Pakistan. Border closures and border infiltrations took place between the two countries which caused damage to Afghan trade. The tensed relations had serious economic consequences for both countries, especially, for the landlocked Afghanistan. (Gartenstein-Ross & Tara Vassefi, 2012)

On the other hand, Afghanistan had rejected the demands of U.S. regarding the Pakhtoonistan issue which led Afghanistan to a kind of isolation in the region. Beside, U.S., Iran also wanted Afghanistan to have good relations with Pakistan. It was because of Afghan policy towards Pakistan that U.S. paid no attention to Afghanistan and, as a result, the USSR was trying to fill the political vacuum in Afghanistan. During Muhammad Daud Khan's ten years' premiership (1953-63), the USSR had almost filled that vacuum. U.S. and Iran were afraid of the Russian influence in Afghanistan. Hence, they did not want to give away Afghanistan from their hands, and thus, both countries urged Afghanistan to resume good relations with Pakistan. Afghan King Zahir also thought that it was desirable to bring shift in Afghanistan's policy towards Pakistan. Thus, Afghanistan pushed the issue of Pakhtoonistan into the background. (Kayathwal, 1994). Though, Afghan fully refrained itself to loud and talk about the Pakhtoonistan issue but expressed its support on various occasions for Pakhtoons of NWFP under Pakistan.

Muhammad Yousuf, the new Prime Minister of Afghanistan, in his speech reiterated Afghanistan's support for the legitimate demands of the people of Pakhtoonistan. (Kabul Times, 1963). His tone of speech was not provocative, which was the sign of shift in Afghanistan's policy of Pakhtoonistan. (New York Times, 1963) He also did not link the Pakhtoonistan issue to the closure of the border and said that Afghanistan would like to re-establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan (Taher Kheli, 1975).

Sabauddeen Kaushkaki, who was appointed as the new Director of Afghanistan's official news agency *Bakhtar*, wrote in his book that, after the resignation of Muhammad Daud Khan from premiership, he met King Zahir Shah, who told him that the media should not give too much attention to the Pakhtoonistan issue. Though, the King reaffirmed that Afghanistan would support the independence of the people of Pakhtoonistan gradually but, at the moment, they would not highlight that issue to the extent which could harm Pak-Afghan relations (Kushkaki, 1994). It was Pakistan's insistence that Afghanistan must withdraw the issue of Pakhtoonistan from its media. (Ghaus, 1999). It was also reported that King Zahir Shah was convinced by the Shah of Iran to tone down his support to the issue of Pakhtoonistan and improve his relations with Pakistan (Taher Kheli, 1975).

Abbas Aram, the Foreign Minister of Iran, sent a letter to the new Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Yousuf and asked him for his support for mediation of Iran between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Shah of Iran also sent a letter to Afghan King in this regard. After the approval of King Zahir Shah, the Afghan Foreign Minister accepted the Iranian mediation between

Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although, Pakistan accepted the mediation of Iran but it rejected the re-opening of Afghanistan consulates because General Muhammad Ayub Khan considered the Afghan consulates as the centers of intelligence and provocations against Pakistan. (Ghaus, 1999).

Afghanistan started a new era of relations with Pakistan. It wanted to have cordial relations with Pakistan. With the mediation of the Shah of Iran in May 1963, the severed diplomatic relations between the two countries came to an end. The talks were held in Iran's capital Tehran. From Afghanistan side, Syed Qasim Reshtia (the Minister of Culture), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Noor Ahmad Etimadi and Afghan ambassador to Iran Muhammad Usman had participated in the talks, while from the Pakistan side, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Pakistani Foreign Minister) and Akhtar Hsussain (the Pakistani ambassador to Iran) were the members of the Pakistani delegation. After many days of talks, on May 27, 1963, the delegations reached to an agreement for the restoring of the diplomatic relations between the two countries (Ghaus, 1999). The delegations did not discuss the issue of Pakhtoonistan which was the main cause of difference between the two countries (Farahi, 2002).

It was reported that on May 29, 1963, the Afghan Culture Minister Syed Qasim Reshtia said in Tehran that Afghanistan had never recognized the Durand Line as international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and that Pakhtoonistan would divide both countries. Pakistani Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said in Rawalpindi that Pakhtoonistan was a dead issue and his country would continue restrictions on the entry of *Powindas* of Afghanistan (Qureshi, 1966). The border was reopened on July 20, 1963 after months of closure and, on the same day, the Afghan consuls returned to their posts. After the restoration of political and economic relations between the two countries, Pakistan showed warmth and softness towards the nationalist Pakhtoon leaders of NWFP (Andeshmand, 2006).

Pakistani Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told the Pakistan Parliament that it was Afghanistan who, for almost two years, severed diplomatic relations with Pakistan and Pakistan always desired to have good relations with Afghanistan. He further added that, due to the initiative of Shah of Iran, negotiations with Afghanistan in Tehran were most fruitful. He also said that, in near future, Pakistan would send a new ambassador to Kabul. (Panhwar, 2017). During the negotiations with Pakistan in Tehran, Afghan government kept informed both Washington and Moscow about progress of the talks and its positions on Pakhtoonistan. U.S. and USSR viewed the Pakhtoonistan issue within the context of their international competition. (Saikal, 2012). A U.S. State Department official said: "We attempted to dissuade the Afghans pressing this issue, since it could have led to a war with Pakistan and created opportunities for the Soviet intervention in both countries. Apart from these considerations the disposition of the Pathans has little strategic interest to us." (Saikal, 2012, p. 134).

In July 1963, Afghan King Zahir Shah told a reporter that Afghanistan could not left the issue of Pakhtoonistan but, for the time being, it moved back the sword. (Dupree, 1963). During his visit to Washington, he further said that it was difficult to have peace with Pakistan until the issue of *Pakhto* speaking remained between the two countries (New York Times, 1963). In 1964, King Zahir Shah summoned the Afghan *Loya Jirga*. The *Jirga* maintained moral support for the Pakhtoonistan issue without endangering Afghanistan's diplomatic or economic interests (Rubin, 2002).

In order to promote relations and understanding between the two countries and to bring Afghanistan closer, the Pakistani President Ayub Khan visited Kabul on July 1, 1964. Pakistani President was welcomed by Afghan King Zahir Shah. The talks between the two leaders were described satisfactory. A Pakistani newspaper, the *Dawn*, wrote that relations between the two neighbors were much improved after the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1963 and the influence of India was also diminished over Kabul. The Afghan press was also pleading for closer relations with Pakistan (Qureshi, 1966).

USSR supported the Afghan claims on Pakhtoonistan but with the normalization of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, USSR's behavior had also been changed. From April 21 to April 30, 1965, the Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Yousuf was on his official visit to USSR but the Pakhtoonistan issue was not mentioned even indirectly in a joint communiqué. Similarly, when Zahir Shah visited Moscow in August 1965, he was cordially welcomed by USSR leadership but there was no mention of Pakhtoonistan issue which was the sign of improved relations between Pakistan, USSR and Afghanistan as well (Malik, 1994).

In Pakistan, during the course of normalization of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Ayub Khan was talking about Afghan claim on NWFP and was trying to challenge the Afghan stance regarding the Durand Line. On October 11, 1964, in his address to a meeting in Karachi, he said that the Afghan grievance was that the Durand Line, to which they agreed with the British India, was in wrong place but if they thought that it was wrong then Pakistan had no alternative to thought about the line which existed in times of Mahmood Ghaznavi, Timor, Babur and Ahmad Shah Abdali. He asked Afghanistan that which line they could want re-establish as their border with Pakistan (Razvi, 1979). One of Afghanistan's arguments on Durand Line was that both countries must negotiate and re-establish the border between the two countries as Pakistan did with Iran and China but Pakistan never accepted that argument.

The restoration of diplomatic relations and opening of transit trade between the two countries was a new chapter in Pak-Afghan relations. On August 26, 1965, the instrument of transit trade was exchanged between Pakistan and Afghanistan in Rawalpindi (Ahmad, 2010).

### **Indo-Pak War of 1965 and Afghanistan's Stance**

Pakistan and India fought a war in 1965 on the issue of Kashmir. During that war, some of the Afghan officials including Muhammad Yousuf (the Prime Minister), Abdul Qayyum (the Interior Minister), Gul Pacha Ulfat (Minister of Tribal Affairs) and Muhammad Azeem (Minister Public Works) were of the view that Afghanistan must get benefit of that opportunity and resolve the issue of Pakhtoonistan for once and all. They proposed that Afghanistan must ask Pakistan to resolve that issue. Being in war with India, Pakistan could not retaliate strongly and the USSR would also support the action of Afghanistan. But, King Zahir Shah declined to act against Pakistan during the war (Andeshmand, 2006). According to Ghaus, during the war between India and Pakistan in 1965, Afghanistan remained completely neutral and Pakistanis were pleased with Afghanistan (Ghuas, 1999). Hence, despite Afghanistan differences with Pakistan on Pakhtoonistan and Durand Line issues, it remained sympathetic towards Pakistan in the 1965 Indo-Pak war.

During the war, Afghanistan followed a strict policy of neutrality despite the external pressures (Jillani, 2001) and its close relations with USSR and India (Javaid, 2012). USSR demanded from



Afghanistan to exploit the situation but Afghanistan resisted. It refrained to take advantage from the situation and instead provided moral support to Pakistan (Magnus & Naby, 2002). It was also said that USSR sent a message to Afghan government and urged it to remain neutral between the war of Pakistan and India. Many Afghan cabinet ministers were surprised with the message of the USSR (Saikal, 2012).

As a whole, Afghanistan government assured Pakistan that whatever happened, it would not have any evil intentions towards Pakistan. Moreover, Afghanistan did not discourage those tribals who tried to join the Pakistan Armed Forces in the war against India. Thus, Pakistan was satisfied from Afghanistan's front and deployed its military from Afghan border to the Indian border (Saikal, 2012). Even, Afghan King Zahir Shah asked Pakistan to move its troops from the border. Afghan King said that Pakistan had no cause to fear its western border (Pande, 2011). Kabul's support to the Pakistani government during the Indo-Pakistan war showed that Afghanistan could ally to Pakistan in the time of crisis (Khan, 2011).

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto also acknowledged the sympathies of the people of Afghanistan during Indo-Pak war of 1965. According to him, it was reiterated by the government of Afghanistan. In a communiqué, Afghan King Zahir Shah told to the then Pakistani President Ayub Khan that he, being an Afghan, a Muslim and King of Afghanistan, was with Pakistan and he would never betray her (Panhawr, 2017). Afghanistan reacted ambiguously to the 1965 War between Pakistan and India. It supported the ceasefire initiative of UN. When war was on its peak and Indian planes were bombing Peshawar and Kohat, Afghanistan protested to India because Kabul considered those areas as part of Pakhtoonistan and not of Pakistan. Kabul wanted to keep them out of Pakistan-India war. King Zahir Shah was not supportive to India in its conflict of 1965 (Paliwal, 2017).

After the end of war between Pakistan and India, Rawan Farhadi, who was the most senior official in Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told a U.S. diplomat in Kabul that Afghanistan's restrained strategy on Pakhtoonistan issue during the war had developed enough goodwill in Pakistan to start talks on that issue. He further said that instead of pressing for territorial revision, Afghanistan would endorse more autonomy to Pakhtoons of NWFP within Pakistan (Paliwal, 2017). The neutrality of Afghanistan during the war between Pakistan and India in 1965 was a good sign of improved relations between the two countries. Afghan officials did not take advantage of Pakistan's preoccupation in the east to encourage new unrest in the Tribal Areas. Indian officials and politicians were considering to provide aid to Pakhtoons but the Afghan government's reluctance to antagonize Pakistan prevented further moves. To reach and aid the Pakhtoons in Tribal Areas, Indian officials needed the aid and permission of Afghan government (Leake, 2016).

After the Indo-Pak war of 1965, Pakistani President Ayub Khan visited Kabul and told Afghan leaders about the war with India. Afghan King Zahir Shah expressed his sympathy for Pakistani stance on Kashmir. (Dawn, 1966). Both countries expressed the intention to strengthen the mutual understanding and to create more conditions for the cooperation and friendship. Afghanistan reaffirmed its hope for the fair resolution of the Pakhtoonistan problem (Saikarl, 2012). The aim of Ayub Khan's visit was to hold discussions with Afghan King Zahir Shah and to thank him for his neutrality and understanding during the Indo-Pak war of 1965 (Javaid, 2013). The spokesman of the Pakistani delegation said that they had agreed to explore the avenues for greater collaboration in economic, social and cultural fields. It was also reported that both sides agreed to set up a joint steel mill for the recently discovered Afghan iron ore (Dawn, 1966).

The then Afghan Prime Minister Hashim Maiwandwal told the press that Afghanistan and Pakistan would settle their issues in a mutually agreeable way. He further said that discussion between the leaders were very useful (Dawn, 1966). The government of Maiwandwal maintained the formal posture regarding the Pakhtoonistan issue but steps were taken to have diplomatic relations and easier trade with Pakistan (New York Times, 1966). In his visit to USSR in 1966, instead of raising the Pakhtoonistan issue with USSR, he appreciated the USSR for organizing the Tashkent Conference between Pakistan and India (Malik, 1994).

In 1966, Pak-Afghan relations were much better as Afghanistan had put the issue of Pakhtoonistan in the background. Since 1963, economic cooperation and trade had been increased (Saikal, 2012). When Afghanistan's Abdul Rahman Pazhwak was elected as President of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNO's General Assembly, the then Pakistani Foreign Minister Sharifuddin Pirzada extended the warmest welcome to him on behalf of his government and people of Pakistan (New York Times, 1966). Afghan King Zahir Shah paid an official visit to Pakistan in 1967 and was given a warm welcome. It was the sign of improvement in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistani press lauded King's efforts for democratizing the political institutions in Afghanistan. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in exploration of natural resources and encourage trade (Dawn, 1966).

From 1963 until Afghanistan's Independence Day in August 1967, Pakhtoonistan issue was not raised by Afghanistan at any level, but, on that occasion Afghan Prime Minister Hashim Maiwandwal said that Afghanistan would support the right of self-determination of the people of Pakhtoonistan. Maiwandwal threw bitter allegation against Pakistan (Chopra, 1974). In 1968, the new Afghan Prime Minister Noor Ahmad Etimadi said that Afghanistan supports the *Pakhtoonistani* brethren to attain their right of self-determination. Etimadi added that Afghanistan could continue its support until the issue of Pakhtoonistan found a solution in accordance with the aspiration of *Pakhtoonistani* brethren (Kabul Times, 1968). On March 25, 1969, Ayub Khan resigned from presidency in Pakistan.

### **Yahya Khan and the Annulment of One Unit and its Impacts**

In 1969, the outgoing Pakistani President Ayub Khan invited Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan to be the new Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) of Pakistan and Yahya Khan tried to maintain good relations with Afghanistan. During his two years' period, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were improving, but despite that manifestation of cordiality, the Pakhtoonistan objective was not abandoned by Afghanistan. For the first time, Afghan diplomat, Abdur Rahman Pazhwak, brought the issue of Pakhtoonistan to the UNO. The issue was also discussed by the Foreign Affairs Committee of Afghan Parliament and stamps showing Pakhtoonistan were issued by Afghanistan in 1969 (Razvi, 1979). It showed NWFP, Tribal Areas and the whole Pakistani Balochistan as the territory of the proposed Pakhtoonistan (Ahmad, 2017).

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Afghanistan in 1969, the Afghan Prime Minister Noor Ahmad Etimaadi said that it was right and duty of Afghan government to continue its efforts for the solving of the Pakhtoonistan problem. He termed this problem as the remnant of the Western colonialism (Christian Science Monitor, 1969). Despite that, both countries had continued the efforts to strengthen relations in the field of commerce and trade. In May 1970, a delegation led by Pakistani Finance Minister Muzzafar Ali Qazalbash visited Kabul to explore possibilities of increasing

economic and trade collaboration. (Dawn, 1970). Both countries identified the areas where the expansion was possible (Dawn, 1970).

In 1955, Pakistani government had merged West Pakistan into One Unit which was much criticized by the then Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Daud Khan. Later on, it became another bottleneck for cordial relations between the two countries. Afghanistan was opposing Pakistan's One Unit Plan but Pakistan said that it was its internal issue. In 1969, Yahya Khan declared disbanding of One Unit and holding general elections in Pakistan. Pakhtoons of NWFP and Balochistan welcomed the disbanding of One Unit and holding of general elections in Pakistan. It was a token of satisfaction for Afghanistan that the Pakhtoons were on their way to get autonomy inside Pakistan (Ghaus, 1999).

The dissolution of One Unit Plan was a catalyst which hurried the normalization of relations between the two countries. On August 25, 1970, Afghanistan welcomed the restoration of former provinces of Pakistan (Dawn, 1970). On the Day of Independence of Afghanistan, the Afghan Prime Minister Noor Ahmad Etimaadi said that this step would help in the establishment of closer relations between the two countries and would increase cooperation and mutual understanding between the two neighbors (Javaid, 2013). Hence, the decision of Islamabad to disband the One Unit brought warmth in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and increased the economic cooperation (Razvi, 1979).

On August 26, 1970, the Afghan Prime Minister hoped that a new era of mutual understanding between Afghanistan and Pakistan had begun. Throughout 1970, there was improvement in cooperation between the two countries. The softening factor in Pak-Afghan relations was Iran and Turkey which had close relations with both countries (Razvi, 1979). To set up proposals for a joint development enterprises and to seek the possibility of using Afghan iron-ore in Pakistan Steel Mills, a five men delegation headed by the Chairman of Pakistan Steel Mill Corporation visited Kabul in September 1970. In spite of great internal chaos and its war with India in 1971, Pakistan continued its efforts to strengthen relations with Afghanistan (Razvi, 1979).

### **Indo-Pak War of 1971 and Afghanistan's Stance**

Again in 1971, Afghanistan remained neutral between Pakistan and India War (Ghaus, 1999). Afghanistan maintained strict neutrality during the war and abstained from taking advantage of Pakistan's preoccupation in war (Razvi, 1971). Although, some of the Afghan governmental and non-governmental circles were of the view that Afghanistan must get advantage of the prevailing war between Pakistan and India to get back the Pakhtoon areas from Pakistan across the Durand Line. It was also discussed in the Afghan cabinet but most members thought the idea as incorrect and was rejected (Andeshmand, 2006).

During the India-Pakistan War of 1971, Afghan King Zahir Shah visited Russia and the Russian President Leonid Brezhnev had a private meeting with him. Russian President asked Afghan King to join USSR and India to cut Pakistan into pieces and got Pakhtoonistan back from Pakistan as a reward. It was reported that King Zahir Shah regretted on the plea that a Muslim state could not attack another Muslim state (Rammohan, 2010). USSR insisted of Afghan King to follow more pro-Indian policy but the King refused USSR's demand (Javaid, 2013).

During the war of 1971 between India and Pakistan, there were rumors that Afghan Army, encouraged by former Prime Minister Muhammad Daud Khan, was about to invade Pakistan to

liberate Pakhtoonistan from the occupation of Pakistan. But Afghan King Zahir Shah, who was in London in December 1971, clarified that Afghan Armed Forces were fully under his control and Afghanistan was politically stable. (Meher. 2013). During the war, Afghanistan did not threaten Pakistan by opening a second front for it. On December 30, 1971, Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry declared that Afghan Government extended categorical assurances to Pakistan of its good will, non-interference and support to Pakistan's territorial integrity during the recent Indian aggression on Pakistan. Afghanistan also did not follow the Soviet Union's pro-Indian voting pattern at the United Nations (Jillani, 2001, para. 4).

### **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Visit to Kabul**

The separation of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in 1971 had changed the geo-political situation. Hence, Pakistan wanted to have an understanding with Afghanistan, as at that critical situation, Pakistan's defense was more dependent on its cooperation with Afghanistan (Razvi, 1979). By then, Pakistan became more interested cooperating with Afghanistan due to its strategic compulsion (Ali, 1979).

The separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan provoked the tendencies of separation and agitation among Pakhtoon and Baloch nationalists in Pakistan across the Durand Line. The disintegration of Pakistan motivated them that it might be a chance to separate their lands too. There were armed agitations against the Pakistani government but the government suppressed them. King Zahir Shah's government reaction to those agitations in Pakistan was very cautious. It did not support the armed agitations of Pakhtoon and Baloch nationalists against Pakistan (Andeshmand, 2006). The tragedy of East Pakistan made it clear to Pakistan that Pakistan's defense would only be ensured she has cooperation with Afghanistan (Javaid, 2013). For these purposes and to thank Afghanistan's neutrality in Indo-Afghan War of 1971, the new president of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto visited Kabul soon after the end of war. Afghanistan was the first country which he visited as the President of Pakistan. Some Pak Army's high officers were also accompanying Bhutto in his visit to Kabul. Bhutto, in an official meeting with King Zahir Shah and other Afghan officials, said that he had come to Kabul to thank and to present respect to Afghan King, to Afghan government and to the people of Afghanistan for their sympathetic attitude towards Pakistan during the war (Andeshmand, 2006). Afghan King Zahir Shah never wanted to allow his formal commitment to the right of self-determination to come in the way of interstate relations (Razvi, 1979).

Benazir Bhutto wrote that after becoming President of Pakistan, Bhutto made an unscheduled and unannounced visit to Afghanistan. King Zahir Shah was completely surprised and rushed to the airport to welcome Bhutto. In a meeting with the Afghan King, Bhutto assured him that whenever normal conditions returned to Pakistan, he would open sincere and meaningful dialogue with Afghan leaders to improve relations between the two Muslim countries. Afghan King recognized that Pakistan faced difficulties during war days but Afghanistan did not intend to take any reckless step that might destroy the prospects of good relations between the two countries. Moreover, Afghan King welcomed Bhutto's invitation for a dialogue between the two countries. After his return from Afghanistan, Bhutto declared that he gave more importance to Pak-Afghan relations for being two Muslim brethren neighbor countries compared to India which is a conventional enemy of Pakistan. He further added that the bottlenecks between Pak-Afghan relations were inherited by both the countries from the Anglo-Afghan wars fought as a result of British forward



policy towards the north-west of India. That's why, according to Benazir Bhutto, President Bhutto felt obliged to take measured steps in dealing with Afghanistan (Panhawar, 2017).

Shortly after Bhutto's visit to Kabul, his wife and first lady, Nusrat Bhutto visited Kabul in May 1972. She got economic agreements signed between the two governments (Javaid, 2013). During her visit, Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that Afghanistan values its brotherly and cultural relations with Pakistan and desires further strengthening of these relations between the two countries (Jillani, 2001). But the next day, on May 21, 1972, Afghan government declared that it had clearly told Begum Nusrat Bhutto that Afghanistan would support the Pakhtoons of NWFP and relations of Afghanistan with Pakistan depended on that issue. Pakistani government said nothing and remained silent on it. At that time, Pakistan had a policy of conciliation towards Afghanistan. It allowed 60 trucks of Afghan fruits to India through Wahgah border. But still, on September 01, 1972, Afghanistan officially celebrated the "Pakhtoonistan Day" throughout Afghanistan (Jillani, 2001).

In October 1972, Afghan Foreign Minister repeated Afghan stance on Pakhtoons of NWFP and Balochistan. He reiterated that the right of self-determination of Pakhtoons was violated in 1947 and even those areas of Pakhtoons were made part of Pakistan which had never been part of undivided India (Jillani, 2001).

### **Pak-Afghan Relations under Muhammad Musa Shafiq**

On December 24, 1972, Afghan King Zahir Shah appointed Muhammad Musa Shafiq as the new prime minister of Afghanistan. The new government under him supported the right to self-determination of the Pakhtoons of NWFP in Pakistan. Shafiq termed the issue of Pakhtoonistan as a national problem and said that it was the only obstacle between the two countries. Responding to a question about Pakhtoonistan, he said that Afghan support to the *Pakhtoonistani* brethren was their national and historical right and moral duty of Afghanistan. He further said that their support would continue in accordance with the will of Afghan nation (Kabul Times, 1972).

In early 1973, Musa Shafiq tried to mend fences with Pakistan. He gave indications of softening Afghanistan's policy regarding Pakhtoonistan (Weinbaum, 1994). He wanted to have no problems with Afghanistan's neighbors. He solved the long disputed problem of water with Iran. He also intended to solve the Pakhtoonistan issue with Pakistan. But he said that he would solve Afghanistan's issues according to the Afghan national interests (Khalili, 2014). Shafiq said in a press conference in Kabul that Afghanistan government intended to solve the issue of Pakhtoonistan peacefully with Pakistan (Andeshmand, 2006). He himself was also much determined to resolve the problems with Pakistan (Qassem, 2009). His goal was to strengthen the cordial relationship with Pakistan. He was very close to reach on a settlement on Pakhtoonistan issue with Pakistan but Britain, U.S and USSR were not willing to completely solve that. They wanted to keep alive that issue under their successful tested policy of "divide and rule" in this region. USSR was opposed to the Afghan King and his Prime Minister's efforts to improve Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan (Bradsher, 1985).

### **CONCLUSION**

Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have witnessed ups and downs. The first major damage happened to their relations when Afghanistan opposed the entry of Pakistan into the UNO, though later on, Afghanistan withdrew its vote of opposition. But it was



the major incident that affected the future course of relations between the two countries. Pakistan might not be expecting that from a Muslim neighbor but Afghanistan did it because of its ethnic relations with Pakhtoons of Pakistan and border issues inherited by the two countries from British legacy in the region.

In 1963, Muhammad Daud Khan resigned from the premiership of Afghanistan. It is reported that Afghan King Zahir Shah asked him to resign as, during his premiership, Pak-Afghan relations had become much tensed which caused deteriorated economic situation in Afghanistan. After the mediation by the Shah of Iran, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were restored and borders were re-opened after 22 months' closure. Afghan King Zahir Shah practically involved in politics of Afghanistan. He and his new Prime Minister Muhammad Yousuf put the issue of Pakhtoonistan in background but Afghanistan never stopped the support of *Pakhtoonistani* brethren. Afghanistan also never accepted the Durand Line as an international border.

In 1965, during the war between Pakistan and India, Afghanistan followed strict neutrality. Even, the Afghan King Zahir Shah told Pakistan that they could move their troops from its eastern border towards its western border without any fear from Afghanistan. The neutrality of Afghanistan during the war was the sign of improved relations between the two countries. In 1970, Afghanistan welcomed the annulment of One Unit Plan by Pakistan. Afghanistan was keened that it could help in the establishment of closer relations. In 1971, during the war between Pakistan and India, Afghanistan again followed strict neutrality. Pakistan again welcomed Afghanistan's stance and Z. A. Bhutto visited Kabul to thank Afghan King and the people of Afghanistan. However, differences and obstacles in the way of good relations between the two countries remained till the end of King Zahir Shah's monarchy in 1973.

In a nutshell, it may be concluded that Afghanistan's stance on Pakhtoonistan and its denial of Durand Line as an international border with Pakistan are the major obstacles in the way of creating cordial relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Whenever, Afghanistan pressed Pakistan over these two issues the relations between the two countries became fragile. But as much as these two issues remain unresolved, the relations between the two countries cannot move to cordiality.

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