

# **The Political Dimensions of Relations between the Taliban Government and India**

**(Translated)**

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On 8 January 2025, Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban's Foreign Minister, met in the UAE with Vikram Misri, India's Deputy Foreign Minister. The two sides announced new agreements to enhance political and commercial relations between the two countries. During the meeting, the role of India in development projects in Afghanistan, providing "humanitarian assistance," and facilitating visa issuance for Afghans was emphasized. Muttaqi also stressed that the Taliban government seeks to establish positive relations with all countries, focusing on achieving economic growth and balance in international relations.

Simultaneously with these developments, tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan have escalated. Pakistani forces launched raids on Afghan border areas, intensifying the deportation of Afghan refugees, while the Taliban government responded by targeting Pakistani military sites on the other side of the Durand Line.

Since the return of the Taliban to power, India closed its embassy in Kabul but has maintained a small technical mission inside the embassy since 2022 to monitor the situation. In November 2024, G.B. Singh, India's Deputy Foreign Minister for Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, visited Kabul, where he met with Taliban officials and agreed to transfer the responsibility of providing Afghan consular services in Mumbai to the Taliban government.

In recent years, India has lost several regional allies, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Myanmar, while its relations with Nepal and Sri Lanka have also soured. On the other hand, China's influence in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran has grown, increasing India's concerns about the decline of its regional power. In response, New Delhi, with support from the United States, is trying to play a more active role in Afghanistan instead of isolating itself.

At the beginning of the Taliban's rule, India described them as "Pakistan's proxy" and placed them alongside China and Pakistan under the umbrella of the "Axis of Evil." However, this stance has gradually shifted as India became more deeply involved in Afghan affairs. The United States views the relationship between India and the Taliban as part of its strategy to curb China's influence and strengthen India's position in the region.

India has come to the conclusion that it can improve its relations with the Taliban government, especially in light of the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. India aims to achieve this goal by providing "humanitarian aid," completing unfinished development projects in Afghanistan, and using the Chabahar Port as an alternative to the Karachi and Gwadar ports. Additionally, India seeks to facilitate the export of Afghan agricultural products, which are spoiling due to the closure of Pakistani ports, thus enhancing its role as an influential player in Afghanistan's economy. These steps present an opportunity for India to expand its regional influence and turn it into a strategic investment.

On the other hand, the Taliban government seeks to strengthen its relations with India to break free from international isolation and ensure recognition based on a policy focused on the economy and balanced international relations. It plans to appoint diplomats from both sides and enhance trade cooperation, including facilitating the issuance of visas for Afghan students, patients, and businessmen.

India, for its part, is leveraging developments in international relations to realize its vision of a “Greater India” and aims to expand its dominance in the region. To achieve this goal, India sees the need to constrain the strategic capabilities of Islamic countries, particularly Pakistan, and work on guiding regional states under its leadership, with U.S. support, to counter China’s influence.

India’s support for separatist movements in Balochistan and Pashtunistan has complicated regional relations. Pakistan considers this intervention a threat to its territorial integrity, and continues to warn against foreign interference supporting these movements. These policies may present India with additional obstacles in achieving its regional objectives.

However, this policy comes at the expense of Muslims in the region. India, like the U.S., NATO, China, and Russia, is waging a direct war aimed at destroying the values of the Islamic Ummah. These policies target Muslims, particularly in India and Kashmir, where their suffering has significantly worsened due to policies of repression and marginalization.

The situation of Muslims in India and Kashmir stands out as one of the most sensitive issues in the region. Mass killings, the destruction of masajid, bans on the hijab, home invasions, and support for the Zionist entity in its violations against the people of Palestine are all stark examples of India’s hostility toward Islam and Muslims. These policies have turned relations with the Islamic Ummah into an open confrontation, which Islamic Shariah Law asserts can only be responded to by jihad, and the establishment of the caliphate.

In light of this, India must be treated as a hostile enemy, not as a trading partner or ally! Muslim rulers, particularly in Afghanistan, will only be able to adopt this stance if they adhere to the principle of **الولاء والبراء** “**loyalty and disavowal**” and make it a fundamental aspect of their foreign policy.

As long as the foreign policy of the Taliban government remains focused on pragmatism and economic concerns, under the banner of “**balance and neutrality in international relations,**” it will remain far from the standards of an Islamic state. It will even lose its position among non-legitimate nation-states. The foreign policy of the Islamic state should be based on spreading Islam globally through dawah and jihad, bringing guidance and justice to humanity in both this world and the Hereafter.

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