

NATIONAL TRANSPORT RESEARCH CENTRE (NTRC)

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**NORTH SOUTH CORRIDOR AND ROLE OF PAKISTAN**  
**IN PROVIDING TRANSIT TRANSPORT FACILITIES**  
**VIA AFGHANISTAN**

( POSITION PAPER )

January, 2002

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**NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR AND ROLE OF PAKISTAN  
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VIA AFGHANISTAN**

**POSITION PAPER**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This position paper presents, in a summarized form the North - South corridor and role of Pakistan in providing Transit Transport Facilities to Central Asian States via Afghanistan. The paper is based on the review of the literature and information obtained from the Communications Division, National Highway Authority (NHA) and Railways. The list of documents may be seen at Annex-I.

Peace and stability in Afghanistan, will lead to reconstruction/ rehabilitation. This will not only result in rebuilding Afghanistan, but also provide the required access / outlets to the Land-Locked Central Asian States (CAS) for their international trade through Pakistan with other countries. All these countries including Pakistan are located between the Arabian Sea to the south, the Russian Federation to the north, China and India to the east and the Caspian Sea and Iran to the west.

The transport network of Pakistan extends to all important border points, positioning Pakistan as a credible regional transport hub. Roads extend to China through Khunjerab Pass on the North, to Afghanistan via Chaman and Torkham on the West, and to Iran at Taftan on the South - West (SW) as well as to India at Wagah on the East. Pakistan on account of its geographical location and developed road network is in a position to offer its Gateway Services to the Central Asian Region through the ports at Karachi. International transporters can freely access China, Afghanistan, CAS using Pakistan road links with these countries. From Khunjerab, it takes about 40 hours to reach Taftan and 36 hours to reach Karachi Port. The time from Karachi to Taftan and Chaman is 24 hours and 11 hours respectively.

to India while finalizing the road network. As per the Summary for the Cabinet dated the 30th August, 2000, the TTFA has been ratified by two member states i.e. Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. However, in the MAPS Seminar on the role of Government in development of International Corridors in Tehran from 29th -31st January, 2001, it has been mentioned that four member states including Pakistan have ratified the agreement. Iran was urged to ratify the TTFA.

### 3. Quadrilateral Agreement

Four countries namely Pakistan, China, Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on 9th March, 1995 for traffic in transit amongst the contracting states.

With a view to implement the Agreement For Traffic In Transit among the Governments of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the regulations agreed upon by the Contracting Parties were signed on 24th November, 1998 alongwith the Protocol on establishing the system of International Road Transit Permit among the Contracting Parties.

The Agreement for Traffic in Transit shall remain valid for a period of 5 years. Thereafter it shall be automatically renewed for a further period of 5 years unless either contracting party gives termination notice to others six months before the expiry of the five years period. The Implementation Regulation shall enter into force upon the date of signing. The period of validity of the Implementation Regulations is the same as that of the "Agreement For Traffic In Transit" among the Contracting Parties. With a view to operationalize the agreement, the member countries could not decide the number of permits to be issued by each member country in its meeting held on 25-26th March, 1999 in China. )

4. North-South Transportation Corridor (NOSTRAC)

On 12th -13th September, 2000, Russia, Iran and India had signed an agreement for the establishment of North-South Transport Corridor which is based mainly on Rail network and intended to link Central Europe and Scandinavia with Asia and Near East.

The Minister for Communications and Railways, Government of Pakistan, in the MAPS – Seminar held on the “Role of Governments in Development of International Corridors” in Tehran from 29th - 31st January, 2001, expressed strong reservations against the exclusion of Pakistan from NOSTRAC and expressed that optimum benefits from the North-South Corridor could not be obtained without including Pakistan in the project. He also made this point during his brief bilateral meeting with the First Deputy Minister of Transportation of Russia on the side line of the Seminar.

The Minister for Road and Transportation of Iran responded that Iran was willing to associate Pakistan in the NOSTRAC if a formal request in this regard was sent to the Iranian Authorities by Pakistan.

Pakistan can play a vital role in the development of regional transit corridors as can be seen from the map at Annex-III. Under NOSTRAC framework, it can effectively contribute by providing seamless multi-modal transportation due to its connectivity to the neighbouring countries by road and as well as by rail (after the development of Kirman – Zahidan missing Link). The other missing link of interest to Pakistan (north-south corridor) is Torgundi – Herat – Kandahar – Chaman (about 800 km).

Thus Pakistan's interest in NOSTRAC can be met through the inclusion of the following routes:

- (a) Khushka – Mashad – Zahidan – Quetta – Karachi
- (b) Khushka – Herat – Qandahar – Quetta – Karachi
- (c) Gwadar–Naushki–Chaman–Khushka

5. New Delhi Action Plan - Declaration on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific

ESCAP Secretariat undertook the theme study to improve the performance and delivery of infrastructure services, as well as to strengthen Public-Private partnership in development in the member countries. Following the deliberation on the study at its 50<sup>th</sup> session, the Commission adopted resolution 50/2 of 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 on an action plan on infrastructure development in Asia & Pacific. At its 51<sup>st</sup> session in 1995, the Commission adopted Resolution 51/8 on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1995 on implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan.

For the implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan, the ESCAP Secretariat developed the regional action programme structured around following seven areas for action at the national and regional level :

- (a) Infrastructure Planning & Policy
- (b) Administration, management and Finance
- (c) Privatization participation
- (d) Logistics and facilitation
- (e) Environment and safety
- (f) Human resources development capabilities
- (g) Poverty Alleviation, rural areas and disadvantaged population groups

This regional action programme for implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific was endorsed by the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure held by the Commission at its fifty second session in 1996 in New Delhi from 23<sup>rd</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1996. It approved 64 projects with recommendation that scope and cost estimate of some projects would be revised. The Conference also accorded high priority to 59 out of 64 projects. The conference stressed that Plan is a reflection of the specific needs and priorities, of member countries and associate member States of ESCAP region and therefore they were required to

firmly commit themselves to its implementation with the financial / technical support of donor agencies, multi-lateral institutions and private sector.

The financial requirements for implementation of all 64 projects for phase-I (1997-2001) are approximately US\$46,287,680. Breakdown of Estimated Funding by Implementing Agency may be seen in Annex-IV.

As far as Pakistan's participation in the New Delhi Action Plan is concerned, it may be pointed out here that the National Highway Authority (NHA) was declared as a focal point for identification of priority schemes and programmes out of 64 projects indicated by ESCAP. NHA had also provided the information relating to identification of priority projects to ESCAP Secretariat. However, according to our Ambassador's letter under consideration (from Seoul), Pakistan's interests in restoring and developing links through Afghanistan were not reflected in the New Delhi Action Plan and Draft Seoul Declaration.

### **3. ROAD - RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Studies have been conducted by Pakistan to examine the feasibility of developing/providing Road and Rail Network linking Pakistan with CAS via Afghanistan. The salient features of these studies are as follows :-

#### **(1) Roads**

As per the contract awarded by NHA in 1992, M/s Khyber Consulting Engineers undertook the condition survey of the following roads in Afghanistan :

-	Kabul - Qandahar	500 Kms
-	Qandahar - Spinboldak	108 Kms
-	Qandahar - Torghandi	668 Kms
	<b>Total:</b>	<b><u>1276 Kms</u></b>

The scope of work for the study entailed preparation of detailed inventory of the road damage and damage of all of its allied and cross - drainage structures alongwith proposal for rehabilitation work for the road network including allied structures to their original specification leading to an assessment of rough - cost estimates. The damage to road network was categorized as good, fair and poor. The summarized position and cost estimates (1993) are as under :-

Sl. No.	Description	Road Condition (Kms)				(Rs. Million) Cost of Rehab:	
		Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Total Cost	Unit Cost
1.	Kabul - Qandhar	134	143	223	500	3,243	6.485
2.	Qandhar-Spinboldak	38	19	51	108	855	7.920
3.	Qandhar-Torghondi	139.70	359.20	168.80	667.70	3,785	5.669
	Total:-	311.70	521.20	442.80	1275.70	7,883	6.179
		(24 %)	(41 %)	(35 %)			

The Torkham-Jalalabad-Kabul Road was totally destroyed during the war. NHA in August 1999 assigned the task to assess the condition of Torkham-Jalalabad-Kabul Road to M/s BAK Consulting Engineers. The estimates and plans for rehabilitation work were prepared by the Consultant, which could not be undertaken due to instability in Afghanistan.

The cost estimates were prepared in 1999 for the two options - restoration of pavement to original structure and the minimum cost alternative. Basically the minimum cost alternative dispensed with the premix carpet and substituted it with two or three coats of surface treatment with the rest of specifications remaining the same.



<u>Description</u>	<u>Length Km.</u>	<u>(Rs. million)</u>	
		<u>Restoration To Original Specification</u>	<u>Minimum Cost Alternative</u>
Torkham - Jalalabad Section	77	219.243	121.207
Jalalabad - Kabul Section	150	710.068	352.000
<b>Total:-</b>	227	929.311	473.207

As may be seen from above studies, the then estimated cost for rehabilitation of about 1500 Km of roads in Afghanistan (1993/1999) was in the vicinity of Rs 9.00 billion. The road map of Afghanistan may be seen at Annex-V.

**(2) Asian Highways in Pakistan**

Asian Highway Network Plan has been proposed by the UN ESCAP. The identification in terms of North - South and East - West links including feasible routes was carried out and integrated with the Asian Highway Network Plan. The highways network in Pakistan predominantly follows North - South pattern due to population, and economic activities spread over the country in this direction. The eastern link has not been included in the summary because of Cabinet decision dated 27th September, 2000 regarding TFA contract that transit should not be extended to India. List of North - South feasible routes for Asian Highway Network in Pakistan are as under :-

	<u>Identification</u>	<u>Feasible Route in Pakistan</u>	<u>Length</u>
-	Asian Highway - A.1-A.2-A.4 Linking Afghanistan & Central Asia via N-5, N-35.	Torkham - Peshawar - Kohat - Multan - Karachi	1756
-	Asian Highway - A.1-A.80-A.4 Linking Afghanistan and Central Asian States with Karachi via N-5 and N-55.	Torkham - Peshawar - Kohat - D.I Khan - D.G. Khan - Karachi	1417
-	Asian Highway - A.74, and A-75. Linking Afghanistan & Turkmenistan with Karachi Port via N-25.	Chaman - Quetta - Karachi.	816

The National Highways Network may be seen in Annex-VI.

(3) Railways

A pre-feasibility study of the Railway Line between Pakistan and the Republic of Turkmenistan through Afghanistan was carried out in 1994. The aim of the study was to analyze the feasibility of constructing a railway line that would link the network of the ex-Soviet Central Asian Republics, starting from Turkmenistan, with the Pakistani network via Afghanistan in order to provide those republics with direct access to the sea ports.

Comparative cost of the three alternatives revealed the following:-

Description	Length (Kms)	Cost in Million US \$	
		New Rail Construction	2nd hand Rail Construction
- Kushka-Chaman	1,015	838.844	790.916
- Kushka-Nushki	1,090	889,455	837.895
- Kushka-Dalbandin	1,115	923.524	870.874

The Kushka-Chaman and Kushka-Nushki corridors are comparable though the Kushka-Chaman is somewhat shorter and more economical. Further advantages for the Kushka-Chaman corridor are that it is the only one that passes through Qandahar and links this city with Quetta, and is the one located closest to Kabul regarding any future connection.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The review of the relevant available documents suggests as under :

- (1) The transport network of Pakistan (both road and rail) extends to all important border points positioning Pakistan as a credible regional transport hub.

- (2) The adoption/adherence to UN conventions may be necessary for the sake of uniformity and facilitating multi-modal transport. It should, however, be necessary to keep in view the experience and lessons learnt from the Quadruplicate Agreement which does not seem to have materialized despite a lapse of several years. The number of permits to be issued by each member country, transit fee, road fee, environment fee, etc need to be resolved and quantified so that the total cost of transportation to the destination could be accurately worked out.
- (3) The condition of TTFA (Article 43) that the agreement shall enter into force six months after depositing of ratification of instrument by six member states of which one is a coastal state may be relaxed in view of the inordinate delay as per the present experience.
- (4) There is an urgent need to establish the Transit Transport Coordination Council (TTCC) as envisaged in the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA). An organization of the type of NHA, NH&PMP with 'control arms' spread across the length and breadth of the country would be the most suitable set ups to support such a Council.
- (5) As per the studies conducted for road and rail network in Afghanistan in the 1990s, the then estimated cost was about Rs 9 billion for 1500 kms of roads and Rs 50 billion for about 1000 kms of railway line. These estimates need to be updated keeping in view the existing condition and present costs.
- (6) It may be pointed out that NOSTRAC route reflected in its Map indicates Sea - rail distance of 4121 Kms between Ashkabad and Karachi via Bander Abbas (Iranian Port) in the Persian Gulf. However, the land route distance between these two cities is 1706 Kms. The map 'Pakistan as a Transit Hub' prepared by

ECIL (Annex-III) has understated the distance between Ashkabad - Bander Abbas as 890 Kms against the estimated road distance of 1,773 Kms. The distance between Ashkabad - Karachi via Afghanistan has been estimated at 1,969 Kms. It may be mentioned that Origin - Destination (O-D) distances are necessary to be worked out for both the import and export traffic separately (by country and city) by a specified mode of transport. Besides, the total financial costs have to be taken into account between the various Origins and Destinations (by country and city) for any meaningful comparison.

- (7) The existing planning should be based on the available road routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The transshipment involves both, time and cost penalties and need to be evaluated in detail before going for the rail-based system specially when the track gauges do not conform with each other.
- (8) Since Afghanistan do not have a rail system, the quickest and the most cost effective mode would be the road transport. In the context of road links through Afghanistan, Pakistan affords the shortest road route for which N-25 from the Karachi Port to Quetta (816 kms) and N-55 from Karachi via Peshawar (1417 kms) seem to be the most attractive in terms of distance. However, condition survey, inventory of roadside facilities and travel time surveys need to be carried out for a quantified assessment.
- (9) For visibility, it would be necessary to undertake only those projects which have a short 'gestation period' and have quick tangible results. In this category, the road construction and rehabilitation projects stand out quite prominently. Besides, the road projects undertaken by Pakistan should carry boards at suitable spacing acknowledging its contribution in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

- (10) It is understood that the Government of Pakistan intends to pledge US\$ 100 million (Rs 6 billion) for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It would be necessary to identify the 'grant' component and the 'supplier's credit component' if any. The possibility of undertaking road projects as joint ventures or otherwise may also be explored.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS COLLECTED FOR PROVIDING  
TRADE TRANSIT FACILITIES BY PAKISTAN TO CAS  
THROUGH AFGHANISTAN

UN Documents

1. UN Resolution 48/11 (Feb 2001)
2. UN Convention on Road Traffic (1969)

UN ESCAP Documents

3. Study on Asian Highways (Sept. 1998) in Pakistan
4. Regional Action Programme for Implementation of The New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and Pacific (1997).
5. New Delhi Declaration on Infrastructure Development in Asia and Pacific - Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure 23-29 Oct. 1996 New Delhi (1997).
6. Draft Seoul Declaration on Infrastructure Development in Asia and Pacific (Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure held in Seoul from 12-17 November, 2001).
7. Annotated Provisional Agenda - Meeting of Senior Officials in Presentation for Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure (12-14 November, 2001 Seoul).
8. Review of Development in Transport & Communications in the ESCAP Region, and Evaluation of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Phase-I (1997-2001) of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and Pacific - Review of Development in Transport in the ESCAP Region: Air Transport (Item 4 of the Provisional agenda) Note by Secretariat.
9. Review of Developments in Transport & Communications in the ESCAP Region 2001 - Draft Proposed for Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure 23-25 July, 2001, Jakarta (Item 4 of the Provisional agenda).
10. Evaluation of the Regional Action Programme for Phase-I (1997-2001).
11. Emerging issues in Transport and Communications & Infrastructure Development - Item 5 of the Provisional agenda.

Item 5(a)

- Globalization & integration of transport
- Regional Shipping and Port development strategies
- Asian land transport infrastructure development

Item 5(b)

- Infrastructure financing and Private Sector participation

Item 5 (c)

- Society and Transport (Part 1)
- Society and Transport (Part 2)

UNCTAD

12. Trade and Development Report, 1997 (Globalization, Distribution and Growth).

TTFA (MOC)

13. Cabinet Decision - Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) between ECO Member countries (Cabinet Secretary along with Enclosures).

NHA Documents

14. Expert Group meeting in preparation for the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure.
15. Re-Assessment Study of Torkham - Jalalabad - Kabul Road April 1999).
16. Preliminary Study of Roads in Afghanistan (December, 1993).
  - Kabul-Qandahar - 500 kms
  - Qandahar - Spinballak - 108 kms
  - Qandahar - Torghondi - 668 kms

RAILWAY STUDY

17. Pre-feasibility Study of the Railway Line between Pakistan and the Republic of Turkmenistan (through Afghanistan) Consultancy Work Team PRO/NTEC - INECO (December, 1994).

COUNTRY PAPER

18. Country Paper of Pakistan on Transport Sector, Communications Division (July, 2001).

Brief

19. Maps - Seminar on Role of Governments in Development of International Corridors in Tehran from 29-31 January, 2001.
20. Pakistan as a Transit Hub.
21. Brief background on North South Transportation Corridor (NOSTRAC).

MAPS

22. Asian Highway Network.
23. NOSTRAC MAP (Original) IRAN THE MOST STRATEGIC LAND BRIDGE IN THE REGION.
24. Map - Pakistan as Transit Hub.
25. Map - Central Asia.
26. Map - Distance Chart Line Diagram

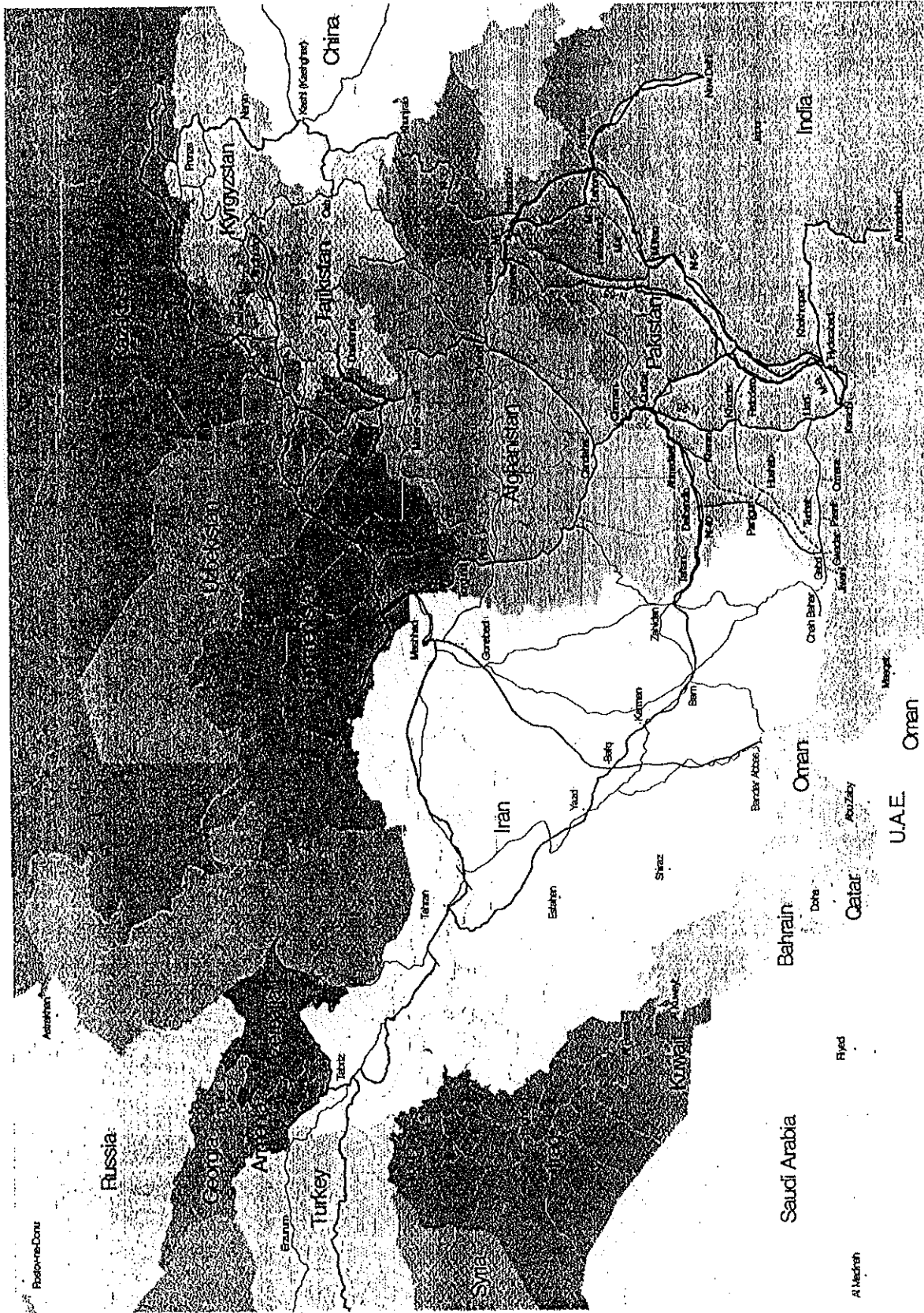


Status of ESCAP member countries' and areas' accession or being party to international conventions listed in Commission resolution 48/11, as of 5 February 2001

Country or area	Convention on Road Traffic (1956)	Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968)	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (1975)	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)	Customs Convention on Containers (1972)	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1953)	Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (1955)
<b>Group I: Mainland Asia</b>							
Afghanistan			x	x			
Armenia			⊙			⊙	
Azerbaijan			⊙	⊙		⊙	
Bangladesh							
Bhutan							
Cambodia							
China					x		
Democratic People's Republic of Korea							
Georgia	⊙		⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙
Hong Kong, China				x			
India							
Islamic Republic of Iran	x	x	x				⊙
Kazakhstan	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙
Kyrgyzstan			⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙
Lao People's Democratic Republic							
Malaysia							
Mongolia	⊙	⊙					
Myanmar							
Nepal							
Pakistan	⊙ x	⊙ x					
Republic of Korea	x	x	x		x		
Russian Federation	x	x	x		x	x	x
Singapore				x			
Tajikistan	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙
Thailand	x	x					
Turkey			x		x		⊙
Turkmenistan	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙
Uzbekistan	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Viet Nam							
<b>Group II: Island countries</b>							
Brunei Darussalam				x			
Indonesia	x	x	x		x		
Japan							
Maldives							
Philippines	x	x					
Sri Lanka							

Note: Two dots (..) indicate that data are not applicable  
 x - party/acceded  
 ⊙ - acceded after adoption of resolution 48/11.

# Pakistan as a Transit Hub



Ministry of Communications & Railways

Route	Distance (KM)
Kashghar - Karachi	4060
Almalyk - Karachi	3950
Naryn - Karachi	4040
Ashkhabad - Karachi	890
Samarkand - Karachi	1466
Dushanbe - Karachi	1530

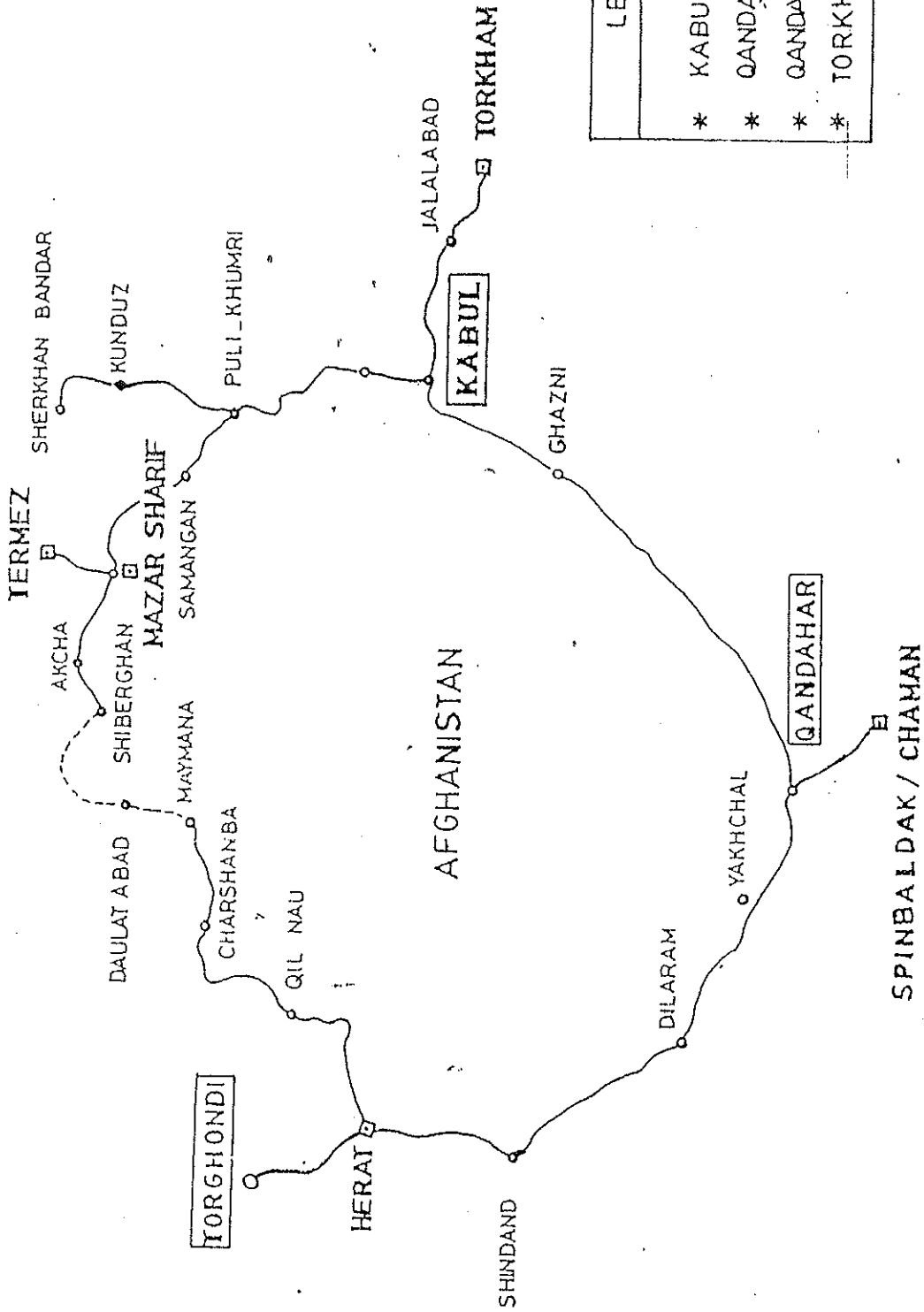
- Existing Road Network
- Under Const. Highways
- Planned Highway Links
- Existing Railway Network
- Under Const. Rail Links
- Planned Rail Link
- Main International Routes
- Cities

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DELHI ACTION PLANBREAKDOWN OF ESTIMATED FUNDING BY IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

<u>Implementing Agency</u>	<u>No. of Projects</u>	<u>Funding Requirements</u> (US\$)
APT	5	1,100,000
ESCAP	26	8,037,000
ICAQ	6	22,148,000
ILO	4	1,570,000
IMO	1	420,000
ITU	13	3,845,000
UNCTAD	1	198,880
UPU	2	6,506,000
IMO/ESCAP Joint	2	900,000
ITU/IMO Joint	1	380,000
ITU/IMO Joint	1	200,000
UNCTAD/ILO/ESCAP Joint	1	632,800
UNCTAD/ESCAP Joint	1	350,000
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Total:	64	46,287,680

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ROAD MAP OF AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN MOTORWAYS & NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

