

THE PAKISTANI FACTOR IN THE AFGHAN CONFLICT

Kosimsho ISKANDAROV

*D.Sc. (Hist.), Head of the Department of Iran and Afghanistan,
the Rudaki Institute of Language, Literature,
Oriental Studies,
and Manuscript Heritage,
Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan
(Dushanbe, Tajikistan)*

ABSTRACT

In 1947, when Pakistan was established as an independent country, Afghanistan ceased to recognize the Durand Line, the border between India and Afghanistan drawn in 1893 under an agreement between Foreign Secretary of British India Sir Mortimer Durand and Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, and raised the question of the Pashtuns who found themselves in the newly established state. The Afghans demanded that the British either grant the Pashtuns and Balochi the right to elect their own gov-

ernment independent from the center or to join Afghanistan: as Afghans they should be free to decide whether they wanted to belong to any state or would prefer independence; deep at heart, however, the Afghan rulers expected that the British withdrawal from India would render the Durand Line agreement null and void. The relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are burdened by countless problems; this explains why Pakistan keeps on interfering in its neighbor's domestic affairs.

KEYWORDS: *Pakistan, Afghanistan, Pashtunistan, the Durand Line, conflict, the Tribal Areas, the right to self-determination.*

Introduction

For nearly four decades now, Afghanistan has been living in an armed conflict started by the military coup of 17 July, 1973 when, in King of Afghanistan Zahir Shah's absence (who was in Europe at the time), Mohammad Daoud, his cousin, displaced him and declared a republic. Five years later, however, on 27 April, 1978, another military coup brought to power Nur Muhammad Taraki, leader of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. His rule was a short one: on 14 September, 1979 he was replaced with Hafizulla Amin and assassinated. In December 1979, the Soviet Union moved its military contingent into the country; President Hafizulla Amin was killed; and Babrak Karmal came to power.

Over the next forty years regimes replaced one another in quick succession, but none of the rulers managed to set up a sustainable central government, unify Afghanistan, and end the war that had engulfed millions of lives, drove Afghans into immigration, and destroyed the country's infrastructure.

In the 2000s, NATO members and several other countries (forty in all) formed a counterterrorist coalition to bring peace into the country and squash terror. Today, twelve years later, the war is still going on, while external interference became a negative factor that worsened the situation in the country.

Pakistan's interference in Afghanistan's domestic affairs has been for many years and remains one of the ongoing factors in the conflict.

Contradictions between Pakistan and Afghanistan: The Sources

The contradictions are rooted in 1947 when Pakistan became an independent state. Great Britain pulled out of India leaving behind numerous potentially conflicting situations that have been defying a solution for over 60 years now.

Pashtunistan, which the British colonialists divided into two parts, is one of the most stubborn problems. It had not disappeared when the British made India independent and set up Pakistan for the simple reason that the Pashtuns found themselves divided by the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The problem was created by an agreement between Afghanistan and British India signed on 12 November, 1893 in Kabul by Amir Abdur Rahman Khan and Foreign Secretary of British India Sir Mortimer Durand on a border stretch 2,640 km long (later it became known as the Durand Line).

Late in 1946, Prime Minister of Afghanistan Sardar Shah Mahmud, cousin of Zahir Shah (earlier that year Shah Mahmud replaced his brother Hashim Shah as prime minister) sent a letter to the British powers with a description of what was happening on the other side of the Durand Line and asked the prime minister of Great Britain to pay attention to the sad fate that would befall the Pashtuns after the division of the country.

On 13 June, 1947, the prime minister of Afghanistan, guided by the generally accepted opinion that the Pashtuns and Balochi were Afghans and should, therefore, be given the right either to join one of the two states or form an independent state, sent a memorandum to the British embassy in Kabul, which said in part: "The Pashtuns and Balochi should be given a chance either to elect their own government or join Afghanistan."¹

The U.K. referred to the 1921 treaty to ask Afghanistan to keep away from the delimitation process going on in the northwest.²

On the eve of the division of India, the Afghans remained convinced that the British pullout of India would devalue the Durand Line agreement and that Afghanistan would acquire the rights to a big chunk of Pakistan's territory.

On 21 June, Shah Mahmud sent one more letter to the British to point out that Pakistan should realize that Afghanistan also needed access to the sea and that its rights to the transit territory between Khyber and Karachi should be observed. The Afghans were obviously using every opportunity to build up more influence down south and acquire access to the Arabian Sea.

Early in 1941, Abdul Majid, Minister of National Economics of Afghanistan, started talking to Nazi diplomats in Berlin in an effort to secure a large part of India for his country. He spoke about a new border along the Indus River, the port of Karachi and part of Soviet Turkmenistan.³

It should be said that the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan never sided with the idea of joining the Pashtun areas to Afghanistan.

On 2 July, 1947, Doctor Khan, brother of Abdul Ghaffar Khan,⁴ sent a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, in which he wrote in part: "Let me assure you that we had no intention to join Afghanistan. We have just learned that the government of Afghanistan sent an official letter to the British. The Afghans may try to capitalize on our situation."⁵

The future of the Pashtuns was entrusted to a referendum: people had to choose between India and Pakistan. It was in vain that Abdul Ghaffar Khan, leader of the Khudai Khidmatgar ("Servants of God") movement (also called "Surkh Posh" or "Red Shirts" because of their red uniforms) insisted that the people should be offered a chance to vote for independent Pashtunistan, as the third option. The British refused.

The referendum took place on 16-17 July, 1947; 289,224 people living in the frontier territories voted for Pakistan; India looked attractive to a small group of 2,874. Only 50.99 percent of the votes cast were accepted as valid. Yu. Panichkin from Russia writes that Pakistan was chosen by a negligible majority of 50.49 percent.⁶

Afghanistan refused to retreat: on 30 September, 1947, when the U.N. discussed membership of Pakistan, H. Azizi, who represented Afghanistan, objected to Pakistan's membership in the U.N. because it had denied the Pashtuns the right to vote for independent Pashtunistan. Later, on 20 October, he retreated from this position: "I have to inform you that the discussion with regard to the North-West Frontier is being continued through diplomatic channels between the Governments concerned and there is hope that an agreement will be reached. In this hope the delegation of Afghanistan wishes to withdraw the negative vote which it cast at the meeting of the General Assembly on 30 September."⁷

¹ M.I. Andeshmand, *We and Pakistan*, Kabul, 2007, available at [www.ariaye.com] (in Dari).

² See: M.I. Varsaji, *Jihad of Afghanistan and the Cold War of the Superpowers*, Vol. 1, Peshawar, 2002, p. 181 (in Dari).

³ See: Yu.N. Panichkin, F.A. Musaev, "Krizis v pakistano-afghanskikh otnosheniakh posle obrazovaniia Pakistana: nachalo konflikta (1947-1950 gg.)," *Fundamentalnye issledovaniia*, No. 1 (Part 3), 2013, pp. 615-618, available at [www.rae.ru].

⁴ Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother Khan Sahib were two prominent figures of the Pashtun and Indian national movement; they favored the idea of "self-determination of Pashtunistan".

⁵ M.I. Varsaji, op. cit.

⁶ See: Yu.N. Panichkin, *Obrazovanie Pakistana i Pashtunsky vopros*, Moscow, 2005, p. 180.

⁷ [http://ipripak.org/factfiles/ff44.pdf].

The talks on the Durand Line began in November 1947 in Karachi. The Afghan delegation was headed by Najibullah Khan, Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Zahir Shah. The very fact that talks had begun meant that Afghanistan refused to admit that Pakistan had power over the Pashtuns living in Afghanistan. According to Afghan researcher Muhammad Iqrom Andeshmand, the king's personal representative spoke about the right of autonomy for the Pashtuns of the North-West Frontier Province; about the need to develop this region, and about a new name for the province to reflect the ethnic identity of those who lived in it.⁸

What the Afghan scholar has written about the talks suggests that when they started the Afghan side had no clear ideas either about the Durand Line or about the fate of the Pashtuns on the other side of the border. In any case, during the talks Afghanistan did not formulate any territorial claims, it merely supported the idea of self-determination very popular among the Pashtuns.

According to Sayyid Qasim Rishtiya, Head of the Press Department in the government of Shah Mahmud Khan, an extended meeting held in Kabul in 1947 discussed the Durand Line issue and concluded that it was too late to formulate territorial claims against Pakistan and that the world community would object to any changes, which would inevitably cause a total revision of the region's borders.

It was decided to demand the right of self-determination for the Pashtuns of Pakistan. The department head said that this meeting suggested that from that time on the term Pashtunistan should be used; over time it gained wide currency in the media.⁹

In 1949, however, relations between the two countries began going from bad to worse. In February 1948, Abdul Gaffar Khan attended the first session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and vowed loyalty to the state; this was when he met Muhammad Ali Jinnah and invited him to the North-West Frontier Province. He never abandoned his efforts to set up Pashtunistan as part of Pakistan. Arrested on 15 June, 1948 on an accusation of plotting with Faqir of Ipi, who waged guerilla warfare in Northern Waziristan against the British in colonial times and then against the government of Pakistan, Abdul Gaffar Khan was sent to prison for three years. His brother Khan Sahib and many of his followers were also arrested.¹⁰

Some analysts think that these arrests were provoked by sharp statements from intellectuals and Pashtun nationalists who accused the government of inaction. The arrests rearranged the position of Afghanistan to a certain extent.

In 1949, the National Council (parliament) denounced all treaties and agreements between Afghanistan and the U.K. related to the Durand Line and announced that it was no longer accepted as a state border between the two countries.

On 31 August, 1949, the so-called "declaration of independence of Pashtunistan" took place in Tirakh (a settlement in Northern Waziristan in the northwest of Pakistan); the Afghan government made this date the Day of Pashtunistan to be marked every year.¹¹

The relations between the two countries deteriorated to the extent that in August 1950 Afghanistan raised the flag of Pashtunistan; on 30 September, Afghan troops attacked one of the border outposts beyond the Durand Line.

Pakistan responded as could be expected by closing the transit routes for Afghan cargoes, which proved a very painful blow for landlocked Afghanistan. This was a handy instrument to be used every time Afghanistan started talking about Pashtunistan.

Not discouraged, Kabul continued to insist that:

⁸ See: M.I. Andeshmand, *op. cit.*

⁹ See: *Ibidem.*

¹⁰ See: Yu.N. Panichkin, F.A. Musaev, *op. cit.*

¹¹ See: *Ibidem.*

- (1) the peoples on the other side of the Durand Line had been ruled by Afghanistan until the Brits took this region from Afghanistan by force;
- (2) legally, the Durand Line agreement was signed by Afghanistan and the U.K., but not with Pakistan, which did not exist at that time;
- (3) the people on the other side of the Durand Line were ethnic Pashtuns related by blood and ethnic origin, as well as culturally with the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and should, therefore, be united with them.¹²

Mohammad Daoud Khan, appointed prime minister of Afghanistan in 1953, was one of the most zealous fighters for the rights of the Pashtuns of Pakistan. This was when, not surprisingly, tension between the two countries increased; his ten years in office (1953-1963) were marked by never ending conflicts with Pakistan without any visible gains for Kabul. The two countries finally severed their relations; it required concerted efforts by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey to restore them.

The West strongly disapproved of Daoud Khan's policy on the Pashtunistan issue to the extent that the Afghan ruler had to turn to the Soviet Union for latest weaponry to modernize the army and develop infrastructure.

In 1973, when the monarchy was overthrown and Mohammed Daoud became President of Afghanistan, Pashtunistan was moved to the frontline of the relations between the two neighbors. As president of Afghanistan, Mohammed Daoud started talking about his determination to fight for the rights of the Pashtuns and Balochi living on the other side of the Durand Line. In November 1973, in a letter to the UN Secretary General, he accused Pakistan of "failure to observe the rights of Pashtuns and Balochi."¹³

In view of the unyielding position of President Mohammad Daoud on Pashtunistan and the Durand Line, the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto extended its support to the Afghan Islamists living in emigration in Pakistan and fighting against the republican regime. It was revealed later that forty Afghan Islamists trained in one of the military camps in Peshawar had undertaken a failed armed uprising against Daoud in several regions of Afghanistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan after the April 1978 Coup in Kabul

Taraki, Amin, and Karmal, who ruled the country one after another when M. Daoud was deposed and assassinated, refused to recognize the Durand Line and continued to support the idea of Pashtunistan. Under Taraki and Amin, Pashtun nationalism became even more pronounced, while the country's leaders moved toward the idea of Greater Afghanistan; it retained its prominence under Babrak Karmal and Mohammad Najibullah.

According to Afghan researcher Sangshikan, President of Afghanistan Najibullah lost his life because of the Durand Line disagreements. "When units of the Taliban entered Kabul several Pakistanis burst into the building of the U.N. mission which had sheltered Najibullah since 1992. They tried to force him to sign several documents. He refused." The author writes that the papers contained an agreement which extended the Durand Line for 100 years more; Najibullah paid with his life for his refusal to comply.¹⁴

¹² See: M.I. Varsaji, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187.

¹³ M.I. Andeshmand, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ See: Sangshikan, "Pakistan, Pashtuns and the Taliban," available at [www.ariaye.com] (in Dari).

Pakistan skillfully used the situation created by the April coup of 1978 and complicated still further by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to consolidate its position in this country.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought the special services of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia closer together; it was on Pakistan's request that Saudi Arabia did not grudge money for the mojahedeen of Afghanistan; the larger part of the money transferred through the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI).

Saudi Arabia paid for the training camps along the Afghan-Pak border where instructors from the elite units of the Pakistan army trained mojahedeen. "By the end of the war against the Soviet invaders, the ISI camps had trained at least 80,000 to 90,000 Afghans in ten-day or three-month courses."¹⁵

The ISI was working hard inside the largest Islamic political parties; secret agents placed their stakes on the leaders expected to promote the interests of Pakistan in Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan, was one of the hopefuls. According to numerous sources, in 1973 he was moved to Pakistan where he cooperated with the Pakistani secret services in an effort to depose Daoud.

He received the lion's share of the money the ISI gave to the Islamic military-political groups. According to a report by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, in 1986 the ISI hired deserters and refugees to put together a so-called Free Army of Afghanistan. The report said in part: "The ISI strives to use the army to fight other mojahedeen units operating in different regions of Afghanistan, secure a victory for Hekmatyar, or channel the course of political settlement of the Afghan problem in the interests of Islamabad."¹⁶

The so-called Afghan Army was controlled by the ISI; the report contained information that the officers, either Pakistanis or Afghans, worked for the ISI.

Pakistan used the mojahedeen victory to bring Hekmatyar to power; the ISI analysts were convinced that a non-Pashtun government in Afghanistan did not suit the interests of Pakistan.

By 1994, the situation had changed: Pakistan placed its stakes on the Taliban as an alternative to Hekmatyar who had irretrievably lost his post of prime minister.

The changes were brought about by the resignation of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1993. Moreover, it is an open secret that Islamabad supported and continues to support the Taliban.

The ISI was purged by the Army: the generals removed ISI Chief Lieutenant General Javed Nasir and dozens of officers who sided with Islamic parties in Afghanistan. Retired general Naseerullah Khan Babar, Minister of Internal Affairs in the Bhutto Cabinet (1988-1990), and Maulana Fazal ur-Rehman, leader of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (it is no accident that the general was known as the god father of this movement), took the initiative to form the Taliban.

This made the ISI relatively passive, but did not remove it from the scene altogether. The army and the intelligence service, in which Pashtuns figure prominently, play an important, if not decisive, role in the country's Afghan policies.

The fighting part of the Taliban relied on students of religious schools in Pakistan: Islamabad, which encouraged their conscription, also dispatched hundreds of Taliban militants, as well as special units of the national army to Afghanistan.

Pakistan assumed financial obligations as well: in 1996, for example, about \$6 million in budget money was spent on wages for the movement's administration. Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist,

¹⁵ B. Riedel, *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 2012, p. 24.

¹⁶ H.B.A. Ansari, *Afghanistan in Petrol Fire (The Truth which had Never been Said)*, 2nd edition, Maiwand, Kabul, 1382 (2003), pp. 59-60 (in Dari).

wrote: "In 1997/8 Pakistan provided the Taliban with an estimated US\$30 million in aid."¹⁷ Its members were encouraged to buy weapons in Ukraine and East European countries.

At first the Pakistani leaders had been carefully avoiding any association with the Taliban until former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto dotted the "i's": in an interview with the BBC, she acknowledged that the Taliban training colleges were "paid for by Saudi Arabia, the United States and Britain."¹⁸

To balance out the crushing defeats of the Taliban in the north of Afghanistan, Islamabad stepped up its conscription activities and started sending more and more regular troops to fight Ahmad Shah Massoud. According to an Australian researcher, Andrew Davies, in August 1999, about 6 thousand foreigners fought together with the Taliban and captured Taloqan; 400 to 500 of them were officers of the Pakistani army.¹⁹ Some of the participants on the other side of the front think that the Pakistan military was much larger: two battalions of the G-9 division²⁰ (a mountain rifle division billeted in Charot, North-West Frontier Province).

Pakistan and Afghanistan after 9/11

The 9/11 terrorist acts pushed Pervez Musharraf and his government into a tight corner: throughout the Taliban's history, Islamabad remained its loyal ally and, in fact, its representative on the international arena. The attack of 9/11 forced Pakistan to side with the West and to disrupt its official ties with the Taliban while remaining its patron. Practically all Taliban agencies in Pakistan were closed; the last of them in Quetta, on 19 November, 2001.

According to Vadim Sergeev, it was the United States that forced Islamabad to sever relations with the Taliban; however, Pakistan continued helping the movement's remnants on the sly.²¹ In short, Pakistan continued fighting Afghanistan after 9/11.

Operation Enduring Freedom cut short Pakistan's frantic effort to save the regime by removing the most odious figures from the movement's top crust. The regime refused to be saved: the talks with Taliban leaders did not produce a government of so-called moderate Taliban members. The Americans and British, meanwhile, having talked to the ISI, dispatched Abdul Haq²² to Afghanistan; betrayed by the ISI, he was captured by the Taliban and executed in Logar.

The failed attempt to set up a moderate Taliban government and the counterterrorist operation of NATO in Afghanistan forced President Musharraf to ask Prime Minister Blair and Secretary of State Powell to move in the forces of Northern Alliance to save the lives of the Pakistani military stationed in Kunduz. The Americans complied: under the pretext of negotiating with the Taliban its surrender in Mazar-i Sharif, they stopped bombing the positions of Taliban militants in Kunduz. It took Pakistan several nights to evacuate hundreds of its military by helicopters.²³

¹⁷ A. Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, London, New York, 2002, p. 183.

¹⁸ Quoted from: A. Dubnov, "Stolknovenie tsivilizatsiy? Net,—interesov," *Tsentralnaia Azia*, No. 7, 1997, p. 74.

¹⁹ Quoted from: M.I. Andeshmand, op. cit.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ See: V. Sergeev, "Afghano-Pakistanskies svyazi posle padeniia rezhima talibov," available at [www.iran.ru], 25 October, 2005.

²² Abdul Haq, one of the prominent warlords of the Islamic party of Afghanistan headed by Yunus Hales; lived in Pakistan for a long time; negotiated arms deliveries to mujahedeen with President Reagan; joined the Rome group of Zahir Shah.

²³ See: M.I. Andeshmand, op. cit.

In 2001, the Americans bombed the main bases of al-Qae'da in Afghanistan, which forced its main forces to retreat to their bases in Pakistan under the wing of the ISI and the military.

Islamabad, fearing the Northern Alliance, which was strong enough to capture Kabul, demanded that NATO should interfere; the issue was discussed with prominent military commander Mohammed Qasim Fahim; this, however, did not help: the Northern Alliance entered the capital.

Pakistan, which had failed to save the Taliban regime, tried a different approach. Muhammad Amin Furutan, for example, writes that the protests against the Bonn Conference followed by its boycott by former governor of Nangarhar Abdul Qadir under the pretext of discrimination of the rights of the Pashtuns at the conference was organized by the ambassador of Pakistan to Germany.²⁴

The United States and the U.N. returned Abdul Qadir to the conference table; the Bonn Conference set up an Afghan Interim Administration, which left Islamabad no choice. It had to recognize the new government and promise to help the country in post-Taliban reconstruction.

Pakistan did not like either the presence of the American and NATO troops in Afghanistan, or the new government put together in Bonn. So at the turn of 2004, the ISI tried even harder to revive the Taliban. According to Riedel, who in 2010 spoke to the warlords, from 2004 through 2006, the ISI had been actively campaigning in favor of the Taliban; it later organized training in Quetta and elsewhere in Pakistan. One of the warlords told Riedel that "some ISI camps had 2,000-4,000 recruits at a time, and one commander estimated that 80 percent of his fighters had attended such a camp."²⁵

The international conference held in Kabul on 5 December, 2006 pointed out that Taliban fighters were mainly trained in Pakistan. Everyone agreed that the ISI, which sided with the Taliban secretly or even openly, added to the rising destabilization in the neighboring country. The participants went even further: it was established that the ISI supplied the Taliban with information, that it trained fighters in numerous training camps and supplied them with weapons and money.

Everyone knows that Mullah Omar resides in Quetta, the city in which the Taliban's supreme council, the Quetta Shura, is situated (another supreme council is the Peshawar Shura). Jalaluddin Haqqani, another leader of the Taliban, who operates more or less independently, set up his headquarters in Waziristan, from which he leads all military operations.

The leaders of Pakistan reject all accusations coming from all sides: official and unofficial circles of the United States and Europe insist that the ISI resurrected the Taliban. On 28 September, 2006, in an interview to TV BBC Pervez Musharraf pointed out: "Breaking the back of al-Qa'eda would not have been possible if ISI was not doing an excellent job" and "remember my words: if the ISI is not with you and Pakistan is not with you, you will lose in Afghanistan."²⁶

Facts, however, point to the opposite. It is hard to believe that the ISI never knew that terrorist No. 1 Osama bin Laden had settled next to the Kokul military academy.

Since 1 May, 2011, the day Osama bin Laden was located and liquidated, relations between Pakistan and the United States have been going from bad to worse. In September, the Taliban attacked the American embassy in Kabul; the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. Army accused the ISI. "In November [of the same year] a fire fight on the Afghan-Pakistan border led to two dozen Pakistani soldiers losing their lives in NATO airstrikes."²⁷

²⁴ See: M.I. Andeshmand, *op. cit.*

²⁵ B. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²⁶ [<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/sep/29/alqaida.politics>], [<http://www.rietas.gr/research-areas/global-issues/asian-studies/566.html>].

²⁷ B. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

There is a more or less commonly accepted opinion that the key to a peace settlement in Afghanistan is found in Pakistan: if this country and its intelligence service, in particular, decide to keep away from the peace process, the road to stability in Afghanistan will be very long indeed.

Early in 2013, the density of terrorist and extremist groups camping in Pakistan became a threat to the country's security and stability. This breeds hope that Pakistan will show more enthusiasm about the Afghan settlement. After the tripartite meeting that took place in London early in 2013, Islamabad agreed to support the Peace Process Roadmap to 2015 chartered by the Afghan High Peace Council and promised to draw the Taliban into peace talks with Kabul within the next six months. It also agreed to help organize a meeting of representatives of the high clergy of Afghanistan and Pakistan expected to discuss how to reach peace and what to do about suicide bombers. This meeting never took place. Instead, Chief of the Pakistan Ulema Council Allama Tahir Ashrafi issued a fatwa which justified jihad and suicide bombers in Afghanistan. This meant that Pakistan had not withdrawn its religious and political support from the Taliban.

Kabul is convinced that Islamabad is demonstratively unwilling to help the peace process in Afghanistan. One of the top diplomats of Pakistan said that Hamid Karzai was the main obstacle on the road to peace in Afghanistan. The press secretary of the president of Afghanistan retorted that by insisting on impossible conditions Pakistan is merely interfering with the peace efforts. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Foreign Minister, spoke in Senate: "Pakistan has constantly played a double game against Afghanistan ... our neighbor is the greatest source of security threat to Afghanistan."²⁸

This means that throughout the 12-year-long post-Taliban period, Pakistan has been interfering in its neighbor's internal affairs both secretly and openly. Islamabad closed the transit routes for Afghan cargoes across its territory and organized terrorist acts on important economic facilities in Afghanistan. It was involved in setting up a military front together with al-Qa'eda, the Taliban, the Haqqani network, the IPA, and others.

Pakistan is not alien to a secret warfare against its neighbor using aggressive information campaigns, Islamic slogans, and mudslinging as its instruments and keeping the Afghan government under pressure; Islamabad buys top bureaucrats to gather information; it has become much more active on the international scene, in the Islamic countries and the Arab world in particular.²⁹

From the strategic point of view Pakistan is fighting on three fronts: military, diplomatic, and humanitarian.

On the military front, it directly supports international terror, extremist groups, and insurgents operating in Afghanistan.

There is also a diplomatic front: Pakistan not only fans the fire of warfare in Afghanistan, but also keeps the diplomatic channels open to capitalize as much as possible on the international support the world community extends to Afghanistan. Through diplomatic channels, Islamabad is working hard to undermine the Kabul regime and also the influence of the Americans in the region.

In the humanitarian sphere, Islamabad has mastered the skill of actively using Afghan refugees and other people who found themselves for different reasons in Pakistan.

There are also students from Afghanistan, Burma, Nepal, Bangladesh, Yemen, Kuwait, Chechnia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and other countries who come to Pakistan to study at madrassahs where they are thoroughly brainwashed and undergo military training. The fittest are sent to Afghanistan to join the troops.

It should be said that the Pakistani authorities are either unable or unwilling to establish stricter control over these schools: in the past it was the state that funded the madrassahs and could, therefore,

²⁸ [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/editorialdetail.php?post_id=7195].

²⁹ See: S.S. Sodat, "Fifty-Year War between Afghanistan and Pakistan," available at [www.8am.af] (in Dari).

control them, today they are set up by private individuals and mainly remain unregistered. The number of such schools in Afghanistan skyrocketed after the downfall of the Taliban regime, 9/11, and NATO's counterterrorist operation; according to M. Atrofi, there are over 40 thousand of them in the country.³⁰

Pakistan does not hesitate to use the two million Afghan refugees still living in the country for its own purposes under the threat of deportation.

In short, the conflict in the neighboring country has allowed Pakistan to meddle in the Afghan affairs in an effort to change the situation up to and including the use of force.

Why does Pakistan interfere in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state with which it has so much in common? The answer is:

- (1) The pending problem of the Durand Line. I have already written that since 1947, the year when Pakistan was established, none of the governments of Afghanistan (including the current Cabinet) recognized it as the border line; this causes concern in Islamabad.
- (2) The pending problem of Pashtunistan caused by the fact that the border issues remain unsettled. The Pashtuns straddle the border between the two countries; from time to time, heated up by the idea of Greater Pashtunistan and instigated by Kabul, they become more active. To prevent discontent among the Pashtuns, the Pakistani authorities have assumed the role of "protectors" of their rights and interests at the international level. Starting with the Bonn Conference of 2011, Pakistan has been talking about a wider Pashtun representation in the corridors of power in Kabul to make the government ethnically balanced. Islamabad also insisted that "the moderate Taliban" should have their say in the government.

In June 2003, during a visit to Washington, President Musharraf said that "the Afghan government had little control outside the capital and was not representative of the country's ethnic mix" and that "the Afghan president's writ did not extend beyond Kabul." Early in July 2003, President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai could not conceal his irritation: "Mr. Musharraf has made some comments regarding Afghanistan which have become a matter of sadness and regret for me. Afghanistan does not interfere in anyone's affairs and neither does it want others' interference in its affairs."³¹

In November 2006, Minister of Information of Balochistan said to Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid that only the Taliban could transform Afghanistan into a real state. The official meant that this state should be a product of concerted efforts by several Pashtun groups connected with Pakistan. Translated into common language, this means that Pakistan, rather than seeking stabilization in Afghanistan, is working toward a Pashtun state.

President Musharraf and his government refused to recognize Hamid Karzai as a Pashtun; the same applies to the government of Afghanistan. In April 2007, in Ankara at a meeting of the two presidents, Musharraf said in the presence of the prime minister of Turkey that Karzai had no influence among the Pashtuns. President of Pakistan was obviously vexed when his Afghan colleague addressed him as "brother." He explained to the prime minister of Turkey, who hosted the meeting, that the Taliban rather than Karzai had the Pashtuns on its side and added that Karzai, whose government was dominated by Panjshir people, could not be regarded as a representative of his own people, by which he meant Pashtuns.³²

³⁰ See: M.A. Atrofi, "The Entanglement of the Continued War in Afghanistan," available at [www.ariaye.com] (in Dari).

³¹ [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3050672.stm].

³² See: M.I. Andeshmand, *op. cit.*

On the other hand, the government of Pakistan does not take the Tajiks (the number of whom is negligible, according to its own statistics) into account and bases its policy on the idea of the Pashtuns' ethnic domination. In 2007, at one of the press conferences in Washington, the president of Pakistan said that the Tajiks constituted 5 percent of the total population of Afghanistan,³³ a figure probably supplied by the Pashtuns of the ISI.

This is a dangerous approach or, rather, a provocation that fans national enmity. Ahmed Rashid has written that Pakistan's obvious intention to Taliban-ize the Pashtuns in the south of Afghanistan may split the country and divide its people into Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns. This will plunge the country into uncontrolled violence and never-ending wars.³⁴

Aware of the possible catastrophic repercussions, Pakistan prefers to avoid this alternative; however, on the eve of the NATO pullout scheduled for 2014 the idea of the Greater Pashtunistan in the southeast of Afghanistan and the Tribal Areas in the northwest of Pakistan was suddenly revived.

On 29-30 May, 2012, Afzal Khan Lala, the 81-year-old nationalist leader who had firmly opposed the Taliban in Swat, convened a two-day Pashtun jirga in Peshawar, supported by the leaders of the Awami National Party (ANP), Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam.

The Qaami Jirga was unanimous in its conclusion that the 30-year war in Afghanistan should be ended, otherwise the Pashtun issue would remain unresolved; the participants pointed to the negative role the Taliban has played and continues to play in the Afghan developments and denied it any role in setting up Pashtunistan.

The Jirga spoke about the reunification of the Pashtun tribes on both sides of the Durand Line to set up Greater Pashtunistan³⁵; the idea caused a lot of concern in Islamabad.

The economic factor figures prominently in the relations between the two countries. Pakistan, the developing industry of which badly needs cheap raw materials (fuel in particular) and consumer markets, is looking to the Central Asian countries. However, it seems that because of the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan may be too late: other countries are locked in stiff and uncompromising rivalry over Central Asian energy resources and markets.

Vladimir Moskalenko of the Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS, has offered the following: "So far, numerous agreements on railways, highways, oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia to Pakistan via Afghanistan have not been realized. Iran and Turkey, Pakistan's main rivals, capitalize on this to push forward their own alternative routes. In fact, the unregulated Afghan problem may cost Pakistan its direct access to Central Asia."³⁶

The demographic situation and water shortage figure prominently in Pakistan's Afghan policy. In 1947, the population of Western Pakistan was 39 million, by 2009, its population had risen to 180.8 million. Today, Pakistan holds sixth place among the states with the largest populations. Some experts believe that "if fertility rates remain constant, the population will reach 460 million by 2050."³⁷ This means that by 2050 Pakistan will push aside Indonesia, currently the most densely populated Muslim state. Water shortage is an old headache with no signs of alleviating. Between 1951 and 2007, the norm of per capita water consumption dropped from 5,000 to 1,100 cu m. "By 2025 water availability will drop to less than 700 cubic meters per capita."³⁸ According to the Pakistan

³³ See: *Ibidem*.

³⁴ See: *Ibidem*.

³⁵ See: "Taliby vozvrashchaitusia ili budet sozdan 'Velikiy Pashtunistan'?" available at [www.didgah.de].

³⁶ V.N. Moskalenko, "Afghanistan i Pakistan," in: *Afghanistan: voyna i problemy mira*, Moscow, 1998, p. 68.

³⁷ B. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), by 2025 most reservoirs will deteriorate because of sedimentary rocks brought by mountain rivers. A critical (16 percent) drop in water inflow in Pakistan is also predicted if Afghanistan starts building water reservoirs in its territory. According to the Chairman of the Pakistan Water Council, in the spring and fall of 2004 Punjab needed 60 percent more irrigation water.

There is a strong conviction in Islamabad that New Delhi created the threat of depriving Pakistan of water from the Afghan rivers of the Indus basin. In 2003, India announced that it was prepared to extend its involvement in the projects underway in Helmand (the Salma reservoir) and Kunduz (the Hanabad canal) by shouldering the construction of water reservoirs in the Nangarhar province. The same year, the first stones of the foundation of dams on the Kunar River to channel its waters to River Kabul at Jelalabad were laid.

Seen from Islamabad this looks like India's intention to undermine Pakistan's economy. India also plans to build several hydro-technical facilities to change the course of the rivers Beas, Ravi, and Satulej (3 out of 5 main rivers of the Indus system).

In March 2010, Hafez Saeed, the founder and leader of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, accused India of stealing water from Pakistan in Kashmir, insisting, "if India continuous with her *water terrorism*, Pakistan must keep open the option of using force."³⁹

The geopolitical factor was pushed to the fore by the growing demands in hydrocarbon resources all over the world and their rich deposits in Central Asia. The regional powers are locked in stiff rivalry over the routes by which energy resources can be moved out of the post-Soviet Central Asian republics. Its advantageous geographic location allows Islamabad to insist on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline. In this way, Pakistan will not only put an end to the natural gas deficit, but also will consolidate its geopolitical position.⁴⁰

America's continued presence in Afghanistan, very much contrary to the geopolitical interests of Pakistan and its neighbors, explains Pakistan's support of the Taliban.

Barnett Rubin, American advisor to President Karzai, argued that Pakistan remained on the side of the Taliban because it and several other countries regard Afghanistan's dependence on the United States, which preaches preemptive defensive war, as a threat to their security in a long-term perspective.

Islamabad is concerned about the increasing rapprochement between the United States and India and their wider cooperation in the nuclear sphere, hence the Taliban's continued presence in the southwest and southeast of Afghanistan and its control over the Tribal Areas, and the terrorist training camps in Balochistan, Peshawar, and elsewhere in Pakistani territory. Islamabad encourages extremist and subversive activities to keep instability in Afghanistan at a high level to demonstrate that it, rather than Delhi or Kabul, is in the driver's seat.

The Jammu and Kashmir conflict is one of Pakistan's old headaches. For over 60 years now, India and Pakistan have been unable to arrive at an agreement over the territory that used to be part of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. Permanent tension and regular border conflicts do nothing for the relations between the two countries.

Pakistan needs Afghanistan on its side as "strategic depth," otherwise it will find itself jammed between two hostile states. This explains Pakistan's negative attitude toward the developing relations between Afghanistan and India.

One tends to agree with President Musharraf that peace and stability in Afghanistan suited Pakistan's vital interests, but Islamabad pinned its hopes on the puppet regime in Kabul.

³⁹ B. Riedel, op. cit., p. 121.

⁴⁰ See: "Osnovnye problemy afghano-pakistanskikh otnosheniy posle teraktov 11 sentiabria 2001 goda," available at [<http://knowledge.allbest.ru/international/2c0a65625a2ac78b5d53b89421316c37.html>].

Muhammad Iqrom Andeshmand is convinced that Islamabad does not want a strong and independent Afghanistan for a neighbor; for different reasons (political, economic, military, and social) it wants to set up a puppet “Pashtun state” in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is pursuing the following aims:

- (1) keeping the 35-million strong Pashtun population of Pakistan satisfied so that it will not brood on the absence of its own state;
- (2) dealing with the Durand Line problem once and for all;
- (3) playing on the religious feelings of the Pashtuns when settling the Jammu and Kashmir conflict;
- (4) placing the Afghan economy under its control to make the country a market for its goods and a corridor leading to the Central Asian countries.⁴¹

Late in the 1980s, Islamabad devised a plan to set up a Confederation of Pakistan and Afghanistan; it was first suggested by Head of the ISI General Hamid Gul in a secret report to Pakistan’s military dictator General Zia ul-Haq.

The report entitled “Our Expectations in Afghanistan” said in part: “the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan will create a vacuum which we should fill in. This chance is too good to be wasted. We need fresh, earlier impossible, initiatives. We should help the mojahedeen to achieve complete victory. We should also extend military and political support to Peshawar Seven, the group of Hekmatyar, a trusted and respected leader, in particular.

“Today, we should set up an Islamic and friendly government in Afghanistan eager to set up an alliance or a confederation between Pakistan and Afghanistan in which Pakistan will play the first fiddle. There will be no borders inside it; the new confederation will function as a single economic space that will give us access to the uranium resources of Afghanistan. In this way, we will no longer need foreigners for our nuclear program.”⁴²

This dots the “i’s” and crosses the “t’s”; this makes it clear that Pakistan can and will defend its interests in Afghanistan.

At no time Kabul contemplated talks with Islamabad on the Pashtun issue and the Durand Line; it was never prepared to discuss these issues without emotions or to reach an agreement through concessions. A simple suggestion that the Durand Line might be recognized is treated in Afghanistan as high treason.

It seems that Afghanistan, which has lost the battle, should readjust its approaches to both fairly sensitive issues. In Pakistan, the Pashtuns enjoy a full range of political rights: four of its ten presidents were Pashtuns.⁴³ Practically all the ISI heads responsible for the country’s foreign policy (especially in Afghanistan) were Pashtuns.

Since the 1960s, Pakistan has been and remains a federative state; unlike the neighboring provinces of Afghanistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly called the North-West Frontier Province) has developed infrastructure, stable water and power supply, schools, etc. It should be said that at no time have the Pashtuns of Pakistan wanted to join Afghanistan. Some experts think that the Pashtun provinces of Afghanistan may join Pakistan. Those who think so proceed from certain historical and geographic facts which say that the bulk of the territory of historic Afghanistan is found on the other side of the Durand Line.

M. Mahdi from Afghanistan has revealed what he calls “three historical truths:”

⁴¹ See: M.I. Andeshmand, op. cit.

⁴² M.A. Atrofi, op. cit.

⁴³ See: M. Muslim, “The End of the Durand Line,” *Bokhtaron*, No. 1, 2012, p. 21 (in Dari).

- (1) the Sulaiman Mountains in Pakistan are the historical home of the Afghan tribe;
- (2) Afghanistan as a geographic name was first applied to the Afghan-populated territory that now belongs to Pakistan;
- (3) there are three times more Pashtuns in Pakistan than in Afghanistan.⁴⁴

Notorious retired General Naseerullah Khan Babar, who in the 1970s was governor of the North-West Frontier Province, once said that “we can beat the drum better than Daoud Khan”⁴⁵ (the reference is to a popular Afghan song).

The idea of joining the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan to Pakistan was first formulated on 7 March, 1960 when Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Manzur Qadir suggested that since two-thirds of all the Pashtuns lived in Pakistan and only one-third in Afghanistan, it would be more appropriate for the minority to join the majority rather than the other way round.⁴⁶ Earlier, he had suggested an opinion poll on both sides of the border to find out what the Pashtuns really wanted. He seemed to be absolutely sure of the results.

Conclusion

The above suggests that peace in Afghanistan largely depends on Islamabad. Afghanistan and many other countries attached great importance to the results of the parliamentary elections of 11 May, 2013 in Pakistan that made Nawaz Sharif prime minister for the third time.

He previously served as prime minister for two non-consecutive terms from November 1990 to July 1993 and from February 1997 to October 1999. This was when Pakistan was actively involved in the internal affairs of Afghanistan: Islamabad extended direct military aid to the Taliban fighting Afghanistan up to and including dispatching units of the regular army.

Nawaz Sharif was always close to the military and the ISI, the role of which in the country’s foreign policy cannot be overestimated. The military and the ISI have monopolized the decision-making related to the Afghan conflict; this means that the prime minister will hardly be able to play a positive role. It remains to be seen whether the three-time prime minister will readjust his ideas about the Afghan problem and its solution and shift the military from its present position.

One thing is clear: the talks between the two countries are not a one-way street. Those members of the Afghan political establishment who are encroaching on Pakistan’s territorial integrity will have to think twice.

The international community and Afghanistan in particular should pay more attention to Pakistan’s concerns. Until the two countries achieve mutual confidence and partially resolve at least some of the problems, the peace process in Afghanistan will continue to stall.

⁴⁴ See: M. Mahdi, “Settlement of Ethnic Relationships,” *Perazi*, No. 5, 6 August, 2013 (in Dari).

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ [<http://www.ukdissertations.com/dissertations/history/durand-line.php>].