

REVISITING THE DURAND LINE

Historical and Legal Perspectives

Lutfur Rehman



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Reviews



“Dr. Lutfur Rehman has written a fascinating account of the history of the 1893 Durand Line Agreement with Ameer Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan, which was intended to establish a frontier between the kingdom of Afghanistan and what was then British India. But, as the author reminds us, when Pakistan became independent in 1947, the demarcation immediately became a contested issue with Afghanistan, which remains unresolved to this day. While so much attention is focused on Pakistan’s relationship with India, Dr. Rehman’s research makes an important contribution to our understanding of the entire region.”

– **Victoria Schofield**

Author, biographer, and historian

“This book is a result of pioneering and painstaking research based on authentic sources and reflects a great commitment by a scholar to produce a masterpiece. It enlightens the readers on the history of the Durand Line and the historical context in which the boundary was demarcated. It is a contribution by a Pakistani author that has few parallels in the existing literature on the subject. Though the Durand Line has not been acknowledged or formally and publicly accepted by the successive Afghan governments, its legitimacy and validity have been tacitly accepted by Kabul. The Afghan government operates immigration systems, customs check posts and deploys security forces on the other side of the border, showing the sanctity of the border having been accepted. Moreover, Kabul has never raised the issue of the continuing validity of the border before the UN in the last 50 years. In the meantime, the country and the region have been overtaken by many upheavals. Afghanistan is grappling with the major issues of poverty, reconstruction, rehabilitation, restoration of its financial systems, and integration with the world. The

Durand Line issue has become somewhat irrelevant in this scheme of things. Dr Lutfur Rehman should be complemented for bringing to light a treasure trove of hidden documents from which historians, scholars and students would continue to benefit in their pursuit of the history of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.”

– **Ambassador (r) Rustam Shah Mohmand**

“The border dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan has long been a source of friction between the two countries. Both the legitimacy and demarcation of the Durand Line remain controversial today and constitute stumbling blocks to attempts to improve bilateral relations. This book by Lutfur Rehman offers valuable insight into the dispute by looking at the historical context of the border agreement signed in 1893, its legal aspects, and the way the dispute unfolded up to the return to power of the Taliban in 2021. The last chapter is devoted to Afghan-Pakistan relations on a wide range of issues, from narcotics to water resources to refugees. The book is a welcome addition to an under-researched issue.”

– **Elisa Giunchi**

Professor, Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy

“The author has performed a public duty by undertaking documentary and legal research on the Durand Line Agreement of 1893. His findings show that the initiative towards demarcating the Afghan border was taken by Ameer Abdur Rahman, and due to whose manipulations the British negotiator he favored, Sir Mortimer Durand, was appointed. On the ground, from Chaman to Iran, the British ceded up to 70 miles south of the agreed border; further, Richard Udny allowed Afghanistan to occupy Bashgal Valley in addition to the territory earlier agreed upon. The author shows that was no coercion at all. He has also cited relevant international law to establish that the Durand Line is the legal and perennial border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.”

– **Dr. Muhammad Reza Kazimi**

Editor, Quarterly Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society

“A tireless work of painstaking research, a combination of rigorous inquiry and labor of love, the book is a rare yet much-needed contribution to the literature on the Durand Line. Lutfur Rehman brings original insights written in an easy-to-understand language. It is essential reading for everyone interested in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations.”

– **Dr. Farhat Taj**

Associate Professor, University of Tromsø, UiT The Arctic
University of Norway

“The Durand Line is a legitimate international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, some regional and international actors made it controversial. Myths were promoted rather than coming up with solid proofs. Dr. Lutfur Rehman has done a wonderful job in giving the genesis of the issue and bringing to the limelight some hitherto hidden aspects. The Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, which is keeping its tradition of disseminating knowledge alive, deserves appreciation for publishing this work.”

– **Prof. Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam**

Former Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar



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