

PART-II

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PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION:

The Afghan Taliban (current interim government) emerged in the early 1990s as a militant Islamist movement.

The relationship of Pakistan and Afghanistan has been shaped by a complex mix of historical, political and security factors. As said by Michael Kugelman, South Asian analyst that,

"The Afghanistan conflict has shown repeatedly that Pakistan and Afghanistan rise or fall together."

Issues such as border dispute, cross border militancy, refugee flows and regional rivalries have created persistent tension between the two countries. Among the challenges the rise of Taliban has fueled violence, insecurity and mistrust. Understanding these factors and exploring practical solutions such as dialogue, joint security mechanisms, trade cooperation, and humanitarian coordination is essential for fostering lasting peace and mutual trust in the region.

CAUSES OF TENSION BETWEEN PAK- AFGHAN

1) Cross Border Terrorism.

"The safe heavens in Afghanistan pose a serious threat to Pakistan's internal security and regional stability"

- Riaz Khan, Pakistani security analyst.

Pakistan is facing terrorism at peak due to some ^{inter} factors such as TTP, IS-IC and other. Major attacks are done by TTP. Pakistan claim that Afghanistan is providing platform to these militant factors for terrorism against Pakistan. As said by Maleeha Lodhi, a former US, UK and UN ambassador that safe heavens of terrorist are ~~not~~ inside, not outside of Afghanistan. Current interim government of Afghanistan Taliban are providing support and protection to TTP. ~~TTP~~ ~~for~~

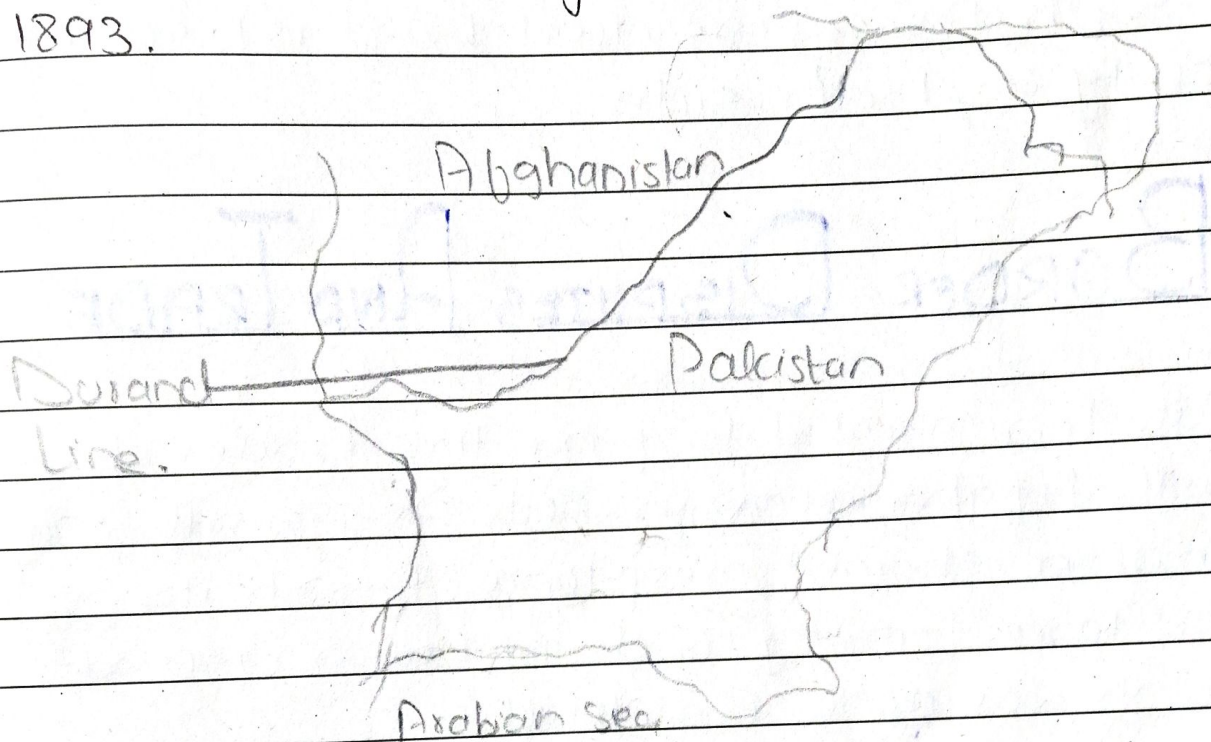
TTP, a major group infiltration in Pakistan's northern areas, is responsible for majority of attacks in Pakistan. They ^{mainly} target security personnel, check posts, Chinese personnel, government officials and civilians.

According to PIPS (Pakistan Institute for Peace Strategy) there were total 521 attacks in 2024 with more than 800 fatalities and several were injured. ~~Pakistan~~ ~~the~~ Additionally, in 2025 surge of terrorism related incidents is 81% increased compared to last year in same time period.

ii)

LEGACY OF PAST.

During British Empire colonial division, both British and Soviet union divide Pakistan and Afghanistan by a line called Durand line as done by British diplomat ~~as~~ Henry Mortimer Durand in 1893.



After Pakistan's independence, Afghanistan refused to accept the Durand line ~~etc~~ claiming it as illegal border, although it is internationally recognized border. Afghanistan claim to include northern area where most of Pushtuns live. ~~They~~ Besides this, they brought the idea of Pushtunistan for ~~to~~ tribals living in northern areas. They ~~also~~ refused for membership of Pakistan in United Nation.

If they (Taliban) challenge the border, we will respond. The Durand line is our

bloodline, we did not draw it, but we will defend it. - Khawaja Asif (2024)
Pakistan Defence Minister

It is the ~~most~~ bone of contention in Pakistan and Afghanistan relations. As said by Raghu Sharma, a South Asian expert that the Durand line remains the most contentious border in South Asia; unresolved borders feed insecurity on both sides.

iii) BORDER DISPUTES AND TRADE

Pakistan decided to fence the border ~~of~~ with Afghanistan in 2005. As a result Afghanistan showed resistance. Despite its resistance fencing and infiltration of check points was ~~there~~ completed.

There has been various illegal activities across the border including smuggling of weapons, oil and others, ~~an~~ Additionally illegal infiltration of militant was also seen.

Due to ~~and~~ occasional cold relations, trade also affected leading drastic economic losses. A Recent skirmishes along border halt trade between both countries causing millions of losses. Currently \$1.3 billion trade total recorded in past year. ~~Although~~ However according to World Bank

report in 2022 Pakistan and Afghanistan has a ~~poten~~ trade potential of \$10bn.

iv) REFUGEE CONTENTION

The deportation of undocumented Afghans is not a refugee crisis of our making. It is a matter of legal compliance and national security... Our dialogue with the Afghan authorities continues, but our sovereign decision is non-negotiable.

- Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizami
(Pakistan Ambassador to Afghanistan)

Pakistan hosts million of Afghan refugees who mostly flew after U.S. withdrawal. According to U.N. reports approximately 3 million of refugees resided in Pakistan.

Pakistan announce deportation of refugees because of two significant reasons. First, is that refugees are becoming economic burden in Pakistan as they avail opportunities and ~~have~~ resources. Second, is comprised of security threat. As surge in terrorist ^{and extremist} activities has been seen. Around 2.6 millions refugees have been deported. Although the procedure ~~is~~ should be more cautious as ~~the most~~ of refugees contain ~~per~~ vulnerable population also. The refugee crisis has condemn by Afghan Taliban as they claim it not according to law and non-humanitarian.

v) HISTORICAL MISTRUST

"Decades of conflict have left Pakistan and Afghanistan in a cycle of suspicion, which cannot be broken overnight"

- Barnett Rubin, Afghanistan Scholar

There has been political mistrust between both countries. Seeds were embedded during ~~US~~ Soviet Union invasion when Pakistan backed Taliban with support of U.S against Soviet Union. During U.S announcement of war on terror in 2011 Pakistan shake hands with America which ~~Taliban~~ seemed by Taliban as betrayal. Furthermore, historical legacy of Durand line and Pushtunistan issue ~~may~~ more widen the gap of mistrust.

~~As said by Dr. Rasool Balesh in his op-ed Tribune Express that Pakistan~~

As Bruce Riedel, a former CIA analyst said that Pakistan sits at the epicenter of global jihad, where regional conflicts, ideology and state policies intersect.

Any modification in foreign policy ~~may~~ changes national interest of states which may not align and cause distortion

vi)

INFLUENCE OF REGIONAL ACTORS

India's presence in Afghanistan in form of development, aid and training is viewed by Pakistan as strategic encirclement.

Pakistan claims involvement of India in promoting supporting terrorist factors.

China's mediation due to CPEC ~~is~~ expansion is aligned with Pakistan. China wants to expand it to Afghanistan to connect ^{with} Central Asia. China role in deescalation helps transiently but it can not resolve mistrust rooted in decade of geopolitical competition.

IMPROVEMENTS IN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN RELATION.

i) JOINT COUNTER TERRORISM.

"A collaborative security framework is the only sustainable solution to cross-border militancy."

- Michael Kogelman, Wilson Center

The most prevailing and pertinent way forward is diplomacy through combined counter terrorism ~~military~~ ~~inter~~

According to Amir Rana, a senior analyst of Pakistan report in Dawn newspaper that ~~military~~ terrorist factors are based on ideologies, military interventions worsen these ~~the~~ condition also bring civilian loss. The only beneficial way is through diplomacy.

There have been diplomatic efforts with no fruitful ~~effe~~ results due to opaque intentions. ~~Refugee has~~

Border skirmishes in October also resulted ceasefire mediated by Qatar and Turkey. Efforts Further efforts are in process. With clarity of thoughts fruitful results will be achieved.

ii) DIALOGUE ON DURAND LINE

"Confidence-building measures at the border are the first step toward lasting peace"

- Raghav sharma, ORF

Official talks should be done about formal recognition of Durand line by Afghanistan. By Joint patrolling and movement should be followed. By this gradual political recognition can follow.

iii) STRENGTHENING TRADE AND CONNECTIVITY

Economic dependency can be used as path to peace. Both countries need to strengthen trade and connectivity. As this trade has potential of \$10b (according to WB, 2024). As Afghanistan is landlocked country, Pakistan can provide more connection for Afghanistan to other ~~worlds~~ countries.

Moreover, with China's interest to expand its economic connectivity both countries can get benefits. As BRI expand to central Asia through Afghanistan.

Development of special economic zones and corridor access will also enhance economy and development of both countries.

iv) REFUGEE MANAGEMENT.

"Refugees are human capital; coordinated management benefits both states"

Fillipo Grandi, UNHCR

There should be ~~stare~~ proper documentation of refugees as there are many Afghan who are living in Pakistan since generations. So, only deportation of refugee should be allowed. During this process there should be strict humanitarian standards follow up this will reduce political tensions.

v) REGIONAL MEDIATORS

Regional framework will help to at least tensions. China, Iran has tendency to solve the issue. Also Pakistan can use SCO Platform although it is mainly security concern framework but it expands in other domains also.

vi) CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL DIPLOMACY

People to people contact and educational exchange create a resilience against political hostility -

Barnett Rubin.

Cultural exchange programs will reduce the political crisis as both countries nations are familiar with ~~one another~~ culture.

Educational programs including Scholarships, diploma and workshop will encourage mutual understanding and softens negative narratives.

~~Culture~~ Socio cultural exchange through the media has also significant role in bringing positive roles.

Date: _____

CONCLUSION.

"Peace is ^{not} merely the absence of conflict but the presence of cooperation and understanding."
- Barack Obama.

Pakistan and Afghanistan relations are like weather. Sometimes hot and other time cold, ~~which~~ both are intoreble with severity. Tensions are arised because of past legacy (Durand Line), US war on terror, lack of confidence in one another, terrorism, cross border smuggling. Currently ~~the~~ most significantly focused is terrorism although there may be water issue in future as well. These injuries in relation of Pakistan and Afghanistan can be ~~is~~ healed by joint counter terrorism, cross border joint Datadling, Strengthening trade and encouraging ~~some~~ cultural and education programs. Moreover, China, ~~the~~ has played role but it was transient although it has potential to benefit both countries.

Ans.) Revival Of Militancy In KP And Baluchistan

In recent years Pakistan has witnessed a resurgence of militant activities especially in KP and Baluchistan. While military operations over the last decade significantly weakened extremist networks, intelligence reports include revival of militancy targeting government institutions, security forces and civilians. Revival is shaped by historical grievances, porous borders, regional instability and ideological propaganda. As reported by PIR 521 attacks ~~alone~~ reported in 2024, with rise in 81% of attacks in ^{quarter of} 2025 ~~can~~ ^{are} compared with previous year.

REASONS OF REVIVAL OF MILITANCY:

"The resurgence of militancy is not spontaneous. It is fueled by political, economic and social grievances, which extremists exploit".

Riaz Ichan, Pakistani security analyst.

i) Porous Border

The militant factors include ^(CTD, IS-K) both external and internal. External militants cross Pakistan and Afghanistan border illegally. Which is 2640 km porous border with interruptions in fencing. They infiltrate in KP and Balochistan ^{for protection}. Internal factors BIA cross border easily when meet with military intervention. Intelligence Reports suggest surge in those factors after US withdrawal.

ii) ETHNO-SECTARIAN

Balochistan faces long-standing ethnic grievances, including perceived marginalization, limited political representation, and resource exploitation.

According to PIPS (2024) Balochistan recorded over 45 terrorist incidents in 2024, indicating marked increase from previous year.

iii) SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION

Both provinces have high unemployment and poverty - KP 34% below poverty line, Balochistan 46% below poverty line (WB, 2024).

Militants recruit these socio-economic vulnerable people promising financial investment and heaven by brain wash them.

(V) WEAK GOVERNANCE

Remote areas in KP and Balochistan suffer from poor infrastructure, ~~weak~~ ripple governance, ~~and~~ slow judicial processes and absence of rule of law.

Moreover, missing persons of Baloch families and lack of justice over this issue cause insurgency, ~~with~~ militants take advantage of this to recruit there.

v) IDEOLOGICAL PROPAGANDA

Extremist groups continue to spread radical ideologies through madrassas, social media and local networks, maintaining recruitment pipelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE MILITANCY IN KP AND BALUCHISTAN

i) STRENGTHEN SECURITY MEASURES

Enhanced border surveillance, intelligence sharing and counterterrorism operations collaboration with neighboring countries.

"Sustained security operations must be combined with community engagement to be effective"

- Michael ~~Engel~~ ~~Engel~~

1/1/2024

ii) PROMOTE SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Initiatives to promote education, job creation, and healthcare in remote districts of KP and Balochistan.

"Economic opportunity is one of the strongest deterrents against militancy"

Dr. Sanam Navaghi.

iii) ENHANCED GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

Expand state presence in remote areas, including law enforcement, judicial access, and social services.

"Governance is the frontline of counter-terrorism"

Barnett - Rubin.

iv) COUNTER IDEOLOGY

Launch community based awareness campaign integrating religious scholars, media and civil society.

Monitor and regulate online extremist content to disrupt the propaganda networks.

"Winning the ideological battle is as important as winning militarily"

- Raz Khan.

4) REGIONAL COOPERATION

Collaborate with Afghanistan and Iran to reduce cross-border militant movements.

- Engage in intelligence sharing and joint operations.

CONCLUSION

The revival of militancy in FATA and Balochistan is a complex multi dimensional challenge rooted in security gaps, socioeconomic deprivation, governance deficits and ideological exploitation. Combating it requires holistic approach with combined military and non-military interventions by implementing rule of law, addressing socioeconomic issues and strengthening governance in those regions.

"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy".

- Nelson Mandela

Q.1 PAKISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA DEFENSE PACT

For decades, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have maintained deep and multifaceted ties rooted in religion, culture, strategic interests and economic exchange. Because of same Islamic ideology both countries shared deep connections.

Their relationship has long extended beyond diplomatic exchange into military cooperation, mutual defence understanding and shared perceptions of regional security threats.

Particularly in a volatile region shaped by conflicts in the Middle East, shifting alliances, and security challenges in South Asia, such partnership offers each country a measure of strategic reassurance.

The Defence pact is shaped by shared perception of regional threats, the need for coordinated counter terrorism efforts and evolving geopolitical dynamics in South Asia and Middle East. Beyond military objectives, the pact has potential implications on economic, diplomatic and technological implications.

CAUSES OF DEFENCE PACT

i) SECURITY: SHARED REGIONAL THREAT.

Historically, both states perceive instability whether in the Arabian peninsula, the Middle East or South Asia. Saudi Arab threats from regional rivals and for Pakistan internal security and across border terrorism especially from west. Pakistan as being the only ^{Islamic} nuclear country can support in defense from rivals. As re said by Michael Knights, a middle East analyst "Alliances are often forged in response to shared threats"

ii) HISTORICAL & DEFENCE BACKDROP

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have long-standing relations built on religious affinity, labour migration, financial linkages and mutual diplomatic support. Defence cooperation has often been an informal but persistent component of that relationship. Strategic defence agreement formalizes the informal defence cooperation.

A strengthening pact would formalizes what has been informal giving Saudi Arabia a reliable partner in South Asia and Pakistan a powerful economical and political backer in the Gulf. The ~~formal defence pact is a continuation of~~

ECONOMIC AND DEFENCE INCENTIVES

For Economic fragility in Pakistan force it to rely on other countries remittances and resources and trade with ease. Defence Pact provides for Pakistan could mean access to resources, enhancement in trade, military financing, joint training and may be even military industrial collaboration.

For Saudi Arabia, diversifying military suppliers and partners beyond traditional Western sources could be appealing especially amid shifting global alignments. As defence pact ~~at~~ ^{is} a direct implication of Israel's attack on data airbase which was guarded by America, a country with biggest military power fails to provide security to Qatar. This shifts Saudi Arabia direction from west to east.

4. GEOPOLITICAL REALIGNMENT

With shifting allegiances, evolving great-power competition (between western powers, Russia, China) and instability in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Iran's sphere, both states may see a reinforced bilateral pact as a hedge against uncertainty.

IMPLICATION OF DEFENCE AGREEMENT.

i) ENHANCED MILITARY COOPERATION.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has established diplomatic defence cooperation, however by strategic defence agreement those cooperations will augment. Additionally it may provide platform for defence industrial sector.

ii) REGIONAL STRATEGIC BALANCE

By formalizing their defence ties both nations signal a stronger strategic presence in South Asia and the Middle East, which may influence the calculations of regional actors such as Iran, India and Afghanistan. As said by former Pakistani diplomat Hussam Haqqani,

"Strategic partnerships often shift regional power dynamics, acting as both stabilizers and potential sources of tension"

iii) DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC BOOST

The agreement may lead to joint defence production, technology transfer and investments in Pakistan's defence sector, creating jobs and fostering technological growth.

iv) STRAINED BUDGET AND SECURITY

Let there ~~secure~~ By providing security to other state, Pakistan may be vulnerable to security issues. Moreover exchange of ~~military~~ defence cooperation may strain ~~more~~ budget with require cautious planning.

v) SAUDI ARAB UNDER NUCLEAR UMBRELLA

As stated in strategic defence agreement that attack on one of country will be considered as attack on ~~ext~~ other country. This rise a question regarding safety of nuclear nukes. As nuclear weapons are only for one's country protection. Will those be used for other state also? This is not clearly defined in agreement.

vi) DIPLOMATIC REPERCUSSIONS

Strengthen defence ties may realign Pakistan's foreign policy priorities and influence its relations with other regional and global powers.

Pakistan may face pressure to support Saudi positions in Middle Eastern conflict affecting its traditionally balanced diplomatic approach.

BALANCE BETWEEN CHINA AND U.S.

RELATIONS BY PAKISTAN

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan's relationship with the U.S. dates back to the ^{early} years after its independence in 1947. The U.S. has historically engaged Pakistan through military alliances, economic aid, and strategic partnerships, notably during Cold war, Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989), and the post 9/11 war on terror.

While U.S. aid and military support strengthened Pakistan's security capabilities, relations have often been episodic and influenced by global strategic priorities.

Parallely, Pakistan's relationship with China has evolved since the 1950s, marked by mutual trust, strategic collaboration and economic partnership. In recent years the CPEC has further deepened ties, making China a key partner in Pakistan's economic and regional connectivity.

In current geopolitical context, Pakistan faces the challenge of balancing its strategic engagement with U.S. while maintaining its deep partnership with China. Both are vital, the U.S. offers technological, economic and military cooperation, while China provides long term economic investment and security guarantee.

i) MULTI VECTOR FOREIGN POLICY

Pakistan can adopt multi vector strategy, engaging both the U.S and China without exclusive alignment. By pursuing cooperative initiatives with both powers while maintaining strategic autonomy, Pakistan can maximize benefits.

"Small and medium powers survive best by engaging multiple great powers simultaneously without over-committing to one"

- Michael Kugelman, Wilson Center.

ii) STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

By diversifying trade, investment and technology partnerships, Pakistan reduces overdependence on any single power.

Currently U.S's interest lies in rare earth minerals extraction, terrorism and reliable partner in South Asia. On other hand, China's interest is in economic hegemony through and security through CPEC.

iii) CLEARLY DEFINE NATIONAL INTEREST

Pakistan must prioritize security, economic development, and regional stability when engaging with U.S. and China.

"Clarity of strategic objectives prevents small states from being caught in great-power competition".
Raghu Sharma, ORF South Asia expert.

iv) LEVERAGE REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL PLATFORMS

Pakistan can use regional frameworks such as SCO, SAARC and OIC to engage both powers collectively. This approach provides diplomatic flexibility and positions Pakistan as a mediator and bridge builder.

"Multilateral engagement allows states to leverage collective frameworks rather than being tied to a single patron"

Barnett Rubin, if

v) TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION AND CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE

Maintaining open channels of communication with both the U.S. and China is essential to avoid misunderstanding especially in areas like defence cooperation and technology.

"Transparency in foreign policy builds trust and prevents strategic miscalculation".

Riaz Khan, Pakistani security analyst.

vi) INVESTMENT IN DOMESTIC CAPABILITIES

A stronger, self-reliant Pakistan - militarily, economically and diplomatically has greater leverage to engage with both powers without being forced into compromising positions.

CONCLUSION:

Balancing relations with U.S. and China requires a cautious mix of diplomacy, economic diversification, strategic clarity and domestic strength. By adopting multivector foreign policy, ensuring transparent and continuous dialogue, Pakistan can maintain constructive engagement with both powers.

"Peace and stability are best maintained when national interests guide foreign policy, not external pressures"

— Michael Kugelman.