

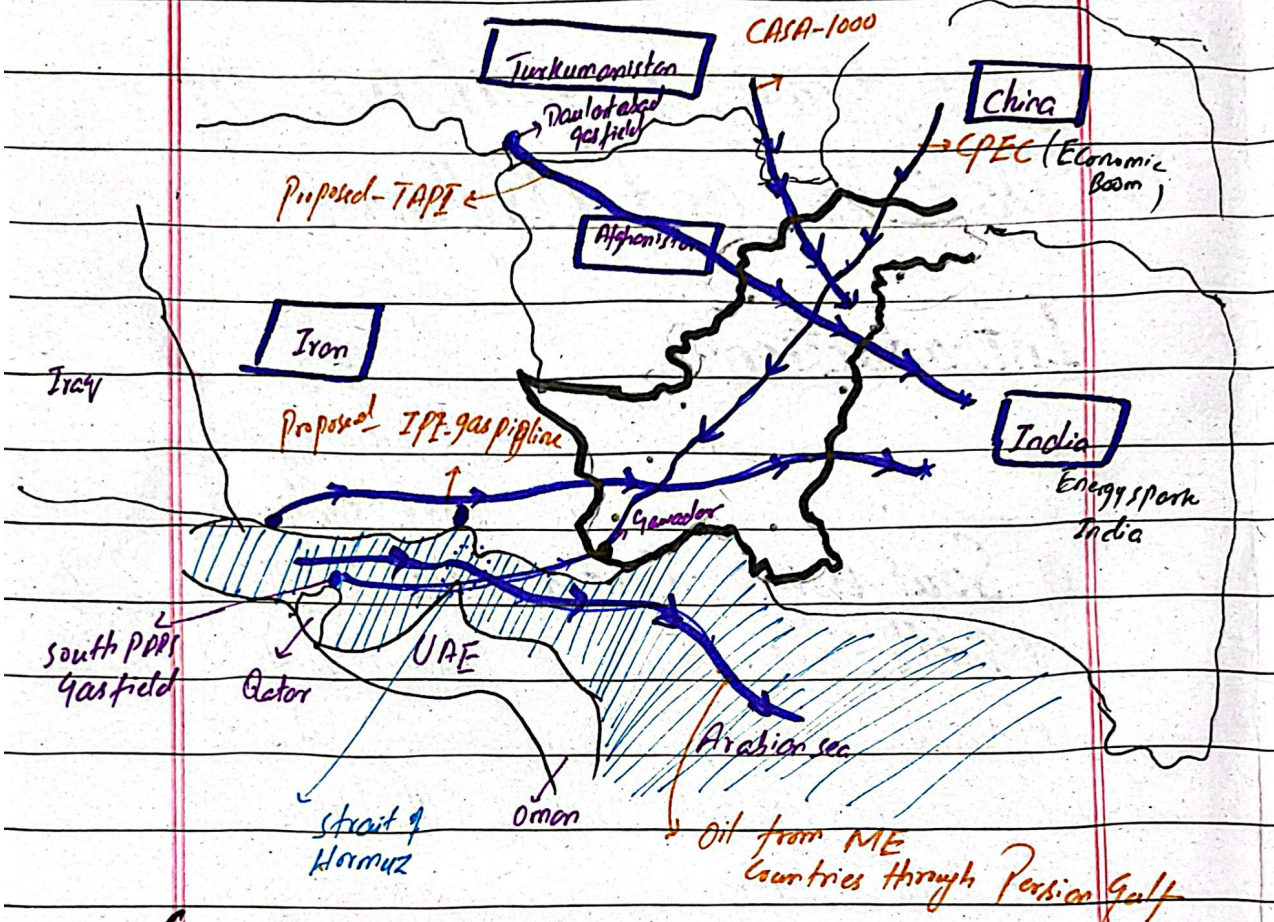
Geostrategic importance of Pakistan and challenges.

Introduction

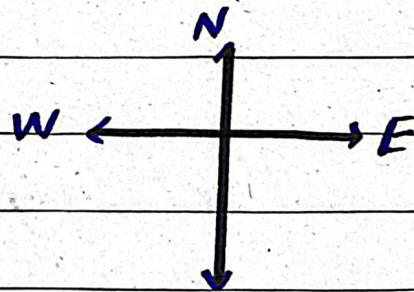
Pakistan's strategic importance lies in its position at the **intersection** of **South Asia**, **Central Asia** and the **Middle East**, sharing its borders with Afghanistan, China, India and Iran. This importance lies in its access to the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman, its role in regional trade and energy corridors. It is very important region on the basis of **political**, **economic** and **cultural significance**. It has been considered as hot bed for foreign invasions. Thus due to its physical location the country had played a vital role in **Cold War** and after 9/11 scenarios.

Geo-Strategic Importance

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Geo-strategic imp. of Pakistan



1) Proximity of Pakistan with Great economies

a) Proximity to China and Economic corridor

Pakistan shares a border with China, the ^{second} world largest economy. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a major component of China's Belt and

Road initiative (BRI), is a multi-billion dollar project that includes infrastructure development, energy project and trade routes, enhancing connectivity between two countries.

(b) Access to oil rich ME states

Pakistan is located near to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, which are the world's leading oil producers. Through Strait of Hormuz 30-33% oil is traded among countries like China, India, Japan and South Korea.

(c) Labour Export :

Millions of Pakistanis work in Oil rich states, sending back remittances that significantly contribute to the economy of Pakistan. The proximity also facilitates the flow of goods, energy supplies between these nations.

(d) Proximity To Central Asia and Energy resources

Pakistan's proximity to

(Economic Boom)

India
Energy supply
India

in Gulf

Economic

for

Central Asia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan
Uzbekistan, offers access to additional
energy resources such as oil and gas
projects like Turkmenistan - Afghanistan -
Pakistan - India (TAPI) pipeline aim to
transport natural gas and oil to South Asia

(2) Pakistan - A Global Connectivity Hub

Maximum benefit can be
gained through regional connectivity. **Gwadar**
port in Pakistan lies very close to
the **Strait of Hormuz** (International
Oil highway). Almost 70% of world
oil transport and 100,000 shipments
pass through this route annually. The
Gwadar port has the capacity to
accommodate 200,000 supertankers. So, Pakistan
can influence neighbouring countries through this
linkages.

(3) Massive Tourism Potential

Pakistan's diverse
landscapes including mountains, valleys

deserts and coastal areas offer massive tourism potential. The **Northern Areas** such as **KPK** and **Gilgit Baltistan** attract adventure seekers. Additionally Historical places such as **Mohenjo Daro** and **Taxila** also attract the tourists

4) Agricultural Potential due to its geography

Pakistan's varied climate and seasons and fertile lands offers great agricultural activities. From **wheat** and **rice** from **plains** to **fruits** and **vegetables** from **Northern areas** are produced, used and exported to neighbouring countries. Agriculture sector contributes about **23.5%** to **GDP** (Bureau of Statistics) and Pakistan ranks **5th** globally Cotton producing country.

(5) Pakistan: As a Mediator in Conflicts

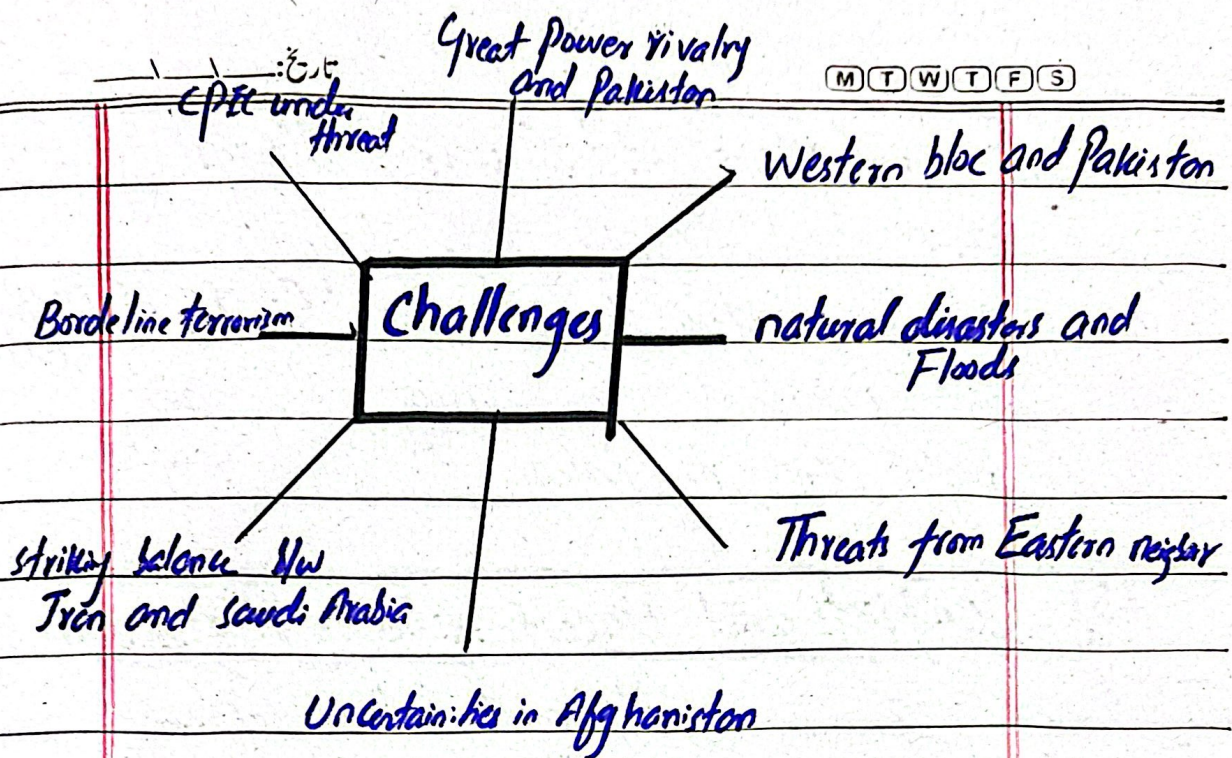
Pakistan is located in Conflict-prone Zone such as **Afghanistan** and **Middle East** so it presents

Opportunities for diplomatic engagement and mediation. Pakistan can play a vital role in maintenance of regional peace. For example in past Saudi Arabia - Iran Conflict in 2016 Pakistan played a vital role in mediation to reduce tension.

(6) Natural Resources Exploration

Pakistan's geographical diversity includes vast reserves of minerals Coal, Copper, gold and oil. Extraction and exploration of these minerals can lead Pakistan its economic growth, provided that they are used sustainably and responsibly. Pakistan has estimated 186 bill tons of Coal reserves (Thon), ~12.3 mill tons of Copper reserves (Reko Dik area), and 1289 tons of Gold reserves (Reko Dik area).

Challenges to Pakistan due to its location.



1) Western bloc and Pakistan

As Pakistan is located at the epicentre of international political arena. So it had to be the part of various political and military-related episodes such as **SEATO**, **CENTO** the erstwhile **USSR** invasion on Afghanistan and **9/11** incident.

2) Threats from Eastern neighbour

On its eastern front lies **India**, its eternal enemy. There has always been threat to Pakistan from India since its inception.

For example 1965 war, Kargil war and recently India launched a ~~real~~ a fake flag operation 'Sindoor' - 8 May 2015
 But Pakistan army working day and night for its protection

(3) Conflicts and Uncertainties in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has suffered immensely over last four decades of war and conflicts. Millions of Afghans were displaced from their homes and were forced to live in exile either legally or illegally mostly in Pakistan. In 2001 US led war on Terror in Afghanistan against terrorists had cost Pakistan a lot in the form of sacrifice. In Pakistan there are multiple militant groups such as TTP which have head office in Afghanistan. So Pakistan is always have uncertainty from that end.

4) CPEC under Threat

International powers and regional powers such as India as well as militant groups such

TTP, are trying to sabotage CPEC Project. which is very important for Pakistan economically and it is our vital interest. This is not acceptable to international powers. So there is imminent threat to CPEC

4) Great powers rivalry and Pakistan

Major powers such as US always wants to exercise its Hegemony in South Asia. So it pushes India to contain the progress of China. In fact India also wants its authority in South Asia for this purpose it is weakening the SAARC and

5- Natural Disasters and Floods

Pakistan is vulnerable to the change in climate which leads to the floods and intense rain in this region as well as destruction of agricultural land. Recent flood in Chakwal and Rawalpindi are due to climate change. Pak have water crisis too

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6) Borderline Terrorism: A major threat

Pakistan shares its boundary with India, Afghanistan, Iran and China. Border disputes, cross border terrorism and smuggling have always been challenges to Pakistan. Moreover proximity to India and Afghanistan pose security challenge to Pakistan.

7) Disease and endemics

It was noted that Malaria is common in those countries lying close to sea. ^(Gallup 1999) In Pakistan Dengue, Malaria, Scabies, Diarrhea and other diseases are common in its geography especially during floods.

8) Dilemma of striking balance b/w Iran and Saudi Arabia

Being a ^{only} Muslim Nuclear power state Pakistan has to maintain a balanced posture b/w Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Conclusion

Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon Pakistan a very fertile and Rich in resources land. Pakistan is at very impant strategic location having different resources of Renewable energy, four seasons, fertile land, natural reserves of Coal, gas, Copper and oil. Moreover it act as mediators b/w diff. conflicts. At the same time it also faces security challenges, CPEC threat, borderline terrorism, Diseases like malaria and dengue and floods. In short Pakistan is located at cross road of S-A giving and having benefits.