

Question # 5

Define the concept of strategic culture and highlight the major determinants of Pakistan's strategic culture.

Answer:

"Strategic culture is the compass that guides a nation's actions on the global stage, defining its priorities, values and aspirations."

John Mearsheimer

1. Introduction:

Strategic culture is what guides states in pursuing their policies and objectives. According to Hasan Askari Rizvi, strategic culture is a set of beliefs, norms, values and historical experiences of the elite that influences its understanding and interpretation of security issues and shapes its responses to threat. Pakistan being an adversary to India and being on prime location strategically on the world map is insecure from arch rival, from region disputes and from its internal security issues. Therefore Pakistan's strategic culture is security oriented.

2. Insecurity from India:

a. History of rivalry:

Both Pakistan and India share historical grievances, even from the time of British raj in United India. This later led to the creation of Pakistan as an independent state. But for the Indian leaders it was something unacceptable to them.

b.

Indian leaders and the division of subcontinent:

For the Indian political leaders, the division of the subcontinent was termed as itself as vivisection of cow-mother. Sardar Patel remarked about the situation as "Pakistan is not going to survive, it will ultimately rejoin us". Indian National Congress Committee passed the resolution about Pakistan's bleak future.

These political developments gave rise to the insecurities of Pakistan from the beginning of the bilateral relationship. Later Kashmir became the focal point for increased tensions between India and Pakistan and further increased the trust-deficit between the two.

c- The Kashmir conflict and Pakistan's Strategic Culture;

Kashmir with the division of the subcontinent remained disputed between India and Pakistan. Kashmir is the zone which can bring both states on the brink of a nuclear war. Neither wants the other to have it. Therefore there is heavy deployment of troops around this region. Pakistan's policy making is centered on Indian threat perception mostly, which shapes its Strategic Culture.

d. Indian Threat perception and Pakistan's Strategic Culture;

Indian threat perception is the most important determinant of Pakistan's Strategic Culture. Pakistan's decision makers perceive that Pakistan has to face Indian threat perception, whether true or not and it derives Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan's decision making is Indian centric. For example if some state is friendly towards India then it will be analyzed by Pakistan that to what extent will Pakistan extend its friendly hand towards it.

"Pakistan and India are prisoners of geography. They can agree on one thing;

Neither one wants the other around."

Prisoners of Geography
Tim Marshall.

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Ideology and Islam and Pakistan's Strategic Culture;

Pakistan has set Islamic ideology. Islam is important in Pakistan's strategic culture because it is a Muslim country. It has to establish warm relations with the Muslim world. Islamic identity has guided Pakistan's moves in international areas. The country was established in the name of Islam. This identity has collected concrete gains in diplomatic security and economic sectors. Islam has affirmed the nationality of Pakistan. Just like other Muslim states Islam is the main driving force for the Muslim states to establish ties with other Muslim border states. For example Afghanistan, Pakistan relations along with political reason are also affiliated because of Islamic identity. But still Pakistan

has concerns regarding Afghanistan as it shares border with Pakistan.

4- Afghanistan and Strategic Culture of Pakistan;

a. Durand Line;

As Pakistan's strategic culture is security oriented, it has concerns regarding its security from Afghanistan, particularly over the issue of Durand Line. Durand Line is the western border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan after the partition of the sub-continent never recognized it as border, and claimed territories in FATA and KP region.

Afghanistan was a state to be established on the basis of Greater Pakhtunistan stance. For that reason they claimed Pakistani territories.

And Afghanistan was the only country in UNGA which did not vote for Pakistan in 1948 citing that unless the issue of Durand Line is resolved it will not vote.

Now Pakistan has completed the fencing of Durand Line approximately about 95%. The Taliban government even attacked it in 2021 causing tensions between both states.

b. Pakhtunistan Issue of Afghanistan;

Before Pakistan came into being, British

government launched operation in FATA against Mirza Ali but remained unsuccessful. He became anti Communal Mujahid and was being called by the name of "Faqeer of Appri". When Pakistan came into being Faqeer announced area of Great-Pakhtunistan in FATA region. He wanted to merge Pakhtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan. When Pakistan denied, Faqeer asked Afghanistan to surrender for the Greater Pakhtun Cause. Afghanistan categorically denied making Mirza Ali denounce his movement. He asked pardon from Pakistan and announced that Afghanistan is not ready for greater Pakhtun Cause rather it wants just more territory.

Till date this issue has caused unrest in Pakistan and compels Pakistani policy makers to address this issue before any other security related issues that determine Pakistan's strategic culture. Along with border security tensions Pakistan's strategic culture is also determined by internal chaos etc.

5- Pakistan and multiple ethnicities:

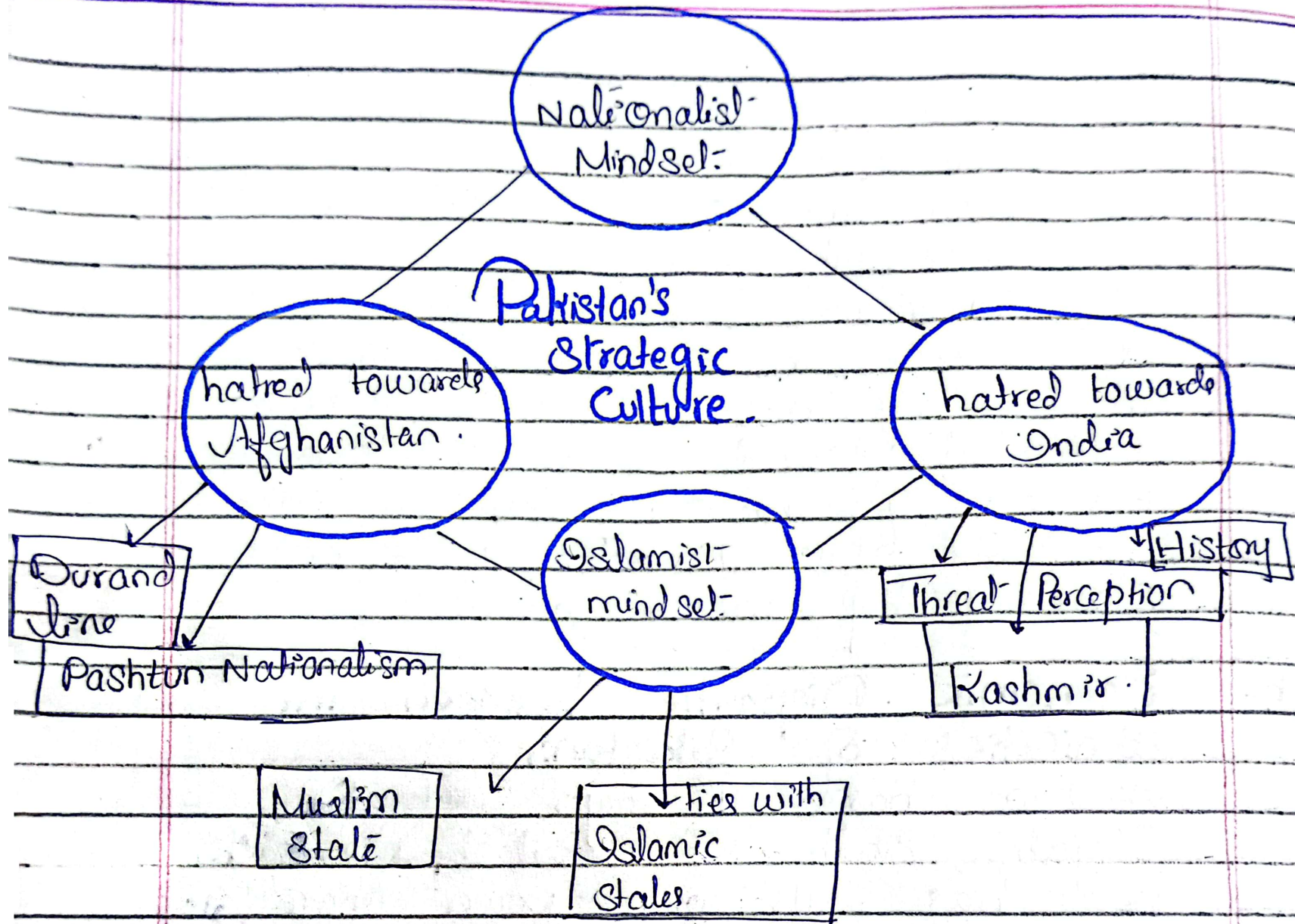
a- Socio-Political landscape:

Pakistan is a state which has multiple ethnicities residing in it. This can be proved as an asset-

as well as curse to Pakistan. Asset and blessing in a sense that all ethnicities if live in harmony with each other can boost the socio-political fabric of state. But if left un-concerned can be proved as a curse for Pakistan. For instance Baloch separatist movements if become successful could result into another episode of bloodshed like in the case of fall of Dhaka while being intervened by foreign powers.

b. Economic Disparities between the ethnicities of Pakistan;

Pakistan has 4 major units. KP, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. Each one has its own power share in government and economic resources and responsibilities based on federal legislative list. But, Balochistan's, Sindh's and South Punjab's economic disparities compared with the rest have huge potential to cause unrest or civil war like situations. Therefore these grievances must be sorted out and addressed in order to maintain the intra-state harmony.



Conclusion:

Pakistan's strategic culture is determined by its domestic and international security, ranging from threat perception from its traditional arch rival India based on historical grievances and center of tension, the Kashmir conflict, to the Afghanistan's nationalism issue and border tension. Ethnic issues of Pakistan greatly determine Pakistan's strategic culture as they have potential to escalate into serious issues.