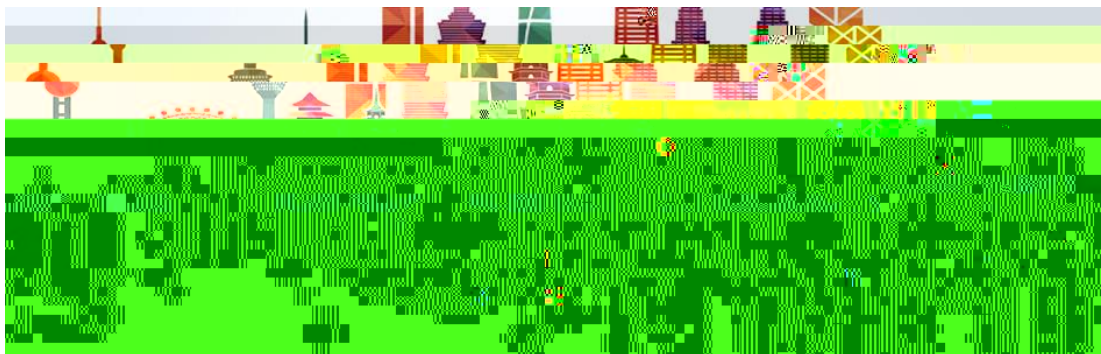




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AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: FRIENDS OR FOES?

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Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups active in Afghanistan.¹ Pakistan's generals see the Taliban as an essential partner in their competition with India.²

The former Director-General of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), General Hamid Gul (1987-1989), spoke out publicly in a TV interview in 2014 about how Pakistan played a double game by using the aid provided by the US after 9/11 to fund the Afghan Taliban. He said, "*when history is written, it will be stated that the ISI defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with the help of America. Then, there will be another sentence. The ISI, with the help of America, defeated America*".³ After the signing of the Doha Peace Agreement between the US and the Afghan Taliban in February 2020, a former Pakistani Minister for Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs tweeted a photograph of then US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, and Afghan negotiation team leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, during the signing ceremony and added a comment, "*you might have might on your side, but God is with us, Allah-u-Akbar*", (God is greatest).⁴ Therefore, until recently, Pakistan considered the so-called defeat of Western forces and the Afghan Taliban's return to power as a victory of their own.

However, Islamabad's expectations did not materialise after the withdrawal of NATO forces and the return to power of the Afghan Taliban in Kabul in August 2021. The caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan, Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, said in a news conference on national media that Pakistan had witnessed a "*60% increase in terror incidents and a 500% rise in suicide bombings since the Afghan Taliban return to power in Kabul, killing nearly 2,300 Pakistanis*". About 15 Afghan nationals were among the suicide bombers, while 64 Afghans were killed fighting Pakistani security forces in 2023. He asserted that Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan was carrying out their campaign of bloodshed from their bases in Afghanistan, and the Afghan government failed to control TTP-led cross-border terrorism.⁵ Therefore, Pakistan's government has decided to deport all undocumented foreigners, among which

¹ Muhammad I. Mahmood. (March, 2023). *the re-emergence of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Pakistan and the role of the Afghan Taliban*. Global Security and Intelligence Note (GSIN). No. 7. Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies (BUCSIS), University of Buckingham. <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/wp>

end. A significant policy shift is that Pakistan has decided to no longer advocate for the Taliban

Conclusion

Two years ago, there was little concern regarding any potential tensions between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan, which have since drastically deteriorated. Here, the stress is on "Afghan Taliban" because the relations of Pakistan with Afghanistan's different regimes and different ethnic groups have ebbed and flowed over the course of history. Pakistan had held a long-standing relationship with the Afghan Taliban, and Islamabad's policy towards Afghanistan was based on supporting and facilitating the implementation of a pro-Pakistan regime in Kabul. From 1979, Pakistan supported the Afghan Mujahideen in the Afghan-Soviet war and later the Afghan Taliban in the "war on terror" with the aim of creating a friendly government in Afghanistan and securing its western border. However, at the time of writing, Pakistan has not succeeded in achieving its objectives and meeting its hopes regarding the Afghan Taliban, and the Afghan regime is reluctant to take adequate measures against TTP and their affiliated groups. Indeed, it is a disastrous failure of Pakistan's four decades of foreign policy towards its neighbour(plem