**Emerging Contour line of Recalibration with Kabul**

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Taliban is the name of a political cum religious ideology, and it is now hard to ignore the reality that has served as a strategic anchor in Islamabad’s policy. A new Afghan approach should put more of an emphasis on dialogue with both the ruling clergy government and the Afghan people. Civilian and military authorities have recently made grandiose talks for the integration of geo-economics factors into the nation’s goals for international relations, but in practice, the entire plan has remained geopolitical in nature.

This is due to the oversimplified notion that both are mutually exclusive. Yet, as geopolitical and geo-economics are not necessarily so distinct from one another, a state can change both within its overall vision. Taliban’s occupation of Afghanistan has made Pakistan’s security problems far worse. The Afghan policy creators are frustrated because the Taliban have not yet provided the government with the collaboration they had hoped for. The state’s institutions must engage the Taliban through a cooperative strategy.

The Taliban are indeed a reality, and they will not vanish anytime soon, at least not in near future. Through engagement and collaboration in the economy, they hope to increase their political leverage in the area. But they will continue to face fresh domestic and global obstacles as a result of their policies toward women, the ethnic and political opposition, and terrorist networks.

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Taliban has potentially banned female education, and Pakistan can enable Afghan female students to complete their studies in KPK. This might allow the government to launch a fresh Afghan approach, which it desperately needs following its recent setbacks with the Taliban administration. Regardless of their mindset and internal consensus, they have an equal probability of delivering about a mid- to lengthy stability or disorder in the nation. There may not be much Pakistan can do to influence or encourage the Taliban at this point. Pakistan must take a careful stance toward Afghanistan that is free from antagonism or appeasement.

A hostile stance might intensify the animosity between the two countries, and in the event that the Taliban rule is effective in setting up an order, it could return Afghanistan to its pre-Taliban state. If the Taliban lose strength, they have the capacity to revert to being an insurgent force and begin spreading terrorism regionally but also internationally. Pakistan will be the first nation impacted in the worst-case scenario.

The TTP is their closest brother in arms, although the Afghan Taliban also have a strong base of support in the neighbouring areas. Many Taliban leaders are in favour of the TTP’s plan to create a tribal emirate that follows their model. So what would Pakistan do in such a complicated situation? In regard to the TTP and border security issues, the National Security Committee has correctly asserted that the authority will engage directly with the Taliban administration. It is unnecessary to reiterate that Pakistan should reject any demands from either the Taliban or that the TTP be treated as an internal matter, but political figures and commentators should also refrain from making harsh statements about the Taliban. Such a statement exacerbates the difficulty of the bilateral dialogue process and raises the danger of terrorism.

It is also crucial that the state avoid making any signal that negotiations with TTP would resume, as this would be a sign of weakness. Border control, counterterrorism, economic cooperation, collaborative transnational involvement, and people-to-people relationships are all essential components of a cooperation-based approach. All of these elements should work together, and the policy should be reviewed on a regular basis.

In 2018, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed on a bilateral engagement strategy for security and counterterrorism under the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Unity (APAPPS). The initiative’s main goal was to take decisive action against escaped prisoners and irreconcilable elements who posed security concerns to either country. Besides avoiding blame games, both parties agreed to prevent violations of each other’s territory, whether aerial or otherwise. It is comprehensible that APAPPS was still not rigorously enforced by both parties at the moment, yet under the Taliban administration, it is a different story, and the effort can be redesigned on the model of the Taliban-US Doha deal on February 29, 2020, in Qatar, bring to an end to the 2001-2020 perennial war in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani establishment’s traditional ideal of domestic and transnational economic participation must be rationalized considering shifting geopolitics. People-to-people contact, on the other hand, should be a critical component of the policy, and it should be based on a different concept than the old mantra of religious, ethnic, and historical linkages between the two countries.

The component should always be built on a foundation of trust-building measures and actual cooperation between the populations of such two countries. Providing education to female students in universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan would not result in a culture shock for Afghan pupils.

The duty can be efficiently taken on by new public universities in regional groupings. It will have numerous benefits, ranging from satisfying the financial demands of Pakistan’s struggling public colleges to improving Pakistan’s worldwide image. Similarly, it is critical for both sides to rethink the concept of establishing commerce facilities and medical districts along the border.

It would not only assist Afghan civilians to get better health care, but it will also lessen the appeal of terrorist organizations in certain areas, among other benefits. Most importantly, bilateral dialogue should take place through official diplomatic, political, and strategic channels as opposed to informal channels including tribal elders or religious academics. The church and tribal links should only be used for confidence-building purposes, and formal involvement in any security-related problem should be avoided. The TTP and other terrorist groups have found followers among them, who normally side with them instead of the state. The approach should not favour any political factions within the Taliban or elsewhere. Who should shape the new Afghan policy, then? It is frequently argued that parliament must play a role in policy formation, however, the current parliament’s status is widely recognized, and it would serve only as a rubber stamp for the establishment.

A greater consultation among politicians, civic society, and security organizations is necessary. The connection between Pakistan and Afghanistan is idiosyncratic. We should be satisfied with the de facto acceptance of the Durand Line as the borderline and let it remain flexible. No conventional threat exists across this border, and no northern army will invade Pakistan.

You may recall that Kabul promised us stability along this borderline in 1965 and 1971. With the Soviet invasion decades ago, the Pashtunistan problem was resolved. But the example of the Afghan Taliban shows that we cannot impose our goals on the Afghan people. Our interactions with Afghanistan should be conducted in accordance with appropriate state-to-state norms.

According to current reports, Islamabad rezone is still trying to clear its obsession; on Wednesday, a strong delegation made a visit to Kabul to put up their case to the Taliban clergy de facto establishment. It is desired that the government of Afghanistan honours its promises. If TTP-led terrorist actions in Pakistan decline, the coming days will show whether the trip to Kabul was productive. Of course, there are valid arguments for being cautious.

The TTP and the Afghan Taliban have the same ideological ancestry and brother-in-arms, after all. Islamabad policymakers must keep gradual pressure and tell again the Taliban clergy rulers of their most recent talks in Kabul. The truth is that the impact of anti-terrorism measures in Pakistan will be meaningless if the TTP or other notorious outfits groups can freely move back and forwards between this country and Afghanistan.

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