

PAKISTAN AFFAIRS

(Q)

Discuss the issues and mistrust in US-Pakistan relations after the withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan.

Introduction:

After Al-Qaeda conducted unprecedented attacks on US's land by a network of suicide attacks and hijacking, its foreign policy towards the entire world changed. Moreover, Pakistan became the frontline state and supported the American interests and counter-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan has experienced a decline in trust vis-à-vis United States of America due to a plethora of reasons.

Flashback from the Past:

During global war on terror, there have been a few incidents which put a dent on Pakistan-US relationships. According to a former diplomat, Tahir Hussain, Pakistan

was accused by the US for ~~conduct~~ using its aid for Pakistan's own military to strengthen its power against India.

- **Salala Incident:**

Keeping in view the background of US-Pakistan relations, their ties started to log down when US conducted an attack (NATO forces) on Pakistan's paramilitary soldiers which triggered Pakistan to block NATO the routes into Pakistan.

- This was the beginning of Pak-US relationship downfall!

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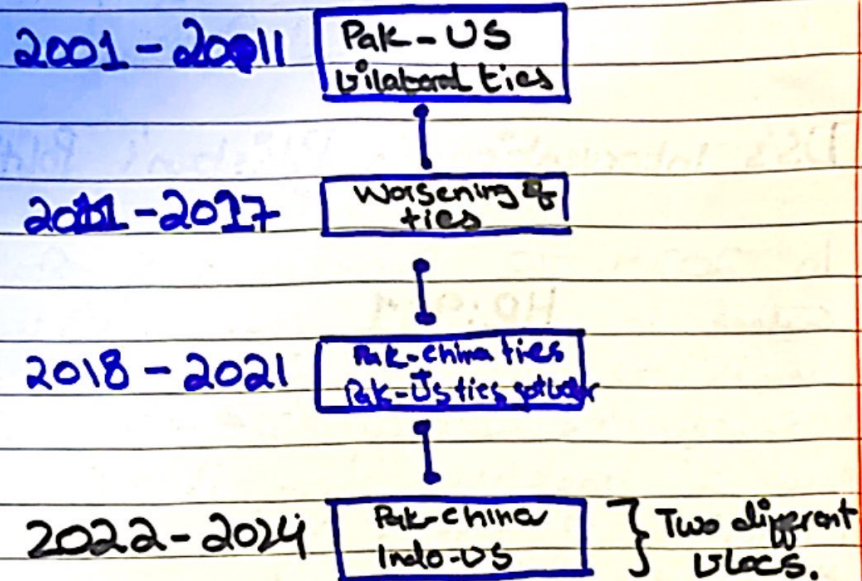
AFGHANISTAN:

Pakistan - China Cooperation and Indo-US Mistrust towards the Allies:

Q A former Diplomat, Shamshad Ahmad has rightly said in his book, "Pakistan and World Affairs".

"China is the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy"

The increasing ties between Pakistan and China has sown a seed of mistrust between Pakistan and the US. Allegedly, China also aims to counter US through its economic muscle which indirectly affects US-Pakistan relations.



China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and US's mistrust:

China has initiated a gigantic project in Pakistan which is worth 46\$ billion dollars. It would allow regional connectivity and boost Pakistan's economy. Imtiaz Gul in his book, "What lies behind the Iron brotherhood?" stated that this project aims to bring energy security, optic fibre for connection between

China and Pakistan and employment in Pakistan. Unfortunately, India has tried to sabotage the project and it has been said allegedly by Pakistani analysts that US is supporting India in its maligning activities. After the withdrawal from Afghanistan, a number of issues exist between India and Pakistan.

US's Intervention in Pakistan's Politics:

In 2024, the Department of State stated in **HE:901** that Pakistan needs to conduct fair elections and strengthen its democracy. To this, US saw a backlash from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the government. Both the institutions asked the US to stay away from its internal matters. Therefore, this incident plays a key role in sowing mistrust towards the US.

US left Pakistan when its interests were fulfilled:

The biggest issue existing between the US and Pakistan is that Pakistan has repeatedly stated US's asked the United States to give Pakistan the status of its ally

rather than using its territory for its own national interest and not accusing it of Terrorism. After 1979, US again deserted Pakistan and the same situation was seen after 9/11 which makes US a untrustworthy ally to Pakistan.

US has accused Pakistan of Terrorism many times:

US has accused Pakistan of supporting the Taliban regime even during global war on terror. However Pakistan supported US in its fight against terrorism. In the book, "Counter terror Coalition: Cooperation with India and Pakistan," the author says:

"More than any ally, Pakistan has supported US in fighting against terrorism. It has also provided more support than the Global Terrorism Counter terrorism Task force".

US has affected Pakistan's National Image:

US has blamed Pakistan for harbouring terrorism on its soil as well as it has supported the Taliban.

After global war on terror, the Institute of International Strategic Studies has published a number of research papers which stated that Pakistan's nuclear weapons might fall in the hands of terrorists. Such statements have made Pakistan more reliant on China and less on the United States of America.

Conclusion:

The US and Pakistan need to strengthen their bilateral relationship. Both the states have failed to have a good relationship since global war on terror and US has provided unprecedented support to India which places hurdles for Pakistan to approach the United States. Therefore, both the countries should work on strengthening their relationship through cooperation in science, technology, climate change etc.
