

Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

Date: ___/___/20

What are the critical issues in Pak-Afghan relations since the Taliban took over Kabul in 2021?

Introduction:

Days ahead of Pakistan's general elections on February 8, 2024, terrorists stormed over KPK Police station and killed 10 security officials. Terror attacks have increased at exponential rate since Taliban takeover. Both countries have experienced more unfriendly relations owing to plethora of issues particularly border dispute, Terrorism financing using Afghan soil, issues of unrest in Pashtun belt are the key issues that have strained the relations.

Critical issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan

Key Issues

- Border dispute over the durand line
- role of terrorists in Pakistan.
- Issues of unrest in Pashtun belt.
- Governance challenges to Afghan regime.
- Islamist radicalization in Pakistan
- Taliban's growing relations with India

Border disputes over durand line
Taliban's refusal to accept durand line as international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is continuation of old policies of Afghanistan. It has triggered recent

clashes between their security forces. its big divide between their intense relations. Since the talibans takeover the clashes frequency have increased.

Rise of terrorism:

Another major issue is the rise of terrorism in Pakistan instigated by TTP, Khaksar and other groups. Pakistani intelligence has credible evidence that, these forces are funded by India and use weapons left by USA in Afghanistan. Pakistan has encouraged Taliban to prevent their ~~territory~~ soil being used by ~~terror~~ outfits.

Issues of unrest in Pashtun belt

Another issue is the rising unrest and violence in Pashtun belt.

Various insurgent groups use the porous borders along KPK to create unrest in the region. They also lure young generation, provide them training and spread terrorism in country.

Taliban violation of border and targeting civilian population of Pakistan

Additionally, Pak-Afghan security forces have indulged in cross-border firing due to Taliban forces violation of border and targeting of civilian population in Pakistan. The clashes are erupting on frequent intervals.

~~Global~~ Governance challenges to new Taliban government

Moreover, the new Afghan rulers are grappling with numerous

governance challenges in terms of international recognition, women rights, humanitarian aid as well as terrorism threat from ISIS-Khorasan Province.

Taliban leaders growing relations with India for finance:

The Taliban were groomed to be strategic asset for Pakistan's security establishment in its anti-India policies. But now they gain little by keeping India at bay, especially as they provide much-needed financing for reconstruction and development.

Taliban's violation of Doha Talk by providing safe havens to TTP:

As the TTP faced rampant crackdown since 2021 they retreated

into safe havens in Afghanistan. As Taliban took over territory, they provide safe sanctuaries to Taliban by violating Doha talks. TTP leadership enjoy shelter and hospitality in Afghanistan.

Solutions for the reconciliation of Pak-Afghan relations

Diplomatic engagement

Support for Intra-Afghan Dialogue

Inclusion of various Afghan factions in talks.

Regional diplomacy

US, China, Russia & diplomatic efforts through OIC platform used by Pakistan.

Managing Afghan refugees

3 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. Pakistan must ask the international community for the financial assistance to Afghan refugees. They have been living in Pakistan for decades, their rights must be protected in volatile situation.

Economic support & trade:

Pakistan must enhance economies with Afghanistan through trade of key goods and services. They must engage in mutual training, exchange programs. Pakistan should use other regional platforms for humanitarian assistance to Afghans.

Support for counterterrorism:

Pakistan has engaged with Taliban on its counter-terrorism efforts particularly the

activities of TTP, ISIS-K and Al-Qaeda. Pakistan has stressed the importance of ensuring that Afghan territory is not used for attacks against Pakistan. In this regard Pakistan has increased border patrol and intelligence sharing to counter the movement of militants across the border.

Conclusion:

Pakistan and Afghan relations have witnessed major hostilities and hate since 2021 owing to key issues of terrorism, border clashes and unrest in neighbouring provinces. Leadership from both sides must negotiate to resolve key issues through enhanced diplomacy and using regional platforms to reconcile their relations.