

Pak-Afghan Relations: Deeper Than the Lines Drawn on Land

News:

Pakistani air strikes on Afghanistan have killed at least four people, a spokesman for the Afghan Taliban government said, promising to deliver an “appropriate response”.

Pakistan said on Thursday it carried out air strikes on 10 locations in Afghanistan used to store and launch drones, some of which were used in cross-border attacks. (Al-Jazeera.com)

Comment:

Pakistan has conducted two airstrikes on Afghanistan this month; it claimed to have killed 28 terrorists in the strike on September 21, while four civilians were killed in the September 24 attack, according to Afghan authorities. Pakistan maintains that the Afghan Taliban government must prevent its territory from being used for terrorism against Pakistan, noting that militants involved in attacks on Pakistani security forces have taken refuge in Afghanistan.

But the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan goes beyond that of two neighboring countries sharing a border. Kabul was once the capital of Mughal Emperor Babur, the founder of Mughal rule in India, before he entered the subcontinent. Despite periods of conflict and political rivalry, Muslims in Afghanistan and India shared a strong connection through their attachment to the Ottoman Caliphate.

As the Ottoman Caliphate weakened, Muslims in both Afghanistan and India shared a sense of loss and concern. In 1920, the Khilafat Movement was launched in India, while some religious scholars declared the subcontinent *Dar-ul-Harb* (a land of war). As a result, around 40,000 Indian Muslims migrated to Afghanistan, where they were welcomed by the Afghan people and the then-ruler, Emir Ghazi Amanullah Khan.

Afghan Muslims not only resisted British attempts to establish control over Afghanistan but also supported the Muslims of India. The division of these communities through imposed borders weakened their historic unity. This division has since allowed external powers to exploit tensions between the two peoples, encouraging many conflicts, including the ongoing hostility, while benefiting from the resulting instability.

The people of Pakistan and Afghanistan are currently facing severe hardships. In Pakistan, the public, frustrated by the corruption and plunder of its rulers, has been pushed deeper into poverty. In Afghanistan, children are suffering from malnutrition as a result of restrictions and sanctions imposed by those same rulers.

Following Pakistan's trade restrictions, Afghanistan turned to Iran, with exports increasingly being routed through Iranian ports instead of Karachi. However, the war-like situation in the Strait of Hormuz has left hundreds of ships stranded, disrupting

the supply chain. At the same time, thousands of containers remain stuck in Pakistan. While ordinary people on both sides suffer the consequences, the enemy benefits from these measures, as Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to threaten and attack one another.

The United States stands to benefit significantly from the current tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The conflict allows the U.S. to maintain its strategic and diplomatic influence in South Asia, either through mediation or by applying pressure. The region is also close to China, particularly the CPEC corridor, and to Russia's borders. Continued instability gives the U.S. greater opportunity to monitor and engage with this strategically important region, while the ongoing tensions can also be used to justify intelligence and security measures in the name of counter-terrorism. Regional tensions increase dependence on the defence market and strategic allies, indirectly strengthening U.S. defence and economic interests. India is also a key beneficiary. Instability along Pakistan's western border with Afghanistan reduces the pressure on India by forcing Pakistan to focus its military attention and resources on its western border. At the same time, internal conflict, economic difficulties, and domestic security challenges place further strain on Pakistan, which benefits India strategically.

The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as any other Muslim land must be that of a covenant. Yet, increasingly, the rulers of these lands betray this bond for the shallow pull of wealth and benefit. The disbelievers' goal has remained to this day to weaken the bond of brotherhood between the Muslim Ummah, and it is only within the security of the Khilafah (Caliphate) State that we may be able to protect this bond and defeat the disbelievers.

‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar narrated: Allah's Messenger (saw) said, **«الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ، وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبَاتٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»** **“A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection.”**

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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