

Chapter 1

A Region of Association and Turbulence

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ABSTRACT

The areas in and around India have always had a close association in building up of events which with time have attained historical and cultural prominence. In this study of cultural association the today's neighboring countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan have served as a passage of the influx of various cultures into the Indian subcontinent. The end of the Cold War highlighted the new threats which had emerged, not bound in the notions of safeguarding the integrity and sovereignty; they were way beyond territorial demarcations. These new threats were transnational in form with a much larger impact on the masses of the state. The rise and fall of Taliban in Afghanistan and the Anti India Islamic forces in Pakistan with the rise of India as a new regional power has led to new perspectives in concerns for the diplomatic and bilateral relations between these countries. What remains to be pointed is the level of porosity of borders and the ancient passes which have been routes for trade and inter cultural affiliations among these countries. The period of 2009-2015 was marked by various incidents which rocked the subcontinent bringing in strategic concerns to a new level. This article would study the historical linkages and cultural affiliations which binds the area of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India into a deeper relationship. Along with dwelling into the political scenario defined by bilateral and diplomatic ties which has taken up an important place in the times of changing perspectives of war and conflict.

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INTRODUCTION

...the vast region that today encompasses northern India along with Pakistan and much of Afghanistan was commonly under a single polity, even as sovereignty over southern India was in doubt. Thus, for Indian elites, to think of not only Pakistan but Afghanistan, too, as part of India's home turf is not only natural but historically justified. The tomb of Babur is in Kabul, not in Delhi. This does not mean that India has territorial designs on Afghanistan, but it does mean that New Delhi cares profoundly about who rules Afghanistan, and wishes to ensure that those who do rule there are friendly to India. (Kaplan, 2012).

As stated India stands at a predicament which has yet to be risen above the shifts of power dynamics in the region. Much influenced by the flow of culture from the western borders it has always shared a relationship with the state of Afghanistan even during the British raj. Pakistan on the other hand was a vital part of the Indian subcontinent until it was divided with the call of independence from the British Raj leading to partition of the Indian state into India (Hindu Majority) and Pakistan (Muslim majority).

BACKGROUND

The Indian subcontinent can be defined as a conglomeration of various cultures, ethnicities, notions and perceptions which exist and have thus continued since time immemorial. The region has been a so called transitory area from the west to the east. While the civilizations like that of Iran, Central Asia and the western side of the continent have influenced the culture of the region, India itself has been a source of influence to its eastern neighbors, be it the countries of Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Myammmar and even China with the greatest weapon of religion. The borders of the region have been mountainous and less guarded leading to influx of people, religion, culture and various invasions from one region to another. Though the countries of Afghanistan, India and Pakistan have been closely interlinked on various terms but have also had some issues of contestation which have rocked the region from time to time meddling with the geographical and cultural affinity they share. The troubled past has lead to a trust deficit between the three which is apparent from the attitude that they have adopted against each other leading to a sense of rivalry that dominates the region. Each of these three countries of the Indian subcontinent have been interlinked troublemakers for the individual states. While the countries of Afghanistan Pakistan have had troubles with the issue of the Durand Line or that

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