

Integral Role of Pakistan in Afghan Peacebuilding: A Case Study of Post 2015 Era

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Abstract

This research study examines Pakistan's significant role in achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. It traces Pakistan's trajectory from being a passive observer to becoming a proactive facilitator of negotiations. Afghanistan has faced devastating consequences since the 1970s, with the Soviet Union's invasion in 1979 and the subsequent intrusion by the USA in 2001. These events have left the nation and its populace in ruins. Pakistan's active efforts have been instrumental in alleviating the long-standing conflict, driven by its strategic interests, socioreligious ties, and geographical proximity. The research highlights the challenges faced by both nations, including targeted killings of Afghan leaders and persistent distrust between the two countries. Additionally, external factors, such as India's involvement and accusations from former US President Donald Trump, pose significant barriers. Despite these obstacles, key initiatives like the Quadrilateral Coordination Group and the Heart of Asia Conference have contributed to restarting the dialogue. The study emphasizes the need for inclusive governance, democratic processes, and mitigation of weapons proliferation to further advance the peace process. It highlights that peace in Afghanistan has broader implications for global peace and conflict resolution. It recommends that India and Pakistan should refrain from undue interference to ensure that peace is achieved, and the UN should actively support Afghanistan in achieving diplomatic, political, and economic independence. The research methodology combines qualitative analysis of historical events, policy documents, diplomatic correspondence, interviews with key stakeholders, and a comparative analysis of regional conflicts, and peacebuilding efforts. It presents a multidimensional perspective on Pakistan's crucial role in the Afghan peace process and its impact on regional stability and international peacebuilding endeavors.

Keywords: *Afghanistan Peace Process, Regional Stability, Pakistan's Role*

1. Introduction:

The word "peace" comes from a Latin term meaning "an agreement to end war." It refers to a state of societal friendship and cooperation in the absence of conflict and turmoil. In social terms, peace often

means the absence of war and freedom from violence and bloodshed between individuals, institutions, or groups. Peace is a complex concept that can be both positive and negative. Negative peace refers to the absence of visible and direct violence, while positive peace is emancipatory and aims to build relationships and institutions that prevent conflict. These concepts are especially relevant today as peace studies evolve from merely building knowledge about peace to training and educating people on how to create and maintain peaceful societies (Tahari, 2013). Leaders may bring peace with their influence and motivation (Ramzan et al., 2023). In educational setup, peers positively interact to be fair and at peace (Javaid & Mahmood, 2023). On the other hand, peacebuilding is an action that aims to settle or resolve disequilibrium and discrimination in peaceful ways, while also addressing the cultural and structural conditions that contribute to destructive conflict. It can be argued that peacebuilding is a process of conflict resolution or the settlement of disturbances. Mindfulness of people leads to less stress (Javaid et al., 2023). Furthermore, peacebuilding aims to establish a peaceful environment where human beings can live socially, psychologically, and physically in the absence of war (Gawerc, 2006).

Peacebuilding is a crucial approach towards state development. Conflicts and wars among countries often lead to negative growth and decline, while the absence of war corresponds with high growth and progress. Peace is essential for political, economic, social, cultural, and religious progress within states. If two or more neighboring states are in conflict or engaged in an international war, efforts must be made to restore peace (Takas, 2015). Workforce improves performance being diverse (Khan & Javaid, 2023).

Afghanistan is a landlocked country located at the crossroads of Central and South Asia, referred to as the “Heart of Asia.” It is bordered by Pakistan to the East and South-East. Afghanistan is a predominantly Pashtun-speaking region. In Pakistan, dominant Pashto-speaking areas are the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the nine districts of Baluchistan. The indigenous Pashtuns have lived in this region for thousands of years since the first millennium B.C. The relationship between these two countries has not been cordial since the independence of Pakistan. Afghanistan cast her vote against Pakistan in the United Nations Organization in September 1947, because Afghanistan reservations were with the permanency of the Durand Line (Mohib & Ashraf, 2015).

The modern state of Afghanistan began with the Durrani dynasty in the eighteenth century. At that time, Afghanistan was a buffer state between Russia and the British Empire, and three Anglo-Afghan wars were fought between Afghanistan and the British Empire. After the third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919 and the signing of the Treaty of Rawalpindi on August 19, 1919, Amir Amanullah Khan became the monarch and established a fully independent state, the Emirate of Afghanistan. In 1926, the Emirate of Afghanistan became the Kingdom of Afghanistan. When Pakistan came into being in 1947, the ruler of Afghanistan was Muhammad Zahir Shah, who remained in power until 1973. The relations between these two states have not been warm since 1947, with Afghanistan supporting separatist movements in Pakistan. The Durand Line border was the first challenge for relations between the two states, as Afghanistan has not formally recognized it as an international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This remains a complicated and sensitive issue between the two states (Zohib, 2020).

In 1952, the Afghan government claimed that not only Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is their part but the province of Baluchistan too. In June 1950, King Zahir Shah spread anti-Pakistan views which were condemned by the prime minister of Pakistan, Liaqat Ali Khan. Some other incidents also took place in the same decade. Pakistan claimed that her counterpart was involved in a violation of the territorial

integrity of Pakistan but Afghanistan denied it. Afghanistan's government condemned the constitutional declaration of West Pakistan as one unit. The involvement of Pakistan in the affairs of Afghanistan started in the 1970s. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1979 and America in 2001, these two events compelled Pakistan to play her role in the peace process in Afghanistan. These two events destroyed Afghanistan where thousands of innocent Afghans were impacted. When great powers came into Afghanistan in 1979, the role of Pakistan in Afghan Affairs started (Mustafa, 2020).

After the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979 till her withdrawal and from the incident of 9/11 to the 'Doha Deal', Pakistan was one of the key stakeholders due to socio-religious and geographical connectivity between both the states. Pakistan played a very vital and decisive role in each peaceful development that occurred in Afghanistan. Pakistan has to be an important player because she has national interest there. After the incident of 9/11 in 2001, the High Peace Council was established in which Pakistan provided hosting in the capital territory of Islamabad. After the demise of Burhan Uddin Rabbani, Pakistan tried to establish good relationships with Rasheed Dostum and Ahmad Zia Masood. These attempts have had positive impacts on the relations between both States (Kamzey, 2017).

In 2013, Hamid Karzai requested Pakistan for help in peacebuilding. Due to the efforts of Pakistan, both the Taliban members and Karzai government members' meeting was held in 2015. This meeting was for the future government establishment and transfer of power. This was so secret meeting, both the USA and China also participated but unfortunately, before the second meeting Muhammad Umar, who was the head of the Taliban, died. Due to this problem, the second meeting was postponed. After that Taliban officials selected Mullah Akhtar Mansour, but he was not interested in table talks and he wanted to fight against foreigners. In 2016, the USA killed the Taliban's head Abdul Mansour, Taliban appointed Mullah Hibatullah as the new head of the Taliban. In 2016, Pakistan again started meeting with the Chinese and Russians for the next step of the peace process. In 2018, US President Donald Trump was against Pakistan's role in the Afghanistan issue, Trump allegedly blamed Pakistan. After this policy, Trump changed his policy toward Pakistan to find a way for a peace process and wrote a letter to Pakistan for help. Pakistan appreciated the letter of the Trump government and the representative of the state of reconciliation visited Pakistan for getting support. Later on, Pakistan supported and provided grounds for table talks and both heads of the states visited each other. When the USA resumed the peace process, Pakistan appreciated this stance on different occasions. The representatives of the USA visited Pakistan to meet high civilian and military officials. In 2020, the peace agreement was signed in Doha, and both parties appreciated and thanked the role of Pakistan in the Afghanistan peace process. As a result, the USA withdrew forces from Afghanistan, and then the Taliban established their own government, provided grounds for peace-building, and acted as a bridge between the Taliban and the USA. Pakistan's role cannot be ignored in peace table talks in Afghanistan (Ali, 2015).

2. Statement of The Problem

A Peaceful Afghanistan is essential to bring stability to the region. Wars always bring suffering, and Pakistan is the most suffered State from the Afghan war. The Taliban and the USA signed a peace document on February 29, 2020, in Doha to end the longest war in the history of the USA. Pakistan played a positive and effective role in bringing the Taliban to the peace table with the USA. A lot of research has been conducted on the Afghan peace process. However, some questions need to be answered. This research is conducted to cover the gap that has existed for a long time.

2.1. Objective of the Study

This study aims to highlight the crucial role played by Pakistan in this process, and conduct a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by Pakistan.

2.2. Significance of Study

Afghanistan's peace process is a significant topic of interest for scholars worldwide, owing to its long-standing importance in global politics. The United States, alongside other major powers, has a vested interest in Afghanistan. Therefore, any developments in the country can have a direct or indirect impact on neighboring Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan is considered a key stakeholder in the peace process and has played a significant role in the current Afghanistan peace process. This study aims to examine Pakistan's contribution to the peace process in Afghanistan, offering valuable insights into this crucial area of research. By delving deeper into this issue, the researchers hope to gain a better understanding of its political and scholarly significance.

3. Literature Review

Mustafa (2020) highlights Pakistan's pivotal involvement in attempts to promote peace in Afghanistan. Due to its close vicinity and shared border, Pakistan has been among the countries most severely impacted by Afghanistan's protracted conflict, which began in 1970. Pakistan has suffered enormous economic losses of billions of dollars. Pakistan has actively supported the peace process in Afghanistan despite these obstacles, striving to involve all pertinent parties in a constructive discourse to promote stability in the area. On February 29, 2020, the United States and the Taliban signed a historic peace accord, marking a significant turning point. This development highlights Pakistan's crucial role in mediating talks between US authorities and the Taliban.

Naqvi's study, titled "Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations Post 2014: Impact on Pakistan Security," analyzes the impact of two significant events in Afghanistan on Pakistan's security environment. Naqvi focuses on the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan and the appointment of Ashraf Ghani as president, which he considers a turning point in the relationship between the two countries. Naqvi argues that these events have had a considerable impact on the peace process in Afghanistan. Additionally, he delves into the intricate relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, examining the various factors that contribute to it (Naqvi, 2015).

3.1. Afghan Peace Process, Challenges and Prospects

Kamzey (2017) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the historical relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, specifically from 2015 onwards. The author highlights Pakistan's significant role and efforts to promote stability in the war-torn region of Afghanistan. Notably, the Murree discussions were a crucial initiative aimed at promoting peace in Afghanistan. The author emphasizes how Pakistan's efforts have brought the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table and led to five successful peace negotiations. This success can be attributed to several factors, including the countries' proximity, shared ideological interests, cultural ties, and Pakistan's adept diplomatic status as a facilitator of peace negotiations.

Soherwordi and Wazire (2012) provide perceptive evaluations of the potential impact of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan on Pakistan. They present a thorough analysis of the historical, political,

and cultural ties between the two nations while highlighting potential challenges after exit. They center on US strategic goals and how they impact Pakistan, emphasizing in particular how vulnerable Pakistan is to shifts in Afghan politics. Collectively, the aforementioned works provide a concise, yet comprehensive, overview of the shifting dynamics within the field.

3.2. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan

Threlkeld (2020) explores the historical dynamics between Pakistan and Afghanistan and their implications for Afghanistan's stability going forward. He emphasizes that worries about commerce, geopolitical pressures, security interests, sovereignty, and cross-border ties have been the main causes of the ongoing strain in their relations. It is anticipated that these complex dynamics will be crucial in determining the stability of both Afghanistan and the border area. Both countries are now prepared for more in-depth talks because of the latest events that have followed America's exit. The study also highlights that in the long run, the bilateral connections that are formed will have a significant impact on political, economic, and security issues. Furthermore, she suggests that Afghanistan and Pakistan have an opportunity to build on their cross-border connections, which could contribute to regional stability and enhance the well-being of their respective citizens.

"Descent into Chaos" by Ahmad Rashid is an informative book that sheds light on the Central Asian region - the world's largest and most unstable region that poses a threat to global security. The author presents a comprehensive explanation of the internal situation of Afghan society, as well as the Pakistan army's involvement in Afghanistan and its ties with the Taliban. Furthermore, the book provides detailed information on the Taliban's links with Pakistan's Madrasas and highlights that the foreign policy of Pakistan is being led by the army and not the civilian government. Additionally, the author presents the involvement of neighboring states in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2001).

Pakistan foreign policy and historical analysis by Burke and Lowrance. In this book authors explain the historical background of Pakistan and Afghanistan relations since 1947, the authors highlighted relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan due to the Durand line as a result Afghanistan was the only state that opposed Pakistan's membership in the United Nations. Diplomatically and politically the support of separatist movements in Pakistan further disturbed the relations. (Burke, 2012).

4. Research Methodology

The research methodology plays a crucial role in guiding academic investigations. In the social sciences, researchers commonly use three methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches. Research methodology shows the nature of the study, the data collection tools, the analysis, and the plans (Khan, 2015). The study employs qualitative analysis without statistical data, focusing on understanding diverse human experiences. The researchers use tools such as interviews, observations, and journals (Behlendorf, Belur, &). The data is sourced from secondary outlets, including newspapers, books, journals, and relevant literature on the peace process in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The researchers gathered data from libraries, websites, and media channels. The analysis follows a historical, explanatory, and interpretive approach. Our research is inductive, aiming to comprehend Pakistan and Afghanistan's peace efforts, aligned with an empiricist philosophy.

4.1. Research Approach and Philosophy

As mentioned earlier, this research was fundamentally developed around an inductive approach; to

understand the role of Pakistan and Afghan peace building. This approach is essentially stressed toward a data-driven normative approach. The research philosophy for this selected is empiricism. It is concerned with the only knowledge that human beings acquire from sensory organs. Philosophy of empiricism; follows an open, flexible, unstructured, approach to inquiry, and aims to explore diversity rather than to quantify and emphasize the description and narration of feelings, perceptions, and experiences rather than their measurement.

5. Discussion

5.1. Pakistan, a key player in Afghan Peace-Building

Pakistan is the central figure in the Afghan peace process. Therefore, it is important to analyze the reason Pakistan is the main player along with her interests.

5.1.1. Pakistan's Tie-up and Influence over Taliban and Other Groups

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Islamic political parties have immensely close relations with the Taliban. Pakistan provides lend and hand to the Taliban for the fulfillment of interests in Afghanistan. Stability and peace in Afghanistan need the Pakistani government. ISI and Afghan Taliban have good links with each other to counter all those actors that endanger the national interest of Pakistan in terms of Indian influence in Afghanistan (Ahmad, 2017).

5.1.2. The Evaluation of Connections between ISI and Taliban

The security was, in all circumstances, prioritized by Pakistan because of the Indian threat after the war of 1971. Pakistan started struggling for Strategic Depth by going towards Islamization by considering India as a larger threat to unity, integrity, and sovereignty. The policy of Islamization started by the Zia regime was the first step towards the evaluation of the ties between ISI and the Taliban. ISI gave all sorts of support and incentives to Sunni- Mujahedeen against the invasion of the Soviet Union.

5.1.3. Pakistan's Linkage with Haqqani Network

To counter Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Haqqani network that had established firm footings in Afghanistan at that time, had established links with the Haqqani madrassahs in Pakistan. Pakistan's signs of association with the Haqqani network are cordial in the same acuteness as that of India with Northern Alliance. The engagement of Pakistan with the Haqqani Network and Hisbi Islami played a decisive role in the Afghan peace process (Wertz, 2012).

5.1.4. Taliban's Association with the Religious Political Parties in Pakistan

Pakistan's religious political parties like Jamati-e-Islami has close links with Hizb-ul Mujahedeen and the Muslim brotherhood movement, Jamaat e Islami Pakistan (JIP) providing support to Afghan Mujahidin. Other political parties Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) link with the Taliban and Haqqani Network, Al-Qaida, and other militant groups. The historical influence of JIP and JUI has remained the main key player in links with the Taliban (Paris, 2010).

5.1.5. Pakistan Providing Ground for the Holding Talks Between US and Taliban

Pakistan arranged different peace talks and formally acknowledged peace talks which were the Muree peace talks till the Doha agreement. Pakistan provides ground for peace reconciliation. President Hamid Karzai 2013 accepted the need of Pakistan for the Afghan peace process. He requested to Pakistan arrange peace talks with the Taliban. In 2012 Pakistan realized seventy-six Taliban prisoners at the request of the ex-Kabul government for a reconciliation process (Khan, 2005).

5.2. Analyzing Challenges and Prospects for Pakistan in the Afghanistan Peace Process

Following were some factors and challenges or impediments to Afghanistan in the peace process since 2015.

5.2.1. The Killing of The Afghan Taliban Leadership

The role of leadership is so important among the belligerent states. The first challenge after the Muree Peace Talk was the killing of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour in a drone attack in Baluchistan. Pakistan as a result blamed Pakistan for the killing of the Taliban leader and announced that we will not participate in any peace which is backed by Pakistan.

5.2.2. Mistrust and Distrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan

The correlation between Afghanistan and Pakistan was not satisfactory since 1947 which caused mistrust and skepticism. The first issue was the boundary of the then Afghanistan that supported the Pakhtunist movement. Furthermore, Pakistan supported mujahedeen against the Soviet Union.

Pakistan's foremost reason for skepticism was the influence of India over Northern Alliances. Therefore, the ex-Afghanistan regime had hostile behavior toward Pakistan and, on the other hand, the blame of Afghanistan on Pakistan for not supporting the democratic government. Although wanting to replace the Taliban instead of the previous government of Taliban. These were the main reasons for distrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mistrust between these two states was increased in Hamid Karzai who was popular in India. As a result, peace talks in Afghanistan were badly delayed and affected (Rahman, 2016).

5.2.3. The India Factor

The diplomatic and political isolation of Pakistan is the premier aim of India forever. India's main aim is economic and diplomatic relations in Afghanistan to counter the interest of Pakistan in Afghanistan as well as regional hegemony in South Asia. India holds up all sorts of spheres in Afghanistan. India's presence in Afghanistan was not a good response this was an opportunity for India to counter Pakistan from two sides. Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was also active in Afghanistan to support the anti-terrorist groups in Afghanistan not only aimed to support terrorism against Pakistan but also wanted to keep Pakistan's military engagement at the border. The presence of India in Afghanistan directly affected Pakistan in the peace process (Malik, 2015).

5.2.4. The Emerging Alienation between Pakistan and Afghanistan

Estrangement is not a new thing but with the increasing and decreasing most estrangement occurs due to biased speeches of state heads or leaders for instance Ashraf Ghani during his interview with BBC "Pakistan and Afghanistan are not brothers but like two states. Both states condemned and blamed each

other. The behavior of Hamid Karzai towards Pakistan was not positive. He has taken coercive measures against non-state actors which is dangerous for his own country (Sandeep, 2015).

5.2.5. Internal Political Instability and Security Dilemma

Peace and political stability are essential for a good economy and internal stability. If we look at and study the era of 2014 in which both countries did not agree on a united government which was a huge challenge for peacebuilding. After this internal conflict, John Kerry (secretary of state) gave help to the united governments of Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani. Political stability needs economic stability, due to the weak economy, corruption, and internal threat to security war between the Afghanistan Taliban and ex-the Afghanistan government was a threat to internal security (Chopra, 2016).

5.3. Prospects for Pakistan

Some of the benefits and prospects for Pakistan are the following.

5.3.1. Amicable Next-door Neighbor

Pakistan has no harmony with India in the East. On condition that Pakistan did not keep a satisfactory relationship with Afghanistan within the West. While it creates internal security problems for Pakistan in case there is instability in Afghanistan is the reason that Pakistan wishes to get a good bond going with the West. Whenever uncertainty in Afghanistan precisely has repercussions on Pakistan. Bloodless Afghanistan is the foremost concern for Pakistan.

5.3.2. Promotion of Pakistan's Positives Self-Image

By cause of Afghanistan matter of contention and linkage with the Taliban, Pakistan's image in the international community has declined. Pakistan was compelled to play an active role in Afghanistan mediation. So, in this, there was an opportunity to improve her image worldwide. Due to the negative image of Pakistan in the entire globe, her dignity declined in the globe. Furthermore, all stakeholders in Afghanistan accepted the need of Pakistan for peace reconciliation. Because of the trust of these stakeholders, Pakistan played a central role in Afghan peace.

5.3.3. To Counter India's Influence

The erstwhile Afghan president Hamid Karzai's closeness with India resulted in India's growing influence in Afghanistan and provided developmental and economic aid to the Afghan government. India wanted diplomatic isolation of Pakistan. All these factors were directly challenging security as long as the interest of Pakistan. Pakistan's main aim was in Afghan peacemaking to fulfill her interests and counter India's hold on Afghan soil.

5.3.4. Confidence Building Measure

There has been distrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan since independence. However, this was the right set of circumstances for Pakistan to quash all sorts of skepticism between the two brother states. For instance, the first confidence-building measure was the Muree Talk handed over at a suitable time for Pakistan to create a positive image in Afghanistan and in the entire globe.

5.3.5. Counter Terrorism and Stabilize Internal Security

For this reason, the war on terror in Afghanistan withal bring to make Pakistan go through political, social, and security threats. Pakistan's effect in both wars in the 1970s invasion furthermore with the war on terror. For instance, the spread of terrorism in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, religious extremism, Kalashnikov culture, Afghanistan refugee problem, and drug culture. Due to these factors, Pakistan was compelled and these were prospects for Pakistan to play for conflict-resolution. However, Pakistan's interest was serious in the Afghanistan issue as she first wanted to send refugees back to Afghanistan and develop her economy (BBC, 2015).

6. Conclusion

Afghanistan has been suffering from war and insurgencies for the last forty years. Due to the invasion of the USSR and USA, the war on terror commenced. These incidents have dismantled all spheres of Pak-Afghan relations such as economic infrastructure, political stability, and security contingencies; millions of Afghans were compelled to leave their soil and migrate to other States. This destruction was followed by the construction of peace. Peace in Afghanistan is directly proportional to peace in Pakistan. Pakistan played a vital and decisive role in bringing about stability on Afghan soil. These two states (Pakistan and Afghanistan) since independence their relations were not good these two States' relations as like pendulum. The role of Pakistan started in the Afghan peace process after the invasion of Russia in Afghanistan due to Pakistan was close ties with the Taliban, and Haqqani network Furthermore Pakistan played a role after 9/11 but this was a passive role. Pakistan changed its policy and was active in the Afghan peace process cause of the Indian threat, and involvement in Afghanistan. Pakistan did not want to repeat past mistakes. The Indian involvement had direct repercussions for Pakistan for instance diplomatically and politically isolation of Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan interacted with the Northern Alliance and engaged all regional stakeholders as quadrilateral coordination was a solid example of regional stakeholders, and Pakistan coordinated with China and Russia group as long as Pakistan gave solid ground for all stakeholders to bring peace. The peace process in Afghanistan was a long journey time these talks were, for instance, Mullah Omar's death, mullah Akhtar Mansour's authority challenged by their own Taliban such as mullah Omar's family, and the behavior of mullah Akhtar Mansour was responsible for rifts in talks as long as former president trump alleged on Pakistan on base of dual game played by Pakistan according to him (Trump)but later on peace process resumed and USA acknowledged the role of Pakistan and trusted on Pakistan for peace. Pakistan's role can be observed from the Murree talks till the Doha Agreement. Pakistan's role played because there are a lot of prospects for Pakistan. In the Afghan war, Pakistan's image was decreased in the international community negatively. Pakistan wanted to promote positive images, as well as take positive steps for confidence-building measures between Pak- Afghan relations and counter India in Afghanistan to counter-terrorism and stabilize security in its own territory.

6.1. Findings

Through research, significant insights have been gained regarding Pakistan's involvement in the Afghan peace process. Initially, Pakistan was passive before 2010, but since then, it has become more actively engaged. This is evident in its participation in pivotal peace talks such as the Muree Talks. Furthermore, Pakistan has played a key role in facilitating initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, the Heart of Asia Conference, and the Doha Agreement.

Pakistan plays a crucial role in the Afghan peace process due to its strong connections with the Taliban, close ties with religious political parties, concerns about India's influence, geographical proximity, cultural similarities, and ideological affinity with Afghanistan. However, Pakistan faces several challenges in its efforts to promote peace in Afghanistan. These include targeted killings of Afghan leaders and persistent distrust between the two nations. External factors such as India's involvement, accusations by former US President Donald Trump, internal instability, and security concerns in Afghanistan pose significant barriers.

The peace process faces many obstacles that make it difficult to continue. These include the death of Mullah Omar, divisions within the Taliban, strong leadership from Mullah Akhtar Mansour, and accusations by the US President that Pakistan is playing a double game. However, the resumption of peace talks is the result of a joint effort by key figures and groups. The initiatives of former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, visits by the US Secretary of State to Pakistan, the collaborative work of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, and a specially sent letter to former Prime Minister Imran Khan have all played a crucial role in restarting the dialogue.

Examining the broader implications, the Afghan peace process can offer significant benefits to Pakistan. These benefits include enhancing Pakistan's global image, fostering trust with the Afghan government, countering regional influence from India, addressing the challenge of refugee populations, and bolstering internal security and stability.

In conclusion, this research highlights the crucial nature of Pakistan's proactive involvement in the Afghan peace process for regional stability and international peace. It is imperative to address the existing obstacles, and sustained efforts are crucial to ensure the continuity of peace talks with the ultimate aim of achieving lasting and secure peace in Afghanistan.

6.2. Recommendations

Achieving peace in Afghanistan is of utmost importance for the country, the region, and the world. Major powers must prioritize the Afghan peace process. Inclusive governance plays a vital role in fostering national unity and benefiting future generations. Democratic processes are essential for ensuring political stability. Despite its flaws, the current government aims to serve the interests of the Afghan people. Avoiding weapons proliferation is necessary to safeguard against power-driven agendas. The peace in Afghanistan can inspire global peace by facilitating conflict resolution. India and Pakistan should refrain from undue interference to ensure that peace is achieved. The UN should help Afghanistan in achieving diplomatic, political, and economic independence. Establishing positive relations with key powers is necessary to promote stability.

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