

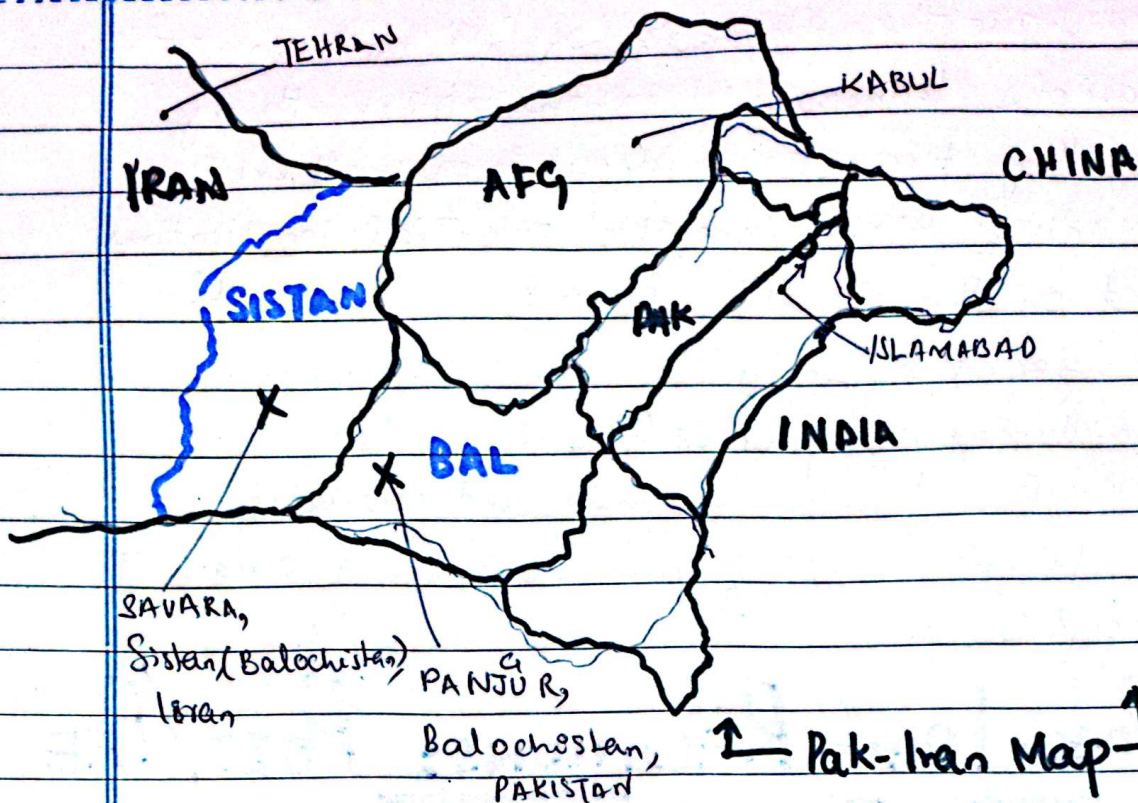
How have the dynamics of Pakistan-Iran relations transformed in the aftermath of targetting terrorists hideout in each other's territories? what are the potential implications based on the realist school of thought?

Analyze the shifts in the relationships considering geopolitical factors, national interests and power dynamics and evaluate the potential consequences according to realist principles.

PAK-IRAN RELATIONS: POST/PRE FEB STRIKES

Pakistan and Iran have enjoyed brotherly and cordial relations in the past. Both countries were members of the same bloc and before the Iranian Revolution helped the US in its policy of containment against the USSR. After the revolution, the countries continuously engaged (with) each other. Trade, Regional security and energy were all major talking points between the two countries.

However, the presence of separatists in both countries were a cause of discord and often both blamed each other. Separatist entities like 'Jaish-e-Millat' and 'BLA' (Baloch Liberation Army) had taken refuge in the peripheries of the countries.



In February 2024,

Iranian forces conducted strategic and pre-emptive strikes on Jaish-e-Adl hideouts. The group has been designated as a terrorist organization by the Iranian government.

Pakistan in retaliation targeted Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) hideouts. These groups had taken shelter in Savaran, Iran.

The country established deterrence and Escalation Dominance when it responded to the attacks. ^{By doing so,} The

In a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan, it said

'Pakistan has the capacity to respond to any aggression.'

(Pak-MoFA Spokesperson)

After the strikes, both countries engaged in

diplomatic activities to cool down the hostilities. Regional players, like China, played a mediating in calming tensions down.

In May of this year, the Iranian President visited the country signalling resumption of warm and cordial ties.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STRIKES BASED ON REALISM

a) Offensive Posturing to be adopted by both countries

Offensive Posturing (realism) and is a ^{technique/theory} ~~sub-branch~~ of realism which dictates the countries shall adopt a tougher stance against our countries. Iran and Pakistan might engage in offensive posturing to establish dominance and deterrence in the regional and assert their influence of

b) Escalation Domination Achieved by Pak

Escalation Domination ^{is a} concept by Mearshleiner that he uses to explain the responses achieved by states going up the escalation ladder. Pakistan's response was more powerful and more devastating such that the Iranians were forced to the

table rather than the trench.

c) Security Dilemma Created for Iran

The IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp) boasted about the defenses of the Iranian state. Post-Feb strikes that myth has been busted and the state has been put in a **Security dilemma** regarding its Eastern Neighbour. The regional players such as the US also observed the loops/holes in the Iranian air defense network.

d) Balance of Power Shifted from Iran to Pakistan

The balance of power of the region was in Iran's favour. The posturing and progress of the country had created an aura of the country. However, the strikes shattered and reset the balance of power, as Pakistan managed to establish both deference and dominance over the region. Same was evident in the '2019 Balakot Air strikes and resulting operation Swift Retort'. As many analysts said,

'Pakistan managed to punch above its weight and establish its dominance in the region.'

PAK-IRAN RELATIONSHIP AND POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES DUE TO GEO-POLITICAL SHIFTS IN POWER DYNAMICS

a) Energy Security and Potential Risks of Arbitration in IPI Deal

Pakistan's energy security may be at risk as both the Iranians and Pakistanis know this. Due to these strikes the Iranians may adopt a tougher stance when it comes to ^{debt} energy with Pakistan. They might even pursue the International courts for arbitration, that might hurt Pakistan, in the Iran-Pak Pipeline deal.

b) Impact of the ^{porous} Border will be felt in the Capitals

The long and porous border was a bone of contention among the two countries. After these strikes, the impact of this border will be felt in the capitals of the country. The Iranians have constantly pressured the Pakistanis to fence the border. The latter have agreed and now are redefining the border by fencing it. These borders

allowed the cross border movement of terrorist/separatist outfits. This fencing will lead to a tougher stance regarding border incursions.

c) Regional Power play to be affected

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran that entangled Pakistan will be affected. Iran's posture will probably more attuned to the aspects of Defensive Realism. Pakistan might also employ a defensive posture in order to avoid future conflicts.

PAK-IRAN RELATIONSHIP AND SHIFF IN NATIONAL INTERESTS— CONSEQUENCES

a) Reaffirming the Commitment to Counter Cross Border Separatism

Both countries have put their strategic and national interest ahead (whole) to counter the threat of separatists and cross border attacks. Both countries strategic calculus aligns on this point of curbing this menace.

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a) Trade and Sanctions are hampering

b) Balance of Power is hampered by Iran's Expansion in Shia Crescent

Iran's expansion in the Shia Crescent is hampering the balance of power and influence in the regional. To safeguard its **security and sovereignty**, the Pakistanis have to ally themselves with major powers such as China, US and Saudi Arabia.

c) Sectarian Violence and Proxies a major cause of Concern

Internal security is the foremost concern of Pakistan. However, the use of proxies by the IRGC have caused a rift in the relation between the two. Moreover, 22% of the country Shia's population is also a major order threat from sectarian rivalries. (Shia-Sunni conflicts purported by proxies of regional powers have led to immense bloodshed.

CONCLUSION

The airstrikes of February sent fissures down the region's power dynamics.

DATE: ___/___/___

The Pak-Iran relationship was recalibrated and a balance of power was shifted from the Iranian side to the Pakistani one.

The latter established escalation dominance and deterrence in the region. and finally, the relationship between took a different ^{turn} with emphasis on cross border security taking the first place.