

The Impact of India-Pakistan Rivalry on Peacebuilding Process in Afghanistan

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Thesis Abstract

This research examines the role of India and Pakistan in the Afghan conflict by addressing the following research question: “how has rivalry between India and Pakistan undermined the internationally–supported peacebuilding process in post-2001 Afghanistan?”. The central argument of this paper is that the Afghan conflict is more than a local power struggle between competing Afghan groups because external factors, particularly the India-Pakistan rivalry, permeates internal struggles and undermines Afghanistan’s stability, economic growth, and regional integration. For the purpose of the main argument of this research, India and Pakistan have projected their conflict into Afghanistan by considering it as a strategic value in their geopolitical, security and economic calculations. However, despite the fact that the India-Pakistan rivalry has been a major determinant in Afghanistan’s peace and stability, the prospects for cooperation between the two rival states in Afghanistan has been a neglected element in almost all proposals for peacebuilding efforts, and for that reason, it has attracted less attention of scholarly literature in and outside South Asia. What considerably distinguishes this research from the existing studies is its particular focus on the implications of the India-Pakistan rivalry for the Afghan peacebuilding process by testing the validity of the theoretical framework of liberal peace.

Introduction

In post-2001 era, the presence of thousands of international forces and spending of billions of dollars have not necessarily stabilised Afghanistan in a way that its people live in peace, safety and prosperity. The security situation and uncertainty about the future of the country has been further complicated by the transition process through which the full transfer of responsibility for security of the country was handed over to the Afghan security forces as the United States (U.S.) and allies withdrew their combat troops from Afghanistan in December 2014.¹ With the transition of international forces from a combat role to an advisory mission, there are significant concerns about the international community's long-term commitment to peacebuilding in Afghanistan and the ability of the Afghan government to survive the post-2014 situation.

The current turmoil in Afghanistan is the continuation of a four-decade long conflict, which has been caused by a combination of numerous internal and external factors. Internal confrontations among various competing Afghan groups, who are divided along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines, have always been a central feature of the conflict in Afghanistan. Throughout the course of conflict in the past four decades, resorting to violence has become an essential tool for competing Afghan groups to promote their political interests in the fragmented society.²

In addition, external factors have also contributed equally to the persistence of the Afghan conflict because Afghanistan's location at the crossroads of the three important regions of South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia has significantly raised the country's strategic importance for both global and regional powers. During most of the Cold War period, the U.S. and the Soviet Union competed for

¹ Sultan Barakat & Brooke Smith-Windsor, *Post-ISAF Afghanistan: the early months* (Brookings Doha Center, Qatar, 2015), pp. 2-4.

² Astri Suhrke, Kristian B. Harpviken & Arne Strand, 'After Bonn: conflictual peace building', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 5 (2002), pp. 880-81.

influence in Afghanistan, which resulted in the military invasion of the country by the Soviet Union in 1979. Following the Soviet invasion in the 1980s, Afghanistan became a battle ground for the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul and the U.S.-sponsored mujahidin who were provided territorial sanctuary by Pakistan.³

Although the country lost its strategic importance after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet-backed regime in 1992, the Afghan conflict persisted in the 1990s between various Afghan competing groups, supported by neighbouring and regional states. The Afghan conflict reached another turning point by attracting the attention of the U.S. and the world when the mujahidin-led government of Afghanistan expelled from power in September 1996, and the Taliban, a Pakistani-backed “ultra-fundamentalist Islamic group”, captured Kabul and established the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan.⁴ These developments resulted in the increased economic and military support of Russia, India and Iran to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, led by Ahmad Shah Massoud, the then Defence Minister of the mujahidin government.

In the late 1990s, apart from their divergent views on political developments in Afghanistan, the U.S., the European Union, Russia, India, Iran and Central Asian states found common ground in their opposition to the Taliban regime to contain the strong presence of al-Qaeda and other international terrorists in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the Afghan conflict entered into a new era of extensive global engagement after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the U.S., which were carried out by al-Qaeda that was afforded territorial sanctuary by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.⁵ Although most of regional and neighbouring states

³ Shahram Akbarzadeh, ‘India and Pakistan's geostrategic rivalry in Central Asia’, *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2003), p. 223.

⁴ Amin Saikal, ‘The role of outside actors in the Afghanistan conflict’, in C Noelle-Karimi, C Schetter & R Schlagintweit (eds.), *Afghanistan: a country without a state?* (IKO Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Frankfurt and London, 2002), pp. 217-19.

⁵ Meirav Mishali-Ram, ‘Afghanistan: a legacy of violence? internal and external factors of the enduring violent conflict’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2008), pp. 482.

involved in the Afghan conflict, including India and Pakistan, supported the U.S.-led military intervention to topple the Taliban regime, in the post-2001 era they have continued to use the Afghan stage to contest their power and advance their influence.

For the purpose of the central argument of this research, the Afghan conflict is more than a local power struggle between competing Afghan groups: The external factors, particularly with reference to the India-Pakistan rivalry, permeates internal struggles and undermines Afghanistan's stability, economic growth, and regional integration. The India-Pakistan rivalry has been shaped by the legacy of a conflictual relationship in which unresolved territorial disputes, competing national identities, security competition, and confrontation over economic resources are some of the central contributing factors. Since their independence from Great Britain in 1947, India and Pakistan have fought three major wars, and have been involved in numerous militarised interstate disputes.⁶

The tension and conflict between India and Pakistan have persisted through changes in their governments, political parties and leaders of both countries in a variety of different forms, including unofficial fighting by their proxies in and outside their territories. As part of their rivalry, both India and Pakistan have used the Afghan stage as a preferred venue of competition and projection of power because Afghanistan is considered as a strategic value in their geopolitical, security and economic calculations.⁷

For India, Afghanistan is considered as a crucial element in its growing efforts to consolidate strategic power beyond the Indian subcontinent because India's capacity to effectively deal with challenges in its immediate neighbourhood would have significant effects on its emergence as a new great power. In this context,

⁶ John Mitton, *Regional realities: the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry as an obstacle to success in Afghanistan* (Dalhousie University Halifax, Canada, 2010), p. 35.

⁷ Harsh V. Pant, 'India in Afghanistan: a test case for a rising power', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2010), p. 151.

India's involvement in Afghanistan is primarily to maintain its strategic interests in the broader South-Central Asia in which minimising Pakistan's influence in the Afghan affairs plays an important role.⁸ In the post-2001 period, India has successfully developed relations with Afghanistan to ensure that a stable and multi-ethnic representative government in Kabul would prevent Pakistani-backed Islamist militants from spilling over into its territory.

On the other hand, Pakistan views Afghanistan from an India-centric perspective by seeking a dominant role for the Taliban in a weak Afghan government to prevent India's power projection in South-Central Asia, undermine Indian interests in the region, and preserve use of Afghan territory as a strategic asset in its rivalry with India. Pakistan perceives that an Indian-friendly Afghan government would enable India to create a serious backdoor threat to Pakistan by supporting separatist groups within its borders.⁹ In the past 15 years, apart from constant pressure by the international community, Pakistan has continued to support the Taliban and other insurgent groups as an alternative to the current government of Afghanistan.

To evaluate the India-Pakistan's challenge to peace in Afghanistan, this research aims to address the following research question: "how has rivalry between India and Pakistan undermined the internationally-supported peacebuilding efforts in post-2001 Afghanistan?". The central research question will be broken down into a number of inter-connected sub-questions which will be addressed in the subsequent chapters of this research. In doing so, a qualitative case study methodology is adopted to conduct this research by using a variety of secondary data sources. This methodology helps facilitate exploration of the Afghan conflict within the India-Pakistan rivalry by investigating various contributing factors to the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process.

⁸ John Mitton, 'The India–Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan', *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, vol. 69, no. 3 (2014), p. 364.

⁹ Sumit Ganguly, 'India's role in Afghanistan', in *Sources of tension in Afghanistan and Pakistan: a regional perspective* (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Spain, 2012), pp. 4-5.

What considerably distinguishes this research from the existing studies is its particular focus on the implications of the India-Pakistan rivalry for peacebuilding in post-2001 Afghanistan. Despite the fact that the India-Pakistan rivalry has been a major determinant in Afghanistan's stability, economic growth and regional integration, the prospects for cooperation between the two rival states has been a neglected element in almost all proposals for peacebuilding in Afghanistan, and for that reason, it has attracted less attention of scholarly literature in and outside South Asia.

To fill the gap in the literature, this research's central focus is on examining the impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on peace and stability in Afghanistan because the dynamics of the India-Pakistan relationship and Afghanistan's place within their relationship are considered as necessary components of evaluating the challenges of the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process. The contribution this research offers to the scholarly literature is the idea of bilateral cooperation between India and Pakistan as a way forward for building sustainable peace in Afghanistan, and greater regional cooperation in South Asia, instead of just stopping with the violent effects of their rivalry.

In conducting this research, the validity of liberal peace theory will be tested to understand whether this theoretical framework offer necessary explanations and relevant insights into examining the India-Pakistan's challenge to peace in Afghanistan. In doing so, the primary hypothesis of this research is based upon the notion that liberal peace in the context of its three core propositions of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions might offer comprehensive insights into understanding the India-Pakistan rivalry, their rivalry's impact on Afghanistan, and the prospects for their mutual cooperation in Afghanistan.

From this theoretical perspective, the pacifying effects of democracy lies in the notion that democratic states rarely engage in conflict with each other as they are

inherently more peaceful than authoritarian regimes due to a number of normative and structural factors.¹⁰ Additionally, inter-state cooperation can easily be translated into economic interdependence and mutual benefits, which reduce the risk of conflict and increase the prospects for peaceful behaviours.¹¹ Moreover, membership in regional and international institutions enables states to develop peaceful relations among themselves as institutionalised mechanisms help them resolve their insecurities and enhance mutual cooperation.¹²

The structure of this research is organised into four chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the methodology used to conduct this research, explanations of the adopted theoretical frameworks, and a brief literature review of existing scholarly studies. The central focus of this chapter is to highlight relevance, strengths and weaknesses of existing studies in relation to the theoretical concepts, major debates and scholarly analyses on the India-Pakistan rivalry, its impact on Afghanistan, and their possible cooperation for a peaceful Afghanistan.

Chapter Two evaluates the effects of internal and external factors on peacebuilding efforts in post-2001 Afghanistan. The chapter focuses primarily on the negative outcomes of deep power struggles between Afghan ethnic groups as well as the competing geopolitical, economic and security interests of external powers. For the purpose of the central argument of this chapter, despite the investment of an immense amount of human and financial capital by the international community in the past 15 years, Afghan peacebuilding efforts have largely been unsuccessful because of the damaging interplay between internal and external factors.

¹⁰ Bhumitra Chakma, 'Liberal peace and South Asia', *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 3 (2014), pp. 188-89.

¹¹ Timothy M. Peterson, 'Dyadic trade, exit costs, and conflict', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 58, no. 4 (2014), pp. 565-66.

¹² Charles Boehmer, Erik Gartzke & Timothy Nordstrom, 'Do intergovernmental organizations promote peace?', *World Politics*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2004), pp. 6-7.

Chapter Three evaluates the implications of the India-Pakistan rivalry for peacebuilding in Afghanistan. The central argument of this chapter is that both India and Pakistan have used Afghanistan as a preferred venue for strategic competition, which has significantly contributed to the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process. In fact, the projection of the India-Pakistan conflict into Afghanistan has had significant implications for the country's security, political stability, economic growth and regional integration as both rival states have continuously attempted to pursue their competing geopolitical, security and economic interests.

Chapter Four examines the prospects for India-Pakistan cooperation in Afghanistan by testing the three core propositions of liberal peace theory. The central argument of this chapter is that the India-Pakistan rivalry has been so enduring due to the absence of a liberal peace order in their relationship, which has also undermined peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan. This chapter concludes that liberal peace offers an impressive entry point to the notion that strengthening a liberal order in the Indian-Pakistani relationship would enable the two countries to normalise their relations, reconcile their decades-long differences, and cooperate with each other for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The research will conclude that the India-Pakistan rivalry, alongside other internal and external factors, has significantly undermined peacebuilding efforts in post-2001 Afghanistan. While the role of India has been positive as it has supported Afghanistan's reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts, Pakistan has mostly played a destabilising role by supporting the Taliban to return back to power as an alternative to the Afghan government. The research will further conclude that the possibility of conflict resolution between India and Pakistan, and their possible mutual cooperation in Afghanistan is still possible if the two countries are able to transform their relationship based on the three core propositions of liberal peace theory.

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter explains the methodology used to conduct this research and the primary data collection procedure by which secondary data sources are collected and reviewed to support the main arguments, overall analyses and certain conclusions of the research. The chapter also provides a brief literature review of existing studies about the theoretical frameworks of realism, liberalism and liberal peace by looking at the India-Pakistan's challenge to peace in Afghanistan, and the potential of liberal peace in offering relevant insights into the prospects for cooperation between India and Pakistan.

The central focus of this chapter is to highlight key findings of the existing scholarly literature to guide the research in subsequent chapters by addressing the following sub-questions, which are related to the central research question: 1) Does liberal peace theory provide compelling explanations to understand multiple facets of the India-Pakistan rivalry? 2) Does the absence of a liberal peace order in the India-Pakistan relationship allow the two rival states to use Afghanistan as a preferred venue for competition?

1. Research Methodology

A qualitative case study methodology is adopted for conducting this research. This methodology is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context by investigating and analysing a single or collective case to capture the complexity of the topic of study.¹³ In this research, the phenomenon is the Afghan conflict and the context is the India-Pakistan rivalry, with a case study focusing on the impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on peacebuilding in Afghanistan. To investigate the role of India and Pakistan in

¹³ Pamela Baxter & Susan Jack, 'Qualitative case study methodology: study design and implementation for novice researchers', *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2008), pp. 544-45.

frustrating peacebuilding in Afghanistan, this methodology helps situate the topic of study in a complex setting in which multiple secondary data sources are collected and evaluated to support the relevant arguments, analyses and conclusions. The sources selected for conducting this research include scholarly analysis, expert commentary, government and international organisations documents, statement from government officials, and newspaper reports.

The procedure of data collection and data analysis in this methodology is fairly flexible because there is no fixed end point in the scope and extent of data collection and analysis. This is because it involves a detailed investigation into the collected data to evaluate the phenomenon within its context by testing the validity and applicability of an adopted theoretical framework.¹⁴ Likewise, this methodology is considered very practical when the focus of a research is to answer “how” and “why” questions. This is why applying this methodology fits well into the purpose, statement of problem and scope of this research which has a central research question and a number of inter-connected and relevant sub-questions, all starting with “how” and “why” questions.¹⁵

Additionally, this methodology ensures that the implications of the India-Pakistan rivalry for Afghanistan’s stability, economic growth and regional integration are not solely explored through one lens but rather a variety of lenses to understand multiple internal and external contributing factors to the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process.¹⁶ This means that the India-Pakistan’s challenge to peace in Afghanistan will be evaluated by examining various causes of their decades-long rivalry and the reasons behind projection of their conflict into Afghanistan. A further advantage of this methodology is that the primary focus of the research on

¹⁴ Chih-en Hsieh, *Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative case study research* (University of Leicester Publishing, Leicester, UK, 2004), p. 93.

¹⁵ Baboucarr Njie & Soaib Asimiran, ‘Case study as a choice in qualitative methodology’, *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2014), p. 36.

¹⁶ Baxter & Jack, qualitative case study methodology, p. 545.

the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident at the beginning of the study because at the earlier stages of the research it is not clear to what extent the India-Pakistan rivalry has frustrated the Afghan peacebuilding process.¹⁷

2. Literature Review

The literature review for this research evaluates existing secondary data sources in relation to theoretical concepts, major debates and scholarly analyses on the impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on peacebuilding in Afghanistan. First, the review examines briefly the existing literature on peace, inter-state cooperation and conflict from the perspectives of the theoretical frameworks of realism and liberalism followed by an in-depth evaluation of the potential of liberal peace theory in explaining multiple facets of the India-Pakistan rivalry. Second, the review evaluates studies associated with the India-Pakistan's challenge to peace in Afghanistan by focusing on the projection of their conflict into Afghanistan as a preferred venue of strategic competition. Finally, the review provides an overview of the key findings in the literature to highlight the relevance, strengths and weaknesses of existing studies.

2.1. Realism

The realist approach to international politics focuses attention on the importance of power in the relations between states. Realism characterises the structure of international system as anarchic not just because of the absence of a global hierarchical system to coordinate world politics, but also due to the fact that sovereign states are not required to submit to a higher power.¹⁸ Realist scholars stress that a state of conflict and tension shapes the feature of world politics in a

¹⁷ Hsieh, strengths and weaknesses of qualitative case study research, pp. 90-91.

¹⁸ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of international politics* (McGraw-Hill, New York, United States, 1979), p. 91; Cameron G. Thies, 'Are two theories better than one? A constructivist model of the neorealist-neoliberal debate', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2004), p. 161; Rajesh Rajagopalan, 'Neorealist theory and the India-Pakistan conflict-I', *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 22, no. 9 (1998), p. 1263.

way that relations among sovereign states are mainly influenced by constant insecurities, dangers and threats. This forces states to establish a self-help system for prioritising their perceived national interests and seeking their survival because states must help themselves and be distrustful of one another in the absence of a world government.¹⁹ These analyses of world politics lead realist scholars to conclude that states are the most important and dominant actors in the international system in the absence of an over-arching international authority.

In the meantime, the realist thought stresses that states seek to form alliances with each other to ensure that there is a balance of power amongst them. The primary aim is to prevent a hegemon from emerging that has the capability to dominate all of them and replace a system of anarchy with one of hierarchy.²⁰ For this reason, a balance of power is considered as the appropriate response to threatening concentrations of power in the hands of other states as states seek to increase their power capabilities in order to counter the growing strength of other states.²¹ Additionally, realist scholars believe that international norms and institutions are bound by the restrictions of the anarchical structure of the international system, and are less capable of convincing states to cooperate with each other for promoting peaceful relations. This is mainly because under conditions of anarchy, power trumps all other considerations in a way that powerful states determine the content and form of norms and institutions, and when power shifts so do norms and institutions associated with them.²²

¹⁹ Waltz, theory of international politics, pp. 91-94; Joseph M. Grieco, 'Anarchy and the limits of cooperation: a realist critique of the newest liberal institutionalism', *International Organization*, vol. 42, no. 3 (1988), p. 488.

²⁰ Jack Donnelly, 'Realism', in S Burchill, A Linklater, R Devetak, J Donnelly, T Nardin, M Paterson, C Reus-Smit & J True (eds.), *Theories of International Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2009), p. 36; Tim Dunne & Brian C. Schmidt, 'Realism', in J Baylis, S Smith & P Owens (eds.), *The globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2011), p. 93; Christopher Layne, 'Kant or Cant: the myth of the democratic peace', *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1994), p. 11.

²¹ Michael Walzer, *Just and unjust wars: a moral argument with historical illustrations* (Basic Books, New York, 2006), p. 77; Colin Elman, 'Realism', in PD Williams (ed.), *Security studies: an Introduction* (Routledge, New York and London, 2008), p. 21.

²² Waltz, theory of international politics, pp. 104-05; Adam R. C. Humphreys, *Kenneth Waltz and the limits of explanatory theory in international relations* (Department of Politics and International Relations, University of

From a realist perspective, the India-Pakistan hostility is usually defined as an “enduring rivalry”²³ shaped by the legacy of decades-long conflict in which some of the central features are persistent security competition, unresolved territorial disputes, competing national identities, and confrontation over economic and environmental resources.²⁴ Since the end of the British colonial rule in 1947 and subsequent partition of the Indian subcontinent into two independent states of India and Pakistan, both states have fought three major wars (1947-48, 1965, 1971), and have been involved in numerous militarised inter-state disputes.²⁵

However, while the India-Pakistani rivalry fits well into the core explanations of realism, there is limited possibility of mutual cooperation between the two countries from this theoretical perspective because of the centrality of threat perceptions and inevitability of security competition. This can be understood in the articulation of Kenneth Waltz, who stresses that despite political, economic and military interdependence of states with one another, the dominant anarchical structure of the international system constrains significantly mutual cooperation.²⁶ As such, the realist pathway doesn’t offer an optimistic view of the India-Pakistan relationship and their possible mutual cooperation for peace in Afghanistan. This is because

Oxford, UK, 2006), pp. 5-6; Gunther Hellmann & Reinhard Wolf, ‘Neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and the future of NATO’, *Security Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1993), p. Autumn, p. 7; Arthur A. Stein, ‘Neoliberal institutionalism’, in C Reus-Smit & D Snidal (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook on international relations* (Oxford University Press, New York, US, 2008), p. 206.

²³ According to T. V. Paul, “enduring rivalry is defined as a conflict between two or more states that lasts more than two decades with several militarised inter-state disputes. Enduring rivalry is characterised by a persistent, fundamental, and long term incompatibility of goals between the involved states”. (T. V. Paul, ‘Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry’, in TV Paul (ed.), *The India-Pakistan conflict: an enduring rivalry* (Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2006), pp. 3-5.

²⁴ Muhammad S. Pervez, *Security community in South Asia: India and Pakistan* (Routledge, New York, 2010), p. 31; Rajesh Rajagopalan, ‘Neorealist theory and the India-Pakistan conflict-II’, *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 22, no. 10 (1999), pp. 1525-26; Mitton, regional realities, p. 35; Robert G. Wirsing, ‘In India’s lengthening shadow: the U.S.-Pakistan strategic alliance and the war in Afghanistan’, *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2007), p. 153.

²⁵ Christian Wagner, ‘Pakistan’s foreign policy between India and Afghanistan’, *Sicherheit Und Frieden (S+F) / Security and Peace*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2010), p. 247; Peter Suedfeld & Rajiv Jhangiani, ‘Cognitive management in an enduring international rivalry: the case of India and Pakistan’, *Political Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 6 (2009), p. 940; Mitton, the India–Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan, p. 361; Derrick C. Seaver, *The power of perception: securitization, democratic peace, and enduring rivalries*, Wright State University, Ohio, US, 2013), p. 115.

²⁶ Kenneth Waltz, theory of international politics, pp. 104-105.

this theoretical perspective emphasises the unlikelihood of continued inter-state cooperation, overemphasises the danger of inter-state conflict, and underestimates the role of international norms and institutions in facilitating peaceful relations among states.²⁷

2.2. Liberalism

Liberalism is based on the essential principle of freedom of individuals. This principle places individuals at the heart of society, and is the foundation upon which various elements of liberalism spring forth, including individualism, egalitarianism, universalism and meliorism.²⁸ Liberalism is recognisable by certain characteristics such as individual freedom, political participation, private property and equality of opportunities that most liberal states share. In this sense, freedom of individuals in a society is compatible with the freedom of all by calling for principles, norms and institutions to protect the rights of each citizen and actualise the harmony of interests among them.²⁹ From a liberal perspective, individuals are fundamentally the same in pursuing “self-preservation and material well-being” in which freedom of individuals is an essential element, and can only be realised when there is peace. For this reason, individuals share a strong interest in peace and prosperity as violence and coercion are counter-productive for their freedom and well-being.³⁰

In the context of international relations, liberalism is a distinct theoretical framework with a set of principles, norms and institutions that shape the perceptions, capacities and practices of foreign relations of democratic states towards each

²⁷ Humphreys, Kenneth Waltz and the limits of explanatory theory, p. 5-6; Hellmann & Wolf, neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and the future of NATO, p. 7; Syed M. Murshed, ‘The liberal peace and developing countries’, *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2009), p. 7.

²⁸ Michael W. Doyle, ‘Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs’, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 12, no. 3 (1983), p. 206; Michael W. Doyle & Stefano Recchia, ‘Liberalism in international relations’, in B Badie, D Berg-Schlosser & L Morlino (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* (Sage, Los Angeles, 2011), pp. 1434-35.

²⁹ Michael W. Doyle, ‘Liberalism and world politics’, *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 80, no. 4 (1986), pp. 1152-53; Michael W. Doyle, *Liberal peace: selected essays*, Routledge, New York, 2012), pp. 5-6; John M. Owen, ‘How liberalism produces democratic peace’, *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1994), p. 99.

³⁰ Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, pp. 89-90.

other. Liberal ideas give rise to a liberal ideology and domestic democratic norms and institutions that shape the behaviours of democratic states for promoting cooperation and pursuing peaceful relations among themselves.³¹ As such, compared to realism which distinguishes states according to their capabilities, liberalism gives rise to a set of principles, norms and institutions that distinguish states primarily according to their regime types by assessing whether a state is a liberal democracy or non-democracy.

In spite of adopting realism's state centric approach, the anarchical nature of the international system and the linkage of states interests to their material capabilities, liberalism challenges two realist assumptions: first, that the question of war and peace dominate all other issues in world politics; and second, that states are the only important actors in the international system.³² By denying the zero-sum nature of international relations, liberal scholars stress that states are not always pre-occupied with relative gains as many states feel secure enough to maximise their own gains regardless of what occurs to other states. Mutual benefits arising out of cooperation are always possible.³³ For this reason, liberal scholars argue that the anarchical nature of the international system still permits a variety of patterns for interaction among states, making inter-state cooperation possible in the presence of liberal principles, norms and institutions.³⁴

³¹ Hellmann & Wolf, neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and the future of NATO, p. 7; Doyle, Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs, p. 206; Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, p. 93; Robert O. Keohane, 'Neoliberal institutionalism: a perspective on world politics', in R Keohane (ed.), *international institutions and state power: Essays in international relations theory* (Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1989), pp. 8-9.

³² Doyle, Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs, p. 206; Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, p. 95; Ole R. Holsti, 'Theories of international relations and foreign policy: realism and its challengers', in C W Kegley (ed.), *Controversies in international relations theory: realism and the neoliberal challenge* (St. Martin's, New York, 1995), p. 40; Håvard Hegre, 'Development and the liberal peace', *Nordic Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2005), pp. 18-9.

³³ Hellmann & Wolf, neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and the future of NATO, p. 7; Keohane, neoliberal institutionalism, pp. 8-9.

³⁴ Thies, are two theories better than one?, p. 162; Grieco, anarchy and the limits of cooperation, p. 492; Keohane, neoliberal institutionalism, pp. 8-9; Scott Burchill, 'Liberalism', in S Burchill, A Linklater, R Devetak, J Donnelly, T Nardin, M Paterson, C Reus-Smit & J True (eds.), *Theories of international relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2009), p. 67.

In the context of the India-Pakistan rivalry, despite the fact that a large number of existing studies mark the centrality of security competition in their interactions, there are still many examples of liberal and cooperative elements in their post-independence relationship. For instance, the historical events of Liaquat-Nehru Pact (1950), Indus Waters Treaty (1960), Simla Agreement (1972), Lahore Declaration (1999), Lahore-Delhi Bus Service, and most recently Cricket diplomacy explain such cooperative initiatives between the two countries.³⁵ This means that from a liberal perspective, cooperation is possible between India and Pakistan even if they exist in a system where there is security competition. Such cooperation can be translated into strong interdependence, entailing mutual benefits for both states and resulting in the improvement of peaceful relations.³⁶

2.3. Liberal Peace

Rooted theoretically in the writings of Immanuel Kant, and in particular his work “Perpetual Peace” in the late 18th century, liberal peace is a sub-theory of liberalism which is driven by the notions of democracy, interdependence and institutions. According to Kant, peace is a reasonable outcome of interaction of states with a republican form of government and a republican constitution through which the consent of citizens is required to declare war against another state.³⁷ From this theoretical perspective, the vast majority of individuals have self-interest in peace since their material and non-material well-being can only be realised during peace.

There is a strong tendency for domestic and international peace to follow when the large majority of individuals in a society have control over decisions in political,

³⁵ Surnedra Chopra, *Pakistan's thrust in the Muslim world: India as a factor* (Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, India, 1992); Narendra Singh, *India as a factor in Pak Politics* (Vishvabharti Publications, New Delhi, India, 2007).

³⁶ Robert O. Keohane; Lisa L. Martin, ‘The promise of institutional theory’, *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1995), p. 45; Lisa L. Martin & Beth A. Simmons, ‘Theories and empirical studies of international institutions’, *International Organization*, vol. 52, no. 4 (1998), pp. 732-33.

³⁷ Jeff Pugh, *Democratic peace theory: a review and evaluation* (Center for Mediation, Peace and Resolution of Conflict-International, Cumming, GA, 2005), pp. 2-3; Zenonas Tziarras, Liberal peace and peace-building: another critique (The Globalized World Post, 2012), pp. 2-3.

security, and economic issues.³⁸ Applying liberal peace to the foreign policy context means that peace could emerge among states once they share three features: representative democracy, adherence to international institutions and advanced commercial integration. As such, democracy, economic interdependence and international institutions, as the three core propositions of liberal peace, provide substantial constraints and disincentives to the initiation and maintenance of conflict between states because the combination of these propositions constitutes a liberal order in inter-state relationship, leading to sustained cooperation among states.³⁹

Democracy

A core proposition of liberal peace lies in the notion that democracies live in peaceful co-existence without being engaged in armed conflict as democratically-elected governments pursue peaceful foreign policies towards each other.⁴⁰ Democracy is often referred to as a peaceful conflict resolution mechanism in which conflicting claims by rival groups are solved by majority votes or consensual agreements, assuring a minimum set of individual rights through the constitutional and institutionalised power-sharing mechanisms.⁴¹ In this sense, responsible and peaceful behaviour of democratic states towards each other is derived from their internal accountability, transparency, and a check-and-balance of their political systems, which lies in two inter-connected normative and structural factors.⁴²

³⁸ Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, pp. 89-90; Hegre, development and the liberal peace, pp. 18-19.

³⁹ Seaver, the power of perception, pp. 22-3; Russett & Oneal, triangulating peace; Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, pp. 188-89.

⁴⁰ Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, p. 189; Oliver Richmond, 'The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 6, no. 3 (2006), p. 293; Christian Wagner, *Democratic peace in South Asia* (South Asia Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Heidelberg, Germany, 2003), pp. 5-6.

⁴¹ Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, p. 102; Håvard Hegre, *The limits of the liberal peace* (Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, Norway, 2004), p. 34.

⁴² Hegre, the limits of the liberal peace, p. 42; Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia, p. 7; Zeef Maoz & Bruce Russett, 'Normative and structural causes of democratic peace, 1946-1986', *American Political Science Review*, vol.

In the context of the India-Pakistan relationship, absence of democracy can be considered as one of the major causes of their enduring rivalry because a fairly large number of scholarly assessments confirm that inter-state rivalries are more likely to end when rival states become fully democratic.⁴³ To confirm this notion, it is important to note that the probability of a new militarised dispute between India and Pakistan has been significantly lower during periods where both countries were ruled democratically. For example, two major wars of 1965 and 1971 between the two rival states were fought when Pakistan was under the military rule.⁴⁴

Economic interdependence

A second proposition of liberal peace is economic interdependence, which encourages states to cooperate with each other in economic terms even if they exist in a system where there is security competition. Economic interdependence is closely linked to the liberal concept of free trade within the broader concept of trade liberalisation. Increased international trade makes conflict too costly, and states that are economically interdependent are more likely to be peaceful in their relationship with each other.⁴⁵ Economic cooperation and trade relations can lead to economic interdependence, which enables states to advance their mutual gains

87, no. 3 (1993), pp. 625-26; Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, p. 99; Hegre, development and the liberal peace, p. 25.

⁴³ Murshed, the liberal peace and developing countries, p. 5; Pugh, democratic peace theory, p. 3; Musarat Amin & Rizwan Naseer, 'Democratic peace theory: an explanation of peace and conflict between Pakistan and India', *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2011), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁴ Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, p. 193; Ishtiaq Ahmad & Hannes Ebert, 'Breaking the equilibrium? new leaders and old structures in the India-Pakistan rivalry', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2015), p. 56.

⁴⁵ Peterson, dyadic trade, exit costs, and conflict, pp. 565-66; Solomon W. Polachek, John Robst & Yuan-Ching Chang, 'Liberalism and interdependence: extending the trade-conflict model', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1999); Oriana S. Mastro, 'The problems of the liberal peace in Asia', *Survival*, vol. 56, no. 2 (2014) April, p. 139.

and increases the prospects for a peaceful relationship since conflict disrupts trade relations and threatens the economic growth of conflicting parties.⁴⁶

A fairly large number of existing studies suggest that an expansion of trade and enhancing economic relations would reduce significantly political tensions and the threat of conflict between India and Pakistan.⁴⁷ This means that economic interdependence in the sense of economic cooperation, trade liberalisation and increased trade relations might have the potential to reduce the risk of new conflicts between India and Pakistan, and lead them to promote peaceful behaviours by raising their citizens' incomes, reducing poverty, decreasing unemployment, expanding foreign investment, and improving production of technologies.⁴⁸ However, despite tangible political and economic gains of economic interdependence, the level of economic exchanges between India and Pakistan has remained very low compared to what would be predicted by their close geographical proximity.⁴⁹

Regional and international institutions

A third proposition of liberal peace is that regional and international institutions provide institutionalised mechanisms for sustained cooperation between states. While the pacifying effects of regional and international institutions on inter-state relationship depend on the genesis and structure of particular institutions and the origins of conflicts, states with shared membership in well-functioning regional and international institutions are likely to interact peacefully with each other compared

⁴⁶ Burchill, liberalism, p. 67; Pugh, democratic peace theory, p. 4; Kishore C. Dash & Robert K. McCleery, 'The political economy of trade relations between India-Pakistan', *Journal of Economic & Financial Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2014), pp. 26-7.

⁴⁷ Pugh, democratic peace theory, p. 4; Sasidaran Gopalan, Ammar A. Malik & Kenneth Reinert, *The imperfect substitutes model in South Asia: Pakistan-India trade liberalization in the negative list*, International Growth Centre, London School of Economics, London, 2013); Dawood Mamoon & Sayed M. Murshed, 'The conflict mitigating effects of trade in the India-Pakistan case', *Economic Governance*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2010).

⁴⁸ Burchill, liberalism, p. 67; Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations between India-Pakistan, pp. 26-7; Charles H. Anderton & John R. Carter, 'The impact of war on trade: an interrupted times-series study', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 4 (2001).

⁴⁹ Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations between India-Pakistan, p. 27.

to states that have no shared membership. Regional and international institutions in the form of formal and informal norms and rules reduce inter-state conflict by providing states with cooperative opportunities for furthering their mutual interests and absolute gains.⁵⁰

In the context of the India-Pakistan relationship, an absence of shared membership in well-functioning regional and international institutions is considered as an important contributing factor to the persistence of their rivalry. Many existing studies emphasise the pacifying effects of regional and international institutions as institutional mechanisms reduce significantly the risk of inter-state conflict and increase the possibility of mutual cooperation among states.⁵¹ For this reason, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which was formally launched by South Asian states in 1985, can play a significant role in improving the India-Pakistan relationship. Nevertheless, the full potential of SAARC is yet to be realised due to mistrust and political differences among member states, particularly because of the India-Pakistan rivalry.⁵²

2.4. Critiques of liberal peace

Apart from the strengths of liberal peace theory in providing substantial constraints and disincentives to the initiation and maintenance of conflict between states, this

⁵⁰ Boehmer, Gartzke & Nordstrom, do intergovernmental organizations promote peace?, pp. 6-7; Keohane, neoliberal institutionalism, pp. 2-3; Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia, pp. 12-3; Russett & Oneal, triangulating peace; Sara Mitchell, *Cooperation in world politics: The constraining and constitutive effects of international organizations* (Department of Political Science, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 2006), pp. 3-4; Robert O. Keohane, *After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, US, 1984), p. 94.

⁵¹ Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia, pp. 12-13; Lisa L. Martin, 'An institutionalist view: international institutions and state strategies', in TV Paul & JA Hall (eds.), *International order and the future of world politics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1999), p. 91; Russett & Oneal, triangulating peace.

⁵² Pervez, security community in South Asia, pp. 37-8; Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, p. 195; Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, *South Asia and Afghanistan: The robust India-Pakistan rivalry* (Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway, 2011); Christian Wagner, *Security cooperation in South Asia: overview, reasons, prospects*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin, Germany, 2014), p. 20.

theoretical framework has been criticised because of a number of obvious weaknesses.⁵³

First of all, opponents of liberal peace argue that there is historical evidence indicating the failure of democracies to maintain peace among themselves. This is in contrary to one of the central propositions of liberal peace that democracies do not go to war with each other because of a number inter-connected structural and normative factors. According to Szayna et al., while historical statistical evidence suggests that only in the post-World War II democratic states have become much less war-prone political systems, in the pre-1945 period democracies have widely been engaged in militarised disputes the same as non-democratic states.⁵⁴

In the meantime, Plauché argues that maintaining peace between democracies in the post-Second World War era has been a direct result of political and strategic alliance systems among themselves rather than the pacifying effects of democracy on inter-state relations.⁵⁵ To confirm this, Ray further stresses that the bulk of the evidence on the pacifying effects of democracy comes from the Cold War era, during which democracies avoided serious conflicts with each other because of common interests generated by their confrontation with the Soviet Union and communism.⁵⁶

In addition, liberal peace theory has largely been criticised in terms of its core propositions. According to Farber & Gowa, sustaining lasting peace among states as a consequence of democratic consolidation, economic interdependence and membership in institutions is theoretically unjustifiable because peaceful relationship of states is often the consequence of foreign hegemony, mutual

⁵³ Pugh, democratic peace theory: a review and evaluation, p. 12.

⁵⁴ Szayna et al., *The emergence of peer competitors: a framework for analysis* (RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2001), p. 159.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Plauché, *Democratic peace: myth or reality?* (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2005), pp. 7-8.

⁵⁶ James Lee Ray, 'Does democracy cause peace?', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 1 (1998), pp. 37-38.

deterrence or acquiescence to status quo.⁵⁷ Gobetti, in particular, argues that liberal peace theory lacks the potential strength to provide reliable theoretical evidence to support the argument that democracies are less war-prone due to the complexity of structural and normative factors within the democratic political systems.⁵⁸

This leads Rousseau to conclude that liberal peace is unable to justify theoretically the examples of clashes between democracies.⁵⁹ For instance, the 1861 Trent Affair between the U.S. and Great Britain and the 1898 Fashoda crisis between France and Great Britain are two obvious examples of clashes between well-established democratic states.⁶⁰

Moreover, the emphasis of liberal peace theory on the pacifying effects of democracy, economic interdependence and institutions underestimates the influential role of democratically-elected political leaders in initiating war. Szayna et al. argue that liberal peace, with underestimating the role of political leaders, over-emphasises the norms of respect for individual liberties and liberal values in democratic states.⁶¹ In fact, ideologically-driven political leaders in democratic states have the ability to simultaneously respect liberal values and engage in numerous militarised conflicts.⁶² For example, while President Reagan in the U.S. and Prime Minister Thatcher in Great Britain fully respected liberal democratic values, these norms had less influence on their decisions for foreign policy behaviour due to their strong personality and ideological beliefs.⁶³ In this context,

⁵⁷ Henry S. Farber & Joanne Gowa, 'Politics and peace', *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1995), p. 129.

⁵⁸ Zeno Gobetti, *A revision of the theory of democratic peace* (Institute for Peace Science, Hiroshima University, Japan, 2009), p. 39.

⁵⁹ David, L. Rousseau, *Democracy and war: institutions, norms and the evolution of international conflict* (Stanford University Press, Stanford and California, 2005), pp. 4-5.

⁶⁰ Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, 'The myth of democratic peace: theoretical and empirical shortcomings of the democratic peace theory', *Alternative: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2002), pp. 43-44.

⁶¹ Szayna et al., the emergence of peer competitors, p. 159.

⁶² William R. Thompson & Richard Tucker, 'A tale of two democratic peace critiques', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 41, no. 3 (1997), p. 440.

⁶³ Özkeçeci-Taner, the myth of democratic peace, pp. 45-46.

in spite of socialising the norms of compromise and peaceful conflict resolution, political leaders mostly exhaust such means of conflict resolution in order to initiate war.⁶⁴

Lastly, another criticism of liberal peace theory is laid down in its core proposition of economic interdependence that increased economic relations reduce the risk of conflict between states.⁶⁵ Several studies indicate that the costs of broken trade ties in wartime encourage states to limit their trade with one another by perceiving the probability of inter-state war anytime in future. In this context, opponents of liberal peace theory argue that economic interdependence is a “double-edged sword” because if a country is dependent on resources in another country, it may be tempted to secure access to the resources by occupying the other country for unilaterally solving its dependency problem.⁶⁶

However, despite a wide range of critiques by its opponents, liberal peace theory remains a substantively significant theoretical tradition in explaining inter-state relationship, mutual cooperation and conflict resolution. For the purpose of this research, liberal peace presents a series of theoretical strengths through which offering impressive explanations for understanding inter-state rivalry and prospects for mutual cooperation,⁶⁷ particularly in the context of the India-Pakistan rivalry and its consequences for peace and stability in Afghanistan. For this reason, the combination of democracy, economic interdependence and institutions could pave the way for establishing a liberal peace order in the India-Pakistan relationship as a means of strengthening their cooperation for mutual gains and promoting sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

⁶⁴ Rousseau, democracy and war, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁵ Hegre, the limits of the liberal peace, p. 48.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 53.

⁶⁷ Gobetti, a revision of the theory of democratic peace.

2.5. India-Pakistan's challenge to peace in Afghanistan

Many recent scholarly assessments acknowledge the damaging impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process by arguing that they have largely expanded their conflict into Afghanistan. The interests of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan are primarily a reflection of their own security aspirations, insecurity concerns, and broader strategic calculations in South-Central Asia. Influence in Afghanistan is considered as a zero-sum game for both rival states as they are motivated by the rationale of checking on the influence of each other by continuing to advance their competing interests.⁶⁸ However, despite the importance of Afghanistan as a preferred venue for India-Pakistan competition, most scholarly assessments argue that Afghanistan is a secondary competition venue, which will fade with time or be replaced by more important considerations.⁶⁹ As such, understanding Afghanistan's place within the dynamics of the India-Pakistan relationship becomes a necessary element of understanding the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process.

Existing studies stress that India's approach towards Afghanistan has been a function of its Pakistan policy since New Delhi has constantly attempted to prevent Pakistan from dominating Afghanistan by ensuring that a fundamentalist regime of the Taliban variety does not take root again. In pursuit of this policy, India alongside Russia, Iran and Central Asian states supported the Northern Alliance⁷⁰ of Afghanistan in the late 1990s against the Taliban, which was backed by Pakistan,

⁶⁸ Tadjbakhsh, *South Asia and Afghanistan*, p. 41; Pant, *India in Afghanistan: a test case for a rising power*, p. 151; William Maley, 'Afghanistan and its region', in JA Their (ed.), *The future of Afghanistan* (United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2009), pp. 84-5.

⁶⁹ Mitton, *regional realities*, p. 95; Sourish Ghosh, 'Afghanistan: the theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry', *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2012), pp. 60-61; Anit Mukherjee, 'A brand new day or back to the future? the dynamics of India-Pakistan relations', *India Review*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2009), p. 427.

⁷⁰ The Northern Alliance of Afghanistan came into existence after the capture of Kabul by the Taliban on 26 September 1996. Consisting of the leaders of the Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, the Northern Alliance was a coalition of Afghan anti-Taliban groups, led by president in exile Burhanuddin Rabbani and former Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud. The Northern Alliance was mostly made up of ethnic Tajiks, but later included Uzbeks, Hazaras, and some anti-Taliban Pashtun figures (Mara Tchalakov, *The northern alliance prepares for Afghan elections in 2014*, (Institute for the Study of War, Washington, DC, 2013), pp. 16-17)

Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states.⁷¹ On the other hand, Pakistan's goals and interests are mainly India-centric, focusing primarily to undermine India's influence in Afghanistan. Pakistan's goals in Afghanistan are not always as coherent as the Indian aims because Islamabad's deep-rooted desire to block Indian influence in Afghanistan overshadows its economic, security and geopolitical considerations. In pursuit of its policy, Islamabad has been able to frustrate the Afghan peacebuilding process by keeping Afghanistan in turmoil and preventing the emergence of a stable Afghan government.⁷²

However, apart from the past emphasis of India and Pakistan on a realist pathway to security competition, the combination of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions as the core propositions of liberal peace might provide a means for them to overcome their competition and cooperate with one another for a peaceful Afghanistan. Referring to recent democratic changes in Pakistan, many scholarly analyses acknowledge that democratic consolidations in both India and Pakistan are essential elements for cooperation between the two countries in political, economic and security areas.⁷³

⁷¹ Avinash Paliwal, India's Taliban dilemma: to contain or to engage?', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2-3 (2015), pp. 5-6; Pant, India in Afghanistan, p. 138; Mitton, the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan, pp. 364-65; Ganguly, India's role in Afghanistan, pp. 2-3; Vikash Yadav & Conrad Barwa, 'Relational control: India's grand strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan', *India Review*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2011), p. 106; Tadjbakhsh, South Asia and Afghanistan, pp. 41.2; Pant, India in Afghanistan, p. 151.

⁷² Mitton, the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan, pp. 366-67; Larry Hanauer & Peter Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's strategies in Afghanistan: implications for the United States and the region* (RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy, Pittsburgh, 2012), pp. 25-26; Mitton, the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan, pp. 365; Yadav & Barwa, relational control: India's grand strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, p. 100-101; Wagner, Pakistan's foreign policy between India and Afghanistan, p. 249; Pant, India in Afghanistan, p. 138; Ghosh, Afghanistan: the theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry, pp. 61-2.

⁷³ Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, pp. 188-89; Radha Kumar, *Afghanistan-India-Pakistan trilogue 2009: a report* (Delhi Policy Group, New Delhi, India, 2010), p. 9; Michael Mousseau, Håvard Hegre & John R. O'neal, 'How the wealth of nations conditions the liberal peace', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2003), p. 283; Sadika Hameed, Prospects for India-Pakistani cooperation in Afghanistan (Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, DC, 2012), pp. 2-4; Milind Thakar, 'Identity, institutions, and war: a new look at South Asian rivalry', *India Review*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2006), p. 253; Wagner, security cooperation in South Asia, p. 19; Mukherjee, A brand new day or back to the future?, p. 432.

In addition, increasing economic interdependence between India and Pakistan in recent years might have the potential to help them transform their conflictual relationship as economic relations alter their incentives for mutual cooperation.⁷⁴ Moreover, many scholarly analyses acknowledge that regional and international institutions, particularly SAARC as the only regional platform for regional cooperation in South Asia, can turn into an important confidence-building platform to transform the India-Pakistan's conflictual relationship.⁷⁵

2.6. Relevance, strengths and weaknesses of existing literature

A key debate in the existing literature is whether India and Pakistan are able to change their conflictual relationship and cooperate with each other for mutual interests. At the core of this debate is liberal peace's core propositions of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions as a platform for inter-state cooperation. While the existing literature on the India-Pakistan relationship is fairly extensive in the areas of the long-lasting India-Pakistan rivalry and the impact of their rivalry on Afghanistan, most of the existing studies do not explain their rivalry from a particular perspective of liberal peace theory except for a limited number of assessments.

A number of prominent scholars, including Chakma (2014); Mousseau et al. (2003); Thakar (2006); Pugh (2005); Murshed (2009); Wagner (2003); and Ahmad & Ebert (2015), provide impressive explanations about the prospects for transforming the relationship of the South Asian states into a liberal order by

⁷⁴ Pugh, democratic peace theory, p. 4; Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations between India-Pakistan, pp. 26-7; Murshed, the liberal peace and developing countries, p. 6; Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, p. 198; Harsh V. Pant, India's changing Afghanistan policy: regional and global implications (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Pennsylvania, 2012), p. 28; Nasrullah M. Mirza, Economic cooperation between Pakistan and India: need, problems, and prospects (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, US, 2005), pp. 3-4; Tadjbakhsh, South Asia and Afghanistan, p. 45.

⁷⁵ Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, p. 200; Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia, p. 13; Samad Aftab, *South Asian regional cooperation: The India-Pakistan imperative* (Faculty of Society and Design, Bond University, Queensland, Australia, 2014), pp. 28-9.

examining some of the core propositions of liberal peace.⁷⁶ However, most of these analyses don't evaluate the potential of liberal peace in the particular context of the India-Pakistan rivalry to explain whether the two rival states are able to change their adversarial behaviours and cooperate with each other. As a result, the importance of recent democratic developments in Pakistan and India's increasing willingness to adopt structural changes in its relations with Pakistan has largely been neglected by existing studies as necessary elements of possible cooperation between the two countries.

In addition, a realist perspective shapes a second debate in the existing scholarly literature. Here it is argued that inter-state cooperation is less likely between India and Pakistan as the two states are involved in a persistent security competition for over six decades. A fairly large number of scholarly analyses examine the India-Pakistan rivalry from a realist perspective in which the hostility between the two rival states is defined as an "enduring rivalry" due to the durability of security dilemmas, unresolved territorial disputes, competing national identities, and confrontation over economic and environmental resources.⁷⁷

However, the problem with a realist approach to examine the India-Pakistan rivalry is that the potential of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions are underestimated since the realist pathway leaves no or very limited opportunity for both states to think about improving peaceful relations and mutual cooperation. With overemphasising the danger of conflict which forces states to establish a self-help system, a realist analysis of the India-Pakistan relationship doesn't offer any persuasive explanations for their

⁷⁶ Murshed, the liberal peace and developing countries; Pugh, democratic peace theory; Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia; Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia; Ahmad & Ebert, breaking the equilibrium; Thakar, identity, institutions, and war; Mousseau et al., how the wealth of nations conditions the liberal peace.

⁷⁷ Hellmann & Wolf, neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and the future of NATO; Pervez, security community in South Asia; Wirsing, in India's lengthening shadow; Suedfeld & Jhangiani, cognitive management in an enduring international rivalry; Mitton, the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan; Seaver, the power of perception; Tadjbakhsh, South Asia and Afghanistan.

possible cooperation, and for that reason, the realist pathway does not consider the probability of their cooperation as a means of promoting sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

Moreover, a third debate in the existing literature is that the hostility between India and Pakistan lies at the heart of the current war in Afghanistan as both states have been engaged in a long covert struggle with each other over pursuing their competing interests. This issue is broadly acknowledged in the scholarly literature by highlighting the damaging impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on the post-2001 internationally-supported peacebuilding process in Afghanistan.⁷⁸ In this context, most studies consider Afghanistan as an extension of the broader India-Pakistan rivalry because their interests in Afghanistan are primarily a reflection of their own geopolitical, security and economic calculations.

For this reason, progress towards promoting sustainable peace in Afghanistan is heavily influenced by the India-Pakistan rivalry as the two rival states have significant disagreements over pursuing their interests in Afghanistan's stability, politics, economy, and leadership.⁷⁹ However, apart from the forceful articulations of these studies, most assessments consider Afghanistan as a secondary competition venue for India and Pakistan, which will fade with time or be replaced by other more important considerations. Such simplistic assessments underestimate the importance of the impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on peacebuilding in Afghanistan. The India-Pakistan rivalry has been a major determinant to the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process undermining Afghanistan's stability, economic growth and regional integration.

⁷⁸ Mitton, the India–Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan; Paliwal, India's Taliban dilemma; Ghosh, Afghanistan: the theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry; Ganguly, 'India's role in Afghanistan; Yadav & Barwa, relational control: India's grand strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

⁷⁹ Mitton, regional realities; Tadjbakhsh, South Asia and Afghanistan; Wagner, security cooperation in South Asia; Paliwal, India's Taliban dilemma; Pant, India in Afghanistan; Maley, Afghanistan and its region; Ghosh, Afghanistan: the theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry; Mukherjee, A brand new day or back to the future?.

Lastly, a fourth debate in the existing literature is whether cooperation between India and Pakistan is possible as a means of promoting sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Although the prospects for cooperation between India and Pakistan in economic, cultural and scientific terms has attracted some attention in the scholarly literature, the possibility of cooperation between the two rival states for promoting peace in Afghanistan is mostly absent from the assessments of both academic and policy making circles. Most scholarly analyses have explained separately the potential of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions in decreasing inter-state hostility and increasing mutual cooperation with no or very limited reference to the impact of possible India-Pakistan cooperation on promoting sustainable peace in Afghanistan.⁸⁰ As such, if not all, most of the existing scholarly literature has shied away from presenting fresh conflict resolution and mutual cooperation methodologies applicable to promoting the India-Pakistan relationship as a means of building sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to note that the existing scholarly literature on the India-Pakistan rivalry is fairly extensive but consists primarily of focusing on their security competition with limited reference to liberal peace theory. This is because a large number of scholarly assessments have examined the India-Pakistan rivalry from a realist pathway to security competition, which leaves limited room for the two rival states to transform their conflictual relationship. However, apart from the limited reference of existing studies to liberal peace, many scholarly assessments have separately highlighted the importance of democratic consolidation, developing economic interdependence and membership in regional

⁸⁰ Tadjbakhsh, South Asia and Afghanistan; Ganguly, India's role in Afghanistan; Hameed, prospects for India-Pakistani cooperation in Afghanistan; Mirza, economic cooperation between Pakistan and India; Noreen Naseer, 'Trade as an instrument of peace building (Pakistan, Afghanistan and India)', *PUTAJ – Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2014); Nisha Taneja, *India-Pakistan trade* (Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi, India, 2006).

and international institutions as a means of helping the two rival states to overcome their competition and cooperate with each other for mutual gains. Existing studies have also confirmed that India and Pakistan, as part of their strategic competition, have projected their conflict into Afghanistan, which has significantly undermined the internationally-supported Afghan peacebuilding process.

CHAPTER TWO

Failure of Afghan Peacebuilding: Internal and External Factors

This chapter evaluates the effects of internal and external factors on the failure of the internationally-supported peacebuilding process in post-2001 Afghanistan. For the purpose of the central argument of this chapter, despite the investment of an immense amount of human and financial capital by the international community, peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan have largely been unsuccessful because of the damaging impact of various internal and external factors. The first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of Afghanistan's geography, people and society followed by a second section which provides a brief historical overview of state formation and ethnic divisions in the country. The last section evaluates the root causes of the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process by analysing the impact of local power struggles and the interventions of external powers.

This chapter addresses two sub-questions which are directly related to the central question of this research: 1) how have internal power struggles between competing Afghan groups contributed to the failure of the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan? And 2) how have the competing geopolitical, security and economic interests of foreign powers undermined efforts to transform Afghanistan into a peaceful country in the post-2001 era?

1. Afghanistan: People and Society

Afghanistan is a landlocked sovereign state with an area of approximately 652,225 square kilometres. While Afghanistan is geographically and historically a part of Central Asia, its political and religious geography groups it with South Asia and the Middle East. It is bordered by Pakistan in the south and east, Iran in the west, the Central Asian republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the north,

and China in the far northeast.⁸¹ The largest and capital city of Afghanistan is Kabul with an estimated population of around four million. Other major cities are Kandahar in the south, Herat in the west, Jalalabad in the east, Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, and Kunduz in the northeast.⁸² The Hindu Kush mountain range is the main topographic feature that marks Afghanistan by dividing the country into three distinct geographic areas of the central highlands, the northern plains, and the southwestern plateau.⁸³



Map 1: Afghanistan's political map⁸⁴

⁸¹ Iram Khalid, 'Dynamics of political development in Afghanistan', *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, vol. 2, no. 12 (2011), pp. 103-4.

⁸² Afghanistan in perspective: an orientation guide (Defence Language Institute Foreign Language Center, U.S. Department of Defense, Monterey, CA, 2012), pp. 3-4.

⁸³ Afghanistan in perspective: an orientation guide, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁴ Reference Maps, e-Afghan agriculture maps, USAID-supported AAEP II project, Kabul, Afghanistan, <<http://afghanag.ucdavis.edu/country-info/e-afghan-ag-maps-1>>.

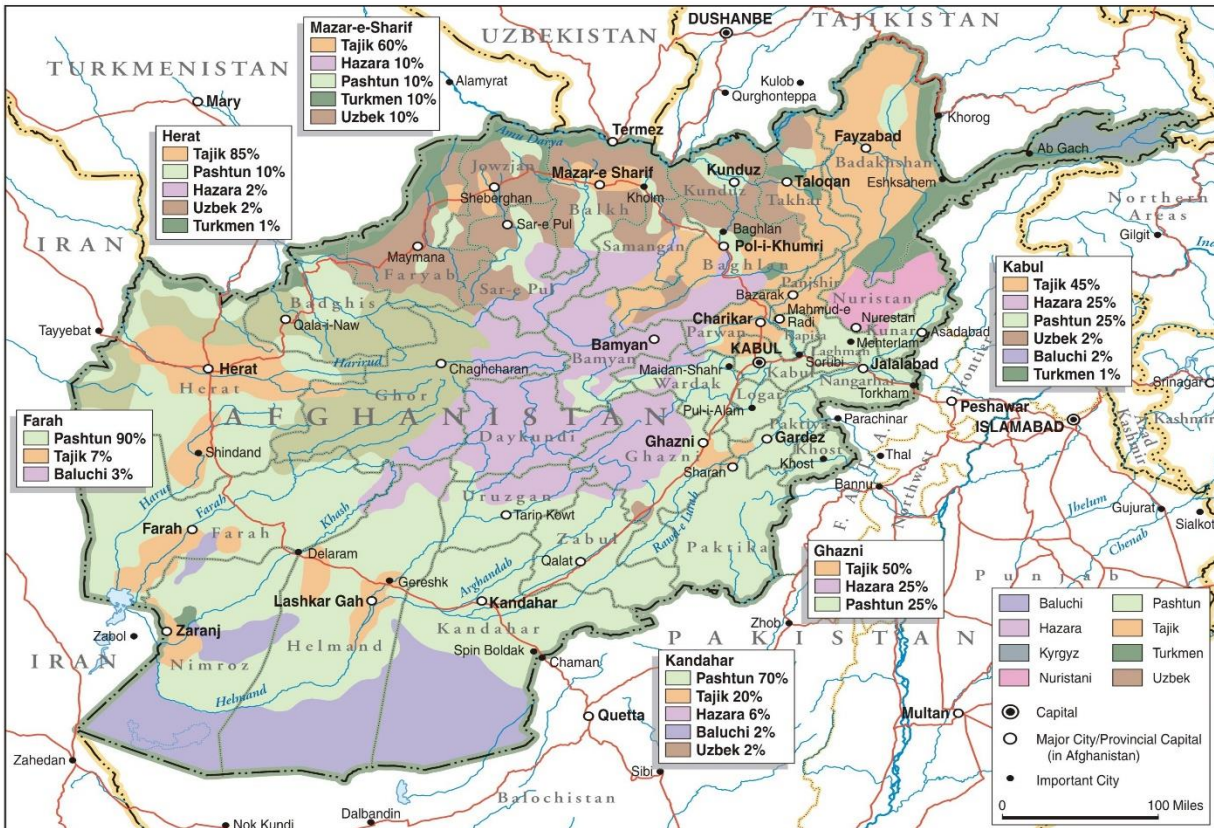
Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society with an estimated population of 30 million. Although the population statistics are highly controversial in the absence of an accurate official census, most of international sources acknowledge that there are four major ethnic groups and numerous minor ethnicities in Afghanistan. The largest ethnic group is the Pashtuns (42%), who are mainly concentrated in the south and east, and have been politically dominant in Afghanistan from 1747 to 1978.⁸⁵

The second largest ethnic group is the Tajiks (27%), who are mainly concentrated in the northeast, north and west, and have been politically influential in the last four decades.⁸⁶ The third largest ethnic group is the Hazaras (over 9%), who are mainly settled in Central highlands, and have historically been the most marginalised group in the country. Uzbeks make up the fourth largest ethnic group (9%) mostly settled in the north.⁸⁷ Afghanistan is nearly 100 percent Muslim, including Sunni Muslims (80%) and Shiite Muslims (19%). Pashtuns, Tajiks and Uzbeks are mostly Sunni but Hazaras are predominantly Shiite.

⁸⁵ Saleem M. Mazhar, Samee O. Khan and Naheed S. Goraya, 'Ethnic factor in Afghanistan', *Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2013), pp. 99-100.

⁸⁶ Carol J Riphenburg, 'Ethnicity and civil society in contemporary Afghanistan', *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2005), p. 37.

⁸⁷ Mazhar et al., ethnic factor in Afghanistan, pp. 101-102.



Map 2: Afghanistan's demographic map⁸⁸

2. Brief Historical Overview

Following the assassination of the Persian Ruler in 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani, chief of the Durrani tribe of the Pashtuns, rose against the Persians and established modern Afghanistan. By 1762 the Durrani Kingdom included all of modern Afghanistan plus Iran's Khorasan, nearly all of modern Pakistan, parts of India, and the province of Kashmir. After consolidating and enlarging the Afghan state, Ahmad Shah's leadership established a pattern by which the Durrani subgroup of the Pashtuns became the ruling class in the country.⁸⁹ However, Ahmad Shah's reign was punctuated by constant internal revolts and power

⁸⁸ Institute for the Study of War, Afghanistan: overview, Washington, DC, US, <<http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan>>.

⁸⁹ Mishali-Ram, Afghanistan: a legacy of violence, pp. 480-81.

struggles among the Durrani ruling elites, and struggles carried out by non-Pashtun groups aimed at challenging the dominance of the Pashtuns. During the 19th century, the societies that preceded today's Afghanistan were marked by extreme statelessness and power was characterised by a plethora of overlapping tribal, ethnic and religious loyalties.⁹⁰

In the 19th century, Afghanistan's internal affairs deteriorated as a result of increasing intervention of the British and Russian Empires. While the British were consolidating their colonial holdings on the Indian sub-continent, the Russians were expanding south by conquering several Central Asian independent states.⁹¹ Between 1887 and 1893, continued confrontations between the British and Russian colonial powers, referred to historically as the "Great Game", left Afghanistan with precisely defined territorial boundaries to serve as a "Buffer Zone" under the rule of Abdur Rahman Khan.⁹² The British nevertheless managed to assert control over Afghanistan's foreign policy until 1919 when King Amanullah Khan led a broad rebellion against the British to gain full independence. After a short war, which is called the "Third Anglo-Afghan War", the British gave Afghans their independence on 19 August 1919.⁹³ After nine years in power, Amanullah Khan was overthrown by Habibullah Kalakani, an ethnic Tajik, in January 1929 whose rule only lasted for ten months, and was replaced in October 1929 by Mohammad Nadir Khan, an ethnic Pashtun.

Subsequently, Nadir Khan was assassinated during a graduation ceremony by Abdul Khaliq, an ethnic Hazara, in November 1933 and was succeeded by his son, Mohammad Zahir Khan. King Zahir ruled over Afghanistan for 40 years until he

⁹⁰ Conrad Schetter, 'Ethnoscapes, national territorialisation, and the Afghan war', *Geopolitics*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2005), pp. 54-6.

⁹¹ David Seddon, 'Imperial designs: a deep history of Afghanistan', *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2003), pp. 185-86.

⁹² Seddon, imperial designs: a deep history of Afghanistan, pp. 185-86.

⁹³ Carl C. Hodge, 'Short shrift for the long war: NATO's neglect of the Afghan mission', *International Journal*, vol. 65, no. 1 (2009), p. 148.

was overthrown on 17 July 1973 by Mohammed Daoud Khan, a former Prime Minister, and both cousin and brother-in-law to the King.⁹⁴ Daoud Khan abolished the monarchy, set up a republic and made himself President and Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Although the overthrow of Zahir Khan was carried out with the support of the Afghan communists, known as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), in the aftermath of the coup a struggle developed between President Daoud and the PDPA, which resulted in the removal of the PDPA members from key government positions.⁹⁵ The PDPA took power in April 1978 in a bloody coup by assassinating President Daoud and most of his family members, including his wife, his three sons and three daughters, his brother, his four grandchildren, a son-in-law, and a daughter-in-law.⁹⁶

As a result of imposing Soviet-type radical reforms by the PDPA and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, violence erupted across the country. The popular movement against the Soviet-backed regime gave rise to seven Sunni mujahidin groups, encompassing Pashtuns, Tajiks and other smaller ethnic groups that took root in the Pakistani city of Peshawar, and were militarily and financially supported by the U.S., Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, and other American allies.⁹⁷ Their eight Shiite counterparts, who were largely ethnic Hazara, found refuge in Iran to fight the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan. The Soviet intervention led to the breakdown of the central government authority, and the 1980s and 1990s conflict resulted in the vitalisation of regional patronage networks under the leadership of local commanders whom invoked ethnic, religious and linguistic ties to legitimise their leadership and power.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Peter D. S. Lyon, *A solution for ethnic conflict: democratic governance in Afghanistan, a case study* (University of Manitoba, Canada, 2006), p. 122.

⁹⁵ Seddon, *imperial designs*, p. 190.

⁹⁶ Seddon, *imperial designs*, p. 190.

⁹⁷ Lyon, *a solution for ethnic conflict*, pp. 142-42.

⁹⁸ Mishali-Ram, *Afghanistan: a legacy of violence*, pp. 481-82.

The war between the communist and the mujahedin groups raged strongly after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in February 1989. In March 1992, the mujahedin captured Kabul and set up a new government consisting of a fifty-member ruling council who selected Burhanuddin Rabbani, an ethnic Tajik, as President of Afghanistan.⁹⁹ Consequently, much of the motivation that united the mujahidin guerrilla against the Soviet-backed regime was replaced by ethnic, tribal, religious and political rivalry, leading to a full-scale civil war in the 1990s.¹⁰⁰ The inter-mujahidin struggle and serious instability allowed the emergence of the Pakistani-backed Taliban, a Pashtun-based ultra-fundamentalist Islamist militia group, which primarily presented an alternative to the disorder and instability in the country. Although well accepted in Pashtun areas of southern Afghanistan in 1994 and 1995, the occupation of non-Pashtun areas was met with significant resistance against the Taliban dominance over other ethnic groups, particularly the Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. By September 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul and declared itself the legitimate government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.¹⁰¹

The Taliban regime was only recognised by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates but the rest of the international community refused to recognise them as the official government of Afghanistan.¹⁰² In 1996 Osama bin Laden returned to Afghanistan, allied with the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, and began to build a major al-Qaeda hold on the country. Al-Qaeda very quickly became a major power in Afghanistan from which it launched a global jihad against the U.S. and its allies, and organised the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, bringing about the U.S.-led coalition invasion of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Taliban regime in November 2001.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Fotini Christia, *Alliance formation in civil wars* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012), pp. 58-60.

¹⁰⁰ Christia, *alliance formation in civil wars*, pp. 58-60.

¹⁰¹ Mishali-Ram, *Afghanistan: a legacy of violence*, p. 482.

¹⁰² Guido Steinberg & Nils Woermer, *Exploring Iran & Saudi Arabia's interests in Afghanistan & Pakistan: stakeholders or spoilers—a zero sum game?* (CIDOB Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Spain, 2013), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰³ Mishali-Ram, *Afghanistan: a legacy of violence*, p. 482.

3. Internal and External Factors

The internationally-supported peacebuilding process in Afghanistan officially began in the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime in the late 2001. Under the influence and support of the U.S., its allies and the United Nations (UN), an agreement was signed on 5 December 2001 in Bonn, Germany by a diverse group of competing Afghan groups, excluding the Taliban, to establish the foundations for a multi-ethnic representative government to build a sustainable peace and prevent a relapse into conflict.¹⁰⁴ Fully supported financially and politically by the U.S. the UN, and the rest of the international community, the Bonn Agreement outlined a grand transformative policy framework for the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process, in which promoting liberal democracy, facilitating socio-economic development and rebuilding permanent state institutions were the most important components.¹⁰⁵

With the initiation of a comprehensive liberal peacebuilding process, Afghanistan began to experience the foundations of creating a democratic, multi-ethnic representative government for the first time in its history. Some of the key features of the peacebuilding process were the ratification of a new constitution, rebuilding state institutions, holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, reforming the legal system, creating human rights protection mechanisms, creating an enabling environment for civil society, and introducing market economy and liberalisation policies.¹⁰⁶ As for the purpose of the central argument of this research, the importance of liberal peacebuilding in Afghanistan lies in the notion that a liberally-constituted state would be internally more peaceful, stable and prosperous than a

¹⁰⁴ Mark Fields & Ramsha Ahmed, *A review of the 2001 Bonn conference and application to the road ahead in Afghanistan* (Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, DC, 2011), p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Fields & Ahmed, a review of the 2001 Bonn conference and application to the road ahead in Afghanistan, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Marissa Quie, 'Peace-building and democracy promotion in Afghanistan: the Afghanistan peace and reintegration programme and reconciliation with the Taliban', *Democratization*, vol. 19, no. 3 (2012), pp. 557-58.

non-democracy.¹⁰⁷ This means that a successful peacebuilding process in Afghanistan could have paved the way for fundamentally transforming the country into a liberal order in which a relapse into a new conflict would largely be unlikely.

However, the early successes in the post-2001 peacebuilding efforts quickly gave way to the deterioration of security, deficit of democratisation, and setbacks in effective and legitimate governance. This was mainly because of the combination of a number of internal and external factors, including deep elite power struggles among contending Afghan groups as well as the interplay between competing interests of external powers.

3.1. Domestic power struggles

Since the establishment of the modern Afghan state with precisely defined territorial boundaries at the end of the 19th century, almost all successive Afghan governments have failed to accommodate traditional power structures and ethnic groups through democratic participation, political integration, and economic justice.¹⁰⁸ For this reason, many of the tensions and conflicts that continue to the present day Afghanistan are linked to the historical process of Afghanistan's state formation and the persistent weakness of central and local state institutions and governance, which reflects a continuous centre-periphery conflict over power and influence in the context of inter-ethnic rivalry.¹⁰⁹ This has largely been the consequence of the policies and practices adopted by many Afghan rulers to favour the Pashtun over the non-Pashtun ethnic groups by repressing their political, social and economic aspirations.

The inter-ethnic rivalries have been further reinforced in the past four decades by other significant cultural, linguistic and religious differences, leading to continuous

¹⁰⁷ Edward Newman, Roland Paris & Oliver P. Richmond (eds.), *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding* (United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2009), p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Ali A. Jalali, 'Afghanistan in transition,' *Parameters*, vol. 40 (2010), pp. 24-5.

¹⁰⁹ Martina Spornbauer, *EU peacebuilding in Kosovo and Afghanistan: legality and accountability* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden and Boston, 2014), p. 85.

political tensions and sectarian conflicts.¹¹⁰ Following the 1979 Soviet invasion, major ethnic groups became competing political actors, whose goals were driven by the quest and struggle for power, making ethnic diversity in Afghanistan a fundamental source of conflict. Subsequently, resorting to violence became a central tool by multiple ethnic, religious and linguistic groups to promote their socio-political interests in the fragmented Afghan society because ethnic identities were continuously strengthened throughout the conflict.¹¹¹ This led to the emergence of strong political groups within the Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, who represent a significant challenge to the traditional dominance of the Pashtuns.

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime, despite the fact that the Bonn Agreement was a symbolic step towards creating a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, inter-ethnic rivalries played an important role in frustrating peacebuilding. The Afghan peacebuilding process began in an extremely problematic context on all accounts, including barely existent central state institutions, an unstable internal and geopolitical situation, a very poor population, and most importantly, a politically fragmented society characterised by deep ethnic divisions.¹¹² This resulted in a situation in which the implementation of many essential elements of peacebuilding, such as consolidating democracy, promoting human rights, realising social justice, facilitating economic development and rebuilding permanent state institutions, were forcibly left aside. Consequently, the peacebuilding process became co-opted by domestic political elites and ethnic warlords¹¹³ who used the legitimacy

¹¹⁰ Suhrke, Harpviken & Strand, after Bonn: conflictual peace building, pp. 880-81.

¹¹¹ Mishali-Ram, Afghanistan: a legacy of violence, p. 483.

¹¹² Spornbauer, EU peacebuilding in Kosovo and Afghanistan, p. 87.

¹¹³ The term “warlord” has only recently gained currency in Afghanistan, with the term “militia commander” having greater resonance in the vernacular.¹⁹ There has been much academic debate on the precise meaning of the term ‘warlord’ and its applicability to certain actors.²⁰ The term lends itself to caricature and can be interpreted as being inherently condemnatory. The only essential criteria for the label warlord are the maintenance of a private army, the use of coercion or the threat of coercion and an economic means to sustain the warlord (Roger M. Ginty, ‘Warlords and the liberal peace: state-building in Afghanistan’, *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2010), p. 583).

derived from their local constituencies, domestic power resources and international economic aid to turn the state institutions into a reliable tool for advancing their factional and political interests.¹¹⁴

After the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, numerous former warlords had returned from exile to participate in the war against the Taliban and al-Qaida by receiving new arms and money from Americans that enabled them to revitalise their patronage networks of militants.¹¹⁵ Many warlords benefited from the peacebuilding process by exploiting reconstruction resources, seeking sponsorship from the U.S. and allies, filling senior government positions, and mobilising their local constituencies.¹¹⁶ The result was considerable coercive capacity vested in the warlords controlling many regions of the country but with no parallel political and military capacity at the central government in Kabul. In fact, the empowerment of ethnic warlords was the immediate consequence of the reliance of the U.S. allies on local militia from the Northern Alliance and Pashtun warlords in the south to fight the Taliban in the absence of capacity in the Afghan security forces.¹¹⁷

However, the U.S. and allies ignored the fact that warlords represent equally grave threats as the Taliban to peacebuilding efforts because the uncontested power of warlords undermined severely democratisation, institution building, socio-economic development, and human rights promotion.¹¹⁸ The primary reason for the reliance of the U.S. on warlords was that Washington was ill-prepared to go to war in Afghanistan due to lack of well-defined military plans, no history of military

¹¹⁴ Naazneen H. Barma, 'Peace-building and the predatory political economy of insecurity: evidence from Cambodia, East Timor and Afghanistan', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2012), p. 274; Katsumi Ishizuka, *Security issues facing peace-building in Afghanistan: is a light-footprint approach a panacea?* (The Academic Council on the United Nations System, Kyoto University, Japan, 2007). P. 135.

¹¹⁵ Suhrke et al., *After Bonn: conflictual peace building*, p. 879.

¹¹⁶ Ginty, *warlords and the liberal peace*, p. 585.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 585-86.

¹¹⁸ Mark Peceny & Yury Bosin, 'Winning with warlords in Afghanistan', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 22, no. 4 (2011), p. 604.

presence in the region, and problematic neighbouring states surrounding Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ This led to the widespread corruption and disintegration of the state institutions, which were already weakened as a result of three decades of conflict.

In addition, the corrupt regime of President Hamid Karzai also played a major role in frustrating the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. The U.S. and the international community supported Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, to become head of the transitional government in post-2001, which enabled him to be elected as President of Afghanistan in 2004 elections. This was in the vision that the strong Pashtun participation in building a multi-ethnic representative government could pave the way for successfully stabilising and reconstructing Afghanistan in the absence of the defeated Pashtun-based Taliban.¹²⁰ However, the most important challenge to the government of President Karzai, and for that matter the internationally-supported peacebuilding process, was the dominance of Tajiks from the Northern Alliance over key levers of power in the government.¹²¹ When the dominance of Tajiks over state institutions ended in 2005, under continuous pressure from the international community, the same scenario repeated once again as President Karzai's government became increasingly dominated by a group of his loyalist Pashtuns.¹²²

Subsequently, having enjoyed unconditional, widespread international support along with a high level of domestic legitimacy in the early years of his government, President Karzai was able to consolidate his power. Karzai established a personalist and corrupt regime by allying to many warlords and local militia groups, who were routinely accused of severe human rights violations, corruption and drug

¹¹⁹ Peceny & Bosin, winning with warlords in Afghanistan, p. 608.

¹²⁰ Ibid, pp. 604-606.

¹²¹ Sven G. Simonsen, 'Ethnicising Afghanistan?: inclusion and exclusion in post-Bonn institution building', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 4 (2004), p. 711.

¹²² Barma, peace-building and the predatory political economy of insecurity, p. 286; Timor Sharan, 'The dynamics of elite networks and patron-client relations in Afghanistan', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 63, no. 6 (2011), p. 1121.

trafficking.¹²³ As such, despite the injection of billions of dollars to the economy of Afghanistan by the international donors, the Karzai's administration was unable to deliver basic civil services to the public across the country due to the fact that corruption, patronage, nepotism and bribery became some of the most common features of his government.¹²⁴

Lastly, the post-2001 peacebuilding process was also significantly undermined by the resurgent Taliban. Despite the fact that the resurgence of the Taliban between 2002 and 2005 was made possible by evident support from Pakistan and al-Qaeda along with generous donations from Arab Gulf nations and access to drug incomes, it was also rooted in the historical inter-ethnic rivalry and corruption in the Afghan government.¹²⁵ The exclusion of the Taliban from the Bonn Agreement provided them with an effective propaganda tool to claim that the Pashtuns are under-represented in the Afghan government. As such, in addition to the foreign support, the resurgence of the Taliban is laid down in the failure of the international community to build a consolidated democracy, strong state institutions and economic development in Afghanistan to build a sustainable peace and prevent a relapse into conflict.¹²⁶

3.2. Interventions of foreign powers

Afghanistan's history and politics have largely been shaped by its location at the crossroads of the three strategic regions of South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia, making the country a zone of confrontation among regional and global powers. Following the 1979 Soviet invasion, Afghanistan became a battle ground for the Soviet-backed communist regime and the U.S.-sponsored mujahidin in the 1980s. After the Soviet troops withdrawal in 1989, the Afghan conflict lost its strategic significance for both Washington and Moscow but the

¹²³ Peceny & Bosin, winning with warlords in Afghanistan, p. 609.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 609.

¹²⁵ Richard Kraemer, 'Towards state legitimacy in Afghanistan', *International Journal*, vol. 65, no. 3 (2010), p. 639.

¹²⁶ Peceny & Bosin, winning with warlords in Afghanistan, p. 609.

violent conflict among competing Afghan groups continued in the 1990s with the support of neighbouring and regional states.¹²⁷ The Afghan conflict reached another turning point by attracting the attention of the U.S. when the Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996 that led to increased Russian military and economic support to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.¹²⁸

3.3. United States and allies

The presence of the U.S. and the allied forces became inevitable in Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks in Washington, DC and lower Manhattan on 11 September 2001, carried out by the al-Qaeda organisation of Osama bin Laden to whom the Taliban regime had afforded territorial sanctuary.¹²⁹ Following the collapse of the Taliban regime, the U.S. and allies became heavily engaged in Afghanistan as the mission evolved from regime change to a long-term peacebuilding process.¹³⁰ However, the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process has proved to be a challenging experience because of the counter-productive outcomes of the policies and practices of the U.S. and allies as well as the impact of other relevant internal and external factors.

Despite the fact that consolidating democracy, facilitating socio-economic development, rebuilding effective state institutions, strengthening civil society, and promoting human rights, rule of law and good governance were the primary elements of the U.S. and the rest of the international community's commitment towards peacebuilding in Afghanistan, many of these elements were left aside in the early years of the post-Taliban era. This was mainly because of the reliance of the U.S. on corrupt warlords to fight the Taliban and the light footprint of the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan, caused by the involvement of the U.S. military forces

¹²⁷ Akbarzadeh, *India and Pakistan's geostrategic rivalry in Central Asia*, p. 223.

¹²⁸ Saikal, *the role of outside actors in the Afghanistan conflict*, pp. 217-19.

¹²⁹ Hodge, *short shrift for the long war*, pp. 144-45.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

in the Iraq war of 2003.¹³¹ As a result, the security situation in Afghanistan became highly deteriorated because of the inadequacy and insufficiency of the military personal, arms, aid, trainers and advisors of the U.S. and allies, fully ignoring the high level of security threats caused by the Taliban insurgency.¹³² This clearly indicates that the U.S. quickly lost interest in the Afghan peacebuilding process because of their financial challenges and other global engagements.

In addition, the U.S. allowed President Karzai to deal independently with various warlords and incorporate them into the government system, resulting in a corrupt and ineffective administration, which was incapable of delivering necessary services to the public.¹³³ With this, the warlords became able to strengthen their patronage networks of armed militia and consolidate significant power at the expense of weakening the central and local government institutions. Lastly, the uneasy relations of the U.S. with neighbouring and regional powers also contributed to the frustration of the Afghan peacebuilding process.¹³⁴

3.4. Neighbouring and regional states

Although most of neighbouring and regional states supported the U.S.-led military intervention to topple the Taliban regime, in the post-2001 era they have continued to use the Afghan stage to pursue their competing geopolitical, economic and security interests. For instance, apart from Moscow's earlier support for the international community's stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan, a number of senior Russian officials are concerned about an enduring presence of the U.S. and would privately like to see Americans fail in Afghanistan.¹³⁵ In doing so, Russia has regularly attempted to diminish the U.S. military footprints in Central Asia by

¹³¹ Joseph J. Collins, *Understanding war in Afghanistan* (National Defense University Press, Washington, DC, 2011), p. 72.

¹³² Collins, *Understanding war in Afghanistan*, p. 76.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 76.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 78.

¹³⁵ Dmitri Trenin, 'Russia', in AJ Tellis & A Mukharji (eds.), *Is a regional strategy viable in Afghanistan?* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 2010), pp. 71-73.

demanding Central Asian republics to expel the U.S. airbases in their territories.¹³⁶ In the meantime, although China has provided limited political and economic support to the Afghan government in the past 15 years, Beijing does not want Afghanistan to become the base for a long-term American presence in Central Asia nor give the impression to other countries in the region that it supports such an outcome. In Beijing's view, an American enduring presence in Afghanistan would enable Washington to complete the "strategic encirclement" of China and weaken China's influence in Central Asia.¹³⁷

In addition, the real threat to peace and stability in Afghanistan lies in the interplay between neighbouring and regional states and the Afghan ethnic groups. In this context, Iran and Saudi Arabia have exploited ethnic, linguistic and religious ties as a useful instrument to influence developments in Afghanistan, which has partly resulted in the frustration of the Afghan peacebuilding process.¹³⁸ For example, in spite of being active in the post-2001 reconstruction of Afghanistan, Iran has sometimes been accused of supporting some factions of the Taliban to fight the Afghan and international forces.¹³⁹ Similarly, Saudi Arabia has also continued to expand its influence in Afghanistan by spreading the Wahhabi version of Islam as a way to balance the influence of Iran's Shiite ideology because Riyadh views the Iranian government as a major threat throughout the region, the Muslim world, and in Afghanistan.¹⁴⁰ As such, Riyadh would have no problem to see the return of the Taliban to power as an interlocutor of its interests in Afghanistan.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Shinn & Dobbins, Afghan peace talks, pp. 59-60.

¹³⁷ Michael D. Swaine & Tiffany P. Ng, 'China', in AJ Tellis & A Mukharji (eds.), *Is a regional strategy viable in Afghanistan?* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 2010), pp. 62-63.

¹³⁸ Sharan, the dynamics of elite networks and patron-client relations in Afghanistan, p. 1112; Shanthie M. D'Souza, 'Afghanistan in South Asia: regional cooperation or competition?', *South Asian Survey*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2009), p. 24.

¹³⁹ Pant, India in Afghanistan, pp. 120-21.

¹⁴⁰ Shiza Shahid, *Engaging regional players in Afghanistan: threats and opportunities* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 2009), p. 5.

¹⁴¹ Christopher Boucek, 'Saudi Arabia', in AJ Tellis & A Mukharji (eds.), *Is a regional strategy viable in Afghanistan?* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 2010), p. 49.

To conclude this chapter, in combination a number of internal and external factors have significantly undermined the internationally-supported peacebuilding process in post-2001 Afghanistan. While the importance of internal and external factors varies significantly from one another in terms of influencing Afghanistan, it has been clearly evident that both factors have played an important role in undermining Afghanistan's stability, economic growth and regional integration. In the context of internal factors, the fragmentation of the Afghan society has significantly frustrated peacebuilding efforts as consolidating democracy, developing socio-economic situation, rebuilding state institutions, promoting the respect for human rights and rule of law, and strengthening civil society had to be conducted in a society with a very high level of ethnic divisions caused by decades-long foreign interventions and inter-ethnic confrontations.

In addition to internal challenges, external factors have equally frustrated the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process. Competing geopolitical, security and economic interests of external powers have largely contributed to the failure of peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan. In the post-2001 era, despite the fact that the U.S. and its allies have played a positive role in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan, Washington's commitment towards the Afghan peacebuilding process has been limited due to its internal policy-making priorities, its engagement in other conflicts, and its primary reliance on Afghan warlords to fight the Taliban. This has partly resulted in the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process. Moreover, the presence of the U.S. and allies' forces in Afghanistan has proved to be a challenging experience because of strong opposition of regional powers to a perceived long-term American presence in the region. The primary challenge in this context comes from Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan as all these countries are against an enduring American presence in Afghanistan and in the region.

CHAPTER THREE

Implications of Indian-Pakistani Rivalry for Afghan Peacebuilding

This chapter evaluates the implications of the Indian-Pakistani rivalry for peacebuilding in Afghanistan. The central argument of this chapter is that both India and Pakistan have used Afghanistan as a preferred venue for strategic competition, which has significantly contributed to the failure of the post-2001 peacebuilding process. Although it is difficult to measure quantitatively the impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry on the Afghan peacebuilding process as opposed to other internal and external factors, what is clearly evident is that the projection of their conflict into Afghanistan has had significant implications for the country's security, political stability, economic growth and regional integration. In the meantime, it is important to distinguish between the individual challenges posed by each of the two rival states to the Afghan peacebuilding process as India has played a constructive role in Afghanistan compared to the more destructive consequences of Pakistan's approach.

This chapter is divided into three sub-sections, beginning with a brief overview of the multiple facets of the India-Pakistan rivalry, continued with the evaluation of the two countries' geopolitical, security and economic interests in Afghanistan, and followed by the most important implications of their rivalry for the Afghan peacebuilding process. In this chapter, two sub-questions, related to the central research question, are addressed: 1) what geopolitical, security and economic interests shape the India-Pakistan competition over developments in Afghanistan? 2) how has the India-Pakistan rivalry undermined Afghanistan's security, political stability, economic growth, and regional integration?

1. India-Pakistan Rivalry

The beginning of the Indian-Pakistani rivalry is traced back to the massive human and political shocks of the Indian subcontinent's partition into India and Pakistan

at the end of the British colonial rule. Hostility between the two rival states is usually defined as “enduring rivalry” shaped by the legacy of a conflictual relationship.¹⁴² Since their independence in August 1947, the India-Pakistan rivalry has significantly shaped events in South Asia, marked by three major wars (1947-8, 1965, 1971) and numerous militarised inter-state disputes. These fluctuations in tension and conflict have persisted through changes in governments, political parties and leaders of both countries in a variety of different forms, including unofficial fighting by their proxies in and outside their territories.¹⁴³ The most important contributing factors to the persistence of the India-Pakistan rivalry are territorial disputes, competing national identities, security competition, and economic confrontation.

1.1. Territorial disputes

The inability of India and Pakistan to agree on a mutually acceptable settlement over the disputes in the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir has been one of the root causes of their enduring rivalry. Jammu and Kashmir (often referred to as simply Kashmir), located in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent, which is divided into the Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir, the Pakistani-controlled Azad Kashmir, and the largely uninhabited Chinese-controlled Aksai Chin.¹⁴⁴ As the 1947 partition of the subcontinent did not fully settle the distribution of the Kashmir territory, India and Pakistan were born in conflict. New Delhi claims that Kashmir is an integral part of India by referring to the decision of Maharajah Hari Singh, the former ruler of Kashmir, who acceded to the Indian Union in October 1947.¹⁴⁵ For India, control over Kashmir is crucial as New Delhi fears that an independent or Pakistani-controlled Kashmir could provide inspiration to similar

¹⁴² Mitton, regional realities, p. 35.

¹⁴³ Suedfeld & Jhangiani, cognitive management in an enduring international rivalry, p. 940; Wagner, ‘Pakistan’s foreign policy between India and Afghanistan, p. 247.

¹⁴⁴ Swati Parashar, ‘Gender, jihad, and jingoism: women as perpetrators, planners, and patrons of militancy in Kashmir’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2011), pp. 296-97.

¹⁴⁵ Parashar, gender, jihad, and jingoism, pp. 296-97.

secessionist movements elsewhere in the country, posing considerable threats to the Indian territorial integrity.¹⁴⁶

On the other hand, Pakistan maintains that Kashmir is a disputed territory whose destiny must be decided by the Kashmiri people because the state's accession to India was illegal and executed under the coercive pressure of an Indian military presence. Pakistan stresses that its military presence in Kashmir is justifiable as self-defence from Indian troops who have invaded Kashmir and captured part of the territory.¹⁴⁷ Since 1989 Kashmir has been the centre of violence between the two countries, described by Pakistan as an insurrection against the Indian rule.¹⁴⁸ However, with describing the Kashmir conflict as separatist movement, New Delhi accuses Islamabad of supporting Islamist militants and terrorists in attacks within India in order to achieve Pakistan's territorial claims in the long term.¹⁴⁹ Kashmir became a more important issue for Pakistani leaders after the partition of Bangladesh in 1971, which resulted in a desire in Islamabad to control the whole Kashmir territory. For that reason, conquering Kashmir would help Pakistan to settle down other internal problems with Sindh and Baluchistan as a means of securing territorial integrity of the country.¹⁵⁰

1.2. Competing national identities

Since their independence in 1947, incompatible national identities and religious belief systems has contributed to the persistence of the India-Pakistan rivalry. From an identity perspective, Kashmir is an extremely important test case for India to prove that a Muslim-majority state can also be an integral part of the Indian

¹⁴⁶ Carolyn C. James & Ozgur Ozdamar, 'Religion as a factor in ethnic conflict: Kashmir and Indian foreign policy', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2006), p. 453.

¹⁴⁷ Sayed R. Hussain, 'Resolving the Kashmir dispute: blending realism with justice', *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 48, no. 4 (2009), p. 1010.

¹⁴⁸ Husain Haqqani, 'Pakistan's endgame in Kashmir', *India Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2003), p. 49.

¹⁴⁹ Rhea Vance-Cheng, *Discourses of war and peace in Kashmir: a positioning analysis* (The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 2011), p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ T. V. Paul, 'Why has the India-Pakistan rivalry been so enduring? Power asymmetry and an intractable conflict', *Security Studies*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2010), p. 611.

secular and multi-ethnic society.¹⁵¹ For the elites of newly independent India, particularly the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, integrating a Muslim-dominant region into a primarily Hindu state was a symbol of secular nationalism and successful state-building.¹⁵² This is why India's national movement of independence never accepted the "two-nation theory" by rejecting the argument of advocates of Pakistan that Hindus and Muslims had separate religions and nationalities. From their secular nationalistic perspective, Muslims were as much citizens of India as Hindus.¹⁵³

Quite the opposite, for Pakistan and its first leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the primary defining characteristic of the nation of Pakistan was Islam, arguing that Hindus and Muslims are two different religious communities and separate nations. For Pakistan, Kashmir symbolises the impossibility of secular nationalism in the region by claiming that Kashmir territory must be integrated into the Muslim-dominant state of Pakistan.¹⁵⁴ This has helped the Pakistani military and political elites to use Islamic identity as an effective tool to defend their own political positions and interests, leading to the continuation of rivalry with India. For this reason, the Islamic political ideology remains important for Pakistan as it has served as the basis of Pakistani nationalism in the absence of an unambiguous national identity and a stable democratic regime.¹⁵⁵ However, using Islam as a unifying factor has proved to be a challenging experience due to the fact that the common religious identity neither kept Bangladesh unified with Pakistan nor does it prevent the escalation of ethnic-based separatist movements in Baluchistan, Sindh, and Waziristan.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Musarat J. Cheema, 'Pakistan-India conflict with special reference to Kashmir', *South Asian Studies (A Research Journal of South Asian Studies)*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2015), p. 46.

¹⁵² Cheema, Pakistan-India conflict with special reference to Kashmir, p. 46.

¹⁵³ Ashutosh Varshney, 'India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: antinomies of nationalism', *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 11 (1991), pp. 101-102.

¹⁵⁴ Doug McCune & Arihant Jaint, *Investments for peace in Kashmir* (Stanford University, California, 2003), pp. 3-4.

¹⁵⁵ Paul, why has the India-Pakistan rivalry been so enduring?, p. 614.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 614-15.

1.3. Security competition

Since their independence, the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry has led to various full-scale wars and numerous militarised conflicts in which both countries have suffered severely. Of the various wars they have fought, the India-Pakistan war of 1971 played an important role in shaping their perceptions, relationship and practices towards each other in the upcoming years following the war.¹⁵⁷ The 1971 resulted in the disastrous Pakistani military defeat at the hands of India, leading to the partition of Bangladesh from Pakistan. The crushing defeat of Pakistan contributed to an existential threat perception vis a vis India, that has largely shaped Pakistan's foreign and security policies since then.¹⁵⁸

In addition, the outcomes of various India-Pakistan wars can be clearly seen in a persistent security competition for power position between the two rival states, which is often referred to as "truncated power asymmetry".¹⁵⁹ Despite the fact that India's power capabilities are considerably greater than Pakistan in terms of territory, population, economy and military, Pakistan has been able to sustain rough military parity with India since their independence.¹⁶⁰ This is because the India-Pakistan power asymmetry is truncated by many inter-related factors because the weaker Pakistan has successfully reduced the power imbalance through effective strategy and tactics, military balance in the theatre of conflict, alliances with outside powers, and developing nuclear weapons.¹⁶¹

Moreover, Pakistan's strategic alliances with outside powers, particularly the U.S. and China, has been one of the major factors enabling Pakistan to truncate its

¹⁵⁷ Ganguly, India's Role in Afghanistan, p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ Isaac Kfir, 'Is there any hope for peace-building in Afghanistan?', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2010), p. 48.

¹⁵⁹ Power asymmetry comes from the fact that rivalry persists between a status quo power and a challenger state that are relatively equal in their capabilities at the local level, but unequal in terms of their global capabilities (Paul, why has the India-Pakistan rivalry been so enduring?, p. 615).

¹⁶⁰ Evan B. Montgomery & Eric S. Edelman, 'Rethinking stability in South Asia: India, Pakistan, and the competition for escalation dominance', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1-2 (2015), p. 164.

¹⁶¹ Paul, why has the India-Pakistan rivalry been so enduring?, p. 615.

power asymmetry with India. In their post-independence era, both India and Pakistan have been supported by outside powers in their confrontation with each other. During the Cold War, as a result of Islamabad's alliance with both the U.S. and later with China, New Delhi quickly moved to establish a strong relationship with the Soviet Union to balance the presence of outside powers in the region.¹⁶² As a result, the foreign and security policies of both India and Pakistan were significantly influenced by the U.S.-Soviet Union rivalry in South Asia, leading to the intensification of security competition between them.¹⁶³

Lastly, the presence of nuclear weapons has further reinforced the relative military parity between India and Pakistan, as India has been reluctant to initiate cross border military operations due to the fear that a conventional war could easily escalate to a nuclear exchange.¹⁶⁴ This is because Pakistan, in order to respond to the growing conventional weapons asymmetry in India's favour, has refused to declare a "no-first-use" policy by retaining the option of using nuclear weapons first in the event of a conventional war with India.¹⁶⁵ This nuclear doctrine has enabled Pakistan to support insurgent movements and Islamist militants in order to put military and economic pressure on India.¹⁶⁶ As a result, the stronger India has neither been overwhelmingly preponderant in the theatre of conflict due to its vulnerability to asymmetric challenges by the weaker Pakistan, nor has Pakistan been too small or incapable of mounting sustained challenges from India.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Tadjbakhsh, *South Asia and Afghanistan*, p. 12.

¹⁶³ Paul, *Why has the India-Pakistan Rivalry Been so Enduring?*, 615

¹⁶⁴ Montgomery & Edelman, *rethinking stability in South Asia*, pp. 164-66.

¹⁶⁵ Sadia Tasleem, *Pakistan's nuclear use doctrine* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 2016), <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/pakistan-s-nuclear-use-doctrine-pub-63913>>.

¹⁶⁶ Montgomery & Edelman, *rethinking stability in South Asia*, p. 165.

¹⁶⁷ T. V. Paul, 'Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry', in Paul, TV (ed.), *The India-Pakistan conflict: an enduring rivalry* (Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2006), pp. 5-6.

1.4. Economic confrontation

The level of bilateral trade and economic exchange between India and Pakistan has remained very low compared to what would be predicted by their close geographical proximity. For instance, while 56 percent of Pakistan's exports went to India in 1948-49, Pakistan's exports had reduced to only 4 percent by 1958 as both countries actively disengaged and embarked on import-substitution strategies.¹⁶⁸ In the broader context of economic confrontation, Pakistan considers India's regional economic dominance the same as its military supremacy. This is why despite obvious mutual benefits of economic cooperation; trade has not expanded significantly between the two rival states as the distribution of economic gains is considered unfair by Pakistan.¹⁶⁹ This is laid down in Islamabad's apprehensions that increased economic exchanges with New Delhi could pose a threat to its industry as they are seen as potentially working in favour of India's more developed industrial infrastructure.¹⁷⁰

2. India-Pakistan's Strategic Competition in Afghanistan

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, India and Pakistan have been keen to influence developments in Afghanistan by advancing their highly disparate geopolitical, security and economic interests. Both rival states have chosen different approaches to achieve their primary national security objectives by preventing each other from gaining any advantage in the Afghan theatre.¹⁷¹ In the aftermath of the collapse of the Pakistani-backed Taliban regime, a major strategic shift occurred in Afghanistan as the new Afghan government became an ally of India, enabling New Delhi to rebuild its close links to senior officials in the Afghan

¹⁶⁸ Kishore C. Dash & Robert K. McCleery, 'The political economy of trade relations between India-Pakistan', *Journal of Economic & Financial Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2014), p. 27.

¹⁶⁹ Mirza, economic cooperation between Pakistan and India, p. 10.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Robert Boggs, 'India's Afghan policy: time for a defensive re-calibration,' in Gaur, M (ed.), *India-Afghanistan relations* (India: Foreign Policy Research Centre, New Delhi, 2011), pp. 33-34.

government. This led to intense India-Pakistan competition for influence over developments in Afghanistan in the presence of the U.S. and allied forces.¹⁷² For the purpose of the main argument of this research, their rivalry in Afghanistan can be understood in three major areas of geopolitical, security, and economic interests.

2.1. Geopolitical interests

Afghanistan constitutes an important component of the India-Pakistan rivalry in which both countries have considerable geopolitical interests. Given its strategic location in South-Central Asia, Afghanistan is considered as a crucial element in India's broader geopolitical strategy, which aims at promoting its status as a regional and ultimately great power.¹⁷³ For this reason, New Delhi's relations with Kabul is part of its growing efforts to consolidate strategic power beyond the Indian subcontinent as India's capacity to effectively deal with problems in its immediate neighbourhood would have noticeable effects on its emergence as a new great power. The India's global ambitions to legitimise its claims to great power status can also be understood in the sense that influencing Afghan affairs and extending significant influence over Central Asia through Afghanistan constitute the "land-based parallel" to India's "much-publicised naval foray" into the broader Indian Ocean.¹⁷⁴

In pursuit of this policy, India has recently introduced the "Connect Central Asia" policy to improve its relations with the Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The policy aims at setting up universities, hospitals, information technology centres, joint commercial ventures, air connectivity, tourism initiatives, joint scientific research projects, and

¹⁷² Ghosh, *Afghanistan: the theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry*, p. 62.

¹⁷³ Mitton, *regional realities*, p. 76.

¹⁷⁴ Mitton, *the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan*, p. 364.

strategic partnerships in defence and security affairs with Central Asia.¹⁷⁵ To achieve this, New Delhi seeks to limit Pakistan's influence over developments in Afghanistan in order to ensure that no regime emerges in Kabul that is fundamentally hostile towards Indian interests in the region.¹⁷⁶ However, the geopolitical interests of India in the broader South-Central Asian region have been challenged by Pakistan, and its close ally China as Beijing seems to have encircled India by implementing a number of ambitious regional initiatives such as the “Karakoram Highway” that links China with Pakistan and forms part of China’s “One Belt, One Road” project. The project continues along the Afghan-Pak border and is forging south to the Chinese-developed port of Gwadar on Pakistan’s Arabian Sea coast.¹⁷⁷

In contrast to India, Pakistan’s geopolitical interests in Afghanistan are mainly India-centric. In Islamabad’s Afghanistan calculations, protecting Pakistan against a perceived Indian invasion takes precedence over pursuing its broader geopolitical goals. To realise this objective, Islamabad seeks a weak Kabul government dominated by pro-Pakistani proxies in order to maintain “strategic depth” against a perceived Indian invasion, undermine New Delhi’s influence in Afghanistan, and prevent India’s power projection in South-Central Asia.¹⁷⁸ The idea of strategic depth in Afghanistan came to existence after the defeat of Pakistan in the 1971 war with India, which led to the partition of Bangladesh.¹⁷⁹ The pursuit of strategic depth policy would enable Pakistan to dominate Afghanistan in order to take refuge in case of a future war with India as Pakistan

¹⁷⁵ Sandeep Singh & Amanpreet Kaur, ‘Connect Central Asia policy’ factor in India’s soft power initiatives in CARs: problems and prospects’, *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 12 (2014), pp. 106-108.

¹⁷⁶ Smruti S. Pattanaik, *Afghanistan and its neighbourhood: in search of a stable future* (Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway, 2013), pp. 36-37.

¹⁷⁷ Auriol Weigold, *Embrace and encircle? China’s approaches to India and their effect* (Future Directions International, Perth, Australia, 2015), <<http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/embrace-and-encircle-china-s-approaches-to-india-and-their-effect>>.

¹⁷⁸ Ganguly, *India’s Role in Afghanistan*, pp. 4-6.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

is concerned of being caught between a powerful adversary in the east and an irredentist Afghanistan with claims on the Pashtun-dominated areas in the west.¹⁸⁰

The Pakistan's strategic orientation is understood in the sense that blocking, preventing, disrupting and damaging Indian interests in Afghanistan and across the South-Central Asia is considered by Islamabad as a central component of Islamabad's overarching rivalry with New Delhi.¹⁸¹ For this reason, it is extremely difficult to see a fundamental shift in the Pakistan's India-centric policy as long as the Pakistani security establishment perceives India as a serious existential threat. This has enabled the Pakistani military to play a central role in shaping the country's foreign policy decisions in which security matters are given priority over all other objectives.¹⁸² Therefore, using its proxies to keep India from exerting influence in Afghanistan and the region serve the geopolitical interests of Pakistan.

2.2. Security interests

The security interests of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan are a reflection of their broader security competition. India's objectives in Afghanistan are partly derived from a carefully calculated assessment of its security interests to undermine Pakistan's influence and prevent it from becoming dominant in the Afghan affairs. India perceives that Pakistan's main objective is to dominate Afghanistan's political landscape for using the country as a safe-haven and training ground for anti-Indian Islamist militants and Kashmiri separatist groups.¹⁸³ New Delhi still remembers how Pakistan, under the proxy regime of the Taliban in the 1990s, raised, supported and trained numerous militant groups who operated against the Indian interests within and outside India's territory. For example, on 24 December 1999 a Pakistan-based Kashmiri terrorist group hijacked an Indian Airlines flight in Kathmandu and took the plane to Kandahar Air Field, under the Taliban control.

¹⁸⁰ Ghosh, *Afghanistan: the theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry*, pp. 61-62.

¹⁸¹ Mitton, *the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan*, p. 368.

¹⁸² Kfir, *is there any hope for peace-building in Afghanistan*, p. 48.

¹⁸³ Hanauer & Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's strategies in Afghanistan*, p. 11.

The hijackers' primary aim was to achieve the release of three Pakistani terrorists held in Indian jails.¹⁸⁴

Such considerations encourage India to prevent the resurgence of a Taliban regime in Kabul in order to make sure that Afghanistan is not a safe-haven and training ground for the Pakistani-supported Islamist militants and terrorists. This is because New Delhi is highly concerned about the impact of Afghanistan's insurgency on instability in Kashmir and South Asia more broadly.¹⁸⁵ In pursuit of its security interests, India seeks a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic representative government in Kabul that can establish control over the population and across its international borders in order to prevent the return of the Taliban fundamentalists and mitigate the Pakistani-backed Islamist militancy.¹⁸⁶

In contrast to India, Pakistan perceives Afghanistan as a crucial competition venue with India through which Islamabad might be able to achieve its primary national security objectives. In this context, Afghanistan presents a significant opportunity for Pakistan to challenge India as Islamabad is not able to confront New Delhi directly by using conventional military means due to the India's military supremacy and nuclear deterrence.¹⁸⁷ In this context, Islamabad perceives India's efforts to gain influence in Afghanistan as a deliberate strategy of encirclement that is aimed at trapping and ultimately destroying Pakistan between two hostile fronts, namely Afghanistan and India. Therefore, Islamabad's overriding objective in Afghanistan is to block India's own penetration into the country by helping to foster a pro-Pakistani administration in Kabul.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Pattanaik, *Afghanistan and its neighbourhood*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸⁵ Sumit Ganguly & Nicholas Howenstein, 'India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 63, no. 1 (2009), p. 132.

¹⁸⁶ Ganguly & Howenstein, *India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan*, pp. 132-33.

¹⁸⁷ Mitton, *the India-Pakistan rivalry and failure in Afghanistan*, p. 370.

¹⁸⁸ Hanauer & Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's strategies in Afghanistan*, p. 26.

In the meantime, Pakistan has long considered India to be an aggressive state that poses serious threats to its territorial integrity. In Islamabad's view, India would try to fuel ethnic tensions and sectarian violence along Pakistan's shared border with Afghanistan in Baluchistan and among the Pakistani Pashtun population.¹⁸⁹ Islamabad also perceives that an India-friendly government in Kabul would enable New Delhi to create a serious backdoor military threat to Pakistan by supporting the historical claims of Afghanistan over the Durand Line.¹⁹⁰ For this reason, Pakistan's top priority is to dominate Afghanistan in order to undermine the India's growing influence and obstruct New Delhi's ability to support Pakistani separatist groups.¹⁹¹ However, apart from its efforts to undermine India's influence in Afghanistan, Islamabad has mostly failed as all successive governments in Kabul, with the exception of the Taliban regime, have enjoyed friendly relations with India.

2.3. Economic interests

Both India and Pakistan have considerable economic interests in Afghanistan. India's economic interests in Afghanistan are closely linked to its economic growth and integration into the global economy as well as the importance of trade and commerce in New Delhi's foreign policy.¹⁹² India's trade with Afghanistan has increased substantially from US\$ 216.48 million in 2006-07 to US\$ 557.81 million in 2010-11. The trend in trade between India and Afghanistan is given in Table below.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 25-6.

¹⁹⁰ Mitton, regional realities, pp. 74-76.

¹⁹¹ Raghav Sharma, *India and Afghanistan: charting the future* (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India, 2009), pp. 2-3.

¹⁹² Ganguly & Howenstein, India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan, pp. 130-31.

(Value in US \$ million as on 31/01/2012)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Balance of Trade
2006-07	182.11	34.37	216.48	147.74
2007-08	249.21	109.97	359.18	139.24
2008-09	394.23	126.24	520.47	267.99
2009-10	463.55	125.19	588.74	338.36
2010-11	411.78	146.03	557.81	265.75
2010-11 (April-Oct)	218.15	77.24	295.39	140.91
2011-12 (April-Oct)	287.99	65.33	353.32	222.66

Table 1: Bilateral Trade between India and Afghanistan¹⁹³

In addition to official Afghan-Indian trade relations, India has provided substantial volume of aid to development and reconstruction efforts in post-2001 Afghanistan, making it the fifth largest bilateral donor after the U.S. the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan. For instance, despite a shortage in its own fleet, in 2002 New Delhi helped the Afghan government to rebuild its national airline by donating three Airbus 300 aircrafts and providing substantial training for Afghan commercial pilots.¹⁹⁴ The provision of economic aid and development assistance to Kabul has enabled New Delhi to establish a friendly relationship with Kabul.¹⁹⁵

Moreover, access to energy-rich Central Asia is one of the most potentially crucial components of India's economic priorities in which Afghanistan serves as a commercial corridor. New Delhi's interests in this sense are multi-faceted as India has planned to invest in Tajikistan's uranium and natural gas, Uzbekistan's production facilities, and in a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan.¹⁹⁶ Additionally, the emerging Afghan sectors highlighted by India as being potentially very productive are mining, infrastructure, telecommunications, agro-based and small-scale industries, health, pharmaceuticals, education, and information

¹⁹³ Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2012, India-Afghanistan Bilateral Trade, New Delhi, India, <http://commerce.nic.in/publications/annualreport_chapter7-2011-12.asp>.

¹⁹⁴ Ganguly & Howenstein, India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan, pp. 130-31.

¹⁹⁵ C. Christine Fair, 'Pakistan in 2011: ten years of the war on terror', *Asian Survey*, vol. 52, no. 1 (2012), p. 104.

¹⁹⁶ Shashank Joshi, 'India's Af-Pak strategy', *The RUSI Journal*, vol. 155, no. 1 (2010), p. 22.

technology in which New Delhi might be able to invest significantly.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the India's economic interests in Afghanistan and the region have been undermined by Pakistan's hostile efforts to destabilise Afghanistan.

For its part, Islamabad fears that the Indian growing influence in Afghanistan will undermine Pakistan's regional economic interests and obstruct its access to energy-rich Central Asia. Pakistan is keen to use Afghan territory as a land bridge to enhance its regional commerce and transportation links with the Central Asian states, and access natural gas and other sources of energy in view of its rising domestic demands.¹⁹⁸ To achieve its economic objectives, Pakistan has increased its engagement in the post-2001 reconstruction efforts. For instance, Pakistan has helped to build three highways in eastern, south-eastern and southern Afghanistan in the past 15 years to facilitate Pakistan's trade links with the Central Asian states.¹⁹⁹ However, the Pakistan's contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan has been no match to the India's economic support.²⁰⁰

Despite the fact that a stable and prosperous Afghanistan would constitute a new and proximate market for Pakistani goods and serve as a reliable commercial corridor to access energy-rich Central Asia, Pakistan's deep-seated and pervasive desire to block Indian influence in Afghanistan has significantly overshadowed its economic interests.²⁰¹ For example, while Pakistan did not oppose Afghanistan's formal membership in the SAARC in 2007, it has worked against Afghanistan's regional economic integration by blocking the two-way Afghan-Indian trade and economic exchanges.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Gareth Price, G 2013, *India's policy towards Afghanistan* (Chatham House, London, UK, 2013), p. 5.

¹⁹⁸ Mitton, regional realities, p. 75.

¹⁹⁹ Siddique, Pakistan's future policy towards Afghanistan, p. 17.

²⁰⁰ Siddique, Pakistan's future policy towards Afghanistan, pp. 17-18.

²⁰¹ Mitton, the India-Pakistan rivalry, pp. 365-67.

²⁰² Hanauer & Chalk, India's and Pakistan's strategies in Afghanistan, p. 31.

3. Implications for Afghan Peacebuilding

Apart from other internal and external factors discussed earlier in this research, the India-Pakistan rivalry has significantly contributed to the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process. Their rivalry has been one of the most important contributing factors to the political, economic and security challenges in Afghanistan.²⁰³ In the post-Taliban era, while New Delhi has successfully developed an excellent relationship with Kabul as a means of pursuing its interests and the region, Pakistan has perceived the India's growing influence in Afghanistan as a serious threat to its national interests.²⁰⁴ As such, it has been increasingly difficult for Afghanistan to achieve peace in the presence of the intense India-Pakistan rivalry, has largely undermined Afghanistan's security, political stability, economic growth, and regional integration.

3.1. Security implications

The immediate post-2001 Afghan government was largely dominated by anti-Taliban elements of the Northern Alliance with largely contentious relations with Pakistan in the past. Taking advantage of its past relationship with the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance, India developed a sophisticated diplomatic and intelligence network within Afghanistan in order to limit Pakistan's influence, and prevent the resurgence of any form of a Taliban regime.²⁰⁵ However, the growing influence of India in the post-2001 Afghan government and the long-lasting desire of the Pakistani security establishment to dominate Afghanistan urged Islamabad to facilitate the resurgence of the Taliban as a preferred alternative to the internationally-supported government of Afghanistan. This was also rooted in the fear of Pakistan that the India's growing influence in Afghanistan would lead to the

²⁰³ Paliwal, India's Taliban dilemma, p. 6; Wagner, Security cooperation in South Asia, pp. 10-11.

²⁰⁴ Zahid S. Ahmed & Stuti Bhatnagar, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and the Indian factor', *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 60, no. 2 (2007), p. 168.

²⁰⁵ Ganguly & Howenstein, India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan, pp. 132-33.

Pakistan's encirclement, surrounded by two unfriendly neighbours in its eastern and western borders.²⁰⁶

Despite regular denials by Pakistani officials, by 2003 it was increasingly apparent for both Afghans and their international partners that the Taliban were provided territorial sanctuaries in Pakistani urban and rural areas to organise an insurgency against the Afghan and international forces.²⁰⁷ In addition, as the Indo-Pakistani rivalry became intensified in the Afghan theatre, senior Pakistani officials, including the former President Pervez Musharraf, brought a new political agenda to the table by claiming that the Pashtuns were under-represented in the post-2004 elected government of Afghanistan. This was an apparent indication of Islamabad's growing loss of political influence in Afghanistan as the Pakistan-backed Taliban were put aside from power and the Afghan government was overwhelmingly under the control of anti-Pakistani figures, including a group of Tajiks from the pro-Indian Northern Alliance.²⁰⁸

The senior Pakistani officials nevertheless didn't stop their appeals of increasing Pashtun representation in the Afghan government when the dominance of the Northern Alliance members over state institutions ended by 2005, and the share of Pashtuns, particularly those without prior histories of antagonism towards Pakistan, was dramatically increased.²⁰⁹ Such claims were repeatedly made by Pakistani officials to express their anger towards the growing influence of India over Afghanistan's security, politics, economy and leadership. However, Afghan governments have regularly rejected the Pakistan's concerns about the Afghan-Indian friendly relations. For instance, Hamid Karzai, the former President of Afghanistan in an interview with BBC Urdu in June 2016 stressed that "India wants

²⁰⁶ Harsh V. Pant, 'India's 'Af-Pak' conundrum: South Asia in flux', *Orbis*, vol. 56, no. 1 (2012), p. 112.

²⁰⁷ Pant, India's 'Af-Pak' conundrum, p. 112.

²⁰⁸ Khalid Homayun Nadiri, 'Old habits, new consequences: Pakistan's posture toward Afghanistan since 2001', *International Security*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2014), pp. 148-49.

²⁰⁹ Nadiri, old habits, new consequences, pp. 148-49.

to truly befriend Afghanistan by helping the country build its infrastructure and facilities”.²¹⁰

As Pakistan’s security concerns in Afghanistan are primarily linked to its overarching rivalry with India, Pakistan has attempted to oppose India’s engagement and growing influence in Afghanistan at all costs by using its proxies, including the Taliban and other insurgent groups.²¹¹ This has enabled Islamabad to enjoy a monopoly to determine the future course of the Afghan state by destabilise the country and attacking Indian interests on a regular basis.²¹² As a result, the conflicting imperatives of both India and Pakistan to neutralise each other’s influence over the Afghan affairs have significantly undermined the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan.

3.2. Political stability implications

Political stability in Afghanistan has been affected in a way that both India and Pakistan have used various competing Afghan groups to contest the influence of each other. In fact, the political stability of the country has largely been affected by the fact that most of the leaders and political elites in Afghanistan have been clients of rival neighbouring and regional states, including India and Pakistan.²¹³ To confirm this claim, it is important to look back at the India’s support for the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance and Pakistan’s support for the Pashtun-dominated Taliban in the 1990s conflict in which both fronts of the conflict received considerable amount of money, arms and trainings to fight the other.²¹⁴

Similarly, in the past 15 years, both India and Pakistan have used ethnic diversity in Afghanistan as a means of advancing their competing interests in the

²¹⁰ *The Dawn*, ‘Pakistan can’t tolerate increasing India-Afghan friendly ties: Karzai’ 17 June 2016, <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1265254>>.

²¹¹ Mitton, *the India–Pakistan rivalry*, p. 368.

²¹² Pattanaik, *Afghanistan and its neighborhood*, p. 40.

²¹³ Sharan, *the dynamics of elite networks and patron–client relations in Afghanistan*, p. 1112.

²¹⁴ Paliwal, *India’s Taliban dilemma*, pp. 5-6; Pant, *India in Afghanistan*, p. 138.

fragmented Afghan society, a society which suffers from the politics of identity.²¹⁵ For India, the collapse of the Taliban regime and the emergence of a multi-ethnic representative government offered a significant opportunity to reconnect with all major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, particularly the anti-Pakistani elements among Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks.²¹⁶ For example, the presence of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance in the Afghan government, who were once supported by India, provided New Delhi with the opportunity to increase its influence in Afghanistan. India has also attempted successfully to strengthen its relations with those Pashtun elements in government who are critical of Pakistan and blaming Islamabad for keeping Afghanistan in turmoil.²¹⁷

In contrast to India, in the post-2001 era, Pakistan has chosen to continue to develop its network of clients among the predominantly pro-Pakistani Pashtun insurgent groups of the Taliban, Hezb-e Islami Party and Haqqani Network²¹⁸ who have had closer ties with Islamabad over the course of Afghan conflict in the past four decades. Pakistan was known for its favouritism towards the Pashtun mujahidin during and after the anti-Soviet conflict, and Islamabad's substantial support to the Taliban in the 1990s helped them capture Kabul in 1996 and announce the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.²¹⁹ In pursuit of this policy, Pakistan has constantly tried to advance a political formula to include the Taliban and other pro-Pakistani insurgent groups in a future Afghan

²¹⁵ Brian R. Kerr, *Indian-Pakistani competition in Afghanistan: thin line for Afghanistan* (Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011), pp. 2-3.

²¹⁶ Pattanaik, *Afghanistan and its neighborhood*, pp. 40-41.

²¹⁷ Ganguly & Howenstein, *India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan*, pp. 132-33.

²¹⁸ By 2005, the Taliban insurgents were organised under three distinctive divisions of the Quetta Shura led by Mullah Omar, Hezb-e Islami Party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and Haqqani Network led by Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani to work together for subverting the Afghan government and wear down the U.S.-led international coalition forces.²¹⁸ (Collins, *understanding war in Afghanistan*, p. 72).

²¹⁹ Frédéric Grare, *Pakistan-Afghanistan relations in the post-9/11 era* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2006), p. 8.

government as a means of advancing its influence in Afghanistan and counterbalancing the India's growing influence.²²⁰

In recent years, in spite of showing some signs of facilitating a political settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban, Islamabad has not permitted the Taliban to engage in serious and independence discussions without strict Pakistani oversight. In fact, the Pakistani security establishment doesn't want to witness any progress in peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government in which Islamabad cannot predict the outcomes.²²¹ As a result, while India supports actively a stable and multi-ethnic representative regime in Kabul as it serves primarily its strategic interests, for Islamabad a friendly and pro-Pakistani Pashtun-dominated government in Kabul is still preferable to any of Pakistan's alternatives.

3.3. Economic implications

The India-Pakistan rivalry has had significant economic implications for Afghanistan in past 15 years. For India, economic arrangements with the Afghan government offers a potential opportunity to advance its economic interests in Afghanistan and build robust economic ties with the energy-rich Central Asian states. Since the collapse of the Taliban regime, India's economic relations with Afghanistan have grown substantially, and New Delhi has provided approximately \$2 billion in official development assistance to Afghanistan.²²² Most recently, India offered Afghanistan a fresh \$1 billion in economic assistance after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visited India on 14 September 2016 to strengthen already close ties between the two countries.²²³ The India's substantial volume of aid and

²²⁰ Nadiri, *old habits, new consequences*, p. 158.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Betwa Sharma, 'A conversation with: Indian ambassador to Afghanistan Amar Sinha' (*New York Times*, 8 November 2013), <http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/08/a-conversation-with-indian-ambassador-to-afghanistan-amar-sinha/?_r=0>.

²²³ Niharika Mandhana, 'India pledges \$1 billion in economic aid to Afghanistan', (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2016), <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/india-pledges-1-billion-in-economic-aid-to-afghanistan-1473861874>>.

support to development and reconstruction efforts has made New Delhi of the largest donors in Afghanistan.²²⁴

In October 2011, Afghanistan and India signed a “Strategic Partnership Agreement”, that formalises a framework for cooperation between Kabul and New Delhi in the areas of political and security cooperation, trade and economic relations, capacity development, education support, socio-cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts.²²⁵ India has wisely used economic aid to win not only the hearts and minds of the people in Afghanistan, but also establish a friendly relationship with the Afghan government because New Delhi has played an important role in helping Kabul to lay the foundations for economic development.²²⁶ For instance, a 2009 ABC News/BBC poll found that 74 percent of Afghans held favourable opinions of India but only 8 percent hold favourable opinions towards Pakistan.²²⁷

On the other hand, Islamabad views Indian’s massive support to Afghanistan as a ploy against Pakistan because every single economic initiative of India is interpreted by Pakistan as a new conspiracy against its interests. For this reason, Pakistan has attempted to block and prevent India’s economic interests in Afghanistan in every possible manner.²²⁸ In the meantime, Pakistan has been actively pursuing its economic interests in Afghanistan, and current bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan stands at \$2.4 billion with the potential to increase in future.²²⁹ However, Islamabad’s desire for minimising India’s influence in Afghanistan and destabilising the country by using its proxies has significantly affected not just Afghanistan’s, but also Pakistan’s own economic interests.

²²⁴ Ganguly & Howenstein, *India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan*, pp. 130-1.

²²⁵ Price, *India’s policy towards Afghanistan*, p. 5.

²²⁶ Pant, *India in Afghanistan: a trajectory in motion*, p. 110.

²²⁷ Hanauer & Chalk, *India’s and Pakistan’s strategies in Afghanistan*, p. 23.

²²⁸ Mitton, *Regional Realities*, p. 91.

²²⁹ Rabia Akhtar & Jayita Sarkar, *Pakistan, India, and China after the U.S. drawdown from Afghanistan* (Stimson Center, Washington DC, 2015), p. 5.

In addition, as part of the broader Indian-Pakistani rivalry, India has worked on a number of projects to end Afghanistan's economic dependency on Pakistan. In pursuit of this policy, India has attempted to draw away Afghanistan from its economic and geopolitical dependence on Pakistan by providing alternative sources of income, resources and transit routes for the Afghan government.²³⁰ For example, India has built a 220-kilometer long highway in south-western Afghanistan which enables the country to have direct access to sea via Iran, and provides a shorter and more reliable route for Indian goods to reach Afghanistan. The project was completed in January 2009 despite regular attacks by the Taliban in which 135 people working on the project were killed, including 129 Afghans and 6 Indians.²³¹

Lastly, on May 2016 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Iran and signed an agreement to develop the \$500 million Chabahar port in south-eastern Iran, enabling both India and Afghanistan to increase their economic exchanges without Pakistani influence.²³² However, Islamabad views the increasing economic cooperation between India and Afghanistan as a serious threat to its national interests. For instance, just a week after the signing of the Chabahar port agreement, two former defence secretaries of Pakistan, Asif Yasin Malik and Nadeem Lodhi, insisted that the new transit route is a serious security threat to Pakistan.²³³ These appeals clearly indicate the intensity of the India-Pakistan rivalry, which contribute to the frustration of peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

3.4. Regional integration implications

Promoting trade, increasing economic growth, accelerating free flow of goods and services, improving confidence-building measures, and facilitating people-to-people contact between countries in the region are essential elements of regional

²³⁰ Yadav & Barwa, relational control, p. 116.

²³¹ Pant, India in Afghanistan, p. 109.

²³² Muhammad D. Fazil, '5 reasons Gwadar port trumps Chabahar', *The Diplomat*, June 9, 2016.

²³³ *The Dawn*, 2016, 'Trade route linking Chabahar port with Afghanistan a security threat', May 31, 2016.

integration. In such a situation, Afghanistan will benefit the most economically and politically due to its location at the crossroads of South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia.²³⁴ For India, integrating Afghanistan into the South Asian regional dynamics is considered as a strategic imperative for advancing New Delhi's regional integration as well as economic and geopolitical policies. To facilitate Afghanistan's regional integration, India helped it become a member of the SAARC in 2007 with the hope to expand the transit and free flow of goods across borders as a means of contributing to the greater economic development of the region.²³⁵

The India's support for Afghanistan's regional integration is rooted in India's perception that Afghanistan can serve as a trade and transportation hub between Central and South Asia, which would allow greater commercial and economic exchanges for transforming the whole region's economy.²³⁶ However, despite the obvious benefits of regional integration, the India-Pakistan rivalry has not only hindered Afghanistan's regional integration, but also undermined regional economic collaboration between Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In this context, Pakistan has imposed numerous restrictions on Afghan-Indian economic exchanges by using its leverage on Afghanistan's reliance on its transit routes in order to prevent the integration of the Afghan and Indian markets.²³⁷

In addition, contrary to the great deal of earlier optimism in the region, Afghanistan's inclusion in SAARC neither led to greater economic development of Afghanistan nor did it facilitate the transit and free flow of goods across borders in the region. This is because the India-Pakistan rivalry has prevented them from initiating a joint approach to Afghanistan's regional integration.²³⁸ Afghanistan's accession to SAARC and the fact that it was promoted by India can be interpreted

²³⁴ Barnett R. Rubin & Andrea C. Armstrong, 'Regional issues in the reconstruction of Afghanistan', *World Policy Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2003), p. 36.

²³⁵ Pant, *India in Afghanistan*, p. 111.

²³⁶ Rubin & Armstrong, *regional issues in the reconstruction of Afghanistan*, p. 35.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Pant, *India's 'Af-Pak' conundrum*, p. 110.

as a sign of India's willingness to engage durably in Afghan affairs and to integrate Afghanistan into the South Asian regional order.²³⁹ However, the competition between India and Pakistan has significantly contributed to the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process by affecting the ability of the Afghan government to promote the human and economic development of the country by means of regional collaboration within South and Central Asia.

To conclude this chapter, it has been argued that the India-Pakistan rivalry has significantly undermined the internationally-supported Afghan peacebuilding process. In the post-2001 era, both rival states have intensified their competition in the Afghan affairs by considering influence in Afghanistan as critical towards achieving their strategic goals. The implications of their rivalry for Afghan peacebuilding have been evident as the projection of their conflict into Afghanistan has had obvious negative impacts on the country's security, political stability, economic growth, and regional integration. The India-Pakistan rivalry has particularly affected the security of Afghanistan in the sense that the Taliban have been supported by the Pakistan to destabilise Afghanistan and attack the interests of India.

The India-Pakistan rivalry has also affected political stability of Afghanistan as they have taken advantage of their close relationship with political elites of different ethnic groups to block and contain the influence of each other. In addition, the hostility between New Delhi and Islamabad have prevented Afghanistan from developing its economic infrastructure and integrating into the broader regional economic structures as both rival states pursue adversarial economic policies towards one another. This has significantly undermined Afghanistan's economic growth. As a result, apart from other important internal and external contributing factors discussed in the previous chapter, the India-Pakistan rivalry has been one

²³⁹ Ibid, pp. 110-11.

of the most important elements of the failure of the post-2001 Afghan peacebuilding process.

However, it is important to highlight that both rival states have played quite different roles in Afghanistan in their individual capacities. In this context, India has largely played a positive role by supporting a democratic, multi-ethnic representative government in Afghanistan, helping the country to develop its socio-economic potential, and facilitating regional integration of Afghanistan into the wider South-Central Asian region. Compared to India, Pakistan has played an evidently destructive role in the Afghan peacebuilding process by supporting the Taliban as a preferred alternative to the internationally-supported government of Afghanistan. In the meantime, Islamabad has not been able to contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of Afghanistan due to Pakistan's India-centric policies towards Afghanistan and its own economic troubles.

CHAPTER FOUR

Prospects for India-Pakistan Cooperation in Afghanistan

This chapter examines the prospects for India-Pakistan cooperation in Afghanistan by testing the validity of liberal peace in the context of its three core propositions of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions. The central argument of this chapter is that the rivalry between India and Pakistan has endured due to the absence of the building blocks of a liberal peace order in their relationship, which has also undermined peacebuilding efforts in post-2001 Afghanistan. A liberal peace order in the India-Pakistan relationship means that democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions would largely shape the policies and interests of the two countries towards each other, in Afghanistan, and across the broader South Asia. It will be argued that strengthening a liberal order in the Indian-Pakistani relationship would enable them to normalise their relations, reconcile their differences, and cooperate with each other for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

This chapter is divided into three sub-sections. The pacifying effects of democratic consolidations on the India-Pakistan rivalry will be evaluated, continued with the examination of the potential of economic interdependence in improving their relations, and followed by the evaluation of their membership in regional institutions as a functional platform for reconciling their differences. In this chapter, the following sub-questions are addressed, which are directly related to the central research question: 1) how does liberal peace theory offer conceptual insights into prospects for India-Pakistan's conflict resolution and mutual cooperation? 2) how does democracy, economic interdependence and regional institutions help India and Pakistan to cooperate for a peaceful Afghanistan?

1. Promoting Democracy

Democracy is often referred to as a political system that meets at least three conditions: competition among organised groups and individuals over political power without the use of force; political participation through regular free elections; and assurance of certain level of civil and political rights that ensures competition and participation. Democracy is a peaceful conflict resolution mechanism in which conflicting claims by rival groups are solved by majority votes or consensual agreements, and individual rights are guaranteed by constitutional and institutionalised power-sharing arrangements.²⁴⁰ In the foreign policy context, democratic peace theory suggests that democratic states pursue peaceful foreign policies towards each other and live in peaceful co-existence without being engaged in armed conflicts because of a number of structural and normative factors.²⁴¹ For this reason, absence of democracy has been one of the major causes of the persistence of the India-Pakistan rivalry as they have had only limited joint democratic periods. To look the prospects for India-Pakistan cooperation for a peaceful Afghanistan, it is important to evaluate democratic consolidations in the two countries and the potential of democracy in resolving their enduring conflict.

1.1. Democratic consolidations in India and Pakistan

India and Pakistan have had only limited periods where both countries simultaneously enjoyed democratically elected governments. While India has largely managed to sustain democratic government since its independence in 1947, except for a brief period of emergency rule from 1975 to 1977, Pakistan has been ruled by the military for half of its existence, and it was only in May 2013 for the first time in its history that a democratic transition of power took place.²⁴² The recent democratic transition symbolises Pakistan's move towards democracy,

²⁴⁰ Håvard Hegre, *The limits of the liberal peace* (Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, Norway, 2004), p. 34.

²⁴¹ Richmond, *the problem of peace: understanding the liberal peace*, p. 293.

²⁴² Wagner, *democratic peace in South Asia*, p. 5.

which would possibly pave the way for democratic consolidation in the forms of well-functioning democratic institutions; an improvement of social and economic conditions, and a flourishing civil society.²⁴³

Immediately after independence, India gifted itself a democratic constitution that became a foundation of the overall governance, administration and political system of the country. Nevertheless, Indian democracy has faced numerous challenges, including long-standing discrimination on the basis of caste or gender, vastly unequal access by the public to basic services, and serious governance deficits such as pervasive corruption.²⁴⁴ Despite these challenges, Indian democracy has flourished, grown and enlightened in adverse times. India have had significant achievements in democratic consolidation as the country managed to function as a democracy by strengthening democratic values and institutions as well as maintaining permanent civilian control over its military.²⁴⁵

The successful democratic consolidation in India is understood in the context of the civilian government's ability to maintain control of the military, which was made possible by the combination of India's institutional legacy from the British rule and high levels of government legitimacy.²⁴⁶ Following India's independence, the Congress Party along with the legitimacy of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's rule paved the way for civilian control to be sharply imposed on the military.²⁴⁷ After Nehru's death in 1964, the country's politics become more chaotic and fractured which prompted Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to impose restrictions on civil liberties and announce emergency rule from 1975 to 1977. However, despite

²⁴³ Huma Baqai, 'Pakistan in transition towards a substantive democracy', *Review of History and Political Science*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2014), p. 76.

²⁴⁴ Gerd Schönwälder, *Promoting democracy: what role for the democratic emerging powers?* (German Development Institute, Bonn, Germany, 2014), p. 11.

²⁴⁵ Kotera M. Bhimaya, *Civil-military relations: a comparative study of India and Pakistan* (RAND Graduate School, California, United States, 1997), p. 5.

²⁴⁶ Paul Staniland, Explaining civil-military relations in complex political environments: India and Pakistan in comparative perspective, *Security Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2008), pp. 357-57.

²⁴⁷ Staniland, explaining civil-military relations in complex political environments, pp. 357-57.

various internal challenges, including decreased government legitimacy during the emergency rule, the Indian military did not become involved in politics because of the strong presence and functioning of democratic state institutionalisation.²⁴⁸ After the emergency rule, democracy was further consolidated in India as fundamental rights and civil liberties of citizens and freedom of press were strengthened, the independence of judiciary was protected, and democracy was brought to the proper political track in the country.²⁴⁹

In contrast to India, the combination of continuous internal political instability, weaknesses of political parties, incompetency of state bureaucracy and perceived external existential threats enabled the Pakistani military to dominate not only politics, but also emerge as the most clearly institutionalised organisation in the country.²⁵⁰ With the military coup of 1958, led by the Army Chief, General Ayub Khan, political parties were abolished and all democratic state institutions were sidelined which gave a free hand to the military to run the country. After 13 years of military rule, a second phase of democratisation began in Pakistan between 1972 and 1977 until the elected government of Prime Minister Zuleika Ali Bhutto (August 1973 – July 1977) came to an end by another military coup which brought in power General Zia-ul-Haq.²⁵¹

After the death of General Zia-ul-Haq, a third unsuccessful democratic phase began in Pakistan between 1988 and 1999 in which Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif served two terms each as elected prime ministers. In this period, the Pakistani military wielded significant influence in policy-making processes of the country until General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief of Army Staff, displaced Nawaz Sharif's civilian government and returned the country to military rule in October

²⁴⁸ Paul R. Brass, *The politics of India since independence* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), p. 43.

²⁴⁹ Chandraanta K. Mathur, *Media in India: raj to swaraj*, (Shivalik Prakashan, New Delhi, 2015), pp. 26-27.

²⁵⁰ Staniland, explaining civil-military relations in complex political environments, p. 348.

²⁵¹ Sheila Fruman, *Will the long march to democracy in Pakistan finally succeed?* (United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, United States, 2011), pp. 5-6.

1999.²⁵² Subsequently, the fourth and present phase of democracy began in Pakistan when General Musharraf stepped down in August 2008. This period has been characterised by growing social and political crisis, a troubled economy, poor governance, and religious extremism and terrorism.²⁵³ It is important to note that most democratically elected governments in Pakistan did not have control over the military since the security institutions had an unrivalled opportunity to strengthen their position at the expense of the civilian government.²⁵⁴

The Pakistani military has repeatedly attempted to accommodate constitutional changes or unconstitutional manoeuvres as a means of maintaining its control over the political system of the country.²⁵⁵ Regular constitutional amendments in Pakistan have been used by the military to give legitimacy to military rules and strengthen the powers of military rulers. To consolidate its power and maintain its dominance over the civilian governments of the country, the military has taken the following steps: “co-opt the bureaucracy; use accountability against politicians; entrench the army in political and civil affairs; create a new breed of politicians subservient to military under the guise of local government reform; hold elections to create some sort of democratic legitimacy; and finally move to co-opt the judiciary”.²⁵⁶

In addition, the Pakistani military has acquired a prominent economic role in the country by being given a wide range of benefits, including licenses and large plots of land and the overwhelming presence of retired and serving senior officers in key posts in the public sector and in state-run corporations.²⁵⁷ The military has

²⁵² Hasan A. Rizvi, ‘Democracy in Pakistan’, in W Hofmeister (ed.), *Insights into Asian and European affairs: a future of democracy* (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Singapore, 2011), pp. 117-18.

²⁵³ Baqai, Pakistan in transition towards a substantive democracy, p. 77.

²⁵⁴ Hanauer & Chalk India’s and Pakistan’s strategies in Afghanistan, p. 32.

²⁵⁵ Jayshree Bajoria, Pakistan’s constitution (Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 2010), <<http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistans-constitution/p15657>>.

²⁵⁶ Bajoria, Pakistan’s constitution.

²⁵⁷ Elisa A. Giunchi, *The political and economic role of the Pakistani military* (Italian Institute for International Political Studies, Milano, Italy, 2014), p. 8.

penetrated the economy through the business ventures of its welfare foundations, which are among the largest business corporations in Pakistan, and operate a wide array of commercial activities through which economic and geostrategic interests of the military often intersect.²⁵⁸ Moreover, the placement of military officials in key positions in Pakistan's defence and finance ministries has made these institutions subservient to military interests, making it unlikely that foreign and security policies of the country may evolve away from the Indian security threat perception.²⁵⁹

1.2. Democracy promotion and conflict resolution

The peaceful behaviour of democratic states towards each other lies in two interconnected normative and structural factors democratic peace. Normative explanations mean that citizens in democratic states value their basic rights and freedoms, and are willing to share these norms with citizens in other democratic countries by obliging their governments to externalise such norms as strong protections against initiating war.²⁶⁰ In this sense, domestic norms of internal political processes, such as non-violent competition, peaceful settlement of disputes and importance of public opinion, are the core normative factors, shaping the peaceful foreign policy behaviour of democratic states towards each other.²⁶¹ Additionally, democratic norms in the context of individual rights and freedoms and the willingness of individuals to pursue self-preservation and material well-being play a significant part in the formulation and enforcement of foreign policies of democratic states by enabling citizens to oppose armed conflicts. Thus, the

²⁵⁸ Giunchi, the political and economic role of the Pakistani military, pp. 8-9.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 9-10.

²⁶⁰ Maoz & Russett, normative and structural causes of democratic peace, p. 625.

²⁶¹ Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia, p. 7; Barbara Farnham, 'The theory of democratic peace and threat perception', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 3 (2003), pp. 397-98.

externalisation of domestic norms of democratic processes constrains normatively democratic states from clashing with each other.²⁶²

In addition to normative factors, structural explanations point to the fact that democratically-elected political leaders are required to mobilise domestic support to their international policies because their decisions have to go through the legislature, political bureaucracies, and key interest groups.²⁶³ These structural factors in the context of political constraints, power distribution, and technical restraints slow down any unpredictable or ill-informed behaviours of political leaders in the process of decision-making and constrain their ability to engage in militarised disputes with other democracies.²⁶⁴ In this context, the presence of democratic political parties and strong civil society play an important part in constraining foreign policy-related decision-making issues due to institutional complexity and inter-connectivity of state institutions in democracies.²⁶⁵ Similarly, the principle of checks and balances of power is a further institutional constraint in decision-making processes of democratic states as this principle legally separates powers of executive, legislative and judiciary by preventing a single institution of the state to dominate completely the decision-making processes.²⁶⁶

Having considered the normative and structural explanations of democratic peace, the prospects for conflict resolution between India and Pakistan and their possible cooperation in Afghanistan is more likely if both countries have democratically-elected governments. The rivalry between the two countries has been less dispute-prone under joint democracy than during other periods in their post-independence

²⁶² John R. MacMillan, 'Liberalism and the democratic peace', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2004), p. 186; David Leblang & Steve Chan, 'Explaining wars fought by established democracies: do institutional constraints matter?', *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 4 (2003), p. 386.

²⁶³ Owen, how liberalism produces democratic peace, p. 99.

²⁶⁴ Hegre, development and the liberal peace, p. 25.

²⁶⁵ Brandon C. Prins & Christopher Sprecher, 'Institutional constraints, political opposition, and interstate dispute escalation: evidence from parliamentary systems, 1946-89', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1999), p. 274.

²⁶⁶ Zeno Gobetti, *A revision of the theory of democratic peace* (Institute for Peace Science, Hiroshima University, Japan, 2009), p. 30.

era. For instance, the probability of a new dispute arising in any given year during the joint democracy period was approximately 40% (seven disputes in 17 years) as opposed to almost 100% (36 disputes in 38 years) when there was no joint democracy.²⁶⁷ In fact, Pakistan's three major wars with India and the Kargil border conflict in 1999, had either been initiated by military regimes (1965 and 1971 wars) or decided by intense military pressure on civilian governments. While the Kargil conflict was fought when Pakistan was ruled by a democratic government, the military under the command of General Musharraf had kept Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the dark about the Kargil misadventure.²⁶⁸

However, the pacifying effects of democracy on improving the India-Pakistan relationship has been modest because of the persistent weaknesses of democratic institutions in Pakistan, caused by military interventions. The military establishment has continually exerted considerable influence in the areas of security, defence and foreign policy even during the rule of democratically-elected civilian governments.²⁶⁹ In the meantime, it is important to note that elected civilian governments in Pakistan have always had a positive attitude towards normalising relations and resolving conflict with India. This attitude has been more evident during the elected government of Pakistan People's Party between 2008 and 2013 and the current government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.²⁷⁰ For example, in May 2014 the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif accepted the invitation of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend his inauguration ceremony in New Delhi, which was an unprecedented initiative in the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Ahmad & Ebert, *breaking the equilibrium*, pp. 52-53.

²⁶⁸ Dash & McCleery, *the political economy of trade relations between India-Pakistan*, p. 34.

²⁶⁹ Ahmad & Ebert, *breaking the equilibrium*, p. 53.

²⁷⁰ Chakma, *liberal peace and South Asia*, p. 196.

²⁷¹ Jason Burke & Jon Boone, 'Narendra Modi invites Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif to inauguration', (*The Guardian*, 22 May 2014), <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/21/narendra-modi-invites-pakistan-nawaz-sharif-inauguration>>.

Despite the overwhelming influence of the military in shaping foreign policy and security decision-making processes, the recent democratic developments in Pakistan offer some optimism about a gradual changing in the traditional structure of the country's civil–military relations, which might lead to an improvement in the India-Pakistan relationship.²⁷² However, the pacifying effects of democracy on conflict resolution will not be clearly evident until the Pakistani civilian government is able to assert its authority and maintain permanent control over the military.²⁷³ It is also important to note that while there are no formidable structural barriers in India to peace with Pakistan as the Indian military remains firmly under the civilian control, the ideas about whether Pakistan could be trusted, given their history of enmity, would take time to dislodge but could be amenable to confidence-building measures between the two countries.²⁷⁴ Therefore, the prospect for conflict resolution between India and Pakistan and the possibility of their mutual cooperation for a peaceful Afghanistan would be highly dependent on democracy gaining ground in Pakistan and its military coming under greater civilian control.

2. Developing Economic Interdependence

Liberal peace theory argues that economic interdependence, caused by trade liberalisation and economic interactions, promotes mutual cooperation and peaceful behaviour among states. This is because increased economic interactions reduce the likelihood of militarised conflict between states, which would threaten their trade relations and economic growth.²⁷⁵ In the context of India-Pakistan relationship, increased economic interdependence would help them to transform their conflictual relationship into a liberal peace order, which would provide them with opportunities to work together for economic dividends in Afghanistan and in the region. To examine the pacifying effects of economic

²⁷² Wagner, security cooperation in South Asia, p. 19.

²⁷³ Baqai, Pakistan in transition, p. 76.

²⁷⁴ Ahmad & Ebert, breaking the equilibrium, p. 57.

²⁷⁵ Peterson, dyadic trade, exit costs, and conflict, pp. 565-66.

interdependence, the India-Pakistan economic relations and the prospects for their mutual economic cooperation are evaluated in this section.

2.1. India-Pakistan's economic relations

Despite some progress in recent years, little economic cooperation has taken place between India and Pakistan due to their strained security relationship. In the aftermath of its independence in 1947, India adopted an import-substitution industrialisation strategy, led by the public sector with a highly protectionist trade policy, and comprehensive government controls on economic activities. Serious liberalisation of the India's economy and the gradual dismantling of government controls began only from 1991.²⁷⁶ This was because a balance of payment crisis in 1991 forced the Indian government to introduce sweeping market reforms, which has enabled its economy to grow phenomenally and has brought the country to the doorstep of becoming a global power.²⁷⁷ In the post-Cold War era, India's economic liberalisation and market reform initiatives have been specifically noteworthy because of its dramatic origin, high performance and promising consequences.²⁷⁸

Compared to India, Pakistan's economy remained relatively more open and less import-substituting in character in the early years after its independence but failed to create a diversified, modern and competitive industrial sector.²⁷⁹ Since the end of the Cold War, Pakistan has also introduced various economic liberalisation and market reform initiatives that paved the way for its economy to grow at a healthy pace from 2002 to 2007 but in other times the economy faltered due to a myriad of factors.²⁸⁰ In fact, Pakistan was unable to implement successfully its adopted

²⁷⁶ E. Sridharan, 'Economic cooperation and security spill-overs: the case of India and Pakistan', in M Krepon & C Gagne (Eds.), *Economic confidence-building and regional security* (The Stimson Center, Washington, DC, 2000), p. 64.

²⁷⁷ Chakma, *liberal peace and South Asia*, p. 194.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Sridharan, *economic cooperation and security spill-overs*, p. 65.

²⁸⁰ Chakma, *liberal peace and South Asia*, pp. 194-95.

economic reform policies because of its inability to make necessary structural changes in the economy. This is mainly because domestic political instability, problematic law and order situation and terrorism have profoundly affected Pakistan's economic growth in the past two decades.²⁸¹

In terms of bilateral economic relations, the 1965 India-Pakistan war resulted in the significant decline of bilateral economic relations, and there was practically no trade between the two countries until 1974. The 1990s witnessed a smooth increase in India-Pakistan economic relations but the 1999 Kargil conflict once again slowed down bilateral trade relations.²⁸² Subsequently, economic relations between the two countries came to a halt following the terrorist attack of December 2001 on the Indian Parliament by the Pakistani-backed Islamist militants. After some signs of improvement between 2002 and 2008, bilateral economic cooperation between them again dropped after the Mumbai terrorist attack in November 2008. It was only after three years that both India and Pakistan decided to resume their bilateral trade and economic cooperation in 2011 by opening an Integrated check post at Attari-Wagah border.²⁸³

Therefore, despite the gradual growth of preferential trade among the countries of South Asia under the auspices of SAARC, political tensions, military confrontations and mutual distrust have resulted in extremely weak economic ties between India and Pakistan. India does not import any of Pakistan's major exports nor does Pakistan import any of India's major exports. In 1998 for instance, trade with Pakistan was 0.44 percent of India's total trade, and trade with India was two percent of Pakistan's total trade.²⁸⁴ Pakistan's share in India's total exports increased from 0.33 percent in 2001-2002 to 0.99 percent in 2010-2011, and imports from Pakistan as percentage of total imports of India, marginally declined

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations, p. 32.

²⁸³ Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations, p. 32.

²⁸⁴ Sridharan, economic cooperation and security spill-overs, pp. 65-66.

from 0.13 percent in 2001-2002 to 0.09 percent in 2010-2011. This shows a slight increase in official trade between India and Pakistan from \$144 million in 2001 to \$2.7 billion in 2010-11 but it is still far from an ideal mutual economic cooperation.²⁸⁵ The trend in trade between India and Pakistan is given in the following table.

(Value in US \$ million as on 31/01/2012)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Balance of Trade
2006-07	1350.09	323.62	1673.71	1026.47
2007-08	1950.53	287.97	2238.50	1662.56
2008-09	1439.88	370.17	1810.05	1069.71
2009-10	1573.32	275.94	1849.26	1297.38
2010-11	2333.67	332.51	2666.18	2001.16
2010-11 (APril-Oct)	1066.90	201.16	1268.06	865.74
2011-12 (APril-Oct)	694.25	226.16	920.41	468.09

Table 2: Bilateral trade between India and Pakistan²⁸⁶

2.2. Economic interdependence and conflict resolution

A large number of studies have found that increased economic interdependence would reduce not only political tension and the threat of conflict, but also enhance economic development in both India and Pakistan. For this reason, increased economic interdependence between the two countries would be a valuable confidence-building measure to improve their bilateral relationship. For both India and Pakistan, there are fundamental advantages and benefits associated with increasing their economic interdependence, including trade in goods and services, investment, and foreign aid.

Since it adopted economic liberalisation and market reform policies in the early 1990s, India's top priority has been to maintain momentum in its economic growth,

²⁸⁵ Loknath Acharya & Ashima Marwaha, *India-Pakistan economic relations* (The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, India, 2012), p. 9.

²⁸⁶ Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2012, *India-Pakistan Bilateral Trade*, New Delhi, India, <http://commerce.nic.in/publications/annualreport_chapter7-2011-12.asp>.

which encourages New Delhi to reconcile its differences with Islamabad for further economic gains.²⁸⁷ In the meantime, India is the natural economic partner for Pakistan, and given their geographic proximity, it has compelling reasons to seek economic cooperation with its historical rival. Pakistan's willingness to embrace the "India-China model" of economic cooperation, as agreed by former Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari during his visit to India in April 2012, remains a positive move. This model provides a pragmatic approach to engage in mutually beneficial economic ties while simultaneously pursuing negotiation on contentious bilateral issues.²⁸⁸

In recent years, another major development in the Indian-Pakistani economic interactions was Islamabad's decision to grant Most Favourable Nation (MFN) status to India in 2012, which was in response to India's decision of granting MFN status Pakistan in 1996.²⁸⁹ As a precursor to granting MFN status to India, Pakistan abolished its positive list of 2,000 goods in 2011 that could be imported from India, and replaced it with a negative list of about 1,200 items that could not be imported. It is important to note that India doesn't impose equivalent formal restrictions on exports to or imports from Pakistan.²⁹⁰ Islamabad's decision to grant MFN status to India signifies a shift in the Pakistani motivation and approach to normalising relations with India, meaning that Islamabad has begun to define its national interest vis-à-vis India through the prism of mutual economic benefits.²⁹¹

In addition, Pakistan's recent economic troubles have also pushed Islamabad to normalise its relations with India. The benefits associated with Pakistan's increased economic interdependence with India might prevent its decline towards a "failed state" status by allowing time for Islamabad to gain economic benefits and

²⁸⁷ Pant, India's 'Af-Pak' conundrum.

²⁸⁸ Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations, p. 37.

²⁸⁹ Acharya & Marwaha, India-Pakistan economic relations, pp. 3-4.

²⁹⁰ Acharya & Marwaha, India-Pakistan economic relations, pp. 3-4.

²⁹¹ Acharya & Marwaha, India-Pakistan economic relations, pp. 3-4.

fight internal destabilising elements.²⁹² To understand the linkage of Pakistan's economic prosperity to the Indian growing economy, its 2008 budget indicated a relaxed trading regime vis-à-vis India to create opportunities for business communities on both sides.²⁹³ Such shifts would strengthen economic ties between the two countries as a means of contributing to the normalisation of their relationship, which would also lead them to reconcile their differences and cooperate with each other for peace and stability in Afghanistan. This means that the development of economic relations between the two countries counteracts the mistrust engendered by decades of considerable tensions and conflicts.²⁹⁴

Increased economic interdependence would also help India and Pakistan to work together for tremendous economic dividends in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the region. It provides India with the opportunity of transit trade and market access beyond Pakistan to the markets of both Afghanistan and Central Asian countries.²⁹⁵ A stable and peaceful Afghanistan would have the potential to retain its previous historical role as the gateway between South and Central Asia, enabling all involved parties to benefit from economic opportunities, trade relations and energy pipelines.²⁹⁶ However, this should be acknowledged that the India-Pakistan rivalry might not disappear immediately, given the decades-long history of their enmity, but their cooperative engagement in Afghanistan will benefit economically not just India and Pakistan, but also Afghanistan to achieve stability and prosperity.²⁹⁷

For these reasons, it is clearly evident that the India-Pakistan's willingness to emphasise trade and economic exchanges would enable them to redefine their

²⁹² Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations, p. 37.

²⁹³ Mukherjee, a brand new day or back to the future, p. 435.

²⁹⁴ Mirza, economic cooperation between Pakistan and India, p. 3.

²⁹⁵ Dash & McCleery, the political economy of trade relations, pp. 34-35; Tadjbakhsh, South Asia and Afghanistan, p. 45.

²⁹⁶ Mukherjee, a brand new day or back to the future, p. 436.

²⁹⁷ Mukherjee, a brand new day or back to the future, p. 436.

interests as a means of reconciling their differences. In this context, positive attitudes of New Delhi and Islamabad towards strengthening their economic ties would help them lay the necessary foundations for a liberal peace order in their relationship. This is because a large number of qualitative and quantitative research works acknowledge that there is strong evidence of a link between economic interdependence and conflict resolution between states.²⁹⁸ Therefore, normalisation of relationship between the two countries as a consequence of extended economic interdependence would enable them to advance their mutual economic gains and work together for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan.

This nevertheless should not to be forgotten that India-Pakistan's economic interdependence still have a long way to go to realise its full potential as their relationship is yet to be normalised as Pakistan's civilian government is still constricted by the military's perceived existential threat from India.²⁹⁹ In the meantime, Pakistan is concerned that increased economic exchanges with India could pose a threat to its industry since they are seen as potentially working in favour of India's more developed industrial infrastructure. Thus, Pakistan fears that such a situation could result in a gradual but growing one-sided economic dependence of Pakistan on India.³⁰⁰ This means that increased economic interdependence between India and Pakistan would be highly dependent on strong political will on both sides as well as deepening democratic consolidation in Pakistan.

3. Regional and International Institutions

Regional and international institutions provide institutionalised mechanisms for sustained cooperation and peaceful relations between states. The kind of mutual cooperation opportunities provided by regional and international institutions can

²⁹⁸ Chakma, liberal peace and South Asia, p. 200.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Mirza, economic cooperation between Pakistan and India, p. 10.

include coercing norm breakers, mediating among conflicting parties, reducing uncertainty by providing information, establishing expectations for mutual gains, and shaping norms of cooperation.³⁰¹ In the context of the India-Pakistan relationship, the absence of shared membership in well-functioning regional and international institutions is considered to be an important contributing factor to the persistence of their rivalry. This is because membership in regional and international institutions create differentiated multilateral cooperation mechanisms that would provide both countries with essential means to resolve their insecurities, overcome selfish behaviours, forego immediate gains for the greater benefits of enduring cooperation, and cooperate with each other in Afghanistan.³⁰²

3.1. India-Pakistan membership in regional institutions

India and Pakistan share membership of over thirteen regional and international institutions; however, their membership in the inter-governmental body of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is most relevant for this study. Their membership in SAARC is linked to the idea of facilitating regional integration and cooperation in South Asia, which was officially conceptualised in 1985 with the establishment of SAARC.³⁰³ SAARC is composed of eight member countries, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The organisation aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs of the member states and mutual benefits. The main focus of

³⁰¹ Wagner, democratic peace in South Asia, pp. 12-13.

³⁰² Stephanie, C. Hofmann & Frédéric Merand, 'Regional organizations a la carte: the effects of institutional elasticity', in TV Paul (ed.), *International relations theory and regional transformation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012), pp. 133-157.

³⁰³ Sultan H. Rahman, Sridhar Khatri & Hans-Peter Brunner (eds.), *Regional integration and economic development in South Asia* (Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines, 2012), p. 3.

SAARC is to strengthen cooperation among member states in regional and international forums on matters of common interest.³⁰⁴

The past three decades have witnessed the evolution of SAARC into a regional institutionalised platform aimed at promoting collective measures, joint efforts and mutual collaboration as a complement to the bilateral and multilateral relations of member states.³⁰⁵ However, in spite of its ambitious aims, SAARC has not been successful in overcoming the divergence of interests between member states. Bilateral conflicts and continuous political tensions among the member states, particularly the India-Pakistan conflict, as well as the lack of economic complementarity are regarded as some of the greatest obstacles responsible for the slow growth of SAARC.³⁰⁶ Lack of economic complementarity is understood in the sense that the SAARC-led regional economic integration initiative of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement have not contributed to visible progress in creating a trade enabling environment among member states.³⁰⁷

Another obstacle that has prevented SAARC from reaching its potential, as the only South Asian multilateral institutional platform, has been the concern of smaller member states about the dominant position of bigger states, particularly India, within the organisation. Given the strengths and capabilities of India in terms of its geographical area, military, population, economic advancement, scientific progress, and technological enrichment, the region of SAARC is regarded as an Indian backyard, enabling New Delhi to become the main player within the organisation.³⁰⁸ This had led to serious concerns among the smaller member

³⁰⁴ Chandra D. Bhatta, 'Regional integration and peace in South Asia: an analysis', *Peace, Conflict and Development Journal*, no. 5 (2004), p. 3.

³⁰⁵ Mussarat Jabeen, Muhammad S. Mazhar & Naheed S. Goraya, 'SAARC and Indo-Pak Relationship', *Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2010), p. 131.

³⁰⁶ Wagner, security cooperation in South Asia, p. 17.

³⁰⁷ Selim Raihan & Prabir De, *India-Pakistan economic cooperation: implications for regional integration in South Asia* (The Commonwealth Secretariat, London, UK, 2013), pp. 3-4.

³⁰⁸ Muhammad Ayaz & Muhammad Idrees, 'Peace and conflicts in South Asia: a case study of Pakistan and India', *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, vol. 3, no. 10 (2015), pp. 400-401.

states about India's dominance in the region and its potential interference in their affairs. Nevertheless, today's situation is largely changed as India has tried to make itself a stronger link between many member countries of SAARC by taking effective steps towards reconciling its differences and improving mutual relations.³⁰⁹

Most importantly, the failure of SAARC is caused by the persistence of the long-standing India-Pakistan rivalry. SAARC has been held hostage to India-Pakistan bilateral tensions relations, leading South Asia trailing behind other regional groupings in economic development and regional integration.³¹⁰ For example, after the 1999 India-Pakistan border conflict of Kargil and following the 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament by Pakistani-based militants, the SAARC summit meetings were postponed because of the growing tensions between the two countries.³¹¹ The most recent example of the negative impact of the India-Pakistan rivalry has been the decision of four member states of SAARC (India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Bhutan) to boycott the upcoming summit of the organisation in Pakistan. These countries took side with India to isolate Pakistan diplomatically following an attack by the Pakistan-based Islamist militants on an Indian army base in September this year, that killed 19 Indian soldiers.³¹² Such challenges have prevented the growth of SAARC towards an effective regional cooperation mechanism for conflict resolution between India and Pakistan.

3.2. Regional institutions and conflict resolution

Despite the failure of SAARC to serve as regional conflict resolution mechanism due to the exclusion of contentious issues from its meeting agendas, member

³⁰⁹ Jabeen, Mazhar & Goraya, SAARC and Indo-Pak relationship, p. 131.

³¹⁰ Faizal Yahya, 'SAARC and ASEAN relations', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2004), p. 352.

³¹¹ Yahya, SAARC and ASEAN relations, p. 347.

³¹² Jon Boone & Michael Safi, 'Pakistan humiliated by south Asian countries' boycott of summit' (*The Guardian*, 28 September, 2016), <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/28/pakistan-humiliated-by-south-asian-countries-boycott-of-summit>>.

states have time and again used SAARC summits to discuss contentious issues bilaterally, such as the India-Pakistan conflict and the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka.³¹³ This has helped the organisation to serve as the only forum for discussing confidence-building measures at highest political level among South Asian countries. Considering the fact that there are hardly any summit level talks between the leaders of India and Pakistan, SAARC forums have provided the right ambience for informal meetings between the leaders of the two countries because any formal bilateral meetings only raise expectations and hype without any substantial results.³¹⁴ As such, SAARC is still the most important forum for both India and Pakistan to reduce bilateral tensions by managing their differences through peaceful dialogues.

In numerous occasions, SAARC has been used as a confidence-building mechanism between India and Pakistan. In the 1990s for instance, India's relations with Pakistan were tense due to the allegation of Pakistan's support for insurgency in Kashmir. To reduce bilateral tensions and bring down the hostilities, the then Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and former Pakistani Prime Minister used primarily SAARC summits to meet with each other followed by six bilateral meetings from 1991 to 1993.³¹⁵ The meetings resulted in an agreement between the two countries to initiate on a number of confidence-building measures to avoid military confrontation.³¹⁶ Also, the SAARC has enabled India and Pakistan to work towards overcoming some of their mutual mistrust by providing opportunities for direct government to government talks. Since 2003 both countries have addressed various types of confidence-building measures, and a modest step has been taken

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Smruti S. Pattanaik, 'Indo-Pak relations and the SAARC summits', *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2004), p. 434.

³¹⁵ Jabeen, Mazhar & Goraya, SAARC and Indo-Pak relationship, pp. 133-34.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

between them to open up communications and human contact across the de facto boundary in Kashmir.³¹⁷

In addition, the SAARC summit meetings have made significant attempts towards economic cooperation and social cohesion between India and Pakistan. The SAARC countries' foreign ministers signed the SAFTA agreement in January 2004, which was ratified and entered into force in January 2006. SAFTA aims to strengthen intra-SAARC economic cooperation, improve the preferential trade agreements, eliminate barriers in trade, and facilitate free movement of products, fair competition and free trade environment.³¹⁸ However, despite the fact that SAFTA has been able to establish a competitive edge with regard to imports-exports between South Asian countries, there are still numerous obstacles associated with bilateral tensions that prevent India and Pakistan to take full advantage of this initiative towards improving their mutual cooperation.³¹⁹

In the meantime, the effectiveness of SAARC to help India and Pakistan normalise their relationship would be highly dependent on their ability and willingness to adopt cooperative policies to discuss, negotiate and solve contentious political and security issues on the sideline of SAARC summits.³²⁰ This would only be possible if the scope of SAARC is widened to the extent of political and security questions because excluding contentious issues from the organisation's meeting agendas would not help member states, particularly India and Pakistan, to reconcile their differences.³²¹ It is also important that SAARC gets deeply rooted into the lives of the people of South Asia and become a living body feeling the sentiments of people in all of its member states by involving civil society in its confidence-building

³¹⁷ Zahid S. Ahmed & Stuti Bhatnagar, 'Interstate conflicts and regionalism in South Asia: prospects and challenges', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 13 (2008), p. 17

³¹⁸ Ahmed & Bhatnagar, interstate conflicts and regionalism in South Asia, p. 3.

³¹⁹ Namrata Goswami, *Is South Asian economic integration feasible?* (International Network for Economics and Conflict, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, US, 2013), <<http://inec.usip.org/blog/2013/aug/21/south-asian-economic-integration-feasible>>.

³²⁰ Jabeen, Mazhar & Goraya, SAARC and Indo-Pak relationship, pp. 142.

³²¹ Ahmed & Bhatnagar, interstate conflicts and regionalism in South Asia, p. 17.

measures.³²² Civil society in SAARC member countries, particularly in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, can play a major role in promoting understanding between these countries through interactive and collaborative initiatives.³²³ In this context, cooperation in sports and tourism, ethnic and heritage collaboration, cultural exchanges, and music and film festivals, have the potential to change attitudes in these countries as a means of improving mutual cooperation.

However, from a critical perspective, while SAARC has had some relative achievements in promoting regional cooperation in non-political and non-security areas, the organisation has not been able to address and resolve major political disputes among the member states, particularly the India-Pakistan disputes.³²⁴ The failure of SAARC to serve as a reliable mechanism for conflict resolution can be understood in the context of the realist theoretical perspective in which the absence of a global hierarchical system forces states to establish a self-help system for prioritising their perceived national interests and seeking their survival. In such a situation, institutions are less capable of convincing states to cooperate with each other as states are always distrustful of each other's intentions and policies.³²⁵ In the case of India-Pakistan relationship, their enduring strategic rivalry, that both countries are concerned more with relative gains than absolute gains, reduces significantly the prospects for mutual cooperation within the institutional framework of SAARC.³²⁶

To conclude this chapter, it is important to note that the prospects for conflict resolution between India and Pakistan and their mutual cooperation for a peaceful Afghanistan is likely if their relationship is transformed into a liberal peace order in

³²² Ahmed & Bhatnagar, interstate conflicts and regionalism in South Asia, p. 17.

³²³ Eray Basar, *The roles of India & Pakistan in Afghanistan's development & natural resources* (Civil-Military Fusion Centre, Mons, Belgium, 2012), pp. 3-4.

³²⁴ K. V. Kesavan, 'India and community building in Asia: from idealism to realism', *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies*, vol. 4 (2005), p. 17.

³²⁵ Waltz, theory of international politics, pp. 104-105;

³²⁶ Dev R. Dahal, *Track II diplomacy in South Asia* (South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2009).

which the three core propositions of liberal peace are combined together. To confirm this, recent democratic consolidations in Pakistan have brought a crucial shift in the attitudes and approaches of both New Delhi and Islamabad, which would help them normalise their relations. This nevertheless would be highly dependent on the transformation of the civil-military relationship in Pakistan as democracy has not gained significant ground in the country yet and the military still dominates foreign and security policy-making processes.

The recent democratic trajectories in Pakistan have been coupled with economic rationales as the current civilian government in Islamabad strives to boost trade exchanges and economic relations with India as an essential element of addressing the country's serious economic troubles. In addition, SAARC as the only regional cooperation institutionalised mechanism in South Asia, still has the potential to serve as a confidence-building platform between India and Pakistan. This would only be possible if the member states allow the organisation to address contentious political and security issues, particularly the India-Pakistan rivalry, which has significantly undermined the effectiveness of SAARC.

However, the pacifying effects of these developments on the India-Pakistan relationship would not be evident if the two countries are unable to work together for defining their problems, exploring their underlying interests and working out realistic solutions to their hostilities. If realised, it would contribute to a significant decrease in the level of mistrust between the two rival states, paving the way for them to normalise their relationship, reconcile their differences and resolve their long-lasting conflict. Therefore, the combination of the three core propositions of liberal peace would help the two countries to achieve their interests and provide them the necessary incentives to cooperate with each other for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

This research has evaluated the implications of the India-Pakistan rivalry for the post-2001 internationally-supported peacebuilding process in Afghanistan in four major areas of security, political stability, economic growth, and regional integration. The primary argument of this research is that the Afghan conflict is more than a local power struggle between competing Afghan groups because external factors, particular the India-Pakistan rivalry, permeates internal struggles and contributes to the continuation of the Afghan conflict.

Despite the fact that the India-Pakistan rivalry has been a major determinant in Afghanistan's peace and stability, the prospects for cooperation between the two rival states has been a neglected element in almost all proposals for peacebuilding in Afghanistan. For this reason, the role of the India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan has attracted less attention of scholarly literature in and outside South Asia. To fill the gap in the literature, this research has primarily focused its attention on Afghanistan's place within the dynamics of the India-Pakistan relationship as a necessary component of understanding the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process.

In this context, a large number of existing studies in the form of secondary data sources have been evaluated to understand how significantly the India-Pakistan rivalry has contributed to the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process. The result of these analyses has largely confirmed the damaging role of the two countries in Afghanistan as they both have used the Afghan territory as a preferred venue for strategic competition. The two countries have constantly attempted to advance their competing geopolitical, economic and security interests in Afghanistan after the U.S.-led military intervention in late 2001 and the immediate collapse of the Taliban regime. Nevertheless, while their rivalry has undermined peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan, the consequences of their policies have been significantly different from one another. This is because India has played a

constructive role in the peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan by supporting the Afghan government politically and economically; whereas Pakistan has largely played a destructive role in the peacebuilding process by keeping Afghanistan in turmoil by using its proxies.

Apart from the India-Pakistan rivalry, this research has also revealed that there are many other internal and external factors that have equally undermined the Afghan peacebuilding process. Of these, the internal factor of confrontations among various competing Afghan groups, who are divided along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines, have played an important role in frustrating peacebuilding efforts. In addition to the India-Pakistan rivalry and internal power struggles, competing geopolitical, security and economic interests of other external powers have significantly contributed to the failure of peacebuilding in post-2001 Afghanistan.

In this context, while the U.S. policies have largely contributed to the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, its reliance on Afghan warlords as well as losing attention to Afghanistan at the early stages of peacebuilding due to its global engagements and internal policy-making priorities have impacted the Afghan peacebuilding process. Moreover, the presence of the U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan has proved to be a challenging experience because of strong opposition of regional states to a perceived long-term American presence in the region.

In this research, the validity of the theoretical framework of liberal peace has been tested to understand the India-Pakistan's challenge to peace in Afghanistan. The primary focus of the research was to evaluate whether liberal peace offer relevant insights into understanding the failure of the Afghan peacebuilding process in the context of its three core propositions of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions. In doing so, liberal peace has proved to be a valid theoretical perspective in understanding multiple facets of the India-Pakistan rivalry, the impacts of their strategic rivalry on the Afghan peacebuilding process, and the prospects for their mutual cooperation in Afghanistan.

The overall conclusion of insights offered by liberal peace theory emphasises that the absence of a liberal peace order in the India-Pakistan relationship has forced the two countries to be engaged in a long-lasting struggle in their post-independence era. As such, constituting a liberal order in the India-Pakistan relationship in the sense of promoting consolidating democracy, developing economic interdependence, and membership in well-functioning in regional and international institutions would enable them to normalise their relations, reconcile their differences, and cooperate with each other for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The contribution this research has offered to the scholarly literature is the idea of bilateral cooperation between India and Pakistan as a way forward for building sustainable peace in Afghanistan and greater regional cooperation in South Asia. This means that the pacifying effects of democracy, economic interdependence and regional/international institutions on the India-Pakistan relationship have been highlighted as an essential element of transforming their relationship into a liberal peace order through which they might be able to cooperate with each other for a peaceful Afghanistan.

This is because the pacifying effects of democracy lies in the notion that democratic states rarely engage in armed conflict with each other as they are inherently more peaceful than authoritarian regimes. Also, economic interdependence reduces the risk of conflict and increase the prospects for peaceful behaviours among states. Moreover, membership in regional and international institutions enables states to develop peaceful relations for resolving their insecurities and enhancing mutual cooperation.

Therefore, the possibility of conflict resolution between India and Pakistan and the prospects for their mutual cooperation in Afghanistan is highly desirable should the three core propositions of liberal peace combined together to constitute a liberal peace order in their relationship. This nevertheless would highly be dependent on

democracy gaining ground in Pakistan and the country's military coming under the control of the civilian government, Additionally, it is important for India and Pakistan to take advantage of the potential of bilateral economic cooperation as a means of normalising their relationship and reconciling their differences. Lastly, it is important for both countries to work together to enable SAARC, as the only regional cooperation institutionalised mechanism in South Asia, to address their contentious bilateral political and security issues.

However, despite the fact that liberal peace is a means to transform their thinking and provide incentives for change, the India-Pakistan relationship is largely influenced by the realist perspective in which long-lasting security completion and continuous political tensions play a central role. This is because in the absence of a global hierarchical system that forces states to establish a self-help system for prioritising their perceived national interests, the potential of international norms, principles and rules to convince India and Pakistan to cooperate with each other would require continuous efforts and strong political will in both sides to work for gaining absolute gains.

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