

Current affairs (Mock).

9-Dec-2025.

Q : There is dangerous revival of militancy in KP and Baluchistan. Critically evaluate the reasons and give recommendations.

The dangerous revival of militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan is a complex issue stemming from mix of regional geopolitical shifts, internal governance failures, and persistent socio-economic grievances. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) are the primary groups responsible for the sharp increase in violence in 2024 and 2025.

Reasons for the Revival-

- **US withdrawal from Afghanistan:** The US withdrawal and the Afghan Taliban's return to power in August 2021 significantly emboldened the TTP, providing them with safe havens and operational support across the porous border. Militants are in contact with handlers in Afghanistan.
- **Lack of a cohesive State Response:** A lack of coordination between civilian and military institutions and the absence of a clear, formal counter-terrorism policy has created an atmosphere of public mistrust, particularly in peripheral areas.

- Socio-Economic and Political Grievances:

Long-standing issues such as poverty, underdevelopment, lack of infrastructure, bad governance, and the perception of political marginalization have fueled discontent and provided fertile ground for recruitment, especially among the youth in Balochistan.

- Militant Adaptation and Shifting Tactics:

The TTP has strategically shifted its focus from civilian casualties to targeting security forces, a move potentially aimed at improving its public image, while the BLA has also escalated high-impact attacks on security personnel and Chinese interests.

- External Influences:

The possibility of external powers leveraging these groups to advance their strategic objectives and destabilize Pakistan - Particularly to counter China's influence and the CPEC project is a noted factor.

- Breakdown of Ceasefires:

The collapse of the ceasefire agreement with the TTP in late 2022 led the group to order attacks across Pakistan.

directly contributing to the escalation of violence.

Recommendations.

- Implement a Comprehensive Strategy:

Sustainable security requires an integrated approach that combines kinetic military operations (like the ongoing Operation Azan-e-Istehkam) with political engagement, development initiatives, and regional diplomacy to address the conflict's root causes.

- Strengthen Civilian Law Enforcement:

The capacity and role of civilian law enforcement agencies especially the police's counter-terrorism departments (CTD's) in KP and Balochistan, need enhancement to better address threats through community-rooted structures.

- Address Root Causes and Grievances:

Comprehensive political and socioeconomic programs should be initiated to win over local populations and isolate militants. This includes addressing issues like enforced disappearances in Balochistan through lawful and amicable policies to counter insurgent narratives.

Enhance Intelligence Coordination: Strengthening intelligence sharing and coordination among military, police, and intelligence agencies is imperative to preempt attacks and improve operational effectiveness.

- **Improve Governance and Trust:** The federal and provincial governments must improve cooperative and dialogue, assert state authority in volatile regions and ensure accountability and good governance to ~~bring~~ bridge the trust deficit with the local populace.

- **Engage in Regional Diplomacy:** Addressing the issue of TTP sanctuaries and support in Afghanistan requires robust regional diplomacy and a trilateral consensus (perhaps involving China, India and Pakistan) to move beyond a reliance on proxies.

Q:2 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.

Persistent tension in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, even with mediation effort, stem primarily from the issue of cross-border terrorism, the long-standing Durand Line border dispute, and mutual mistrust aggravated by geopolitical dynamics.

Major Factors

- Cross - Border Terrorism and the TTP:

This is the most significant factor. Pakistan accuses the Afghan Taliban of providing safe havens and support to the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has escalated attacks on Pakistan soil since Afghan Taliban took power in August 2021. The Afghan Taliban, however, considers the TTP issue an internal matter for Pakistan to handle and is reluctant to crack down on a group with which it shares ideological and ethnic ties, for fear of TTP members defecting to the rival Islamic State Khorasan Provinces (ISKAP).

- **The Durand line Dispute:** The Colonial-era Durand line, a 2670 km border, remains a contentious issue. Afghanistan has historically refused to formally recognize it as an international border, viewing it as a national grievance and a division of Pashtun communities. This leads to frequent border skirmishes and disputes over border management efforts by Pakistan.

- **Deep-Seated Mistrust and Sovereignty Concerns:** Decades of proxy warfare, shifting alliances, and mutual accusations of interferences have created a profound trust deficit. The Afghan Taliban perceive a "patronizing" attitude from Pakistani elites, while Pakistan feels its security concerns are not being adequately addressed by a government it previously supported.

- **Geopolitical Competition:** Regional power dynamics, including India's growing engagement with the Afghan Taliban, influence the relationship. Pakistan often views India's influence in Afghanistan as a strategic threat, which complicates its

own policy. China's mediation efforts are largely aimed at safeguarding its own interests, particularly the security of CPEC projects, but even this has not fully alleviated the core bilateral issues.

- Refugee Crisis and Trade Disruptions:

The presence of millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and frequent border closures due to security issues strain resources and disrupt vital trade and transit routes, impacting both economies.

Avenues for Improvement:

- The current trajectory of Pakistan-Afghanistan relation reflects deep-rooted mistrust, security anxieties, and political misunderstanding. Sustainable peace and cooperation demand a holistic approach that moves beyond episodic engagements. The following avenues can significantly contribute to stabilizing bilateral ties.

- Sustained, Holistic Dialogue.

Both nations need to move beyond security centric approaches and engage in a comprehensive dialogue that addresses political, economic, and social issues.

A mutually agreed-upon framework, potentially a Strategic Partnership Agreement, could structure the relationship and prevent unilateral actions.

- Enhanced Security Cooperation:

Instead of mutual blame, both sides should enhance intelligence sharing and consider collective patrols or a joint counter-terrorism framework to address militant threats effectively. The Afghan Taliban must take verifiable action against TTP sanctuaries as a goodwill gesture.

- Economic Interdependence: Focusing on increasing bilateral trade and regional connectivity projects, such as the expansion of the China - Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan can build mutual reliance and create economic incentives for cooperation.

- People to People Contact and Cultural

Understanding: Utilizing shared cultural and historical ties such as through sports and educational exchanges, can help build goodwill and reduces nationalistic hostilities at the public level.

- International Support: Continued mediation and support from regional and international partners like China, Qatar and Turkey are crucial to maintaining dialogue channels and ensuring commitments are honored.

