

The Influence of India in Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategic Relations

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Abstract: *This paper traces how this rivalry has molded the relationship between India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan through time. It analyzes the history of Indo-Pakistani competition in Afghanistan, particularly emphasizing how both have sought to influence Afghan politics and security. The paper further analyses India's role in Afghanistan today especially since the Taliban's fall and its impact on Pakistan's national security. Through analysis of the current situation, this paper highlights how India and Pakistan's rivalry in Afghanistan determines the region's stability. It also discusses the influence this competition might bring global peace and security. And will also point out how India's strategic influence plays a major role in determining the future of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. It seeks to show how the rivalry between India and Pakistan in Afghanistan affects the border regional and international dynamic.*

Keywords: *Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations, India-Pakistan Rivalry, Regional dynamics, Taliban etc.*

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Introduction

Since independence Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have been largely dominated by Pakistan's security concerns over India. Pakistan views India as a threat to its sovereignty at all times because of the painful experiences of partition and the notion that India has not fully accepted Pakistan's existence this mistrust between Pakistan and India has influenced Pakistan's foreign policy and shaped its relations with Afghanistan¹. Being the gateway to central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia Afghanistan has always been a country of strategic interest to global and

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regional powers. Known as the graveyard of empires because of its resistance to foreign control Afghanistan has become a focal point of regional dynamics, especially after the 9\11 attacks. India has been more actively engaged in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 considering the region crucial for its economic and strategic interest. Investment by India has focused on infrastructure development, education, healthcare, women's empowerment, and rural development thus boosting trade and fostering long-term economic ties. These efforts have enhanced India's influence in Afghanistan, particularly through its support of the Northern Alliance during the 1990s which positioned India favorably after 2001. Pakistan however views India's growing presence in Afghanistan as a threat to foreign strategic encirclement that undermines its policy of strategic depth this has led to a rivalry between two countries over Afghanistan with Pakistan seeking to counter India's influence. The Durand line disputes have also complicated Pak-Afghan ties and allowed India to strengthen its relations with Kabul. Soft power and economic investment made by India also isolated Pakistan².

India's involvement in Afghanistan is primarily driven by strategic and geopolitical interests rather than mere economic goals. Afghanistan is at a strategic location and historical competition with Pakistan provides a leeway for India to resist Pakistan's influence over this region. India sponsors an anti-Pakistan element in Afghanistan to undermine Islamabad's support for insurgencies in Kashmir and other parts of India. It also urges Afghanistan to spurn the Durand line a colonial-era border separating Afghanistan and Pakistan as part of its approach to challenge Pakistani territorial and political influence. India is concerned about this Taliban revival and its chances of motivating separatist insurgencies in India like in Kashmir and among Sikhs. To support the democratic government in Afghanistan like that of Hamid Karzai and provide considerable aid such an effort would help in stabilizing Afghanistan thwarting the Taliban from again taking power and lowering the influence of extremist ideologies that would destabilize India's social structure. Geo-economically Afghanistan is a gateway to Central Asia's vast oil and gas reserves. India wants to become a key player in regional energy projects by solidifying its presence in Afghanistan and reducing Pakistan's strategic role in these initiatives. India's positioning also aligns with U.S. efforts to develop alternative trade and energy routes that bypass China, Russia, and Iran. This alignment has strengthened the Indo-U.S. partnership which has been marked by joint military exercises nuclear agreements and coordination strategies in central and South Asia in addition to Afghanistan India is also investing in the

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region as a move to counterbalance China's rising influence. It is gaining importance geopolitically by making itself a stabilizing power and trusted partner in development. Its activities in Afghanistan secure its interests in Central Asia making it a countervailing power to China and aligning with U.S. objectives of checking regional powers such as Iran and Russia. Shared objectives of maintaining regional security preventing the spread of extremism and safeguarding maritime trade routes between India and the U.S. have further deepened their strategic partnership. India's moves in Afghanistan are designed to weaken Pakistan gain access to energy enhance its regional influence and fit into the U.S. geopolitical strategy thus becoming a player in South and Central Asian politics³.

Pakistan has throughout history been concerned with exercising influence in Afghanistan to protect its interests and counter the presence of India there. India has since 2001 developed strong ties with Afghanistan through investments and diplomatic missions that Pakistan perceived as a threat as it suspected India of aiding separatist movements in Pakistan. Good relations between India and Afghanistan have often been seen as harmful to Islamabad's security because Pakistan fears being encircled by a powerful India and a potentially hostile Afghanistan. Islamabad has long wanted a friendly government in Kabul to protect its interests but there seems to be an about-face now. The country now recognizes India's significant investments in Afghanistan and accepts India as a legitimate stakeholder given India's activities do not threaten Pakistan's security or interest this is a more pragmatic position that focuses on stability rather than rivalry⁴.

Literature Review

Scholars Larry Hanauer, and Peter Chalk argue Pakistan and India had altogether different strategies regarding Afghanistan and this has huge implications for the region including the policies of the United States. India has strategized to help strengthen Afghanistan's government and integrate the country into a broader regional political and economic structure doubt this strategy is certainly not moved by any element of selflessness but as a matter of national interests of India. India is supporting Afghanistan's government to prevent terrorism emanating from Afghan soil, protect its regional power, and gain access to the resources of Central Asia such as energy and trade. India is focused on strengthening Afghanistan as a buffer zone against terrorism and as a strategic ally while trying to limit Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan. The

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Indian approach is primarily driven by national security goals especially to curb terrorist groups targeting India. It also seeks to position India as a regional power with the ability to influence both Afghanistan and the broader South Asian region. India's support for Afghanistan through economic aid, development projects, and military assistance is in line with this broader goal of strengthening the region while also advancing India's interests. It is important to note that India's strategy does not revolve solely around Pakistan limiting Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan is a key component. Overall India's policy in Afghanistan while remaining focused on regional stability facilitating trade and infrastructure as well as securing energy supplies has aligned with this increasing role of India in the region and Pakistan's strategy is driven largely by its quest for competition with India. Pakistan's concern remains strategic depth against India. Pakistan views Afghanistan as a strategic area in which to balance Indian influence given the historical animosity between the two nations. Pakistan has thus continued to support the Taliban and other insurgent forces that advance its interests in Afghanistan. Pakistan's goal is to maintain Afghanistan as a fragile and unstable country so that it cannot be closely aligned with India. By maintaining a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan or any government that is friendly to the interests of Pakistan, Pakistan wants to keep its western neighbor under its influence and prevent India from taking a foothold in Afghanistan. This strategy is deeply ingrained in Pakistan's national security concerns and is driven by the idea of creating a buffer zone against potential Indian military which has a dominant role in decision-making and often emphasizes this security concern above all else including the development of Afghanistan or its economic prosperity. Pakistan's approach to Afghanistan, therefore, is far more focused on undermining India's influence and creating a weak Afghan state that challenges Pakistan's regional security interests. In comparison to Pakistan, India has a much more positive influence on Afghanistan. While Pakistan's involvement always brings instability and violence India's involvement has largely been focused on constructive aid. India has provided Afghanistan with development assistance such as building roads, schools, and hospitals and investing in Afghanistan's economic growth. India has also trained Afghan security forces and provided military assistance to help strengthen Afghanistan's ability to protect itself from external threats. This engagement has been welcomed by Afghanistan, especially by the Afghan government which has increasingly turned to India for support and assistance. The relationship between India and Afghanistan has evolved into one of the mutual benefits as Afghanistan sees India as a stable and reliable partner for both economic

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development and security. Instead of having an affinity for Pakistan which continues to work to destabilize the region owing to its support for militant organizations including the Taliban Afghanistan has been pushing further away from Pakistan through its relationship with India. This therefore becomes a part of broader relations where India is to take a more significant part in Afghanistan's future following security and development support provision. The United States has long played an important role in shaping the relationship between India Pakistan and Afghanistan. Since its independence, the United States has tried to find a delicate balance in terms of maintaining cordial relations with both India and Pakistan. This balancing has been extremely critical in Afghanistan due to both India and Pakistan having major stakes in this country after the September 11 attacks the U.S. looked to Pakistan for help in fighting terrorism and provided billions of dollars in military aid to Pakistan however this relationship has been tumultuous. While the U.S. has been giving aid to Pakistan it has frequently been criticized for supporting terrorist groups that targeted both U.S. and Afghan forces. This duplicity has led to growing frustration in Washington which has increasingly criticized Pakistan's role in the region. On the other hand, India has been a more reliable partner for the U.S. in terms of both counterterrorism efforts and regional stability. India has supported U.S. efforts in Afghanistan through development aid and military training for Afghan forces. The U.S. also sees India as a counterbalance to the growing influence of China in the region making an even stronger case for closer ties between the U.S. and India and the U.S. policy over the last decade has changed to favor India's role in Afghanistan it has gradually realized that India can play a more constructive role in Afghanistan's long term stability though India's engagement in Afghanistan is helpful in maintain regional stability there is also a danger connected with Pakistan and Pakistan is likely to counter any Indian efforts at increased influence within Afghanistan as directly challenging their strategic interest. India's assistance is focused on development and security⁵.

The article by Anurakshat Gupta highlights India's interest in Afghanistan. It is rooted in its desire for regional stability, economic partnership, and strategic security. Afghanistan is essential for India geographically because it connects South Asia to Central Asia and might serve as a bridge between the two regions for trade and cooperation. India has been building its presence in Afghanistan over the years by partnering with and supporting groups that stand against extremism and promote democracy. One major action was supporting the Northern Alliance a set of Afghan leaders who opposed the rule of the Taliban in the 1990s. By supporting the Northern

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Alliance India was able to establish great relationships with important leaders such as Ahmad Shah Massoud whose group possessed significant military force and authority. The influence of the Northern Alliance did however decline with the establishment of President Hamid Karzai. Later it resurfaced under the banner of the National Front of Afghanistan(NFA) spearheaded by Ahmad Zia Massoud the half-brother of Ahmad Shah Massoud. This faction vehemently denounces the Taliban and demands decentralization and a parliamentary form of government. India shares the same view as this is consistent with its stance against extremist groups such as the Taliban and in pursuit of promoting a stable and inclusive Afghanistan. India's commitment to Afghanistan began to take shape when on October 4, 2011, India signed a strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan when President Karzai visited India. It marked a milestone of long-term engagement for India with Afghanistan. For the first time, India officially declared its role in training the army and capacity building of Afghan security forces. It was not just security focused but also on enhancing trade, and economic ties, and India has agreed to invest in such projects as mining, hydrocarbon exploration, and infrastructure development which demand long-term commitment and involvement these efforts indicate India's long-term strategic approach to building a stable economically vibrant Afghanistan that suits both nations interests. Moreover, India has banked heavily on soft power to win hearts in Afghanistan. Through scholarships for higher education, cultural programs, and health-related projects India has attempted to win over the hearts and friendships of Afghan people. It is an approach quite different from the military-led strategies pursued by most other countries. The Indian emphasis on development and people-to-people relations is a reflection of the fact that it can play a positive role in Afghanistan's development. However, the Indian ambitions are facing Pakistan which has a different strategy for Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a strategic asset for Pakistan and Pakistan has always supported the Taliban in the region to maintain its influence there. By establishing ties with the Taliban Pakistan is trying to establish a buffer state against India and acquire what it calls "strategic depth" in its competition with India. The approach taken by Pakistan stands in stark contrast to the vision of a peaceful democratic and inclusive Afghanistan as held by India. When international forces withdrew Pakistan followed a "wait-and-watch" approach hoping to bring the Taliban back into power. India however is opposed to the return of Taliban power because it perceives that Taliban poses a danger to regional stability and security. The emergence of extreme forces in Afghanistan may pose an immediate threat to India itself

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because of its earlier linkage with anti-India terrorist organizations. India has an alternate approach to counter Pakistan's influence through supporting alternative political entities such as the National Front of Afghanistan and closer ties with other regional powers that share its vision for Afghanistan. Other nations such as Iran, Russia, and Central Asian nations have also voiced their concerns over the resurgence of the Taliban and could be willing to cooperate with India to counter extremism in the region. Moreover, India's investment in the economic development of Afghanistan helps to demonstrate value as a partner. India provides concrete benefits to the Afghan people by countering the influence of Pakistan. Despite these efforts, India faces several challenges in Afghanistan. The security situation remains fragile with frequent violence and instability. The Taliban's resurgence has complicated India's efforts to maintain its influence, especially in areas where the group has regained control. To start regional rivalries with rising influence with China in Afghanistan increase complexities behind this enthrallment for India to embrace. China is seen infusing its resources within Afghanistan in developing infra and mining projects there. Maintaining a balance that promotes economic investment as well as strategic partnership alongside the conduct of diplomatic relations becomes even more important to achieve against these challenges. The 2011 strategic partnership agreement between India and Afghanistan has a framework for addressing the challenges stated above including measures such as enhancing Afghanistan's security capabilities⁶.

Muhammad Amir Rana highlights the need for an impartial Afghan policy the need for a balanced Afghan policy that should not provide any preference to a particular group including the Taliban. Since the parliament is too weak to lead effectively Rana has suggested broader consultation among political parties, civil society, and security institutions. It lacks the involvement of neighboring countries and international partners has no clarity on methods to organize consultations and does not address procedures for public involvement or institutional biases. It does not suggest monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for its success. All these gaps should be filled for a wholesome and functional Afghan policy⁷.

Historical background

India and Afghanistan share a rich historical relationship with deep cultural, political, and economic ties. Historically, Afghanistan was an important center of Indian civilization influencing its religious and cultural landscape including Buddhism and Hinduism. However, with the rise of Islam in the 7th century, Afghanistan's religious and cultural dynamic shifted

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significantly. In modern times the relationship between India and Afghanistan is shaped by regional geopolitics and historical events like the Soviet invasion and the emergence of the Taliban. India was among the first non-communist countries to recognize the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan in 1979 and went on to support successive governments in Kabul until the emergence of the Taliban in the 1990s. India did not grant recognition to the Taliban regime and after the Taliban's demise in 2001, India restored full diplomatic ties with Afghanistan and became a significant regional donor raising more than \$1.2 billion for reconstruction and development. In 2005 India proposed Afghanistan's membership in the SAARC. India has strategic interests in Afghanistan. India seeks to establish regional stability in Afghanistan and prevent Pakistan's influence in the region. Afghanistan is the gateway to Central Asia^{8, 9}.

India's Strategic interests in Afghanistan

India's objectives in Afghanistan are deeply rooted in its strategy. The country wants to establish itself as a regional power and thus has the strategic goals that it wants to fulfill from Afghanistan. The most significant aim is to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a platform for anti-India terrorism because Pakistan-backed groups use the Afghan territory to infiltrate into Indian soil or diplomatic missions. India has seen several such incidents in the past such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks which were reportedly supported by groups from Pakistan. To counter this threat India supports a stable Afghanistan with a strong government that can check extremism and prevent terrorist activities from spreading into the region. Stability in Afghanistan is essential for India's national security and its larger agenda. Countering Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan is another key objective. India is suspicious of Islamabad's efforts to gain a stronghold over Afghanistan's political and security environment especially when the U.S. left Afghanistan. Pakistan's policy of keeping Afghanistan as a "strategic depth" against India has also compelled Delhi to reach closer to Afghan leaders who resist Pakistani dominance. This is because India has fostered a democratic pluralistic Afghan government that should counterbalance the Taliban. Its resurgence could inspire separatist movements in India as well as in Kashmir. India also challenges the Pakistani narrative by engaging in strong strategic ties with Afghanistan thereby limiting Islamabad's influence. Indian soft power strategy in Afghanistan also includes providing huge development aid and engaging in nation-building activities. The country seeks to win Afghan

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public support by funding schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure projects to create goodwill. This development assistance aligns with India's broader objective power in the region¹⁰.

Indian investment in Afghanistan

India has invested over \$3 billion in Afghanistan to support the country's development and welfare. The investment covers all 34 provinces and includes more than 500 projects in critical sectors like power, water supply, healthcare, education, road connectivity, and agriculture. This reflects India's commitment to the progress of Afghanistan despite the challenges the Taliban's takeover in 2021 brought about. Most of the projects that India had committed to were completed and handed over before the political change although the Taliban's control has plunged Afghanistan into a severe economic, humanitarian, and security crisis that was worsened by the suspension of foreign aid and sanctions¹¹.

A high-profile project that India undertakes is the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, which connects the town of Zaranj along the Iranian border to the Herat-Kandahar-Kabul Highway. It grants access to Afghanistan through the port city of Chabahar in Iran which India has also developed. The Chabahar Port is important for India as it allows a direct trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia without using the Pakistani route. India has upgraded the terminal facilities of the port and spent on infrastructure such as mobile harbor cranes to add to its capacity. It further intends to connect the port through a rail line from Chabahar to Zaranj, via Zahedan in Iran. These infrastructure projects are underutilized because comprehensive transport development in Afghanistan is absent. For example, although the Zaranj-Delaram Highway has enhanced economic activities in western Afghanistan, it needs to be linked with a more extensive rail network to fully benefit from it. Afghanistan had some success with railway development including the Uzbek-built Hairatan-Mazar-Herat railway which could be connected to Chabahar through Zaranj is not yet complete. The viability of the Chabahar-Zahedan-Delaram rail line would therefore rely upon cargo traffic something entirely missing presently is significantly increased. India's investments in Afghanistan's infrastructure have strategic importance beyond economic benefits. They strengthen India's connectivity with Central Asia reduce reliance on Pakistan for trade routes and support regional stability. However, achieving long-term success requires addressing gaps in Afghanistan's transport system and ensuring political stability. For

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now, these projects symbolize India's commitment to its neighbor's development despite ongoing challenges¹².

India's relation with the Taliban

India has been facing a tricky balancing act in its relationship with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban came into power in 2021 replacing the U.S.-backed Afghan government India has not made any official recognition of the Taliban government but is engaging pragmatically to protect its interests. One key issue is the power struggle over the Afghan embassy in New Delhi between representatives of the former Afghan government and the Taliban. India has asked both sides to solve the issue internally and a decision on whether it is going to extend the visa of the Taliban-appointed diplomat could indicate how it looks at the Taliban regime. India's engagement with Afghanistan is focused on humanitarian assistance and regional stability. India has airlifted large amounts of aid including wheat, medicines, and COVID-19 vaccines to the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan to reach its people. India restored a small diplomatic presence at the embassy in Kabul to coordinate humanitarian work and explore areas where they could cooperate with Taliban Afghanistan. The Taliban have demanded that India complete the unfinished infrastructure projects for Afghanistan and continue its aid effort. For India, it is a pragmatic approach Afghanistan cannot become a base for anti-India terrorism. But the relationship is complex the Taliban still maintains strong ties with Pakistan long-time rival of India. Pakistan-based terrorist groups may oppose closer India-Taliban ties. India is cautious in working with the Taliban without appearing to endorse their rules or government style. India is also competing with regional powers such as China. Which has been increasing its influence in Afghanistan through investment and trade deals¹³.

India's presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan concerns

Pakistan's policy in Afghanistan has mainly been centered around the protection of its national interest, especially through counterbalancing India's influence in Afghanistan since 2001 Pakistan has feared Indian growing influence in Afghanistan and had suspected that Indian diplomatic missions were being used for espionage against Pakistan and to fund separatist

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movements including the Baloch insurgency and TTP. for most of its history a good government in Kabul has been central to Pakistan's security it feels surrounded by India and Afghanistan and is deeply threatened by the latter since afghan history has supported Pashtun tribes in Pakistan. At the start of the soviet invasion in 1979 Pakistan provided crucial coordination of aid for the Afghan Mujahidin lining up alongside the United States and others to counter the Soviet army. Pakistan continued to support groups aligned with its strategic goals following the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1988. Islamabad has traditionally sought "strategic depth" in Afghanistan by supporting the Taliban and making sure that Kabul's government remains weak thereby limiting the influence of India. The recent development indicates a possible shift in Pakistan's approach as it now acknowledges India's role in Afghanistan due to its significant investment in the country. Pakistan seems to be fine with India's presence in Afghanistan but this is if India does not work in opposition to Pakistani interests. Pakistan also wants to defeat Afghan claims over its land by promoting trade with central Asian republics and above all undermine India's influence and maintain its leverage in the region¹⁴

India's strategy of long-term and Pakistan's short-term

India and Pakistan have taken different approaches to gaining influence in Afghanistan and how they followed through with their strategies. Primarily when the Taliban took over it appeared like Pakistan had the better shot because Pakistan was the one who helped in Taliban form their new government and Islamabad was to expect the Taliban to be playing it as an ally. However, the Taliban did not seem to take cues from Pakistan and went to support the TTP an outfit hostile to Pakistan .it set discord between the Taliban and Pakistan. India at first seemingly marginalized kept having low-level contact with the Taliban and opened its embassy in Kabul. Gradually the Taliban began to exhibit interest in the betterment of ties with India that too as a shift in the power play. India has always supported the Afghan government and has invested in development projects like schools, infrastructure, and training programs which has won it goodwill of the Afghan People in contrast Pakistan's strategy of supporting groups such as the Taliban has created long-term problems including instability and terrorism within Pakistan itself. The rivalry between India and Pakistan has extended to Afghanistan however India's strategy of long-term relationships and development projects has been much more sustainable than Pakistan's short-

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term focus on proxies. The result is that even as Pakistan seemed to have the initial advantage India's steady and strategic approach has allowed it to regain influence in Afghanistan as Pakistan grapples with the consequences of its policies¹⁵.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

Indian involvement in Afghanistan reflects its longstanding competition with Pakistan and its strategic interests in the region. India and Pakistan have competed for influence in Afghanistan since the former's independence in 1947 for political, economic, and security reasons. Pakistan perceives Afghanistan as critical to securing its security and it has wanted to restrain the presence of India there conversely India holds Afghanistan as a critical link to balancing Pakistan's influence and ensuring regional stability. India has played a constructive role in Afghanistan through economic investment, development projects, and cultural ties. It has spent more than a billion on infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and roadways which have benefited Afghan society major projects such as the Zaranj-Delaram Highway and the development of Chabahar Port in Iran created trade routes that bypass Pakistan and enhanced India's influence in the region. Education, healthcare, and cultural exchange supported by India have further helped build goodwill among the Afghan people making India a trusted partner. Pakistan's strategy had been to provide aid to the Taliban as a way to retain influence in Afghanistan and undermine India. The result of such an approach however is Afghanistan in shambles and rising militant activity in Pakistan. Not least of which has been the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan(TTP) which opposes Islamabad. Pakistan expected the Taliban to align closely with its goals but the group's support for anti-Pakistan elements has created tensions between them. India's focus on development and long-term partnerships has been more sustainable than Pakistan's reliance on proxies. Though Pakistan had initially seemed to have an advantage due to its relations with the Taliban India's steady engagement and constructive efforts have helped it regain influence in Afghanistan. This approach is also in line with India's objectives of stability prevention of terrorism and regional connectivity. India's engagement with Afghanistan under Taliban regime is pragmatic.it is giving humanitarian aid and still speaking of development without recognizing the Taliban government officially This approach serves India's interests while making it a stabilizing factor in the region.

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This paper suggests India and Pakistan should introduce policies that promote stability and peace in Afghanistan while respecting each other's interests. To Pakistan, the focus should be on a fostering stable Afghanistan rather than using it as a buffer against India. That is without promoting groups such as the Taliban which it has supported and in many ways destabilized long-term security in Pakistan. Instead, Pakistan should focus on building trust with Afghanistan by resolving issues such as the Durand line diplomatically providing development aid and respecting Afghan sovereignty. Regional cooperation is the way forward and Pakistan can benefit from engaging in joint trade and infrastructure projects with Afghanistan India and other neighbors. India should continue the development-focused approach such as investing in schools, healthcare, and infrastructure in Afghanistan, and has given goodwill among the Afghan people. India should very carefully approach the Taliban so that Afghanistan does not become a base for anti-India activities and India can strengthen its role in Afghanistan by building regional partnerships with countries like Iran, Russia, and Central Asian nations to counter extremist threats. Both countries need to shift their focus from rivalry to cooperation for regional stability. Pakistan should see Afghanistan as a partner for trade rather than a zone of conflict while India should maintain its long-term strategy of supporting Afghanistan's development and democracy by placing interest in the Afghan people ahead of the geopolitical interests both countries can put side rivalry. Afghanistan's stability benefits everyone, including economic growth, security, and peace in the region.

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