India spins history for geopolitics

**Share:**

[Durdana Najam](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/5133)

September 03, 2018

Of late, India has tried to explain its relationship with Afghanistan in the context of civilization and cultural affinity. Not to forget the mention of Gandhara civilization, where, according to Indian historians, the famous Mahabharata character Gandhari lived. Studying the history of Gandhara from the Indian lens gives an impression of a state that was either Hindu or Buddhist in its origin. History takes a thousand turns and rulers change hands as often, but spinning the truth makes for a tasteless epoch.

**READ MORE:**[**Pakistan to begin ‘Socca World Cup’ journey against Spain**](https://nation.com.pk/03-Sep-2018/pakistan-to-begin-socca-world-cup-journey-against-spain)

Afghanistan had remained the centre of many invasions on India and could be the originator of any historical personality, but the country’s Islamic contours are far stronger and irrefutable. If anything, many Afghans feel natural empathy towards Pakistan than with any other regional state. Though it is purely geopolitical, India is trying to manifest its ties being historic with Afghanistan, allegedly to water down Pakistan’s Islamic ties that come naturally to both the nations.

Afghanistan is a complex country. If on the one hand, the superpowers have used the country for proxy wars, the Afghans have been equally unsympathetic towards their nation. Instead of bringing a culture of diversity and tolerance, the presence of multiple tribes has been a cause of political disruptions, leading to wars.

The end of the Cold War and the beginning of the War against Terrorism happened in Afghanistan. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan was left in the hands of different guerrilla Mujahedeen groups that landed the country from one civil war to another until the Taliban took over, however, to be thrown out again by the US in 2001. USA argued that the Taliban nurtured and supported international terrorists that felled the symbols of powers – the Twin Towers in New York and Pentagon in Virginia.

It is about time that Kabul takes responsibility for the deteriorating security situation. Each government, since the ouster of the Taliban regime, has been knee deep in corruption. President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah have been running parallel governments manned by their respective political camps. Amazingly, the US, except a few admonitions, continues to put a blind eye to the sloppy behaviour of the Afghan government.

**READ MORE:**[**Darwinism in our education system**](https://nation.com.pk/03-Sep-2018/darwinism-in-our-education-system)

For the US a confused, disrupted and war-torn Afghanistan is far suitable than a stable one. Efforts are afoot for Taliban’s political assimilation, but no efforts have been shown to combat the rising spectre of the Islamic State (IS). Russia’s concern against the IS has been viewed as a tactic to justify Moscow’s intervention in Afghanistan. More smokescreens have been generated, as India was given a free hand in the Afghan affairs on the pretext of sharing the US financial burden.

Pakistan’s security anxiety vis a vis Afghanistan would only mitigate if India’s role in Afghanistan’s political affair is diminished. Any accusation on Pakistan for providing strength to the Taliban, fighting against the western supported Kabul government, becomes immaterial when India is projected as a lead country in the Afghan affairs. Pakistan claims that India is using Afghanistan and its intelligence agencies to stoke a separatist movement in Balochistan.

India changed its foreign policy from being anti-Taliban to pro-Taliban in 2011 when the country signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with the Afghan government. This agreement expressed India’s decision to support the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process. Earlier, India had put its weight behind the Northern Alliance and Jamat-e-Islami, depending on the circumstances.

Interestingly India’s democratic credentials at home have been questioned because of Hindu Nationalist Ideology known as Hindutva. Converting Muslims and Christian to Hindu faith, while beating up and murdering people for eating beef, are just a few examples of the extremism India has displayed since the coming of Narendra Modi into power. In the first 100 days of his administration, after 2014 elections, approximately 600 instances of violence against minorities were recorded.

**READ MORE:**[**PM Imran, Army Chief discuss security matters**](https://nation.com.pk/03-Sep-2018/pm-imran-army-chief-discuss-security-matters)

In Kashmir, a new wave of violence has been unleashed to replace the Kashmiri culture and its Muslim identity with that of Hindutva. The freedom of religion laws in India are described as the ‘anti-conversion’ laws, are also under threat of being repealed in many states. The late Asma Jahangir, the UN Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom, had expressed “deep concerns” about such laws and their implications for freedom of religion in India.

Spinning history to suit its foreign and domestic policies has been India’s usual tactic to attract hegemony in the region and to align with the overall Asian policies of the superpowers. The strategic situation in a realist sense could hardly be any other than Afghanistan’s natural alliance with Pakistan, because of similarities both countries share in the religious and cultural domain. It is in this context that peace in Afghanistan is linked to Pakistan and vice versa.

Post World War II, the world has seen more ethnic and genocidal dispositions, because of the senseless lines and borders drawn to separate people of similar kinships. Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kurds and Turks and many others are just a few examples—-all still suffering from the pangs of separation. However, it is in this order that we all must learn to live and survive. Will this sanity ever prevail? This million-dollar question is for the ‘powers that be’ to answer.

**READ MORE:**[**Phone ban rings in new French school year**](https://nation.com.pk/03-Sep-2018/phone-ban-rings-in-new-french-school-year)

The writer is a freelance journalist based in Lahore.

durdananajam1@gmail.com