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# RELATIONS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN DURING THE TALIBAN REGIME (1996-2001)

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## Abstract

This article tries to study the Taliban movement and its relationship with Pakistan, which represents a part of the political processes taking place in international relations, Pakistan's ambitions in Afghanistan, the reasons for its dynamic changes and its results. The article helps to understand how the Taliban movement came to power and the role of Pakistan in this process.

**Keywords** "Great Game", Durand Line, Dream of Pakistan, Umar Okhonzade, Asif Ali Zardari, "Delta Oil", Mujahideen's military.

## INTRODUCTION

A new political situation has arisen in Afghanistan. The pro-Soviet government of M. Najibullah, who was completely deprived of foreign support in the conditions of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the sudden change of the world political landscape in the late 1980s and early 1990s, managed to manage Afghanistan only until April 1992. The difference in the new situation was that during the existence of the USSR, Afghanistan formed a single state structure, but now it was divided into zones of influence controlled by local military-political groups. It should be noted that after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, peace was not established in Afghanistan, and this gave rise to further military actions. Also, the struggle of the two great countries (USA, Russia) in Afghanistan is not over. Now the "Great Game" continued in the form of hostilities between the pro-Soviet President Muhammad Najibullah's 130,000 troops

and 7 opposition groups of 150,000 people supported by the United States and Pakistan.

By this time, the issue of preserving the integrity of the country became a cross-cutting issue for Pakistan. It is known that according to the treaty signed between Afghanistan and British India in 1893, the ethnic territory of the Pashtuns was divided into two parts by the Afghan-Pakistani border - the Durand Line. As a result, Pashtuns were more in Pakistan than in Afghanistan. The Afghan government, which claims the entire territory inhabited by Pashtuns, has never recognized the Durand Line. [1; 12] That is why Pakistan has always tried to prevent Pashtuns from uniting. Also, Pakistan was against the partition of Afghanistan by Mujahideen. The main reason for this is that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Pakistan was able to establish economic cooperation with the young countries of Central

Asia. During this period, young independent countries need new transport corridors to import their fuel and energy resources, and Pakistan expressed its readiness to provide them access to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. For this purpose, a plan to create a railway network between Pakistan and Central Asia was developed in Islamabad, as well as a pipeline project for the delivery of Turkmen oil and gas to Pakistan. [2; 56]

### **METHOD**

If these plans were successfully implemented, official Islamabad would gain economic and political benefits, since Pakistan would become the full "owner" of all the main transport corridors of Central Asia, since all transport communications passed through its territory. Therefore, Afghanistan, which was divided in the mid-1990s, was the only serious obstacle on the way to the "Dream of Pakistan".

To overcome this, Pakistan had to solve the disunity in Afghanistan and ensure that a government dependent on Islamabad came to power. After many years of war, such a task could only be carried out by military force. However, this could not be done due to the military and political situation in Afghanistan in 1992-1994. It is known that the disintegration of Afghanistan and the destruction of state institutions as a result of the civil war do not allow to restore the unity of the country simply by strengthening one of the existing military-political groups. [3; 9] At this time, Pakistan could not allow direct military intervention of its army, thinking of straining the relations with the countries of Central Asia. Because the planned pipeline would connect Pakistan with these countries.

Thus, in order for the conditions in Afghanistan to develop in accordance with the interests of Pakistan, it will be necessary to create a completely new force that exceeds the combined capabilities of all Afghan groups with military potential in the

country. At such a time, the "Taliban" movement turned out to be such a force. This action was mentioned for the first time when "Taliban" detachments occupied the city of Kandahar in 1994. At first, the Taliban meant the students of madrassas located mainly in the Pashtun areas of Pakistan (North-West Province and Baluchistan). In the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas, madrassas were opened specifically to train Afghan refugees and mujahideen, most of whom were orphaned boys brought from Afghanistan by Pakistani intelligence and considered Pashtuns. They received military training in camps near Peshawar and were taught to conduct jihad "which consists of military actions against infidels". These formed the basis of the emerging "Taliban" movement.

Also, according to the former chief of the general staff of the armed forces of Pakistan, General Mirza Aslam Bek, such a system of madrassas, which provides special training to the Taliban, was established by Pakistan and the United States "along the Afghan-Pakistani border to support the fighting spirit of the Mujahideen." [4; 127] It was formed as a religious-ideological belt. By the beginning of the 90s, more than 80,000 Afghan "intransigents" were educated in these madrasas.[5; 198] Although several leaders of the "Taliban" movement participated in the "jihad" organized by the USA against the USSR, this movement was not considered an association of mujahideen. They were trained in the camps of Afghan refugees in the North-Eastern region of Pakistan and did not participate in the battles of the 1980s.

In the 1990s, the resumption of civil war in Pakistan killed 3 million people. did not allow Afghan refugees to return to their homeland. The "Taliban" movement was formed mainly from these refugees, most of whom were born and grew up in refugee camps. Ahmad Rashid, one of the

authors who dealt with the problem of the Taliban, describes the situation at that time as follows: "These young men are the Mujahideen I knew in the 1980s - they are able to tell detailed stories about their tribe and clan, their abandoned farms and It was a world apart from the men who remembered the valley and could tell legends and stories from the history of Afghans. These young men were considered to be from the generation of those who had never seen their homeland in peacetime, who had never seen Afghanistan in a state of war against invaders or against its own people... They had no roots and no work, they were war orphans who were economically poor and had a weak sense of identity..". [6; 30] At the same time, the Taliban movement was not just a product of governments and vested interests. This new movement emerged in 1994 as a result of two factors:

First, as a result of social and political desperation that created soldiers ready to go into battle;

Second, it suddenly emerged, rapidly developed, and achieved military success with the help of external financial, arms, and advisory services from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

In 1994, the political leadership of this movement was gathered from people who do not belong to the traditional elite system of Afghan society. In particular, the political leader - Muhammad Umar Okhunzade, who was previously considered one of the field commanders of the Mujahideen, and another of the founders of the movement was Abdurrahman, who sought refuge in Pakistan when the Soviets entered the country. In addition, among the leaders of the "Taliban" there was Shah Sarwar, who was in charge of the intelligence unit under the Soviet command, Muhammad Akbar, a former official of the secret communist police department, and General Muhammad Gilani. From this point of view, the "Taliban" movement, made up of people who do not have stable connections in Afghan

society for various reasons, with the support of Pakistan, is trying to establish order in Afghanistan, eliminate its disintegration, and transport to the Central Asian region. It can be assumed that he can perform the task of opening the corridor. In doing so, it was important for official Islamabad to remain true to the main goals of Pakistani politics.

## **RESULTS**

Taliban movement has exerted an ideological influence on ordinary people, presenting itself as a religious movement committed to eliminating the evil that is being done to ordinary people. "The simple belief in Islam, instilled in their minds by ordinary village mullahs, was the only support they could hope for and gave some meaning to their lives," one researcher wrote about the ordinary Taliban. These people, who are not ready for anything, and are not even aware of the traditional occupations of their ancestors, such as farming, cattle breeding, or profession, were the weak social stratum of Afghanistan". The ideology of the "Taliban" movement was considered a mixture of ideas developed with this layer in mind.

In fact, the program of the Taliban based on the ideas of "Pure Islam" was completely formed during the time of Benazir Bhutto (prime minister of Pakistan in 1994). He admitted that during his time, the movement was provided with large-scale military and financial support from the United States, Britain, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It was after that that the Taliban managed to enter Afghanistan and make a triumphant march towards the north, where there was a fight among the Mujahideen's military (field) commanders. It should be noted that the official reason for the appearance of the Taliban movement on the Afghan political scene is well known. "One of the big Pakistani businessmen, the former president of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari (husband of Benazir Bhutto) sent the first test convoy to Central Asia through Afghanistan, and this convoy was looted

by the Afghan Mujahideen.” [7; 2] Soon after, in 1994, Taliban forces attacked the southern regions of the Mujahideen, controlled by a large number of independent militia commanders, mostly ethnic Pashtuns, and captured the city of Kandahar and large parts of the southern provinces, where the population is mainly Pashtun.

## **DISCUSSION**

After the Taliban entered the country, supporters of “pure Islam”, known as “Wahhabis”, opposed the combination of secular and religious management of the Muslim society and began to fight against the traditional elite of the Muslim society. For example, on March 12, 1995, the head of Hazari Shiite party “Hizbi Wahdat” Abdulla Ali Mazari was killed by the Taliban. After the capture of Kabul, on September 26, 1996, the former president of the country, Najibullah, was hanged.

The military success of the “Taliban” movement was an expression of the presence of foreign partners of this movement. In the conditions of the long-standing balance of power and the ongoing civil war, all military resources are well known, and additional opportunities could come only from outside the country. At the same time, in less than a year, the Taliban movement can field more than 20,000 well-organized fighters, equipped with tanks and artillery, receiving air support and controlling many regions of southern and western Afghanistan. became a paramilitary group.

As noted by Afghan scholar Martin Evenc: “It is incredible that the Taliban, a force composed mainly of ex-guerrillas and unprofessional students, could operate with the level of skill and organization it has demonstrated almost from the beginning of its movement.” Among its members, no doubt, are former representatives of the Afghan armed forces, but the speed and skill of their offensive operations, as well as the quality of their communications, aerial bombing and artillery fire, made them stand out against the Pakistani military

or at least, inevitably leads to the conclusion that they are indebted to them for their professional help.[ 8; 182] In addition, Saudi Arabia has been continuously supporting the Taliban movement financially and materially. By mid-1996, Saudi Arabia began sending money, vehicles, and fuel to Kabul to support Taliban attacks. In fact, the Saudi oil company “Delta Oil” is a partner of the “Unocal” company in the estimated project of the pipeline, and the victory of the “Taliban” movement was very necessary for its construction.[9; 84]

Thus, the “Taliban” movement initially captured Kandahar and the southern regions where there are more Pashtuns. However, instead of attacking Kabul, the Taliban directed the main attack in the northwest direction, towards the Turkmen-Afghan border. Because the Taliban faced resistance from the army of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud on the outskirts of Kabul. But the main reason is different, “the Taliban crossed the Kandahar-Herat road, that is, the part of the main highway that should connect Pakistan with Central Asia, which belongs to Afghanistan. Interestingly, in the summer of 1994, the railway construction project from the city of Kushka in Turkmenistan to the city of Chaman in Pakistan was approved. This branch was supposed to pass through the western provinces of Afghanistan through Herat and Kandahar. After some time, the Taliban appeared here.”

## **CONCLUSION**

Assessing the current situation in Afghanistan, we can come to the following conclusions. Afghanistan has become a field of criminal activities, a hotbed of international terrorism and extremism, and the main country where narcotics are cultivated during the period of increased control of the Taliban. The situation is becoming more and more tense, and the risk of military actions spreading to other countries in the region is increasing.

Anyone who thinks that the Afghan conflict is only a local and regional tension is completely

wrong. This issue is becoming a huge problem that threatens the peace and tranquility of other regions and peoples located far from Afghanistan.

Today, one truth is becoming increasingly clear to all of us. That is, the reason why there is no end to the war that has been going on in Afghanistan for many years, and peace is not being established in the fragile Afghan land, is the conflict of strategic and geopolitical interests of the world's most powerful and powerful countries. is becoming increasingly clear. Perhaps that is why the work related to the solution of the Afghan problem does not go beyond many discussions and the announcement of various sanctions.

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