

Q: Pakistan has experienced a recent increase in terrorist attacks. What are the key issues contributing to this rise in violence, and in what ways are these incidents affecting the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan?

1- Introduction: Resurgence Of Terrorism In Pakistan:

The revival of terrorism in Pakistan poses grave threat to the country.

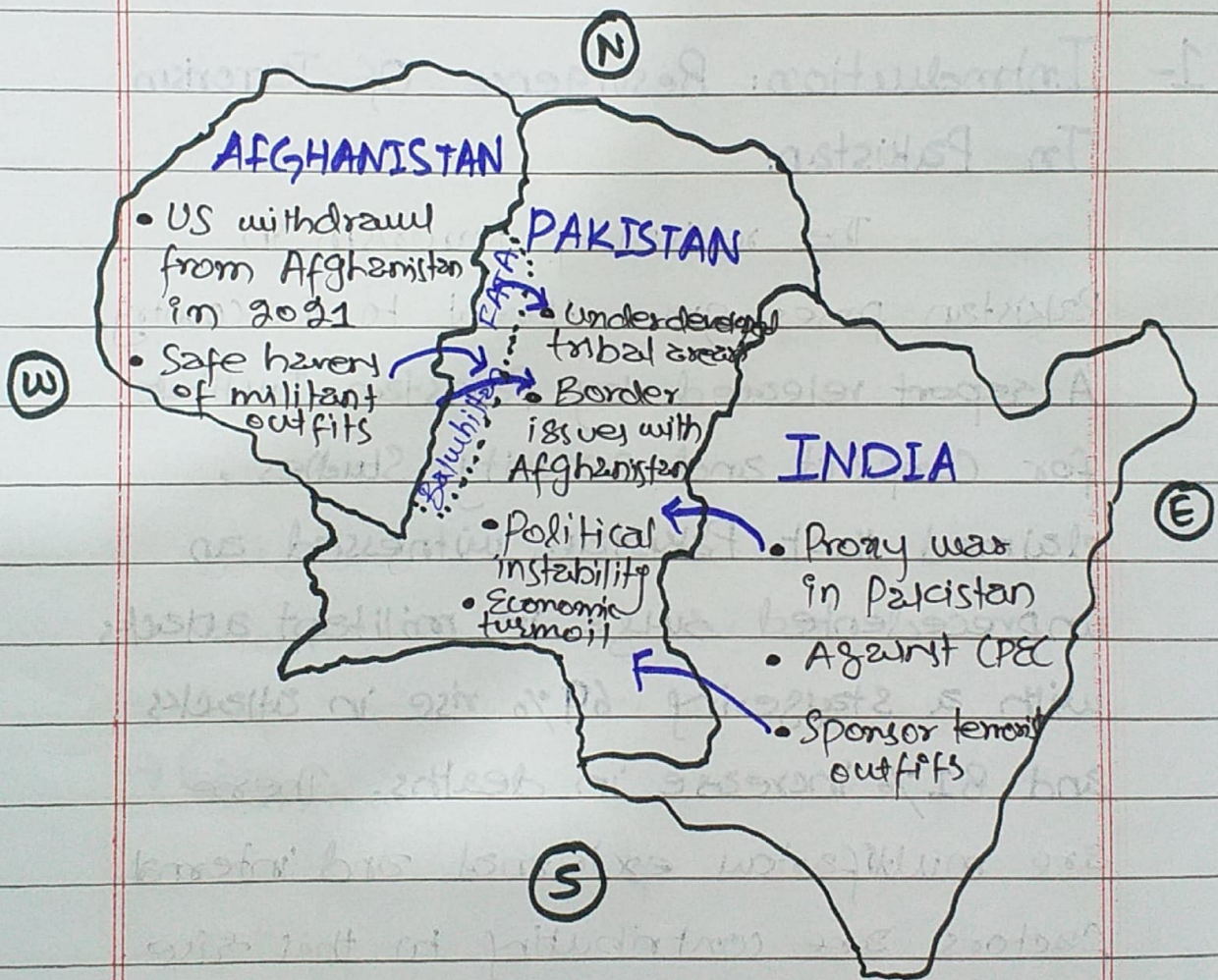
A report released by Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, claimed that Pakistan witnessed an unprecedented surge in militant attacks with a staggering 69% rise in attacks and 81% increase in deaths. There

are multifarious external and internal factors are contributing to this rise in terrorist attacks, including US withdrawal from Afghanistan, political instability and under-development.

It strained the ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan across multiple

Sectors, involving economic, diplomatic, political and security.

2- Factors Responsible For The Rise Of Terrorist Attacks In Pakistan:



Map Showing Multiple Factors Causing Terrorism In Pakistan

2a. External Factors Causing Terrorism In Pakistan:

(i) US withdrawal from Afghanistan:

Safe sanctuaries for terrorist hideouts:

After US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, the militant outfits such as Al-Qaeda and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan emboldened their outreach in Afghanistan. It has exacerbated terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

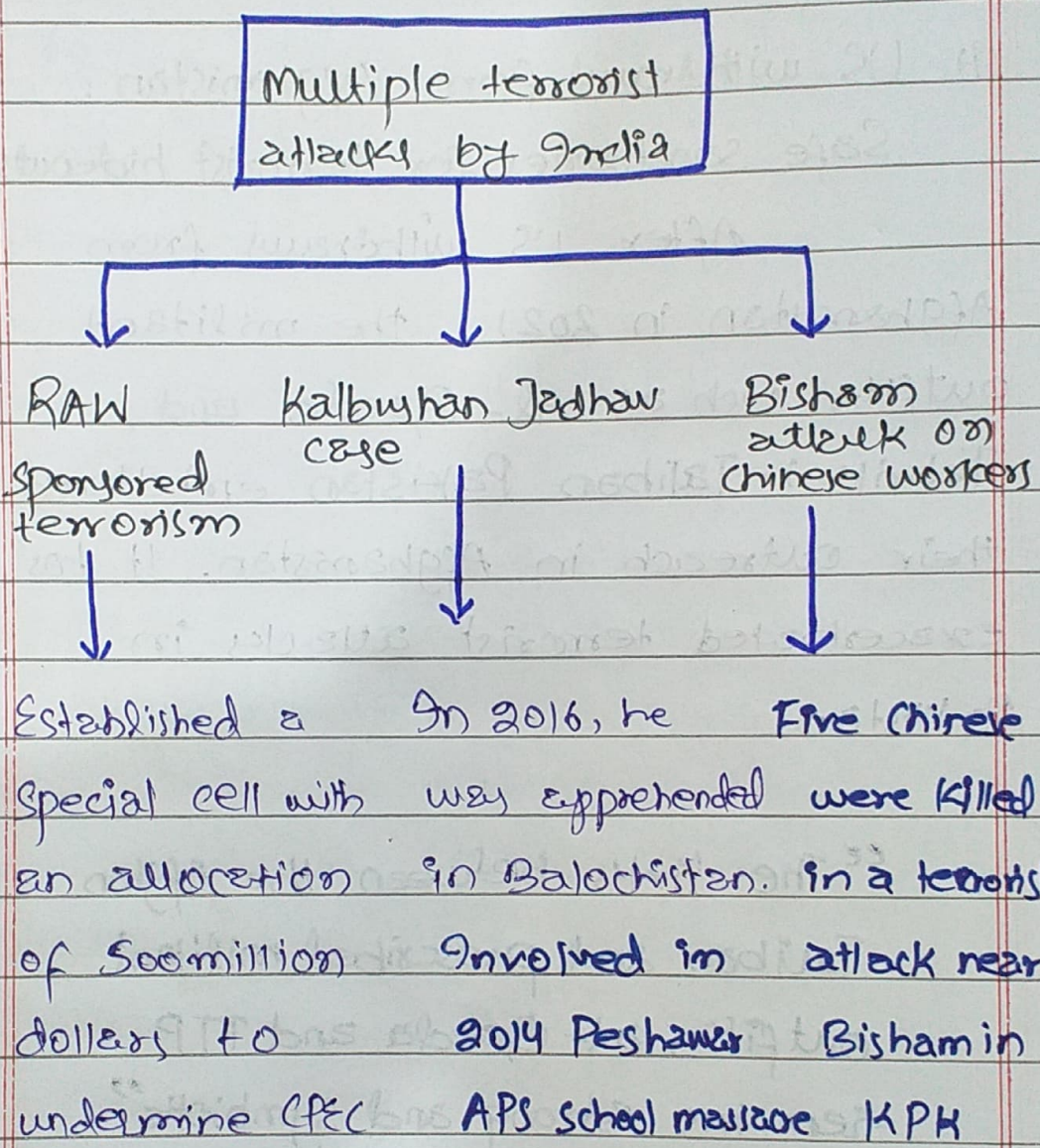
“The links between the Afghan Taliban and proscribed militant outfits, al-Qaeda and TTP remains strong and symbiotic”

~ UN

(ii) Indian sponsored terrorism: Targeting CPEC project in Pakistan:

History sheds light on multiple high profile terrorist attacks in Pakistan that were backed by

Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) agency.



(iii) Proxy wars in Pakistan: Sectarian and Ethno-political terrorism:
Many foreign non-state actors such as Islamic State Khorasan ISIS-K also involve in proxy wars in Pakistan, launching suicide

bombings in most vulnerable region of Pakistan. For instance, terrorist attacks have increased in tribal areas, Southern Punjab, Baluchistan and Northern Sindh.

2b. Internal Factors Causing Terrorism In Pakistan:

(i) Underdevelopment in tribal areas of Pakistan:

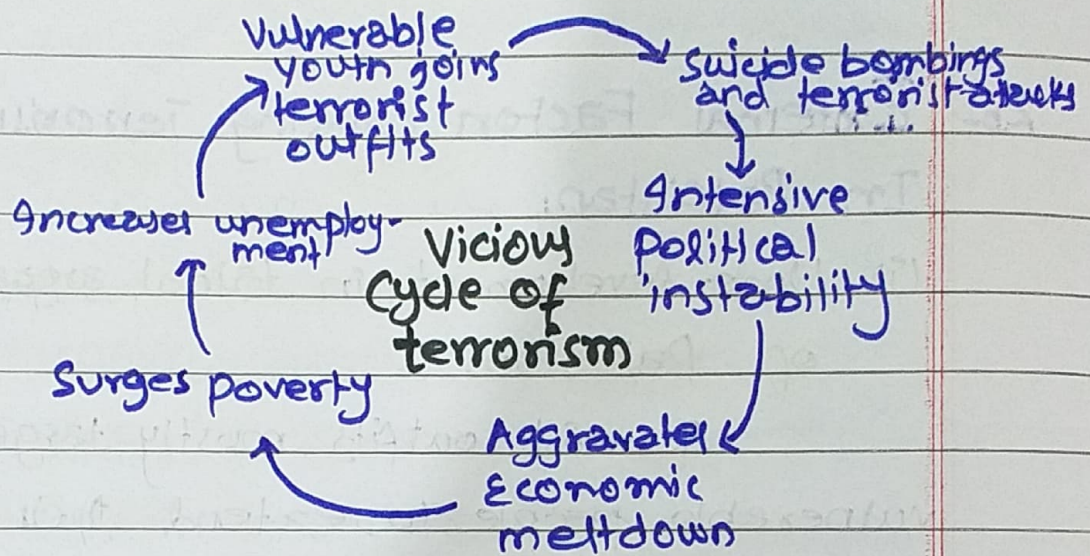
Terrorist outfits mostly target vulnerable people to extend their nefarious agendas. The marginalized areas in Pakistan provide vacuum to militant group to target civilians.

→ Case study of Balochistan crisis:

Its stark example is recent Balochistan resentment against government of Pakistan. It provides leverage to terrorist groups to target Pakistan.

(ii) Staggering political instability in Pakistan:
Political turmoil further

increased terrorist attacks. The rising terrorist attacks in KPK and Balochistan reflect the failure of governments strategy to counter terrorism.



(iii) Lack of capacity building of law enforcement agencies:

In this era of advanced technology, the terrorists outfits are well-trained and well-equipped. However, the provincial counter-terrorism departments of Pakistan and NACTA have scarce resources that make them unable to curb well-planned terrorist attacks.

3- Effects Of Rising Terrorism On Bilateral Ties Between Pakistan And Afghanistan:

3a- Rising security concerns and border tensions:

“Terrorism has become the key issue in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, with both sides accusing each other of harboring militants, making cooperation on security difficult”

↳ Abdul Sattar “Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Concise History”

The safe hideouts of terrorist groups in Afghanistan have strained relation between the two countries, with Pakistan scapegoats Afghan Taliban for not taking action against TTP and al-Qaeda and Afghanistan blames Pakistan for not resolving its internal security issues.

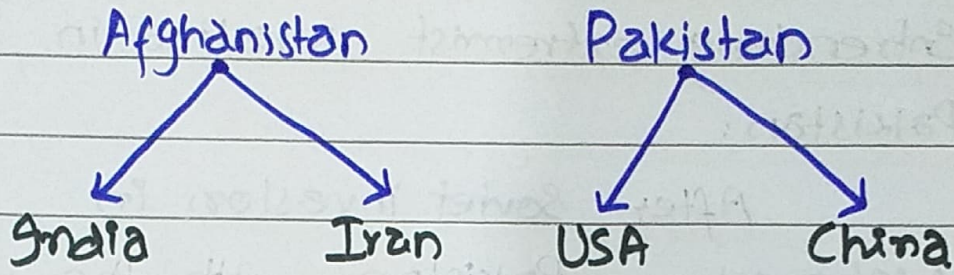
3b- Frayed bilateral economic cooperation and trade:

Despite sharing similar goals and ideologies, the issue of terrorism has always been bone of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It has hampered economic ties between them. For instance, Pakistan imposed one document policy and Temporary admission document (TAD) on Afghanistan. It further hampered free trade between them.

3c- Deportation of Afghan refugees and humanitarian issues:

Due to rising terrorist attacks in Pakistan, it repatriated Afghan refugees. It further created skirmishes between two countries. Almost 1.4 million Afghan refugees are residing in Pakistan according to UN report. Pakistan has pressurized Afghan Taliban by deporting thousands of refugees.

3d- Geopolitical influence and foreign relations: Divergent interests and alliances:



An case of resurgence in terrorism, global and regional powers involve to counter them. It's flagrant example is war on terror. Pakistan assisted the USA in combating terrorist outfits such as al-Qaeda. Similarly, Pakistan again called on USA and China for help in recent summit of SCO. It can divert Afghanistan towards India and Iran for help.

3e- Diplomatic strain and trust issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan:

The support of Afghan government to TIP and al-Qaeda has caused suspicion in Pakistan. Recently, Pakistan

has fenced border with Afghanistan.

It reflects trust issues exist between them, which impede bilateral ties.

3f- Entrenching extremist narrative in Pakistan:

After Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, Pakistan, with the help of USA and China, prepared Mujahideen in Pakistan to fight against Soviets. However, it fostered extremist narrative in Pakistan, which has spin over effects all over the Pakistan.

4- Conclusion:

The rise of terrorism in Pakistan has various factors ranging from economic and political to foreign influence. It caused friction between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which affected their diplomatic, economic, political and security ties. It needs bilateral talks and negotiations between two countries to resolve the issue.