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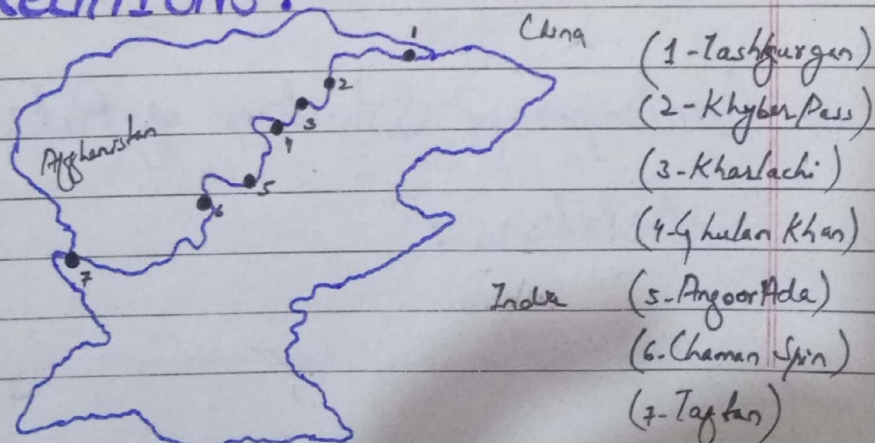
Q- How do you see Pakistan Afghanistan relations in the wake of repeated attacks by TTP and IBKP in Pakistan using Afghan land and in return Pakistan decision to pull out Afghan refugees?

1- INTRODUCTION:

On October 3rd, 2023, the interim government of Pakistan announced the expulsion of Afghan refugees by end of month and was later expanded to December. The motive of this decision was to pressurize the Afghan government to curb the activities of TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) which was operating against Pakistan. The relationship between both have become complicated further amidst of decision. It is important to acknowledge that since the establishment of Taliban government in the neighbouring country, they do not share amicable relations due to discord on terrorism as well on recognition of Durand Line. Despite the divergence, economic, political and security convergences can reduce hostility on both sides.

2- A BRIEF HISTORY OF PAK-AFGHAN

RELATIONS:



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1947 - 1970 : Complex Relationship
(due to bilateral issues and geo-strategic environment)

1978 - PDPA Government in Afghanistan
(People Democratic Party of Afghanistan)
Soviet Sympathiser Government

1980s - Pak-Afghan Relations Bitter due to
Pakistan Support to US in Countering Soviet
Union from Afghanistan

1980s - Anti-Pakistan Sentiments in Afghanistan

1990s - Rise of Taliban in Afghanistan
Cordial Relations with Pakistan for the
first time

2001 - US Led "War on Terror" in Afghanistan.
Pakistan was forced to support US

After 2001 - Pakistan Afghanistan relations did
not improve well

2021 - US Withdrawal and Establishment
of Taliban Government 2.0

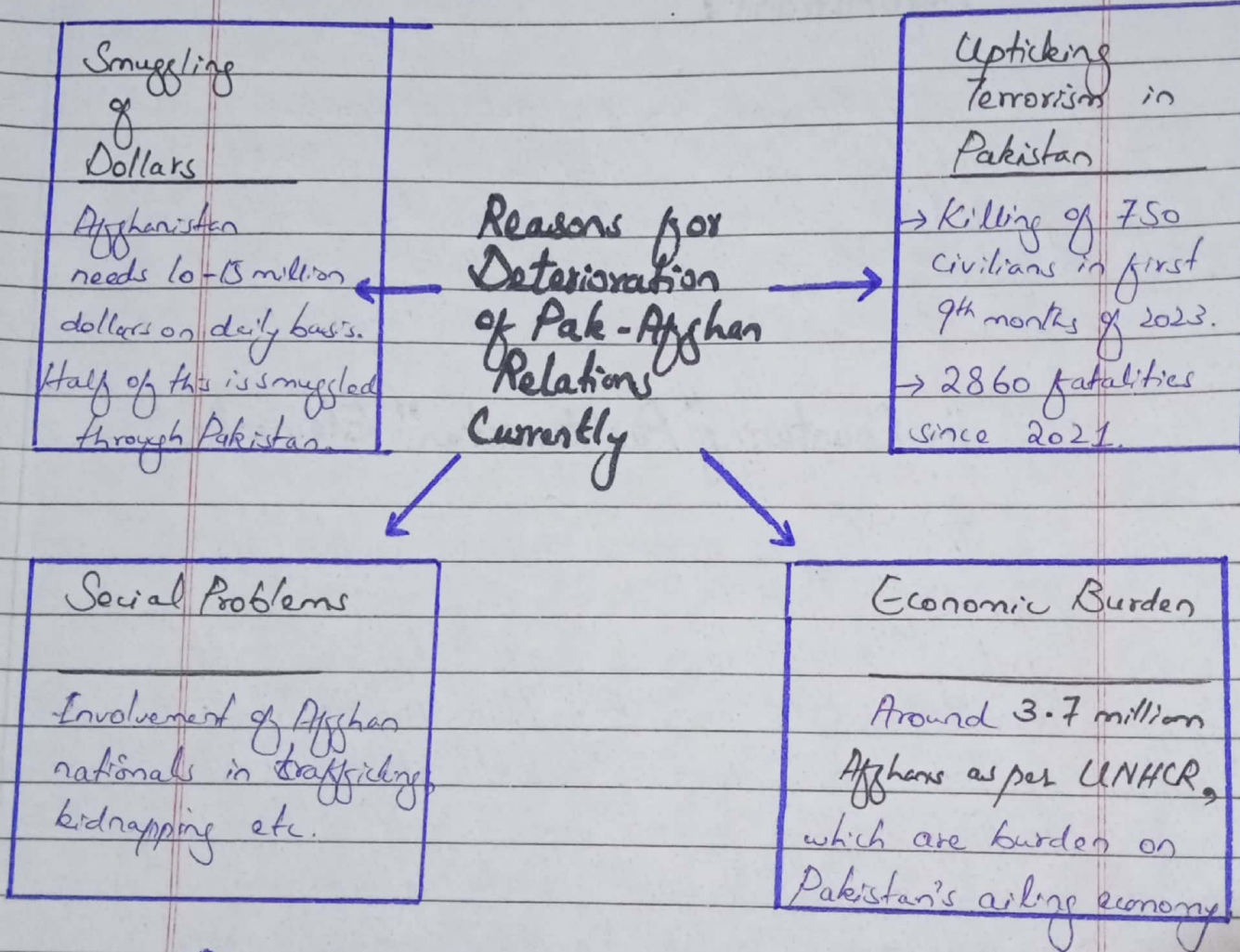
2024 - Frustrated with each other on different
issues

History of Mistrust, Disputes and Conflicts

3. Contemporary Situation of Pakistan Afghan Relations :

On October 3, 2023 the interim government of

Pakistan has announced the expulsion of Afghan refugees which has further deteriorated the relationship between two states. Since 2021, Pakistan is facing consequences of establishment of Taliban government which is supporting TTP and ISKP against Pakistan.



4- Pakistan's Interests in Afghanistan:

Pakistan shares longest border with its neighbour Afghanistan of around 2670km. In case of hostility in its immediate neighbourhood, Pakistan will have to face ripple down effects i.e. economic effects, internal challenges and as well as regional challenges. Pakistan

cannot afford another hostile neighbour. The interests of Pakistan from geo-economic to geopolitical and geostrategic which are discussed below:

i- Managing Border Issues Through Negotiations:

Historically, Afghanistan has not recognized Durand Line which remained a violent faultline between the two. Pakistan want a friendly Afghan government to negotiate on border management as well as on its recognition.

ii- Countering "Pashtunistan" Element:

The Afghan government is accused of providing ^{space to} anti-Pakistan elements in their territory for drawing away Pashtun dominant regions from Pakistan. For 41 million Pashtuns, anti-Pakistan support for Pashtunistan has been growing. Pakistan wants such a neighbouring government which respect territorial sovereignty of Pakistan and which will not provide space to anti-Pakistan elements in their soil.

iii- The Indian Factor:

India is improving its relationships with Afghanistan as in 2022 it has reopened its embassy in Kabul. Moreover, it provided US \$ 750 million as economic and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Pakistan has

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no objections in Afghanistan's growing relations with India however, it fears the involvement of Indian intelligence on border near to Afghanistan. As, in 2020 Pakistan found evidences regarding Indian links to terrorism on Pakistani soil through funding to militants in Afghanistan.

iv. Geo-economic Interests:

Government of Pakistan wants to have a cordial relationship with Afghan government which could contribute to enhance trade.

According to Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce :

Trade between both (2010) = 2.5 billion US\$

2022 = 1.6 billion US\$

2023 = 1.8 billion US\$

According to Pakistan Trade Development Authority, Afghanistan presents a significant market opportunity for Pakistani exports, valued 4 billion US\$, and could be reached at 20 billion US\$.

Moreover, Afghanistan could provide ^{Pakistan} access to CARs (Central Asian Republics) for enhancing economic interests.

5. Conflicts Between Pakistan and Afghanistan:

Terrorism
↓
In 2023, 14 out of 24 suicide bombers were Afghan Nationals.

Ousted Refugees
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Around 3.7 million residing in Pakistan. 1.7 million were undocumented.

Durand Line's Discord
↓
Discord on recognition Smuggling

6- Points of Convergence Between Pakistan and Afghanistan:

i- Economic Interests:

Pakistan is passing through tough economic times and Afghanistan is going through the same. Therefore, it is mutual interest between both states to collaborate economically. The available options are:

a- To Materialize with CARs (Central Asian Republics):

Pakistan needs Afghanistan as an access to materialize with CARs while Afghanistan can further enhance its infrastructure development and trade through multilateral projects. For example, a project was signed recently "Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan Railway Project" which will connect Peshawar to Mazar-e-Sharif and it will cost 4.8 billion dollars. Similarly, TAPI Project (Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan India Gas Pipeline Project) is a multilateral project which success will depend on relationships among its member states.

b. To Increase Transit Trade:

In July 2012, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to extend their existing Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Agreement to Tajikistan. In 2014, Afghan government

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further proposed a trade corridor to India via Pakistan but could not materialize due to security issues in Pakistan. Though Pakistan wanted to implement this deal however, international isolation as well as complex relationships have become hurdle to this concept. This trade has trade potential of \$96 billion with Pakistan through Afghanistan.

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ii. Security Interests :

a- To Counter Daesh: A Common Enemy of Pakistan and Afghanistan

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Another point of convergence which can bring two countries together is Daesh. Daesh - a terrorist group - is declared as enemy by acting Deputy Prime Minister of Taliban for Political Affairs, Mohammed Abdul Kabir. Though both countries can differ on TTP but Daesh is the mutual enemy. As per TRT, the attack in Bajaur on the political gathering of JUI-F was carried out by Daesh which caused death of more than 50 people. Therefore, one interest that can benefit both Pakistan and Afghanistan is to cater Daesh.

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iii. Political Interests :

a- Afghanistan Quest for International Recognition:

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Afghanistan wants to be recognized by international community and Pakistan can provide a better opportunity.

for this. If Pakistan is not satisfied with it, world will see Afghanistan from eyes of its immediate neighbour Pakistan. Therefore, if Afghan government will not converge on terrorism and security threats to Pakistan, the concerns of international community will be evident to stay in the longer run. Hence, Pak-Afghan relations is mutual benefit for both.

7. Recommendations for Improving Relations:

- i. Instead of building security walls and raising measures, both can stabilize and build friendly ties in common areas of interest.
- ii. It is better to work on confidence-building measures among two which may cost much less.
- iii. Cricket diplomacy can transform sports into a healthy competition which can bring nations closer.
- iv. As far as border management and security is concerned, instead of blame games and misunderstandings both states should enhance security through collaboration and collective patrols.
- v. Along with state actors, influential non state actors could be used regularly to build regular communication and proper channels on such issues.
- vi. Increasing people to people contact and maximum interaction to contain bilateral issues is only way.

8. **Conclusion:** Pak-Afghan relations are significant to achieve regional interests, internal stability and strategic goals Pakistan needs to make sure that Afghanistan stays engaged with it.

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Afghanistan concerns are allure and Pakistan's concerns are communicated ~~effectively~~. It is aware to everyone that one can change friends but not neighbours therefore, ultimate way forward should be talks and peaceful negotiations.

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