

India, Pakistan and the US in the Afghan Imbroglio: The Way Forward

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Abstract : When insurgency erupted in Kashmir in 1989, it was quickly backed by Pakistan. Kashmir witnessed terrorism for more than a decade till 2004 when Indian forces decimated militancy. After the US pressure in 1992, terrorist training camps of Pakistan shifted to Afghanistan and al Qaeda and the Taliban had taken over training of Kashmiri militants in Afghanistan after 1997 as part of their global jihad. The Indo-Pak rivalry over Kashmir dispute had taken a new turn in the aftermath of 9/11 developments. Islamabad viewed its Afghan policy through the prism of denying India any advantage in Kabul. Pakistan was successful in refuting Indian presence in Kabul for a decade through the Taliban. After the 9/11 attacks the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) saw Northern Alliance, supported by the Americans and all of Pakistan's regional rivals - India, Iran, and Russia - as claiming victory in Kabul. For Pakistan's military regime, this was a strategic disaster and prompted the ISI to give refuge to the escaping Taliban, while denying full support to Hamid Karzai. The new development in Afghanistan prompted India to establish a foothold it had lost nearly a decade earlier. India established diplomatic contacts with Afghanistan; supported the Karzai government and funded aid programs. Pakistan alleged that Indian agents are training Baloch and Sindhi dissidents in Pakistan through Afghanistan. Kabul had suddenly become the new Kashmir - the new battleground for India-Pakistan rivalry.

Keywords : Afghan imbroglio, Kashmir conflict, Indo-Pak rivalry, US policy in South Asia

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