

SUMMARY of the article “Issue of refugees,” by Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, published on November 19, 2023

The article delves into the complex issue of the forced return of hundreds of thousands of undocumented Afghan refugees from Pakistan. While acknowledging the principle of not allowing illegal foreign nationals to stay, the author emphasizes the need to address the growing public perception that ties this expulsion to Pakistan's response to the Taliban government's non-cooperation on the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) issue. The article suggests engaging with Kabul to create economic pull factors for returning refugees and underscores the intertwined ideologies of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. It advocates a two-pronged approach, urging political efforts to persuade Kabul against TTP activities and recognizing the kinetic fight against the TTP as one Pakistan must handle independently. The piece questions why Afghans may not express gratitude for Pakistan's past assistance and proposes diplomatic engagement with the Taliban for candid discussions on TTP, border management, and refugee return. Finally, it encourages bilateral collaboration between Pakistan and Afghanistan, emphasizing economic projects and regional partnerships as a foundation for mutually beneficial relations.

Easy/Short SUMMARY:

The article discusses the forced return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan, emphasizing the need to address public perceptions linking it to the Taliban's non-cooperation on the TTP issue. The author suggests engaging with Kabul for economic incentives for returning refugees, highlights the shared ideologies of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, and proposes a two-pronged approach



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involving political persuasion and independent kinetic efforts against the TTP.

The piece encourages diplomatic engagement with the Taliban, advocates gratitude for Pakistan's past assistance, and underscores the potential for bilateral collaboration and economic projects to strengthen Pak-Afghan relations.

SOLUTIONS of The Problem:

Economic Incentives for Returning Refugees

Engage diplomatically with Kabul to create economic pull factors, such as offering land, to encourage returning refugees to settle in Afghanistan.

Two-Pronged Approach for TTP

Continue political efforts to persuade Kabul against TTP activities, and independently pursue kinetic efforts to combat the TTP threat within Pakistan.

Diplomatic Engagement with the Taliban

Initiate diplomatic discussions with the Taliban on issues like TTP, border management, and refugee return to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

Parliamentary Discourse

Discuss all pertinent matters, including relations with Afghanistan, TTP, and refugee policies, in Pakistan's parliament to enrich the debate and formulate sound policy decisions.

Bilateral Economic Collaboration

Strengthen Pak-Afghan ties by focusing on bilateral economic projects and regional partnerships, aligning with Pakistan's geo-economic pivot outlined in the National Security Policy 2022.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the article:

- Hundreds of thousands of undocumented Afghan refugees are being forced to return to Afghanistan from Pakistan.
- The forced return coincides with a rise in terrorism in Pakistan, leading to a public perception that it is a response to the Taliban government's non-cooperation on the TTP issue.
- The article emphasizes the intertwined ideologies of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, both deriving inspiration from the Taliban movement's founder.
- Pakistan's government aims for a smooth return of undocumented refugees without manhandling and with immediate complaint redressal.
- The piece questions why Afghans may not express gratitude for Pakistan's assistance during the Soviet-Afghan War and the US-led 'war on terror.'
- The author suggests diplomatic engagement with the Taliban for candid discussions on TTP, border management, and refugee return.

MCQs from the Article:

1. *What issue does the forced return of Afghan refugees coincide with?*
 - A. Economic downturn
 - B. Political unrest
 - C. Rise in terrorism in Pakistan
 - D. Border disputes
2. *What is the perceived correlation between the forced return and the Taliban government's actions?*
 - A. Economic cooperation
 - B. Political alliance
 - C. Response to non-cooperation on the TTP issue
 - D. Joint military operations
3. *Why does the article suggest engaging with Kabul for economic incentives*



for returning refugees?

- A. To strengthen political ties
 - B. To encourage political asylum
 - C. *To create pull factors for settlement in Afghanistan*
 - D. To establish military cooperation
4. *What approach does the article recommend for combating the TTP threat?*
- A. Independent political efforts
 - B. Exclusive diplomatic persuasion
 - C. *Two-pronged approach involving political persuasion and kinetic efforts*
 - D. Complete reliance on international intervention
5. *What historical accusation does the article mention regarding Pakistan's stance on the Afghan Taliban?*
- A. Supporting Al Qaeda
 - B. Engaging in double game diplomacy
 - C. Refusing humanitarian access
 - D. *Playing 'good Taliban (Afghan), bad Taliban (Pakistani)'*

VOCABULARY:

1. *Expulsion* (noun) (تخلیص): The action of depriving someone of membership in an organization.
2. *Perception* (noun) (تصور): The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.
3. *Engage* (verb) (مُتَمَلِّکِ): Occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention).
4. *Diplomatically* (adverb) (بِطَرِیقِ دِلْمَاطِی): In a manner showing skill in dealing with people and situations.



5. *Incentives* (noun) (انحصار): A thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something.
6. *Kinetic* (adjective) (حركى): Relating to or resulting from motion.
7. *Pertinent* (adjective) (مربط): Relevant or applicable to a particular matter.
8. *Parliamentary* (adjective) (پارلمنتارى): Relating to or characteristic of a parliament.
9. *Enrich* (verb) (بهبود بخشيد): Improve or enhance the quality or value of.
10. *Geo-economics* (noun) (جيو-اقتصاد): The use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests and to produce beneficial geopolitical results.
11. *Tandem* (adverb) (تتبع): In conjunction or partnership; together.
12. *Diverse* (adjective) (متنوع): Showing a great deal of variety.
13. *Ideological* (adjective) (فكرى): Based on or relating to a system of ideas and ideals.
14. *Coin* (noun) (سكه): A flat, typically round piece of metal with an official stamp, used as money.
15. *Candid* (adjective) (صريح): Truthful and straightforward; frank.
16. *Centrepiece* (noun) (قطعه مركزي): The most important or prominent feature.



17. *Twofold* (adjective) (دوگونی): Having two parts or aspects.

18. *Enormous* (adjective) (بسیار بزرگ): Very large in size, quantity, or extent.

19. *Foundation* (noun) (بنیاد): The basis on which a thing stands, is founded, or is supported.

20. *Win-win* (adjective) (دو طرفه برتری): In a situation or outcome where everyone benefits.

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Issue of refugees

By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

HUNDREDS of thousands of undocumented Afghan refugees are returning to their country. In principle, it makes perfect sense. No country allows illegal foreign nationals to stay on its land. Pakistan, too, has that right. Notably, at this stage, only undocumented refugees are being obliged to return home. The caretaker interior minister said in a Senate hearing that the government would want the return of refugees to proceed without any manhandling, and with immediate redressal of complaints.

However, since this forced return has coincided with the steep rise of terrorism in Pakistan, a correlation has developed in the public consciousness that the

expulsion of Afghan refugees is Pakistan's answer to the Taliban government's non-cooperation on the issue of the TTP, which is carrying out terrorist acts against Pakistan. This perception needs to be addressed.

There is a view that Afghan refugees were victims of foreign aggression and oppression. Some would even suggest that Afghan refugees have lived in Pakistan long enough to be deemed economic migrants. As it is, many of those returning now might come back to Pakistan in the near future because there is no real economic pull for them to settle in Afghanistan. Hence the need to talk to Kabul for creating pull factors, such as offering land.

Amidst this diversity of views, the debate has begun to affect the overall trajectory of Pak-Afghan ties. Pakistanis wonder why the Taliban government is not sensitive to Pakistan's high concern about TTP-sponsored terrorism. The answer lies in recognising the fact that the Taliban of Afghanistan and the Taliban of Pakistan are two sides of the same ideological coin. Both derive their inspiration from the founder of the Taliban movement. The TTP helped the Afghan Taliban during the latter's fight with Americans. The Afghan Taliban are returning the favour.

The debate has begun to affect the overall trajectory of Pak-Afghan ties.

Further, the TTP wants to do what the Afghan Taliban would welcome: establish an Islamic emirate in the tribal belt straddling the Pak-Afghan border. It is clear that the Afghan Taliban are unlikely to take any kinetic action against the TTP on their soil. It is worth recalling how their first government defended the Al Qaeda leader's right to stay in Afghanistan despite intense US pressure.

Given these realities, our government needs to adopt a two-pronged approach. Politically, Islamabad should sustain its efforts to persuade Kabul to not allow the TTP to plan attacks against Pakistan using Afghan soil. Kinetically, this is a fight that Pakistan will have to win on its own, as it did in Swat and Waziristan. The perception of the forced return of refugees being tit-for-tat action could have serious implications and cause an open rift with Kabul.

Let us also address a related question that is being asked, ie, why the Afghans are not grateful to Pakistan for all that was done for them in the past four decades. Indeed, Pakistan had helped Afghans push out the Soviet forces and also gave

them humanitarian access during the US-led 'war on terror'. Despite US pressure, Pakistan never took kinetic action against the Afghan Taliban leadership that often visited Pakistan to meet their families and receive medical treatment. Consequently, Washington accused us of playing 'good Taliban (Afghan), bad Taliban (Pakistani)', meaning a double game.

In hindsight, when the US started a dialogue with the Taliban and managed to obtain some written commitments from them in return for withdrawing its troops in 2021, should Pakistan not have opened its own dialogue with the Taliban on how they should deal with the issues of TTP, border management, and the return of refugees, if and when they returned to power? They were under immense pressure and would have been more amenable to talks then rather than now when they are in power and unchallenged by any internal faction.

Yet, we must stay engaged with them on the diplomatic and political tracks for candid discussions on the bilateral issues mentioned. If we are to learn from history, all such matters should be discussed in Pakistan's parliament. A diversity of views enriches debate and helps generate sound and consensual policy decisions.

The Afghans tend to view their country as the 'economic roundabout' that could connect West and Central Asia with South Asia. They cite a verse of Allama Iqbal, which characterised Afghanistan as the 'heart of Asia'. This provides an enormous win-win foundation for both countries to work together on regional energy projects and transit trade. This will help make mutually beneficial economic projects the centrepiece of Islamabad's relations with Kabul, in tandem with Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics espoused in our first National Security Policy 2022.

The writer is a former foreign secretary and chairman of Sanobar Institute Islamabad.

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