

Q) Why did Pakistan join Western Defense Pacts, what cost it had to pay for that? [20]

1) Introduction:

"In war, there are no unwounded soldiers. In alliances, there are no unimportant partners;" (José Maria Aznar). The dictum laid down by erstwhile prime minister of Spain aptly accentuates the significance of alliances. Pakistan procured independence in a bipolar world engulfed with the cold war between American led west Bloc and the eastern bloc spearheaded by USSR. The newly established country, Pakistan, found itself on the horns of a dilemma when it had to choose which side was it going to be on.

2) Why did Pakistan choose the Western Defense Pacts:

After careful consideration, the country's senior leadership, devoid of experience, chose to establish an alliance with the western bloc. Many factors were weighed by the leadership in choosing to side with

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the west and some of these factors are as follows:

### 2.1) To counter the Indian Threat:

Pakistan, since its inception, is grappled with a genuine existential threat emanating from India. To reiterate the axiom, the Indian subcontinent was divided into a state of hostilities. Many Hindus, political and religious figures alike, were furious about the partition and ever since engaged in intrigues to reintegrate Pakistan back into India. Pakistan, in the face of this existential threat, turned towards the west in a bid to bolster its defences.

### 2.2) Threat from Afghanistan:

Threat from Afghanistan was another serious challenge for the newly established Pakistan. After Pakistan's independence, Afghanistan refused to accept the durand line and claimed the areas of entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including some areas at its peripheries. Afghan govt also supported



separatist tendencies operating within Pakistan. Consequently, Pakistan had to align with the west in order to eliminate such threats.

### 2.3) Improve the Defense Capabilities:

Pakistan, grappled with many security threats, had to bolster its defense capabilities. The west, who had ruled many parts of the world, possessed such technologies and military equipment that could consolidate the country's defense. Hence, in order to obtain such cutting-edge defense systems, Pakistan established friendly ties with the west.

### 2.4) Strengthen the Economy:

Pakistan, after its partition, inherited a feeble economy replete with irregularities. The economy of the country was very fragile and was in dire need of financial support. Weak exports and no foreign investment only contributed towards the plight. Consequently, Pakistan had to ally itself with a thriving economic hub of excellence in order to secure some finances.



Example Aid :

The US provided aid to Pakistan for several decades. This aid helped the country ~~to~~ alleviate the economic crisis.

2.5) Develop friendly relations with the west

Another significant factor was to establish friendly relations with the west. The western alliance stood victorious in world war II and, though suffered heavy losses, were still in a consolidated position and enjoyed, direct or indirect, influence over many regions of the world. The newly established Pakistan found it necessary to align with the west in order to strengthen its international position.

3) Cost Pakistan had to pay for its alliance :

Contrary to what the erstwhile leadership had in mind, the western alliance had severe repercussions for Pakistan



which are as follows -

### 3.1) Social cost:

Pakistan had to witness social impacts of severe nature. Joining the western block, Pakistan had to train Afghan mujahids against war with USSR. The venture, at its outset, seemed fruitful for not only did it eliminate the Soviet threat but also created a gateway for substantial financial support from the west. But as the Soviet threat was dealt with, the trained mujahideen turned their guns at Pakistan, plunging the country into extreme terrorism that is perpetuating hither to.

### 3.2) Plagued Economic conditions of the country:

Since Pakistan was left exposed to severe extremism, the country had to spend a mammoth amount of finances in order to strengthen the internal security of the country to cope with the proliferating extremist tendencies. Hence Pakistan had to suffer huge economic losses.



### 3.3) Diplomatic Isolation in the Region:

Pakistan's alliance with the west only exacerbated the, already hostile, diplomatic ties in the region. The country already had to face hostilities from India and Afghanistan, but now, Russia also became an enemy of the state. By supporting policies against Pakistan and providing unwavering support to India on Kashmir issue, Pakistan was left diplomatically isolated in the region.

### 3.4) Dire Impact on the Administrative Sectors:

Pakistan's administrative sectors had to pay a huge cost for the country's alliance with the western bloc. The main focus of the government encompassed the defense capabilities. The country was preoccupied with security challenges, and consequently little heed was given to other sectors like education, public health. As per the World Economic Forum, Pakistan stands as the 125<sup>th</sup> worst education system.



4) Conclusion :

There remains no ambivalence that joining the western bloc induced more harm than good. The country is still reaping the bitter harvest in the form of economic predicament, inadequate human development, terrorism etc. The shipwrecked country can still be steered to safer shores through meticulous policies and by adopting robust measures.