

## Theo-diplomacy: A Track towards Peace Building and Reconciliation between Pakistan and Taliban's Government in Afghanistan

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### Abstract:

*This study is focused on, investigating the role and need of religious diplomacy to de-escalate the tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Recently, Pakistan has had to engage with the theocratic government of its indispensable neighbor Afghanistan. As everyone knows, the post 9/11 world has different dynamics of international relations, particularly; states are facing challenges in engaging and handling some non-state radical or terrorist actors such as Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. In this research paper, I am focused on answering the question of Theo-diplomacy between Pakistan and Afghanistan and how it will work effectively to create an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence between two immediate neighbors and Muslim brother states. Furthermore, it enquires to identify the lines of mutual understanding and misunderstanding between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the end, it analyses the recent breakthrough in Theo-diplomacy, which consists of the visits of Pakistani ulema to Kabul.*

**Keywords:** Theo-diplomacy, non-state actor, confidence building, indispensable neighborhood

### Introduction:

As everyone knows the dynamics of global politics has been changed with 9/11. The gravity of the Afghan Taliban's anger against Pakistan and the nightmare of TTP both be traced back to 9/11 and Pakistan's policy of nexus with the USA in the 'global war on terror'. The Taliban's takeover after the USA withdrawal from Afghanistan is very different from the Taliban's takeover before 9/11. Similarly, Pakistan's policy towards the Taliban's ongoing government is different than what was previously. The Taliban's government from 1996 to 2001 was diplomatically recognized by Pakistan. However, the current Taliban regime lacks such recognition from Pakistan. On this occasion "Islamabad doesn't want to take a solo flight." On legal grounds, Pakistan is taking pace with the international community.

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In international relations, state policies have no single definition and angle. Seeing realistic lenses in the previous Taliban regime there was no involvement of Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, in bilateral relations. But now in the post 9/11 era atmosphere for Pakistan has been changed by TTP. Now, Pakistan can't breathe in an open environment. TTP remains a nightmare for Pakistan for two decades. It is now a bottleneck between Pakistan and Afghan Taliban relations. Perhaps Pakistan was very optimistic about the fall of Kabul into the hands of the Taliban after the USA's withdrawal from Afghanistan. But the TTP problem is not as simple as seemed by Pakistan. The fabrics in the TTP and the Islamic Emirates nexus are very complex and tightened.

However, the atmosphere of optimism still exists between both neighbors because Pakistani seminaries remained the nurseries for Jihadist indoctrination in the Taliban, still, the mentors of Afghan Taliban are working in Pakistani seminaries so, Pakistan can use them diplomatically, therefore, Pak-Afghan relations after the Taliban takeover are centered in Theo-diplomacy. Because Afghan Taliban are a crucial part of the Deobandi movement that started in united India now largely operating in Pakistan. Almost all Taliban are been educated in Pakistan in such a network of Madrassas. The thread of Theo-diplomacy or religious diplomacy rests in the complex fabrics of track-II diplomacy, today it is a vital and only useful policy option for Pakistan to build confidence and peace across the border with Afghanistan.

Although, after secular revolutions in the West, religion is often blamed for conflicts and counting it unworthy in the arena of politics this is a subjective and exclusive approach, it narrows down the scope of international politics. Realistically speaking, humans are by nature religiously biased but almost all religious teachings are based on corporal and spiritual peace. "Across the world religious affiliation constitutes 84% of the world population's behaviors, perspectives, and opinions (Pew Research Center, 2012)." Best diplomats can exploit religious stakes for peace-building and international cooperation. Theo-diplomacy is gaining influence in global politics, with religious actors gaining involvement in international relations issues of; peace and conflict, climate change, and cooperation.

This research is in the context of Pakistan and Afghanistan, both are overwhelmingly Muslim-majority neighboring States. "In Afghanistan, there are around 99.7 percent Muslims, while in Pakistan there are approximately 98 percent Muslims (Evason, 2019)." It is a misfortune in the history of diplomacy that global powers use the stakes rather than religion in Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan both share religious and cultural ties both countries should speak religious language to understand each other. After the Taliban took over Afghanistan they established a theocratic system of governance ruled by Islamic Law. The Taliban's August 2021 victory has been celebrated by the Islamist segment of Pakistani society those who seek to impose sharia law in Pakistan and they named it an Islamic Revolution (Kaura, 2022). Despite, the

manifold identities between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban the relations are still under strain and tension, and the major cause of tension is TTP. After the Taliban takeover in Kabul terrorist incidences in Pakistan have increased, according to the narrative of the government of Pakistan the Taliban regime in Afghanistan further nurtured TTP to destabilize Pakistan and harm peace inside Pakistan. In October 2023 the caretaker prime minister of Pakistan Anwar ul Haq Kakar accused the Taliban in strong words, he maintained that since the takeover of the Taliban in Kabul terrorism in Pakistan has increased by 60% and suicide attacks surged 50%, killing over 2000 people. He also claimed that about 24 suicide bombs were committed by Afghan nationals. This was the explanation given by the caretaker PM in response to the question of expelling around 1.7 million non-documented or illegal Afghan refugees in October 2023 (Basit, 2023). Taliban spokesperson Zbihullah Mujahid rejected Pakistan's allegation and maintained that "Afghanistan is not responsible for keeping peace in Pakistan. Instead of blaming Kabul, Islamabad should focus its domestic security problems (Gull, 2023)." Pakistan officials are still skeptical despite the Afghan interim government's rejection of allegations.

Under the framework of Theo-diplomacy, and perusing ideological overlapping Fazlur Rehman (a prominent Pakistani political leader and religious scholar) visited Kabul on Sunday 7, January 2024 to convince Afghan Taliban to assist Pakistan in eradicating terrorism and removing misunderstandings between neighbors. The study in hand is mainly focused on this recent development which is a significant move in religious diplomacy signaling a good atmosphere of optimism in Pak-Afghan relations. Moreover, several pieces of literature address the concept, history, and utility of Theo-diplomacy, but very scarce literature is concerned with special cases of Pak-Afghan relations. It is significant of the study in hand that, there is very little secondary data available to address the case:

"How Religious Diplomacy and Pan-Islamic Organizations Can Help Stabilize Afghanistan" by Ahmad (2022) is a case of Afghanistan; it is focused on the issue of the post-USA withdrawal power vacuum in Afghanistan. It also points out that the negation of religious diplomacy by the Western powers in Afghanistan is the main cause of the failure of Western powers to establish peace in Afghanistan. The author further emphasizes the best way for religious diplomacy for he has mentioned Pan-Islamic organizations. In terms of relevancy, this literature is concerned with the prevention of Taliban from coming to power, it is contrary to the study in hand which is mainly concerned with Pak- Taliban relations and preventing TTP from using Afghanistan's soil against Pakistan as a launching pad (Ahmad, 2022).

The significant source which addresses current Pak-Afghan relations is "The TTP Factor in Pak-Afghan Relations" Sattar (2023). The matching part of this article is "religious diplomacy" in the context of Pak-Afghan relations and it provides basic information about post-USA withdrawal and Pak-Afghan relations. The gap found

here is that this article neither explains the concept of religious diplomacy in the context of Pak-Afghan relations nor discusses about way forward (Sattar, 2023).

"Fatwa Diplomacy: How Religious Decrees Influence Militancy in Pakistan and Afghanistan" Mehsud (2023) is another source that provides insight into the study and also some information about the attitudes of the Afghan Taliban regarding Pakistan (Mehsud, 2023).

The recent source of information is "Can Pakistan's Maulana Fazlur Rehman Mend Ties with the Taliban?" Jalalzai (2024) This article is most relevant to the study because it discusses the recent development in Pak-Afghan Taliban relations, this is about the visit of Fazal ur Rehman (prominent Pakistan's political leader and religious scholar) to Kabul. It explains the meetings of prominent Pakistani figures with the Taliban and discusses the prospects of promoting good relations and the Taliban's cooperation by stopping TTP from launching terrorist attacks inside Pakistan by using Afghanistan soil (Jalalzai, 2024).

### **Statement of the Problem:**

With the advent of secularism in the West, religion has been sidelined and often blamed for conflicts and considered unworthy in the arena of politics but this is a subjective and exclusive approach, it narrows down the scope of international politics and particularly the field of diplomacy. Religion plays a vital role in diplomacy. Almost all religions in normal conditions give a message of peace. Particularly, peace is central to Islam. Scholars define its literal meaning as 'peace'. This research paper analyzes Pak-Afghan relations after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. Both neighboring states are Muslims and the Taliban claim Islamic governance in Afghanistan. But relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan under the Taliban are rocky, not smooth. Pakistan accuses the Taliban of nourishing TTP and the Afghan Taliban rejects Pakistan's allegations. Whatsoever, the atmosphere of optimism still exists because Pakistani Seminaries remained nurseries for Jihadist indoctrination in the Taliban, still in Pakistani seminaries Taliban's teachers are working so, Pakistan can use them diplomatically, and therefore, Pak-Afghan relations after the Taliban takeover are centered on Theo-diplomacy because Afghan Taliban are the crucial part of Deobandi movement started in united India now largely operating in Pakistan. Almost all Taliban are been educated in Pakistan in such a network of Madrassas. The thread of Theo-diplomacy or religious diplomacy rests in the complex fabrics of track-II diplomacy, today it is a vital and only useful policy option for Pakistan to build confidence and peace at the cross border with Afghanistan. This paper is concerned with exploring the significance of Theo-diplomacy in Pak-Afghan relations. After in-depth inquiry, I reached the point that this study will be the first-ever focused account to explore religious diplomacy in Pak-Afghan relations.

### **Research Questions:**

1. How can religious scholars be used to remove misunderstandings between Pakistan and Afghanistan?
2. What is the main problem between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban?

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To explore Theo-diplomacy in the context of Pak-Afghan relations.
- To investigate the successful use of religious stakes in removing misunderstanding between Pakistan and Afghan Taliban.
- To uncover the areas of convergence and divergence between two indispensable neighboring states.

### **Methodology:**

This research paper is a result of scientific and systematic inquiry in the field of international politics. Methodologically, it is based on the qualitative method because no numerical and statistical formulas and processes are used. Opinions, perspectives, and situational analysis are used. Broadly, it follows an interpretive approach rather than a positivist approach. Because no scientific sophisticated tools of measurement are used. Data for the research is collected in secondary as well as in primary nature. As for secondary data, second-hand documents were collected from libraries and online sources then documents were analyzed. In the case of primary data, is collected from field experts in the form of opinions. Furthermore, the universe for the study is the whole of Pakistan but the main focus is given to residential areas of policy makers, and field experts for instance Islamabad and other big cities. Moreover, this study has exploratory purposes and a non-experimental research design because there is no cross-matching and testing in its design. Furthermore, in this study purposive and convenience sampling has been applied. At the end for evaluation of collected data thematic analysis technique is used.

### **Concept of Theo-diplomacy:**

Broadly, defined; diplomacy is the peaceful dialogue and interaction between states and non-state actors, it is as old as civilizations, while Theo-diplomacy is a paradigm wherein the envoys or diplomats to a particular situation of conflict have religious experiences, literacy, and full understanding of the contextual sensibilities of the conflict and further have the intent to hinder or facilitate the peacebuilding and reconciliation (Hussain, 2023). Illustrating Theo-diplomacy via the prism of current global affairs; the diplomacy in ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, the UK archbishop Justin Welby (Bishop) Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra (Imam) and Jonathan Wittenberg (Rabbi) gathered in front of Lambeth Palace and conveyed the audience about rejecting any form of violence and encouraged interfaith harmony, later on Archbishop of Canterbury called for Israel Hamas ceasefire as well (The Guardian, 2023).

### **Voices for the Resurgence of Theo-Diplomacy:**

The year 2023 concluded with major global political conflicts and environmental threats, alongside voices for peacebuilding and reconciliation were heard. Illustrating, R20 (G20's Religious Forum) meeting in Bali (Indonesia) on 2, 3 November 2023. Its main agenda was the mobilization of religious leaders to ensure and encourage that

religion is a source of peace, human development, and prosperity, these all shall be the goals of a global community in the 21st century. Therefore, religion should be in focus to use for peacebuilding and reconciliation. On the occasion, one of the world's prominent Islamic scholars Dr. Abdul Kareem Al-Issa (Secretary General of the Muslim World League) stated that: "major global challenges today are not only economic and political in nature they are religious and moral. And to come out from these challenges we need moral and religious leadership so, religion must be an integral part of the solution of global problems (Pajares-Yngson, 2023)."

Recently another voice for Theo-diplomacy heard from the president of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in New York. He says; "the world is witnessing the rising of global tension and erosion of world order. In this atmosphere of tension and fear it is vitally important to develop a new global movement and a new approach for peace, by strengthening inter-faith dialogue and harmony." "Therefore, the role of religious leaders is indispensable" (Tokayev, 2023). The key role of religion is required because approximately 85 percent people of in the world have specific religious identities.

*Analysis of Theo-diplomacy in the Case of Afghanistan:*

Theo-diplomacy is broadly identified from Track-II diplomacy. It is deeply rooted in religious texts, practices, and traditions and its key players are always remaining religious leaders in reconciliation and peace-building. In Afghanistan, where 99.7% population are Muslims, almost all are committed to religion. The socio-cultural and political realities of Afghanistan have always been miss –misunderstood by the Western powers; ultimately they failed to develop a secular approach and democracy. Western mode of governance diplomacy is not applicable in Afghanistan, particularly; Pakistan cannot engage with Afghanistan in the mode that is practiced in the West after the advent of secularism. There is a need for the immediate recall of religious centrality in diplomacy. It can be easily operationalized in Afghanistan where religion is already rooted in social fabrics. The people and forums, through which it can be operationalized, will be religious, spiritual leaders, and faith-based organizations, for instance; the Muslim World League and OIC.

Historically, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Muslim World League (Rabita e Alami Islami) both are highly influential pan-Islamic global forums, these are been used to some extent for religious diplomacy in Afghanistan for setting up an inclusive government and establishment of peace by convincing Taliban to abstain from attacking in Afghanistan. A major development in this context took place when a conference for peace was held among Pak-Afghan and Saudi Ulema in Makkah under the chairmanship of Pakistani Minister for Religious Affairs Noor ul Haq Qadri and Chairman of Council of Islamic Ideology and also participated by Dr. Qibla Ayaz. It was organized by Rabit e Alam e Islam on 10, June 2021. At this conference, fourteen points of "The Afghanistan Peace Declaration was issued. In the declaration, suicide attacks were declared un-Islamic and it emphasized Muslim brotherhood all over the

world, particularly between Pakistan and Afghanistan (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2021). The conference was a big initiative towards religious diplomacy in Afghanistan in this initiative Pakistani religious scholars were on the frontline.

Following the Afghanistan Peace Declaration, when in August 2021 Taliban overtook Kabul, they banned women's education, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation released a statement and called on the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) to sharply launch a campaign in the Muslim World to unite Islamic scholars and religious authorities to prevent the Islamic Emirates from its decision to ban women education. Soon after, Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar also issued a decree that "it is not acceptable to prevent women from attending school." Very softly the spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate Zabihullah Mujahid responded that "we are looking forward to institutes and state building this issue will be resolved (Ziaei, 2022)."

Another breakthrough in religious diplomacy between Pakistan and Afghanistan took place when an eight-member delegation of Ulema was sent by Pakistan under the Great Mufti of Pakistan Taqqi Usmani in July 2022. Taliban warmly welcomed the delegation, it was claimed by Ulema in the delegation that Afghan Taliban as well as TTP respected Taqqi Usmani. The delegation returned after 4 days of talks with the Taliban. Taqqi Usmani led the delegation and expressed their hopes that Afghan Taliban in sense they will convince TTP (Dawn, 2022). The main agenda was ceasefire extension and discussion over TTP's way of carrying out Jihad in Pakistan. After the visit of Taqqi Usman-led delegation TTP did not stop attacking inside Pakistan, then renowned scholar and great mufti issued a decree; in that decree he said; "any armed struggle against the state of Pakistan is a rebellion." Before it, during a meeting with Afghan Taliban in Kabul he had expressed that "fighting with law enforcement and national security agencies and carrying out anti-state activities' came under rebellion and it has nothing to do with Jihad (holy war) (The Express Tribune, 2024)."

Fazlur Rahman's Visit to Kabul; A Breakthrough in Theo-diplomacy:

Track II diplomacy through religious scholars working effectively between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Therefore, famously pro-Taliban politician and religious scholar Fazlur Rahman visited Kabul on January 7, 2024. This trip marks the first visit of Fazlur Rahman to Kabul after the Taliban's last takeover of Afghanistan. Over the past two decades, Fazlur Rahman has been a staunch supporter of the Taliban's Jihad against the USA in Afghanistan. Some authorities in Afghan Taliban are also optimistic sense of by the visit of this prominent Pakistani politician and religious scholar, their concern is that it might pave the path for reconciliation and better bilateral relations, and every nation in the international community might consider it necessary to have good bilateral relations with an immediate neighbor.

I think religious diplomacy is the best tool that Pakistan should use to convince the Taliban because Pakistan and Afghanistan both have such a religious and cultural

understanding that no nation in the world particularly in the region has. Fazlur Rahman and Taqqi Usman like Pakistan figures will be the best options for religious diplomacy because they have many shared identities and links with the Afghan Taliban; among these one is both belong to the same school of jurisprudence and their interpretation of Islam which is Sunni and Hanfites. Furthermore, both belong to the Deobandi school of thought affiliated with the Gran Seminary in India (Darul Uloom e Deoband). Almost the current generation of Taliban officials has studied in Pakistani seminaries because seminaries are not as well established as Pakistan in war-torn Afghanistan. Connection through this link TTP also has the same religious identity; even TTP and Fazur Rahman have a similar view over the FATA merger in KP both have opposed the move.

Corroborating the aforementioned views Professor and religious scholar Ismail Rehan says in a personal interview that “very few countries in the world have such numbers of identities and lines of reconciliation what exist between Pakistan and Afghanistan for instance: both are Muslims, Sunni, Hanfites, being educated in same seminaries, etc. all these factors can be sources of conflict such as Pakistan has a history of sectarian conflict with Iran.” He further added that; “religious understanding is a vital source of peace but it is also a big source of conflict as well”. Further in response of question who should be diplomats? He responded; “it can be through Ulema of Jamiat ur Rashid Karachi Pakistan, Ulema of Jamia Benuria Karachi Pakistan, Ulema of Darul Uloom Karachi, Taqqi Usmani, Fazlur Rehman, and Tablighi Jammāt as well, these all can effectively work.” Apart from the religious identity, the neighborhood is also an important factor on its own, because if the neighbor is even non-believer you can't change it e.g. Taliban's emerging nexus with China” I. Rehan (personal communication, January 14, 2024) despite Chinese hands are still red with Muslims massacre inside China.

### **Challenges to Theo-diplomacy in Pak-Afghan Relations:**

Currently, three major issues are creating tension between two neighbors, The first challenge emerged in the shape of TTP after 9/11. In the Taliban's era it was easy for Pakistan to engage with the Taliban the whole scenario has been changed by 9/11. After 9/11 the birth of TTP became life lifetime nightmare in Pak-Afghan relations. Now TTP is a bottleneck between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan. On one side TTP is a matter of national interest for the Afghan Taliban, if next time any world power attacks Afghanistan then TTP will fight for the Afghan Taliban as they have fought with NATO.

Pakistan accuses the Afghan Taliban that Afghanistan's soil is using as a launching pad by TTP and carrying out attacks inside Pakistan and the Taliban provides those safe corners in Afghanistan. Officials of Pakistan continuously make demands from the Afghan Taliban that the Taliban should stop supporting TTP and expel them from their land, but Pakistan should understand the nexus between TTP and Afghan Taliban



both have a strong bond therefore; the Taliban will never go against TTP and will never expel them from their land. If the Taliban go against TTP it will be a big strategic death to them in their home. Because in the Taliban some hardliners want an Islamic system in Pakistan as well as considering the demands of TTP rightful so, the Taliban's crackdown on TTP will bring cleavage and catastrophe to the Taliban government. On the other hand, Pakistan might not be as important for the Taliban as TTP. Taliban have learned from history they have not forgotten the lesson given by Pakistan by providing of NATO supply line to the USA for the invasion of Afghanistan which was also one of the causes of TTP formation. So, TTP is a big challenge in Pak-Afghan relations.

A second major challenge in Pak-Afghan relations is the refugee problem. In October 2023 the caretaker prime minister of Pakistan Anwar ul Haq Kakar accused the Taliban in strong words, he maintained that since the takeover of the Taliban in Kabul terrorism in Pakistan has increased by 60% and suicide attacks surged 50%, killing over 2000 people. He also claimed that about 24 suicide bombs were committed by Afghan nationals. This was the explanation given by the caretaker PM in response to the question of expelling around 1.7 million non-documented or illegal Afghan refugees in October 2023 (Basit, 2023). Taliban spokesperson Zbihullah Mujahid rejected Pakistan's allegation and maintained that "Afghanistan is not responsible for keeping peace in Pakistan. Instead of blaming Kabul, Islamabad should focus its domestic security problems (Gull, 2023)." This response severely hurts Pakistan because Pakistan the response given by the Taliban's spokesperson is indifferent to the ousted government in Afghanistan. It dashes all hopes kept by Pakistan from the Taliban to the ground, as Pakistan perceives it. For security insurance Pakistan supported the Taliban for two decades and advocated for them in the global community.

Furthermore, a third major challenge is linked with the Taliban's religious approach versus Pakistan. On this approach, TTP and Afghan Taliban both are on the same page, due to a similar religious approach TTP is considered the extension of Afghan Taliban in Pakistan. Due to ideological homogeneity between both these groups in 2021 after the Taliban declaration of victory, TTP's head Noor Wali took allegiance to Mulla Akhonzada Haibatullah. They both consider the constitution of Pakistan non-Islamic. Even in the issue of Afghan refugees' treatment and their concern through religious lenses; Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, called on Pakistan's government to adhere to Islamic principles, similarly and most significantly, Taliban's Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani a longstanding ally of Pakistan has also expressed his concern over the treatment of Afghan refugees he condemned Pakistan and declared its decision to expel refugees as unIslamic (Mir, 2023)." These statements reflect the depth of anger in the Afghan Taliban against Pakistan which is a counter-projection of Pakistan's optimism.

### **Way Forward:**

Firstly, I think the dilemma of the Durand Line is the main cause of the hatred attitudes of the Afghan Nation toward Pakistan. One notable problem in South Asian nations' minds is that they peruse rhetoric instead of to enquire the ground reality. Almost South Asia remained a British colony. Similarly, almost all South Asian borders are the handicraft of British gerrymandering. For this reason, Great Britain is called the mother of all conflict in the world. All, it is Pakistan and India or Afghanistan they never express hate and anger toward those who had created the geographic issues, but fight with each other. On the Issue of the Durand Line Afghan Nation should ask explanation from the UK instead of cooling their hate and anger against Pakistan. Durand line is one of the colonial lines it is like; Afghanistan and Central Asian borders, India and China border, and Myanmar and India border. Almost all borders in the world are colonial never in history any colonial borer has been reversed. And Durand Line was marked by Great Britain. On 3rd June Plane Afghan ruler was required to discuss it. After the final partition, Afghanistan had nothing to do with Pakistan. In the Durand line agreement, there is no single letter about the expiry date of the agreement. It is one of the misunderstandings between Pakistan and Afghanistan which is the major cause of tension. So, the Afghan nation should give up its claims on the land across the border. It is nothing but false consciousness and nothing but causing unnecessarily deteriorating bilateral relations.

Secondly, another major cause that has deteriorated Pak-Afghan relations and has created a trust deficit between the 'Good Taliban' and Pakistan IS Pakistan's nexus with the USA against Afghanistan during the US declared 'war on terror' following 9/11, which also remained the motive of creation of TTP. According to General Aslam Baig; "I was against Pervaiz Musharraf's policy of alliance with USA against Afghanistan" he further added; "I had predicted the worse repercussion of such policy, it would be terrorism in Pakistan and lifetime hatred of Afghan Nation from Pakistan (Hussain K. A., 2021)." In the future, Pakistan should not repeat such mistakes and should remain sincere with its neighbor and avoid nearing an agreement with the USA or any other power that compromises Afghanistan's sovereignty.

Thirdly; people on both sides should not be part of political rhetoric and propaganda. Both sides should stop the hateful voices against each other on any platform; especially the Taliban should stop the so-called 'General Mobeen' from using anti-Pakistan rhetoric. On the other hand, the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan should avoid crimes and own this land, the government of Pakistan also has to treat them brotherly.

### **Conclusion:**

Theo-diplomacy is never an unusual concept or policy option to lay down lasting peace. Whenever two groups or states interact in a global community both have an area of commonality or lines of understanding then both actors should adopt that channel of communication it would create a convincible atmosphere for

communication. Ideology and religiosity are much-exploiting elements in politics. Whenever it has got a chance in situations of conflict it has successfully winded down violence and de-escalated tension. It plays an anchoring role in peace-building and reconciliations. Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and declaration of their rule based on Islamic law is another major transformation to theocracy in international and regional politics after the Iranian Islamic revolution. It increased the scope of religious diplomacy. Following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan TTP anti-state activities in Pakistan have been increased, and Pakistan accuses the Afghan interim government of harboring peace in Pakistan and nourishing TTP. In response Taliban government rejected Pakistan's allegation and maintained that "Afghanistan is not responsible for keeping peace in Pakistan" thus the war of words between two immediate neighbors and religious-cultural identical states escalating tension. On the other hand, Pakistani ulema wants peaceful co-existence and brotherhood with its indispensable neighbor and Muslim brother. Therefore, the prominent politician and religious scholar Fazlur Rahman visited Kabul to remove the misunderstanding between Kabul and Islamabad. This visit is a significant breakthrough in Theo-diplomacy and it has created an atmosphere of optimism on both sides of the border.

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