

International Relations Class 14

2nd February, 2024 at 9:00 AM

INTRODUCTION (09:18 AM)

- A Brief Overview Of The Previous Class.

HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN (09:24 AM)

- **1823:** The history of Afghanistan as a state begins.
- **1919-1921:** The British are defeated in the Third Anglo-Afghan War, Afghanistan becomes independent.
- **1926:** Amanullah Khan declares Afghanistan a monarchy, but abdicates by 1929.
- **1933:** Zahir Shah becomes king for the next 40 years.
- **1934:** The United States formally recognizes Afghanistan.
- **1953:** Pro-Soviet Mohammed Daoud Khan becomes Prime Minister, and introduces social reforms.
- **1956:** The USSR becomes a close ally of Afghanistan.
- **1965:** The Afghan Communist Party is formed secretly.
- **1973:** Daoud Khan overthrows the king in a coup, and establishes the Republic of Afghanistan.
- **1978:** Daoud Khan is killed in a communist coup. Nur Mohammad Taraki becomes president.
- Taraki signs a friendship treaty with the USSR.
- The Mujahadeen guerrilla movement is formed to oppose the communist government.
- **1979:** Taraki is killed. The USSR invades Afghanistan.
- Babrak Karmal becomes president.
- The Mujahadeen unite against the Soviets and the Afghan Army.
- **1984:** Osama bin Laden first travels to Afghanistan to aid anti-Soviet fighters.
- **1986:** The Mujahadeen receive arms from the US, Britain, and China.
- **1988:** Osama bin Laden forms al-Qaeda.
- **1989:** The USSR withdraws from Afghanistan.
- **1992:** The Mujahadeen capture power.
- **1995:** The Taliban rise to power.
- **2000:** The UN punishes Afghanistan with sanctions.
- **Sept. 11, 2001:** The US invades Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 attacks.
- **Dec. 2001:** The Taliban are overthrown. Hamid Karzai becomes interim leader.
- **2004:** Karzai is elected president.
- **2006:** NATO expands its peacekeeping mission to southern Afghanistan.
- **2011:** Osama bin Laden is killed.
- **2014:** US announces troop withdrawal by 2016.
- Ashraf Ghani becomes president.
- **Feb. 2020:** The US and Taliban sign a deal to end the war.
- **April 2021:** Biden announces complete US troop withdrawal.
- **Aug. 2021:** The Taliban take over Kabul, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan falls.

AFGHANISTAN THE CENTRE OF GREAT GAMES (10:05 AM)

Reasons:

1) The interest of USA:

- a) Zipper state: Afghanistan has close proximity to Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East.
- b) Proximity of Afghanistan to Iran.

Why is US & Iran at loggerheads?

- Iran hostage crisis, 1979-1981, (444days)
- The secret nuclear program of Iran.
- Iran's anti-west ideology.
- Alleged human rights violations in Iran.
- c) USSR being the center of politics in Afghanistan.
- d) Opium production and subsequent economic gains.

The interest of Russia:

- Afghanistan lies at the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia.
- This makes its location highly strategic.
- Central Asia is considered to be the soft belly of Russia and lies in the North Caucasus region.
- Any possible violence or instability in Afghanistan could have a possible spillover into Russia's Caucasus region or its backyard.
- Russia has a monopoly of trade in Gas and Oil within Central Asia and South Asia.
- Therefore for Russia, Afghanistan is very important due to its central location.
- To reduce Russia's monopoly of energy trade, the US has planned to create alternative pipelines one of which is the BTC pipeline.
- The BTC pipeline has a great effect on the world's petroleum politics.
- It involves parties like Azerbaijan Turkey and Georgia which have been seen as Russia's backyard and therefore of great strategic significance.



Reasons for US involvement in the construction of Pipelines:

- US wanted to create an alternative to Russia's monopoly of energy supply in the region.
- Countries under these projects could act as a counterbalance to Russia as far as energy supply is concerned.
- Russia therefore alleges that through this project, the US plans to station itself in Russia's backyard
- The pipeline also created the potential for Georgia to seek independence from the Soviet sphere of influence.
- Already both Russia and Georgia have undergone a war in 2008 when Russia backed the self-proclaimed republics of S Ossetia and Abkhazia.
- This confrontation is also regarded as the first European war of the 21st century.
- The result was that Russia recognized the independence of these 2 provinces and Georgia severed diplomatic ties with Russia.
- Russia wants its stake in Afghanistan in order to counter threats related to Drug Trafficking.

The interest of China:

- There is a proxy war between the US and China.
- The US agenda is to curb China from both the Eastern and Western front.
- On the eastern front, the US has created chains of Islands to circumscribe China under the Island Chain Strategy.
- On the Western front, Afghanistan appears to be a potential place for the US to station itself in containing China.
- This is the reason, why China has an interest in Afghanistan.
- China does not want radicalization of its Yughyr Muslims in its Xinxiang province which can only be possible if China is in good relation with the establishment of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

INTEREST OF IRAN (11:04 AM)

Iran-Afghanistan Water Dispute:

- Tensions flared between Iran and Afghanistan over water sharing from the Helmand River.
- Border clashes erupted on May 27, 2023, resulting in casualties.

Key Points:

- Iran accuses the Taliban of withholding water to leverage for other gains.
- Taliban claims water scarcity due to drought is the main issue.
- Both sides suffering from severe water shortages.
- Iran is interested in Afghanistan because it does not want any government in Afghanistan tilted towards South Arabia or Sunni-led Arab world.
- Both Iran and Afghanistan have conflicts over water resources.
- Since the US is interested in Afghanistan, it also makes Iran even more interested since Iran is not comfortable with the US presence nearby.

The interest of Pakistan in Afghanistan:

- Pakistan wants to have strategic depth in Afghanistan.
- However, it has not been successful in this regard.
- Pakistan wants to have easy access to Central Asia and West Asia and thus Afghanistan appears important.
- In case of war between India and Pakistan, since India was in good relations with Afghanistan,
- Pakistan had a danger that India could open a second front in the Northwestern part, thereby releasing pressure from Kashmir.
- The area between Afghanistan and Pakistan is already conflict-ridden since the Durand line is still not widely acceptable.
- In Afghanistan, the Pashtuns do not recognize Durand's line and dream of a greater Pashtunistan involving the Northwestern region of Afghanistan and the surrounding region of Pakistan.
- This creates another ground for Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan.

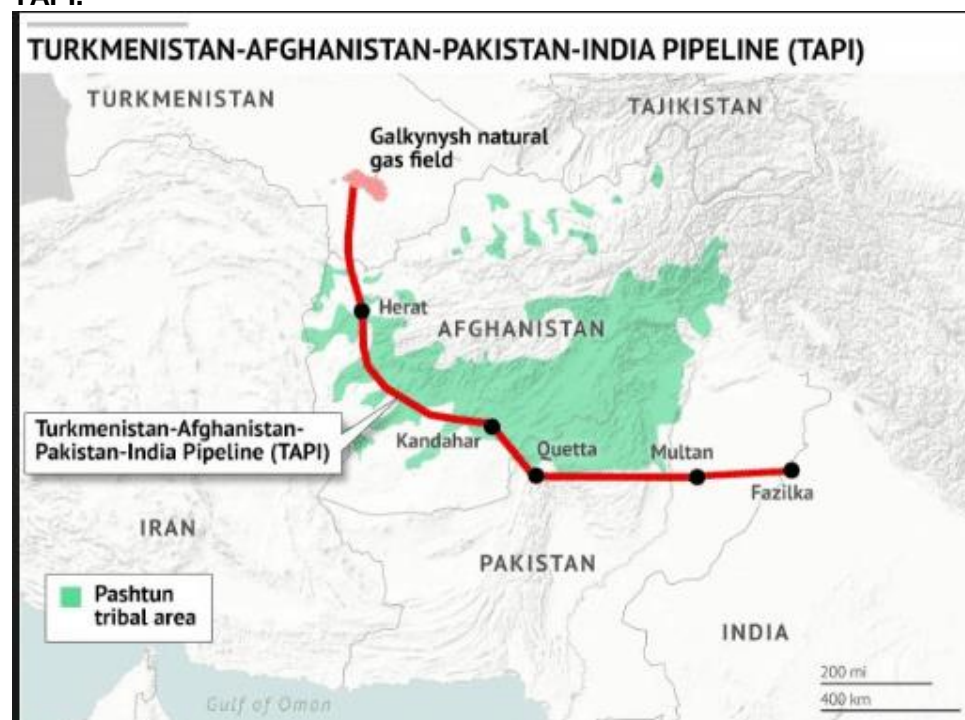
The interest of India:

Geo-Strategic significance

- Critical in terms of outreach to the Central Asian Republics (CAR).
- Shares a border with India's PoK.
- Counterbalance to Pakistan.

Economic Significance:

- **Gateway to Central Asia :**
- **TAPI.**



- Chahabahr: Afghanistan acts as an energy bridge in terms of enabling energy connectivity between central Asia and India and through India to South Asia.
- Apart from the TAPI project which is stalled due to instability in Afghanistan and deteriorating Indo-Pak relations.
- Another such project is the Chahabhar project constructed in Iran By India.

Importance of Chahbahara Port:



- Its importance lies in that it can be seen as a gateway for India to access Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Middle East.
- It acts as a link to India's BRO-constructed Delaram Zaranj Highway of Afghanistan.
- In this way, Chabahar port ensures our accessibility of trade with Afghanistan.
- Chabahar port is very near to Gwadar port in Pakistan.
- This can help India to keep watch over the activities of the Iron brothers (China and Pakistan) in the region.
- Chabahar port can also help India monitor activities, especially of China and Pakistan in the IOR region.
- It will also help India to keep surveillance over illegal drug transmission from Iran (a country within Golden Crescent) in India.
- Keeping in mind the importance of Chahabaha port, in March 2021, India demanded to include Chabahar port into 13 nations INSTC.
- India has also proposed a land route Via Kabul Afghanistan and Tashkent (Uzbekistan) to create an eastern arm of INSTC.

Security Concerns:

- Rise of radical tendencies and the threat of terrorism.
- Drug trafficking.
- Political instability in nearby Iran and possible spillover,
- Chahabaha Port and its proximity with Gwadar Port.

INDIA'S AFGHAN POLICY (11:45 AM)

- During the Cold War Afghanistan was under the influence of the Soviet Union and India had cordial relations with Afghanistan.
- After the end of the Cold War, the dynamics changed.
- After the Cold War Afghanistan became a war zone because of fighting between Afghanistan establishments and Muzahiddin supported by the US and Pakistan.
- In 1996, Taliban 1.0 captured power in Kabul.
- India did not recognise Taliban 1.0.
- (Pakistan, South Arabia, and UAE recognized Taliban 1.0).
- India recognized the displaced govt. of Afghanistan as the true government.
- Fearing a spillover on Kashmir India even backed the Northern Alliance. (Democratic force countering Taliban in Afghanistan).
- Non-engagement with Taliban 1.0 however came with a big cost for India keeping in mind the close Nexus emerging between Taliban and Pakistan.
- In 1999, there was the hijacking of IC-814, where hijackers took the plane to Kandahar and the ruling Taliban emerged as the supporting arm indicating that non-involvement with the Taliban could be even more disastrous for India.
- In 2001, the US started the global war on terrorism against the Taliban in Afghanistan post the attack on Twin Towers on 9th September 2001.
- India became a very important partner of the US in combating the threat of terrorism.
- In December 2001, The BONN agreement regarding reconstruction and development of Afghanistan was made.
- India became a leading donor from Asia to Afghanistan.
- However, Indo-US relations witnessed a small dip during this time when the US made Pakistan its frontline non-NATO ally.

India's Afghan policy between 2001-2021:

- Ousting of Taliban
- India became Afghanistan's biggest regional development partner.
- In 2011, India became the first country with which Afghanistan signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement.
- India always stood for an Afghan-led, controlled, owned political process in which all stakeholders have a role to play.
- It stresses the legitimate democratically elected government in Afghanistan.4)India's Afghan Policy after Taliban Takeover (Taliban 2.0 post-2021)

Why should India engage with Taliban 2.0?/Concerns that have arisen for India :

- 1)Revival of terrorism
- 2)Rising international engagement.
- 3)Changing dynamics between Pakistan and the Taliban.
- 4)Increasing influence of China
- 5)National security
- 6)Threat to financial and strategic investments.
- 7)Mutually beneficial.
- 8) The Taliban's presence could lead to perpetual regional instability.

India's Afghan Policy after Taliban Takeover (Taliban 2.0 post 2021)

- 1)India shuttered its embassy in Kabul.
- 2)Initially India reserved itself to limited talks with Taliban 2.0.
- 3)Initially India remained in a wait-and-watch mode.

(THE TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: SINO-INDIA RELATIONS)