CURRENT AFFAIRS - MOCK EXAM 2026
PART - II

Q8. Pakistan Saudi Arabia have signed a historic defense pact. Critically evaluate the causes and implications of the deal.

INTRODUCTION:
Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share a deep-rooted relationship based on historical, religious and strategic ties. The foundation of their alliance can be traced back to Pakistan's independence in 1947, as both nations are Islamic states with shared cultural and religious values. Over the decades, their religious relationship has evolved by economic, military and diplomatic cooperation. Their relationship was based on the following key historical factors such as:

- **Religious Bond:** The relationship is strongly anchored in Islam, with Saudi Arabia being the custodian of the two holiest sites in Mecca and Medina. This religious connection fosters mutual respect and solidarity. Saudi Arabia has often supported Pakistan on Islamic causes, such as during the 1974 Islamic Summit in Lahore.

- **Economic Ties:** Saudi Arabia has been a key economic partner, frequently providing financial aid and oil supplies to Pakistan during economic crisis. In the 1970s, the Saudi government provided significant support to Pakistani workers, creating a large diaspora that contributes to Pak's economy through remittances

Military Collaboration: Pak has provided military expertise and training to Saudi forces. Thousands of Pakistani troops have served in Saudi Arabia as part of defense agreements. In 1991, during the Gulf War, Pakistan deployed troops to protect Saudi Arabia's holy sites.

Strategic support: Saudi Arabia has backed Pak on critical international issues, including it's stance on kashmir. Pakistan supported Saudi Arabia during the Yemen conflict by deploying troops for non-combat roles.

NUCLEAR PROGRAM: Saudi Arabia has reportedly supported Pak's nuclear program financially, viewing Pakistan as a counterbalance to regional rivals, particularly Iran and Israel.

HISTORIC DEFENSE PACT BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA:

The historic defense pact between Pakistan and saudi Arabia, officially called the strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA), was signed on september 17, 2025, during a high-level meeting in Riyadh between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. This agreement marked a significant milestone in the decades-long, close relationship between the two nations, elevating their partnership to a formal, strategic alliance.

FEATURES OF HISTORIC DEFENSE PACT:

1. **MUTUAL DEFENSE CLAUSE:** The pact includes a clause stating that an attack on one country will be considered an attack on both nations. Both countries commit to providing military and logistical support in case of external aggression faced by either party. This clause strengthens the security umbrella for both nations, ensuring their soverignty is protected amidst rising regional tensions.

2. **MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMME:** Pakistan agreed to provide extensive training for saudi military personnel, including the army, airforce and navy. Pakistani military experts were stationed in Saudi Arabia to train saudi forces in modern warfare and counterinsurgency tactics.

3. TROOP DEPLOYMENT:

The pact allowed for the deployment of Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia to safeguard the country's holy sites and ensure the kingdom internal and border security. At it's peak, around 20,000 Pakistani soliders were stationed in Saudi Arabia under this agreement.

4. JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES:

The agreement encouraged regular joint military drills to improve operational coordination and readiness. Exercises focused on desert warfare, counterterrorism and modern combat techniques.

5. COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION:

The pact emphasized collaboration on combating terrorism and insurgencies, especially as the region faced growing threats from extremist groups. Intelligence sharing between the two nations became a critical part of the defense pact.

6. ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT:

Alongside military cooperation, Saudi Arabia provided Pakistan with financial aid and concessional oil supplies, strengthening Pak's economy in exchange for its defense support. Pak's commitment to Saudi Arabia's security reinforced the kingdom's position in the Gulf region.

CAUSES OF THE DEAL:

1. SHARED HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BONDS:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's relationship spans nearly eight decades, built on Islamic solidarity and strategic cooperation. Saudi Arabia is home to Islam's holiest sites, making it's security a matter of religious significance for pakistan.

2. REGIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS:

The growing influence of Iran in middle East, coupled with it's support for Yemen's houthi rebels, has pushed Saudi to seek stronger security guarantees. Pak, with it's battle-hardened military, offers a reliable partner to counterbalance Iranian ambitions.

The pact also reflects concerns over Israel's rising military assertiveness in the middle East, particularly its actions in Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Both nations share a commitment to counter such threats.

For Pak, the SMDA strengthens its deterrence posture against India, particularly after recent escalations in Kashmir and cross-border tensions. Saudi Arabia potential support in a conflict scenario is a valuable strategic partnership

3. ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE:
Pak's struggling economy depends heavily on saudi financial aid, concessional oil supplies and investment. The pact serves as a quid pro quo, with Pak providing military expertise and security assurance in exchange for economic support. Saudi Vision 2030, aimed at diversifying it's economy and boosting defense capabilities, aligns with Pak's defense industry which offer technologies like drones and arms manufacturing expertise.

IMPLICATIONS OF DEAL:

1. STRENGHTENED REGIONAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK:
The pact establishe a NATO-style mutual defense commitment, where an attack on one country is treated as an attack on both. This creates a formal military alliance, significantly enhancing deterrence against external threats like Iran and Israel. It reinforces joint deterence, providing a stronger security umbrella for both nations, especially amidst ongoing instability in the middle east and south Asia.

2. ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC BENEFITS FOR PAK.

Q7:-

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan's recent engagement with the United states and its longstanding strategic partnership with China have placed the country in a delicate diplomatic position, requiring a nuanced approach to manage relations with two global powers whose interest sometimes intersect and sometimes conflict. Balancing these r/s is crucial for Pakistan to safeguard its sovereignty, promote economic development and ensure regional stability.

Pakistan can balance its relations after recent engagement with the US and its strategic partnership with China by adopting a multi-faceted approach that safeguards national interests while maintaining diplomatic flexibility.

SEVERAL WAYS :-

1. **DIPLOMATIC PRAGMATISM:** Pakistan can pursue a non-aligned foreign policy, emphasizing mutual benefits in its engagements with both the US and China. By focusing on economic and security interests rather than ideological alignment, Pakistan can negotiate deals that serve its development needs from both sides without appearing to favor one over the other.

2. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION:

Strengthening economic ties with both powers through trade, investment and infrastructure projects can reduce dependency on a single partner and enhance Pakistan's bargaining position.

3. SECURITY COOPERATION:

Managing security relations by aligning counterterrorism efforts with US interests while preserving strategic military and intelligence cooperation with China can help Pakistan address internal security challenges without compromising its partnerships.

4. REGIONAL DIPLOMACY:

Enhancing relations with other regional players like Saudi Arabia, UAE or Iran can provide additional diplomatic leverage, allowing Pakistan to play its engagements with the US and China against broader regional interests to maximize benefits.

5. TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION:

Maintaining open channels of communication with both the US and China to clarify intentions and avoid misperceptions can prevent zero-sum competition b/w the two powers from harming Pak's interests.

Balancing Relations with the US and China: Pakistan Strategic Approach:-

Pakistan's relations with both the US and China are critical to its foreign policy, economic growth and security interests. Balancing these relationships amid shifting geopolitics requires careful diplomacy and strategic prioritization.

1. **Leveraging Strategic Partnerships:-**

- **China:** The China-Pak Economic corridor remains a cornerstone of Pak's economic ambitions with investments in infrastructure, energy and connectivity. Pak must ensure CPEC's progress while addressing concerns about debt sustainability and local impacts.

- **US:** Engagement with the US is vital for security cooperation, counterterrorism effort and access to technology and markets. Pak seeks US support for economic stability through IMF programs.

2. **AVOIDING OVER-DEPENDENCE ON ONE PARTNER:-**

Pak needs to avoid being caught in the US-China rivalry. By maintaining diplomatic flexibility, Pak can navigate tensions b/w the two powers without compromising its sovereignty or strategic interest.

Multi-vector diplomacy: Engaging with other partners like the Gulf, EU and ASEAN can reduce over-reliance on US-China dynamics.

3. Economic Priorities:

ECONOMIC & US RELATIONS:

- **CPEC vs US:** While CPEC drives economic growth, Pak must balance this with its need for US aid, trade and investment. For instance, US support via the IMF can stabilize Pak's economy.

- **Trade-off:** Pak may need to address US concerns on issues like terrorism financing while protecting its strategic ties with china.

4. Security and geopolitical Consideration:

- **US-PAK security ties:** Cooperation on counterterrorism e.g in Afghanistan remains important for Pakistan's Security.

- **China's strategic interests:-** Pak must align with China on regional security issues (e.g in the context of SCO) while avoiding entanglement in US-China disputes.

Q3:- INTRODUCTION:

The debate over creating new provinces in Pakistan has been a recurring political and administrative issue, driven by demands for better representation, resource distribution, and ethnic or regional autonomy. Evaluating the hurdles involves examining constitutional, economic, social and governance challenges, while recommendations focus on addressing these obstacles to ensure effective and sustainable provincial organizations.

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE HURDLES IN FORMING NEW PROVINCES IN PAKISTAN:

1. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL BARRIERS.

The process requires a constitutional amendment, which demands a two-thirds parliamentary majority and consensus among diverse political parties, making it politically cumbersome. Legal disputes over boundary demarcation and jurisdictional authority can also arise.

2. FINANCIAL ~~EVALUATION~~ IMPLICATIONS.

Establishing a new province involves significant expenditure for setting up a separate administrative infrastructure - offices, bureaucracy and public services - which may strain national finances and increase the fiscal deficit.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEXITY:
Redrawing provincial boundaries and reallocating resources can lead to bureaucratic inefficiencies and disruption of existing governance structures, affecting service delivery and development projects.

4. ETHNIC AND REGIONAL TENSIONS:
Demands for new provinces often stem from ethnic or regional identities which can exacerbate existing communal divisions or create new ones, potentially fueling separatist sentiments or inter-provincial conflicts.

5. RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION CONCERNS:
Redistribution of natural resources, revenue shares and development funds may cause disputes between existing and new provinces over financial allocations and economic opportunities.

6. POLITICAL RESISTANCE:
Established provincial governments may oppose the creation of new provinces, fearing loss of territory, influence or revenue, leading to political deadlock.

7. SECURITY IMPLICATIONS:
Changes in provincial jurisdiction can affect law enforcement and security management, especially in areas with existing militant or insurgents activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGING THE FORMATION OF NEW PROVINCE:

1. **CONSTITUTIONAL SIMPLIFICATIONS:** Streamline the amendment process for provincial reorganization by introducing specific, less cumbersome legal procedures for territorial adjustments.

2. **COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS:** Conduct thorough economic assessments to evaluate the financial viability of new provinces and plan phased funding for infrastructure setup.

3. **INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE:** Facilitate broad-based consultations with stakeholders - political parties, local communities and experts to address ethnic and regional concerns and build consensus.

. **TRANSPORT RESOURCE ALLOCATION:** Establish clear formulas for distributing resources and revenues to avoid inter-provincial disputes and ensure equitable development.

Q4: The resurgence of militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan is a multi-faceted issue with deep-rooted causes and requires a nuanced analysis for effective recommendations.

REASONS FOR THE REVIVAL OF MILITANCY IN KP AND BALOCHISTAN:

1. **SOCIOECONOMIC DEPRIVATION:**
   Poverty, unemployment and lack of basic services in tribal and rural areas create fertile ground for extremist recruitment, especially among disenfranchised youth.

2. **POLITICAL GRIVANCES:**
   perceived marginalization of ethnic groups (Pashtun ~~and~~ in KP and Baloch in Baluchistan fuels resentment toward the central government, making militant narratives attractive.

3. **EXTERNAL INFLUENCES:**
   Cross-border support from militant networks and ideological sanctuaries in neighboring regions exacerbate local insurgencies.

4. **WEAK GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY GAPS:-**
   Inadequate law enforcement, porous borders and insufficient intelligence infrastructuring enable militant operations.

5. **RELIGIOUS RADICALIZATION:**
Exploitation of sectarian divides and religious ideologies to justify violence.

6. **RESOURCE EXPLOITATION.**
Disputes over natural resources (e.g. mining in Baluchistan) aggravate local tensions and fuel anti-state sentiments.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE MILITANCY:

1. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**
Implement targeted job creation programs and infrastructure projects in affected regions to alleviate poverty and unemployment.

2. **POLITICAL RECONCILIATION:**
Initiate inclusive dialogue with tribal and ethnic leaders to address grievances and ensure representation in governance.

3. **STRENGTHEN SECURITY APPARATUS.**
Enhance border surveillance, intelligence sharing, and law enforcement capabilities to dismantle militant networks.

4. **COUNTER-RADICALIZATION INITIATIVES:**
Launch education and community programs to promote moderate interpretations of religion and counter extremist narratives