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Q-2 Foreign Policy Challenges of Pakistan

Introduction:

"Domestic policy can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us." This quote goes well with the situation of Pakistan as country is grappling with critical foreign policy challenges along with polycrisis domestically. The geostrategic location of Pakistan, where seen as a blessing, is the biggest challenge to security of state as well due to hostile neighbours. The long standing rivalry with India; unwillingness of Taliban government to stop TTP - in case of Afghanistan; recent episode of border escalations with Iran; deteriorating relations with China over ineffectiveness of Pakistan in CPEC; pose a great challenge to the foreign office and foreign policy of

Pakistan. It is more important now than ever for Pakistan to devise effective foreign policy and enforce it to ensure security and development of country.

Challenges:

• Stuck between two Giants:

In the recent ~~scenario~~ scenario of US-China rivalry on multiple fronts and its manifestation in the form of trade war and alliances to contain each other's influence; it is important for Pakistan to stay out of bloc politics and not indulge in the war of giants. However, considering Pakistan's entente relationship with China and dependence on CPEC for industrialization, it is impossible for Pakistan to not support China. On the other hand, Pakistan has a history of relationship with USA and USA has a strong hold on the international financial institutions like IMF and WB, therefore Pakistan can not openly associate with China due to financial constraints and

dependence on IMF. This is one of the most defining point in the foreign policy of Pakistan where it'll have to be smart while formulating a policy to carry out relationships in future.

Abdul Basit - Former Diplomat said;

“Pakistan's statement that it doesn't wanna be part of any block is not convincing. It should take a stance that it'll do what is best for its national interests.”

• TTP, Afghan refugees and Taliban government: A conundrum in foreign policy:

With the rise of terrorist activities in Pakistan and resurgence of TTP has posed grave challenges to the security of Pakistan. Pakistan has been trying to diplomatically involve Taliban government in mutual efforts against terrorism in Pakistan but Taliban government hasn't done anything to resolve TTP issue, in fact Pakistan accuses

Taliban government for providing sanctuaries to TTP in Afghanistan. The bilateral relationship has further deteriorated after Pakistan's government decided to deport the illegal refugees in Pakistan, majority of which are Afghans. Pakistan took this decision in the wake of increasing terrorist activities involving illegal Afghans. This is a crucial decision as it'll shape the nature of relationship b/w Pakistan and Afghanistan in future. This is one of the important foreign policy challenges of Pakistan that needs a long term solution.

• Indian SC's verdict on Kashmir:

Pak - India relations in equation:

Kashmir has been the bone of contention between Pakistan and India for a long time and a major foreign policy challenge for Pakistan. Now with the decision of Indian supreme court to revoke special status of Kashmir and conduct polls, the dynamics b/w India and Pakistan have only worsened.

Kashmir is pivotal for Pakistan due to multiple reasons; water security being the most important one. India can not unilaterally decide the fate of a disputed territory. India's decision is against the resolutions of UNSC and Pakistan can not accept it. This is a huge challenge to the foreign policy of Pakistan; now that India has support of USA in defense and diplomacy.

• CPEC - China's vital investment and Pakistan's foreign policy:

Pak-China relations have been of friendly nature. China has helped Pakistan on different forums and with domestic economic problems as well but recently Pak-China relations have seen a stalemate due to Pakistan's internal issues i.e. political and economic instability and P China's unmet expectations in terms of CPEC progress in Pakistan. It is very

Important challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy to resolve problems with China and resume friendly relations as soon as possible.

• Middle East - Iran - Pakistan ~~Foreign~~ Foreign policy challenges:

With the ongoing conflict in Middle East and Pakistan's internal crisis of politics and economy, there hasn't been much progress in relations with the Middle East, although countries like KSA, Qatar and UAE have been major trade partners and investors in Pakistan. The recent SIFC policy might see a progress in economic relations with Middle East. It is important for Pakistan to employ a robust foreign policy in this region.

Moreover, the recent episode of cross-border escalations b/w Iran and Pakistan has opened a new front for tumultuous relations b/w Pakistan and Iran. Although controlled diplomatically with the mediation of Turkey,

this escalation will have far reaching impacts on foreign policy of Pakistan.

• Thaw in relationship with Russia = an opportunity for Pakistan:

Pakistan saw a thaw in relations with Russia before Russia invaded Ukraine. Considering the US support to India, strengthening ties with Russia can be beneficial for Pakistan. It is a challenge for Pakistan's foreign policy to balance relations with rivals like USA and Russia while prioritizing its national interests.

Conclusion:

"There are no permanent friends; no permanent enemies; only permanent interests in foreign policy."

Henry A. Kissinger

Pakistan is faced with multiple foreign policy challenges right now.

The most important step in readjusting its relationship with its neighbours and with superpowers will be prioritizing Pakistan's national interests while

securing long-term security of the country via geo-political and geo-economic alliances.

Q-2

Repatriation of illegal

Afghan Migrants: Legal

and Security Dimension:

Introduction:

The government of Pakistan issued a notice to illegal Afghan refugees to leave the country by Nov. 2023 otherwise they'll be deported. This decision was in fact taken for all the refugees but Afghans are a majority of them so a debate was initiated around Afghan refugees. The ~~govt~~ government started repatriation of illegal Afghan refugees, without any PoR, after the given deadline and almost 3,80,000 Afghans have gathered around Tashkand border.

There are certain legal and security dimensions associated with illegal refugees' repatriation that can impact Pakistan's image in the international community.

• A tale of hosting refugees for 4 decades with any refugee law:

Afghan refugees first came to Pakistan in 1979, when Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Around 2 million Afghan refugees came to Pakistan. The second wave came when US ~~aid~~ withdrew its forces from Afghanistan in 2021. Pakistan has hosted almost 4 million refugees from Afghanistan over the time period of 4 decades but most of them never registered themselves. Moreover, Pakistan never made any legislation for refugees.

• Security issues in Pakistan and repatriation:

Pakistan has taken the decision of deporting illegal Afghans in the wake of resurgence of terrorism in Pakistan and involvement

(alleged) of Aghan refugees in ^{such} events.

• International Debate on Human Rights and Refugee Laws:

Pakistan is a signatory of International Refugee Convention and have been working alongwith UNHCR to resolve the refugee issues in Pakistan. But Pakistan never treated refugees under Pakistan Citizen Act rather they were treated Under Pakistan Foreigners Act.

There is a debate on legal and humanitarian aspects of the issue that most of these refugees have spent a long time in Pakistan but Pakistan does not have any clause mentioning refugees in Citizens Act.