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The Changing Character of the Durand Line

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Abstract

The contentious status of the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a symbol of both the problems of state and nation-building and their conflict-prone relationship. First, the unresolved border of the Durand Line was a tool in the process of nation building by Afghan governments, whose demand until the 1970s for a "Greater Pashtunistan" challenged the territorial integrity of Pakistan. Secondly, in the 1990s, the Durand Line acquired a regional dimension when the Pakistani military linked Afghanistan to its conflict with India over Kashmir. Finally, after 9/11 the Durand Line suddenly acquired a global dimension in the War on Terror. The solution for contested borders like the Durand Line does not lie in the continuation of confrontational policies as in the past, but in new strategies in order to foster cooperation. The pooling of sovereignty along the Durand Line was already being discussed in the 1930s and 1940s. Such concepts, which could include joint management of common cross-border issues, would be helpful in transforming the contested line into an area of cooperation rather than confrontation.

Keywords

Durand Line, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India

Inbtroduction

The contentious status of the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a symbol of both the problems of state and nation-building and their conflict-prone relationship. But the nature of the Durand Line has undergone various changes since the refusal of the Afghan government to

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accept the colonial border as their national boundary with the new state of Pakistan in August in 1947.

The history of the Durand Line can be divided into at least three phases. First, at the national level, until the 1970s successive Afghan governments promoted the idea of a "Greater Pashtunistan" that should include the Pashtun parts of Pakistan. The unresolved issue of the Durand Line was a tool in the process of Afghan nation-building that challenged the territorial integrity of Pakistan. Second, in the 1990s, the Durand Line took on a regional dimension when the Pakistani military linked Afghanistan to its conflict with India over Kashmir. The undeclared border made it easier for the Pakistani military to envision Afghanistan only as a hinterland in the overall context of its strategic depth paradigm. Finally, after 9/11 the Durand Line suddenly acquired a global dimension in the War on Terror. In particular, Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) became safe havens for various militant groups that challenged the United States and the West (e.g. Al Qaeda), the newly formed government in Kabul (Afghan Taliban) and the Pakistani state and its society (Pakistani Taliban). The non-existence of a demarcated border prevented security cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the result that militant groups from both countries could seek shelter in the respective neighbouring state.

This article will elaborate the changing character of the Durand Line. The first part will focus on relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan until the 1980s, the second part will deal with Pakistan's policy since the 1990s, and the final section analyse the implications of 9/11.

1. The national dimension: the Durand Line and Pashtun nationalism

When the successor states of British India received their independence, Afghanistan raised territorial claims to the Pashtun areas – present day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa[1] – on the basis that they had belonged to Afghanistan for a short period of time in the eighteenth century. However, already in 1893, an agreement was signed between the British, led by Sir Mortimer Durand, Foreign Secretary of the British Indian government, and the ruler of Afghanistan, King Abdur Rahman Khan. The Durand Line demarcated the 2,450 km border between British India and Afghanistan. In the mid-1940s, the Afghan rulers refused to recognize the treaty and played the nationalist

[1] Previously known as the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), the province's name was changed to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010.

card of "Greater Pashtunistan", laying claim to Dir, Swat, Chitral and Amb, Baluchistan and the princely states of Kalat, Kharan, Makran and Las Bela. (Dupree / Pazhwak 2003: 3–15)

Subsequently, there was a quest for Pashtun independence in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of British India that was not necessarily aligned with the Afghan demands. Local leaders like Ghaffar Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars (Servants of God) movement, campaigned for an independent Pashtun state. Called the "Frontier Gandhi", he propagated a strategy of non-violence. But the option of independence was not accepted by the British and therefore not included in the referendum of 6–17 July 1947 (Hussain 2005; Cheema 2006). Although Ghaffar Khan and his followers boycotted the referendum, more than 50 percent voted for the accession of NWFP to Pakistan[2] (Burke / Ziring 1990: 70).

Similarly, a Loya Jirgah was held in the Tribal Agencies of Pakistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in which the tribal leaders declared their support in favor of Pakistan. When the tribals agreed to join Pakistan and swore allegiance to the state, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, agreed to let them retain the existing administrative structure with their special status and royalties, but with the prospect of eventual integration into the rest of the country (Rafique 1966). It was hoped that, as the state progressed, FATA would be brought into the mainstream and integrated through social, economic and political development. However, successive Pakistani governments have lacked the will and political sagacity to focus on the tribal areas and their integration into the state. The status and structure of FATA has remained largely unchanged and it continues to operate under the principles of administration introduced by the British. This meant recognizing the autonomy of the tribes and retaining the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) enacted in 1901, which places the tribes beyond the writ of the government and Pakistani law (Nawaz 2009).

Hence, with partition in August 1947 the areas disputed and contested by Afghanistan became legally part of Pakistan (Spain 1961). After Pakistan's independence the Afghans continued to challenge the Durand Line, with the exception of Nadir Shah and to a certain extent King Zahir Shah, who had begun to acknowledge the legality of the Durand Line as well as the NWFP and FATA as Pakistani territory (Mazari 1979: 45). Afghan objects to the validity of the Durand Line on the grounds, among others, that the agreement was forced upon the Afghan King, Abdur Rahman Khan, during negotiations with the British government in 1893, that it was signed only for a

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2 Pakistan received 289,244 votes and India 2,874 out of a total of 572,798 votes.

period of 100 years and, hence, expired in 1994, and that the agreement was with the British Government and not with Pakistan, and so in essence, can be regarded as invalid (Brasseur 2011: 6–7).

However, Pakistan has always upheld the norms of international law and the position of a successor state that inherited the rights and duties of the British government in India. Pakistan takes the view that the Durand Line is

> a valid international boundary recognized and confirmed by Afghanistan on several occasions; that the Durand Line terminated Afghan sovereignty over the territory or influence over the people east of [the] Durand Line; and finally that Pakistan, as successor state [to British India], derived full sovereignty over this area and its people and had all the rights and obligations of a successor state (Shaikh 2009: 201–202).

The British have on several occasions endorsed this stance. In fact in 1950, Philip Noel-Baker, the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, in reference to the then NWFP territory stated,

> It is His Majesty's view that Pakistan is in international law, the inheritor of the rights and duties of the old government of India, and of his Majesty's government in the United Kingdom, in these territories, and that the Durand Line is the international frontier (Caroe 1958: 465).

This stance was upheld and reiterated by the British prime minister in 1956 in the British parliament (Mazari 1979: 43). Pakistan's position was also supported by its international allies, for instance the members of the South-east Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). In their ministerial meeting in Karachi in March 1956

> the Council declared that their governments recognized that the sovereignty of Pakistan extends up to the Durand Line, the international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan" (Azmat Hayat Khan and M.Y. Effendi: The Durand Line. Its Geo-Strategic Importance. University of Peshawar 2000, p. 220, cited in: Lambah 2011: 16).

The Afghan stance on the Durand Line was rejected once again on 21 October 2012 when the US Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Marc Grossman, stated in an interview with a private TV channel in Kabul that the US "recognized the Durand Line as the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan" (Iqbal 2012). However, the Afghan Ministry for Foreign Affairs responded by saying that the government "rejects and considers irrelevant any statement by anyone about the legal status of this line" (Iqbal 2012).

The Durand Line and the Pashtunistan question continued to remain the most dominant and contentious bilateral issue until the 1970s. In 1948, when Pakistan joined the United Nations, Afghanistan was the only country

that voted against it. Already in 1950 there were violent clashes in the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan (Pupree / Pazhwak 2003: 127–128). The incursions of tribal warriors from Afghanistan into Bajaur, one of the agencies in FATA, led to further clashes in September 1960, this time with the Pakistani army. Following these tensions, the two countries broke off diplomatic relations in the spring of 1961; they were restored only in 1964. In the 1960s, governments in Kabul continued to celebrate a "Pashtunistan Day" and tried to internationalize the Pashunistan issue. The Afghan government brought the issue to the International Islamic Economic Conference and raised it in the United Nations (Hussain 1966: 120). However, successive Afghan governments have failed to gain the desired international support and recognition for its stance regarding Pashtunistan.

During the 1970s, Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto sought a rapprochement with Afghanistan in order to defuse the bilateral tensions. In 1973, he recognized the new government of Mohammed Daoud after the coup in Kabul. But Daoud was a strong supporter of the idea of Pashtunistan. During his rule from 1973 to 1978 he continued to promote this idea and supported tribal insurgencies in Baluchistan and the NWFP. In return, Pakistan supported the Afghani opposition to Daoud and granted asylum to his cousin King Zahir, whom Daoud overthrew in 1973 (Roy 2002: 150). In 1975, Bhutto secretly supported an insurrection by Islamist radicals. After its failure, some of the leaders found refuge in Pakistan and later turned into Mujehideen in the fight against the Soviet Union (Weinbaum / Harder 2008: 28). The visit of Mohammed Daoud to Pakistan in March 1978 seemed to open a new era in the bilateral relations (Burke / Ziring 1990: 439). But domestic turmoil in Afghanistan and the invasion by the Soviet Union in December 1979 put an abrupt end to this process.

Afghan demands for a separate state of Pashtunistan have seldom found adequate support among the majority of Pashtuns in Pakistan (Burke / Ziring 1990: 377). Pashtuns have traditionally been the majority population in Afghanistan but are only a minority in Pakistan. But in absolute figures, there are more Pashtuns living in Pakistan than in Afghanistan.[3] After the creation of Pakistan, Pashtun organizations that promoted independence were banned. One such organization, the Khudai Khidmatgars movement, was banned in 1948. Successor parties like the National Awami Party (NAP), which was formed in 1957 and headed by Abdul Wali Khan, the son of

[3] The total population of Afghanistan is about 26 million, of which 40 to 45 percent are regarded as Pashtuns, i.e. 10 to 11 million people. In Pakistan 15 percent of the total population of 160 million people speak Pasthu, i.e. 24 million people.

Ghaffar Khan, remained "on the borderline between autonomy and independence" (Amin 1988: 90).

The NAP was banned because it supported the Awami League in East Pakistan and their demands for greater regional autonomy. It was allowed to contest the first elections in 1970, and won the largest number of seats in NWFP and Baluchistan. After the civil war in 1971, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and regional parties like the NAP reached a consensus on the independence of East Pakistan and a new constitution was passed in 1973. However, due to internal power struggles, the consensus broke down and the NAP was banned again in 1975. Within the Pashtun community, a radical section under the leadership of Ajmal Khattak fled to Afghanistan and tried to start a rebellion for an independent Pashtun state. The members of the leadership of the NAP that were not arrested, such as Wali Khan, established the National Democratic Party (NDP), which rejected the idea of an independent state of Pashtunistan (Amin 1988: 139). The war in Afghanistan during the 1980s, the two million Afghan refugees in the NWFP, and financial and military support for Pakistan to train *jihadi* groups weakened the support for regional Pashtun parties, such as the NDP with its traditional pro-Moscow stance (Amin 1988: 184–192). Religious parties like the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) benefited from these constellations and the support they received from Zia's military rule *vis-à-vis* Pashtun regional parties (Haqqani 2005: 189–193).

Support for independence waned among Pashtuns in Pakistan. They were integrated into the military and bureaucracy and became part of the Pakistani state. Although the Punjabis remained the dominant and most influential ethnic group in Pakistan, the Pashtuns have been successfully integrated politically, economically, socially and culturally. Pashtuns have held high positions in the military and in politics, and two presidents have been Pashtuns. The positive integration of Pashtuns was also officially recognized by Wali Khan in a written statement to the Supreme Court in 1975, in which he "admitted that the Pashtuns were disproportionately highly represented in both the armed forces and the civil services" (Amin 1988: 187). In 1986, the Awami National Party (ANP) was founded to represent the political interests of the Pashtuns. In 2008, it won the provincial elections and successfully lobbied to have NWFP renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), which was granted in 2010. The ANP also became a coalition partner of the PPP in the national government, thereby further underlining its commitment to the Pakistani state and its institutions.

Until the late 1970s, the open question of the Durand Line was mostly exploited by various Afghan governments to threaten the territorial integrity of Pakistan. The instrumental character of the Durand Line in the context of

the Pashtunistan issue is also highlighted by a comparison with Afghanistan's other borders. Afghanistan's boundaries with Russia (now Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and Persia (now Iran) were also demarcated by the British, and neither Afghanistan nor the successor Central Asian States of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have challenged or questioned the validity of the border (For the recent debate on the validity of the Durand Line see Omrani / Ledwidge 2009 and Brasseur 2011.).

The quest itself was problematic, because the concept of Pashtunistan included parts of Baluchistan, and it did have the full support of the Pashtuns in Pakistan. Segments of the Pashtuns demanded national independence, but the majority preferred to stay within the Pakistani state, even if there was an ongoing struggle between the centre and the provinces over the question of regional autonomy.

Although Pashtuns do live on both sides of the border, they are still separated by tribal structures, and hence are not as united as often perceived or expressed by Afghan Pashtun nationalists. Moreover, keeping in mind the deep ethnic strife that has always existed in Afghanistan between the Pashtuns and the other ethnic groups, who have always resisted and opposed Pashtun dominance, the repeated raising of the Pashtunistan ethnic card could be detrimental to these groups. If a "greater Pashtunistan" became reality, it would lead to even greater Pashtun dominance and further marginalization of the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

2. The regional dimension: the Durand Line and strategic depth

After the Soviet invasion of 1979, Pakistan again became a frontline state of the United States. In the 1980s, the US provided substantial financial and military aid to Pakistan so that it could fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan under the banner of *jihad* (Holy War). The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) trained the Mujahideen from Afghanistan and volunteers from the Arab world in the tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, the triangle between Pakistan, Afghanistan and India underwent a fundamental change. The Durand Line and the open border with Afghanistan now turned into an instrument for Pakistan's foreign policy. Until that time Pakistan's relations with India and Afghanistan were largely independent of one another. Aslam Beg, who followed Zia-ul-Haq as Chief of Army Staff (COAS), outlined Pakistan's new regional strategy. Afghanistan should be transformed into Pakistan's hinterland in order to secure "strategic depth" in the conflict with India. A "friendly" government in Kabul would allow Pakistan to gain a

better strategic position. First, Afghanistan was to serve as a backyard and safe haven for militant groups which could be used against India in the Kashmir conflict (Hussein 2002). Second, it should help to counter the demands of Pashtun nationalist groups in Afghanistan for a "greater Pashtunistan".

The concept of strategic depth linked Pakistan's dispute with India to Afghanistan. It was not astonishing that the Pakistani military played the religious card. Domestically, Zia-ul-Haq had already started a process of Islamisation in Pakistan in the 1980s. At the regional level the main lesson from the Afghanistan war seemed to have been that if the strategy of jihad could successfully defeat a superpower like the Soviet Union, it could also be used against the arch-enemy India (Haqqani 2005: 289).

Former Mujahideen from Afghanistan were sent to Kashmir to support the local rebellion against the rigged assembly election that had started in 1987. But the Islamist militants also turned against the supporters of the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), who demanded national independence and not accession to Pakistan. The strategy of the Pakistan military was partly successful. In the 1990s, Kashmir became a hot spot and was perceived as "the most dangerous place" in the world, but it failed to bring about international intervention in favour of Pakistan. Instead, it led to the birth of violent militant groups like the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), which have proved to be detrimental to Pakistan.

Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the country faced a multitude of problems. In the ensuing power struggles between various groups in the 1990s the country slid into civil war. Initially, Pakistan supported its traditional Mujahideen allies, such as Gulbuddin Hektmatyar and his Hezb-e Islami. When he failed to achieve a prominent position, Pakistan turned to the Taliban, a local group from southern Afghanistan. In 1994, the Taliban took control of Kandahar, and Pakistan started to support the movement militarily and logistically. The extensive support is well documented, making Pakistan the "godfather of the Taliban" (The National Security Archive 2007; see also Rashid 2000). Religious students had been educated and trained in madrassas in Pakistan since the Afghan war. The non-existence of a border made it easy for them to move into Afghanistan and join the ranks of the Taliban.

When the Taliban took power in Kabul in 1996, Pakistan was one of three countries that recognized the new regime (The National Security Archive 2007: Rais 2009: 57ff.). Despite the fact that Pakistan favoured the Taliban regime in the belief that having a friendly government in Afghanistan would secure and protect Pakistan's interests on both its eastern and western

frontiers, the reality was different. Once again, Pakistan's strategy was only a partial success. Although the Taliban suited Pakistan's interests, the relationship remained difficult. The Taliban were, for instance, not willing to recognize the Durand Line as an international boundary, or to hand over Osama bin Laden to the United States, or to stop the destruction of the Buddha statues in Bamiyan.

3. The global dimension: the Durand Line and 9/11

After the attacks of 9/11, heavy American pressure forced Pakistan to abandon its support for the Taliban in Afghanistan in order to secure its national interests, especially *vis-à-vis* India (Musharraf 2006: 201–202). After the military intervention of ISAF/NATO forces in Afghanistan at the end of 2001, thousands of fleeing Taliban members and foreign militants, including al-Qaeda operatives, poured into Pakistan's FATA and Baluchistan. The tribal areas became a safe haven for foreign militant groups and served as a base for al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban, who used the porous border to attack western forces in Afghanistan.

Although Pakistan became a part of the US-led intervention in Afghanistan and was even given the enhanced status of a "major non-NATO ally" in 2004 for its role in supporting the military intervention to oust the Taliban, the Afghan government and western forces began to accuse Pakistan of not only allowing, but also supporting militant groups and cross-border attacks, thus further straining relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and heightening their distrust of one another.

Again under US-pressure, the Pakistani army started large-scale military operations in FATA in 2003/2004. In reaction, militant tribal groups took up arms against the Pakistani state and the military; they opposed close co-operation with the United States in the War on Terror and sought to transform Pakistan into a Taliban state. After the violent end of the siege of the Red Mosque in Islamabad in July 2007, more than 40 different militant tribal groups formed the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud in December of the same year (Rana et al. 2010: 169). But Pakistan was not willing to give up its strategic interests *vis-à-vis* Afghanistan, especially after the Taliban resurgence in 2007. Again, India was the main reason, although the motivation had changed from "strategic depth" to the prevention of Indian encirclement (Chakrabarti 2009). Following its international support for Afghanistan, India became the biggest non-Western donor and enjoyed a high reputation among the Afghan population after the fall of the Taliban regime (Mukhopadhaya 2010: 38). India expand-

ed its influence and made considerable influential inroads into Afghanistan by providing a $1.5 billion aid package, engineers and IT specialists, and developmental assistance by building roads, communication links, schools and hospitals. Even under the stern Taliban regime, Indian soft power continued to play a role in Afghanistan through its culture and film industry. India's growing political and economic presence, with consulates in Jalalabad, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar, and its high popularity among the Afghan population, was a major strategic defeat for Pakistan. Despite giving political, economic and moral support, Pakistan has not been able to achieve its strategic goals in Afghanistan *vis-à-vis* India nor in relation to Pashtun nationalism and the Afghan Taliban groups.

In order to prevent the illegal crossing of militants and also to put an end to the continuous accusations levelled at Pakistan by Afghanistan and western allies of allowing Taliban to infiltrate from Pakistan and of allowing Taliban militants to conduct attacks in Afghanistan with Pakistan support, in 2006 Pakistan decided to fence parts of the 2,400 km border. However, this initiative, too, was met with strong opposition from the Afghan side, which noted that the line would further divide and separate the ethnic tribes on either side of the border. Although a mere unarmed fence may not be as effective as hoped, it will, if nothing else, limit the number of militants crossing the border. Already after 2001/2002, Pakistan had strengthened the border with more than 180 border posts in order to contain the infiltration into Afghanistan (Rana et al. 2010: 168).

In another effort to monitor, but not to prevent the border crossings or to divide the ethnic tribes, the Pakistani authorities installed a biometric system at the Chaman border crossing at Baluchistan in January 2007. However, it was vehemently opposed by the Afghans, and on the second day of operation angry protestors attacked the border gates and the system had to be done away with. Although the biometric system was installed on an experimental basis, its purpose was to replace the previous permit system by issuing border passes to people after recording their fingerprints, retinas or facial patterns for identification. Contrary to what many Afghans thought, this was in no way meant to divide the people or stop them from crossing; both measures were tools to monitor the border and influx of militants.

Domestically, Pakistan's political, military and economic strategy in the FATA has not been very successful thus far. Various peace agreements with militant groups have failed, e.g. North Waziristan in September 2006. Pakistan's counterinsurgency strategy has not been very successful, either. Because of its long-standing conflict with India, the military is neither trained nor equipped for guerrilla warfare. The army has suffered higher casualties than the NATO forces in Afghanistan. The army has managed to

"clear" territory, but found it difficult to "hold" and "build" owing to the lack of civilian capacities. Moreover, the use of airpower and artillery has caused many civilian casualties (Jones / Fair 2010). Economically, the Pakistani government and the United States provided substantial support in an effort to improve the infrastructure in the region, which is among the least developed parts of Pakistan. Politically, the FATA reforms of 2011 allowed political parties to operate in the tribal area and introduced improvements in the Frontier Crime Regulations (Express Tribune 2011a; Dawn 2011).

Again, as in the case of Kashmir, supporting militant groups for foreign policy interests has been counterproductive for Pakistan. The creation of the TTP, whose ideology is inspired by Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, has brought another violent conflict to the Pakistan heartland (Rana et al. 2010: 141–142; Shahzad 2011). The TTP is held responsible for many attacks against civilian and military installations in Pakistan, for instance the attack on the military headquarters in Rawalpindi in October 2009 and the attack on the Mehran naval base in Karachi in May 2011, and the assassinations of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 and Shahbaz Bhatti in March 2011. Moreover, the TTP has established links with militant Sunni groups like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ), which is held responsible for many attacks against religious minorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

4. Prospects: the open nature of the Durand Line

The use of an open, undeclared border like the Durand Line as a foreign policy tool for tactical or strategic political gains has failed both for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Playing the ethno-nationalist card as Afghan governments have done since the 1940s by agitating for "Greater Pashtunistan" has not achieved any significant result. Playing the religious card, as the Pakistani military did in the 1990s in order to achieve "strategic depth", has not brought any success for its foreign policy agenda either. What initially seemed to be a clever strategy, turned into a nightmare for its protagonists, whose societies have to bear the brunt in the form of increasing levels of nationalistic and religious violence. Moreover, both strategies have increased mistrust about the motives of the other, which now constrains any noticeable rapprochement.

Today, most states are not ethnically homogenous, and religion has also failed to serve as the exclusive basis for modern statehood. In the era of globalization, open borders are often regarded as a symbol of trade, development and mobility. The solution for contested borders like the Durand

Line does not lie in the continuation of outdated confrontational policies, but in new strategies which foster cooperation. The pooling of sovereignty along the Durand Line was already being discussed in the 1930s and 1940s (Omrani / Ledwidge 2009: 55–56). Concepts such as the joint management of common cross-border issues would be helpful in transforming the contested line into an area of cooperation rather than confrontation.

Keeping in mind the upcoming US/NATO withdrawal in 2014, managing the border is an issue that is of pivotal importance to both states, particularly due to the increase in cross-border attacks from both sides as well as the presence of the TTP on the Afghan side of the border, namely in the provinces of Kunar and Nuristan, which border on Pakistan (Khan / Hussain 2011). For Pakistan, moreover, border management is an issue of some concern, because as Afghan Security Forces (ANSF) assume greater responsibility for security in Afghanistan (including areas that border Pakistan), there has been a sharp rise in cross-border attacks, which again highlights the fact that if the two governments cannot reach agreement on formal recognition of the border, the issue will resurface in the near future and further weigh on the countries' already fragile relationship.

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