

Analyze the challenges Pakistan faces in managing its western border with Afghanistan, particularly in the context of cross-border terrorism and refugee influx in the post-Taliban Era.

9/20

### Introduction:-

Pakistan's western border with Afghanistan stretching over 2600 plus Km is one of the most difficult frontiers in the world to manage. The terrain is mountainous, porous and historically used for unregulated movement of people and

goods. After the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, Pakistan's border

management challenges have increased than decreased. Issues such as cross-border management challenges have increased.

Infiltration by militant groups, illegal trade, and a renewed influx of refugees have placed significant pressure on Pakistan's security apparatus, economy, and social stability. Managing this border has therefore become a central national security concern for Pakistan.

Date: 1/20

# PAK AFG BORDER.



## ANALYSES

(i) Structure Issues of the Western border

(ii) RISE of Cross-border Terrorism  
after 2021

(iii) Refugee Inflow & its Impact  
on Pakistan

(iv) Border Management and  
Governance Problem

(v) Geopolitical Complications

(vi) Economic and Social Impact

(i) Structure Issues of the  
Western border

1. Dispute over Durand Line

2. Harsh Terrain and Weak  
border Infrastructure

3. Dispute over Durand Line

Durand Line drawn in 1893 has  
never been recognized by the

overall good  
attempt. need to  
add more data and  
statistics

Afghan government including Taliban-  
This dispute creates continuous tension  
because

- Pakistan treats the border as an international boundary
- Afghanistan sees it as an artificial division of Pashtun tribes.
- Local tribes ignore the border since families live in both sides.

## b) Harsh Terrain and Weak border Infrastructure

The border passes through high mountains, narrow passes, remote valleys, areas with extreme weather. These conditions make continuous surveillance extremely difficult, even with fencing and security posts, militants can still find unguarded routes.

### (ii) Rise of cross-border Terrorism

After 2021

- (a) TTP safe havens inside Afghanistan
- (b) Increase in cross-border attacks
- (c) Role of ISKP

#### (a) TTP safe havens inside Afghanistan

After the Afghan Taliban took control,

TTP prisoners were released.

Many TTP leaders released to Afghan provinces like Kandahar, Nangarhar.

TTP regained manpower and launched stronger

add statistics  
e.g a 51%  
increase in  
terrorist  
attacks  
(2022 vs  
2021)

Attacks on Pakistan

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of firing TTP Space -

### (b) Increase in cross-border attack

Since 2021,

- (1b) Pakistani border check posts have been attacked
- (2b) Police stations in KPK were targeted
- (3b) Suicide bombings increased
- (4b) Militants used Afghan territory as a launching base

### (c) Role of ISKP

Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)

- (1c) Opposes both Pakistan and Afghan Taliban
- (2c) Conducts high-casualty attacks in Pakistan
- (3c) Exploits border weakness and refugee movement
- (4c) Competes with the TTP for recruitment and territory

### (iii) Refugee Inflow and Its Impact on Pakistan.

- (a) Large number of Afghan Refugees
- (b) Security concern within refugee population
- (c) Diplomatic friction over deportation policy

#### (a) Large number of Afghan Refugees

Pakistan has hosted Afghanistan for over 40 years - After 2021, more arrived due to:

→ Taliban rule fear

Economic collapse

Hunger and unemployment

Drought and Poverty in Afghanistan

This increase pressure on Pakistan's Hospitals, Schools, Housing, Employment market & Social Services.

### (b) Security Concern within refugee populations

Pakistan worries that militants may hide among refugees because:

- (1) Many crossings are uncontrolled.
- (2) Multiple refugees are undocumented.
- (3) Some may be linked to TTP or LSF.

### (c) Diplomatic friction over deportation policy

Pakistan's illegal foreigner's Repatriation

Plan led to tensions because, Afghanistan

accused Pakistan of human right violations

Pakistan argued it cannot host unlimited

refugees during economic crisis, Border

conflict increased and protests erupted

on both sides. (Reuters, 2023).

### (iv) Border Management and Governance Problems

(a) Weak state presence in border area

(b) Controversy over border fencing

(c) Impact on Local Economy.

### (a) Weak state presence in border area

Former FATA and border districts suffer from

Poor policy

Limited control

Smuggling networks

High Unemployment

Tribal justice system, Strong Military

Influence

don't call it  
illegal  
outright.

Weak state governance enables both militants and irregular migrants to move freely.

### (b) Controversy over border fencing

Afghanistan destroyed fence 130+ times  
256 crossing points; only 6 official

Pakistan completed fencing along 2600 km, However Afghan Taliban removed fence. Segregation called it illegal. Local people dislike this fence because it disrupted movement. Thus fencing created new tensions instead of eliminating old ones.

### (c) Impact on Local Economy

Strict border reduced trade, increased transit delays, raised food prices in border towns and hurt daily wage workers.

### (d) Geopolitical Complications

(a) Pak-Afz Mistrust

(b) Role of Regional Powers

### (a) Pak-Afz Mistrust

When Pakistan was established in 1947 all countries voted for Pakistan in UN

except Afghanistan. Post 2021, Kabul refuses to act against TTP. Pakistan carries out airstrikes on TTP inside Afghanistan.

This mistrust prevents any cooperation.

### (b) Role of Regional Powers:

Other countries like India maintain diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. Iran strengthens ties with western Afghanistan.

China wants stability for CPEC expansion.

Pakistan's limited economic leverage:

restricted Afghan transit trade but Afghanistan diverted routes to Iran's Chabahar port, reducing leverage.

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## (6) Economic and Social Impact

Pakistan faces severe economic crisis - Border Problem worsen it by, Increasing defense spending, Reducing bilateral Trade, encouraging smuggling over legal business, Reducing investor confidence and increasing Policy uncertainty.

### Conclusion:-

Managing Pakistan's western border with Afghanistan has become an extremely complex challenge in Post Taliban era - Cross-border terrorism has increased, TTP has strengthened, ISKP remains a threat and millions of Afghan refugees continue to create social and economic pressures. The border's disputed status, difficult geography, weak governance, and deep mistrust between Kabul and Islamabad further complicate the situation.

(Please give me marks out of 20)