

Current Affairs Pak-Afghan Tensed Relations

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

very good attempt

Introduction:

Pak-Afghan relations remain tense even after several rounds of mediation by China. The relationship continues to be shaped by geography, history, border disputes, military and political instability in Kabul. Although the return of Afghan Taliban in 2021 raised hopes for improved ties, the post-2021 situation has become more complicated with mistrust deepening on security and diplomatic fronts.

add reference to the Military Escalation Cycle (October-November 2025)

Major Factors Behind Tensions

① Duran Line and Border Fencing

The most persistent irritant between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the Duran line dispute. From 1947 onwards Afghanistan still refuses to formally recognize this internationally accepted border, resulting in ~~re~~ recurring clashes at multiple crossing points. At the same time, Pakistan's fencing of the 2600 km

border is frequently opposed or dismantled by Afghan forces undermining border management further fueling constant diplomatic tensions.

② TTP Safe Havens in Afghanistan

Pakistan's primary security concern is the presence of TTP militants inside Afghanistan. Despite repeated assurance, the Afghan Taliban have not taken any decisive action against TTP leadership or their fighters operating from Afghan soil. The reluctance of Afghan Taliban to act against TTP is the clear violation of commitments made under the Doha agreement by Afghan Taliban furthering the mistrust between two states.

③ Violation of Doha Agreement

Another major cause of friction is the Afghan Taliban's failure to meet the obligations outlined in Doha agreement importantly the prevention of Afghan soil from being used against Pakistan. The continued presence of TTP, Daesh and IS-K suggests a weak CT framework.

④ Non-Inclusive Afghan Governance

The absence of political inclusivity, broader representation and institutional structure limits Afghanistan's ability to

administer borders areas effectively. Pakistan is looking for a stable and functional political system in Kabul, because lack of such system ~~is~~ create roads for militancy, smuggling and cross-border crime.

⑤

Refugee Pressure & smuggling

Pakistan hosts over four million Afghan refugees creating economic and security burden. Due to incomplete fencing, the unchecked movement across the border facilitates smuggling the goods, fuel, money, arms, drugs resulting in the weakening of economy. Pakistan recent attempt to repatriate the undocumented Afghans added another layer of diplomatic friction.

⑥

Diverging Strategic Interests Post 2021

After the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan expected a friendly and cooperative government/rule, but that expectations didn't lasted long as Afghan Taliban opted for the independent foreign policy. From resisting the pressure to act against TTP to refugee repatriation, the priorities of Afghan Taliban over Pakistan's expectations has further widened the trust gap.

Terrorism Spillover (A major concern)

Afghan territory

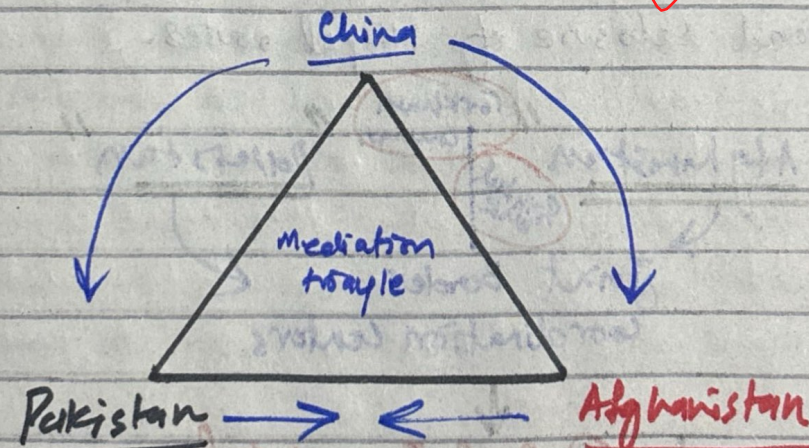
cross border attacks

TTP, Daesh
sanctuaries

Pakistan
security
concerns

Border fencing & Rules

⑦ China's Mediation Role



China Efforts

- Border Tensions ①
- Terror concerns ②
- Trade issues ③
- Diplomatic Dialogue ④

Limited Role:

Although China has tried to mediate but Beijing's leverage is limited as they rely mainly on diplomatic persuasion. The Afghan Taliban prioritize ideological and internal consideration over external pressure.

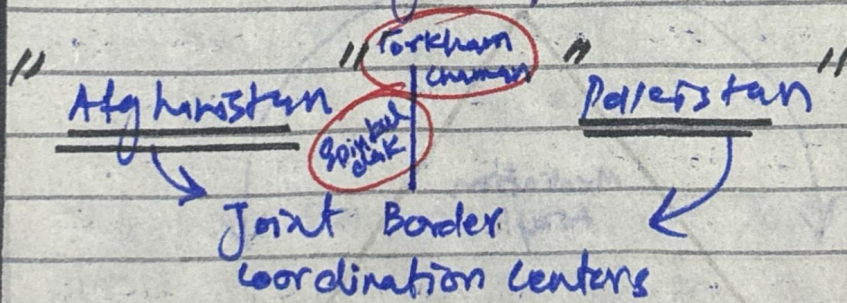
also add the The India Factor

This further reduces the effectiveness of Beijing's mediator role. Moreover, the regional geo-political shifts after the US withdrawal have weakened external actor's influence in capital of Afghanistan.

Ways to Improve Relations:

① Formal Border Management

A mutual agreed border management system is essential. This must include the acceptance of fencing, regulated crossing points, biometric id verification and closure of illegal routes.

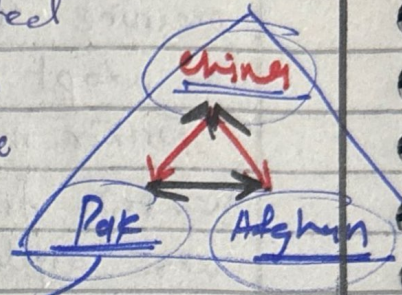


- ① Real Time Intel
- ② Coordinated Patrolling
- ③ Smooth Trade Routes
- ④ Improved Trust & stable relations

* This clear framework will minimize the misunderstandings and reduced militant movement across the soil.

② Joint Counter Terrorism Mechanism

Both countries with the help of China should develop a trilateral CT mechanism. Through intel sharing, coordinated surveillance and pressure on militant groups can address the core security concerns.

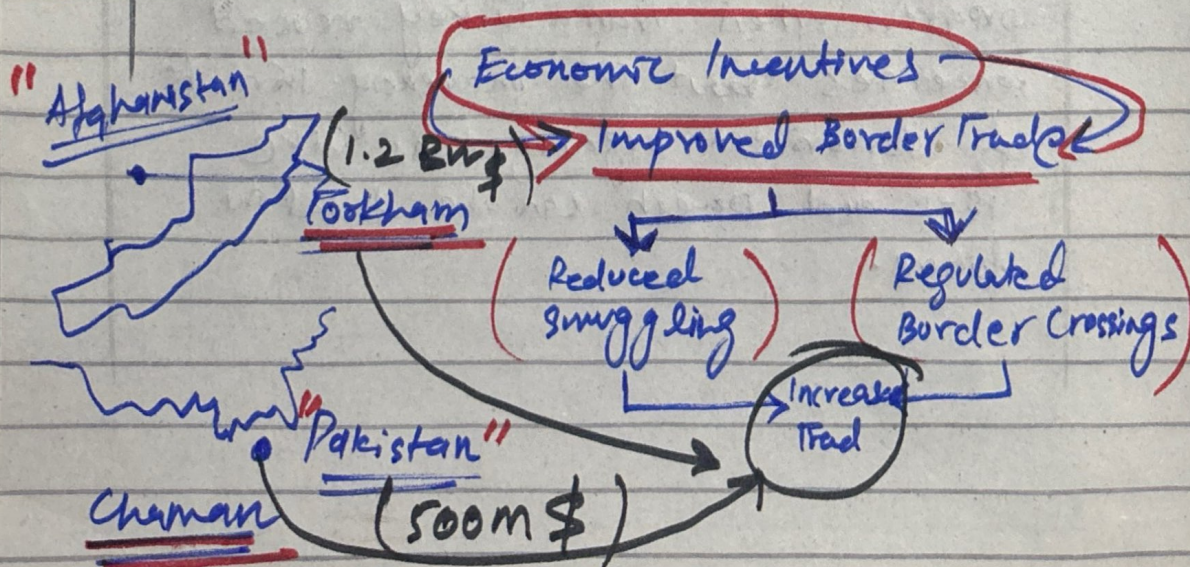


"Trilateral Counterterrorism Mechanism"

③ Economic Incentives and Transit Trade Reforms

Economic interdependence can reduce hostility as Pakistan can provide transit trade facilities and market access to the land locked Afghan country. Transparent trade mechanisms will discourage smuggling and benefit both economies creating incentives for stability.

④ Massive Trade Potential



⑤ Regional Approach & Political Engagement

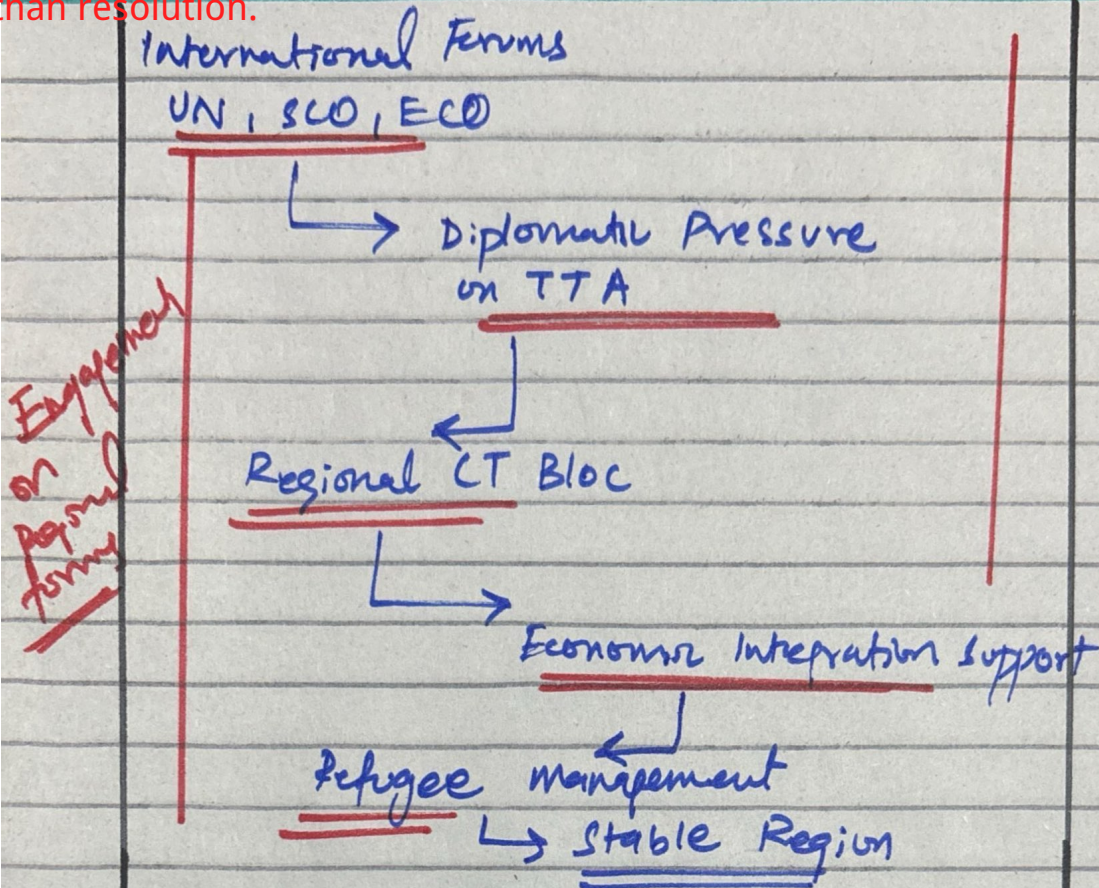
Regional policy involving China, Iran and Central Asian States can create collective pressure and other incentives for Afghanistan to adopt cooperative behaviour.

Further more, Pakistan must try to maintain firm conditions regarding terrorism with diplomatic and political engagement as Total isolation policy rarely works.

⑥ International Forums Utility

Pakistan, if remain unanswered of all the concerns primarily the security - the most important and central - then should raise voice on international and regional forums like UN, SCO, EU so that all the concerned states must pressurize Afghanistan to let accept the Pakistan's demands. Recently such actions from Pakistan showed little progress when Iran-Turkey raised concerns about the increasing threats of terrorist organizations like IS-K and Daesh can be fatal in future.

The relationship is trapped in a vicious cycle: Pakistan demands concrete action against TTP, Afghanistan refuses and denies TTP presence, Pakistan conducts airstrikes, Afghanistan retaliates, ceasefires collapse, and violence intensifies. The trajectory points toward prolonged low-intensity conflict with periodic escalations rather than resolution.



Conclusion:

Despite China's mediation Pak-Afghan relations remains tense due to border disputes, militant sanctuaries, governance issues, refugees pressure and diverging strategic priorities. The relationship can improve only through scaled steps and structured border management, regional and counterterrorism mechanisms. For Pakistan, international forums utility and diplomatic pressure seems to be the positive step further for long-term stability in the region and country.