

Chapter 6

The Dynamics of the Triangle: A Critical Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, an attempt was made to examine the nature of the triangle that is formed through the interacting dynamics of Afghanistan-India-Pakistan relations. The chapters also tried to find out the causes of the conflict between India and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Afghanistan and India and relations among these three countries using a triangular approach. This chapter would critically analyse the different and competing interests within the Afghanistan-India-Pakistan triangle. It would also scrutinise how their dynamic interests create an atmosphere of competition in which all sides of the triangle seek any possible edge over one another.

This working of the triangle can be critically examined through two different phases. The first phase started after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and ended in 2001. This phase saw ups and downs in their relations. There was a troubled and strained relation among these states. The second phase started after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 and it continues. This phase saw some new developments that included CDP between India and Pakistan, installment of Afghan interim government, terror attacks in Mumbai in 2008, Pathankot and Uri attacks in 2016, and resurgence of the Taliban and its allies.

6.2 The Dynamics of the Triangle, 1947-2001

The partition of the subcontinent has been considered the turning point in the South Asian history. The new developments have occurred after India and Pakistan emerged as sovereign states. The partition altered the geopolitical unity of the subcontinent and led the states to consolidate their new boundaries. The new geopolitical realities forced states to perceive each other from their “narrow sovereignty-sensitive prisms” (Pattanaik and Behuria 2016: 399). Immediately after the partition, Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan gave birth to a triangle with complicated relations. This gave rise to conflicts and serious problems because of overlapping territorial, geopolitical, and ethnic interests. There is

much to distinguish Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. Aside from national interests, the ethos of these states stands in some contrast. They are very divergent in constitutional setup, and unequal in economic status.

The relationships of these countries have passed through some of the most difficult and turbulent times in the history of the triangle. They have changed domestic and international politics of South Asia. The disputes between India and Pakistan and Afghanistan and Pakistan regarding the borders have been simmering for the last seven decades. Border issues remain to be a central question between India and Pakistan, and Afghanistan and Pakistan to be resolved. These have been unresolved because the countries involved have different views and perceptions. Indeed, their geographical proximities appear to be at the very root cause of their rivalry and irrepressible conflict. Moreover, India-Pakistan concerns depict some portions of the historical antagonism ranging from territorial dispute to water issues. Their history, geography, and power status in the region put this conflict as one of “the enduring rivalries of the post-World War II era” (Paul 2013: 213-39).

The triangle has a history of conflicts, unproductive peace process, and deep mistrust rooted in the past animosities. Their relations continue to be marred by differences and distrust. Trust is, however, a requirement for cooperative actions and agreements. After each war and crisis, there arise some constructive developments, while these were and remain short-termed and are replaced with renewed tensions. Their conflicts have not only adversely affected regional peace and security, but have also hindered economic developments which require peaceful management and resolution of conflicts.

Their relationships have moved through dynamic and multi-dimensional engagements. The governments of these states have shown reluctance on several occasions in seeking solutions to their disputes. An entire structure of dialogues at diverse levels and of different types – political, economic, cultural, and even defence – have evolved, with the major objective of resolving their disputes and issues. They have also adopted different conflict-ending mechanisms, including confidence building measures to resolve their disputes. But overall the relationships have never enhanced fundamentally

for long because the states involved have failed to resolve their fundamental and contentious issues.

Perceptions have played a substantial part in northwestern South Asia's politics. The dynamic mutual perceptions of Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan have significantly shaped and influenced politics and policies among these complex states. Consequently, this has generated apprehensions among them despite a shared sense of geography, culture, and history. The triangular relationship has largely contributed to a hostile environment in the entire region.

Thus, the partition and the problems intensifying in its wake embittered the relationships among these countries. Over the years, their mutual distrust and antagonism have risen and fallen. This pattern continues to the present day. Moreover, security and stability in the South Asian region are shaped by the intertwining policies of these three countries. These countries have had dynamic relationships since 1947. So, this has made a significant impact on their domestic and international politics. The following sections would critically examine the triangular relationship.

6.2.1 The Cold War Politics and its Impact on the Triangle

When India and Pakistan got Independence in 1947, the world was divided into two hostile blocs. One bloc was led by the USA, known as the capitalist bloc and the other bloc was led by the Soviet Union, known as the communist bloc. The geographical, political, and cultural factors caused hostilities, border-skirmishes, and wars among states, especially India-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Pakistan, prompted the two major blocs to operate their factors in their bilateral ties. Both blocs started influencing these states and their international relations in different ways and policies to maintain the balance and sustain their dominance over them. Robert Jervis has put it succinctly that “In order to protect their possessions, states often seek to control resources or land outside their own territory” (1978: 168). South Asia proved to be an arena between two major power blocs.

6.2.2 *The Era of the Endurance of Uncertainty: 1947-1979*

Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan have engaged in the classic security dilemma behaviour. This has created mistrust among them. John Herz, who coined the term security dilemma in the 1950s, defines it “as a problem encountered by humans in a social constellation” (cited in Pervez 2013: 35), rather a biological trait. While Jervis (1978) defined it as “the means by which a state tries to increase its security and decrease the security of others” (1978: 169). The whole perplexity or quandary among states is built around “perception and misperception” (Jervis 1976). So, the concept revolves around three major assumptions. These are: First, an anarchical environment that leads to uncertainty; Second, existing huge trust deficit among states; and, Third, a misperception of each other’s intentions. The formulation of Jervis helps us understand the dynamics of the triangle during this period.

The behaviour of these states has changed according to their national interests to survive in the international system. Two major factors i.e., an anarchical world and mistrust in their relations led them to make alliances with each other’s arch-rivals. During the 1950s, they made partnerships with the two major blocs. Some major factors led them to make direct or indirect alignments with these power blocs. Pakistan’s relationships with Afghanistan and India have remained continuously under strain. On the other side, India and Afghanistan have established good relations and in 1950 both signed a Treaty of Friendship. The other factors included: First, Afghanistan did strong opposition to Pakistan’s membership in the United Nations; Second, Afghanistan has been demanding separate and independent Pashtunistan state; Third, Afghanistan didn’t ever recognise the Durand Line which was demarcated in 1893; and, Fourth, India and Pakistan have had conflicts over Kashmir territory. Their relationships have been fraught since 1947. New conflicts have emerged in their bilateral relationship including terrorism.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the relations between Pakistan and the USA were cordial. As a result, Pakistan’s foreign policy took a shift and made an alliance with the USA. Pakistan aligned with the USA-led pacts, i.e., SEATO in September 1954 and CENTO in 1955 to strengthen its cooperation with the USA and contain the Soviet expansionism. Subsequently, Pakistan also aligned with China. So, it made strong ties

with these two countries. Pakistan has received billions of dollars' worth of military and other equipment assistance over the years from its partners. That strengthened Pakistan's diplomatic and military capabilities. The USA viewed "Pakistan, whose regional hostility towards India had prompted her to search for allies against possible Indian aggression, as an anti-Communist power, anxious for support against the Soviets and a willing and able partner in the Middle East" (Buzan and Rizvi 1986: 211).

Afghanistan and India saw the alliance as a hard step to weaken them. Afghanistan did a strong protest against it. On 4 January 1954, Mohammad Kabir Ludin, Afghanistan's Ambassador raised a strong protest note before the USA's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that the USA military support and assistance to Islamabad might produce a power vacuum with an opportunity to be exploited by any other foreign element (Kux 2001: 60). This would also create a volatile situation not only in the sub-region but in the entire region.

Pakistan has viewed Afghanistan as a natural ally and friend, based largely on shared Islamic values and some common ethnic identification, while Afghanistan has looked at Pakistan with suspicious and apprehensive state. They never became completely normal and stable partners except in the Taliban regime. Their relations had started deteriorating in the 1950s. On 22 November 1954, the then Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra launched a geopolitical program to merge all the four provinces of West Pakistan into "One Unit". This was severely criticised by the Afghan officials. Violent protests erupted on both sides. Afghanistan did a huge protest against Pakistan in Kabul, and even attacked the Pakistani Embassy. They also ransacked its consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar. A retaliatory mob in Pakistan led an assault on the Afghan consulate in Peshawar. As a result, their diplomatic relations were worsened and the border remained closed for five months.

In this situation, cordial relationship with New Delhi and Kabul was perceived by the leaders of the Soviet Union as a balancing factor. Indeed, India and Afghanistan inclined towards friendship with the Soviet Union. Both maintained normal diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Marshall Bulganin visited Kabul in 1955 to start bilateralism. They also gave \$100 million

economic aid to Afghanistan. It has been argued that India and Afghanistan developed their amicable relations in the backdrop of their common enmity towards Pakistan. William Dalrymple puts it succinctly that “Mutual antipathy to Pakistan quickly brought India and Afghanistan together as natural allies” (2013: 3).

The India-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Pakistan hostilities contributed to build close political, military, and economic linkages between Pakistan and the USA on the one side, and ushered a new era of friendly relations among Afghanistan, India, and the Soviet Union, on the other side. In addition, Afghanistan was also the scenario of the competition of these two blocs. Afghanistan’s geostrategic location has led the great powers feel the need to control it in the interest of propagating their economic, political, and ideological hegemony and influence in the entire region.

Subsequently, the Soviet Union also supported India on the Kashmir issue and Afghanistan on the Pashtunistan issue. In 1955, the Soviet Union and India’s bilateral relationships reached their peak when leaders of both the states visited to each other’s countries. The first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru paid first official visit to the Soviet Union in November 1955 and in December 1955 the Soviet Union leaders Nikolai A. Bulganin and Nikita S. Khrushchev visited India. Both major powers had established their main players in the region.

The Soviet Union-India’s friendly relations got worsened in 1956 because of a byproduct of two international episodes – the Anglo-French-Israel war against Egypt, known as the Suez War and the revolution in Hungary. The actions and policies of the USA and the Soviet Union in dealings with these two episodes moved India closer to balanced ties with these two power blocs. At that time, India was also patron of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Afghanistan was the first country, who accepted, supported, and adopted it. Indeed, it gave an opportunity to India to gain economic support from both blocs in the international system. C. Raja Mohan has explicitly argued that “the movement and its politics didn’t always merge completely with India’s own articulation of its national interests” (2013: 28). He has further argued that the “NAM often complemented India’s pursuit of its international objectives but never fully supplanted non-alignment” (ibid).

6.2.3 *A Brief Era of Abatement of Tension*

Despite different power bloc alliances, the three states have also witnessed a period of amicable relations during the 1950s and early 1960s. At that time, India and Afghanistan tried to mend their ties with Pakistan. On the one side, India and Pakistan improved their relations through engaged in bilateral talks to resolve problems on a wide range of conflicts. Those included trade issues, water distribution, and protection of minorities. On the other side, Afghanistan and Pakistan also mended their relationships by opening borders, and established trade relations.

The enmity relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan did ease for a brief period between 1955 and 1958 and a series of official visits also took place. The Pakistani President Iskander Mirza paid a visit to Kabul in August 1956. Both states reaffirmed their commitment to promote better ties. They also declared that they will resolve all their bilateral disputes by peaceful means. Similarly, Afghanistan's Prime Minister Daoud Khan visited Pakistan in December 1956. During his visit, both states discussed the Pashtunistan issue. They agreed to continue the dialogue process to resolve their differences and conflicts.

A bitter controversy emerged between India and Pakistan immediately after the independence about the division of assets and also regarding the demarcation of boundaries. The antagonism between India and Pakistan compelled them to reconsider their hostile policies with each other and, as a result, they took some notable initiatives to enhance their relationship. Due to communal riots, a huge number of Muslims migrated from India, while Sikhs and Hindus migrated from Pakistan. These post-riot migrations had an impact on the status of minorities in both countries. The issue became so acute that even a possibility of open war was feared. In order to de-escalate the crisis, talks between the two Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan began in New Delhi on 2 April 1950. They reached an agreement on the issue. Both countries agreed that "each shall pledge to the minorities throughout its territory complete equality of citizenship" without any discrimination, "irrespective of religion, a sense of security in respect of property, life, culture and personal honor" (Hassan 2010: 21).

Both the countries signed various agreements on trade on 25 February 1951 in Karachi; 5 August 1952; 20 March 1953; and 21 March 1960. These marked the end of the trade deadlock between them. They also reached an agreement on the Indus Water Treaty on 19 September 1960, after long eight years of negotiations, and the mediation of the World Bank. However, the treaty has not fully resolved water issues between these two countries. The recent issues like Tulbul Navigation Project and the Kishanganga Project have brought the sustainability of the treaty under intense scrutiny. With the passage of time, the unease in their relations has only widened and deepened.

With the advent of the 1960s, these patterns of relations were significantly changed. This brief phase of friendly relations didn't last long and more strident positions were adopted by both states. Because of their divergent interests, their concerns remained acute and even a conflict erupted between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the Bajawar District in 1960 and again in 1961. Again their relations reached at the lowest point and they were very close to a war that could emerge from the propaganda campaigns, military intervention, and economic retaliation. The outbreak of the war was averted through mediations by Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia and Turkey; the USA's offer of mediation had been rejected earlier. It has been argued that "economic resentment and provocation, and cross-border political agitation have sustained tensions" (Weinbaum 1994: 1).

In addition, India and China's relations were severely strained by border skirmishes in 1959 and early 1960. Their unsettled border dispute led them to a full-fledged war in 1962. During the subsequent years, their relations were deteriorated rapidly. The 1962 war also changed the pattern of relationships among the South Asian states. The war had brought the USA and India very close to each other. Ashley J. Tellis has argued that "the year 1962 in fact marked the zenith of US-Indian relations during the Cold War, when the US strongly supported India politically, diplomatically and militarily during the Sino-Indian war" (2013: 304). The era following the war saw India's close ties with the Soviet Union as well, while Pakistan tilted towards China. Both signed an agreement in 1963 after negotiations on China's border with the "Contiguous areas the defence of which is under the control of Pakistan" (cited in Gupta 1968: 389). This had established a new Sino-Pakistan relationship. India protested and rejected this agreement.

India argued that there could be no border dispute between China and India because the region bordering China under Pakistan's occupation didn't belong to Pakistan but India.

The India and Pakistan relationship worsened significantly in January 1965 when armed skirmishes broke out between these two countries into the borders of West Pakistan in which both countries fully deployed all their weapons including aircraft and tanks (Zaman 1969: 127). China did openly support and hugely assisted Pakistan during the war. The USA, however, remained neutral and even blocked military transfer to both India and Pakistan. Both Pakistan and China wanted to limit India's influence and power position in South Asia. By middle of the year 1965, conflict turned into a wider war involving Jammu and Kashmir as well. The matter became so serious that, when on 9 January 1965 these two countries attacked each other's police posts, the then British Prime Minister intervened and mediated a cease-fire. They reached an agreement which was signed in New Delhi on 30 June 1965 under the auspicious of the United Nations.

The agreement raised hopes for a real enhancement in their relationship. However, in the following years, the cease-fire violations occur extensively in the region, and all those hopes of progress and stability were belied. The agreement couldn't resolve the major issue and concerns which have been accumulating over the years. The regional atmosphere became so vitiated that it ultimately plunged the two states into another major war. Therefore, there was limited cooperation between India and Pakistan and Afghanistan and Pakistan during the 1950s and 1960s. The period saw ups and downs in their ties. Their relations have been constantly challenged by issues and competing interests.

In addition, from the beginning, Pakistan has been a vital factor in India-Afghanistan relationship. However, during the 1960s a shift occurred in Afghan policy. During the India-Pakistan war in 1965, Afghan government sided with Pakistan. Kabul perceived the war as an opportunity to reconcile differences with Pakistan. Again in 1971, when India had entered the war against Pakistan in the country's east wing, known as Bangladesh, Afghan leaders refrained from supporting India. Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated during the mid-1965 and the early 1970s, while Afghanistan-Pakistan ties were improved.

While replying to a question posed by an American diplomat regarding Pakistan's disintegration, Rawan Farhadi, a renowned diplomat from Afghanistan, replied that "Do you think we would want India at the Khyber Pass?" Subsequent to the war, Afghanistan again reverted its policies and made cooperation with India. After a few days of the war, "the Afghan diplomats joined India in demanding self-determination for Pashtun and Baloch people living in Pakistan" (Paliwal 2016: 1). Subsequently, the rivalry among these countries provided an opportunity for the major powers to penetrate the sub-region and pursue their interests.

6.2.4 *India-Pakistan War 1971 and Afghanistan*

This was the first instance when Jammu and Kashmir wasn't the major bone of the contention between them. The war occurred as a result of the ongoing tension between the West and the East Pakistan. Despite a huge pressure faced from China and the USA not to interfere in Pakistan's domestic affairs, India gave full support and encouragement to the East Pakistan. India formally "entered into war with Pakistan after it carried out strikes on forward airbases and radar installations of the Indian Air Force" (*The Times of India* 2016). As a result, a new state came into existence, known as the People's Republic of Bangladesh. In August 1971, the Soviet Union and India signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation. However, Afghanistan, China, and the USA were sided with Pakistan. This brought a military alliance between India and the Soviet Union and the "so-called America-China-Pakistan versus Soviet-India alliance was established" (Malone 2011: 135).

The period following the war, therefore, saw renewed efforts on both sides to build a strong bilateral relationship. The leaders of these two countries met in order to restore their relations in the aftermath of the war. The two leaders, the then Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi met with diametrically opposite views (Ali 1972: 58; Kheli 1973: 74). Despite their different approaches, these two countries put initiatives in order to end the hostilities and confrontation that marred their bilateral relations. They agreed to work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship for the establishment of durable peace. They signed an agreement on 2 July 1972 which opened a new chapter in the India-Pakistan

relationship. The accord reduced tension, allowed for the resumption of diplomatic activity, and improved communication. The accord converted the 1949 “Ceasefire line” brought into effect through the mediation of the UN, into the “Line of Control”.

The years 1972-1998 were considered as a “long peace” between India and Pakistan. Before initiating CDP in May 1997, there were instances when both sides started dialogue processes on various issues. In the 1980s, they initiated dialogues on issues including Sir Creek, Siachen, and the Wular/Tulbul Project and established a range of military and nuclear CBMs. After the Simla Agreement India and Pakistan’s relations were improved, while Afghanistan and Pakistan’s relations were severely strained. They blamed each other for interference in their internal affairs. In 1973, Sardar Mohammed Daoud Khan had overthrown Zahir Shah in a bloodless coup. The year 1973 saw the death of monarchy in Afghanistan as well. It reignited Pakistan’s concerns and saw the revival of the Pashtunistan issue. In November 1974 Daoud ordered a military buildup along the Pakistani border. In March 1975 he visited India and argued:

The one and only political difference between Afghanistan and Pakistan concerns the restoration of the legitimate rights of our Pakhtoon and Balochi brothers. We have always expressed our willingness to settle this only difference with that country, but we see that Pakistan is not ready to give a positive response to our desire in this regard (cited in Paliwal 2016).

Pakistan, however, responded very tactically to counter the Pashtun movement. They had supported some religious leaders of Afghanistan, who were against Daoud’s policies of modernisation and secular values. They played a substantial role in organising and grooming, anti-Daoud Afghan resistance forces. So, a nexus emerged between religious extremists and Pakistan. As a result, Afghanistan and Pakistan fought a low-intensity proxy war between 1973 and 1977. This period saw a steep decline in their ties.

In 1976, Afghanistan has witnessed drastic earthquakes and flooding which caused huge sufferings of the common masses. Pakistan seized the opportunity to show goodwill and sympathy towards the Afghan people. It sent a huge aid package to the Afghan people. The Afghanistan government welcomed it and made it public that it is a positive step towards the friendly relations. And, they also invited the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto to visit Pakistan. However, Pakistan domestic politics saw

another military coup. In July 1977, Zia-ul-Haq brought a military coup and overthrew Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

On 10 October 1977, he visited Afghanistan and held an effective dialogue with Daoud. The Pakistani President invited Daoud to visit Pakistan. On 4 March 1977, Daoud visited Pakistan. On his return to Kabul, he argued that “we fully understood each other’s points of view and realised the extent of our common destinies...We fully appreciate that in this unstable world our friendship and brotherhood constitutes a prerequisite to our two countries’ progress and prosperity” (Qassem 2009: 52). In April 1978, Daoud was killed in a military coup in collaboration with the PDPA. So, the PDPA came to power in 1978. The Afghan communists who seized power from Daoud in 1978 pursued the same policies (Rashid 2011; Abbas 2014).

6.2.5 The Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan: India and Pakistan

On 12 December 1979, the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan, though they faced into a conflict with mujahedeen. This intervention had ushered in a new period of uncertainty and confrontation in international politics. It had also aggravated the strategic environment of South Asia. The argument by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver perfectly illustrates the situation:

A handful of states at the top of the power league play a truly global game, treating each other as a special class, and projecting their power into far-flung regions. But for the great majority of states, the main game of security is defined by their near neighbours (2003: 14).

6.2.5.1 India’s Position

The intervention had produced new challenges and convoluted India’s option in Afghanistan. Its strong ties with the Soviet Union became a major factor, predominantly with the rise of America-China-Pakistan nexus. This laid a formidable challenge to India’s Afghanistan policy because it put India in a complex situation affecting its credibility and prestige in the international system. India was caught in between the NAM of which it was a founding member and the friendship treaty signed by India with the Soviet in 1971. The then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed that “the Soviet Union were introduced into Afghanistan only after Pakistan started training Afghan

rebels and sending them in to topple the government there, nevertheless India was opposed USSR's presence and it had told that country so" (cited in Horn 1983: 246).

Some salient factors led India to immediately respond to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. These were included: First, the USA's financial aid and weapons to Pakistan; Second, a USA fleet was build-up on the Indian Ocean; Third, Pakistan played a substantial role to build the USA-China nexus and it also helped to facilitate the USA's opening to China in 1971; and, Fourth, an apprehensive nature of the militant groups and their success would benefit Pakistan in the sub-region.

6.2.5.2 *Pakistan's Position*

The Soviet intervention, however, gave an opportunity to Pakistan to intervene in Afghanistan and became a frontline state to fight against the Soviet forces and its expansionism. It also resumed Pakistan's cooperation with the USA. Pakistan's decision was influenced by domestic, regional and international considerations. As General Zia-ul-Haq firmly believed that the Soviet presence in Afghanistan constituted a divisive anxiety not only to Islamabad but to the whole region. A few days after the Soviet occupation, an Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting was held and Pakistan enunciated and won adoption of the four important pillars on which it rested its policy towards Afghanistan over the 1980s: First, complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops; Second, all Afghan refugees to return to Afghanistan; Third, free choice of a government by the Afghans; and, Fourth, the institution of a nonaligned government in Afghanistan (Weinbaum 1994).

Before the Soviet intervention Islamabad had "already effective Islamic radicals under its control which would lead the Jihad" (Rashid 2001: 85). Pakistan posed a major obstacle to the Soviet aspirations. It gave sanctuary to militant groups as well. The Pakistani government also insisted that a negotiated peace should not reward the Soviet Union for their occupation. The militant groups were supported by many international actors, including the USA, China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.

The USA's military and economic aid also opened doors to other sources of assistance and encouragement for Pakistan. At the end of the year 1982, Pakistan was

receiving around \$5 billion in foreign aid from different sources. The ISI and CIA fully cooperated in supporting, coordinating, recruiting, training, and supporting the mujahedeen resistance against the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan. From 1950 to 1990 the USA transferred "9.4 times more arms and 9.9 times more military aid to Pakistan than India" (Malone 2011: 162). The Soviet Union withdrew in 1988 after an accord was signed at Geneva on 14 April 1988. The objectives of Pakistan's foreign policy became more ambitious and it wanted a future Afghanistan to pose no problems and threats to Pakistan.

6.2.5.3 India-Pakistan Relations and the Afghanistan War

Despite the support to the Soviet Union, the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent an envoy to Islamabad to assure the then Pakistani President General Zia-ul-Haq that he "could remove as many divisions as he wished from the Indian border without fear of any advantage being taken by India and suggested talks on reduction of force levels" (Paliwal 2013: 24). In June 1981, the then Indian Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao visited Pakistan and made it clear that Delhi was "unequivocally committed to respect Pakistan's national unity, territorial integrity, and sovereign equality" (IBP 2012: 171). He has also further argued that Pakistan has right to acquire weapons for self-defense.

In addition, the process of establishing a joint commission to strengthen cooperative relations started in late 1982. They finally signed an agreement on 10 March 1983, setting up a joint commission in the presence of President Zia-ul-Haq and Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi. The agreement was signed for the purpose of fortifying understanding and cooperation with each other in a variety of fields such as health, science, technology, and communication. The Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission was created in 1982 to facilitate trade and commerce. After the Simla agreement, this was considered a major step towards the purpose of securing a friendly and cooperative relationship. They also initiated to set up the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

These two countries hardly implemented the Simla Accord, while they violated the agreement by occupying the higher peaks at the Siachen glacier in 1984 which

created a new dispute between them. In the 1970s and 1980s, instead of the resolution of their old conflicts and differences, the new disputes arose between them which includes Siachen and Tulbul Navigation. There have been several rounds of negotiations to eliminate the differences. However, the attempts made so far have failed to resolve these disputes. The primary factor which obstructed the implementation of any mutually agreeable mechanism about Siachen conflict includes issues ranging from domestic political limitations to differences over the redeployment positions.

The differences over the Salal Dam and the Wullar Barrage have increased the existing feelings of mistrust between them. The concerns over the Salal Dam on the Chenab River arose in 1970 and after prolonged negotiations it was resolved peacefully. On this issue, the two countries held two rounds of talks and signed an agreement on 14 April 1978 in New Delhi, which ended the 30 years old dispute between them. This is an example of how these two countries resolved an issue without mediation of third parties. The issue of Wullar Barrage arose in 1985, but the dispute is still pending and is in search of a suitable solution.

Following the Brasstacks Operation, these two countries were close to war due to Pakistan's perception of the exercise as a preparation for war. The hotlines were inoperative during the Brasstacks crisis in 1987. Around the period of the Brasstacks crisis, India and Pakistan were manufacturing their nuclear weapons.

Both states introduced a number of mechanisms after the Brasstacks crisis to keep the doors of communication open to clarify the situation. An Agreement was signed between them in 1988 which deals with the Prohibition of Attacks on Nuclear Installations and Facilities. In order to remain more transparent in their relationship, they pledged to supply information to each other on 1 January every year about the latitude and longitude of their nuclear installations. It was ratified in 1991 and implemented in 1992 by the two countries. The lists of facilities are covered by the accord and exchanged every year on 1 January (Gosh 2009: 1). They also agreed to abstain from undertaking, encouraging or participating in any action aimed at causing the devastation or spoiling of any nuclear installation or facility of the other country. This agreement is one of the

major exercises to build confidence between them. But the entire process of the agreement and its manner of implementation reveals lack of confidence and mutual trust.

6.2.6 *Post-Cold War Relationship*

The year 1991 brought the Cold War end. Ashley J. Tellis has argued that in its aftermath, “to all intents and purposes, India appeared like the loser in South Asia and Pakistan the improbable winner” (2013: 305). The Cold War politics, however, had a negative impact on the triangular relationship. They divided it and never gave them a chance to have a trilateral cooperation. Their policies and politics have had exacerbated the sub-regional security environment. This has also produced arms race and tense relations among the countries in the region.

Following the decades of the Cold War, the nature of international politics has radically altered and fundamentally a number of relationships had restructured around the globe, including the USA-India one. Both the USA and Russia suspended military aid to their factions in Afghanistan at the end of 1991. The USA showed no interest there and left the country in a civil war. Russia had also closed its shipments of fuel and food. Though the demise of the Soviet Union gave rise to a “profitable ‘New Great Game’ of gas and oil to which Central Asia today is an even larger complex quagmire of competing interests” (Rashid 2001: 145). As Buzan and Weaver argue that “Decolonization opened the space for regional military-political dynamics, and the ending of the Cold War enabled these dynamics to operate with much more freedom from high level of rival superpower intrusion” (2003: 19).

After the Soviet withdrawal, Pakistan didn't stop to intervene in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. As Soviet forces withdrew, however, Afghan civil war escalated. The country plunged into a prolonged civil war in which millions of Afghans died or were uprooted and took refuge in neighboring Iran and Pakistan. Pakistan completely failed to bring stability, peace, prosperity, and political reformations in the war-ravaged Afghanistan. Post-Soviet era, Pakistan has continued to support and encourage pro-Pakistani militant groups to fight against the Najibullah's regime, and anti-Pakistani groups. Pakistan wanted to install a pro-Pakistani government there.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, however, had a major impact on India's foreign policy. It gave India the choice "to reinvent its foreign policy" (Mohan 2006: 19). It "liberated India's foreign policy and allowed it to choose its friends without external pressure" (Malone 2011: 167). During the 1990s, India's regional approach underwent major shifts with the transformation in the global power structure. The early 1990s was a significant turning point in Indian economic orientation, foreign policy, and politics. It has adopted geo-economics towards the immense energy resources of the Central Asian Republics. Since then, India has continued to play a major role in regional economic development, and strengthen energy and market connectivity.

The post-Cold War political process has been largely ineffective in stabilising Afghanistan as hostility and violence have reached their climax. The departure of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan led to the formation of Najibullah's government in Kabul and India supported his regime. The years following his regime, India remained active in Afghanistan and provided financial and other assistance to pro-Indian groups.

The Taliban and its allies have replaced the Rabbani regime in 1996. India didn't recognise the extreme Taliban regime which forced India to close its embassy in Afghanistan. India established close ties with the Northern-Alliance group to sustain its influence in Afghanistan and counter the Pakistani factor. For that reason, the Indian government also extended aid to this group.

The Afghanistan-India relations deteriorated after the Taliban government came into power. The Taliban regime was tilted towards Pakistan and it was antithetical to India's interest. Subsequently, their ties also witnessed a setback with the Kandahar Hijacking. The militants of Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) hijacked India's flight IC-814 from Kathmandu, Nepal and landed at Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Taliban government supported the hijackers and prevented the Indian military to take any action against them. That forced the Government of India to deal with the Taliban regime. The then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh went to Afghanistan and handed over three militants in exchange for 155 passengers and the crew.

India-Pakistan saw cordial ties during the early 1990s. It is significant that the decline of the USA's interests in Pakistan in the years subsequent to the 1989 withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan, and the rising India-China rapprochement, convinced Islamabad of the need to form different mechanisms of dispute resolution independent of the support of its two main partners, the USA and China (Misra 2011).

The major agreements which they signed before the nuclear tests in 1998 was agreement on Advanced Notice of Military Exercises, Manoeuvres, and Troops Movements on 6 April 1991, an Agreement on Prevention of Airspace Violations and authorise over flights and landing by Military Aircraft in 1992, hotlines of DGMOs and Prime Ministers of both countries, and a joint declaration on Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It was after the Brasstacks crisis that hotlines were resumed. It has been argued that in "the absence of serious political commitment to the nuclear CBMs, the efficacy of such confidence building, if any, is minimal" (Chakma 2010: 373).

In 1989, first hotline was established by the then Prime Ministers of both states Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto. Then in November 1990 India's Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif established the hotline to ease direct communication. In 1997, Prime Ministers I. K. Gujral and Nawaz Sharif pledged to restore the hotline to facilitate communication and enhanced the bilateral relationship. Ashutosh Misra argues that these above meetings played a significant role in raising a level of confidence in their bilateral relationship. They also produced a favourable atmosphere for future talks (2011: 22). For these reasons, the CDP was initiated in May 1997 between the Prime Ministers Inder K. Gujral and Nawaz Sharif, on the side-lines of the SAARC summit, at Male, capital of Maldives. The issues on the agenda included: peace and security CBMs; Siachen; Sir Creek; Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project; Jammu and Kashmir; terrorism and drug trafficking; economic and commercial cooperation; and promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields.

Both countries violated the spirit of the earlier agreements, Pakistan more so than India, it would appear. These above agreements did not prevent the Kargil and other major crises. They have neither helped to de-escalate the crisis. The primary reasons

behind the failure of the peace process are discontinuities resulting from the terror attacks and subsequent frequent crisis.

6.2.7 1998 Nuclear Tests and Aftermath

India conducted five nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998 and declared itself a nuclear state. This created an apprehension in Pakistan. The then Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan described them as “a death blow to the global efforts at nuclear non-proliferation” (cited in Hussain 2011: 324) and appealed to the international community to issue a strong condemnation. The then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif argued that “as being a sovereign state Pakistan has every right to undertake measures for national defence and security” (ibid). Two weeks later, Pakistan conducted six nuclear tests on 28 and 30 May 1998 in the Chagai Hill, Balochistan.

Their relationship, however, became very critical and remained under severe strain in the wake of their nuclear tests. On 3 August 1998, the USA government sent “urgent messages” to both the countries asking them to “refrain from proactive actions and rhetoric”, to restart the dialogue process (Hussain 2005: 7). Under intense pressure from the international community, India and Pakistan began bilateral talks in October 1998. The discussion culminated in a famous bus ride by the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Lahore on 20 February 1999. This process was one of the consequences of the nuclear tests. The Lahore Declaration stated that both countries were persuaded of the significance of jointly agreed CBMs for enhancing the security environment of South Asia. Both were also concurred that their respective sides shall abstain from interference and intervention in each other’s domestic affairs. The declaration further committed both states to take immediate steps for lessening the risks of accidental or unauthorised exercise of nuclear armaments. Although the Lahore Declaration confidently looked forward to substantial cooperation on nuclear risk reductions, the Kargil conflict spoiled its most promising efforts.

The Kargil conflict occurred less than a year after the two countries conducted nuclear weapons tests and declared themselves as nuclear weapon states. The conflict is often depicted as the first major nuclear crisis in South Asia. It was significant not only

for what happened, but also for what did not occur in 1999 and in subsequent years. They suspended all dialogues after Kargil, ramped up their production of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems, and accelerated planning for conventional war, which nearly occurred in January 2002 and again in May 2002 (Lavouy 2009).

The Kargil operation was launched by the Pakistani forces and threatened to derail the peace process again. It can be seen as the consequence of non-resolution of the conflict over the disputed territory i.e., Jammu and Kashmir. The DGMOs link provided the key means of implementing the political decision to deescalate the crisis. The two sides used it to facilitate face-to-face DGMOs meeting on 11 July 1999 at Attari border where they developed the modalities under which the Pakistani troops would be withdrawn. India had set 16 July 1999 as a deadline for vacation of intrusions, which was later extended to 17 July 1999. The continuous contact between the two governments, both formal (the DGMO hotline) and back channel diplomacy played a key role in the Kargil issue. Timothy D. Hoyt (2009) states that the conflict tested long-held assumptions regarding deterrence and nuclear stability, and the consequences of nuclear proliferation. It also provided important displays of intelligence failure, the operation of the stability-instability paradox, and fundamental misperceptions regarding the intentions and capabilities of well-known adversaries. The Kargil conflict and border confrontation in 2002 violated the earlier agreements.

6.2.8 *Post-Kargil Relations*

The two-day meeting between the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf took place at Agra on 15-16 July 2001. The reason behind the summit was to resolve the issues, including Kashmir. Abruptly, it ended in the late evening on 16 July without the two parties having been agreed upon the wording of a declaration or joint press conference statement, and without any final handshake (Wirsing 2004). The Kashmir issue and terrorism became the reasons of failure of the summit.

Following the Kargil conflict and the failed Agra Summit, the prospects for dialogue process got much worse due to the attack by terrorists on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 and subsequent mobilisation of forces on the borders in 2001-02.

They have mobilised their troops in 2001-2002 and standing face-to-face in the border areas in a ten month-long tense armed standoff. These events led to the complex phase in their bilateral relationships. After these incidents, they severed all links, including diplomatic and military relations.

6.3 Critical Analysis of the Triangle: 2001-Present

The September 2001 terror attacks on the USA altered the geopolitics of South Asia. It has also transformed the geostrategic environment further in the region. The attacks changed the foreign policy priorities of Pakistan and India. Meanwhile, Pakistan became a frontline state again in the USA-led NATO military fight to exterminate extremist groups including the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The USA's tough stance forced the Pakistan administration to support the "War on Terror", which ended the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Since the USA intervention, the Taliban and its allies have shifted their base towards the NWFP and Pakistan. This has had serious implications for the security and stability not only for the sub region but for the entire region.

In October 2001, the USA-led NATO forces drove the Taliban government out of Kabul. This led to the start of a new period in Afghanistan with the signing of the Bonn Agreement on 5 December 2001. Through this agreement, they endorsed a roadmap and agenda for establishing peace, stability, and security, protecting human rights, and re-establishing some key institutions. The four major Afghan sects, who participated in the Bonn Conference in 2001 were – the Peshawar faction, the Rome faction, the United Front, and the Cyprus faction – represented Hazaras, Tajiks, Durrani Pashtuns and Uzbeks. They all were critical of Islamabad's involvement in pre-2001 Afghanistan. They were averse to Islamabad's role in reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Regional players, including India and Pakistan, also engaged in rebuilding Afghanistan process. India and Pakistan have adopted soft power strategies to establish their influence in Afghanistan. Both are competing in post-Taliban era for gaining greater influence and power there. As far as their strategies and policies towards Afghanistan are concerned, they have been trapped in the classic security dilemma, "in that any measure by either side to increase its security is liable to trigger a reaction thus causing

deterioration in the overall regional balance” (Pant 2011: 31). Afghanistan is significant for both of them for strategic, economic, and security reasons. The following sections would analyse the nature of the triangular relationship and India-Pakistan’s engagement in Afghanistan. It would also examine the competing interests of all the three countries.

6.3.1 *India-Afghanistan Relations Post-2001*

India and Afghanistan relations have rapidly improved since the overthrow of the Taliban regime. India, meanwhile, has taken a multi-pronged engagement towards Afghanistan, focusing on its education, social, economic developments to maintain its influence there. As an emerging power in the international system, India has consistently pursued a more proactive policy in Afghanistan and building institutional, military, and economic ties. India moved quickly to extend its footprints in this war-torn country by opening its embassy in Kabul and other four consulates in Mazar-e-Sharif (western Afghanistan), Herat (northern Afghanistan), Jalalabad (eastern Afghanistan), Kandahar (southern Afghanistan). In addition, India has emerged as a main supporter and a developmental partner there. Afghanistan and India have the realisation that economic development of Afghanistan is a prerequisite for national and regional stability and peace.

India attended the Bonn Conference and played an important role to build the new administration in Afghanistan. Its engagement has aimed at promoting development and democracy as “key instruments in ensuring that Afghanistan becomes a source of regional stability and does not slide back into extremism as happened earlier” (Qassem 2011: 196). In addition, it focuses on building human capital and helping in a number of social and economic projects like rural electrification, small-scale irrigation projects, as well as improving security. During the 1990s, India supported the Northern Alliance group to fight against the Taliban and its allies. Since 2001, it has also reached diverse ethnic groups including the Pashtuns. It has shown its keenness to develop strong ties with Pashtun dominated areas.

Given the decades of wars, devastation, and deconstruction of state structures, India supports a plural government and a viable independent Afghan state. The major objective of India’s Afghan policy has been to see a prosperous, stable, secure, and

democratic Afghanistan. India wants the peaceful, independent, and united Afghanistan capable of standing on its own feet. It has pledged in various international forums that its major objective is enhancement of democratic institutions and practices, and strengthening the rule of law in Afghanistan. India played a substantial role to integrate Afghanistan into SAARC at the 14th Summit in New Delhi in 2007. Afghanistan was granted full membership and became eighth state of the organisation.

On 23-24 May 2002, the then Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh stated at a conference on South-South Cooperation and the Reconstruction of Afghanistan in New Delhi that India's approach to Afghan rehabilitation and reconstruction focuses on: First, providing immediate health, medical, and humanitarian aid; Second, strengthening institutional capacity of the government machinery; Third, offering commodity and project aid in priority sectors of education, information technology, health, civil aviation, public transport, agriculture and industrial development; and, Fourth, synergising with global endeavours to meet all the needs and prerequisites of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan (Gaur 2003: 155-156).

India has used a series of economic policy mechanisms – including development aid, private sector investment, and trade promotion – to foster peace and stability and intensifies India's influence in Afghanistan. The former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, paid a visit to Afghanistan in 2005. He became the first Indian Prime Minister after Indira Gandhi, who visited in 1976 to visit Afghanistan. He was also the first foreign head, who visited the war-ravaged country since the fall of the Taliban regime. The major reason of his visit was to revive the past relations and develop a new cooperation as well as to mark the consolidation of bilateral traditional friendship between them which were disunited during the Taliban period.

The agreements they have signed after 2001 include the Preferential Trade Agreement in 2003, agreements on tourism and education in 2005, Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2011 aimed at reaffirming the commitment of both states to fortify their relations. Indeed, prior to 2001, both states have a long-standing record of economic, cultural, and technical partnerships in various sectors. Since 2001, they have grown stronger and India has also pledged \$750 million dollars towards reconstruction and

rehabilitation process. It has invested immensely in this country, ranging from infrastructure to human resource development programmes. According to the Strategic Partnership Agreement in October 2011, these two countries agreed to the following principles. First, protecting and fostering shared democratic principles and practices; Second, enhancing long-term stability, peace, and security; Third, strengthening bilateral and regional collaboration and security; Fourth, socio-economic growth; and, Fifth, fortifying democratic establishment and local governance in this war-ravaged country.

Today, India is the fifth largest donor, certainly the largest from the region, to Afghan rehabilitation and reconstruction process. On 11 September 2017, the second Strategic Partnership Council meeting was held in New Delhi between the delegates of India and Afghanistan. Both countries agreed “to take up 116 High Impact Community Development Projects to be implemented in 31 provinces of Afghanistan, including in the areas of education, health, agriculture, irrigation, drinking water, renewable energy, flood control, micro-hydropower, sports infrastructure, administrative infrastructure” (Ministry of External Affairs, 11 September 2017). India also agreed:

To implement some important new projects such as the Shahtoot Dam and drinking water project for Kabul that would also facilitate irrigation, water supply for Charikar City, road connectivity to Band-e-Amir in Bamyan Province that would promote tourism, low cost housing for returning Afghan refugees in Nangarhar Province to promote their resettlement, a gypsum board manufacturing plant in Kabul to promote value added local industry and for import substitution, and a polyclinic in Mazar-e-Sharif (ibid).

India has also provided training to the Afghan citizens in various fields including doctors, lawyers, diplomats, etc. The 218 km Zaranj-Delaram Highway, Salma Dam Power Project, the Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul electricity transmission line, the Indira Gandhi pediatric hospital, and the Afghan parliament are some of the vital investments.

It has been argued that Afghanistan holds the economic, security, and political significance for India. Strategically, Afghanistan is very significant for India’s ambitions to access the energy rich CARs. Currently, Islamabad allows Kabul land transit facility to India, but doesn’t allow Indian goods to Afghanistan. India is trying to maintain the better ties with the CARs. India is hugely investing on the Chahbahar port and firmly believes that it will allow India’s access to Afghanistan and the CARs.

Central Asia's strategic location and immense energy resources have attracted the international and regional actors. The players in this game are actively engaged in the region both strategically and economically. It has intensified the geopolitical rivalry. India and Pakistan are also vital players of the "New Great Game". Both are investing in the region to reduce each other's power and influence. So, India's presence in Afghanistan has the emergent ability to extend its influence beyond South Asia. From Afghanistan, it could easily monitor its rival Pakistan's activities and cultivate its influence in Pakistan as well.

6.3.2 Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations Post-2001

In November 2001, the Taliban regime completely collapsed. In December 2001, a new interim government was formed under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. This included many Afghan factions in a power-sharing arrangement. This has sent convulsive effects on Afghanistan-Pakistan ties. Although at the same time this incident has provided a great opportunity to both the states to reconsider their policies to each other and to renew their diplomatic and political relations.

Following the Taliban rule, the Pakistani administration has committed to support endeavours to stabilise Afghanistan, and also agreed to assist the Karzai government. For its part, Islamabad had no option but to acquiesce in the Bonn decisions. Musharraf formally welcomed the agreement and the Bonn process. Islamabad has joined the USA-led NATO forces against its former ally, the Taliban, to safeguard its national interests. This decision marked a paradigm shift in Pakistan's policy towards the Taliban in post-September 2001 era.

The doubts, however, have remained as to Pakistan's commitment and capacity to crackdown on all terrorist groups. As Pakistan supported Taliban to form a government in Afghanistan earlier and recognised their regime as well. It has been argued that Pakistan was deeply concerned over Pashtun under-representation and Northern Alliance dominance in the new administration in Kabul. The Pashtuns in Pakistan were passionately speaking against the interim government and considered Karzai as an American puppet. Some of the members of the Karzai government heavily criticised

Pakistan's role in the USA-led NATO "War on Terror" and accused Islamabad of interfering in the internal matters of Afghanistan. So, the diverse perceptions and mistrust persistently spoil their ties.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have been engaged in regular diplomatic talks since the interim council was created in Afghanistan. Islamabad is using its physical proximity, financial aid, and transit trade to increase its influence in Afghanistan. In February 2002, the then Afghan President Hamid Karzai made an official trip to Pakistan. The trip was important as it laid the foundation of revitalised bilateral ties between the two countries. In April 2002, the then Pakistani President Musharraf visited Kabul. During his visit, he has announced \$100 aid to Afghanistan to meet the challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction in this war-torn country.

President Karzai sought Islamabad's assistance for the conduct of peaceful election processes in 2004 and again in 2005. There was an apprehension of severe threats across the border to interrupt the elections. Islamabad has assured Kabul of its full cooperation to peacekeeping in the country. It has also deployed around 80,000 military personnel along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Musharraf became the first head of state to visit Afghanistan after the completion of the presidential elections.

Islamabad has renewed the Torkham-Jalalabad road, and contributed \$100 million dollars towards Afghan reconstruction, soon after President Karzai took over. It has been estimated that one million Afghan refugees continue to live in Pakistan, and many more have poured into Pakistan (Zaidi 2006). However, the bitter exchanges and mutual recriminations persistently spoil the relations between them. In July 2005, the then Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz visited Afghanistan. In a joint conference, Afghan President Hamid Karzai spoke how infiltrators from Pakistan come to Afghanistan to torch and demolish schools, and deprive Afghan children of education. Indeed, since 2005 Afghanistan has faced a significant rise in suicide bombings inside the country that indicated the revival of the extremist factions as well.

During the Musharraf rule, the major political priorities of Islamabad's policy towards Afghanistan were included: First, achieving peace, stability, and security in the

Afghan-Pakistan border regions; Second, ensuring fair political representation of Pashtuns in the Afghan government; Third, ensuring that the land of Afghanistan was not used to fuel insecurity and insurgency in NWFP and Balochistan; and, Fourth, securing Islamabad's ambitions vis-à-vis Delhi's increasing military, economics and political interests in Afghanistan.

The regime change in Pakistan in 2008, however, altered their ties. Both agreed to re-initiate their broken ties. Afghanistan has professed friendship with Islamabad, but continuously accuses Islamabad of supporting and encouraging extremist elements in Afghanistan. Their relations saw another blow when the TTP was formed. Since then, the deadly terror attacks have increased in the "Af-Pak" region. The formation of TTP and a resurgence of Taliban have further worsened their relations. From 2007 to 2012 around 261 border violations were reported. The year 2013 saw a dramatic rise of cross-border terror incidents. It has been reported that around 732 attacks were carried by the extremists in 2013. Their relations reached at the lowest point when Pakistan's 24 forces were killed in Salala in late November 2011. Pakistan withdrew from the 2011 Bonn Conference.

In order to reduce the tension and repair the bilateral relationship, the former army General Ashfaq Kayani visited Afghanistan in November 2012 to sign an accord to enhance border security. On 5 February 2013, both the states agreed to a structured interaction, establishing a hotline between their respective intelligence and militaries departments. This has been seen as a positive development for both countries' future.

In 2014, Afghanistan chose Ashraf Ghani a new President of the country. The then Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain attended his oath taking ceremony. Ashraf Ghani has exemplified sturdy commitment to friendly ties between the two neighbours. His visit to Pakistan in November 2014 guaranteed close relations and strong bilateral ties between the two countries. He has adopted a "rapprochement policy" towards Islamabad. He has argued that peace is the major prerequisite to bringing economic and political stability in Afghanistan, which he considered was not feasible without building strong ties with Islamabad.

On 15 June 2014, Pakistan has launched a military operation “Zarb-e-Azab” (Sharp and Cutting Strike) on the rash of terrorist groups in North Waziristan along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. From Pakistan’s side, it is doing much to deal with the terrorist groups. But from Afghanistan’s perspective, Pakistan doesn’t deal strictly with the terrorist groups that find a safe haven within its borders. Ashraf Ghani has said in August 2015 that “Pakistan still remains a venue and ground for gatherings from which mercenaries send us messages of war” (Putz 2016: 1). In April 2016, he again reiterated that the terrorists who carried terror attacks in Afghanistan “are being hosted and aided from the territory of Pakistan” (ibid).

Since 2014, both countries have shifted their approaches towards each other. On his two-day visit to Pakistan, Ashraf Ghani said on 15 November 2014, that the “partnership with Pakistan is an important pillar of Afghanistan’s foreign policy” (Syed 2016: 1). He further added that “Pakistan and Afghanistan have overcome obstacles of 13 years in three days” (ibid). They had renewed their relations and agreed to work together for stability, peace, and security for the entire region. On 16 November 2014, both states “re-affirmed their resolve at the highest level to transform bilateral ties and build a relationship marked by close cooperation on the political and security planes and a strong economic foundation” (ibid).

A delegation of sixteen Afghan officials visited Pakistan in 2014, where they met Pakistani members including Nawaz Sharif. Both states have reiterated their commitments to fight against radical and extremist elements and enhance bilateral cooperation in various sectors. They also agreed to establish military-to-military cooperation. Pakistan also received six Afghan military cadets to give them extensive training in the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) at Kakul.

Despite their hostility, peace talks were held between the Afghan administration and the Taliban after consistent attempts by Pakistan in July 2015. This gave a new hope of resolving the issues and concerns between them. Pakistan played a substantial role in this process. The major aim of the negotiation was to build confidence among the parties. The Chinese and the USA officials attended the talks as observers. Both Afghan and the

Pakistani officials informed that the talks were initiated in a positive and cordial atmosphere. They agreed upon meeting again. However, the death of Mullah Omar scuttled the promising peace process in the country.

Following his death, the region is seeing a frosty period as many negative developments have been occurring. The negotiation process has been stalled and terror attacks have increased in the “Af-Pak” region. The Taliban has rejected the negotiation process with the Afghan government and claimed they would continue their fight until the implementation of the Sharia law in the country. Afghanistan and Pakistan have signed a memorandum of understanding in Kabul between the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) and the ISI for cooperation in counter-terrorism operations. However, this has received harsh criticisms in Afghanistan. The former President Hamid Karzai publicly accused Ghani’s government of treason for signing this intelligence accord.

The Paris Climate Change Conference in November 2015 gave both the countries an opportunity to consolidate their ties. Ashraf Gani has visited Islamabad to attend the Fifth Heart of Asia Conference. This has been regarded as a major development towards enhancing relations between the two states. A Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) was also announced on the sidelines of the conference, involving Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the USA. Ashraf Ghani tried very hard to mend ties with Pakistan, but it hasn’t worked. The present situation in the region is very complex. Their relations are worse than it has been since 2001. On 4 December 2016, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani not only harshly criticized Islamabad, but also rejected its aid of \$500 million at the Sixth Heart of Asia Conference in Amritsar, India. Both countries are blaming one another. So, they are caught in this mutual blaming game. This conundrum is persistent to cause rifts between the two nations and averts peace, stability, progress, and security not only in the sub-region but in the entire region.

6.3.3 India-Pakistan Relations Post-2001

In 2003, India started step-by-step initiatives towards its rival Pakistan. On 18 April 2003, the then Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee offered and extended a “hand of

friendship” towards Islamabad in a speech at Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. This was a new beginning to negotiation with Pakistan on the basis of Composite Dialogue Process. The process resumed after a gap of six years. In October 2003, India proposed 12 CBMs, including new rail and bus services, resumption and extension of air and rail links, liberalisation of the visa regime, endorsement of commerce and trade across the LOC, and opening up of meeting points for people along the border for divided families.

In July 2003, direct transport links and diplomatic ties were anew and in November of the same year a ceasefire was also initiated. Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf met on the side-lines of the 12th SAARC Summit in Islamabad, on 6 January 2004. The joint statement committed the two countries to re-starting the negotiation process that was suspended for the previous three years. Subsequently, the second round of the dialogue process re-started with the meeting of the two Foreign Secretaries in December 2004 in New Delhi (Gul 2007: 57-58). They launched some important CBMs after the post-Kargil scenario. Some of them are as follows:

- The Delhi bus service was resumed in 2003. The bus service started in 1999 but was later stopped due to the border crisis (2001-02).
- Passenger and freight rail services between Attari and Lahore, and air connections between them were restarted in 2004.
- The Samjhauta Express, which runs between Delhi and Lahore, recommenced in 2005, and regardless of the blasts in 2007, has continued to run since.
- They signed an agreement on 3 October 2005 at Islamabad in which they agreed to provide advance or pre-notification of at least 72 hours before any ballistic missile tests within a 40 kilometres radius of the LoC and International Boundary (Mirza 2009).
- In 2005, the first bus service was started between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad.
- The bus service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib, Lahore to Amritsar and railway links between Monabao in Rajasthan and Khokhrapar in Sindh was started in 2006. Night bus service between Ferozepur and Fazilka to Ludhiana-Chandigarh was also restarted in the same year (ibid).

- On 14 December 2006, these two countries signed a shipping protocol, replacing the old protocol signed in 1975.
- They opened truck route first time in 2007 through the Wagah border.
- India and Pakistan opened road links for trade in 2008 at Wagah-Attari border, Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot. In the same year, rail link from Munabao-Khokhrapar was also opened.
- The Joint Business Councils and the Joint Economic Commissions were reactivated in 2004 in order to endorse good commercial activity as well as better environment for peace process. The Joint Study Group (JSG) constituted two subgroups in order to study issues concerning non-tariff barriers and custom, cooperation and trade facilities.
- Pakistan accepted humanitarian aid like food, tents, medicine etc. from India after the earthquake hit in Pakistan occupied Kashmir on 8 October 2005.
- They suspended the peace process after Mumbai blasts in 2006. After the blasts, the first formal discussions between the then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf held in September during the side-lines of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Havana, Cuba. They decided to revitalise the delayed peace process. A Joint Anti-Terrorism institutional mechanism was established “to identify and implement counterterrorism initiatives and investigations” (Scott 2011: 273) in both states. It was brought into effect in 2006. They agreed that specific information would be exchanged for helping enquiry on both sides related to terrorist activities and avoidance of violence; while the terrorist attacks continue to ruin the peace process.
- An accord was signed in 2008 between state-run think tanks, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (New Delhi) and Institute of Strategic Studies (Islamabad) to facilitate regular contacts. This agreement is meant to contribute building channels of communication at the level of scholars.
- They mutually agreed to host events exhibiting each other’s movies in 2006. The Pakistani government allowed for the legal release of the Indian films in Pakistan in 2008 (Ghosh 2009).

During the crises these mechanisms were ineffective, however. The diplomatic and military hotlines played a limited role whenever needed most. These measures have been used for post-crisis management, like after the Kargil crisis, not during that period. The DGMOs did not work at the time of Indian hijacking crisis in 1999. The Foreign Secretaries' links did not avoid the attacks in Mumbai 2008 and subsequent years. The attacks derailed the whole peace process. Borders were closed, train and ferry services were discontinued, and visas became difficult to obtain. The peace process entails a non-crisis atmosphere for the eradication of mistrust and misunderstanding between the competing parties. The ceasefire agreement which was adopted in 2003 was violated by Pakistan in 2008 as well as by alleged frequent interventions of the Indian Army in 2009 (Ghosh 2009). The implementation of these Agreements had not been impressive. Moonis Ahmar (1996) has argued that the difficulty with these two countries is not the failure of CBMs, but their inability to pass through the process of mutual acceptance and tolerance.

The terrorism issue has also assumed greater implications in the last decade in determining their relationship. The terrorist attacks on the Indian soil have heightened the feeling of distrust between the two countries. Also, it posed a serious challenge to the peace process. The terrorists are spoilers in the case of India-Pakistan peace process. Before the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, their relations had shown signs of normalcy. The attacks disrupted the dialogue process.

India, however, has postponed all the secretary level talks on Sir Creek, Siachen and trade. It has also canceled the cricket tour of Pakistan and meeting of India-Pakistan Joint Commission on environment. The situation strained the visa issuance process for the Pakistani citizens. After the terror attacks on Mumbai, the resumption of meetings has given priority to trade and investment rather than political concerns. These two countries need to address issues collectively if they want to establish peace among themselves and in South Asia. The current geostrategic environment is completely different in South Asia from what it was 69 years ago. The various external factors such as growing the USA strategic interests in South Asia and political turmoil in Afghanistan are influencing

South Asian politics in a manner never experienced before. These issues are compelling both of them to continue the dialogue process (Gul 2007).

It took another three years for India-Pakistan to announce CBMs related to trade. These CBMs meant for facilitating trade and travel across LoC which could improve strained bilateral relationship. They also agreed to liberalise the visa regime. They signed a new visa agreement in 2012 and replaced the 38 years old agreement signed in 1974. The September 2012 visit of India's External Affairs Minister, S. M. Krishna, to Pakistan reaffirmed India's commitment to the dialogue process and to resolving all the outstanding issues.

In 2013 and again in 2014, these two states tried to harmonise the relationships. Although repeated cease-fire violations have worsened this process. During his visit to India in May 2014, Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi agreed to initiate new period of bilateral ties. And, again in December 2015 they agreed to resumption of bilateral talks. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also paid a visit to Pakistan and became the first head to visit Pakistan since 2004, where both leaders had brief discussion on bilateral ties. They agreed to work collectively "towards the common goal of fighting poverty and increase people to people contact" (*The Dawn* 2015: 1) and open a new path for partnership and peace between them. The former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Aizaz Chaudhry said: "It was a goodwill visit and the two sides decided to understand each other's reservations and restart the comprehensive dialogue in a positive manner" (ibid). Since then, however, their relations remained frigid.

The Mumbai terror attacks, Pathankot and Uri attacks in 2016 were seen as a direct attack on the India-Pakistan peace process. The current border skirmishes have also hindered the progress of dialogue process. However, bilateralism is the best way to provide harmonious solutions. The few summit meetings and gestures cannot bring solutions or peace between them. The only possible way to solve their concerns is through CDP. The effectual dialogue process is possible only through CBMs by which both countries can solve their long standing issues or disputes peacefully. It could assist them to move from a condition of mutual antagonism and reduce enmity that could

enhance further security and stability in the region. It would also remove the mental barriers erected by the division of the subcontinent. The longer India and Pakistan remain estranged from negotiation on these issues, the more distrust would be built up and both sides could expect the worst from each other.

6.3.4 *Kashmir Issue*

The issue of Kashmir has continued to remain the main hurdle in their dialogue process. They have been in conflict over Kashmir since their independence. It has been regarded as the main contentious issue between them. They fought four wars, out of which three had their origins in the Kashmir dispute (1947-48, 1965, and 1999). Since their independence, a series of direct and indirect negotiations have been held between them to normalise the ties for seeking a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Despite these diverse efforts, they have failed to resolve the dispute due to their different approaches towards the issue. The war of 1965 and 1971 produced two accords including the Tashkent Declaration in 1966 and the Simla Accord in 1972. In both cases, the Kashmir issue was accepted as a foremost cause of tension. They pledged to seek a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict. Any solution of the Kashmir dispute is central to an enduring peace process and prosperous future of the whole South Asia. In recent times, the two countries have reiterated their commitment to endorse progress towards the common objectives of peace, security and progress for the future generations of South Asia. However, the current border clashes and turmoil situation in Kashmir has worsened their ties.

6.4 Diverse and Competing Interests among the Players in the Triangle

Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan have diverse interests in the triangular relationship. They look at each other through the prism of the triangular relationship. Their disparate and complex interests are overriding with one another. In addition, India-Pakistan's and Afghanistan-Pakistan's mutual concerns and distrusts have had an aggravating impact not only on the triangular relationship but the entire region.

Conflicting interests among these players have resulted in a zero sum game. Inter and intra-regional issues and concerns are rife that generates instability, insecurity, disorder and threats not only to the region but the entire international community. The interstate rivalry is also one of the critical dimensions that create instability, disharmony, fragile, and insecurity in the sub-region. The situation in the “Af-Pak” region has significantly deteriorated over the past few years with the revival of the Taliban and its allies and an increase in suicide bombings. It has also exacerbated the regional security environment. So, the security situation in the region is worsening day-by-day.

India and Pakistan claim that they play imperative roles in shaping Afghanistan, however, their different interests hamper Afghanistan’s own prospects for revitalisation and rehabilitation. Each state seeks to enhance its self-protection and security. Both states harbour a great deal of distrust against each other.

6.4.1 *India’s Major Interests in the Triangle:* The following are the major interests of India in the triangular relationship.

First, the major goal of India is to deny Islamabad’s ‘strategic depth’. Pakistan looked at Afghanistan as “something like the vacant lot behind their house” (Chayes 2006: 118). The successive regimes in Pakistan “postulated Afghanistan as an extension of their territory, land to fade back or retreat to, or base their missiles on, if it ever came to war” (ibid) with New Delhi. This is the crux of Islamabad’s concept of ‘strategic depth’.

Second, in contemporary times, terrorism and extremism have emerged as the most menaces to the international community. They have engulfed not only South Asia but the entire world. This sub-region faces grave concerns because of rising terrorism and religious fundamentalism. The persistent terrorist attacks on the Indian soil and increasing terrorist activities in “Af-Pak” region worsen the security situation in the region. India is fighting very hard to curb extremism and terrorism in the region. It became a major objective of India’s foreign policy. India and Afghanistan have signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement in October 2011. India gives training Afghan military personnel. The former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh has argued that:

Our cooperation with Afghanistan is an open book. We have civilizational links, and we are both here to stay. India will stand by the people of Afghanistan as they prepare to assume the responsibility for their governance and security after the withdrawal of international forces in 2014 (cited in Alikuzai 2013: 818).

Third, to support and encourage democratisation process and the pro-India regime which would restrain the revival of the Taliban and other extremist groups. When Taliban occupied Afghanistan in 1996, India had to vacate from Afghanistan. The USA-led NATO forces threw away the Taliban rule in Afghanistan in 2001; it gave a great opportunity to India to fortify its footprints in Afghanistan. Since then, India has reached out to every ethnic community there and built political affiliations to maintain political stability and peace in the region. India played a substantial role in the Bonn Agreement. Subsequently, India has supported democratic elections in Afghanistan in 2004 and subsequent years. It promotes human rights and good governance there. So, to promote democratic values in the country is another major goal of India's foreign policy.

Fourth, another major objective of India is to build strong economic and strategic relations with the energy rich states of Afghanistan and the CARs. The region holds economic, security, and political significance for India. India, however, lacks physical contiguity with the CARs, but it has trade ties with the region. Indeed, India has traditional links with the region and some dynasties and cultures to India came from the CARs. The major reason behind India's hugely investment on the Chahbahar port is that it will allow India's access to Afghanistan and the CARs.

On 5 June 2002, the then India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said during his trip to the Central Asian region that "historically, this extended neighborhood of ours has been very close to our hearts. It is linked to India through ties of history, culture, and spirituality" from the ancient times (Sarma 2010: 14). He has further argued that "with the countries of Central Asia becoming independent, a new geopolitical reality, of great significance to us, has come into being in this part of the world after the end of the Cold War," in which "India wishes to strengthen her ties with all the countries of the region" (ibid).

Fifth, it competes for geopolitical dominance in the region to aspire a major power status and give leverage against Pakistan, and China, who are obsessed with balancing India's power and influence. On 16 April 2007, the then Minister of Defence A. K. Antony has argued at the Army Commanders Conference that "India's enhanced stature will demand that it plays a role commensurate to its stature, potential and aspirations. It need not be over-emphasised that our strategic interests extend far beyond the South Asia region" (Scott 2013: 354).

Similarly, in the same year the Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee, stated that "India's vision for the future has essentially ... been to expand India's strategic space ... engagement with our extend neighborhood ... has become at once intense and broad ranging" (ibid). The major concerns for India's extend neighborhood agenda are security, military, trade and energy. India and Pakistan's antagonistic ties with the region have spilled over into the wider extend neighborhood – the Southwest Asia, the Central Asian region, the Indian Ocean, and West Asia.

Though India's biggest competitive element is not only Pakistan but China as well in the region. China and India are also main geopolitical competitors in the region. Their interests clash with one another both in the economic and political spheres. They "are vying for the same markets' in which India calls 'extended neighborhood' while to China it is the 'strategic backyard'" (Bhattacharya 2004: 359).

6.4.2 *Pakistan's Major Interests in the Triangle:* The following are the major interests of Pakistan in the triangular relationship.

First, Pakistan looks at India as an aggressive state that poses severe threats to its national integrity and security. Since 1947, India and Pakistan are strategic rivals in Afghanistan. Pakistan always wants to counter India's strategic encirclement of Pakistan. It also wants to maintain 'strategic depth' there. In the 1990s, the Pakistani army claimed victory when there was no India's presence in Afghanistan. India, however, returned to Afghanistan after 2001. That is why it is very apprehensive with India's involvement in Afghanistan and has endeavoured to fortify the "Af-Pak" alliance to protect itself. Pakistan has

“ensured that Indian interests would be blocked whenever and wherever possible” (Grare 2010: 21).

Second, to establish a friendly and pro-Pakistani government in Afghanistan. Pakistan wants the same kind of acquiescence which it has received during the Taliban regime. Subsequently, it looks a friendly government in Afghanistan as salient to keep New Delhi out. A major goal of Pakistan’s foreign policy has been to eliminate India’s presence in the “Af-Pak” region.

Third, another major objective of Pakistan seeks to block the revival of Afghan nationalism and the issue of Durand Line. These issues have been the consistent thorn in their bilateral relationship. No Afghan regime has ever accepted the legitimacy of the Durand Line. Thus, Islamabad seeks to install a friendly government in Afghanistan that diminishes Pashtun nationalism and demand of separate and independent Pashtun state in parts of the FATA, the NWFP, and Balochistan.

Fourth, Pakistan uses Afghanistan to attract economic and diplomatic assistance of regional and extra-regional countries. Pakistan’s sturdy grip on northern trade would lessen the value of Chabahar port and the Indian built Zaranj-Delaram route, thereby, abating New Delhi’s endeavours to expand its economic and commercial links with Afghanistan and the CARs (Rashid, 2000; Ganguly and Howenstein, 2009). In addition, Pakistan desires to access the CARs rich energy resources.

Fifth, another important objective is to return Afghan refugees. The Afghan refugees were held responsible in large measure for a breakdown of law and order, many social evils, and economic dislocation. It has been argued that the “Kalashnikov culture” was imported by the Afghan refugees. Pakistan’s economy was also seen as being adversely affected. So, Pakistan wants early repatriation of the refugees.

Sixth, Pakistan has provided immense support and assistance to the Taliban and its allies in the form of training, funding, supplies and sanctuary to contain threats from them as well as to retain significant influence over them. The ISI believes that it would not only counter India’s presence in Afghanistan but to curb other states including Iran and

Russia's influence there. The country has "positioned itself as a vital player in any Afghan reconciliation process" (Hanauer and Chalk 2012: 29).

6.4.3 *Afghanistan's Major Interests in the Triangle:* The above sections have studied India-Pakistan's interests in the triangle. Afghanistan, however, is the weakest of the three states. It is important to look how Afghanistan defines and pursues its own major goals. The following are the major interests of Afghanistan in the triangular relationship.

First, the first major interest of Afghanistan has been trying to maintain good relations with both states for its own prospects of reconstruction and rehabilitation. With the collaboration of neighboring countries, Afghanistan has inked a series of regional development projects – among them the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission project and the TAPI pipeline project. They are not only crucial for the future for the country, but also for other signatories in the region. Being a landlocked state, Afghanistan could gain direct access to Chabahar port with the collaboration of New Delhi and Tehran.

Second, another major objective of Afghanistan is seeking for internal stability and security. A reinvigorated aid and reconstruction agenda from India and Pakistan could assist Afghanistan persistent to build popular support. It has been argued that the continued training for Afghan police and military in India and Pakistan could make Afghan security more effective in countering the Taliban and its allies and other insurgents.

Third, the Afghan regimes are consistently harnessing the two countries to advance country's economic and geopolitical objectives. Afghanistan makes every attempt to continue its development and growth through their aid and support. It would try to recover the country's economy. The former President Hamid Karzai has "managed to secure large-scale Indian aid and investment without causing Islamabad to retaliate by undermining his regime or stirring up even greater unrest" (Hanauer and Chalk 2012: 39). India and Afghanistan have signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement in October 2011 and India agreed to give training Afghan military forces. Hamid Karzai assured that the accord "is not directed against any country" and argued that Pakistan is a "twin brother".

A few weeks later, Afghanistan government has accepted Islamabad's offer training facilities for Afghan forces. They are also balance the two nuclear powers of the region.

As Thomas Barfield has argued:

In a country that often cultivated a reputation for isolation and xenophobia, Afghan leaders had always proved remarkably shrewd in dealing with the outside world. Historically they negotiated even with their worst enemies if they thought they could come to a useful accommodation (2010: 221).

To wind up this chapter, the historical assessment proves that it is the incoherent relationship and unsettled issues between India and Pakistan, on the one side, and Afghanistan and Pakistan, on the other side, that have prevented them to harmonise their relationship. The instability in "Af-Pak" region has also hindered the constructive peace process and positive developments among these countries. The agreements and policies adopted by any two states among the triangular relationship have an immediate impact on and response from the other one. The diverse interests of the regional stakeholders have contributed to the regional instability, disorder, and insecurity.

Therefore, the challenges are very complex and multifarious. Without a potential trilateral engagement and cooperation, endeavours towards enduring peace, security and stability not only in this distinct sub-region but in the entire region will most likely fail. Therefore, diplomatic cooperation among these countries could be necessary to achieve success in the region. There is a need for effective cooperation in the region.