



THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF AFGHANISTAN: FIVE YEARS OF GOVERNMENT

Commentary by:

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On August 15, 2026, the Afghan government completed five years in power. In other words, five years have passed since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which regained control of Kabul in 2021, established its government.

Many people have commented on this development. Journals and newspapers have published analyses, and various opinions have also appeared on social media. However, the enthusiasm that initially existed regarding the Taliban government now appears to have diminished considerably in social media.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Certainly, many achievements have been made during these five years. As I have stated previously, for the first time after a long period, a central government has established its authority throughout Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a total of 34 provinces, locally known as *wilayats*. According to Afghanistan's administrative structure, the districts are distributed among all 34 provinces. These include 421 districts, comprising 387 permanent districts and 34 provincial centers, which are the districts containing provincial capitals.

The government, that is, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, has established its authority throughout the country. At present, in

2026, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the Taliban) exercises effective control and governance over Afghanistan. Since taking control of Kabul in August 2021, it has been administering the country.

2. The Taliban government in Afghanistan has undertaken a number of measures that have benefited the people. As a result, business activity has increased, international relations have improved, imports and exports have increased, and economic and trade agreements have been concluded with other countries. United Nations agencies have also helped in Afghanistan for poverty alleviation and the resolution of other public problems. Just a few days ago, the European Union provided a substantial amount of assistance to Afghanistan for the supply of food.
3. Similarly, several countries have recognized the Afghan government during this period and opened their embassies there, while Afghanistan has also opened embassies in certain countries. Afghanistan's relations with China, Russia, the United States, and several other countries have improved, and investment and assistance from these countries continue at various levels.

SHORTCOMINGS AND FAILURES

These are the achievements that the Afghan government has made during the past five years. However, if we also look at

the list of shortcomings and failures, it is quite lengthy.

1. The first major shortcoming is that Afghanistan still does not have a formally promulgated constitution. No parliament has been established and no elected Shura has been formed. The government itself continues to describe its administration as an “interim government.” Therefore, it has not yet acquired the status of a fully established and permanent government.

It is equally important for any state to have its own constitution, parliament, and elected representative Shura. However, we have not seen such institutions established during the past five years.

2. Another major issue facing Afghanistan is the education of girls. Initially, this educational system continued for approximately two years. Girls continued to receive education at universities, colleges, medical colleges, schools, and high schools.

In some places, girls at universities were separated from male students, with separate timings being introduced for female and male students. Nevertheless, the educational process continued.

However, it has now been three years since restrictions were imposed, and girls have been allowed to receive education only up to the sixth grade. After that, the doors of education have been closed to them. Universities, medical colleges, colleges, and other technical institutions have also been completely closed to them.

No specific reason has been provided for this policy. Whenever we have asked officials at Afghan diplomatic missions,

representatives, or ministers during our visits to Afghanistan when the education of girls would be restored, they initially stated that they were developing a separate curriculum and a separate system for them. They said that once the system and curriculum were ready, girls’ education would be restored.

However, as a considerable period has now passed, they have also stopped making this argument. Many of them express regret over the situation. Several Afghan ministers have expressed their regret and embarrassment to us and have stated that



they cannot defend the policy, but that they are compelled to follow it because it is the order of the Amir. Therefore, they have kept girls’ education suspended.

There appears to be no indication that they intend to restore it in the near future. In some places, education is continuing unofficially and secretly, but on a very limited scale. A large majority of girls have been deprived of higher education, and it is difficult to understand what the future educational policy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will be.

This raises serious questions for the future of the health sector. Where will medical doctors, female doctors, female ultrasound specialists, radiologists, female doctors specializing in maternal and child health, female nurses, and female Lady Health Visitors come from?

If the doors of education are closed, where will these professionals come from? Where will the teachers come from to educate these girls? Where will the teaching staff come from? If women are not receiving higher education, how will future teaching faculty be produced?

These are all serious questions, but we have received no answers from the Afghan authorities. This is an extremely regrettable situation that continues to persist.

RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN

The second, and an even greater, issue concerns Pakistan.

More than fifty years have passed since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which resulted in widespread destruction and devastation. As a consequence, more than five million Afghan refugees moved to Pakistan and Iran, and large refugee camps were established for them.



Everyone is familiar with this history. Throughout this period, Pakistan provided shelter to the Afghan people, extended extensive support to them, and continued to raise its voice at the diplomatic level for the freedom of Afghanistan.

Later, circumstances changed. The Soviet forces withdrew, followed by the establishment of the Mujahideen government. Subsequently, the Taliban

replaced the Mujahideen government in 1996.

Then, in 2001, the 9/11 attacks took place. In response, the United States launched a major military intervention in Afghanistan. With the assistance of the Northern Alliance, the United States took control of Afghanistan, supported by NATO forces from 42 countries.



At that time, the Taliban withdrew, and the Taliban movement began resistance from several major cities. This resistance continued for approximately 20 years. A war continued for two decades. During this period, governments were formed and elections were held to some extent. The government of Hamid Karzai was established, followed by the government of Dr. Ashraf Ghani.

Eventually, the situation reached the point where Dr. Ashraf Ghani fled the country in 2021 along with his cabinet. His army of approximately 400,000 personnel, which had been built at enormous cost, collapsed rapidly, and the Taliban once again established their government.

Pakistan welcomed this development and considered itself to have been involved in the process. There was a perception that Afghanistan had once again achieved a form of independence. However, Pakistan did not formally recognize the Afghan government this time.

Previously, when the Taliban government was established in 1996, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates had recognized it. Even then, however, Afghanistan was not given a seat at the United Nations, which was a major injustice. Nevertheless, Pakistan continued to make efforts in this regard.

FIVE YEARS TALIBAN

Now, five years after the Taliban government was re-established, the current Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan still does not have a seat at the United Nations and remains without formal representation there. Pakistan made efforts for several



years in support of its representation.

GROWING TENSIONS IN PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS

The current situation, however, is that since October 2025, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have become extremely strained, with an almost war-like situation developing along the two fronts.

During this period, acts of terrorism and sabotage in Pakistan have repeatedly been attributed to groups that cross the border from Afghanistan into Pakistan and carry out attacks there. These groups are said to have safe havens in Afghanistan, with their families residing there, and attacks are launched from Afghan territory. A

considerable number of Afghan nationals are also reportedly involved.

PAKISTAN TOOK NOTICE OF THE SITUATION

Pakistan took notice of the situation, and since October 2025, the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has been closed. Relations between the two countries have deteriorated severely, while business and trade relations have also been affected.

Following this, whenever a major incident occurred in Pakistan, Pakistan would, in response, carry out attacks and air strikes in Afghanistan. Rockets, missiles, and drones were used in these attacks. Afghanistan, in turn, responded with firing.

Afghanistan also used whatever means were available to it and, reportedly, was provided with drones, which were subsequently used in several attacks against Pakistan.

According to Pakistani authorities, the groups involved have received support not only from India but also from Israel and other countries. It is alleged that the militants are provided with weapons and financial assistance by India and that the Afghan government is acting as a facilitator. This is, understandably, an extremely regrettable situation.

It is an almost unbelievable situation that two brotherly countries, which remained close to each other for a very long period, are now facing each other on a military front because of what are described as misguided policies of their respective governments. They are in confrontation with each other, and their relations are becoming increasingly strained.

Obviously, for all those who want to see Pakistan-Afghanistan relations return to normal and believe that the interests of the governments, nations, and peoples on both sides are best served by maintaining good relations, supporting one another, promoting imports and exports, and allowing people to travel freely between the two countries, the present situation is deeply concerning.

A large number of Afghans used to travel to Pakistan for medical treatment and business and then return to Afghanistan. A significant number of Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan, but it is still estimated that between two and 2.5 million Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan. They have not all returned, and therefore a large number are still present in the country.

There is also a large number of people who obtained asylum in other countries through Pakistan. Many people also obtained Pakistani passports, traveled on them to the United States and European countries, and obtained employment there.

Obviously, such people have become deeply integrated into the societies of both countries. The peoples of the two countries are closely connected. Intermarriages have taken place between them. Families have brought brides from one country to the other, creating extensive social connections between the two countries that have existed for centuries.

This connection is now being disrupted. The borders are currently closed. The Torkham border is closed, as are the Chaman, Kharlachi, and Ghulam Khan crossings.

At present, Afghans are coming toward Pakistan through Iran, but they are doing so

illegally. At the moment, Afghans cannot enter Pakistan through legal channels.

Nevertheless, during the past few days, several indications have emerged that have once again generated hope among those of us who want to see relations between the two countries restored.

During this period, a process of trilateral negotiations has continued through China. Meetings have also been held in Beijing. Religious representatives have maintained contacts with the authorities in Kabul as well as with the Government of Pakistan. Meanwhile, negotiations have continued through a backchannel.

Last month, Amir Khan Muttaqi, who is currently serving as Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister, said that he would visit Pakistan in August. However, because he is subject to travel restrictions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, Pakistan was required to request the United Nations to lift the restrictions on his air travel. This did not happen, and therefore his visit



could not take place.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Mr. Hussain Andarabi, recently issued a statement indicating a desire to improve relations with Afghanistan. He stated that Pakistan wants to establish relations and engage in state-to-state negotiations with the Afghan government.

The major agenda of such negotiations would be the prevention and elimination of terrorism and sabotage taking place in Pakistan.

A few days ago, another major incident occurred, the repercussions of which are still being discussed on social media. It also generated reactions in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan.

Afghanistan's ambassador in Pakistan is currently Mr. Ahmad Shakib. This indicates that diplomatic missions still exist in both countries. Diplomatic relations have not been completely severed. They are operating at a low profile, but they have not ended altogether.

In Afghanistan, Mr. Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani has been serving as ambassador for a considerable period. When we visited Afghanistan last year, we had a detailed meeting with him. Here in Pakistan, Mr. Ahmad Shakib is the Afghan ambassador, and he also helped arrange our visit to Afghanistan last year.

He was invited to the National Defence College in Islamabad to deliver a lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, strategic relations, and defence and military cooperation.

He delivered a very useful and positive presentation and gave encouraging indications regarding bilateral relations. He described the relationship between the two countries as mutually indispensable and expressed very positive sentiments.

Here in Peshawar, their Consul, Hafiz Mohibullah Sahib, also consistently expresses very positive views whenever we meet him. I sometimes joke with him that after meeting you, it seems as though there

is no problem at all between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But, in reality, problems do exist.

These problems need to be resolved, and Afghanistan needs to make progress in this regard. Pakistan has fulfilled its responsibilities toward Afghanistan for a very long time and has supported Afghanistan in every way and on every platform.

Now it is Afghanistan's turn to respond to Pakistan. It should not merely express good sentiments toward Pakistan; it should also take practical steps.

Nevertheless, this is a welcome development, and we hope that this process will continue. In practical terms, Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to Pakistan should also take place, and both countries should adopt a pragmatic and practical approach.



Pakistan is facing serious problems. In particular, large-scale terrorist activity is currently taking place in Baluchistan, in which, according to the assessment presented here, a clear Indian element is involved. The Afghan government should fulfill its responsibility in this regard and take every possible step that can help change this situation.

This is also their responsibility, both as members of the Muslim Ummah and as a neighboring country. If reports reach them that our personnel have been martyred or

that our people have been killed, then, just as we feel the pain of such losses, they should also feel that pain and do whatever is within their power to address the situation.

If they simply say that they have no responsibility in this matter, no one will accept such a position.

Similarly, the Government of Pakistan should also fulfill the responsibilities incumbent upon it as a neighboring country of Afghanistan. We should restore business and trade relations with Afghanistan, avoid imposing unnecessary restrictions, and prepare ourselves to formally recognize its government at the diplomatic level.

If, at this point, we continue to expect that a new government or major political change will emerge in Afghanistan, this does not appear likely.

If one points to incidents in Badakhshan or Panjshir, such events have occurred in Afghanistan historically. A major change in Afghanistan is unlikely unless an external power launches an attack on the country.

Obviously, there appears to be no such possibility. Neither the United States is likely to repeat such a mistake, nor is any other country likely to do so. Nor do neighboring countries possess the capacity to undertake such an intervention.

Therefore, we should recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan as a political reality, restore Pakistan-Afghanistan relations to whatever extent possible, and promote and strengthen those relations further.

CONCLUSION

After five years of governance, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has established a degree

of political and administrative stability and has demonstrated its ability to maintain control over the country despite serious economic, diplomatic, and security challenges. At the same time, its policies on education, governance, human rights, political participation, and relations with the international community remain subjects of considerable concern and debate.

For Pakistan, Afghanistan is not merely a neighboring country; it is a country with which Pakistan shares deep historical, cultural, religious, economic, and social ties. Peace and stability in Afghanistan therefore have a direct impact on Pakistan's security, border management, economy, and regional connectivity. The two countries cannot afford prolonged confrontation, mistrust, or the closure of their major border crossings.

The current tensions should be addressed through sustained dialogue, diplomatic engagement, and practical confidence-building measures. Both sides have legitimate concerns and responsibilities. Pakistan should continue to pursue its security interests while maintaining constructive engagement with the Afghan authorities. Similarly, the Afghan government must ensure that its territory is not used against Pakistan or any other neighboring country.

The international community should also recognize the political reality in Afghanistan and engage with its authorities through a pragmatic and gradual approach. Constructive engagement can provide greater opportunities to encourage improvements in governance, education, human rights, economic development, and regional cooperation.

Ultimately, the future of Afghanistan and Pakistan is closely interconnected. A peaceful,

stable, economically viable, and internationally engaged Afghanistan would serve the interests not only of the Afghan people but also of Pakistan and the wider region. The way forward lies not in confrontation, but in dialogue, mutual respect, responsible diplomacy, and cooperation for lasting peace and regional stability.

AFGHANISTAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Prevent the use of Afghan territory against Pakistan:** The Afghan authorities should ensure that no militant group or organization is allowed to use Afghan soil for attacks against Pakistan.
2. **Address Pakistan's security concerns:** Afghanistan should take credible and practical measures against groups involved in cross-border terrorism and demonstrate its commitment to peaceful relations with Pakistan.
3. **Strengthen border management:** Effective coordination and cooperation on border security, crossings, and movement of people and goods are essential to prevent misunderstandings and illegal activities.
4. **Maintain constructive dialogue:** Afghanistan should continue diplomatic engagement with Pakistan and resolve bilateral disputes through negotiations rather than confrontation.
5. **Protect bilateral economic and social ties:** Afghanistan should support the uninterrupted movement of legitimate trade, transit, and people between the two countries.
6. **Promote inclusive governance and development:** Greater attention to education, economic development, political participation, and the rights of citizens can contribute to Afghanistan's internal stability and international engagement.

PAKISTAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Continue diplomatic engagement:** Pakistan should maintain dialogue with the Afghan authorities and avoid allowing temporary disputes to permanently damage bilateral relations.
2. **Address security concerns through dialogue and diplomacy:** While protecting its national security, Pakistan should prioritize diplomatic and negotiated solutions to cross-border security problems.
3. **Facilitate trade and transit:** Pakistan should seek practical mechanisms to keep legitimate trade and transit routes functioning, as economic connectivity benefits both countries.
4. **Maintain humanitarian considerations:** Pakistan should deal with Afghan refugees and other humanitarian matters with dignity, compassion, and in accordance with applicable laws and bilateral understandings.
5. **Promote confidence-building measures:** Regular meetings between officials, security authorities, tribal representatives, and business communities can help reduce mistrust and prevent escalation.
6. **Support regional connectivity:** Pakistan should continue to view Afghanistan as an important link to Central Asia and pursue opportunities for trade, transit, energy, and regional economic cooperation.

May Allah Almighty resolve our difficulties and help the Muslims of Gaza.

Thank you very much. Allah Hafiz.