

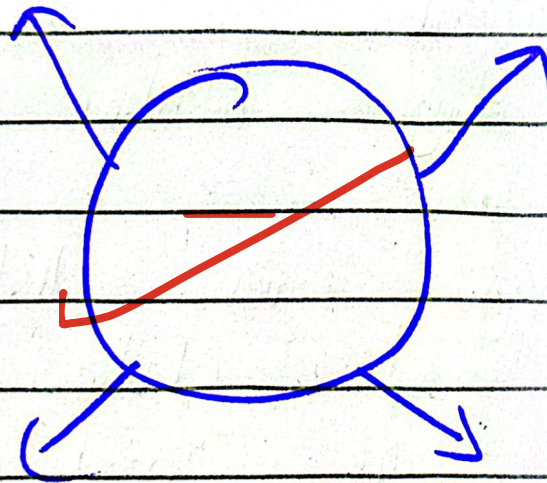
Q: Discuss the various dimensions of Pakistan-US relations in the wake of Pakistan's playing the role as a frontline state against international terrorism.

Introduction.

Pakistan's decision to join the US-led Global War on Terror (GWOT) after 9/11 reshaped the strategic architecture of bilateral relations. The partnership evolved into a complex mix of security cooperation, political friction, and economic dependency, driven by shifting regional interests. As the frontline state, Pakistan bore both critical strategic advantages and considerable internal costs, making this period one of the most defining in the history of Pakistan-US engagement.

Security Coordination
Intelligence Sharing,
Joint Operations,
Logistical Support for
US Forces

Economic Assistance
Military &
Civilian Aid
packages, budget
support, debt
Relief



Operational Pressures
US Demands for
Specific actions,
drone strikes,
Controversies,
Timelines

Political Conditionalities
Demands for
Democratic Reforms
human rights
compliance, Policy
Changes

give main heading first and relate your headings to the

Security Cooperation and Military alignment

The early phase of GWOT witnessed unprecedented military collaboration, including intelligence sharing, logistics support, and counterterrorism operations along Pakistan's western frontier. ~~Abdul Sattar~~ in Pakistan foreign policy argues that US outreach towards Pakistan was shaped by the need for geographical access and operational depth in Afghanistan. This cooperation revived strategic ties but placed Islamabad under sustained external expectations.

Operational Pressures and Drone Controversies

US drone strikes in FATA

became a central feature of the counterterrorism framework. Anatol Lieven in "Pakistan: A Hard Country" notes, "Drone operations blurred the line between targeting militants and infringing sovereignty."

The duality of tactical success and strategic resentment complicated public perceptions, fuelling anti-American sentiment while pressuring Pakistan to intensify internal operations against militant networks.

Economic Support and

Strategic Dependency

Washington extended significant economic incentives, including Coalition Support Funds, budgetary assistance, and preferential market access. These inflows temporarily strengthened Pakistan's fiscal space and enabled counterinsurgency

initiatives. Yet the pattern reinforced asymmetrical interdependence, reducing Pakistan's bargaining leverage in broader political negotiations with the United States.

Political Conditionalities and Trust Deficit

Despite cooperation, the relationship was strained by periodic suspicions, particularly over Pakistan's strategic calculus in Afghanistan. Stephen P. Cohen in *The Future of Pakistan* what US policymakers frequently questioned Pakistani distinction between "good" and "Bad" militants. The Raymond Davis incident (2011) and Salala attack deepened mistrust, underscoring divergent threat perceptions despite shared objectives.

Frontline State Role
Essential Partner
in War on
Terror with
Geographic
Importance

Increased Dependency, Reliance
on US Aid, Military
Equipment, and
International Financial
Support

Internal Security Burden
Militant Blowback, Domestic
Instability, Civilian Casualties,
Infrastructure Damage

Strategic Rebalancing
Diversification towards
China, Russia, and Gulf
Partners for Balance.

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Domestic Security Challenges and

Counterterrorism ~~Objective~~ Operations -o

Pakistan's frontline role triggered massive internal transformations, including large scale counter insurgency campaigns, such as Operations Rah-e-Nijat, Zarb-e-Azb, and later Radd-ul-Fasad. These operations dismantled militant strongholds but imposed high military, human, and economic costs, with ~~losses~~ losses exceeding USD 120 billion over two decades, reshaping Pakistan's internal security landscape.

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Impact on Pakistani Foreign Policy Autonomy -o

The intense alignment with Washington limited Pakistan's strategic flexibility, especially in its relations with

Iran, China, and the Gulf States. Akbar Zaid in Issues in Pakistan's Economy observes that heavy reliance on US economic and security ~~alliance~~ assistance constrained Pakistan's ability to pursue independent regional diplomacy, particularly during Afghan reconciliation efforts and nuclear-related negotiations.

Afghanistan factor and Divergent Strategic Goals

The core disagreement centered on Afghanistan's political end-state. While Pakistan sought a power sharing arrangement inclusive of the Taliban, the US initially ~~preferred~~ prioritized a military first approach. Bruce Riedel in Deadly Embrace remarks, "The Afghan theatre became a mirror of clashing expectations,

where both cooperation and confrontation coexisted. These divergences prolonged the trust deficit and complicated joint efforts.

→ Socioeconomic and Public Perception Dimensions →

The prolonged war effort reshaped the public opinion in Pakistan, where the majority viewed the partnership as externally imposed rather than nationally owned.

This perception widened the gap between state policy and societal attitudes. The resulting tensions affected political stability, fostered anti-Americanism, and influenced electoral discourse for nearly two decades.

→ Shift Toward Strategic Rebalancing →

From 2015 onward, Pakistan pursued

a more balanced approach, deepening ties with China through CPEC, engaging with Russia on defence consultations, and expanding diplomatic outreach to Middle Eastern partners. This recalibration was aimed at reducing dependence on Washington, ensuring a multipolar hedge, and restoring strategic autonomy in regional security affairs.

Enduring Relevance of the Partnership

Despite friction, Pakistan and the US remain connected through counterterrorism cooperation, Afghanistan's stability, regional nuclear stability, and economic engagement. The relationship continues to oscillate between necessity and scepticism, shaped by evolving geopolitical realities and domestic political

add more arguments.

a 20 marks answer should have around 15 arguments.....

transitions in both states.

Conclusion

Pakistan's role as a frontline state fundamentally redefined Pakistan-US relations, producing a complex mixture of security collaboration, mistrust, and strategic dependency. While the partnership delivered operational gains against transnational terrorism, it also imposed significant domestic, political, and economic burdens. Going forward, the bilateral relationship will continue to be shaped by Pakistan's efforts to pursue balanced external alignments, regional stability imperatives, and shifting global power dynamics.

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