



**O.P. Jindal Global University**

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**Deploying Game Theory in Analyzing the Conflict in  
Afghanistan-Pakistan Bilateral Relations**

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## Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to develop a game theoretical model for analysis of the conflict in the bilateral relations of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The development of the model is preceded by historical and qualitative analysis of Afghanistan, its internal politics and consequent trajectory of relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The model has been developed keeping in view the existence of a National Unity Government in Afghanistan and the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the issues of the Durand line and Taliban. The game theoretical model hence developed is structured as a two-level game which has the domestic game in Afghanistan at the level one and an inter-state game at the level two. Both games have different structures with the level one being an extensive game tree whereas for the level two of the game hyper-gaming has been deployed to account for the different perception the players may have about the same conflict. Although this thesis avoids using the formal mathematical notation, knowledge of basic game theory is a prerequisite.

## DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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### STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA Diplomacy, Law & Business.

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### STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations.

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to John Nash and his wife whose sad demise almost about the time of finishing this dissertation has left me feeling very distressed.

***“Find a truly original idea. It is the only way I will ever distinguish myself. It is the only way I will ever...matter.”***

***-John Nash***

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## **Introduction:**

Pakistan and Afghanistan are two countries saddling across the gateway that connects South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. The two countries thanks to both exogenous and endogenous factors have faced the brunt of terrorism and radicalism and are vital in the context of establishing peace in South Asia and elsewhere. The two countries have for long had a mutually influencing relationship albeit a vexed one.

Now in the post-withdrawal phase of the international forces and the ‘Operation Resolute’ kicking in Afghanistan has a unity government in place led by President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, which still faces impediments of the factional and fractured polity of Afghanistan. There are many complications on the internal front with a resurgent insurgency and pulls and pressures of different communities divided on ethnic, tribal and clan lines in the politics of power in Afghanistan which manifest across different institutions and have a structural component to it.

Pakistan on the other hand is amidst an insurgency in Baluchistan which it alleges finds cross-border support from Afghanistan and India, along with myriad number of radical groups some with links to the state machinery and others like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan(TTP) that are now at loggerheads with the Pakistani state.

Funneling of huge amount arms and ammunitions since the soviet misadventure and consequent channeling of US military hardware in addition to left over military hardware by the soviet army

have created challenges that persist even today for Afghanistan while Pakistan once the carrycot of the Taliban movement has now herself become a victim of the Frankenstein monster.

Historically Afghanistan was the only country to have objected to Pakistan's entry into UN despite it being a declared Islamic Republic putting forth the condition that right to self-determination be given to the people of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Burk, n.d., p. 73); common Muslim heritage could not give an incentive for cooperation over confrontation and the unsettled issue of Durand line remained as a relic of British legacy in South Asia.

Post the soviet withdrawal the Najibullah government installed under Moscow's supervision could only hold until 1992 against the Mujahedeen forces. But the fall of the government meant a bitter struggle for power between different Mujahedeen factions. This provided an opportunity to a far more radical group Taliban to come to power who were swiftly recognized by Pakistan. Since then Afghanistan and Pakistan have had a less than friendly relationship. Pakistan has been unhappy about successive governments siding with India while it has also accused Kabul of fomenting and helping Baloch rebels, in turn Kabul has also accused Islamabad of aiding the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network and interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Conflict also exists on the issues of Durand line and Pashtunistan between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have been blaming each other's intelligence agencies for the ills in their countries even as accusing each other of incubating the Pakistani Taliban and Afghan Taliban respectively and using them as proxies. The conflict is a matter of concern for the entire South Asian region and therefore Afghanistan's relationship with Pakistan is indeed the most important relationship in the context of establishing peace in the region and especially South Asia. This thesis attempts to game theorize the conflict in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations.



## **Thesis statement:**

The central idea is to deploy game theoretic tools in generating a model appropriate for understanding the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship and be able to forecast the future trajectories of this bilateral equation which is very critical in establishing peace in the region.

Also on an ambitious note it will seek to contribute to theory in complicated cases of Afghanistan and Pakistan where linked situations and multiplicity of actors pose a difficult problem for game theory analysis. The final thesis is to deploy different game models in conjunction with each other to develop a sort of hybrid model, but in case that is not feasible, a comparative analysis of the results of the two models could be undertaken to yield some useful insights. A variety of game theory tools and models have been mentioned in this regard for application to the case under consideration very briefly in the subsequent literature review which will aid in analyzing the conflict in contemporary Afghanistan-Pakistan bilateral relations.

## **Theoretical Framework/Literature Review:**

It is no secret that in any analysis concerning Afghanistan or Pakistan, either state's role has to be taken into account to develop a comprehensive understanding of the situation in these countries. Both countries have forces and agents operating sometimes within and sometimes across borders and influencing events in each other's countries in a rather intertwined way. Afghanistan and Pakistan both exude tremendous complexity internally due to the multitude of actors that shape the dynamics of conflict within these countries. The bilateral relations of the two countries are bound to be a function of these intricacies. Although not totally dependent they are not totally independent either, but one may posit that the bearing and ramifications will show far more on Afghanistan than in Pakistan considering it has a fledgling state apparatus and institutions that is trying to establish itself as against Pakistan where certain institutions of the state are still strong enough to whether the destabilizing forces.

Game theory which was first conceptualized by John von Neumann in his seminal work: *A Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* was first used in the realm of economics, but it was quickly latched on to by professional from various fields including Political Science, International Relations, and Biology etc. Game theory is best suited to examine strategic behavior between interacting and interdependent units (Quackenbush & Zagare, 2006) and this makes it highly applicable to the case under consideration.

Decision making theories can help us understand the evolution of a conflict which is still ongoing and has both competitive and cooperative elements and which will have important consequences for a country like Afghanistan however application of game theory to understand

to understand the strategic relationship between Afghanistan-Pakistan taking into account the domestic politics will inevitably be complex.

In his paper on *Modeling Decisions in International Relations: Game theory and Beyond*, Bennett introduced game theory models that can be used to generate an understanding of decisions but cautions against its usage for prescription. Extensions to the basic game models are discussed which are very relevant to the study of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. Basic models of game theory can sometimes be criticized for not taking into account some important processes which are very much critical in comprehending something as intricate as Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations because of the dynamically interacting and interdependent agents and forces. As mentioned before the strategic relationship between the two states is composed of both competitive and cooperative elements and while all players can be assumed to be rational (traditionally being rational means only caring about self-interest but that is a very narrow definition of rationality) pursuing their own interest, these interest change in time-space in accordance with the changing realities of the conflict situation. Therefore these games cannot be modeled as a game where interests of the player are in absolute conflict, implying a typical constant sum game like 'zero sum' is not an appropriate model for these situations while also accounting for the intricate nature of the situation under consideration.

In game theory the selection of players is up to the researchers, who can chose to have two or more number of players in a game who can be individuals, groupings such as committees or cabinets, or entities such as corporations or nations. Each player has a set of strategies and a set of possible outcomes. Along with this there are a set of preference functions which specify how

bad or good a particular outcome is for each player (Bennett, 1995, p. 22). Game Theory is often thought to require quantification of preferences by means of utility scales, but many models simply assume that one can define a preference order for each player, that is, outcomes are simply ranked from best to worst (Bennett, 1995, p. 22).

Since it is possible to set up different types of games like with different number of players, sequential or simultaneous, with information or without information different game models can be used for different situations. Also very importantly this is still an evolving conflict where to account for newer situations a game can also include chance events as well as deliberate moves; this is modeled by introducing "nature" as a separate player, presumed to have no preferences but to act in accordance with certain probabilities (Bennett, 1995, p. 22). Since the actors are most likely to be in partial conflict so mixed-motive game is most appropriate to model Afghanistan-Pakistan relations as these games are much closer to the real world of partial conflict, threats and promises, bargaining and negotiation, dispute settlement, and arguably conflict resolution (Bennett, 1995, p. 23).

A second very important thing to note is that this cannot be a game of chicken or prisoner's dilemma or in general a symmetric game, because in symmetric game even if the positions of two players are swapped the structure of the game does not change. In a real life situation like that of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Pakistan is overwhelmingly stronger than Afghanistan in the efficacy of the state, military strength among other attributes which will make it an asymmetric game as there is difference in the relative power between the two states.

Bennett argues that basic models of game theory exhibit some missing dimensions, which are (a) Differing perceptions, (b) Dynamics, (c) Combinatorial Complexity and (d) Linked issues. These missing dimension need to be accounted for in modeling Afghanistan-Pakistan relations as well. As mentioned before this will primarily be an asymmetric game but perception of the game might differ for different players as well that means different players might not see the 'same game' in terms of who the actors are, and what strategies and preferences they have (Bennett, 1995, p. 30). Misperceptions can be modeled using Hypergame analysis and which is formed by taking into account different preference perceptions. To account for the change in dynamics as strategies and preferences might change in time, Subgame-Perfect Nash Equilibrium (SPNE) as a solution concept is an option that can be employed which can account for the new sub-games that are created when moves are made and new choices are available to the players (as an option one can also employ multi-stage games) alternatively Backward Induction can also be employed. In general, multi-stage games can provide a useful compromise between treating different phases of a conflict in isolation and attempting to include everything in a single game of unmanageable complexity (Bennett, 1995, p. 35).

The third dimension of combinatorial complexity where there are more than two players and the game tree is a several stages long can be addressed by using Analysis of Options. Since  $n$  options in the model lead to  $2^n$  scenarios it can account for multiple scenarios that might develop but to reduce complexity all the unfeasible options can be eliminated to simplify the model for analysis (Bennett, 1995, p. 35).

There is a domestic game in Afghanistan due to the complex internal issues with multiple actors. Conflict at the national level will inevitably have ramifications for the conflict at the interstate level needs to be accounted for in the game theoretic analysis. Here Robert D. Putnam's paper entitled 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two Level Games' can be of considerable utility, although his theory was developed more in background of trade negotiations and on policy issues of international economic importance, but the methods are equally applicable to issues which are strategic in nature. Putnam's idea of two level interactions can be very important in determining the bargaining space available for national leaders. In this light it can help us understand the course Afghanistan and Pakistan will be able to take in solving the most complicated bone of contention between the two states, the interlinked problem of terrorism and extremism, and other bilateral issues like the Durand line, role of India in Afghanistan, etc. Game theory is more applicable in real world interactions, especially because ex post reconstructions of historical events sometimes use information that might not be available to the players then (Quackenbush & Zagare, 2006, p. 99). This is especially relevant in the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan where the luxury of complete information may not be available to the prominent actors like to different camps in the unity government in Afghanistan, mujahedeen, Former PDPA officials and ethnic warlords etc. and Afghan Taliban in the case of Afghanistan. There are others interest groups also but whether they are taken into account as actors in setting up the game will be answered only during the course of the research, but it is easily discernible that due to the multiplicity of actors in both countries at the domestic level one cannot make any assumptions about the flow of information which might be perfect, imperfect or complete or incomplete and this too shall be determined during the course of the analysis (also depending on

the level of complexity which has be taken into account, in case of paucity of time to simplify analysis a scenario of complete information can be assumed).

The idea is to use Putnam's logic of two level games and game theory if possible in conjunction or apply them to the case under consideration independently and potentially develop a hybrid model relevant in understanding the conflict dynamics in contemporary Afghanistan-Pakistan relations where factors like lose borders, common ethnic background and an insurgency saddling across their borders mandate an analysis that takes the intra-state and inter-state level of multiple conflicts into account.

## Methodology:

To gain an insight into the historical nature of the conflict in Afghanistan the website of [Library of Congress for Country Studies](#) has been referred extensively. Similarly to gain a perspective into the conflict scenario from Pakistan's perspective local information sources like The Dawn, Tribune etc. have been referred. Since the author can understand spoken Urdu electronic media sources where available has also been referred and this would include interviews and discussions of Pakistan based analyst and experts on YouTube etc. Similarly in case of Afghanistan apart from local news sources like Khama Press, Bakhtar News agency, etc. a repository for research on Afghanistan with a huge collection of reports, dissertations, blogs, detailed & extensive analysis and translated official documents, the website of [Afghanistan Analyst Network](#) has been referred. To follow the current state of bilateral relations websites of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Afghanistan have been monitored consistently.

The overall methodology used in this paper is that of historical and qualitative analysis in conjunction with game theory. The development of the model is preceded by historical and qualitative analysis of Afghanistan its internal politics and consequent trajectory of relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The model has been developed keeping in view the existence of a National Unity Government in Afghanistan and the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the issues of the Durand line and Taliban. The game theoretical model hence developed is structured as a two-level game which has the domestic game in Afghanistan at the level one and an inter-state game at the level two. Both games have different structures with the level one being an extensive game tree whereas for the level two of the game hyper-gaming has



been deployed to account for the different perception the players may have about the same conflict.

Chapter 1 introduces the root causes for the contemporary conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It goes into the historical Anglo-Afghan relations and the ‘Great Game’ played between British India and Russia over Afghanistan, the consequent evolution of Afghanistan and the creation of Durand Line.

Chapter 2 elucidates Afghanistan-Pakistan relations from the time when Pakistan came into being to the Cold War era when the superpower rivalry enmeshed Afghanistan and Pakistan. Simultaneously it also provides insight into the intricate internal political situation of Afghanistan and its impact on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. The historical reasons for the weakness of the Afghan state structure are also expounded in this chapter.

Chapter 3 discusses the divide within the National Unity Government in Afghanistan and the two key political figures in that government President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah and the pulls and pressures acting on each of the political camps.

Chapter 4 finally introduces the game theoretical model based on the conflict description in the earlier three chapters.

## Chapter 1: Historical Genesis of the Conflict

The Afghanistan Pakistan bilateral relationship was bound to be vexed and much of the trajectory of the relationship was determined in days before Pakistan as country even emerged on the world map. Despite the common Muslim heritage that defined and played a considerable role in forming the identity of populations in both the countries, the relationship followed a trajectory which added to and amplified nagging issues between two geographically proximate neighbors. The current state of the strategic equation between Afghanistan and Pakistan is essentially an outcome of two factors. One lies in the historical setting of the onset of the ‘Great game’ between the British and the Russian empires which essential determined the course of the Anglo-Afghan relations. British India’s policies towards Afghanistan had to an extent set a predetermined tone for the relationship between upcoming new born nations of Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. The Durand line issue was a relic of this era. Second was the shaping of regional interests in the South Asian region during the peak of the cold war era when the ensuing battle between the two power blocs in Afghanistan resulted in a very intricate security situation, this factor is discussed in Chapter 2: Evolution of Internal Political Conflict in Afghanistan and its Implication on Relations with Pakistan.

### **The Great Game and the Pursuit for a Strategic Buffer:**

The first contours of the nation of Afghanistan were shaped during the reign of Pashtun rulers from the Abdali group of clan. After consolidating his rule Dost Mohammad in 1834 defeated an invasion by the former ruler, Shah Shuja, but his absence from Kabul gave the Sikhs the opportunity to expand westward (Library of Congress, 1997). Ranjit Singh's forces occupied

Peshawar, moving from there into territory ruled directly by Kabul (Library of Congress, 1997). In his quest to reestablish control over Peshawar and evade trouble with the Sikhs Dost Mohammad established communication with the British Governor General Lord Auckland to help him deal with the Sikhs. This effectively set the stage for British intervention in Afghanistan. Auckland put forth stringent conditions for helping Dost Mohammed in seeking reconciliation with Ranjit Singh which included purging the Russian officers and diplomats from the court and giving up all claims on Peshawar. When Dost Mohammad could not get Auckland to put the agreement in writing he pivoted towards Russia and started his negotiations with the Russian envoy, Ivan Vitkevitch (Library of Congress, 1997).

The primary interest of the British was to secure India from the advancing Russian sphere of influence into Central Asia. This became such an imperative for British that they made a deal with the former ruler Shuja and the Sikh camp led by Ranjit Singh, the main objective was to place a pliant Shuja in control of Kabul. Shuja had earlier ruled between 1803 and 1809 and in June 1809 had signed a treaty of friendship with the British which prohibited passage of foreign armies through his territory. The importance of Afghanistan for the British in safeguarding their prized possession of India could be gauged from their willingness to work with anyone in power and ensuring that they remain subservient to the British interests in the region. The plan for British intervention to put Shah Shuja in the throne was formally put in the Simla manifesto according to which the troops were to be withdrawn once the Shuja was installed in Kabul. Although Shuja was reinstated in 1839 British permanent troop presence became a requirement as Dost Mohammad's son Mohammad Akbar got the loyalty of some disaffected Afghan tribes.

The period of the First Anglo-Afghan war 1838-1842 ended in a disastrous exodus of the British Garrison who were attacked by the Ghilzai warriors while Shuja was assassinated in April 1841. The death of Shuja was followed by release of Dost Mohammad who was in exile in India and was allowed to return to Kabul where over the next twenty-one years his reign he succeeded in extending his dominions to current borders of Afghanistan (Dalrymple, 2013, p. 11). The British inked the treaty of Peshawar in 1855 with Dost Mohammad in a bid to reestablish diplomatic ties proclaiming respect for each other's territorial integrity (Library of Congress, 1997). In the years that followed especially after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 the British assessment changed and instead of being heavily invested militarily and politically in Afghanistan and from trying to control Afghanistan the concept of non-intervention in Afghanistan and it being a buffer state between the two empires of Russia and Britain started gathering support in London (Kakar, 2006, p. 175). The treat signed in 1855 favored the British in that while the Amir Dost Mohammad made the pledge to be friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies of the British Government of India, the British did not make a similar pledge and only agreed to refrain from interfering in the territories that were then under the control of Dost Mohammad. By implication it meant that Peshawar which was part of Afghanistan but was occupied in 1849 remained under the British control (Kakar, 2006, p. 175). The treaty held well and even during 1857 when the British were facing serious challenges within India it was upheld. The loss of Peshawar was compensated by the British material support for regaining Herat from Persia which they had invaded in 1856.

After the death of the Amir in 1863 his son Sher Ali Khan acceded to the throne but he was unable to elicit the same kind of policy response from the British as it was to his father. It is

important to keep in mind that all this while Russia was steadily encroaching upon the northern borders of Afghanistan. In fact by 1873 Russians were already in control of lands of the khan (Library of Congress, 1997). For Sher Khan Russia was a far more potent threat but the British did not share the same assessment. At around the same time Russia and British reached an understanding that demarcated although vaguely the northern borders of Afghanistan and that it implied that Afghanistan was outside Russia's sphere of influence and within the British (Kakar, 2006, p. 177).

However the British policy underwent a paradigm shift under Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, who was in favor of a more interventionist stance. He implemented the 'Forward Policy' implying occupation and intervention in essence setting up the stage for the second Anglo-Afghan war (Kakar, 2006, p. 179). Lord Lytton the then viceroy and governor general in 1876 made a proposal to Sher Khan saying he was willing to conclude a defensive and offensive alliance with Sher Khan but with the condition that his country would forego its external independence and accept the stationing of British officers along the frontiers. Aware of the fact that brutal memory of war with the British had not faded from the memory and Sher Khan in all his wisdom and wisely so declined the offer (Kakar, 2006, p. 179). In 1878 Russian under General Constantine P. von Kauffman the Russian governor general of Tashkand sent an uninvited diplomatic mission to Kabul. Sher Khan tried but failed to keep them out (Library of Congress, 1997) subsequent to which the British demanded that he accept their mission as well. Sher Khan refused to comply, when the British forced the mission their mission was refused permission to cross the order at Khyber Pass leading to the second Anglo-Afghan war (Library of Congress, 1997). Finally in 1879 with the British forces occupying much of the territory Sher

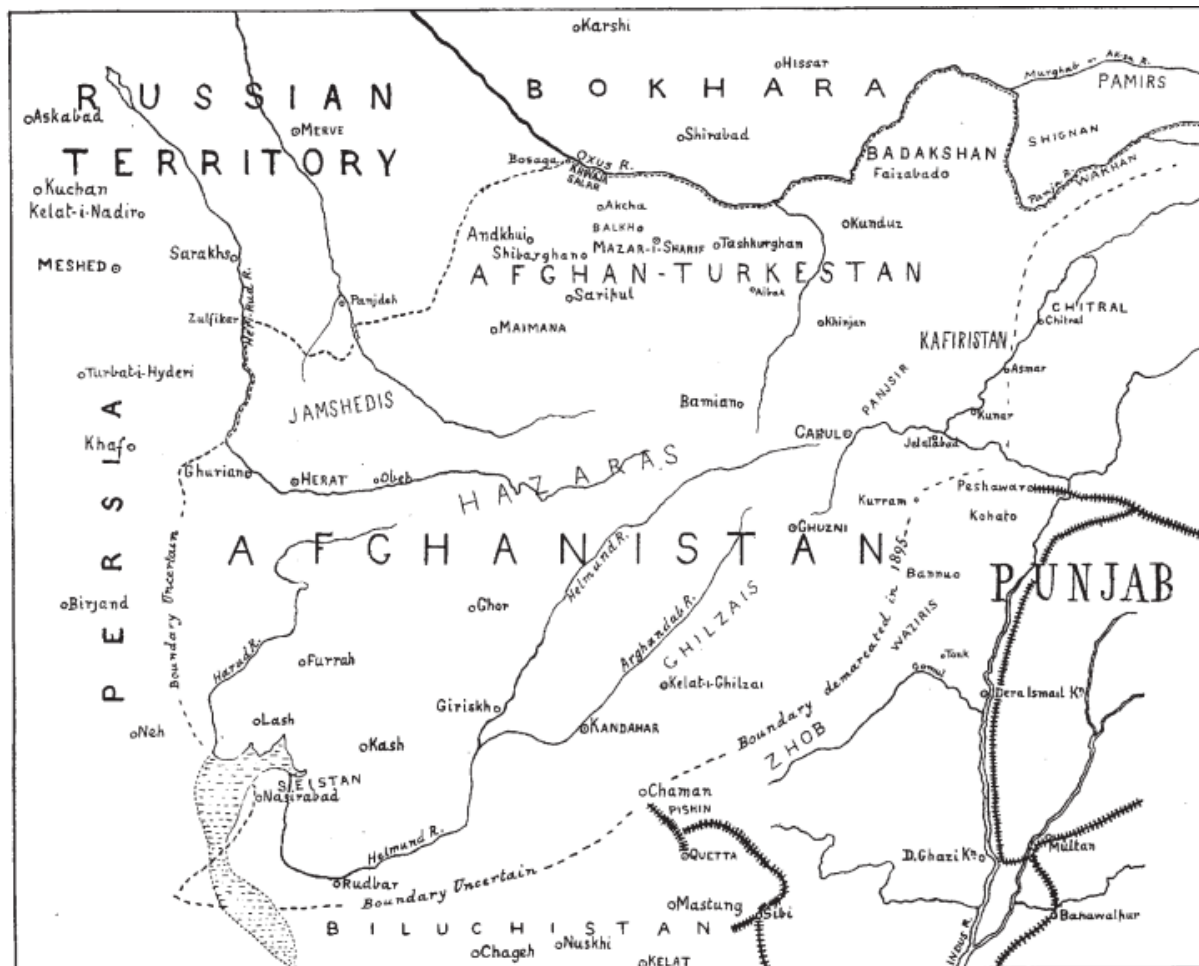
Khan's son and successor, Yaqub, signed the Treaty of Gandamak in May 1879 to relinquish the control of Afghan foreign affairs to the British, British representatives were installed in Kabul and other locations, British control was extended to the Khyber and Michni passes, and the Afghanistan ceded various frontier areas to Britain (Library of Congress, 1997). Between 1880 to 1901 Afghanistan was consolidated under the rule of Abdur Rahman who was willing to accept restrictions imposed by British with respect to external affairs and therefore support the British buffer state policy. Year 1885 saw the Panjdeh crisis, Russians had advanced to Merv (now Mary) Oasis by 1884 and were keen to control the Panjdeh Oasis and eventually after a battle with the Afghan forces managed to take control of the oasis. As the new Amir's foreign policy was entirely in control of the British, a joint Anglo-Russian boundary commission reached a compromise under which Russian would relinquish the farthest territory captured in their advance but retain Panjdeh, this agreement delineated a permanent northern frontier at Amu Darya at the cost of Panjdeh (Library of Congress, 1997). Another important section of Afghanistan's border was demarcated during his reign and this was the Wakhan Corridor, which was done on British insistence that Afghanistan maintain sovereignty in this region which was inhabited by the Kirgiz who were not so compliant (Library of Congress, 1997). But the most vital deal inked during his reign was the delineation of the boundary with then British India. Abdur Rahman agreed in 1893 (see Figure 1) to accept a mission headed by the British Indian foreign secretary, Sir Mortimer Durand, to define the limits of British and Afghan control in the Pashtun territories (Library of Congress, 1997). There were indications that the Amir regarded the Durand Line as a delimitation of separate areas of political responsibility, not a permanent international frontier, and that he did not explicitly cede control over certain parts (such as Kurram and Chitral) that were already in British control under the Treaty of Gandamak (Library

of Congress, 1997). The Durand Line cut through both tribes and villages and bore little relation to the realities of topography, demography, or even military strategy (Library of Congress, 1997). The idea of Durand line was to mark the frontier for both the kingdoms in the sense that no one could exercise any influence beyond that frontier or interfere in any way beyond the line. The Durand line marked the spheres of influence rather than suggesting any hard boundary as the agreement itself did not explicitly use the word boundary and as such did not describe the line as the boundary of British India (Gulzad, n.d., p. 182). Also very significantly the Amir did not sign the Persian text of the agreement. There were differences on some major sticking points of the agreement. There were differences regarding the precise demarcation of the line, areas like Bashgul valley were contended by both sides so while in the English text of the agreement it was part of British sphere of influence in the Persian text it was part of Afghanistan (Kakar, 2006, p. 183). The other contention was related to the Mohmand country where the Amir insisted that the whole region belonged to Afghanistan but on the map this was not the case (Katib, 1912, pp. 1209,1210). In fact Peshawar currently an important Pakistani city had been under the British control since 1849 after it had been recaptured from the Sikhs, who captured it from the Mohamadzay rulers in 1833 also fell under the Lower Mohmand (Kakar, 2006, p. 184). The Mohmands created significant problems for the British after they seized the control of Peshawar and both the Amir and the British vied for political control and influence here. The Amir in order to assert his rule over the Mohmand ordered the construction of a road as a counterpoise to the Khyber Pass which was now under the British control thanks to the Treaty of Gandumak in 1879. So while the Amir had agreed not to interfere in the territories within the British sphere of influence he did not renounce his claim as the Durand line seemed to suggest.

As a consequence of these factors the line laid the foundation, not for peace between the border regions, but for heated disagreement between the governments of Afghanistan and British India, and later, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Library of Congress, 1997). The line was not based on any major ethnographical, political or topographical principle of delimitation (Leitner, n.d., p. 237). It bifurcated most ethnic groups including Tarkalanays, the Wazirs (later Mohmands), the Shinwarays, the Nurzays, the Achakzays, the Baluches and most importantly the Pashtuns who had been defending Afghanistan against foreign invaders for ages (Kakar, 2006, p. 187). As both the Amir and the British vied for influence and control and none could succeed, the area remained largely locally administered and frequent invasions were undertaken by the British in the area to subdue these ever defiant tribes as the tribes fought tooth and nail for their independence. The frequent wars between the infidel and the local created and added to the binding force of religion and tribal loyalty arousing xenophobic sentiments. From 1901 to 1919 Habibullah son of Abdur Rehman controlled the kingdom until his death in 1919 and then his third son Amanullah became the new Amir who ruled until 1929. The third Anglo-Afghan war started in 1919 and even though he did make some gains against the British initially the British recovered and virtually dictated the terms of the Rawalpindi agreement but with an important outcome that Afghans could now have an independent foreign policy which was cemented in further negotiations by 1921. But the issue of who would control the Pashtun tribes over both sides of the Durand line continued to plague Anglo-Afghan relations and remained a one bitterly contested.



Figure 1 Demarcated Territory of Afghanistan in 1895



Source: Stephen Wheeler, The Ameer Abdur Rahman Khan, 1895

### A Difficult Issue:

Historically having lost much territory now there is a willingness to not just maintain territorial integrity of Afghanistan in the current times but also this sentiment manifests itself in the national psyche to regain control of territories deemed to be unfairly taken from Afghanistan. While in the current set up Afghanistan has more or less settled boundary issues with most countries, the issue of Durand line is not something where Afghanistan will forfeit easily and the

rhetorical commitment historically and consistently made to this issue lends itself to correct this unfair deal, albeit with the outcome of a difficult relationship with Pakistan. Since the terror structures operate across the administrative boundaries any uncooperative behavior by both sides regarding the Durand line issue is bound to affect cooperation in counter-terrorism operations and could be fundamental in determining the difference between the success and failure of controlling terrorism in Afghanistan-Pakistan. The trouble has brewed between the two nations on the line there have been frequent border skirmishes that have led each side to protest to the other side. Even the Taliban when it controlled Afghanistan despite being under Pakistani influence refused to endorse the Pakistani position on the Durand line that it be considered the international border (Lambah, 2012, p. 55). In fact Karzai once remarked that Taliban should show patriotism by turning their guns on Pakistan (Stancati & Totakhil, 2013). In the recent years when the Karzai regime was in place in Afghanistan although it avoided commenting on the issue understandably not to elicit a response from Pakistan because of the fragile stability within Afghanistan but he preferred to put the issue on the back burner by favoring a resolution through the parliament (Qaseem, 2008). Effectively this means there has to be national consensus on the issue which could be one a very emotive issue and second also politically very contested. Conceding on the Durand line issue to Pakistan could be difficult and different factions for various political reasons might fail to come to an agreement impacting the Afghanistan Pakistan relationship.

## **Chapter 2: Evolution of Internal Political Conflict in Afghanistan and its Implication on Relations with Pakistan**

### **Inheritance of a Line and a Dispute:**

Pakistan as a nation-state along with India came into existence in 1947 and immediately got embroiled in a territorial dispute with its larger neighbor India regarding Kashmir. The relationship between Pakistan and India has since then reflected characteristics of an escalating security dilemma that has engulfed other countries into its fold with proxy wars. How this factor has affected Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship in the contemporary times is very much evident today, but this factor has always been a key point in Pakistani strategic thinking even during the Cold War era and pre-Taliban years of Afghanistan which pushed it to the objective of maintaining a government that was pliant and controllable by Pakistan.

The pursuit of this objective certainly backfired but more importantly Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan hit troubled waters even before they could properly take off. Pakistan inherited the dispute regarding the Durand line with the Afghanistan from the British. Afghanistan was the only country to not vote for Pakistan during its admission to UN. Afghanistan raised the issue of Pashtunistan and demanded that the Pathans and the Pashto speaking tribes between the Indus and the Durand line in Pakistan be given the right to self-determination (Hasan, 1962, p. 14). In addition the claim involved the whole of Baluchistan in the south and Chitral, Gilgit and Baltistan in the north (Hasan, 1962, p. 14). This could have been prompted by Afghanistan's need for access to the sea considering that it is a landlocked country and that would imply a

forever dependence on other countries for transit to the sea which could be gauged from the fact that Afghanistan in 1958 at the Geneva conference for the Law of the Sea joined thirteen other states in sponsoring a resolution which demanded an absolute right of transit across the other countries for coast-less countries (Hasan, 1962, p. 14).

But even historically Afghanistan ever since the times of Amir Abdur Rehman had never relinquished the notion of Pashtun unity and this issue kept affecting its relationship with British India and hence it was no surprise that it troubled Pakistan as the inheritor of that dispute. Although both Afghanistan and Pakistan made conciliatory gestures, the matter remained unresolved and in one of the government's attempts to suppress tribal uprisings in 1949, a Pakistani air force plane bombed a village just across the frontier; in response, the Afghan government called a Loya Jirgah, which promptly declared that it recognized "neither the imaginary Durand nor any similar line" and that all agreements from the 1893 Durand agreement onward pertaining to the issue were void (Library of Congress, 1997). Subsequent to this irregular forces led by a local Pashtun leader crossed the border in 1950 and 1951 to back Afghan claims and while Pakistan's government refused to accept the Afghan assertion that it had no control over these men, both nations' ambassadors were withdrawn, but were exchanged again a few months later (Library of Congress, 1997). Although a transit agreement was signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan in 1958 it could not prevent frequent disruptions and closing of border between the two states, in 1961 when relations between the two states ruptured this border again became a casualty. The route to the Karachi Port through the Khyber Pass was the most natural and well developed route for sea access for Afghanistan (Hasan, 1964, p. 49), but the when the relationship took a turn for the worse Afghanistan looked for alternatives to reduce

its dependence on Pakistan and Soviet Union seemed to be the answer. In 1961 when the borders were closed Afghanistan depended entirely on the Soviet Union which gave Afghanistan the right of duty free transit of goods through Soviet territory (Ramazani, 1958, pp. 146, 148-9). At this point of time Afghanistan depended heavily on the Soviet Union for a host of commodities specially petrol, gasoline, kerosene and diesel as Afghanistan could not produce these on its own (Hasan, 1964, p. 50). This dependence on Soviet Union was even more pronounced because most of the American aid programs also depended on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to deliver their aid and when the border closed aid could not be delivered for some length of time. The Soviet interest in Afghanistan at this point of time was on an upswing, one because Pakistan had a Mutual Security Pact with the United States and membership in regional defense arrangements such as SEATO and CENTO (Hasan, 1962, p. 17) and second because of Soviet Union's own apprehensions regarding the ethnic Muslim population in the southern region close to the Afghanistan border. Soviet Union did not want Afghanistan to go the Pakistan way and therefore it increased its aid to Afghanistan to prevent such an outcome and further cemented its relations with a trade agreement. For Afghanistan it made sense not only because it reduced its dependency on Pakistan for the sea route but also because it provided an alternative to the American aid which often came with riders and strict conditions.

### **Internal Politics in Afghanistan 1933-1963:**

In 1933 Mohammad Zahir Shah Nadir Shah's son and successor became the final king of Afghanistan. His reign during the first two decades of his rule was much influenced by his uncles of whom the eldest Muhammad Hashim, who had been prime minister under the previous king, retained that post until replaced by his youngest brother, Shah Mahmud in 1946 (Library of

Congress, 1997). Shah Mahmud was instrumental in certain policy changes that would have a resounding impact on Afghanistan in the long term (Library of Congress, 1997). He tried to institute greater political tolerance and liberalization, allowed National assembly elections that were distinctly less controlled than they had been in the past and political debate and criticism in public were allowed more than in the past. But this experiment with liberal politics met an anticlimax with open dissidence by a multitude of diverse groups to an extent that the regime could ill-afford to allow and thus there was crackdown. In 1951 he terminated all political parties, student unions were closed and politically independent and critical newspapers were shut down, all in all the experiment eventually turned out to be a very regressive exercise (Library of Congress, 1997). Despite its failure, the liberal experiment had important repercussions for the nation's political future; it provided a breeding ground for the revolutionary movement that would come to power in 1978 (Library of Congress, 1997). Future Marxist leaders of Afghanistan, Nur Muhammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal, and Hafizullah Amin were all involved (Library of Congress, 1997). After the failure of the political reforms in the period 1949-1952 King's cousin and brother-in-law Mohammad Daud became the prime minister in 1953. Daud was the first generation of western educated member of the royal family and he proceeded cautiously on his social and economic reform policies which were relatively more successful. Although Daud wanted to eradicate the pro-western bias in the government by leaning more towards the Soviet Union he again proceeded cautiously and continued to support the Helmand project which began under his predecessor Shah Mahmud. More significant was the fact that Daud was committed to the issue of Pashtunistan. In a way his two foreign policy goals aligned and as he drew further away from Pakistan he embraced the Soviet Union more and more for trade and transit (Library of Congress, 1997). When the internal politics forced Pakistan to

abolish the four provincial governments of West Pakistan and form one provincial unit (the One Unit Plan) the Afghan government protested the abolition of the North-West Frontier Province (excluding the Tribal Agencies) (Library of Congress, 1997). It was during his reign as the Prime Minister that in 1955 when the Afghanistan-Pakistan border was closed and Afghanistan had to necessarily ensconce itself to the Soviet Union. The Pashtunistan issue remained dominant under his time and the trouble in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations surged with his time-honored techniques like payments to tribesmen on both sides of the border to subvert the Pakistani government as well as dissemination of hostile propaganda, in fact in 1960 Daud sent his troops across the border to manipulate events and press the Pashtunistan issue but his troops were routed by the Pakistani forces (Library of Congress, 1997). Afghanistan and Pakistan went on to severe relation in 1961 but the Afghan economy was ill prepared for this as majority of the aid programs were delivered through Pakistan and the government was dependent on customs revenues, consequently trade suffered and foreign exchange reserves plummeted, this was also the time when Ayub Khan was reigning in Pakistan and as neither Daud nor Ayub budged it became clear that one of them had to resign (Library of Congress, 1997). But the Afghan economy being much weaker Daud had to capitulate first, in 1963 King Zahir Shah sought Daud's removal on account of his Pashtunistan policy hurting the economy.

### **Last Decade of the Monarchy 1963-1973:**

Two weeks after Daud's removal King Zahir Shah endeavored to institute democracy in constitutional form and achieved the promulgation of the 1964 constitution after he ordered a Loya Jirga that required members of the National Assembly, the senate, the supreme court and the constitutional board to convene with the intention of electing new representatives (Runion,

2007, p. 99). Subsequent to this 452 representatives from the country with six women were elected and all 452 members signed the new Constitution and the document was ratified by the king on 20 September 1964 (Runion, 2007, pp. 99-100). The government of Afghanistan was now a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral legislature and an elected Parliament with majority of the power still wrested with the king. The Wolesi Jirga (House of Representatives) was the lower house of the parliament with 216 members and King Zahir also nominated a new Prime Minister Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal. Interestingly the constitution barred royal members of the family other than the king from participating in politics and government possibly done to keep Daud out of politics (Library of Congress, 1997). The new constitution led to emergence of parties based on ideologies that were totally alien to Afghanistan like People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in 1965 which was based on communism (Runion, 2007, p. 100). The 1965 elections also led to a Wolesi Jirga which was remarkably progressive in the sense that included people across the political spectrum from antiroyalists, Pashtun nationalists, entrepreneurs and industrialists, political liberals, a small group of leftists, conservative Muslims to supporters of the king (Library of Congress, 1997). The political actors and the evolving situation from here on would continue to have an impact on long into Afghanistan's future. The King nominated new Prime Minister Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal, who quickly established friendly relations with the students, while making it clear that he was in charge and there were limits to student political activity (Library of Congress, 1997). The PDPA won four seats in the elections of 1965 which included Nur Mohammad Taraki who established a radical newspaper called 'The Khalq' which was published only for a month before being shut down by the government for its extreme views. In 1967 PDPA split into multiple factions and two prominent factions were the Khalq faction led by Taraki and the Parcham faction led by Babrak Karmal.



The Khalq faction was dominated by Pashtuns from the rural areas who voiced their support for the working class whereas the Parcham faction was mainly non-Pashtuns who spoke Dari and composed more of urban citizenry who supported a socio-economic democratic front (Runion, 2007, p. 101). The King though was little more tolerant of the activities of the Parcham faction and allowed the publications from this faction while the publications from the Khalq faction were banned. This led to the accusation by the Khalq faction that Parcham had a secret association with the King.

### **Return of Daud to the April Revolution:**

The 1969 parliamentary elections, when voter turnout was not much greater than in 1965 produced a legislative assembly essentially consistent with the real population and distribution of power in the hinterland, in that conservative landowners and businessmen predominated and many more non-Pashtuns were elected than in the previous legislature (Library of Congress, 1997). Few leftists remained in the new parliament, although Karmal and was re-elected while former Prime Minister Maiwandwal, a democratic socialist, lost his seat when the government selectively influenced the elections (Library of Congress, 1997). The next four years of Afghanistan were unstable and volatile because of the incongruent political representation in the parliament led to an impasse on most issues (Runion, 2007, p. 101). By 1973 the economy was in tatters and an agrarian crisis had also gripped the country, convoluted with the political sloth in the parliament it led to increasing criticism of the King Zahir Shah. As the internal discontent grew along with external shakiness and polarization Daud implemented the coup d'état he had been planning for a year in response to the "anarchy and the anti-national attitude of the regime" (Library of Congress, 1997). With Daud's reemergence monarchy was abolished from

Afghanistan along with the 1964 constitution. Daud went on to establish a republican government with himself as the first President. His party National Revolutionary Party which became the fulcrum of all political activity in 1976 and a Loya Jirgah next year approved Daud's constitution establishing a presidential one party system of government (Library of Congress, 1997).

Prior to the coup Daud had established extensive links with both the factions of the former communist party PDPA and the communist worked to undermine the King Zahir Shah's overtures towards constitutional democracy. Despite this Daud was wary of any kind of ideological inclination and his cabinet included his loyalists and most of the leftist (the Parchamis) were purged citing reasons of inefficiency so as to not irk the Soviet Union. But Daud's five year tenure saw deterioration in ties with the Soviet Union as he tried to shift to the right side of the political spectrum and align Afghanistan away from communism (Library of Congress, 1997). Daud favoured a state-centric economy and drew up an ambitious seven-year economic plan (1976-1983) which would require significant foreign aid. Here he tried to pivot away from the Soviet dependence by turning to oil rich countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait for financial aid. He also went on to ink military training program with India and opened talks with Iran for economic aid (Runion, 2007, p. 102). Relations with Pakistan improved after nudging by United States and Iran and in 1978 Daud visited Islamabad to meet President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq with the intention of an agreement for prisoner exchange and expulsion of Pashtun and Baloch militants from Afghanistan (Library of Congress, 1997). While the meeting proved to be successful it was bitterly resented by the conservative Pashtuns as Daud promised not to aid Pashtun militants. By 1978 Daud's economic plans had failed to achieve any

substantial gains and he had alienated most political interest groups and Soviet Union was also aware of the Daud's policies towards the leftist in his cabinet as well as the removal Soviet military advisors from Afghan Military Units (Anon., n.d.). Despite the fact in the UN Afghanistan voted either with the Soviet bloc or with the nations of the non-aligned group, unofficial reports of sharp criticism by the Soviet Union widely circulated in this period over Daud's cabinet being laden with anti-communist and his failure to cooperate with PDPA. The PDPA that had split in 1967 was reunited ten years later thanks to Soviet efforts that had brought them together in an uneasy truce. In April 1978 a prominent Parchami ideologue Mir Akbar Khyber was murdered which served as the rallying point for all Afghan communists. Both Taraki and Kamal made speeches which saw gathering of huge crowds. The communist unity and solidarity of the people made Daud nervous and he reacted by arresting the leaders of both the factions but he jailed the Taraki and Amin a little late because he felt Parcham was the more immediate threat. The impending coup could not be prevented and on 27 April 1978 rebel groups build up their strength in the capital city of Kabul and within a day Daud and his family members were assassinated. Nur Mohammad Taraki took over as the President of the revolutionary council and Prime Minister of Soviet supported Democratic Republic Afghanistan.

### **Pakistan and Soviet Union get invested in the Afghan Quagmire:**

As the Cold War evolved in time and space globally, the two superpowers fought battles mostly indirectly through proxies and client states. The Central Asian chapter of this cold war engagement was added after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A new dimension to the Pakistani interest in its relationship with Afghanistan was to be added in this epoch, which would draw Pakistan so deeply in this treacherous piece of bog that it will have no escape from. This

was primarily on account of two factors for one Pakistan had a mutual security pact with the United States and was a member of regional security alliances like SEATO and CENTO and second was that it faced the more immediate threat of the communist Soviet Union ensconced to close for comfort in Afghanistan. Pakistan's alliance with the United States had already defined its interest in Afghanistan with respect to ties with the Soviet Union, the invasion would however cement this confrontation and complicate the equation for Pakistan in the years to come more importantly some new forces emerge in Afghanistan with very different interests.

When PDPA usurped power in 1978 they formed a cabinet with alternate ranking positions going to Khalq and Parchami factions, Taraki was the Prime Minister with Karmal being the Deputy Prime Minister with Hafizullah Amin as the Foreign Minister (Library of Congress, 1997). But the regime was doomed from start with inter-factional rivalry heating up between Khalq and the Parchami as well as intra-faction rivalry between Taraki and Amin so much so that eventually Taraki was murdered.

At this point of time many Afghans had started fleeing the country to seek refuge in Pakistan and Iran. These groups regarded the Soviet backed communist PDPA as 'atheist' and 'infidel' (Library of Congress, 1997). The genesis of the new forces that battle the Soviets and remain relevant even after their return lies in this section of population that migrated to Pakistan. Two kinds of warring groups emerged, one were the more fundamentalist and the other more traditionalist, their rivalry continued during the Afghan civil war that followed Soviet withdrawal (Library of Congress, 1997). The fundamentalists based their organizing principle around mass politics and included several divisions of the Jamiat-i-Islami. The leader of the parent branch,

Burhanuddin Rabbani, began organizing in Kabul before repression of religious conservatives, which began in 1974, forced him to flee to Pakistan during Daud's regime (Library of Congress, 1997). Gulbaddin Hikmatyar broke up with Rabbani to form his own resistance group, the Hizb-e-Islami, which became Pakistan's favored arms recipient<sup>1</sup>.

The Soviet invasion began on 25 December 1979 and they secured Kabul without much of trouble in just a matter of days. Amin died in the palace and the soviets installed Barbak Kamal in his place who was the exiled leader of the Parcham faction. The ten year attrition war was fought between Soviet and the PDPA against the mujahedeen. It was against this backdrop that the second phase of Pakistan's engagement began in Afghanistan. United States under President Jimmy Carter identified Pakistan as the frontline state for its response against the Soviet invasion. The mujahedeen set up their base in Pakistan to launch attacks into Afghanistan but received aid and funding from US and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan had two primary concerns during this period one was to deal with the communist Soviet Union ensconced too close for comfort in Afghanistan and second was to attract more aid from US and allied countries for their own military and nuclear capability objectives in return for their successful support for the mujahedeen. But there was an important long term objective which they utterly failed to achieve and this was to install a regime in Afghanistan which would be pliant and reconcile itself to the interests of the Pakistan (Hussain, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> Another split, engineered by Yunus Khales, resulted in a second group using the name Hizb-e-Islami--a group that was somewhat more moderate than Hikmatyar's. A fourth fundamentalist group was the Ittehad-i-Islami led by Rasool Sayyaf. Rabbani's group received its greatest support from northern Afghanistan where the best known resistance commander in Afghanistan--Ahmad Shah Massoud--a Tajik, like Rabbani, operated against the Soviets with considerable success (Library of Congress, 1997).

As the war continued casualties mounted and the war became a huge drain on resources both in terms of men and material for the Soviet Union. Many Afghans died and a good chunk of the population fled to Iran and Pakistan. Others remained to organize resistance movements of which one was led by Ahmed Shah Masoud in the north-eastern Afghanistan later known as the 'northern alliance' or the United Front. Barbak Kamal's government weakened increasingly as it was identified with infidel foreigners and there was always a question mark over their legitimacy in the country. As his position weakened power shifted to Najibullah who maintained his leadership between 1986 -1992 and amidst the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Najibullah remained in power three years after the Soviet withdrawal when the civil war raged between the warring factions of the mujahedeen until the emergence of the Taliban. The most significant division among them was the Jammāt-i-Islami, led by Rabbani and Ahmed Shah Masood, and the Hizb-i-Islami, led by Hekmatyar (Goodson, 2001, p. 61).

Pakistan had succeeded in its objective of bringing the superpower on its knees but they could not bring stability to Afghanistan in the power struggle that ensued after the withdrawal. Pakistan tried to facilitate a political dialogue among the various factions vying for power after the Geneva accords failed to bring an end to the hostilities. Pakistan had hoped that Najibullah regime would collapse soon after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 but the material support continued to bolster it and it took three more years before the regime collapsed, more importantly Pakistan realized the sharpness of differences between the different mujahedeen groups something that had not been factored in policy making up till then. With the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and emergence of new smaller states on the northern boundaries of Afghanistan and the internal strife it created a political vacuum which led to the emergence of Taliban in

October 1994 from the provinces of Qandahar, Zabul and Helmand. When the fragile peace deal between the mujahedeen broke amid the internecine fighting Taliban was quickly able to capture a number of towns and cities and this led to the creation of the United front or the ‘northern alliance’ that included Masoud and Dostam. Whether or not Taliban was then supported by Pakistan, it definitely not only supported the Taliban after it came to power and in fact was one of the few nations to recognize the outfit. This support went on until in a major turn of events after 9/11 attack on the world trade center US decided to intervene in Afghanistan and Pakistan was put in a difficult spot. Pakistan was pressured into aligning with the ‘war on terror’ and the sudden reversal in policy created a difficult dilemma for Pakistan. Pakistan’s external and internal security interest demanded it to follow a policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds<sup>2</sup>. Even as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates supported and recognized the regime of Taliban; India, Iran and Russia among others supported the Northern Alliance. The internal conflict led to chaos within Afghanistan where external forces vied to maximize their own gains. Pakistan was still the most potent actor with the maximum influence in Afghanistan and it used it for interests in the region by using Taliban apparatus for increasing the influx of infiltration in the Indian administered region of Kashmir.

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<sup>2</sup> In an interview Lieutenant General Mohammad Asad Durrani who was the Director-General of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from 1990-1992 with Al-Jazeera elaborately talked about Pakistan’s policy in those decades and also about how the security apparatus held the veto on the foreign policy of Pakistan. It can be found here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_lyS-wl7c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_lyS-wl7c)

## Chapter 3: Contemporary Political Context in Afghanistan

### Close to Peril:

The Karzai government had delayed elections for a substantial time and elections were held only after significant anxiousness was expressed by international community. Elections were held and initial polls suggested that Abdullah Abdullah was leading closest rival Ashraf Ghani. But in the Presidential run-offs even though initial expectations were that Abdullah Abdullah would win, in the end Ashraf Ghani was declared winner. But this did not turn out to be the last word as the history of Afghanistan has shown how highly contested power has been in Afghanistan. The election results were highly contested and there were allegation from both sides about widespread fraudulent voting. Abdullah Abdullah although born a Pashtun drew his support from the Tajik base while Ashraf Ghani was more popular in the Pashtun belt of the south and west. There was fear in the international community and more so in Afghanistan itself that the elections results would once again propel Afghanistan into fractious civil war and divide the country on ethnic lines. This led to international mediation to resolve the crises led by the United States to come to an amicable settlement. It was ironic then that the biggest threat to the country's stability was expected to come from the Taliban who would never want the elections in the first place for democracy to take roots in Afghanistan, but at the end of the elections instead the contending parties could not come to an agreement threatening the stability of the country. The consequent political vacuum could have easily aided a resurgent Taliban. Luckily United States was able to bring the parties to a settlement. In the mediation worked out the two factions were able to come to an agreement which led to the formation of the National Unity Government. It is interesting here that both the parties had initially agreed for an audit, but then the results of



the audit were never made public and a deal was reached thanks to hectic diplomacy by US. Nevertheless a deal cannot obfuscate problems that have been inherent to Afghanistan historically. The fault lines of the National Unity Government Deal are already showing.

### **A Persisting Dichotomy:**

The text of the deal is good starting point for the analysis of the National Unity Government. Much of the agreement talks about what the Chief Executive Officer can do and talks about creating a permanent post for an Executive Prime Minister by amending the constitution (Clark, 2014). Significantly the agreement mentions a ‘genuine political partnership between the President and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) under the authority of the President’ (Anon., 2014) and speaks of governance which is based on political consensus and cooperative decision making (Anon., 2014). But a subsequent text in the agreement said that ‘the relationship between then President and the CEO could not be described solely and entirely by the agreement’. The contradiction in the text pointed to a kind of dual-power centric government where each side had to proceed with caution to allow cooperative but tedious and slow decision making and a vaguely defined balance of power between the two leaders.

The authorities vested in the CEO as per the agreement are very much in line with a traditional head of the state and include carrying out administrative and executive affairs of the government, exercising specific administrative and financial authorities determined the presidential decree, establishing working relationship with the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government, member of the cabinet and the National Security Council. The CEO will have a council of ministers which is a separated body apart from the cabinet. The CEO will be a very

potent actor in the internal and external affairs of the country especially since he is part of the cabinet and the National Security Council along with having parity with President in important appointments at the level of heads of key security and economic institutions and independent directorates. In the National Security Council the two camps will be represented equally at the leadership level and 'equitably' represented at the membership level which implies that at the membership level both camps will have a fair representation but not necessarily equal at the membership level. Importantly the CEO is also allowed participation with the President in bilateral decision making meetings which means he will weigh in on the important regional and bilateral issues.

Another important feature of the agreement is on the issue of electoral reform which is a rather thorny issue for both sides. The President and the CEO both have to agree on the members of the special commission that will be formed after a presidential decree in accordance with the Article 7 of the political framework. The objective was to implement the electoral reforms before the 2015 parliamentary elections. The fight over the election reforms is really to decide who gets to control the electoral bodies, unfortunately in Afghanistan winning elections is more about controlling the bodies that conduct and supervise the elections rather than the mobilizing the voters in their favor (Bijlert, 2015). Till now both the Abdullah camp and the Ghani camp have been working independent of each other on the electoral reforms and the nominees for the special commission who are to draft the reforms for the independent electoral commission that is the institution as well as the laws, that is despite the text of the NUG deal specifically mentioning that both camps have to agree on the members of the special commission. In fact the Abdullah camp announced that it had finalized its delegation for the electoral reform commission much

earlier on 9 February 2015 and named Mohammad Natiqi, Mohammad Asim and Dr. Anwar as part of the delegation (Soadat, 2015). Abdullah camp is especially inclined to remove some of the current management of the electoral commission as part of the reforms.

It was a familiar pattern in which the CEOs team announced that their candidate list for the cabinet formation was ready and they were waiting for the President to do the same (Bijlert, 2015). That the announcements come from one camp beforehand and there was no joint declaration despite the NUG agreement asking the two teams to cooperatively agree on the members of the cabinet as well as the electoral commission seems to suggest either a lack of communication or strong disagreement over the nominations both for the cabinet as well as the electoral reform commission (Sadat, 2015).

This is a major issue because convening a 'Loya Jirga' requires representation from the district councils which need to be elected and the Abdullah camp emphasizes that election reforms are a prerequisite to the elections being held for the district councils. The reforms will be important because they will determine how the district council elections will be held. In Afghanistan there is dearth of correct data on population and exact administrative boundaries for the districts are unclear implying that these issues are going to remain politically contested (Bijlert, 2015). Even if both sides decide to work cooperatively on this issue it is highly unlikely that both sides will be able to come to any sort of agreement in quick time enough to pass the reforms before the 2015 parliamentary elections.

The conflict within the National Unity Government was most starkly evident in inability to institute the cabinet. Like the old adage goes 'conspicuous by its absence' the absence of a full working cabinet even six months after the formation of the Unity government for its five year tenure spoke volumes about the difficult negotiations between the two camps to come to a working agreement. After missing the initial deadline and facing substantial criticism for the same, it was only in about January 2015 that both the Ghani camp and Abdullah camp were able to agree on the nominees for the cabinet. But agreeing on the candidates is not the end of the road. The candidates have to be approved by the Parliament and this has always been a tricky issue in Afghanistan because of corruption and the Parliament being riven on account of ethnic or factional loyalties like erstwhile members of PDPA regime, Parcham and mujahedeen etc. If one does not fit into any of the networks getting an approval from the Parliament could prove to be difficult. For both Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah the security and foreign affairs portfolio are very important and crucial. It is here that the pressures and pulls of factional loyalties with come. Abdullah who draws his support from the Tajik and fought as a member of the Northern Alliance must satisfy the mujahedeen by getting more cabinet posts for ethnic Tajiks who have either had some past association or are somehow connected with the mujahedeen. On the contrary Ghani an ethnic Pashtun who wishes to put men with qualified expertise in positions suitable to their skill sets must also satisfy similar requirements due to the nature of the Afghan Parliament and satisfy his mostly Pashtun voting base. The fact that Afghanistan ended up with unity government meant that there were more number of people who think they are eligible for cabinet positions, obviously it becomes arithmetically impossible to satisfy everyone and the dissatisfaction renders the whole process complicated (Clark, 2015).

Nevertheless by 18 April 2015 Afghanistan had almost a full cabinet barring the position of Defense Minister. Most of the candidates were not those who were known politically or had no previous experience in governance. According to a report Afghan Analyst Network of the new 16 candidates that were endorsed by the Parliament on 21 April 2015 and selected in the final cabinet almost 9 were those nominees whose names had been put forth by Ashraf Ghani and 7 whose names were put forth by Abdullah Abdullah (AAN Team, 2015). Earlier on 26 January the Parliament had endorsed 9 ministers of which 4 were put forth by Ashraf Ghani and rest 5 were Abdullah's nominees. In sum both Abdullah and Ghani were able to have a balance of candidates they sought for the cabinet. That the balance of power between the president and CEO was upheld could be gauged from the distribution of the more important ministries, where interior and foreign affairs went to candidates supported by Abdullah whereas finance and intelligence went to candidates supported by Ashraf Ghani (Clark, 2015).

### **Divergence on Foreign Policy:**

For Afghanistan its foreign policy is an imperative and its relations with US, Pakistan, India and China are hugely important in determining the future of Afghanistan. While there is some consensus on Afghanistan's relationship with US and China among the two leaders that consensus seems to erode when it comes to Afghanistan's relationship with its most important neighbor Pakistan and regional power India<sup>3</sup>. The divergence of views on Pakistan and therefore by extension on Taliban is especially sharp and significant.

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<sup>3</sup> The two leaders made a joint trip to US. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/24/us-afghanistan-joint-statement>

Ashraf Ghani seeks reconciliation with Taliban which mostly ethnic Pashtun to avert fighting a costly war with an insurgent group who operate from their base across the border in Pakistan. Abdullah Abdullah on the other hand was closely associated with the Northern Alliance that fought the Taliban and is not willing to yield or concede much ground to Taliban for pursuing peace. This divergence of views then manifests in conflicting views within the National Unity Government in their vision for their ties with Pakistan and India.

Ashraf Ghani as President made his first foreign visit to China which was followed by his trip to Pakistan in November 2014 (Anon., 2014). During the Karzai regime's tenure Afghan Ministry of Defense had made a request for heavy weaponry for its national security forces from India. Although the request was initially rejected India then agreed to reassess the request. But Ashraf Ghani in trying to break ground in Afghanistan's ties with Pakistan and not agonizing Pakistan by buying arms from India decided to rescind the request (Amini, 2015). In February 2015 in a break from the past when Karzai government had refused to send cadets for training to Pakistan while they were being sent to India Afghanistan decided to send a contingent of six cadets to Pakistan Military Academy Abottabad (Anon., 2015).

Abdullah Abdullah on the other hand who is yet to make an official visit to Pakistan visited India before Ashraf Ghani did in late April 2015. Having been part of the northern alliance which fought Taliban backed by Pakistan, his divergence of views with Ashraf Ghani on Pakistan is pretty palpable. Unlike Pakistan which backed Taliban in the 1990s India has historically been a supporter of the Northern Alliance. Abdullah in a rather polite statement expressed his dissatisfaction with Pakistan in front of the Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan on the issue of

counter-terrorism where he categorically said that Pakistan was not doing enough to restore peace and fight insurgency (Joyenda, 2015). His views on the transit agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan were most indicative of his stance on Pakistan where he said that if Pakistan wishes to have access to Central Asia then it must grant access to the road link for India and Afghanistan.

The hard division between the two camps is amply clear in light of the above factors and this manifests itself as a conflict in policy preferences within the National Unity Government, this will subsequently be an important fodder for the model in

## Chapter 4: The Hybrid Game Model.

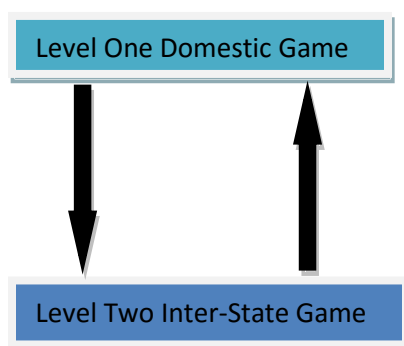
### **Chapter 4: The Hybrid Game Model**

In this chapter we will proceed to apply game theoretical analysis to the problems that have been discussed in the context of the previous three chapters on Afghanistan and Pakistan. The hybrid model of the game has two levels. At level one is the domestic game in Afghanistan while at level two is the game at international level (see Figure 2). The Hybrid model does not have any internal game for Pakistan because there are ample reasons to believe Pakistan's Afghanistan



policy is very much decided by the Pakistani security establishment and the government is on board with it (Kanwal, 2012, p. 30).

**Figure 2 The Hybrid Model**

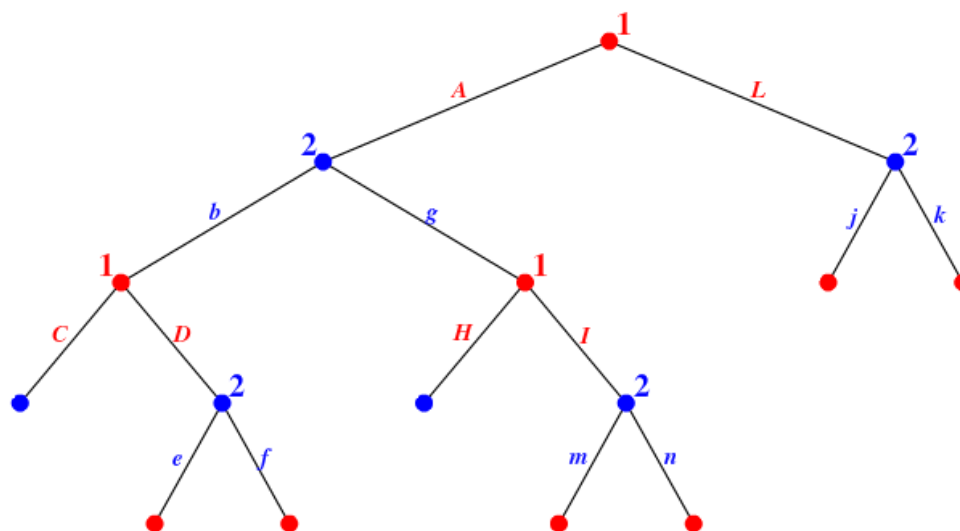


### **The Level One Game:**

The first game is the game at the domestic level in Afghanistan which reflects the political choices available domestically to the players. These choices impact the game at level two but the choices themselves are not independent of what happens at the level two game and are influenced by it, this will be explained later. The game has been developed as a two player extensive game model which is represented as a game tree (see Figure 3). This game tree has two players 1 and 2 who move sequentially. For the model we have chosen 1 to represent Ashraf Ghani and 2 to represent Abdullah Abdullah. At the start of the game player 1 makes the move subsequent to which player 2 moves. The rationale behind modeling the game as a two player game and choosing Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah as the two players is one driven by the motivation to reduce complexity and second because these are indeed the two single most

important actors in Afghanistan because of being part of the National Unity government. One could have argued for Taliban as the third major actor but since game theory is situated in rational choice theory paradigm it would demand assuming that Taliban is a rational actor which wants to maximize its benefits and minimize its costs. But this would be a difficult assumption to make going by the history of Taliban which is more ideologically driven. It is true that rationality is subjective and what may seem irrational as an outsider may be perfectly rational from Taliban's perspective but even then the primary strategic interplay of decisions will be between the two camps of Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah in the National Unity Government. The Taliban factor will however be taken into account and explained later. Since the two players are part of the National Unity government and it is also reasonable to assume that the two players are aware of each other's preferences and choices and hence this is an extensive game with perfect information.

**Figure 3 The Domestic Game (Level 1)**



One can now proceed to define the actions of each player that have been attributed in this model.

Player 1 has the following actions available to him at the start of the game:

*A*: Push for a policy of rapprochement and dialogue with Pakistan (and Taliban)

*L*: Push for more power in the National Unity government by electing more Pashtuns in power holding positions

Following which Player 2 has the following actions to choose from:

*j*: Accept Player 1's demand for more power in the National Unity Government

*k*: Pull out of the National Unity Government

Or

*b*: Push more for power in the National Unity government by electing more former Northern Alliance members (or Tajiks) in power wielding positions while tolerating Ghani's policy of rapprochement

*g*: Resist Ghani's policy on Pakistan (and Taliban)

In the third stage of the game it is again player 1's turn to choose from the following actions:

*C*: Accept Player 2's demand for more share in power

*D*: Refuse the demand

Or

*H*: Accept Player 2's demand for moderation of rapprochement policy on Pakistan (and Taliban)

*I*: Refuse Player 2's demand for moderation of the rapprochement policy

In the last and fourth stage of the game it is player 2's turn who can choose from the following actions:

*e*: Stay in the National Unity Government despite Player 2 refusing to share more power

*f*: Pull-out of the National Unity Government

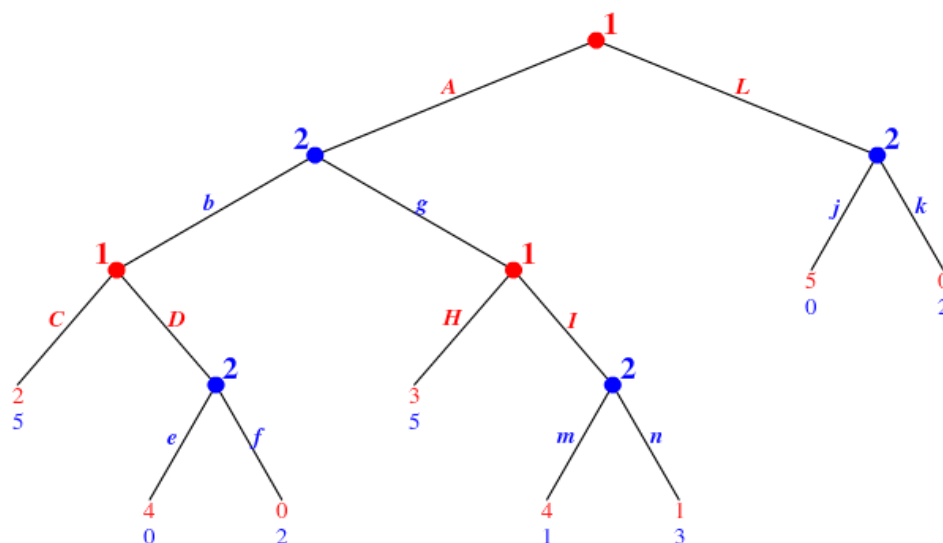
Or

*m*: Stay in the National Unity Government despite the policy of rapprochement and dialogue towards Pakistan

*n*: Impede the policy

The game sequence can be explained as follows, player 1 that is Ashraf Ghani has the actions *A* and *L* available to him at the start of the game. Subsequent to which player 2 that is Abdullah Abdullah has the actions *b* and *g* or *j* and *k* available depending on what player 1 has chosen at the first stage of the game. If player 1 has chosen action *A* at the first stage then depending on what action player 2 opts for *b* or *g*, player 1 has actions *C* and *D* or actions *H* and *I* available to him in the third stage. In the third stage of the game upon player 2 choosing action *b* if Player 1 chooses action *C* then the game ends there, if however he chooses action *D* then the game proceeds to the fourth stage where player 2 chooses action *e* or *f* and the game ends. Similarly if player 2 chooses action *g* and then if player 1 opts for action *H* then the game ends there, in the otherwise case if player 1 chooses action *I* then the game proceeds to the fourth stage where player 2 has the actions *m* and *n* available and the game ends there.

Figure 4 The Domestic Game (Level 1) with pay-offs



Consider now Figure 4 in which the payoffs for both the players are mentioned for the various outcomes as they are. The numbers in red (or mentioned on top) represent the outcome for Ashraf Ghani whereas the numbers in blue (or mentioned below) represent the outcomes for Abdullah Abdullah. The model depends only on the preference orders and one does not have to quantify the exact desirability of the outcomes (Bennett, 1995, p. 23). That is to imply that the preference function is ordinal in nature. So for both players a higher number represents the more preferred outcome. In this case based on our understanding of the internal politics of Afghanistan from chapter number three the preferred outcomes for both the players are as shown in the Figure 4.

Player 1 who is Ashraf Ghani prefers the sequence of actions  $Lj$  the most where he vies for more power within the NUG and Player 2 accepts it with a payoff of 5. Next he prefers the action

sequence *A,b,D,e* where after player 1 pursues a policy of rapprochement and dialouge with Pakistan (and Taliban) respectively, Player 2 vies more power within the NUG but player 1 refuses to concede and player 2 accepts his decision and stays in the NUG. Here the pay-off is 4, intrestingly for the sequence of actions *A,g,I,m* also the pay-off is 4, this is the case when Player 1 opts for action *A* and then player 2 choses to resist the raproachment policy on Pakistan and then player 1 refuses the demand for a more hardline policy and player 2 accepts his decision and decides to stay in the NUG. The next preferred sequence of actions is *A,g,H* with payoff 3 where in the second stage of the game player 2 demands a change in policy and player 1 accedes to it. The next two sequences of actions are *A,b,C* and *A,g,I,n* with pay-offs 2 and 1 respectively, the cases are when player 2 pushes for more power in the NUG and player 1 accedes to it and second when player 2 pushes for a more hardline policy which is refused by player 1 upon which player 2 in the fourth stage chooses to impede or block the policy if not change it. The last sequence of actions is *L,k* which is the least preferred because in this case player 2 chooses to pull out of the NUG because player 1 pushes for more power in the NUG.

Similarly player 2 that is Abdulah abdullah the least preferred sequence of actions is *L,j* and *A,b,D,e* where in the first case he accedes to player 1 grabbing more power in the NUG and second when he stays in the NUG despite player 1 refusing to accommodate his desire for more power. For the sequence *A,g,I,m* a slightly better pay-off is 1 where player 2 stays in the NUG when player 1 refuses to change policy. For the sequence *A,b,D,f* and *L,k* respectively the payoff is 2, in both cases the player 2 is pulling out of the NUG on account of being refused by player 1 to share more power and second when player 1 itself is pushing for more power in the NUG. The next preferred out come is the sequence *A,g,I,n* where player 1 refuses to toe the hardline policy and therefore payer to refuses to cooperate or block policy action. The most preferred out come

for player 2 are the sequence of actions  $A, b, C$  and  $A, g, H$  where either as in the first case player 1 accedes to player 2's request to share more power in the NUG or change policy as per player 2's wish. In both cases the pay-off is 5 for player 2.

Assuming all actors are rational in their choice and since the game is of finite horizon, implying it has a finite sequence we can employ the concept of backward induction for analysis. Starting with sub-games of length one taking the optimal action we then proceed to sub-games of length two and so on. In the sub-game where player 2 has the actions  $j$  and  $k$  available to him player 2 is better off choosing to pull-out of the NUG opting for  $k$  rather than stay in the NUG when player 1 is pushing for power in the NUG. Clearly if player 1 chooses the action  $L$  it is certain that the player 2 will choose action  $k$  with the payoff 2 than  $j$  with payoff 0, so if Ashraf Ghani pushes for more power in the NUG there might be a breakdown. In the fourth stage of the game of the first sub-game where actions  $e$  and  $f$  are available to player 2 he will choose to pull out rather than accept player 1's decision that is he will opt for  $f$ . In the other sub-game where player 2 has the actions  $m$  and  $n$  available to him he will go for  $n$  because the payoff 3 is higher than 1. Now when in third stage in the first sub-game leading from the sequence  $A, b$  player 1 is better off choosing action  $C$  than  $D$  because choosing action  $D$  would necessarily take him to the outcome 0,2 in the fourth stage, if he chooses  $C$  he gets to 2,5 which is a better outcome than 0,2. Similarly at the other node player 1 is better off choosing action  $H$  because that will lead him to 3,5 in the otherwise case he will certainly end up at 1,3 because player 2 will prefer choosing action  $n$  over  $m$  as it leads him to 1,3 than 4,0. Now that we know what actions player 1 will prefer in each of the sub-games in the third stage it is up to player 2 to choose the action which leads him to the best outcome. If he chooses action  $b$  player 1 will choose action  $C$  which leads

him to 2, 5 or if he chooses action  $g$  then player 1 chooses action  $H$  which leads him to the outcome 3, 5. At this point player 2 is indifferent between choosing the actions  $b$  and  $g$  as in both cases he is receiving the same outcome for him. So if player 1 chooses action  $A$  then the two possible outcomes are 2, 5 or 3, 5 depending on player 2's action in the stage 2. The way this game has been modeled it is likely that either player 1 will have to cede some power or accommodate player 2's policy preferences. The implication is that even though Ashraf Ghani would like to pursue a certain line of policy vis-à-vis Pakistan (or Taliban) he might not be totally unencumbered to do it, and either he will have to cede some power to Abdullah or moderate his policy of rapprochement.

It is completely possible that with a different set of preference order which either based on a different context or based on the researcher's judgment one can arrive at a completely different conclusion. In an ideal setting one could have also developed this game as a three player game (or more depending on number of actors chosen) with Taliban in it and some new actions but that would be a slightly more complicated game. Whether or not Taliban can be seen as a rational player<sup>4</sup>, under what circumstances of the conflict and is it a unitary actor or not, is still up for a debate, nevertheless assuming that Taliban is one single entity not divided in its opinion to *continue conflict* or *pursue reconciliation* (Gandhara, 2015), we can imagine Taliban as being the player that has the two aforementioned actions to choose from, then each of those two actions would lead to a game tree with the structure similar to the one shown in Figure 3 but the

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Schelling in his book *Strategy of Conflict* writing about 'irrationality' states that, irrationality can imply disorderly and inconsistent value system, faulty calculation, an inability to receive messages or communicate inefficiently; it can imply random or haphazard influences in the reaching of decisions or the transmission of them, or in the receipt or conveyance of information, additionally it could simply reflect the collective nature of decision making among individuals who do not have identical value systems and whose organizational arrangements and communication systems do not cause them to act like a single identity.



preference order of the actions and the final outcomes will differ in each game tree because of the complexity introduced in the game tree from outside, like for instance if Taliban *continues conflict* then if Player 1 chooses action *A* and then player 2 chooses action *g* that is Abdullah signals his wish to pursue a more hard-line policy on Pakistan (or Taliban) and subsequently even though player 1 that is Ashraf Ghani chooses action *I* refusing to do so. In this case when player 2's turn to choose between the actions *m* and *n* in the fourth stage the payoffs may be very different from what it is in Figure 4. In that case choosing action *n* that is stalling policy action will lead to a payoff of 0 which will therefore mean that staying in the NUG that is action *m* would be a more optimal choice of action.

### **The Level Two Game:**

The next level of analysis is at the interstate level which is level 2 of the macro game. This game is played between the two states Pakistan and Afghanistan. The level 2 game tries to account for the misperceptions between the states because of various factors which could be lack of proper communication despite having government channels and or possible misconstrued actions. To allow for this the game has been developed as a two-player simple hyper-game (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Again the level 2 game could have been developed as a multiplayer game due to other international actors which could influence decision making at the level 2, but a multiplayer hyper-game will have to take into account higher order perceptions which would be require a more complicated analysis because there one has to take into account each player's perception of each player's perception of the strategies and preferences, and each player's perception of this in turn (PG Bennett, 1980, p. 622), besides here we have focused on the game that emanates from the misperception that brews between only the two primary actors Afghanistan and Pakistan.

These are the primary actors because other actors that could have been considered lack the same magnitude of capability to influence the conflict on the ground.

**Figure 5 The International Hyper-Game (Level 2) Pakistan's Perspective**

	HPA		PAT		BAT	
C	1	4	5	6	2	6
NC	3	3	6	1	4	2

**Figure 6 The International Hyper-Game (Level 2) Afghanistan's Perspective**

	C		NC	
SCI	8	4	4	5
PPT	5	8	1	7
HPP	6	1	2	2
RDL	7	3	3	6

Here Afghanistan has the following actions available in the game:

**SCI:** Develop Strategic cooperation with India which could either be just in the form of economic aid or could possibly also include military aid.

**PPT:** Conduct military operation against militant groups hostile to Pakistan concede on other issues

**HPP:** Pursue an actively hostile policy versus Pakistan

**RDL:** Raise the Durand Line Issue

Pakistan has the following actions available to them:

**HPA:** Pursue an actively hostile policy versus Afghanistan

**PAT**: Conduct military operations against the Afghan Taliban

**BAT**: Block Afghanistan's transit access to India while not aiding militant outfits against Afghanistan

**C** and **NC** denote the actions cooperation and non-cooperation respectively.

In hyper-gaming it is not necessary that the two players see the same game. Figure 5 and Figure 6 therefore show two games, one is what Pakistan perceives with the payoffs as shown in the game and the other is what Afghanistan perceives with the payoffs as shown in the game. In both cases Afghanistan is the row player and Pakistan is the column player. The game is in the strategic form that is actions are taken simultaneously by both players. While Afghanistan perceives the game as a 4×2 matrix Pakistan perceives the same game as a 2×3 matrix. In each game certain actions of the other player are interpreted in a certain manner which accounts for the misperception. Pakistan has three actions in its game **HPA**, **PAT** and **BAT**. But Afghanistan interprets Pakistan's actions only as **C** or **NC** that cooperative or non-cooperative. So in Afghanistan's game the action **HPA** and **BAT** are interpreted as **NC** whereas **PAT** is interpreted as **C**.

Similarly Afghanistan has four actions, **SCI**, **RDL**, **PPT** and **HPP** in its own game. Of these **RDL**, **PPT** and **HPP** are easy to interpret for Pakistan which views these actions only as cooperative or non-cooperative in its game. It interprets **RDL** as **NC**, **HPP** also as **NC** and **PPT** as **C**. However the action **SCI** that is taking aid from India economical or military becomes difficult to interpret. Pakistan can view the action **SCI** as **C** or **NC** depending on what kind of aid is received by Afghanistan, its magnitude and how it perceives it, whether or if it is limited to the northern areas of Afghanistan or down south close to Pakistan. These can be depicted by

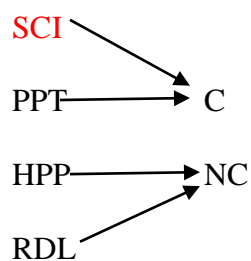
strategy mappings which act as the link between the two perceived games (Bennett, 1980, p. 498). The strategy mappings for this game would be like this as shown in

Figure 7 or

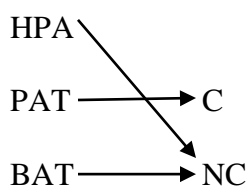
Figure 8:

### Figure 7 Case 1

**Column actions:**

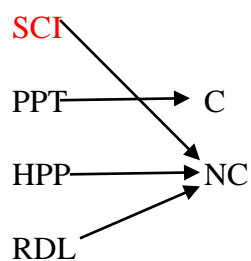


**Row actions:**

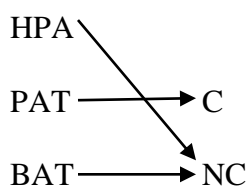


### Figure 8 Case 2

**Column actions:**



**Row actions:**



Depending on how the action *SCI* marked in red is interpreted either the case 1 or case 2 strategy mapping will hold. For instance if Afghanistan only receives economic aid from India and Pakistan interprets it as *C* as shown in

Figure 7 then the strategy mappings for case 1 will hold. If however Afghanistan receives military aid from India and Pakistan interprets it as *NC* as shown in

Figure 8 then the strategy mappings for case 2 will hold. Again it is a subjective matter for the researcher to describe which action(s) can be misinterpreted in a hyper-game. So alternatively it could have been the case that in some situation the action **RDL** may not be interpreted as **NC** by Pakistan, and the action **BAT** may not be interpreted as **NC** by Afghanistan in which case there will be many more scenarios resulting from each set of strategy mapping that are possible, the researcher will have to take into account all possibilities depending on the political context.

The link between the two games at level 1 and level 2 can be explained qualitatively. From Figure 4 we can see that the possible outcomes are 2, 5 which is the action sequence **A, b, C** or the outcome 3, 5 which is the action sequence **A, g, H**. Now if player 2 opts for action **g** then it would imply the outcome 3, 5 that is a more hard-line policy versus Pakistan. In the level 2 game one will have to know the specific hard-line policy action taken and this could imply the action **RDL** that is raising the Durand Line issue or **HPP** that is pursuing an actively hostile policy versus Pakistan. Alternatively this could also mean a more pro-India policy denoted by the action **SCI** but how the game will be played would depend on how **SCI** is interpreted by Pakistan as in the strategy mapping there are two cases. Assuming action **SCI** is taken, then if **SCI** is interpreted as an hostile move implying **NC** in Pakistan's game then considering the action **NC** the system will move towards the Nash Equilibrium<sup>5</sup> to the outcome **NC, HPA** i.e. 3,3 where **HPA** would be the best action Pakistan can take given Afghanistan opts for **NC**. In this case **HPA** will be construed as **NC** in Afghanistan's game which leads to the Nash Equilibrium **SCI, NC** in Afghanistan's game with expected outcome 4, 5. This is the case where the game at level

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<sup>5</sup> A Nash equilibrium in a strategic game of ordinal preferences has action profile  $\mathbf{a}^*$  as Nash equilibrium if for every player  $i$  and every action  $\mathbf{a}_i$  of player  $i$ ,  $\mathbf{a}^*$  is at least as good according to player  $i$ 's preferences as the action profile  $(\mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{a}^*_{-i})$  in which player  $i$  chooses  $\mathbf{a}_i$  while every other player  $j$  chooses  $\mathbf{a}^*_j$ . Equivalently for every player  $i$ ,  $u_i(\mathbf{a}^*) \geq u_i(\mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{a}^*_{-i})$  for every action  $\mathbf{a}_i$  of player  $i$ , where  $u_i$  is a payoff function that represents player  $i$ 's preferences.

2 delivers the stable Nash Equilibrium outcome with the expected result that Afghanistan continues strategic cooperation with India because it expects hostility from Pakistan and Pakistan continues with a hostile policy against Afghanistan because it deems Afghanistan's actions hostile to it.

If however *SCI* is interpreted as *C* in Pakistan's game then the system must deviate from the stable expected outcome of *NC, HPA* to *C, PAT* or *C, BAT* that is 5, 6 or 2, 6 implying Pakistan can choose either of the actions *PAT* or *BAT* leading to non Nash Equilibrium outcome in its own perceptual game. Now if Pakistan chooses the action *PAT* then Afghanistan interprets it as *C* in its own game. This leads to the outcome *SCI, C* in Afghanistan's game that is 8, 4 which is again not a Nash Equilibrium, thus both players end up with an unexpected outcome where Afghanistan continues its economic cooperation with India and Pakistan cooperates with Afghanistan on countering terrorism but this depends on the nature and magnitude of cooperation Afghanistan develops with India and Pakistani tolerance for Indian engagement in Afghanistan which determines how Pakistan react to the Indo-Afghan engagement essentially determining the outcome of the game which is not a Nash equilibrium in either of the two perceptual games. If however Pakistan takes the action *BAT* then it leads to a non Nash equilibrium outcome in Pakistan's game *C, BAT* and the Nash equilibrium outcome in Afghanistan's game *SCI, NC*. The result is that initially Pakistan tries to impede Afghanistan's access to India, continuing to block access but without actively abetting militant outfits against Afghanistan only intending to counter Indian influence in Afghanistan but Afghanistan construes this as a hostile act in its game and further develops cooperation with India which alters how the action *SCI* is perceived by Pakistan once again raising hostilities. The policy implication is that

Afghanistan must strive to ensure that the policy action *SCI* is undertaken in such a way so as to blur or narrow the distinction between *NC* and *C* for Pakistan keeping it below the threshold level where Pakistan would start interpreting this cooperation as irksome to its interest, implying Afghanistan should refrain from receiving military aid from India and moderate its magnitude of economic cooperation and then hope that Pakistan respond in cooperative manner taking action *PAT*. Pakistan on its part must also try not to overreact to this cooperation so as to not raise heckles in Afghanistan by its non-cooperative actions.

From the level 1 (Figure 4) of the game if the outcome is the action sequence *A, b, C* with the payoff 2, 5 implying Ghani's is able to pursue his policy of reconciliation after conceding some ground domestically to Abdullah Abdullah which would lead to the action *PPT*. Similar analysis as like the preceding one can be done for the possible actions taken by Pakistan with the resulting hyper game leading to a combination of non Nash equilibrium outcomes in both perceptual games depending on the action taken by Pakistan.

## **Conclusion:**

It is entirely possible one may assign different set of payoffs for the actions here or that the payoffs in the hyper game might change on account of political and military factors but these are modeling decisions that the researcher has to take. It is evident that the stability of the system at level 2 can be disturbed as a consequence of actions taken in level 1 which lead to unexpected outcomes at level 2. It is also very likely that outcome at level 2 will impact the preferences of the players at level 1 and the transmission mechanism apart from reflecting directly on the preferences of the players could also involve Taliban, as Taliban's actions will be a response to actions taken by Afghanistan and Pakistan and dependent on the equation between the two countries. This will again be a modeling decision for the researcher to take into account the new



context and assign the appropriate payoffs to the model at level 1 or if necessary account for newer actions possibly restructuring the game.

The game theoretical model that has been developed here can be tested against different strategic situations to and then the results can be analyzed for a better insight in the mechanism of the conflict. The whole exercise of game theorizing the conflict itself is very enriching in learning about the conflict, identifying the primary actors and defining their interests. One can use the hybrid model for predictive analysis by assigning the most appropriate pay-offs and strategy mappings for different strategic scenarios. Alternatively this model can be adapted to other cases of conflict where national unity governments have been formed with some slight modifications.

The model developed in this paper does have certain limitations in that one can argue that players both at level one and level two could have more actions to choose from or quite simply there could certainly be more number of players both at level one and level two. For such models analysis can get a little complicated because of which one may have to use computer software that have algorithm to solve and model such games. One such Open Source Software that can be used in case of increase in complexity is Gambit<sup>6</sup>, however learning to deploy and use it may also take some time. The other limitation is availability of information of an event that is currently ongoing as in this case where the conflict is still evolving and so the researcher may not be exactly aware of the preferences of players or sometimes even the players may themselves not be aware of what exactly their interest are and therefore what their actions should be.

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<sup>6</sup> Gambit software and guide can be downloaded from: <http://www.gambit-project.org>

It may be possible to further expand on the work done in this paper by developing a nested hybrid model as a further avenue of research, in case one wishes to model a more intricate domestic game and international game by developing further more levels at each level of the hybrid game to accommodate more players. It may still be possible to extend this model to other cases of conflict which might not necessarily be politico-military but politico-economic as well.

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