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## Background Paper



# State of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

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**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

APTTA	Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement
TAPI	Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



## FOREWORD

The Background Paper on State of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations has been commissioned by PILDAT to serve as a background paper for the participating Pakistan and Afghanistan Parliamentarians for the 7<sup>th</sup> Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentarians Dialogue co-organised by PILDAT and the Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, National Assembly of Pakistan for December 11-12, 2012.

The background paper has been authored by Mr. Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director of the Centre for Research and Security Studies. The paper highlights different aspects which embitter relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and explore the opportunities for both the countries on how to move forward on improving relations. It also discusses and underlines the importance of Parliamentarians' role in building and sustaining a cohesive partnership between the two states through continued issue-based dialogue and meaningful, result-oriented interactions.

As an independent think-tank, PILDAT believes that while diplomatic channels for Dialogue must continue, Parliamentarians from both countries should be facilitated on both sides for a greater interaction and developing a better understanding for resolving issues that lead diplomatic initiatives. It is for this objective that PILDAT has been facilitating Parliamentarians Dialogues.

### Disclaimer

The views, opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of PILDAT and the Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, National Assembly of Pakistan.

Islamabad  
December 2012





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mr. Imtiaz Gul is Executive Director of the Centre for Research and Security Studies that he founded in December 2007. He is a member of the Bellagio Forum, Milan, initiative, for the establishment of a UN University for Peace and Social Studies. He has authored several books including “Pakistan: Before and After Osama bin Laden” (Roli Books, 2012), “The Most Dangerous Place – Pakistan's Lawless Frontier” (Penguin US/UK, 2010), “The Al-Qaeda Connection – Taliban and Terror in Tribal Areas” (Penguin-Viking India, 2009) and “The Unholy Nexus; Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban” (Vanguard, 2002).

Besides reporting for the Urdu, English and Hindi language services of Deutsche Welle, Germany's foreign languages' broadcaster between 1989- 2009, Imtiaz Gul has also been broadcasting with the CNN TV between 1998 - 2000, and with the Hong Kong-based Star World TV, Japanese National Broadcasting Corporation NHK, the National Public Radio in the United States, and also regularly files for the Foreign Policy, USA, the Wall Street Journal, The Friday Times as well as the Daily Express Tribune on issues such as militancy, border regions, Afghanistan, and Indo-Pak relations.

Besides offering advice as consultant to foreign diplomatic missions and development sector organisations, Mr. Gul regularly appears as an analyst / expert on several Pakistani TV channels as well as the Doha-based Al-Jazeera English/Arabic satellite TV channel for his expertise in areas such as Afghanistan/Tribal Areas/ and the Kashmir militancy, which he has been extensively covering since 1988. He is fluent in English, German, Pashto, Urdu, Punjabi and Dari.



## Introduction

In modern world no two states share as much common destiny as Afghanistan and Pakistan. But both of these two states have also lived with a grave geo-strategic misfortune so far during their history of relationship. Their people and lands have been at the cross-roads of empires, from the British Empire in India to Soviet Union expansionism during Cold War, not to mention the strategic importance of these two states for the present day super power U.S., in latter's war against terrorism.

This very hyper activity of great powers in the region has also exacted heavy price for both the states and sowed the seeds of entrenched mistrust towards each other. Against this backdrop, relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have always remained highly complex. The presence of multiple underlying and proximate factors consistently overshadows this six decades of bilateral relationship. Although both states share cultural, historical, ethnic and religious commonalities, they are far from a mutually-beneficial, mistrust-free relationship.

As the preceding discussion demonstrates, the short term clash of interests between these neighbourly states jeopardized the long term prospects of cooperation due to the insulated nature and vision of respective ruling elites. Moreover, the complexity of the relationship is further aggravated due to the fact of various regional and global dimensions to the conflicts.

This paper seeks to highlight different aspects which embitter relations between the two countries. Further, the paper explores the opportunities for both the countries to give their 'taxing past' a break and start new era of cordial and mutually beneficial relations. It also discusses and underlines the importance of Parliamentarians' role in building and sustaining a cohesive partnership between two states and lawmaking institutions.



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## Current State of Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan

Currently the progress towards friendly and bilaterally cooperative relations is patchy between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Afghanistan continues to blame Pakistan for harbouring and launching Taliban into Afghanistan, where Taliban are immersed in a bloody war against the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops and Afghan security forces.

The Afghan President Mr. Hamid Karzai, in a press conference in Kabul in September 2012, categorically charged Pakistan, *“for the export of terrorism, suicide bombers, interference and all the other things which result in killing and disturbing the Afghan people's tranquility and destabilising Afghanistan.”*<sup>1</sup>

On the other side, Pakistan continues to castigate the Afghan Government for its failure to curb cross-border attacks into Pakistan launched by remnants of Pakistani Taliban hiding in south-eastern provinces (Kunar and Nuristan) of Afghanistan.

Moreover, greater involvement of India and long term presence of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan are also proving detrimental to foster trustworthy relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## Cross-border Terrorism & Border Security Management from Afghanistan and Pakistan

Both states share 2,560 km long border, which is largely rugged, inhospitable and porous. This border is manned by almost 1,000 security check posts on Pakistani side of the border and about 100 on the Afghan side of the border. The imbalanced security oversight often results in mutual allegations of cross border movements and attacks of militants on security forces and civilians on both sides.

Between June and October 2012, for instance, as many as 14 cross border attacks originating in Afghanistan reportedly resulted in the killing of two Pakistani civilians, 27 security forces personnel and 79 suspected militants.<sup>2</sup>

In response to these cross-border incursions, Pakistani security forces also launched rocket and mortar attacks into Afghanistan causing loss of civilian lives and inviting stern criticism from the Afghan Government and Parliamentarians.

Pakistan also protested strongly over these attacks and asked the Afghan Government and the NATO command in Afghanistan to control these attacks. Pakistan has also taken up the issue at the Tripartite Commission involving Pakistan, Afghanistan and NATO. Also, Pakistani military leadership invited an Afghan military general in Rawalpindi in recent months to discuss the matter and to find ways to curb recent surge in cross-border attacks by Pakistani Taliban hiding along the Afghan side of the border.<sup>3</sup>

## Status of the Strategic Partnership Agreement

In order to streamline political, security and economic cooperation, Afghanistan has signed Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA) with India, Italy and U.S. in 2012. Keeping in view the enhanced role of India and U.S., which Pakistan considers detrimental to its interests, Islamabad has now also sought to ink SPA with the Afghan Government.

During Afghan Foreign Minister Mr. Zalmay Rasool's November 2012 visit to Islamabad, Pakistan handed him a draft SPA for consideration. Earlier, the Afghan President had reacted with pessimism to the reported offer of SPA with Pakistan and, made it conditional upon *“fulfilment of certain conditions”* - such as terrorism is stopped, extremism is dismantled, anti-Afghan activities are stopped, destruction of Afghanistan is stopped - then friendship starts between the two countries and then a strategic pact would be signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> This has of course not happened so far and given the scale of Indian and U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and their sway over the current government, the prospects of signing such an agreement with Pakistan are dim, at least in the near future.

## Status of Pakistan's Support to Afghanistan

Since the Bonn Conference in December 2002, Pakistan

1. “Strategic partnership agreement: Pakistan rejects Karzai's preconditions”, The Express Tribune, October 9, 2012.  
2. Data compiled by the CRSS as part of its project 'Pakistan Conflict Tracker', available at [www.crss.com](http://www.crss.com).  
3. Afghan general visits Pakistan to discuss shelling”, DAWN, October 4, 2012  
4. “Cross-border Shelling: Karzai puts conditions on strategic pact with Pakistan”, The Express Tribune, October 5, 2102.

has since then invested in various infrastructure projects in the war-torn Afghanistan. Pakistan has completed the reconstruction of the Torkham-Jalalabad road and is also involved in remodeling the road to turn it into a dual carriage highway. Other than trade sector, Pakistan is also engaged in building a hospital in Kabul, known as the Jinnah Hospital Complex. The Allama Iqbal Faculty of Arts at the Kabul University is also gift from Pakistan. Currently Pakistan is implementing different development projects of worth U.S. \$300 million in Afghanistan. It has also increased the number of scholarships to Afghan students to about 7000.<sup>5</sup>

### **Economic Integration and Trade**

Due to its geographic proximity and the nearest sea-lane corridor for Afghan trade, Pakistan continues to be the biggest trading partner of Afghanistan in the region. Afghanistan is also the third largest market for Pakistani exports. Pakistani exports to Afghanistan are set to cross U.S. \$ 2 billion mark in 2012, while in 2011 the gross volume of Pakistani exports stood at U.S. \$ 1.7 billion. The gross volume of bilateral trade currently stands at U.S. \$ 2.5 billion.

The porous nature and lack of regulating mechanism at the border is also encouraging smuggling and illegal trade. According to some estimates, the volume of both legal and illegal trade between both states is more than U.S. \$ 5 billion. Moreover, the signing of Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), wherein Pakistan has agreed to provide transit facility to India for trade with Afghanistan, will further augment trade relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The agreement will also prove a great source of regional connectivity.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project is also a great source of boosting regional integration and economic cooperation. Under the project, 1800-kilometer long gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to India via Afghanistan and Pakistan is likely to cost U.S. \$7.6 billion. The pipeline will initially deliver 27 billion cubic meters (950 billion cubic feet) of natural gas per year of which two billion cubic meters (71 billion cubic

feet) will be provided to Afghanistan and 12.5 billion cubic meters (440 billion cubic feet) to each Pakistan and India. The gas pipeline project will be greatly beneficial for meeting future energy needs of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

### **Return of Afghan Refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan**

The Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 had pushed more than 3.3 million Afghan refugees into Pakistan. The continuous state of war in Afghanistan (civil war during 1990s) also forced the Afghan refugees to stay in Pakistan. Even today, according to a UNHCR survey, some three million Afghans reside in Pakistan beside the 1.7 million registered Afghan refugees.

The collapse of Taliban in 2001 and the revival of relative peace encouraged a slim proportion of Afghan refugees to return to their country but almost half of them are still spread across Pakistan, both in camps as well as living among regular settlements.

Due to the surge in violence in Pakistan in recent years and role of Afghan nationals in it has compelled Pakistani Government to seek return of Afghan refugees. Pakistan Government is now working in conjunction with United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to speed up the process of return of these refugees.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and the UNHCR representatives reached an agreement in Geneva at the start of this year called the 'Solution Strategy' to streamline the safe return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. According to the latest figures shared by the UNHCR officials, during 2012, so far, 50, 000 Afghan refugees have returned to their homeland, while in 2012, around 32, 000 refugees were repatriated.<sup>7</sup>

### **Water Issue**

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a number of rivers. So far due to instable situation in Afghanistan and absence of central authority, it could not initiate energy production projects on its rivers.

5. "Pak handed over draft of SPA to Afghanistan to further build up bilateral relations with neighboring country", South Asian News Agency, December 3, 2012, available at <http://www.sananews.net/english/pak-handed-over-draft-of-spa-to-afghanistan-to-further-build-up-bilateral-relations-with-neighboring-country/>

6. APTT allows Afghan trucks to carry export goods to India through the Wahga border and Pakistan to use Afghan territory for its exports to Central Asian countries.

7. "For Afghan refugees, repatriation is a chance to start anew", The Express Tribune, October 3, 2102.

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However, now foreign energy investment firms have expressed their interest in building dams on Afghan rivers. A proposal of building a dam on the Kabul River, which also runs in Pakistan, is pending with Afghan Government. Water needs of Afghanistan have also increased due to investment in its agricultural sectors in recent years.

Keeping in view these developments, there have been calls for the renegotiation of a 1921 bilateral treaty on water sharing between the two countries.

With the existing level of mistrust between two governments, there are chances that water issue can turn into a dispute in the near future. It is, therefore, in the interest of two countries that a 'Kabul River Waters Treaty' in lines with the 'Indus Waters Treaty' (between Pakistan and India) should be negotiated and signed between the two states in order to regulate the water issue.<sup>8</sup>

8. Rahimullah Yusuzai, "Pak-Afghan Relations: A Pakistani Narrative", PILDAT paper, 2011, p., 13.



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## Future of Pak-Afghan Relationship: Between Now and Post-2014

### Current Role of Pakistan and Afghanistan

The experience of the past decade shows that the present Afghan government as well as the presence and operations of the US-led NATO forces in Afghanistan have proven counter-productive or at least these have not been helpful in neutralizing the Taliban-led insurgency.

The Afghan Government under President Hamid Karzai did not succeed in building an inclusive and transparent governance structure that could have been an alternative to Taliban for the Afghan people. Meanwhile, NATO has tried to eliminate Taliban and/or any local faction opposing its presence in Afghanistan, but it has also not been able to achieve this objective. Consequently, a situation of *constant stalemate has existed in Afghanistan*.<sup>9</sup>

Since Pakistan was the biggest supporter of Taliban before their fall in 2001, it has also often drawn flak and blame for keeping the Taliban insurgency alive in Afghanistan. Interestingly, President Karzai told a foreign TV on December 6, 2012, that while Taliban insurgents bore major responsibility for violence in Afghanistan, US and NATO also shared part of the blame.

Additionally, to the dislike of Pakistan, India has gradually enhanced its role in Afghanistan through investments in infrastructure projects as well as by playing an active part in the training and capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). India has injected about U.S. \$ 5 billion on its engagement in Afghanistan. India is utilizing its traditional cordial relations with the former Northern Alliance (especially Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazaras) parties who are all in opposition at the moment, and the strategic alliance with U.S., for cementing ties with Kabul. This has discomfited Pakistan which perceives this greater Indo-Afghan-American engagement as “encirclement of Pakistan.”

This interplay of internal and external geopolitical factors is also obstructing the Afghan transition from US-led NATO to the ANSF (ahead of the 2014 withdrawal of all foreign troops. Political reconciliation process has also remained stalled until Foreign Minister Zalmay Rasool's Islamabad

visit, which was followed by the release of about a dozen low-ranking Afghan Taliban prisoners.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Pak-Afghan relations have remained fraught with mutual suspicion and distrust, rooted in the unnatural division of Pak-Afghan border, the Durand Line, drawn in 19<sup>th</sup> century by the ruling British. Along with dividing the border, the Durand Line also sliced Pashtun tribes along the border, a source of constant underlying tension between the two states. The porous nature of the border has further made the situation complicated, wherein it is estimated that on average 50, 000 persons cross the border daily legally or illegally. This easy access has made it a haven for militants fighting both side of the border against their respective enemies (Afghan Taliban against NATO troops and Pakistani Taliban against Pakistani security forces). Drug and arms smugglers and criminals operating across the border also move freely into the both states through the unprotected border. Thus cross border security and movement management has emerged as a prime challenge for both the states.

Reconciliation among all Afghan factions is an uphill task under the given circumstances, where Taliban are reluctant to negotiate with Afghan Government in the presence of NATO forces on Afghan soil. This hesitation on the part of Taliban in the Afghan reconciliation process makes it ineffective and also creates suspicions about intentions and (positive) role of Pakistan in the process.

Likewise, close cooperation among U.S., India and Afghanistan is not making Pakistan comfortable vis-à-vis emerging power equation in the region. This very evolving equation, wherein Pakistan feels that it is being divorced from the Afghan transition, is making the transition process complex.

Moreover, Pakistan blames elements in the Afghan Government for colluding with India in causing trouble in its restive western province, Balochistan

At the same time, the period up to 2014, when bulk of NATO troops will leave Afghanistan, is an opportunity for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to devise and implement common strategy to shepherd political reconciliation and curb militancy. After all, both the states are exacting

9. Ken Dilanian and David S. Cloud, “U.S. intelligence report on Afghanistan sees a stalemate”, Los Angeles Times, January 11, 2102, available at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-intel-afghan-20120111.0.3639052.story>

heavy price due to raging militancy.

Pakistan can assist Afghanistan in exerting its influence over Taliban to bring them to the dialogue table and seek a peaceful solution. While Afghanistan can force Pakistani Taliban (Maulvi Fazlullah faction) out of their territory and assuage Pakistani concerns of cross-border terrorism. Also both the states can initiate and enhance people-to-people contacts, mutually beneficial trade ties and security cooperation to institutionalize mutual relationship.

### **Prospects of Jointly Managing 2014 Exit Challenges**

Though Pakistan and Afghanistan keep on discussing bilateral issues, but the discussions have failed to materialise into formal bilateral agreements and concrete footsteps so far.

There is need for change of heart on the both sides and to divorce the past.

Pakistan on its part has showed openness towards its once rival Afghan factions such as Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazaras, when it first extended overtures to them this year. Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar met with a range of ethnic Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara leaders during a visit to Kabul in February. Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf also travelled to Afghanistan in July and invited the group to the opening of the new Pakistani Embassy in Kabul. Among these non-Pashtun leaders, former Afghan Foreign Minister, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, was also present and he appreciated Pakistani efforts to reach out to all local stakeholders in Afghan reconciliation. *"I see a lot of good in reaching out, in engagement, in dialogue,"* underscored Dr. Abdullah.<sup>10</sup>

However, looking ahead, Pakistan will have to overcome significant distrust among the non-Pashtuns. The Government has old ties to some of the leaders, who worked with Pakistan in the 1980s to push the Soviets out of Afghanistan, but Islamabad's subsequent support for the Taliban created a huge amount of bad blood and resulted into serious reservations among non-Pashtuns about Pakistani interests in Afghanistan.

Thus against the backdrop of changing environment, both the states need to realize the importance of bilateral

cooperation, and formulate policies and mechanisms to augment coordination in the face of impending NATO withdrawal.

President Karzai should also shun the policy of blaming Pakistan for backing Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. Rather by streamlining the cooperation through the signing of strategic partnership agreement, both the states can harness common front against the menace of terrorism and militancy in their respective states.

### **Policy Options for Pakistan vis-à-vis Afghanistan**

In order to form close cooperation with Afghanistan, Pakistan has the following policy options:

1. Pakistan needs to treat Afghanistan as an equal independent partner, and engage directly with the Afghan Government, as well as with all other stakeholders.
2. It should not forsake its relations with any Afghan Government in favour of one or the other Afghan ethnic group, or to the like or dislike of any regional or global power.
3. Pakistan must genuinely address Kabul's concerns rather than dismissing them as mere allegations.
4. Pakistan needs to pay more attention to the reconstruction and development effort in Afghanistan, i.e., focus more on the people rather than looking at Afghanistan through the security prism.
5. Pakistan should check and curb cross-border movements of Afghan Taliban and of all those who are opposed to the Karzai Government and its foreign supporters.
6. Pakistan should facilitate the Afghan reconciliation process as much as possible. Release of more Taliban prisoners could possibly be another major step needed to win the trust of the Afghan Government and the opposition.

### **Policy Options for Afghanistan vis-à-vis Pakistan**

Afghanistan has the following policy options:

1. Afghanistan needs to realize the criticality of

10. "New Pakistan outreach could aid Afghan peace deal", USA Today, October 27, 2012.

Pakistan's role in the Afghan peace, reconciliation and economic development.

2. Afghanistan needs to balance its relations with all major neighbours and assure that relations with one country are not being promoted at the cost of the other.
3. By giving serious consideration to the SPA, Afghanistan can signal certain degree of trust in Pakistan, which can help in rubbing off tensions and acrimony.
4. The Afghan Government must look at relations with Pakistan as a means to enhance and encourage more people-to-people contacts which too can help reduce bilateral mistrust.
5. Afghanistan should curb recent escalation in cross-border incursions of militants into Pakistan, causing losses to Pakistani civilians and security forces' lives.
6. Afghanistan should give more open and secure access to Pakistani trade with the Central Asian states. These step will harness regional connectivity and also benefit Afghan trade and business.
7. The Afghan Government should avoid conducting diplomacy through media. It should engage in direct negotiations with the Pakistani Government to address the issues undermining bilateral cooperation.

## The Way Forward

Under new circumstances, where both the states have elected Parliaments and there are plethora of impediments curtailing the progress in building peaceful and trustworthy relations between two neighbourly states; the role of Parliamentarians has become crucial.

Ironically, Pakistan's Afghan policy has been predominantly formulated by the military brass with no civilian input so far. Similarly in Kabul, very few men in the close circle of President Karzai are calling the shots when it comes to engage with Pakistan.

The results of these exclusive and insulated state policies vis-à-vis each other are not encouraging. Thus there is need for more civilian-oriented and inclusive policies on the part of both Pakistan and Afghanistan to start a new chapter of mutually beneficial, stable and trustworthy relations. Political leadership in both states should awaken to the new realities in their bilateral relations and changing regional security environment.

During a recent visit to Pakistan, an Afghan Parliamentarian Sherwali Wardak rightfully alluded to the fact that "*Pakistan must realize that Afghanistan has changed. It is not the Afghanistan of 1999 (when the Taliban were ruling the country). We have our own Parliament, an independent government and the people do not want any interference in our internal matters.*"<sup>11</sup>

Due to its strategic interests in the region: to keep an eye on China and enhance its presence around Iranian borders; U.S. intent does not appear to be to pack out of Afghanistan anytime soon. Meanwhile, U.S. presence in Afghanistan is itself causing instability in the region.

Therefore, it is in the interest of both Pakistan and Afghanistan to cooperate closely to discourage and check any overbearing role of U.S. to spoil their bilateral relations and push the region into further instability and uncertainty.

## Role of Parliamentarians in Well Functioning Neighbourly Relations

Frequent and closer interaction among Pak-Afghan

Parliamentarians can provide an effective platform for conducting diplomacy and address the issue of entrenched distrust between two countries.

Parliamentarians, being the representatives of the people, can also contribute in curbing the surge in recent sentiments of hatred in Kabul and Islamabad, especially the ensuing blame-game in the backdrop of cross-border attacks in recent months.

An Afghan Senator Pir Sayed Hamid Gillani, during his recent visit to Islamabad, emphasised that the "*two governments should refrain from the blame-game. No side has credible information so a public blame-game will only enhance problems. It will not resolve anything.*"<sup>12</sup> He further added that the people in both the states were brotherly, only they needed more communication and cooperation at government levels.<sup>13</sup>

Against this backdrop of local and regional tectonic shifts, Parliamentarians can constructively impact the outcome of bilateral engagements in following ways:

1. At a time when military and political decision-making elite in both states are not interacting robustly for thrashing out clear cut policies to deal with the consequences of the NATO exit in 2014, Parliamentarians, through bilateral interactions, can convey and discuss the issues of mutual concern and interest.
2. Hostile and suspicious sentiments, among people and governments, both in Islamabad and Kabul, are on the rise. In order to address this situation, Parliamentarians can discuss the issues contributing in poisoning the environment and put together recommendations to the respective governments to come up with measures to assuage the sentiments.
3. Through responsible conduct and by avoiding blaming each other on the basis of mere media content, while debating conflicting issues in the Parliament, Parliamentarians can create good will and calm down the situation between two states.
4. Parliamentarians can assist in liberalising trade and investment relations by introducing new and friendly laws and agreements in respective Parliaments. They can establish contacts at committee level to oversee the development in improvement of relations and put

11. Umer Nangiana, "Post-2014: Pakistan urged to revisit Afghan vision", The Express Tribune, October 19, 2012.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

together recommendations.

### **Future Challenges for Pak-Afghan Relations**

Both states need to address the inescapable dilemma of reconciling and balancing bilateral and regional objectives. Both need to shun past misgivings, stop listening to the lobbies thrown up by the war economy, and deconstruct myths woven by decades of hostility and suspicion.

General elections in Pakistan in 2013 and in Afghanistan in spring 2014 ahead of the foreign troops' withdrawal offer good reason as well as an opportunity for greater coordinated among all the stakeholders.

Both need to work on strategies to block cross-border movement of militants from both sides, and commit not to allow their territories against each other.

Balancing its relations with India and Pakistan will be a challenge for the Kabul regime, while addressing Afghan and Indian concerns on militant groups allegedly in close relations with the Pakistani military establishment constitutes a major challenge for Pakistan.

Continued insecurity arising out of the Taliban insurgency, instability and economic adversity both in Afghanistan and Pakistan demand that both countries join hands to stem and eliminate causes of violence in favour of the vast majority of people in their respective countries, particularly those living in regions adversely affected by the religious militancy.

Rather than perpetuating clichés and misplaced notions, political leadership and Parliamentarians in both states must step forward to craft a new relationship based on mutual trust and respect.



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