

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Taut Bataut

28.05.2025

Shifting Alliances and Rising Tensions:

The Evolving Dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have long been marred by profound distrust and allegations. However, China being the new superpower, has mediated between the two sides to achieve regional stability and peace.



Deterioration of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations Post-Taliban Takeover

Soon after the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan deteriorated due to cross-border terrorism and the interim Afghan government's support to terrorist organizations like TTP and BLA. Pakistan holds that the Taliban government has provided safe havens to terrorist organizations that attack its civilians and military personnel. Pakistan also conducted airstrikes, targeting terrorist sanctuaries, inside Afghan airspace. These events eroded bilateral trust.

China mediated peace negotiations between Pakistan and Afghanistan

The Afghan Taliban held that these airstrikes were a violation of the sovereignty of their country. The two sides also exchanged fires along their border. Moreover, the Afghan Taliban's irredentist claim over some Pakistani cities further deteriorated their relations. Over the past few years, relations between the two sides reached a new nadir. Despite Pakistan's unequivocal support to Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover, the latter followed a hard approach towards the former.

TTP and BLA conducted numerous attacks inside Pakistan using Afghan soil. Pakistani officials reported that these organizations had gained access to the NATO weapons, which the US troops left behind during its hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan. This military equipment has increased the capabilities of these terrorist organizations. Pakistan accuses the Taliban government of providing these weapons to these terrorist organizations.

India's Strategic Engagement with Afghanistan and Regional Implications

India saw this Pak-Afghan rift as an opportunity and engaged with the interim Taliban government, raising security concerns for Islamabad. Pakistani officials had been anxious about this partnership. During the recent military standoff between India and Pakistan, some reports of alleged anti-Pakistan cooperation between New Delhi and Kabul also emerged. Terrorist attacks in the Balochistan province of Pakistan also increased during the recent war between Pakistan and India. These developments further increased the concerns of Pakistani officials about regional stability and peace.

Historically, Pakistan has looked towards Afghanistan as a strategic depth. This approach was erroneous in itself as the latter sought to be treated as an ally, not as a proxy. Moreover, almost all the factions in Afghanistan see Pakistan with suspicion due to its support to the United States in the so-called War on Terror (WoT). Despite hosting the largest number of Afghan refugees during this war, Islamabad's ill-witted policies have resulted in deep-rooted hatred among the Afghani population against Pakistan.

Due to this hatred and tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the former has faced a two-front rivalry in recent years. The recent meeting between the Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar and Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Minister of the interim Taliban government in Afghanistan, led to further agitation among Pakistani officials. The latter saw it as a threat to its security and regional sovereignty.

China's Role as a Mediator and the Path to Trilateral Cooperation

The Pakistani government countered this move by negotiating with the Taliban government. China mediated these negotiations between its two regional partners. Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met Amir Khan Muttaqi in Beijing. The two sides agreed to upgrade their

bilateral ties. According to Wing Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister, “Afghanistan and Pakistan expressed a clear willingness to elevate diplomatic relations and agreed in principle to exchange ambassadors as soon as possible. China welcomes this and will continue to provide assistance for the improvement of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations.”

The Taliban regime in Afghanistan has long been striving to gain international legitimization. However, the United States is exerting pressure on its Western allies to isolate the interim Taliban government in Afghanistan. Numerous international NGOs and human rights organizations have warned of a looming humanitarian crisis due to this isolation. Only Russia, China, and the UAE established formal ties with the Taliban government, helping it avoid the looming humanitarian crisis.

Since the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul, Pakistan has voiced its concerns over the isolation of Afghanistan and its humanitarian repercussions. Pakistan’s former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto also urged the world to engage with the interim Taliban government to avoid a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s willingness to maintain fraternal ties has always been marred by cross-border terrorism. The recent meeting between Indian and Afghan foreign ministers has further increased Pakistan’s need to restore ties with Afghanistan.

Both China and Pakistan consider India a US regional proxy in South Asia. Therefore, they seek to strengthen their regional ties to counter India. In this pursuit, China mediated peace negotiations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to international media, the officials of the three countries also discussed the expansion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan. This move will not only strengthen this trilateral alliance but will also help in maintaining enduring regional peace. Moreover, it will also help Pakistan to reach Central Asian markets, a move that will boost its economy.

These developments are alarming for India, as it is rapidly losing regional influence. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, Bhutan, and Laos are already under Chinese influence. India’s relationship with Iran is also under threat due to its strong diplomatic and economic relations with Israel. The Indian government will have to re-evaluate its foreign policy to strengthen its relations with regional countries. Otherwise, it would have to suffer from regional isolation amid growing Chinese influence.

Taut Bataut, May 27, 2025

Taut Bataut – is a researcher and writer that publishes on South Asian geopolitics