

Analyze Pakistan's Foreign policy towards Afghanistan in the context of recent developments following the visit of Afghan FM Haneef Muttaki to India. How have border security concerns, terrorist attacks, and regional diplomatic dynamics influenced Pakistan's strategic responses?

I. Exordium:

Geograph has never been kind to Pakistan. The country inherited a nine times ^{1989s} adversarial state in India, following Indian subcontinent's partition in 1947. Likewise, geographical incongruity with western borders shaped the strategic depth policy that already undergone significant changes. For instance,



Day: _____

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Day: _____

Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan has entered a phase of strategic recalibration, particularly after October 2025 visit of Afghan Foreign Minister Hafeez Muttaki to India. During 8 days visit, Afghanistan FM was focused on bilateral cooperation, trade exchanges, exports of dry fruits, and facilities to health sector of Afghanistan. While initially Pakistan expected strategic convergence with the Taliban regime, but recent developments reveal growing divergence such as border security concern, terrorism, and diplomatic dynamics.

II. Terrorism: Core Determinant of Pakistan's Policy

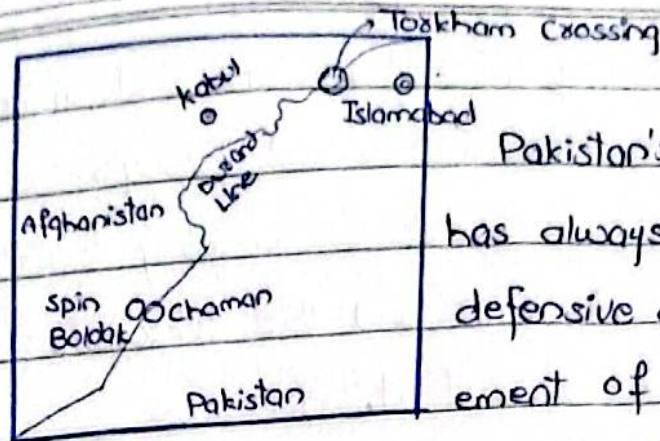
Counter-Terrorism has emerged as the non-negotiable pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated:

"Pakistan sheltered millions of Afghans for decades, yet today our goodwill is repaid with terrorism launched from Afghan soil."

Day: _____

Date: _____



Pakistan's foreign policy has always been defensive due to involvement of India factor

in diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan.

But recent visit of Afghanistan's Foreign

Minister to New Delhi, Afghan-Pak durand

line skirmishes, and October border clashes

have left no room for negotiations. So much

so that various Pakistani officials including its

defense minister have publicly called Afghanistan

an 'enemy country.'

a) 2025 Terrorism Trends:

- * Pakistan recorded over 700 terrorist incidents in 2025, highest since 2015.
- * The TTP accounted for approximately 65-70% of these attacks.
- * More than 1,000 fatalities were reported in KPK and Balochistan - most affected, exploiting post-NATO governance vacuums in eastern Afghan provinces.

b) Strategic Response of Pakistan against

terrorism growing in Afghanistan and affecting Pakistan can be understood through CDF Field Marshal Asim Munir warning that:

"Choose ^{between} Pakistan and the terrorists operating against it."

These statements signify a shift of foreign policy toward conditional engagement, aligning with coercive diplomacy theory.

III. Emergence of Strategic Vulnerability:

Instead of a friendly buffer, Afghanistan has become a source of strategic vulnerability. Pakistan's long-standing doctrine of strategic depth in Afghanistan has collapsed.

Evidence:

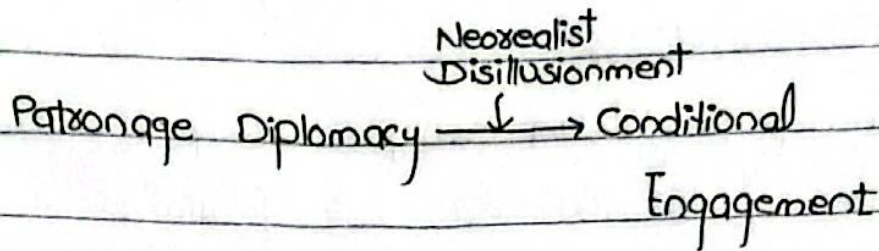
Post-2021 Taliban rule failed to deliver expected alignment with Pakistan.

Taliban's independent diplomacy with India signals rejection of influence of Pakistan.

Strategic Response

In this way, Pakistan shifted from patronage diplomacy to conditional engagement

with Afghanistan.



IV. Taliban's Calculated Ambiguity as a Survival Strategy:

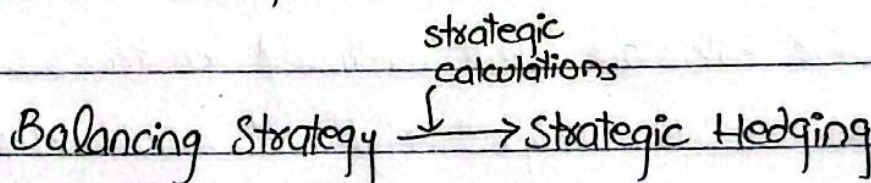
The Afghan Taliban pursue calculated ambiguity, offering assurances to Pakistan while avoiding decisive actions against TTP or anti-Pakistani groups.

Evidence:

When Amir Muttuqi attended Moscow Meeting where Afghanistan's neighbors issued a joint statement opposing deployment of foreign military infrastructure in the region. This shows Afghanistan's inability or willingness to cater terrorism.

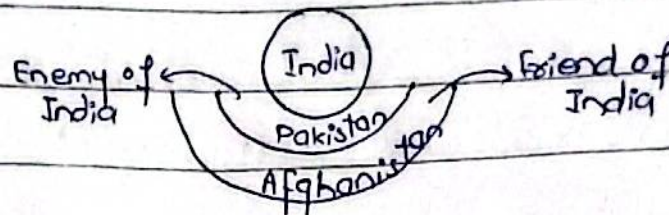
Strategic Response:

Islamabad now demands written guarantees, not verbal assurances, and publicly internationalizes Taliban non-compliance.



V. India's Mandala Strategy and Afghanistan:

India employs Mandala Theory encircling adversaries by growing ties with neighbors of rivals.



Evidence:

India's cumulative investment in Afghanistan exceeds USD 3 billion.

Pakistan declared Afghanistan as 'enemy country'.

Strategic Response:

In response, Pakistan framing India-Afghanistan as security threats and allying itself with global powers like China and USA.

VI. Regional Multipolar Engagement:

In Pakistan's Afghan Calculus, China plays a dual role - economic stabilizer and security stakeholder. Moreover, USA is proved as an ally for Pakistan as it continued to freeze Afghan assets, shapes Afghanistan indirectly.

through sanctions, aid controls, and diplomatic narratives.

Evidence:

- * TTP targeted Chinese nationals and concerns over militant spillover into Xinjiang has increased.
- * USA's claim over Bagram Airbase.

Strategic Response:

Pakistan is bandwagoning with rising powers and improving its goodwill in international relations.

Strategic Inter-dependence + Bandwagoning

Critical Analysis:

Upon analysis, Pakistan's approach towards foreign policy for Afghanistan is evolving time to time. The dependence of the fact that what strategy should be opted is what decisive actions Afghan Taliban is taking to build peace in the region. Because, after all considerations, the major and real problem of Pakistan with Afghanistan is the resurgence of terrorism that took

deep roots in Afghan land. So, Pakistan as a neighboring country always show willingness to help such as Afghan Refugees. Since Afghan FM Amir Muttaki had visited India FM Jaishankar and called each other good friends. Pakistan has transformed its strategic response from patronage diplomacy to conditional engagement with Afghanistan.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan after recent events, such as India-Afghanistan growing diplomatic ties, has evolved from patronage to conditional engagement. Terrorism, security and diplomatic dynamics are some factors that influenced Pakistan's strategic response that includes 9th October, 2025 border clashes after Amir Muttaji India visit. However, if Afghanistan would not restricted to grow diplomatic ties with India, it will consider as the same intensity threat as India, and Pakistan's approach will be offensive.