

## Pak-Afghan Border and Regional Stability: A Perspective of Pakistan Military

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### Abstract

The Pakistan-Afghanistan border has remained volatile since Pakistan's independence in 1947. Two superpower invasions of Afghanistan have further amplified the significance of the contentious border. Our research focuses on border porosity along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border influencing regional stability. The study involves current serving army personnel as respondents. A total of fifty-two respondents were selected through convenience sampling. We utilized a structured questionnaire to gauge the perceptions of Pakistan Army personnel concerning the border porosity and its impact on regional stability. The data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing frequency distribution and cross-tabulation techniques. Our empirical findings reveal that the porosity of the Durand Line contributes to the proliferation of terrorism, smuggling, and human trafficking. A notable factor driving illegal migration is the scarcity of official entry points. Most respondents (92.3%) acknowledged using alternative illicit routes to cross the Durand Line. The absence of legal documentation (51.9% of respondents) also emerged as a primary cause of unauthorized entries into Pakistan. Regarding the impediments to sealing the border, 67.3% of respondents affirmed that the Government of Afghanistan plays a significant role. Conversely, 86.5% of respondents agreed that the registration of Afghan refugees has resulted in a decline in terrorism. Nevertheless, implementing

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fencing along Pakistan-Afghanistan positively enhances border security and regional stability.

**Keywords**

Cross-border, porosity, security, terrorism, border fence, Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Introduction**

Effective border management consistently enhances a nation's security and economy. However, borders often engender challenges for the indigenous populations on both sides. This issue has remained a point of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan (Sojasi et al., 2018). Pakistan initially pursued a defensive policy by constructing a border fence; however, in 2017, it transitioned to an offensive policy due to the limited options available to counteract malicious terrorist activities. During this period, the Pakistani government issued 'shoot to kill' orders for individuals using unauthorized methods to cross the border (Oztig, 2020)

The significance of the Pakistan-Afghanistan (referred to as Pak-Afghan hereafter) border stems from the geopolitical importance of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. In 1893, Afghan ruler Amir Abdulreham entered a treaty with the British government (Payne, 2012). This treaty established the Durand Line, demarcating a boundary between the British subcontinent and Afghanistan. The successors of the Afghan governments subsequently reaffirmed the treaty in 1905, 1919, and 1930 (Yousafzai & Yaqubi, 2017).

In 1947, Pakistan's establishment occurred, prompting Afghanistan to reject the aforementioned treaty and assert its claim over the western side of the Indus River as Afghan territory. Afghanistan also contested the status of the Durand Line as an international border, bringing the matter before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Hoeffler, Ijaz, & Von Billerbeck, 2011; Lambah, 2012). Although the international community recognized it as a legitimate border, successive Afghan regimes, including the Taliban government, refused to acknowledge it (Khan, 2017).

The rejection of the Durand Line as an international border has profoundly impacted the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past seven decades. The failure of both nations to establish effective governance in the border region has created a void that non-governmental actors have exploited. These militants infiltrated the border area, undermining the tribal system (Neill, 2010). If this region continues to serve as a haven for militants, the possibility of another significant attack on the Western world, akin to 9/11, remains a concern (Nawaz & De Borchgrave, 2009).

Pakistan has endeavoured to curb terrorist activities and the influence of non-state actors through various military operations and policies (Manchanda, 2017). The limited control Pakistan exercised over (erstwhile) Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan provided an environment conducive for terrorists to establish training camps, such as those affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban (Janjua, 2009). While FATA was initially perceived as a 'safe haven' for non-state actors, this insurgency expanded across the border regions of erstwhile FATA and into the southeastern and eastern areas of Afghanistan over time.

The present state of Pashtunistan (encompassing both sides of the Durand Line) is shaped by Islamophobia propagated in Western media and the local population's resentment towards unwarranted and unjust interference in the region. Several challenges have contributed to this scenario, including acknowledging the

Durand Line's legitimacy, India's involvement in the western provinces of Pakistan via Afghanistan, and the lingering refugee issue. These factors have significantly hindered regional stability (Schetter, 2013).

The Durand Line assumed global significance after the post-9/11 war on terror. Pakistan incurred the repercussions of aligning with the United States in this endeavor. The surge in terrorism after 9/11 had detrimental effects on Pakistan's security landscape, inflicting extensive human, infrastructural, property, and economic losses (M. M. Khan, 2015). This situation similarly impacted Afghanistan and Iraq. The toll amounted to approximately 1.3 million lives lost directly or indirectly in Iraq (1 million), Afghanistan (220,000), and Pakistan (80,000) due to the conflict (Seymour, 2015). Although Afghanistan served as the battleground, Pakistan's partnership with the USA in counterterrorism efforts shook the foundations of its society. The porous and treacherous nature of the long border played a facilitating role for terrorists, who traversed into Pakistan, seeking refuge in tribal areas. Some also sought shelter in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to unrest in Sindh and Punjab (Tariq, 2018).

Abdullahi and Gawi (2021) define border porosity as "the leakage or breach of the border allowing illegal and unofficial migration of people, goods, and ammunition between countries" (p. 443). The Pak-Afghan border is one of the world's longest porous borders, characterized by its vast expanse. Its significance as a pivotal commercial and trade route for Pakistan with Afghanistan and other Asian countries is undeniable. However, its porosity has transformed it into a hub for illicit activities. Neo-Taliban, the Al-Qaeda network, and the Haqqani network are attributed to disrupting law and order (Tariq et al., 2020). The prevalence of abandoned kidnapping cases and the proliferation of weaponry underscore the consequences of porous borders, as seen in countries like Ghana, the Republic of Benin, and Nigeria.

To understand the current situation of Pak-Afghan border, there is a need to consider three aspects: (i) there is an ideological gulf between Islamic militants and the Western world, (ii) there are long-term conflicts between states and tribes, (iii) the unresolved issues among Kabul, Islamabad and ethnic nationalists create an adverse condition on the border. Terrorism is also increasing in both countries due to the porosity of the Pak-Afghan border (Khan & Wagner, 2013).

Two provinces of Pakistan- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Balochistan are situated along the border of Afghanistan. Pashtun is the major ethnicity found on both sides of the border. Pashtuns share 40% of Afghan's population while 15% to 20% of Pakistan's population (Mazhar & Goraya, 2010). The Baloch community is also vital and is present on both sides of the border. Both ethnic groups gain a large proportion of their income from illegal trade through the porosity of the Pak-Afghan border (Bajoria, 2009).

The influx of Afghan refugees came to Pakistan after the Russian invasion. More than 2.7 million Afghan migrants were living in Pakistan, out of which 74% were born in Pakistan. 80% of Afghan immigrants came to Pakistan before 1985 (Guedes, 2013). The population of registered Afghan refugees decreased over time. Currently, 1.3 Million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan, of which 52% are children and 4% are 60 years or older (Gul, 2022). Migration from Afghanistan is not only due to war; cultural trend is also a fundamental reason behind legal and illegal migration. People also migrated for livelihood and education. People who emigrated from rural areas of Afghanistan settled in urban areas of Pakistan and Iran (Monsutti, 2006). Most Afghans migrate to Peshawar for kinship and to seek education, health and livelihood. The social

networks of Afghanis and politico-religious parties on both sides prompt the people to migrate from Afghanistan to the surroundings of Peshawar (Habibi & Hunte, 2006).

The physiography of the Pak-Afghan border is very complicated. Hindu Kush range, Sufaid Koh, Toba Kakar range and Chaghi hills from north to south are situated on the Pak-Afghan border (Ikram & Anwar, 2018). Khyber Pass, Tochi Pass, Gomal Pass, Khajok Pass, and Mazari Pass are on the border. Kabul River, Kuram River and Gomal River are the important rivers that cross the Pak-Afghan border from Afghanistan to Pakistan (Sheikh et al., 2009).

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan and India are intricately entwined with security concerns and national interests. The specter of external threats has perennially loomed over Pakistan's security landscape. This dilemma has manifested on its eastern and western border—while Pakistan has engaged in three wars on the eastern front, it grappled with post-9/11 challenges on its western border (Tariq, Khan, & Khan, 2019). Pakistan has made vigorous attempts to fortify its borders and curb illicit movements; however, it remains a haven for illegal immigrants, primarily due to Afghanistan's lack of cooperation (Mairaj-ul-Hamid, 2017).

Accusations have been exchanged between Afghanistan and Pakistan concerning internal insurgencies. Pakistan has consistently denied any involvement in Afghanistan and advocated for democratic continuity while suggesting border fencing to mitigate friction. Following the 9/11 incident and the US attack on Afghanistan, the Taliban infiltrated Pakistan through the porous points of the Durand Line (Khan, 2018). The tide of Talibanization swept Pakistan, particularly the tribal areas, breeding armed violence, extremism, and mass mobilization. These outcomes adversely impacted the political, social, and economic fabric of both Pakistan and Afghanistan (Wang, 2010). While the 30 million Pashtuns in Pakistan refrained from joining their 15 million Afghan counterparts, Pakistan remained hesitant to engage in bilateral discussions about Pashtunistan (Ponka et al., 2017).

Terrorism's penetration in both nations owes much to the permeable Durand Line, the scarcity of military checkpoints, and a lack of cooperation from officials on both sides. Border clashes have surged since 2012-13 (Khan, 2017). History underscores that the Pak-Afghan border consistently attracts the attention of international political and strategic players. Pakistan's significance extends to the global community, given its hosting of Afghan refugees and potential role in Afghan stability (Micinski, 2021). With recurrent border clashes involving India and Afghanistan, Pakistan is strategically influential in fostering regional peace. Furthermore, China's involvement in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) augments regional stability.

The international community is responsible for facilitating an agreed-upon border delimitation. If both countries successfully secure their borders, the ripple effect would resonate beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan, fostering global peace. The nexus between regional stability and border security underscores the interconnectedness of neighboring countries and the ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan advocates for border security through fencing, while Afghanistan's concurrence remains elusive (Bano, 2019). Afghanistan, labeled a narcotics-driven state, can transform its image by developing foreign trade through Pakistan, unearthing a solution to its landlocked status. Instead of nurturing an Indo-Afghan nexus, Afghanistan should foster sound political and economic relations with Pakistan, leveraging shared culture and religion. Such a connection would bolster the Islamic bloc and buttress regional stability across the area. Failure to address the tensions between the two states could

catalyze superpower interventions, unsettling both nations and impacting the broader region. In today's global village, the interwoven relationships between countries ripple beyond their borders, influencing allied states that have invested in economic or trading projects.

Pakistan started fencing the Pak-Afghan border in March 2017. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, slow-running economy, complicated physiography and volatile security situation, 85% of fencing has been completed, which stopped cross-border attacks from different militant groups. This double fence is 3.6 meters (11 feet) high from Pakistan's side and 4 meters (13 feet) high from Afghanistan's side. The whole fence is topped with razor wire. One thousand forts and 16 official crossing points are constructed on the Pak-Afghan border, which is expected to cost \$500 Million (Basit, 2021).

Pakistan's military claimed that the construction of the fence on the border had reduced the attacks from Afghanistan's side, stopped the free movement of families, traders and guerilla fighters and reduced smuggling and human trafficking. Military forces also believed the security situation was improving in lawless tribal areas. Local people were unhappy because this fencing divided the families (Bezhan & Khattak, 2021).

Despite the severe reaction from the Afghanistan side and opposition to anti-Pakistan lobbying, Pakistan is still committed to completing the fencing of the Pak-Afghan border. The contentious discourse surrounding the Pak-Afghan border has ensured its persistent coverage in both regional and international media outlets (Alamgirian & Riaz, 2019). The trajectory of relations between the two nations hinges on several pivotal factors: agreements involving the US, the Afghan Government, and the Taliban; progress in intra-Afghan negotiations; the withdrawal of US troops; assurances from the Taliban regarding counterterrorism efforts; and the influence of India on Afghanistan's internal dynamics (Clayton, 2022). This research aims to uncover the role of border porosity along the Pak-Afghan border in the context of regional stability.

## **Research Methodology**

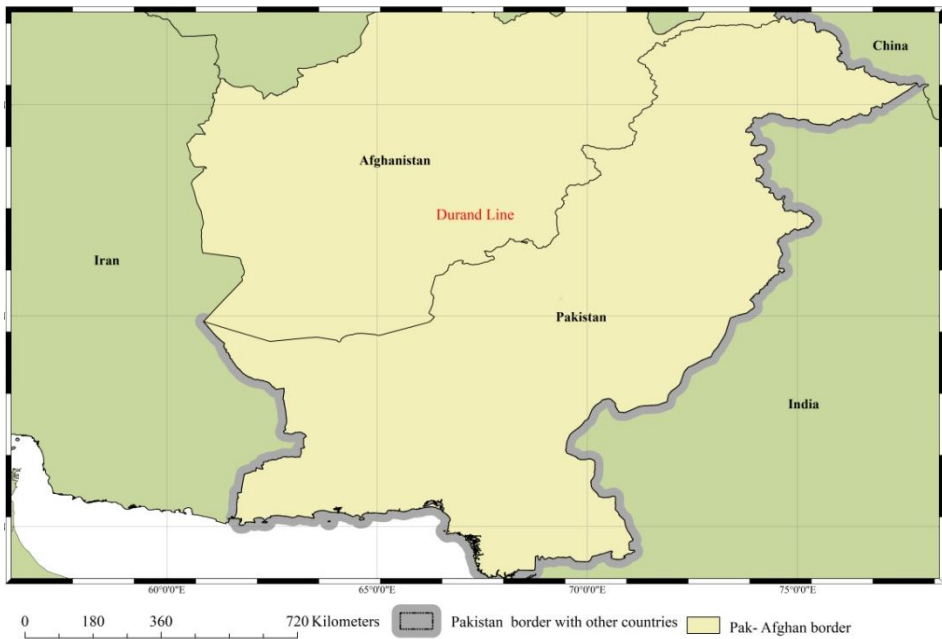
The current research focuses on the Pak-Afghan border depicted in Figure 1. This border area comprises deserts, high mountain ranges, narrow valleys, barren land, and rugged topography. Notably, it is one of the world's most porous and treacherous borders (Ahmed, Khan, & Fayaz, 2022). A structured questionnaire was designed to gather insights from Army personnel regarding Pak-Afghan border porosity and its implications on regional stability. The questionnaire underwent pre-testing and subsequent updates based on requirements. A sample frame was meticulously constructed by compiling a list of Army personnel from official Army records. The targeted population for this research included respondents who had served at the Durand Line or possessed sufficient knowledge of the study area. A systematic approach was employed to establish contact with Army personnel. Initially, convenient sampling techniques were employed, where each Army personnel was contacted through personal connections, and their informed consent was obtained.

Out of 60 Army personnel who initially consented, eight respondents declined to provide information on border management, thus reducing the sample size to 52. Following the scheduling of appointments, interviews were arranged according to respondents' convenience, encompassing methods such as face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews via cellular services, and Skype calls. Ultimately, 52 questionnaires were completed by Army personnel stationed at the Pak-Afghan border.

Among these, 35 respondents participated in detailed face-to-face interviews, while 11 respondents were interviewed through video calls utilizing platforms like Skype and WhatsApp.

Additionally, six respondents engaged in voice interviews via cellular services. The data collection phase spanned four months, reflecting the diverse locations where respondents were stationed. Army personnel’s names, ranks, and serving stations were not recorded to uphold respondent privacy. The data collected were subsequently analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing frequency distribution and cross-tabulation techniques.

**Figure 1.** Study Area: Pakistan-Afghanistan Border



**Results and Discussion**

Figure 2 illustrates the porous points along the Durand Line, reflecting the impact of physiography and climatic conditions on the porous nature of the Pak-Afghan border. Satellite imagery data indicates that Pakistan’s KPK province exhibits higher porosity than Baluchistan. Notably, the Pak-Afghan border near Chitral benefits from enhanced security due to its cold climate and rugged mountainous terrain. In this region, only one porous point has been identified. Conversely, significant porosity is observed to the west of Dir and the east of Nuristan, with nearly 14 porous points identified in these areas. Mainly, two primary porous entry points are located in the Badanay region (Kunar province of Afghanistan), where the absence of population settlements and checkpoints contributes to their porous nature.

Additionally, there are 18 porous points situated west of Ajabay and Toor camp on the Pakistan side and east of Asmar and Asadabad on the Afghanistan side. These points are considered porous due to the lack of human settlements and military checkpoints. The harsh climate characterized by severe cold weather further deters





**Table 1.** Experiences at the Pak-Afghan border

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Experience spending time along the borderline</i>	Yes	51	98.1
	No	1	1.9
<i>Total time spent along the Pak-Afghan border</i>	Less than two years	15	28.8
	2 - 4 years	21	40.4
	4 - 6 years	15	28.8
	6 - 8 years	1	1.9
<i>Knowledge about legal ways on the Pak-Afghan border</i>	Yes	51	98.1
	No	1	1.9

Table 2 illustrates a substantial consensus among respondents (92.3%) in agreement regarding the utilization of illicit routes at porous points by local inhabitants to access territories within Pakistan and Afghanistan. A minor fraction (7.7%) expressed dissent. Respondents point to intrinsic links between individuals residing on either side of the border, attributed to shared ethnicities and tribal associations. Cross-border residents frequently seek medical assistance in Pakistan, circumventing official channels due to hurdles posed by registration prerequisites and the acquisition of daily necessities.

Respondents note variations in illegal entries into Pakistan attributed to a weak border control mechanism, particularly in porous areas. About 40.4% of respondents agree that fewer than 30,000 people use illicit/illegal routes to enter Pakistan every month. A majority (48.1%) agree that 31,000 to 50,000 people cross the Durand Line through porous points. A minority (7.7%) believe that 51,000 to 70,000 people illegally cross the border, and 3.8% concur that a substantial number (over 70,000) do so monthly.

Many respondents, especially those holding the rank of Colonel, assert that population infiltration through porous points has diminished due to a stringent and effective border monitoring system implemented by the Pakistani Government and Pakistan Army. This decline in illegal migration can be attributed to the establishment of numerous checkpoints by the army at short intervals along the border, enabling vigilant monitoring and thorough inspection of local movements.

Illegal border crossings primarily occur due to the absence of proper immigration documents. It is common for individuals to cross the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan for trade purposes and then return to Afghanistan. A substantial 92.3% of respondents agree that those entering Pakistan illegally lack identification, while a mere 7.7% believe that individuals crossing the border often have identification but resort to illegal routes due to limited legal entry points on the Afghan-Pak border.

Table 2 outlines the reasons for illegal entries into Pakistan via the Pak-Afghan border. Approximately 30.8% of respondents indicate that people choose illegal entry points because they are closer and reduce the distance for those entering Pakistan illegally. Another 51.9% concur that illegal entry results from the lack of proper legal documentation. The allure of better healthcare and education facilities in Pakistan also drives regular illegal entries by native individuals from Afghanistan, who often lack legal records and thus employ porous routes.



In contrast to Afghan refugees with legal documentation constraints, the Pakistani government lacks comprehensive information and policy measures for undocumented groups, such as Bangladeshis, Burmese, and other refugees residing in Pakistan. The migration discourse has unrecognized these groups (Shah et al., 2020). About 17.3% of respondents hold diverse opinions regarding illegal entry into Pakistan. According to respondents, a significant factor is terrorism, with those involved in such activities utilizing illegal routes to Pakistan. Rubin (2007) highlights the ongoing activity of Taliban-led insurgent groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Peters and Rassler (2010) underline the involvement of the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, and Pakistani Taliban with Al-Qaida in terror attacks and illicit activities, including kidnappings. Due to their illicit nature, these smugglers bypass legal border crossings and seek alternative routes into Pakistan. The third reason for illegal border crossings is the shared ethnicity of the native populations on both sides of the Pak-Afghan. While these individuals share social ties and familial relations, limited access to legal entry points necessitates using illegal border routes.

**Table 2.** Reasons for crossing the border through illegal ways

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>People use any other way rather than the official way on Pak-Afghan</i>	Yes	48	92.3
	No	4	7.7
<i>People use illegal ways</i>	less than 30,000 people/Month	21	40.4
	31,000 to 50,000 peoples	25	48.1
	51,000 to 70,000 people/Month	4	7.7
	more than 70,000 people/Month	2	3.8
<i>People who cross the border through illegal ways</i>	Yes	4	7.7
	No	48	92.3
<i>Reasons for illegal entries</i>	Short distance	16	30.8
	Unavailability of documents	27	51.9
	Others	9	17.3

Table 3 reveals that the vast majority of respondents (98.1%) concur that the rise in terrorism can be attributed to the porous nature of the Durand Line. There is variation in the views of respondents. 9.6% believe that the border’s porosity has contributed to a less than 10% increase in terrorism. Similarly, 11.5% of respondents believe that terrorism has escalated from 11% to 30%, while another 9.6% agree on figures spanning from -31% to 50%. A significant number of respondents (27.0%) agree that this threat has surged by 51% to 70% due to infiltration facilitated by the porous Durand Line. Furthermore, 23.7% of respondents assert that the issue of terrorism has intensified from 70% to 90%, with an equal percentage believing that the menace has escalated by more than 90% due to the vulnerabilities at the Pak-Afghan border’s porous points.

The Pak-Afghan border, the longest border of Pakistan, boasts a complex physiography. Spanning mountainous terrain throughout its entirety, this border

presents a formidable challenge for sealing due to its rugged geography. The region’s rigid mountains and harsh climate render sealing this border formidable. As depicted in Table 3, 88.5% of respondents agree that the border could be sealed. Conversely, only 11.5% of respondents believe that the Afghan-Pak border cannot be sealed due to its intricate physiography, obstacles posed by the Afghan government, and limited financial resources.

**Table 3.** Role of border porosity in terrorism

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Increasing terrorism because of porous points</i>	Yes	51	98.1
	No	1	1.9
<i>Extension of terrorism</i>	Less than 10 %	5	9.6
	11 to 30 %	6	11.5
	31 to 50 %	5	9.6
	51 to 70 %	14	27.0
	70 to 90 %	12	23.7
	More than 90 %	10	19.2
Total		52	100.0
<i>Possibility of sealing the border</i>	Yes	46	88.5
	No	6	11.5
	Total	52	100.0

Table 4 outlines respondents’ perspectives on measures, obstacles, and costs for securing the Pak-Afghan border. A majority of respondents (50%) advocate for the establishment of military checkpoints at short distances. These checkpoints should be positioned closely enough to enable security personnel to maintain visual contact. Given the challenging geography of the border, the option of placing a fence along the borderline does not receive strong support. However, 32.7% of respondents favor sealing the border by constructing a fence. In this scenario, establishing military checkpoints and effective patrolling teams would be essential for safeguarding the border fence.

A mere 3.8% of respondents endorse securing the border by digging a ditch along its line. The complexity of the Hindu Kush and Salman Mountain ranges dissuades 50% of respondents from supporting this method. A past attempt during General Pervez Musharraf’s tenure involved digging a 500-kilometre ditch on the Pak-Afghan border, but this endeavor proved unsuccessful due to the accumulation of stones, mud, debris, and other waste materials.

A smaller portion of respondents (13.5%) propose border security by constructing a wall. They also stress the necessity of military checkpoints and armed patrols to ensure border integrity. For 11.5% of respondents, the Afghan and Pakistani governments share responsibility for the unresolved issue. In contrast, 1.9% believe the Government of Pakistan is the primary impediment to border sealing. Most respondents (67.3%) attribute major hindrances to the government of Afghanistan due to historical factors like the ‘Pakhtunistan’ slogan and Afghanistan’s landlocked status. Respondents indicate that Afghanistan’s reluctance to resolve the issue stems from its perception of all Pashtuns as an integral part of its territory. Afghanistan’s strategic interest in trade routes to the Arabian Sea and Gwadar Port further complicates the

matter. A small percentage (1.9%) identify a lack of capital as the key hurdle to resolution, while 17.3% view the challenging physiography of the tribal areas of KPK and Baluchistan as the primary obstacle.

Concerning the project’s cost, 3.8% of respondents estimate it to be between Rs. 21 to 30 billion. Meanwhile, 23.1% believe the cost lies between Rs. 31 to 40 billion. A quarter of respondents (25%) contend that Rs. 41 to 50 billion would cover the expense of sealing the border through fence installation and checkpoint establishment. A majority (48.1%) anticipate that the cost will surpass Rs. 50 billion.

Historically, Afghanistan has responded with tension whenever Pakistan attempted to secure the border. An illustrative incident is the Angoor Ada confrontation. Recently, when Pakistan sought to construct a gate at Angoor Ada on the borderline, Afghan border security forces opened fire. This incident resulted in the loss of soldiers and one Colonel-ranked officer. Such border-sealing efforts can be expected to generate tension and potential loss of life. Respondents’ opinions on the loss of human life vary; 23.1% believe it would be under 50 persons, 34.6% expect it to range between 51 to 100 persons, 26.9% anticipate 101 to 150 persons affected, and 15.4% fear the figure could exceed 150 persons.

**Table 4.** Measures, obstacles and costs to secure Pak-Afghan border

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Measures to secure the border</i>	Establishing military check posts on short-distance	26	50.0
	Setting a fence on the borderline	17	32.7
	Digging ditch on the borderline	2	3.8
	Constructing a Wall on the Border	7	13.5
<i>Major obstacles to sealing the border</i>	Governments of both Countries	6	11.5
	Government of Pakistan	1	1.9
	Government of Afghanistan	35	67.3
	Lack of capital	1	1.9
	Physiography of that area	9	17.3
<i>Cost in capital</i>	21 to 30 Billion	2	3.8
	31 to 40 Billion	12	23.1
	41 to 50 Billion	13	25.0
	More than 50 Billions	25	48.1
<i>Cost in terms of human life</i>	Less than 50 person	12	23.1
	51 to 100 person	18	34.6
	101 to 150 person	14	26.9
	More than 150 person	8	15.4

Table 5 illustrates that Afghan refugees are a significant factor in Pak-Afghan relations and terrorism within Pakistan. An overwhelming 86.5% of respondents advocate for the registration of these illegal immigrants. Historically, the absence of a registration mechanism allowed numerous terrorists to enter Pakistan under the guise of immigrants. Similarly, 86.5% of respondents believe that terrorism could be mitigated by registering these immigrants. However, 13.5% of respondents are skeptical, asserting that terrorist activities will not decrease significantly solely through immigrant registration, necessitating additional measures.

While the majority agrees that terrorism will decrease following the registration of Afghan immigrants, there exists variation in their perceptions regarding the extent of this reduction. About 48.1% of respondents believe that registering these immigrants will yield a marginal effect, resulting in a reduction of less than 10% in terrorism. In contrast, 26.9% argue that registering Afghan immigrants could decrease terrorism by 11% to 20%, while 9.6% contend that it might reduce terrorist activities by 31% to 40%. Only 3.8% of respondents envision a reduction of over 40% in terrorism by registering Afghan refugees.

An overwhelming 86.5% of respondents acknowledge a direct link between illegal immigrants and terrorism. On the other hand, 13.5% of respondents assert that these refugees are not involved in terrorist activities. Among the majority, there is agreement that Afghan immigrants have been implicated in terrorist activities. Specifically, 44.2% of respondents believe less than 10% of Afghan refugees are directly involved in terrorism. Another 23.1% concur that 11% to 30% of immigrants have participated in terrorist activities. For 17.3% of respondents, this involvement spans 31% to 50%. Additionally, 11.5% of respondents agree that 51% to 70% of Afghan refugees might have connections to terrorism, while a mere 3.8% concede that more than 70% of immigrants are involved in such activities.

**Table 5.** Registration and involvement in terrorist activities among Afghan immigrants

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Should Registration of Afghan illegal Immigrants will decrease terrorism</i>	Yes	45	86.5
	No	7	13.5
<i>Decreasing the percentage of terrorism by the registration of Afghan illegal immigrants</i>	less than 10 %	25	48.1
	11% to 20%	14	26.9
	21% to 30%	6	11.5
	31% to 40%	5	9.6
	More than 40%	2	3.8
	Total	52	100.0
	Yes	45	86.5
	No	7	13.5
<i>Afghan Immigrants Directly Participate in terrorist activities in Pakistan</i>	less than 10 %	23	44.2
	11% to 30 %	12	23.1
	31% to 50 %	9	17.3
	51% to 70 %	6	11.5
	More than 70 %	2	3.8

Table 6 shows that most respondents (53.8%) support that the government should continuously monitor Afghan refugees to prevent their involvement in terrorist activities. Only 1.9% of respondents advocate for granting nationality to these refugees. In contrast, 40.4% of respondents perceive Afghan refugees as a serious threat to peace, emphasizing the government’s need to repatriate them to their home country to preserve peace within Pakistan. An additional 3.8% of respondents offer a distinct perspective, suggesting that the Government of Pakistan can avert their engagement in terrorist activities through awareness programs and education.

**Table 6.** The incumbent government keep Afghan refugees away from terrorist activities.

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>How can the incumbent government keep Afghan refugees away from terrorist activities</i>	watching them permanently and effectively	28	53.8
	Giving them the nationality of Pakistan	1	1.9
	Pushing them back to their home country	21	40.4
	Others	2	3.8
	Total	52	100.0

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a monumental project uniting Pakistan and China. Initiated amidst the deep-seated roots of terrorism within Pakistan, CPEC notably impacts two provinces KPK and Baluchistan. Given their substantial involvement and considering the grave effect of terrorism on both provinces, a pertinent query emerges: is terrorism a threat to this monumental endeavor? Table 7 gauges perspectives on the influence of terrorism on CPEC.

A decisive 94.2% of respondents acknowledge terrorism’s threat to CPEC in Baluchistan and KPK, while 5.8% hold dissenting views. With both provinces reeling under the scourge of terrorism, discerning which is more susceptible to CPEC’s vulnerability becomes a complex consideration. A fraction (19.2%) concedes that KPK, given its entrenched history of terrorism, maybe more precarious for CPEC. Meanwhile, a larger share (32.7%) contends that Baluchistan’s primacy as the starting point of CPEC and its role as a hub for its main routes render it more susceptible. A majority (46.2%) agree that both provinces jeopardize CPEC’s security.

Experts’ opinions are sought to evaluate the likelihood of non-state actors infiltrating CPEC from Afghanistan. An overwhelming 98.1% of respondents affirm this potential threat. Conversely, a smaller fraction (1.9%) maintains that cross-border terrorism poses no risk to CPEC, citing the establishment of numerous interior checkpoints by Pakistan’s armed forces, rendering it implausible for terrorists to breach provinces and impact CPEC routes. Agreement prevails that CPEC routes can be safeguarded against cross-border attacks; however, divergence arises regarding the requisite measures. A minority (15.4%) suggest bolstering CPEC routes through armed security forces. Another subset (11.5%) posits that securing the Pak-Afghan border would neutralize threats to CPEC routes. A significant majority (73.1%) aligns with the imperative of a dual strategy, advocating both reinforcing armed forces’ duty and control of the border to ensure the safety of CPEC routes.

**Table 7.** Impact of Terrorism on CPEC

		Frequency	Percentage
<i>Terrorist activities are harmful to CPEC in KPK and Baluchistan</i>	Yes	49	94.2
	No	3	5.8
<i>Which Province is more vulnerable to CPEC</i>	KPK	10	19.2
	Baluchistan	17	32.7
	Both	24	46.2
	None of them	1	1.9
<i>Cross-border attacks hit the CPEC routes</i>	Yes	51	98.1
	No	1	1.9
<i>CPEC routes can be secured from cross-border attacks</i>	providing armed security	8	15.4
	sealing Pak-Afgan border	6	11.5
	Both	38	73.1

**Conclusion**

The Pak-Afghan border, also known as the Durand Line, remains porous due to its intricate physiography and the mismanagement of both nations. The porosity of the Durand Line poses a significant threat to regional peace due to the infiltration of terrorists. Moreover, this border porosity fosters illegal migration between Afghanistan and Pakistan, exacerbating issues of smuggling and human trafficking that both countries grapple with. The porous nature of the Durand Line further triggers diplomatic tensions between the two nations. The international community could play a pivotal role in resolving these border-related challenges to promote regional stability.

Establishing fencing along the borderline and positioning military checkpoints at close intervals on both sides is the most effective approach to ensure regional stability and peacekeeping. Additionally, formulating a comprehensive mechanism through mutual agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan to address the settlement of Afghan refugees could alleviate concerns for both governments.

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