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## Factors that shaped Turkey's response to Syrian war (2011-2024) and Pakistan's reaction towards Afghan war (1979-1989): In Comparative Perspective

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**Abstract:** *The world is anarchic, and every state's action is determined by the anarchic system in which a state aims survival, self-help, and distribution of the power among states. The state's action is determined by the international structures rather than ideologies and moralities. This research paper is conducted through Comparative analysis of the structural factors behind Turkey's response to Syrian war (2011-2024) and Pakistan's response towards Afghan war (1979-1989) in context of Neorealism. Themes are developed in order to find out comparisons between both case-studies. Similarities and differences are found out in the study. Many researchers criticized the reactions of Turkey and Pakistan toward Syrian war (2011-2024) and Afghan War (1979-1989) respectively, but no attention was paid by them to study that how the regional changes, international gravity, alliance systems, convergence and divergence of interests with ally, strategic interests of the states and desire for friendly government in the neighboring states were the factors that compelled the both state to shape their actions. In this comparative case-studies research it is established that there were many similarities as well as differences that compelled Turkey and Pakistan to take their foreign policy decisions in the wake of Syrian war (2011-2024) and Afghan war (1979-1989) respectively particularly in the context of Neorealism.*

**Keywords:** Turkey, Afghan War, Pakistan, Syrian War, Russia, USA

### Introduction

Arab spring triggered a series of changes in the Middle East by overthrowing many authoritative regimes that began from Tunisia after a street merchant Mohamed Bouazizi had Self-immolation against police's cruelty. Syria is one of the Middle Eastern countries, which was affected by the regional changes and an uprising against the regime since 2011. The West alleged the Assad Regime of being involved in human rights' violations of the citizens of Syria when Ba'ath regime had started suppressing rallies. Russia was one of the countries that opposed the destabilization of Assad Regime. Moscow intended to save its friend from being encircled by West who could use human rights violation as justification for encirclement. These political dynamics formed two alliances, one supporting the Assad regime (Russia) and other opposing the regime (USA): In short, Syrian war became a ground of international gravity in new fashion cold war by establishment of two camps with different interests in Middle East (Demir, 2013). Syria is an Arabian Peninsula state having geographical neighbors: Israel,

Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. Turkey has 822 km boarder with Syria (Library of Congress, 2005).

The Syrian war was not only destabilizing Turkey's affair but it also threatened Turkish sovereignty and stability. Throughout the history, both countries had hostile relation towards each other but their relations had become cordial since 1998. Turkey assumed proactive approach towards Syrian war. Initially, Ankara offered advice to Assad regime to end violence against demonstrations and to do political reforms. Turkey had started supporting opposition rather than Assad regime by adaptation of isolationist policy toward Assad regime, when it was obvious that Assad did not act upon the Turkey's advice (Demir, 2013).

Similarly, Islamic revolution in Iran had a great impact on Afghan's tribal people and Islamist class that triggered revolt of the Afghan conservative people against the Communist regime of Afghanistan (Irani, 1980). Pakistan is a neighboring state to Afghanistan having border of 2,430 km. Pakistan had responded to Afghan war of 1979 when Afghanistan had faced devastating situation in its country's internal affair. Historically, Afghanistan's sovereignty was challenged by Soviet invasion, which directly threatened Pakistan's sovereignty. Pak-Afghan relations had been hostile since 1947 and even before the Afghan war, the relation between Pakistan and Afghanistan was hostile as determined by Saur Revolution in 1978. However, Saur revolution collapsed within twenty months after intervention of USSR in Afghanistan which was a shocked for the entire world. Kabul became victim of cold war that led to the formation two alliances: one in opposition of Soviet interests in Afghanistan (USA) and other supporting USSR's interests in Afghanistan (USSR); hence, Afghanistan became a ground of international rivalry. Pakistan became ally with western bloc and perceived its policy towards Afghanistan in light of its alignment. Pakistan supported the aspiration of people of Afghanistan rather than being allied with the Afghan regime (Butt, 2016).

## **1. Turkey's response toward Syrian War**

### **1.1. Regional Changes**

In political dynamics, Arab Spring was a biggest cause of change in the Middle East. The Middle East had affected by wave of democratic aspirations of masses through Arab Spring, which overthrew some regimes in the region. The people started opposing the un-democratic regimes of their respective countries in perspective of their democratic ambitions. The demands of people for human rights, democracy, freedom, liberty and fairness had been sparked in Tunisia since 2010 (Demir & Rijnoveanu, 2013). On 17 December, 2010 a street merchant burnt himself alive as a protest against regime that started a chain of demonstrations overthrowing the un-democratic regime of Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Egypt. The regime was not expecting that there would be any revolt against it, but in reality, the masses of Syria were dissatisfied for decades. Socio-economic conditions, high inflation, unemployment, lack of freedom of speech, political corruption and oppressive security forces were in common to the countries where protests started against the regimes (Ozturk, 2014).

### **1.3. International Gravity**

Syrian war was a ground for international and regional powers' involvement with their respective interests in it (Demir & Rijnoveanu, 2013). Since 2011, when the Syrian uprising had begun, external players seemed it as an opportunity to shape the war in accordance to their interests. Turkey, a neighboring country of Syria, wanted to avoid the spillover effects to its own territory. America had interests to encounter the Iranian influence in Syria as well as in the Levant. There were some states which were involved in war because of their affinity to fighting groups against the Assad regime like GCC countries and Libya. Iran's engagement in the war was because of its fear of the isolation which would be caused after departure of an ally, Assad, from power in Syria because Assad regime served many interests of Tehran in the Middle East. Russian interests in Syrian war were not to lose its long lasting ally of cold war, its center of influence through which it can influence the Middle East and last but not the least the Mediterranean seaport of Syria through which Moscow transited its trade to Europe.

All the actors involved had different interests regarding Syrian war, yet they were two camps: one wanted to oust Assad regime from power and another one struggled to remain the Assad in power (Martini, York, & Young, 2013).

#### **1.4. Desire of Friendly government in Syria**

Turkey was interested in good and friendly government in neighboring Syria because it would solve its long lasting Kurdish issue which had a major threat posed to Turkish integrity and security. Turkey aimed to oust Assad from power in order to build its influence in Syrian policies in order to enhance its inspiration and force in geopolitics struggle against Iran (Demir & Rijnoveanu, 2013).

#### **1.6. Strategic interest of Turkey to counter Iranian influence in Syria**

Iran and Turkey are the conservative regional competitors for balance of power in the region despite the fact that both are neighbors sharing 312 miles borders. Iran had strategic interests in Syria through which Iranian influence could be exercised over Syria's neighbors and especially in Middle East. Syrian strategic importance could be revealed from the fact that Iranian influence in region could be projected either negatively or positively through Syria. Damascus supported various radical groups: Hezbollah, while Iran aided these groups via Syria to encourage them in violent activities against their common enemy states. However, both friends had adored to influence over the region and had cordial relations despite their difference in political systems, ideologies and sects. They had great foreign policy ties regarding their common enemies, economic relations and military pacts. Syrian war became a ground for balance of power between regional actors: Iran and Turkey. The success of any group would build its significant image in the Middle East as well as to counter the Iranian influence in the region by ending up the Iran-Syria axis (Demir & Rijnoveanu, 2013). The fall of Assad regime would be a great loss to Iran: firstly, it would have deprived it of good friend in the region; and secondly, it would undermine the Iranian influence in region. Turkey wanted to counter the influence of Iran in Syria and desired a post war Turkish friendly government in Syria. Turkey viewed Syria as a strategic important because the latter supported the PKK revolutionary movements against Turkey as well as sharing common ethnic ties with Kurds which had directly or indirectly effect on public opinion in Turkey. When uprising against Assad regime began, Turkey advised Syria to bring reforms but Syria started torturing demonstrators. Resultantly, Turkey started supporting rebels against the regime to encounter Iranian inspiration. The importance of Syria could be estimated from the leaked words in 2009 from diplomatic cabal of Erdogan's that "[t]he best hopes of luring Syria out of Tehran's orbit" (Mohammed, 2011).

#### **1.2. Divergence and Convergence of Turkey's interests with Ally USA in Syrian war**

In December 2012, Obama administration of the USA declared legitimacy to National Coalition of Syria. (Martini, York, & Young, 2013) America provided non-lethal arms of worth 60 million dollars to rebels in 2013 according to secretary of state John Kerry (Glass, 2013). Patriot batteries had provided to Turkey for strengthen its defense system against missile attacks (Berzins, 2013). According the book "Inside Syria", the USA in April 2012, provided of worth 100 million dollars to the SNC for equipment and salaries (Erlich, 2014).

#### **1.7. Involvement in Neighbor's war and Turkey's role in Supporting Rebels against Regime in Syria**

Uprising in Syria against the Assad Regime had begun since March 2011. Since July 2011, Free Syrian Army had been formed in province of Hatay while Turkey had started supporting rebels since August 2011 (Ozturk, 2014). Turkey had opened its southern border with Syria for opponents to Assad regime and to Free Syrian Army. Turkey played a vital role in flourishing the Free Syrian Army. Turkish official had supplied resources and arms to rebels (Demir, 2017). The involvement of Turkey in Syria by backing up rebels became obvious since 2012. When opposition started against the Ba'ath regime,

the first opponent was called Free Syrian Army (FSA) who stood to protect demonstrators from the brutality of the Regime. In September-October 2011, direct confrontation had started between forces of Regime and Free Syrian Army. Turkey started assistance to opponent group during beginning of the conflict. Syrian National Council (SNC) was formed in Istanbul with the aim to amalgamate different opposition groups to regime and would harvest assistance from West. Turkey succeeded to some extent by bringing different section of oppositions under ascendancy of Muslim Brotherhood. The supremacy of Muslim Brotherhood had viewed by the Syrian-Kurdish officials in their complaint as Syrian National Council had been dominated by Muslim Brotherhood with backup from Turkey. New structure for SNC was announced in 2012, but it was dominated by Muslim Brotherhood. Obama administration adopted salience on Turkey's activities and support of Muslim Brotherhood because of the changes in the region and trust on its long last friend: Turkey. Turkey involvement became more intensified during 2012 by aided rebels in many ways ranging from weaponry to medical aid and it supported both secular and religious opposition groups. According to The Wall Street Journal that the head of Turkey intelligence agency (MIT) Hakan Fidan encouraged Turkey to strengthen opposition element by being assisted them with weapons, logistic backing and money. Without Turkish support to the rebels' group would not make them survive for long time. Turkey adopted flexible border policy by which FSA could easily move back and forth to Turkey and Syria. The Jabhat al-Nusra was regarded as extremist by West and source of concerned for the latter that comprised of 8,000 rebels fighting against regime forces. The opponents to regime amalgamated with Jihadist elements. Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, and Sanliurfa of Turkey were used for assistance of rebels. Free movements of the extremists in area of Turkey, near border of Syria, were recognized and were given medical treatment in province of Hatay. According to Juan C. Zarate and Thomas M. Sanderson that foreign fighters from West and Africa could get easily passport in Turkey for up to \$8,000 and accessed to Syria. The Turkish politician from opposition party, People's Republican Party, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu said that the ruling Justice and Development party (AKP) was being involved in Syria by providing the assistance to opposition terrorists against regime (Schanzer & Tahiroğlu, 2014).

### **Shift in Turkey's foreign policy during Syrian war**

Prior to Syrian war, Turkey had "zero problems" foreign policy innovative by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu aimed to improve its relations with neighbors and other countries outside the region (Abramowitz, et al., 2014). In Syrian war, Turkey sided with the rebels who were against the regime by interfering in Syria's internal affairs that showed a clear deviation from pre-war policies towards Syria (Demir, 2017). One of the shortcomings faced by Turkey in zero problem policy was the beginning of Syrian war by being started aiding rebels. On 23 March 2014, Turkey shot down MiG-23 Syrian warplane into Turkish airspace regarding which Erdogan said "if you violate our space our next slap will be harder" (Abramowitz, et al., 2014).

### **Pakistan's reaction to Afghan war**

#### **Major Regional Change: the Iranian revolution**

The Islamic revolution in Iran brought great fluctuations in the region. The Iranian Revolution was rooted in accordance with the desires of the people of Iran under the struggle of religious people who played a vital role in overthrowing of Pahlavi dynasty. Prof. Hamid Algar said that before the Iranian revolution, the opposition to the dynasty was "one the fundamental and most pervasive characteristics" of Shia Islam in 1979, the Islamic revolution in Iran brought great changes in the region because it became food for thought for the masses of Afghanistan who associated themselves to religious and tribal elements and, they were dissent with the leftist regime in country (Irani, 1980).

Iran was ruled by Pehlevi dynasty from 1925 to 1978. Pahlavi dynasty introduced moderation and secularization of Iran that resulted in the fragility of the traditional institutions and leadership as well as thickened the power of cleric. The moderation reforms were not popular among 32 million Shia

masses out of 36 million, but for the sake of gaining consent of people, Shah regarded those reform would rise in standard of life. The Pahlavi dynasty was unpopular and lacked legitimacy of masses because unpopular leadership, arbitrary decision of Shah and the grievance arose from failure of the moderation policies. The supporters of Shah were mostly rich class, bureaucrats and some segments of middle class while other people were controlled by Shah's secret forces: SAVAK (Irani, 1980).

Unpopular reforms, leadership, High Corporation, socio-economic down fall, secularism and poverty were the causes spark for the revolution. Firstly, the seed of nationalism was sowed by Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh in 1950-1953 but little attention was paid by Shah at that time. Other causes were presences of foreign workers whom were awarded with attractive salaries, luxury houses and lived highest standard of life at the cost of local urban Iranian population while the latter were suffered from unemployment, low wages, and lowest standard of life and lack of housing system. In 1973-1974 oil prices rambled that caused serious hardship due to loss of earning power which increased the grievance against the dynasty (Irani, 1980).

The above-mentioned causes further added the fuel to resentment of authoritarianism by local population against Shah because he was unable to fulfill the basic needs of his people. Opposition got stronger under the leadership of religious personality Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who was sent into exiled for 15 years from Iran. The powerful alliance was established against Shah by National Coalition Fund and religious group. He established communication with his supporters when he was in France. Demonstrations increased in every field of life against dynasty. The revolution was a battle between pro-opposition and pro-dynasty forces. The departure of the Shah to abroad from Iran was on 17 January, 1979 while Khomeini returned to Iran on the 31 January, 1979 was regarded as turning point in favor of opposition. At last Ayatollah Khomeini's struggle led the Iran into Islamic Republic of Iran (Irani, 1980).

Afghanistan and Iran are neighboring states while both underwent a series of changes in 1979 that had long last impact for them respectively. Iranian revolution impacted the Shia sect residing in the Afghan territory (Koepke, 2013) as well as influenced on the Islamic and tribal elements' uprising in Afghanistan. It was said according to some reports that in May 1979 approximately 3,000 soviet technicians, military men and advisors assisted the Afghan counterparts to suppress and fight against the uprising which posed a serious threat to the legitimacy of the leftist Afghan regime (Irani, 1980).

Hazaras were the Shia community lived in Afghanistan was the largest population than other communities: Sayyid, Tajik, Pashtun, Qizilbash and Baloch. Hazaras, who had inadequate political representation and were ruled by Pashtun rulers of Muhammadzai and Saddozai. They wished to change the political set up existed in Afghanistan. They firstly sided with the communist regime, but when its brutality, torturing the clerics and conservative elites became evident upon them besides their desire to change the political system and their future government could not be acquired in communist system; as many of them were inspired by the Iranian model because of the Marja-e-Taqlid in simple words which means "high-ranking authoritative interprets of the Shia religious law" (Koepke, 2013).

### **International Gravity**

Afghanistan was a ground of international gravity by the involvement of many actors in the war, besides its own people's opposition to the regime. Every state interfered in the Afghan war (1979-1989) as per accordance to its national interest. American involvement could be understood in the context of revenge and defeat faced in the Vietnam War, backed by its Cold War rival: Soviet Union (Gates, 2006). The Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan to avoid the spread of insurgency to its own land (Fermont-Barnes, 2012). Pakistan wanted to enhance its influence in Afghanistan, to work on its nuclear program, and see the Soviet-Afghan war as a threat to Pakistan's security (Coll, 2004). China opposed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan publicly and viewed USSR actions as "Soviet causes belli, can fool no one" (Bradsher, 1985). China was involved in the Afghan war to sell its cheap weapons to expand its market

(Crile, 2002). India favored and supported the Afghan government and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (Hameed, 2012). In short, the Afghan war became a ground of international conflict with all regional and international players having their interests involved.

## **1.2 Unstable Afghanistan**

To better understand the origin of the Afghan war, an overview of the internal politics of Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion is necessary to mention. In April 1978, a communist group of Soviet trained comprised of communist air force and army officers overthrew the regime of President Daoud. The coup resulted in the appointment of Nor Mohammed Taraki as president as well as prime minister, while Hafizullah Amin as foreign minister of Afghanistan and Babrak Karmal as deputy prime minister. All of the important figures were from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDA); however, the communist party of Afghanistan was divided into two segments: Khalqi and Parchami. It was a risky decision to have two different sections of the party at the government resulted in Karmal being posted to Czechoslovakia as an Ambassador of Afghanistan as well as other Parchami associates were sent to other countries as diplomats, which led to the domination of the Khalqi faction within the regime. The secret police of AGSA (Afghanistan Gatto Satoonkai Aidara: Department for Safeguarding the Interests of Afghanistan) was used to suppress the opponents to the Khalqi regime. Pul-e Charkhi prison in Kabul was famous for the killing of people without a legal trial. The regime ruled the country with Marxist ideology was not supported by the people. The regime introduced reforms: choice in marriage to women, co-education, elimination of bride price, compulsory schooling for girls and eradication of peasants' debts to landowners that caused a restless in the conservative rural sector and resulted in resistance against the regime on religious grounds. The peasant class less supported the regime, while the workers and peasants rejected the Marxist ideology and provoked armed resistance. The lower-class personals in army left their units either joined the resistance or returned to their home taking their skills and arms with them, yet Taraki remained associated with Marxist ideology and strengthened his ties with USSR by signing a treaty on 5 December, 1978 for military and economic assistance from Soviet, besides signing twenty years of "friendship and co-operation" between two countries, which was used by USSR as a justification in accordance with Article 4 of treaty cited in term of military co-operation (Fremont-Barnes, 2012).

On 15 March 1979, a mass uprising against the regime started in Herat. Most of the 17th division joined the revolt; they killed several Soviet advisors and government officials. The military occupied Herat, bombed the city and the rebels; approximately five thousand people were killed. The brutal approach of the regime, moreover, alienated many soldiers, which decreased the army's strength by less than half its official strength of 90,000 personnel. The revolt in Herat accelerated the uprising that spread across the country, with opposition declared through mosques and village elders who condemned Marxism as anti-Muslims and atheistic by declaring a fight against the regime. The resistance movement desired to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan, which was influenced by the Iranian revolution that occurred in Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. The Soviets feared that any threat to Marxist ideology would threaten its hold on Eastern Europe. Any disturbance in Afghanistan would have a direct influence on the USSR (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan), which would be a serious concern for Soviet's integrity. The Soviets focused more concentration on Afghanistan after the Herat uprising. On 17 March, Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet foreign minister, stated that Afghanistan should not drift away from the Soviet Union. Taraki was unable to control the internal situation of the country and repeatedly requested the Soviet intervention to assist in maintaining the law and order situation in Afghanistan, but the Soviets refused direct intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan in order to avoid aggravating the situation. A coup by Amin that ousted Taraki from power changed the Soviet attitude towards Afghanistan, as well as worsened the internal situation of the state. Amin's rule increased the terror by AGSA then renamed as KhaD (Khedamat-e Ettelaat-e Dawlati: State Intelligence Agency). The Soviet Union distanced itself from the Amin regime because of its internal brutality that

left no hope with Amin to establish relations with America. Unfortunately, the U.S looked disapprovingly towards the Amin regime after February 1979 when Afghan security forces ruined a salvage attempt to rescue the USA ambassador in Kabul from unknown kidnappers. Furthermore, the U.S attention from Kabul was diverted by the Iranian hostage crisis. In mid-1979, the Afghan economy worsened, and the rebels, who were called mujahedin, became influential in the downfall of Amin's regime. KGB consultants visited the state to know the best possible way to safeguard a speedy subjection of the country with less interference from Afghan forces. Last but not least Soviet Red Army invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 (Fremont-Barnes, 2012).

### **Factors responsible for the uprising status of Afghanistan from 1978 to 1979**

There were many factors that led toward the Afghan uprising against the communist rule. First, the fragile government of Afghanistan was dependent on the Soviet on its foreign policy decisions. The Soviet-Sino conflict had an impact on Afghanistan. People's democratic party of Afghanistan wished to have cordial relations with China, besides its allegiance towards the Soviet which enhanced the burden within the party to follow an independent foreign policy. Secondly, the change in the political weather of the region in shape of the Iranian revolution which had an impact on the Afghan people, particularly on religious perspective, posed a threat to the communist regime. In 1978, Islamabad supported the tribal element in Afghanistan against the Afghan communist regime for two purposes: to gain the legitimacy at home of its internal policy and externally counter its enemy: the Afghan regime (Haliday).

#### **1.2 Two major alliance systems**

The Soviet-Afghan war became a bone of contention between the two major powers. Many other countries were indirectly involved in supporting the rebels against the communist regime of Afghanistan and the USSR. The Afghan war was an international game because superpowers and regional states played their role. The Afghan war led to the establishment of an alliance system. One alliance was in support of the USSR's interests in Afghanistan, while another group (Western Alliance) was in opposition to its interests (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2016).

#### **1.3 Allies with the USA**

Mostly, neighboring countries to Afghanistan were in the USA camp. In the Afghan war, Pakistan was an ally of the USA instead of the USSR. Each country had its own interests engaged in the Afghan war. When the USSR invaded Afghanistan, the USA got the confidence of Pakistan to assist the fighters who were against the pro-Soviet communist regime (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2016).

#### **1.4 Convergence and Divergence of interests: the USA in war**

The Afghan war posed a security threat to Pakistan. It had security as well as other interests to ally with the USA. The coalition of America and Pakistan served some mutual interests against the pro-Soviet government and to oust the USSR from Afghanistan. Washington needed Islamabad's confidence to support the rebels. Secondly, there was a security interest in building an atomic bomb that needed economic assistance in the shape of an alliance with the USA. After President Jimmy Carter assumed office of presidency, he thought that there were many serious matters between both countries (USA and Pakistan), but the situation took a turn with the Afghan war as Pakistan received 3 billion dollars from the Reagan Administration (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2016). Despite some common areas of interest between the two countries, there were divergences of interests, such as Pakistan's nuclear program, but the USA ignored the matter to highlight further due to the Afghan war (Rizvi, 2004). Without the cooperation of Pakistan, it was difficult for America to support to the Afghan insurgents (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2016).

#### **1.5 Involvement in the neighbor's war and Pakistan's role**

In the Afghan war, Pakistan supported the desires and wishes of the people of Afghanistan rather than siding with the Afghan communist regime. Pakistan was critical of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, as it perceived Soviet presence on Afghan soil as a risk to its own security and integrity. Pakistan sided with the USA in the Afghan war with the expectation that many of its own interests would be fulfilled rather than being a partner with the USSR (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2016).

### **1.6 India and the Afghan war**

Although Pakistan and India are neighboring countries, their relationship has never been cordial since their independence in 1947. The Indo-Afghan relations could be seen in the context of India's rivalry with Pakistan. During the Afghan war, India supported the communist government of Afghanistan and Indian foreign policy was inclined towards the USSR from 1980 to 1989, even though India was a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. New Delhi continued its support to the Afghan regime of Najibullah and his policies of National Reconciliation even after the decision of Soviet withdrawal. India, after the USSR's withdrawal, supported those groups who were less likely to be supported by Pakistan (Najibullah, 2017).

There were strong diplomatic and cultural ties between India and Afghanistan during King Zahir Shah's rule. Kabul was not an adjacent neighbor of India in terms of sharing common borders. India did not oppose the Soviet stance of intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. The rivalry between India and Pakistan could be sensed from an observation of Mr. Parthasarathy, former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, who viewed that reconciliation between Pakistan and India was like treating two patients who were allergic to each other (Malone, 2011).

Indira Gandhi, an elected Indian prime minister in the 1980s, assumed a pro-Soviet stance. India supported the Soviet view of the withdrawal of limited forces in a limited time period, as well as not criticizing the Soviet intervention in the UN General Assembly. She taunted Pakistan's diplomatic pressure on the USSR by saying to the Pakistani ambassador, "Do you expect the UN resolution will force the Soviets to withdraw troops?" (Sattar, 2006).

Pakistan's involvement in the Soviet-Afghan war was based on interests and not entirely on any ideological basis. Pakistan seemed an opportunity in which it could counter the long-standing enemy India, Indian influence and struggled for a pro-Pakistani government in Afghanistan. The Afghan war was a golden opportunity in the hands of Pakistan to get rid of the Pashtunistan issue and to decrease the Indian and Soviet influence in Afghanistan. (Rana & Sial, 2013).

Pakistan supported the wishes of the Afghan masses against the Afghan Communist regime, and Soviet forces were regarded by India as a strategic interest to enhance its influence in Afghanistan. India showed its antagonism as then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi informed the Soviet President that Afghanistan under the influence of Pakistan would not be acceptable to India (Ostermann, 2003).

### **1.7 Desire for a friendly government in the neighboring state**

Pakistan wished for a friendly government in Afghanistan in order to avoid instability at home. The Afghan war was seen as an opportunity for Pakistan to change the hostile Kabul government and its long desire for a friendly government in its neighbor to counter the Indian inspiration and the Pashtunistan issue that posed a threat to Pakistan (Sial, 2013).

### **1.6 Shift in Pakistan's foreign policy during the Afghan war**

Pakistan withdrew from SEATO and the Commonwealth in November and January 1972, respectively. It adopted a policy of mutual interests and bilateralism rather than permanent alignment. Before the Afghan war, Pakistan had become a member of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979. Non-aligned foreign policy resulted in the greater identification of the issues and causes of the developing countries; the relations between China and Pakistan became friendlier and flourished. The Afghan war caused a

change in Pakistan's foreign policy by starting to support the rebels against the communist regime and opposed the USSR invasion in Afghanistan and by opening doors for refugees who sought asylum from the brutality of war inside Afghanistan (Rizvi, 2004).

| <b>Similarities</b>                                     | <b>Pakistan -Afghanistan case study</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Turkey-Syria case study</b>                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Regional change                                         | The Afghans got inspired from the Islamic revolution in Iran.                                                                                                                                           | The Syrians got inspired by the Arab spring that led some Arab countries to become democratic.                                      |
| International Rivalry                                   | The Afghan war became ground of international rivalry because many regional and international actors play their roles.                                                                                  | Similarly, Syrian war became a ground for international and regional players.                                                       |
| Cold war between two international players              | Afghan war was part of cold war in which two super powers (USA and USSR) avoided direct confrontation.                                                                                                  | Syrian war seemed as in cold war fashion between USA and Russia.                                                                    |
| Pakistan/ Turkey Decision                               | Pakistan sided with the Afghan masses in Afghan war rather than regime.                                                                                                                                 | Similarly, Turkey supported the aspirations of Syrian people rather than regime.                                                    |
| Against regional rival in war                           | Pakistan was against Indian influence in Afghanistan. (Afghanistan and India did not share any direct borders)                                                                                          | Turkey is against Iranian influence in Syria. (similarly, Iran did not share border with Syria)                                     |
| Interests                                               | Pakistan desired a friendly government in Afghanistan.                                                                                                                                                  | Similarly, Turkey wished a friendly government in Syria.                                                                            |
| Ally with USA                                           | Pakistan was ally of the USA during Afghan war, having similar and dissimilar interests.                                                                                                                | Turkey allied with USA in Syrian war, similarly having convergence and divergence of interests.                                     |
| Shift in policies                                       | Pakistan brought a great shift in foreign policy with the Afghan war; prior to involvement in Afghan war it persuaded non-alignment policy.                                                             | Similarly, Turkey brought a shift in its policy with Syrian war, before that it had zero-problem policy.                            |
| Two major alliances either to support or oppose regime. | There were two major alliances one under USA leadership who were against regime and Soviet presence in Afghanistan while the second one operates under leadership of USSR who were supporter of regime. | Similarly, alliance under USA leadership who were supporters of rebels while the alliance of Russia was to support of Assad regime. |

Table: author' Assessment

#### **Dissimilarities between the both case studies**

| <b>Dissimilarities</b>     | <b>Pak-Afghan case-study</b>                                                            | <b>Turkey-Syria case study</b>                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nature of regional changes | Iranian revolution that brought a regional trigger was religious in nature.             | Arab Spring, which brought the democratic aspiration, was aimed democratic changes in region.                                              |
| USA assistance             | USA provided much assistance to Pakistan in Afghan war.                                 | USA provided very little assistance to Turkey in Syrian war.                                                                               |
| Priorities of USA          | USA was against the communist regime in Afghanistan and Soviet Union.                   | Initially, the priority of USA was to oust Assad from power but with the emergence of ISIS, his priorities became first to cope with ISIS. |
| USSR/Russia                | Soviet intervened directly and militarily in Afghanistan to save the Afghan government. | Russia did not intervene directly to save the Assad regime but used indirect assistance.                                                   |
| Involvement                | Pakistan used only indirect rather                                                      | Turkey used both methods of proxy                                                                                                          |

|                 |                           |                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| direct/indirect | than direct intervention. | as well as direct intervention. |
|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|

## Table: authors' Assessment

### Conclusion

The change in the international structure compels states to change their behavior accordingly in order to ensure their survival and interests even by siding in the alliance or becoming an ally because the world is anarchic as there is no international government which can ensure a state's survival. Pakistan during Afghan war (1979-1989) was compelled by the circumstance of the regional changes, alliance with the USA, shift in its foreign policy, and its desire of friendly government in the neighboring state: similarly, Turkey during Syrian war (2011-2024) was constrained by the Arab spring as the regional changes and uprising in the Syria, ally with the USA, desire of friendly government in the neighboring states and shift in the foreign policy during the Syrian war. The comparative analysis of the both case-studies shows that regional changes, wish to have a friendly government in the neighboring state, alliance with the USA and shift in the foreign policy during the wars were common between the both cases.

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