

"CURRENT AFFAIRS"

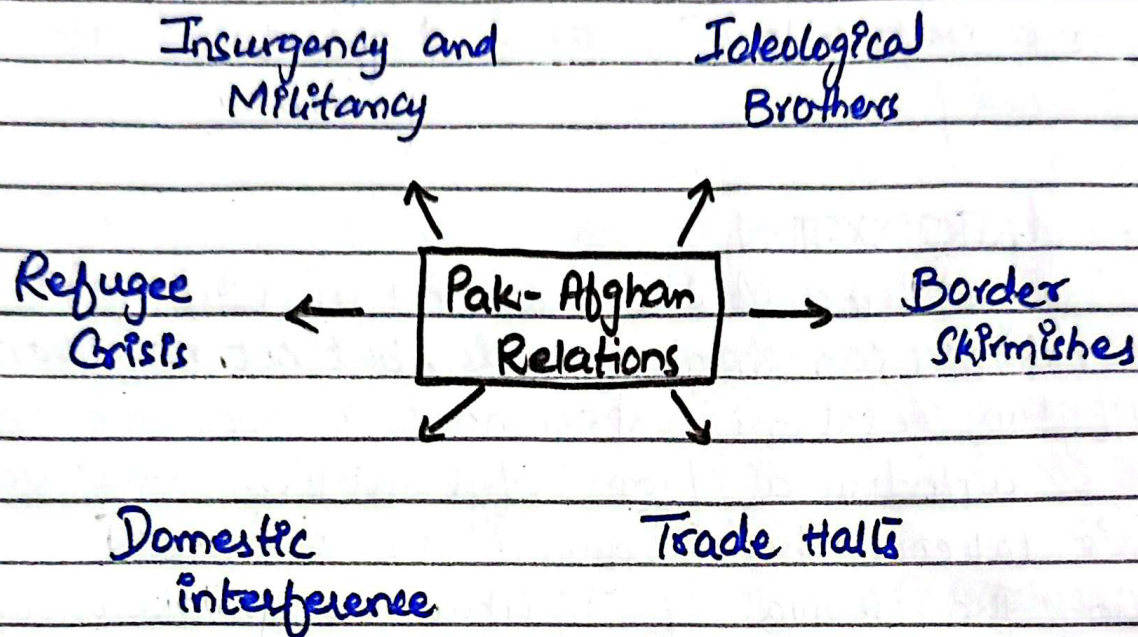
Pak-Afghan relations continue to remain tensed even after mediation by China. What do you think are major factors and how could it be improved?

1. INTRODUCTION

Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee once said, "You can change friends, but not neighbors."

Pak-Afghan relations experienced a revival on post-US withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, Taliban's Takeover has changed the overall scenario. The revival of Taliban and increasing insurgency of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have severely affected the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Moreover, China mediated and played a key role to stabilize the relations, Turkey and Qatar mediated to stop border skirmishes in late 2021, but tensions continued to remain tense. The Durand line, border disputes, Indian factor, and economic and trade friction are the major factors affecting Pak-Afghan relations. Although, they can be improved via intelligence sharing, de-linking trade from geo-politics, regional mediation and offering counter terrorism measures to Afghanistan for internal security. Hence, the relations are tense due to significant factor but they can be improved.

B. PAK - AFGHAN RELATIONS



3. Factors Affecting Pak-Afghan Relations

3.1. DURAND LINE

Durand line is the major triggering point in Pak-Afghan bilateral relations. Pakistan has fenced over 93% of Durand Line by 2023 due to security issues. Afghanistan former minister Zabiullah Mujahid called it an **unIslamic and unethical conduct**. Moreover, continued on rejecting line as it has ended when Britishers left.

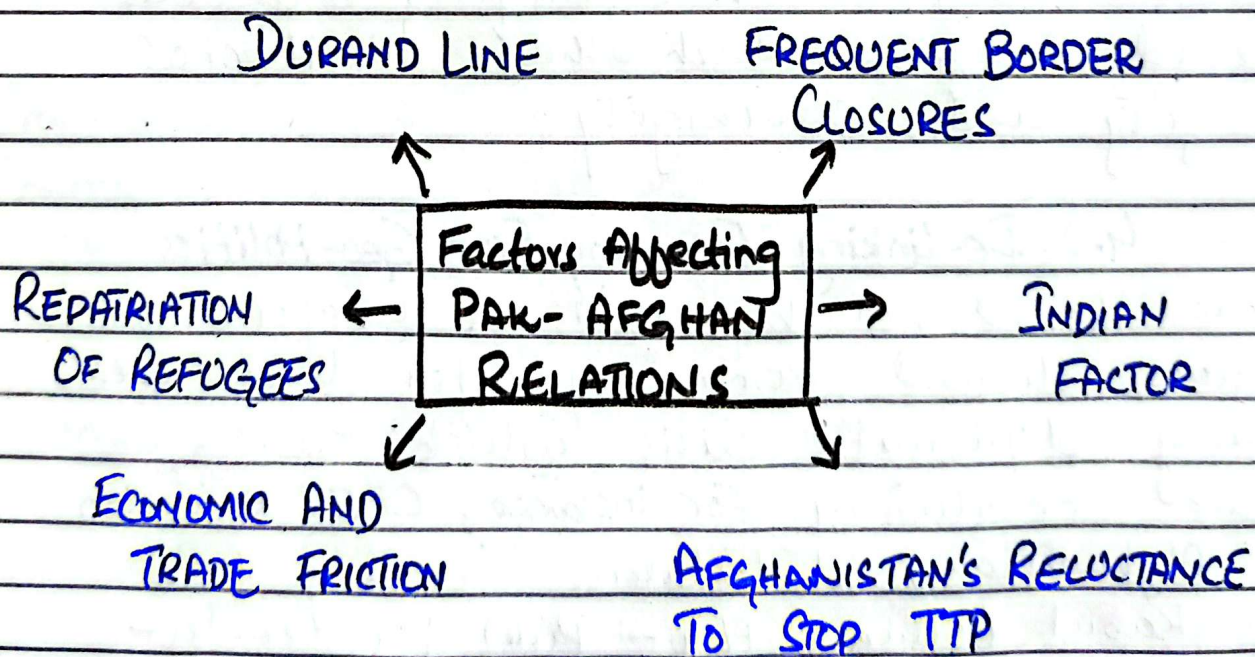
3.2. Border Closures affecting Trade

Rising military and insurgency forces Pakistan and Afghanistan to close borders specifically

Torkham and Chaman borders which halt trade and both countries suffer economic loss. During 2025 crisis, hundred trucks got stucked at borders leader to tomato shortage in Pakistan. These borders are significant for both Pakistan and Afghanistan for their economy.

3.3. Indian Factor

The foreign Minister of Afghanistan was at Delhi during 2025 conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan. India is trying to influence Afghanistan against Pakistan and supporting financially and militarily the terror groups inside Afghanistan. Hence, Pakistan facing a two front conflict on both Eastern and Western borders.



3.4. REFUGEE CRISIS

Pakistan is facing an economic burden due to massive refugee influx. According to NCCIS, insurgency raised to 73% in 2023 compared to 2021. Therefore, Pakistan repatriated more than 1 million refugees which further constrained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

4. STRATEGIC MEASURES TO IMPROVE PAK- AFGHAN RELATIONS

4.1. Recognition of Independence

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are independent states. Also, Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistan for its trade, meanwhile, Pak. is also dependent on Afghanistan for Central Asian access. Therefore, both states should recognise each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

4.2. De-linking Economy From Geo-Politics

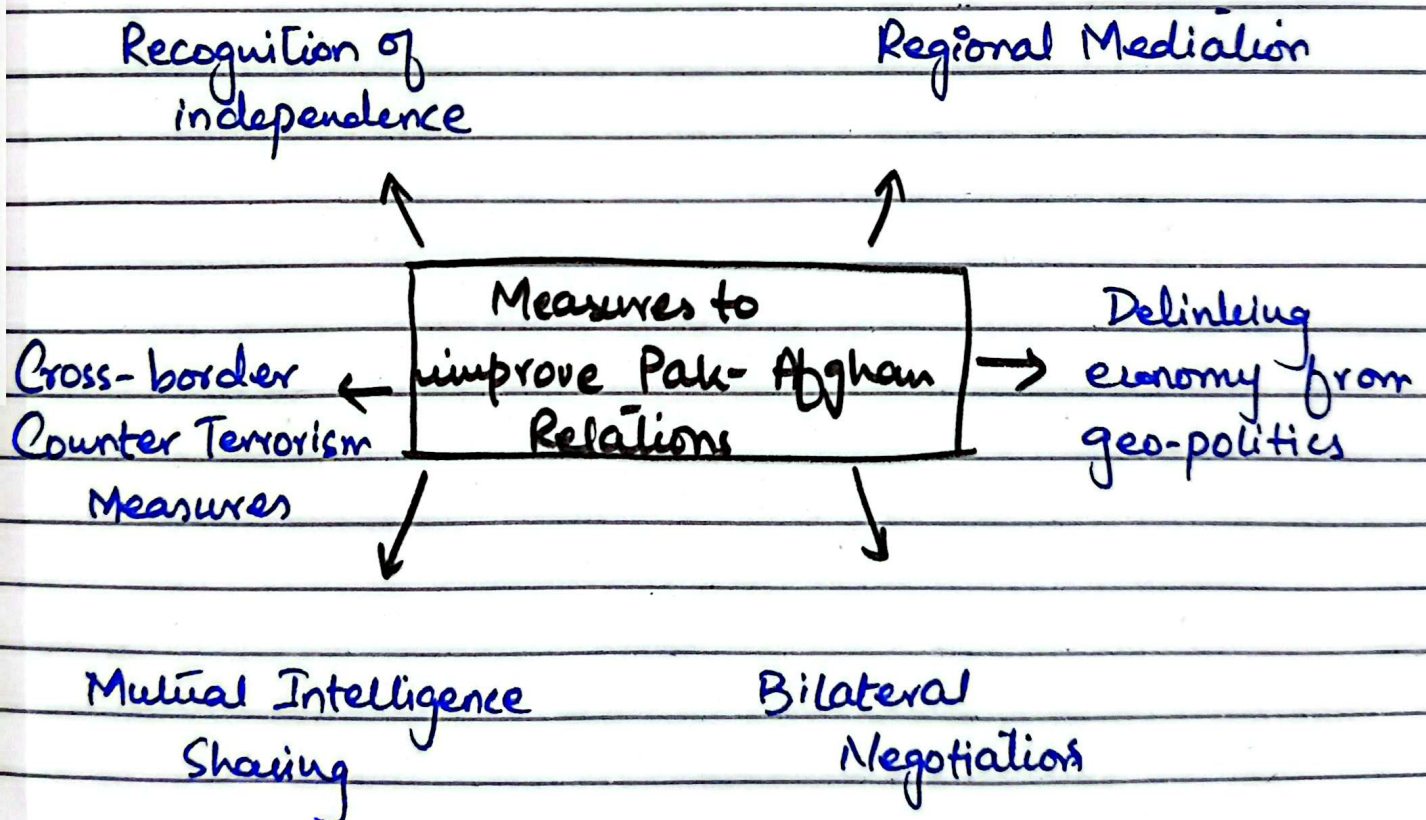
Trade should not be used as weapons.

Borders should remain open for trade even during diplomatic crisis which creates peace constituency. For instance, CPEC extension to Afghanistan, as trilateral meeting held in Kabul (China - Afg - Pak) for counter-terrorism, economic interdependence and

CPEC extension to Afghanistan. These strategic measures could help improve bilateral relations.

4.3. Regional Mediation

Pakistan should encourage Beijing for economic investment and protection of security matters. Pak. can also sought help from regional organizations on the platforms of SCO and SAARC to resolve the bilateral disputes. Moreover, Qatar and Turkey mediated in 2025 conflict to resolve the dispute.



5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Post US- withdrawal, a new wave of Pak-Afghan relations emerged after the Taliban's takeover to Afghanistan. Despite informal efforts which includes bilateral unofficial talks to counter the constraints, no effective results occurred and tensions continued to remain tense. However, like CPEC extension agreement, several other strategic measures should be taken to resolve the conflicts effectively.