

# 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) (Almost 52 American diplomats including students were kept as hostages by Iranian student revolutionary troop)
- 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. (in Afghanistan)

#### 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 <sup>this project</sup> 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 <sup>Uyghur</sup> Muslims in its <sup>Xinjiang</sup> Xinjiang 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 <sup>Saudi Arabia</sup> 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.

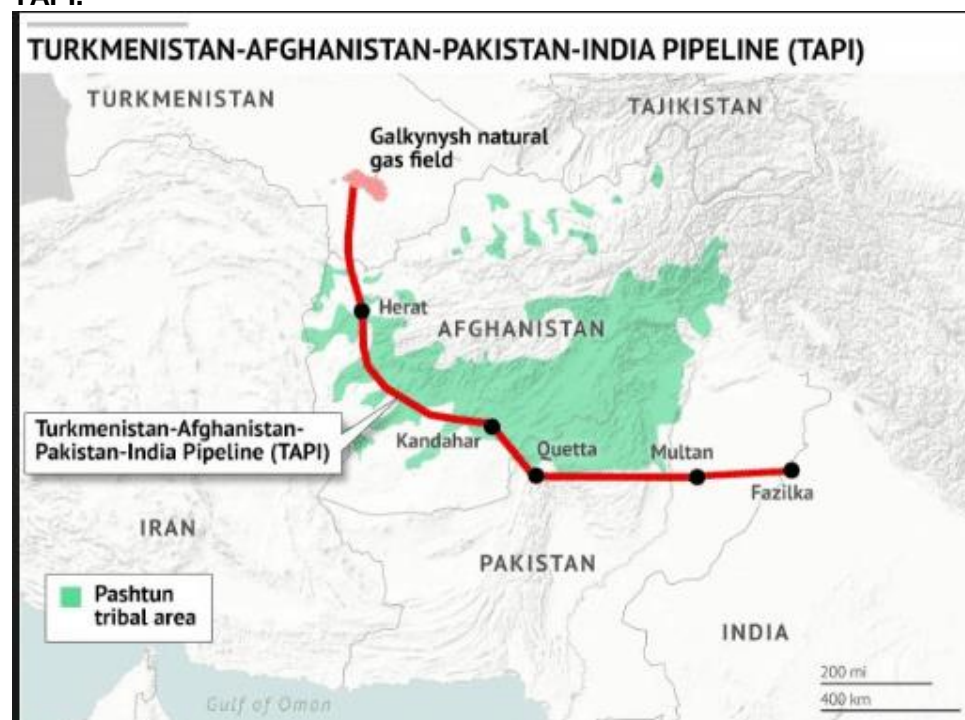
### **The interest of India:**

#### **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 Zeran 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 <sup>to</sup> 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 Chahabahar 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:** (why Afghanistan is imp. in context to security concerns)

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

## 1. Till the end of cold war:

### 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: (refer ppt)

- 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)**