

Unveiling The Hostile Dynamics: Pakistan And Afghanistan In The Seventies

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Abstract

Since the inception of Pakistan, Afghanistan has maintained a passionate focus on the Pashtunistan issue. Daud during his initial term as prime minister of Afghanistan adopted a stringent stance towards Pakistan concerning the matter. Later during his second tenure as President of Afghanistan, his approach grew more assertive, driven by the Pashtunistan predicament. The termination of the NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan and NWFP furnished him with additional grounds to endorse the nationalist movements in these regions. His persistent meddling in Pakistan's internal affairs compelled Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to reciprocate with anti-Afghan government policy. Throughout the 1970s, there was a reciprocal exchange of hostile actions between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The decade witnessed a tit-for-tat dynamic between the two governments. Eventually, Daud acquiesced to a treaty acknowledging the Durand Line as the international border delineating Pakistan and Afghanistan, in exchange for reassurance regarding the safety and security of Pashtuns residing in Pakistan. Regrettably, this accord was thwarted by subsequent military coups in both countries.

Key Words: *Pashtunistan issue, separatist movements, interference in internal affairs, willingness to accept Durand Line, military coup.*

Introduction

The Afghan Government's interest in Pashtunistan was probably because it was concerned for the 'oppressed' Pashtuns in Pakistan. They considered it as their duty to support the Pashtuns in the formation of Pashtunistan, independent from Pakistan. From 1947 to 1963, Daud shaped Afghanistan's foreign policy toward Pakistan. However, for the larger interest of Afghanistan, he was compelled to tender his resignation from his office on March 9, 1963, after completing ten years serving as Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Zahir Shah accused Daud of following the policies, that pushed the nation to the edge of war with Pakistan and made the Afghan army dependent on Soviet arms. After Daud's removal, the Afghan government sought to appease the 'Pashtunistan issue' to maintain as congenial relations with Pakistan as possible.

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The cessation of East Pakistan presented Afghanistan with a chance to exploit Pakistan's insecurities. Furthermore, Bhutto once again presented Afghanistan with an opportunity by dismantling the NAP-JUI governments in Baluchistan and NWFP in February 1973. Bhutto's action allowed Daud to destabilize the situation in these two provinces. However, Zahir Shah's independent foreign policy hindered Daud's plan. When Zahir Shah went to Italy for holidays, Daud seized power in Kabul on July 17, 1973, establishing a republican system and becoming Afghanistan's first President. On the same day, Daud in a broadcast over Radio Kabul said: "The first principle of Afghanistan's foreign policy is peace and friendship with all the countries of the world."¹ He further stated that "we have a political dispute with that country [Pakistan]—the only country with which we have not succeeded in resolving any issue." In the same broadcast, he went on to declare, "Pashtunistan is an incontrovertible reality" and conveyed the aspiration for the matter to be settled in line with the desires of the Pashtuns, Baluchis, and their leaders.²

Pakistan was greatly concerned about Daud's rise to power for three main reasons. Firstly, they suspected Soviet backing of the coup due to Daud's perceived allegiance to Moscow. Pakistan feared that the new Kabul-Moscow relationship would heighten security threats, especially with pro-Soviet officials in the key positions. Secondly, Pakistan's internal situation, particularly the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, had lessened Pakistan's importance in the region. This encouraged Afghanistan and provided a chance to Daud who adopted a threatening stance towards Pakistan. Lastly, Daud's perspective on the Pashtunistan issue raised tensions. Daud continued his earlier hostile policy towards Pakistan in the first few years of his reign and showed sympathy towards the Pashtuns and Baluch in Pakistan. The Afghan representative went as far as to condemn Pakistan on global platforms like the Algiers meeting of nonaligned nations held in September 1973, and the Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore held in February 1974.³ Daud even tried to get China involved to pressurize Pakistan regarding the Pashtunistan issue however China refused to meddle in the affair.⁴ Moreover, Daud's provocative actions within Pakistan's territories, particularly in NWFP and Baluchistan, aimed to undermine the authority of the Pakistani government and incite dissent among the people. By fueling unrest, Daud aimed to destabilize the region and challenge Pakistan's sovereignty. In response to Daud's disruptive activities, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took a retaliatory approach by interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Bhutto's strategy aimed to pressurize the Afghan government and counter threats originated from across the border. The decade was marked by a series of conflicts that heightened tensions and hindered peace efforts. This article seeks to mitigate the animosity between Pakistan and Afghanistan during the 1970s, shedding light on internal strife, subversive activities, and external intervention that stirred unrest in both countries.

Daud's support of the Baluch Insurgency

In Afghanistan, people reacted sharply to the disbandment of NAP-JUI

coalition government in Baluchistan and NWFP and intensified its propaganda for the “restoration of the rights of Pashtuns.” Daud's rise to power as President of the Afghan Republic further heightened the situation.⁵ On July 24, 1973, Daud commented about the Pashtun and Baluch problem that “it was a reality which cannot be denied, but that it could admit of an amicable solution . . . by the aspirations of Pashtuns.”⁶ He refused to have any desire for Pakistani territory. He further said that he would approve of any agreement between the Bhutto government and the Pashtun leaders in Pakistan. When no settlement of that kind took place, he became more resolute in his position. He expressed to foreign journalists that he could not ignore the oppression of the Pashtuns and Baluch in Pakistan and stated that Kabul would back the Pashtun and Baluch's right to self-determination. Additionally, he mentioned that he hoped for support from India and other countries to support Afghanistan in its dispute with Pakistan.⁷ He highlighted that the recent uprising against the Government of Pakistan indicated the desire of the Pashtuns and Baluch to live freely in an ‘independent country.’⁸ Waheed Abdullah, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, echoed similar sentiments, stating that Afghanistan could not just watch Pakistan’s government's deployment of force and weapons against the Pashtuns and Baluch.⁹ The Afghan ambassadors in London and New Delhi declined to admit the Durand Line as the frontier with Pakistan along with the incorporation of NWFP and Baluchistan with Pakistan’s territory.¹⁰ Daud’s policies aligned closely with the separatist movements in Baluchistan and NWFP. On August 30, 1973, he celebrated ‘Pashtunistan Day’ in Kabul with a strong demonstration of backing for Pashtuns and Baluch.¹¹ Despite Daud’s staunch backing for Pashtuns and Baluch, Bhutto took strict measures against the Pashtun and Baluch ‘nationalists.’ In Baluchistan, he initiated a ruthless operation targeting the Baluch, with the support of the military and aerial force.¹²

Daud demanded that Bhutto should conduct a referendum in Baluchistan and NWFP to determine whether their ten million people wish to join an independent Pashtunistan or not. Bhutto saw this demand as interference in its internal affairs. He said, “I am determined to settle the Baluch problem for all time, if they don’t come down from the hills by October 15, we will have to move against them.”¹³ Commenting on Bhutto’s intimidation to bomb the rebellious tribes in Baluchistan, Waheed Abdullah in response to Bhutto’s threat cautioned that such action would only worsen the conflict. He warned that Bhutto’s decision could quickly draw other countries in South Asia and the Middle East into the dispute, particularly India and potentially major powers.¹⁴ In 1974, Abdur Rahman Pazhwak, the Afghan ambassador to India, refused to accept Baluchistan and NWFP as integral parts of Pakistan. Responding to Bhutto’s threat to fly the Pakistani flag on Afghan soil, Pazhwak said, “With all respect to his misused eloquence and intelligence, he is an angry man with a fanatic imagination. No one who could not keep his territory intact should boast of annexing another country.”¹⁵ Afghanistan had good terms with the Baluch leaders and

was believed to have connections with Baluch insurgents. However, from 1973 to mid-1975, Afghanistan could not provide material support to the Baluch due to limitations in arming them. By mid-1975, Baluch leaders, particularly Attaullah Mengal and Khair Bakhsh Marri urged Afghanistan to provide weapons to Baluchistan. Afghanistan responded by supplying approximately five hundred 303 rifles, twelve 3*6 mortars, and some 7.9 mm Bren guns. However, ammunition for these weapons was not available in Pakistan to the Baluch.¹⁶ In 1975, Pakistan accused Daud of training 15,000 Pashtuns and Baluch guerrilla fighters for carrying out rebellious activities in Pakistan.¹⁷ Bhutto criticized Afghanistan's involvement in acts like border attacks, killings, and destruction during 1974 and 1975. However, he did not respond militarily because of his preoccupation with the Baluch uprising at that time (1973-1977). According to Bhutto, the Baluch issue had been exacerbated by the 'outsiders.' The Baluch themselves were only demanding autonomy within the existing state of Pakistan and not independence.

Despite using the Baluch uprising to advance the Pashtunistan cause, Daud preferred for peaceful solution to the political differences through negotiations even amidst Pakistan's vulnerability post-1971 dismemberment. His moderation may have been influenced by his military weakness and opposition from the Soviet Union. Daud understood that despite Pakistan's recent defeat in Dhaka, its military still outmatched Afghanistan. Moreover, Moscow withdrew support for his Pashtunistan cause, leaving him without means for war against Pakistan. Even supporting Brezhnev's Asian Collective Security Proposal didn't sway Moscow. Daud later abandoned the Proposal as it conflicted with his goals, expressing reservations about its emphasis on frontier inviolability which would mean accepting Pak-Afghan borders established by the British.¹⁸

Daud's Alleged Support to NAP

Both Afghanistan and NAP supported the idea of Pashtunistan.¹⁹ However, the Afghan notion of Pashtunistan differed from NAP's leadership. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Pashtun nationalist initially just remarked in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly (1948) that he wanted his province to be renamed Pashtunistan, like Sind and Punjab. However, during a visit to India in October 1969, he suggested that a separate state of Pashtunistan might be formed potentially incorporating parts of northwest Pakistan. He aimed to utilize Afghanistan's resources for his endeavor. His vision of Pashtunistan involved creating an independent state separate from Pakistan, without integrating it into Afghanistan.²⁰

Daud openly endorsed the autonomous demands of Wali Khan of NAP, who frequently visited Kabul where his father Abdul Ghaffar Khan "the champion of Pashtunistan" was living in self-ordained expatriation. Daud's attachment to Pashtunistan made him more appealing to the military officers who had reinstated him with the Pashtunistan slogan. Neglecting their feeling could have prematurely ended

his reign.²¹ NAP's association with Afghanistan, which resulted in Afghanistan meddling in Pakistan's internal affairs infuriated Bhutto and aggravated his concerns.²² He feared that if Pashtun areas were separated from Pakistan to form an independent Pashtunistan or join Afghanistan, it could lead to another situation like the creation of Bangladesh. Bhutto resorted to using force to suppress this possibility.²³

By the end of 1974, incidents such as bombings, acts of terrorism, and cases of train derailments had become frequent in NWFP.²⁴ In 1974 and 1975, Afghanistan was implicated in orchestrating and overseeing destructive activities in Pakistan. This included a bomb explosion in Quetta on August 12, 1974, while Bhutto was addressing a meeting. The Pakistani government alleged that Afghanistan was providing support to Ajmal Khattak, a former secretary of NAP for carrying out destructive activities in the NWFP.²⁵ It was claimed that he masterminded the training camps for the guerrillas located in Kabul's suburbs and administered rebellious activities in Pakistan under Kabul's direct tutelage and direction. Its purpose was to create unrest and horror among the people of NWFP and Baluchistan.²⁶ It has also been reported that Ajmal Khattak asked the United States not to provide weapons to Pakistan. In a letter to the US Congress members, Khattak stated that the arms provided by the United States were being used by the Pakistani government to suppress the democratic rights of the people in NWFP and Baluchistan. Khattak accused Pakistani authorities of conducting widespread destruction against the people of these two provinces leading to a critical situation.²⁷ Bhutto in correspondence with the UN Secretary General, alleged Afghanistan of supporting terrorism in Pakistan under the guise of defending the political rights of the Pashtuns.²⁸

On November 4, 1974, during a public meeting in Bahawalnagar, Bhutto claimed that NAP leaders were responsible for the insurgency in Baluchistan and were receiving assistance from Afghanistan. He stated that individuals arrested for bomb explosions in Pakistan confessed to being trained in Afghanistan. He questioned the need for sacrifices made for Pakistan's creation if it were to disintegrate this way. Bhutto asserted that NAP leaders were not true friends of Pakistan instead, they conspired against it in Afghanistan.²⁹

On February 10, 1975, following the assassination of Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, Bhutto arrested NAP leaders including Wali Khan, imprisoned hundreds of its members, dissolved the NAP; banned its publications, confiscated its assets, placed NWFP under direct central government rule and declared a state of emergency. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the time-honored Pashtun nationalist, who came back to Peshawar from his exile in Kabul, was also arrested. The government of Pakistan considered these measures appropriate for it believed that the NAP was involved in Sherpao's murder. Bhutto accused Afghanistan of involvement in disrupting law and order in the NWFP by aiding and abetting Pashtun and Baluch nationalists.³⁰ Afghanistan condemned the ban on NAP and the arrest of its leaders. It accused Pakistan of taking drastic action without substantial evidence against NAP and its

leaders.³¹ Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Wahid Abdullah's statement expressing Afghanistan's willingness to engage in talks with Pakistan contingent upon Pakistan lifting the ban on the NAP was viewed as meddling in Pakistan's domestic matters.³² Pakistan responded by asserting that Afghanistan's stance amounts to a breach of one of the principles of peaceful cohabitation, which dictates that each country should abstain from meddling in the domestic matters of others. Pakistani authorities attributed the deteriorating relations entirely to Afghanistan.³³

On March 4, 1975, arms were found in the Zareef hostel of a local college, Marriabad and Wahdat Colony, in Quetta. Furthermore, arms were recovered from different locations in the Pishin, Loralai, Sibi, and Zhob districts. Additionally, police confiscated anti-Pakistan literature authored by Ajmal Khattak, former NAP Secretary, urging people to revolt against the government.³⁴ The police authorities disclosed that the seized anti-Pakistan literature included two booklets-one in Urdu, entitled '*Pakistan Mein Qaumi Jamhoori Tehrik*, and the other in Pashto, entitled "*Ghairat Chagha*" written by Ajmal Khattak former Secretary of NAP, and a pamphlet "*Surkh Parcham*." Jam Ghulam Qadir, Chief Minister of Baluchistan disclosed in a press briefing that the Afghan Government was directly involved in activities that presented a risk to the security and sovereignty of Pakistan.³⁵ The arrested persons confessed that the Afghan officers had trained them in guerrilla warfare within Afghanistan to execute sabotage activities in Pakistan.³⁶

Turmoil in Afghanistan and Suspected Pakistani Involvement

Bhutto employed a nuanced strategy in his dealing with Afghanistan, balancing both conciliatory and assertive measures. He believed that securing Pakistan's western border relied on Afghanistan's acknowledging the Durand line, thus he kept the door open for negotiation. Simultaneously he addressed internal challenges by rigorously managing Baluchistan and NWFP while pressuring Afghanistan to cease interference. Embracing a carrot-and-stick approach, Bhutto recognized Daud's regime as a gesture of goodwill, while also leveraging Afghanistan's vulnerabilities to deter hostile actions and advance Pakistan's interests diplomatically.³⁷

Pakistan could not think of achieving the disintegration of Afghanistan on racial lines. Bhutto's policy was to use the ethnic question along with other potential problems to start agitation against Daud thereby destabilizing his regime and carrying the war into the opponent's camp. Furthermore, intelligence reports indicated that Bhutto conveyed a message to Daud warning of a potential Pakistani military strike on Jalalabad.³⁸ In response to Bhutto's threat of war, Pazhwak emphasized that Afghanistan had never advocated for conflict. He regarded Bhutto's statement not only as an affront to Afghanistan but also an impediment to the pursuit of peace.³⁹

Bhutto's Political Maneuvers and the Islamists

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan PDPA, a Communist Party

was created in 1965, led by Noor Muhammad Tarakai with Babrak Karmal as the second highest position.⁴⁰ These leaders along with others from the PDPA later became influential figures in Communist Afghanistan, including Tarakai, Babrak, Hafizullah Amin, and Muhammad Najibullah⁴¹ The agitational politics of the PDPA made the Islamists more active in their demands for Islamization. The Islamists came to the forefront in 1969 in Kabul, after being influenced by the organizational strength of the PDPA. They also decided to organize themselves under the influence of theology professors, in a student movement called *Sazman-i-Jawanan-i-Muslaman* (Organization of Muslim Youth) which later developed into a military force that resisted the PDPA and Maoists. The Muslim youth and the professors were opposed to the communist and Western influences. Since most of them were Tajiks, they opposed Pashtun nationalism and the Pashtunistan cause. In 1972, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani became the head of the council that controlled the Organization of Muslim Youth. The two most distinguished students recruited by the Professor were Gulbadin Hekmatyar and Ahmed Shah Massoud, who happened to be future leaders of the war against the PDPA regime. The Islamists had got inspiration from several modern Muslim thinkers, like Syed Mawdoodi, the creator of *Jamaat-i-Islami* Pakistan and leader of a movement for a "More Islamic" Pakistan; Syed Qutub and Hassan-ul-Bana, the founder of the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan-ul-Muslimun*); and Ali Shariati of Iran. Their ideas attracted the educated Afghan Muslim activists who formed a strong centralized organization, with power concentrated in the hands of a few men within the party. However, before coming out as a dreadful political force, the military coup of Daud took place in 1973, thereby seriously restricting their activities. Soon after Daud's coup, many of these students left Afghanistan for Pakistan, where they regrouped their party under the new name *Hezb-i-Islami*. In Pakistan, several religious leaders and *mullahs* joined them including Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, Maulvi Younas Khalis, Maulvi Mansoor, Commander Jalaluddin, and Ahmad Shah Massoud.⁴²

The Islamists were warmly welcomed in Pakistan. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry established an Afghan cell dedicated to overseeing Afghanistan policy. Bhutto viewed the Islamists as a strategic asset to counter potential Pashtunistan pressure and thus entrusted this role to Pakistan armed forces, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), which combined intelligence with paramilitary responsibilities. The ISI in collaboration with Frontier Constabulary initiated a program to train a minimum of 5,000 Islamists in guerrilla warfare. Hekmatyar and Massoud attended the initial three-month training for commanders. Around 150 individuals underwent training, with approximately 90 of them emerging as significant mujahideen leaders during the 1980s. Afterward, a Pakistani military officer suggested that the US may have covertly assisted Pakistan by funding prospective future Afghan leaders following 1973.⁴³

The coaching of the Islamists served a dual purpose. Firstly, it aimed to establish a capable armed force in anticipation of Daud's potential efforts to incite

Pashtun tribes on the Pakistani side toward Afghanistan. Bhutto orchestrated a preemptive strategy, devising a counter-offensive plan by assembling a mercenary force placed under the command of these Islamist leaders who had sought refuge in Pakistan after fleeing Afghanistan. Their primary objective was to neutralize any pro-Pashtun agenda of Daud's government and reciprocate with a proportional response to any accusation and hostilities initiated against Pakistan. They were tasked with thwarting any attempts to destabilize Pakistan's territorial integrity.⁴⁴ Kabul alleged Pakistan's engagement in an uprising against Daud and his government. On November 27, 1974, Daud apprised the UN Secretary General of Pakistan's "interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan." He referenced several documents held by the Afghan government, demonstrating Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan. Since the papers were not revealed, Pakistan refuted the allegation.⁴⁵

The second goal was to pressure Daud into accepting the contentious Durand Line. If he refused, Pakistan was ready to back a large-scale armed rebellion against his new government.⁴⁶ In March 1975, Gulbadin Hekmatyar made an unsuccessful endeavor to incite insurrection in four provinces of Afghanistan with the assistance of Bhutto.⁴⁷ On July 21st, 1975, the *Hizb* again attempted Panjsher to spark an armed rebellion in opposition to the government of Daud, with Pakistan's backing.⁴⁸ The uprisal in Panjsher commenced in the southeastern region of Afghanistan in the summer of 1975. The rebels aimed at the police outposts in the provinces of Paktia, Laghman, Nangarhar, and Badakhshan. They launched a significant offensive in the Paktia. The goal was to undermine Daud's government. However, despite the swift strikes throughout the night and dawn of July 21-22, 1975, the expected widespread uprising failed to materialize. Daud had to make additional endeavors to quell the rebellion. Government forces with the assistance of helicopters were dispatched to subdue the revolt.⁴⁹ Thus the *Hizb* was unsuccessful in rallying the community against Daud. The survivors relocated to Peshawar where the ISI kept on supporting them.⁵⁰

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* exposes the true nature of Gulbadin and his supporter's intrigues. Gulbadin's followers today use to say that they began to struggle against godless communists and other *Kafir* (infidelity) elements in 1975. However, high-level military and civil officials of the operation against Afghanistan tell a different story. They claim that Gulbadin and others including Rabbani of the *Jamat-i-Islami* Afghanistan were under the direct supervision and command of the Bhutto government. The Pakistani authorities had a notable involvement in the Panjshir uprising contributing supplies, and finances and influencing the timings of the events.⁵¹ However, a rift soon occurred in the Islamists. By 1977, the two main groups based in Peshawar were Rabbani's *Jamaat-i-Islami Afghanistan* and Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan*. When Pakistan's interest in helping them waned, both groups lost their potential due to mutual fighting.⁵²

Despite quelling the rebellion instigated by Pakistan, Daud had got the warning. He decided to agree to a tripartite arrangement of "non-conflicting co-

existence” with Pakistan and Iran.⁵³ Daud was only interested in preserving his power, so he took the softer option of surrender. Within a year, Daud agreed to make a vital deal with Bhutto and the Shah of Iran. The Shah and Bhutto jointly began negotiations with Daud’s government in Kabul and an agreement was finally reached between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Daud demonstrated readiness to acknowledge the Durand Line as the international border contingent upon Pakistan’s commitment to implement regional autonomy granted in its 1973 Constitution. The Shah promised to give almost US \$ 3 billion in aid to Kabul. It included a promise to build a rail line south from Kabul through the cities of Kandahar and Herat to the Iranian border directly linking Afghanistan to the gulf ports to put an end to Afghanistan’s dependence on trade through Soviet and Pakistan territory. Pakistan’s role had been only to use the ‘stick’, which also could not be done without active Iranian support. However, Bhutto’s rejection of granting regional autonomy and fostering federalism prompted Daud to escalate the Durand Line and Pashtunistan issue. In response, Bhutto employed another tactic by negotiating with the exiled King Zahir Shah in Rome. The King was asked if he would consider returning if Daud was ousted from power. The king agreed, with three or four individuals in Bhutto’s government being privy to this agreement. In the meantime, Daud expressed eagerness and a settlement was initiated in 1976. However, at this stage, Bhutto became apprehensive and opted to delay the official announcement of the agreement until Pakistan’s general elections in March 1977. The anticipated moment to execute the plan never arrived. The coordinated efforts of Bhutto, Raza Shah, and Daud crumbled dramatically as all three key figures faced downfall, leading to the collapse of their collective plan.⁵⁴

Conclusion

The strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan during the 1970s prompted the fragility of bilateral relations and the complexities of regional geopolitics. Daud's support for Afghan nationalism, Pashtunistan, and separatist movements in Pakistan, clashed with Bhutto's efforts to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty and security interests. The resulting tensions not only hindered the chances for peace but also intensified mistrust and hostility between the two neighbors. As the decade evolved, the legacy of these hostilities continued to resound across South Asia, shaping the region's political landscape for years to come.

Despite various attempts of negotiation and reconciliation, the basic issues remained pending, with both sides unwilling to compromise on their primary concern. Daud's support for separatist movements in Pakistan, particularly in Baluchistan and NWFP, further fueled Pakistan's suspicions and fears of Afghan interference in its internal affairs. In response, Bhutto adopted a retaliatory approach, seeking to apply pressure on the Afghan government and retaliate against perceived threats ensuing from across the border. However, these measures only served to escalate tensions and deepen the mistrust between the two nations.

The decade-long hostilities between Pakistan and Afghanistan emphasized the need for constructive dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual respect in addressing regional grievances and promoting lasting peace and stability. Both nations should have acknowledged the legitimate concerns and grievances of the other while also prioritizing the broader interests of peace and prosperity in the region.

Pakistan and Afghanistan should have engaged in meaningful dialogue aimed at addressing the root causes of their conflict and building trust and confidence between their governments and peoples. Only through sustained diplomatic efforts and a genuine commitment to resolving their differences can they hope to overcome the legacy of mistrust and hostility that had preoccupied their relations for decades. As both nations look to the future, they must strive to build bridges rather than barriers, recognizing that their shared destiny is woven and that lasting peace and stability can only be achieved through mutual understanding and respect.

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