

Q02: Pak-Afghan relations continue to remain tense even after mediation by China. What do you think are major factors and how could it be improved.

I. INTRODUCTION

Peaceful relations with our neighbour are only possible if all support for TTP is completely ended.

— Khwaja Asif
Pak Defence
Minister

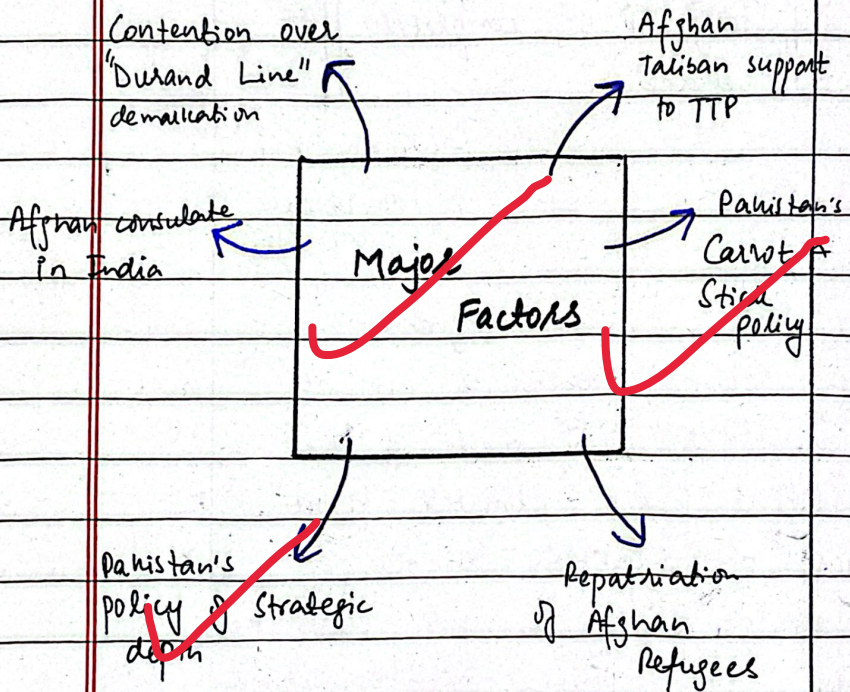
Frictions with Afghanistan have recently been at an all time high. The seeds of the discontent were planted right after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 and with the exit of the United States. Relations slowly turned sour as the Taliban shifted their policy from one of a friend and ally, to that of a potential foe. China and other countries tried to mediate but negotiations failed as neither

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country is willing to compromise of its goals. Despite the current scenario, several policies like inclusion of more actors in negotiation, sustainable repatriation of Afghans and economic collaborations can help mend relations.

II MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING RELATIONS



(i) Contention over "Durand line" Demarcation

One of the biggest issues between the two is the problem

of the border with Afghanistan. Taliban ~~has~~ do not recognize it and claim parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa belong to them. The Durand line is officially recognized by the UN and other countries and was signed under the Amritsar in 1893. But Taliban refuse to accept that.

(ii) Afghan Taliban's safe haven for terror organizations like TTP

Afghanistan has become a safe haven for all terror organizations. Many factions reunited after the US withdrawal and regrouped under original organizations. According to a UN Report of 2024, the Taliban do not conceive of the TTP as a terrorist group. The bond between them is strong.

(iii) Pakistan's policy of Strategic depth back-firing

Pakistan maintained good relations with Afghanistan

as part of its policy of strategic depth. This was to make sure Pakistan could fall back into a friendly state in case of war with India. However, the policy is under threat. Afghan Taliban see the policy as a threat to their sovereignty and do not wish to be reduced to a strategic measure in Pakistan's conflict.

(iv) Afghanistan's warming relations with India

Taliban's foreign minister made a long visit to India, during which the Afghan consulate in India was opened. This came as a direct threat to Pakistan. It now faces a dual threat, from both Eastern and Western borders. Taliban's warming up to Pakistan's closest enemy is a significant contention in the strained relations.

(v) Repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan

Another significant dilemma is the repatriation of refugees in large numbers. Uptil October 2025, more than 1.4 million refugees have been sent back. This was not taken well by the Taliban and the decision further strained relations.

(vi) Pakistan's Carrot and Stick policy

There will be no talks with terrorists.

— DG
ISPR

Make a link

Pakistan adopted a strict policy of carrot or stick. Under this, several compounds of the TTP were targeted inside Afghanistan. This was not taken very well by the Taliban. This resulted in border skirmishes leading to casualties on both sides of the border. The policy strained relations further between the two.

III. POLICIES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS

(i) Ad-hoc to structured security mechanism

Pakistan needs to recalibrate its kinetic tools. A mutual counter terrorism plan could be developed and institutionalized to ensure mutual action against terror outfits. This will lead to a more smoother response thus enabling better relations.

(ii) Re-designing refugee policy

Refugee policy needs to be reshaped to ensure vulnerable groups are protected. Working with agencies like UNCHR could allow for better relations, using it as a gesture of goodwill.

(iii) Inclusion of Regional and global actors in diplomacy

Other neighboring countries and global players could be involved in the peace making process. Organizations like the OIC and SCO could be leveraged to ensure a quick resolution to the problem.

(iv) Economic and Trade collaboration strengthening

The border closures led to a loss of \$45 million dollars in trade. By strengthening the trade mechanisms, it will ensure that relations do not sour because both have alot to lose. The deficits are borne by both countries. An economic incentive might ensure Taliban take action to fix the issues.

(v) Border management and safe zones

A joint border posts system could be developed to ensure that non state actors

do not cross the borders at will. If both work together, surveillance could be fortified and security improved at the borders.

IV. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

"Countries that share borders, share disputes too". This statement by professor Barry Buzan implicates that problems will always exist, but measures need to be taken to ensure a sustainable and long term solution. Otherwise, Pakistan risks fighting a battle at both fronts.

Merge within arguments

V. CONCLUSION

The Taliban have adopted several policies after coming in power that soured relations. This includes giving haven to TTP, and opening disputes on the border. Measures like a sustainable repatriation plan and economic collaborations can ensure that relations are restored.

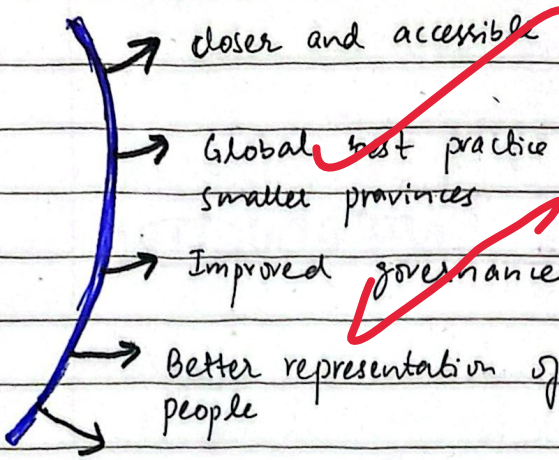
Link it to failed talks

Q03:

I. INTRODUCTION

The new provinces debate has been a burning argument among policy makers. The main arguments for such include the nature of large provinces and inability to effectively govern them. There are several problems, however, as new provinces are very expensive, and put a great financial strain on already struggling financial position. Some alternatives like a strong local governance and administrative zones in large provinces could be developed to achieve the same objectives.

II. REASONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROVINCES

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- closer and accessible governments
 - Global best practice of smaller provinces
 - Improved governance
 - Better representation of people
 - Balanced development and Equity in resources

III. HURDLES IN FORMATION OF NEW PROVINCES

(2) A rise in ethnicization and polarisation of population

The drawing of more boundaries will create greater divisions. This comes at a time when people are already divided along racial and ethnic lines. Dividing provinces will create segregation of ethnicities, deepening divide rather than promoting cohesion.

(ii) Carries a significant fiscal burden

Formation of new provinces requires significant capital.

New provinces means new administrative and political offices and houses. This puts a strong strain on finances while the country is already struggling with balance of payments issues.

(iii) Deepens NFC and interprovincial frictions

The current NFC award has not been renewed amid political disunity. There are already contentions on the division of resources among existing provinces.

Greater provinces mean the slices of current units will become smaller. It may even lead to uneven divisions.

(iv) Water and energy crisis amid scarcity

Along with financial resources,

natural sources would also have to be divided accordingly.

This puts greater pressure on IRSA, leading to provincial disputes.

The Indus is already drying up amid climate change concerns.

This further makes the case of more provinces weaker.

(V) Lack of political consensus on the issue

Many political parties do not condone the idea of more provinces.

This is primarily due to the fact that more provinces entails a loss of power. Smaller units

means political parties become segregated and might lose their strongholds to rivals. It would thus reduce their influence.

(Vi) Conflicts over boundaries and de-markation

The move will start a war between governments to declare territories. Many areas are closely combined, with

no formal boundaries. This will drive more conflict over the land and resources of the regions in question.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO NEW PROVINCES

- Strengthening of Local governments
- Dividing into administrative zones
- Dual or rotational capitals
- Fiscal equalization
- E-governance and digital decentralisation

(i) Strengthening of local governments

The article 140A requires the devolution of power to local governments. The concept has already been codified into law. It allows for the same benefits that new provinces

entail. It helps improve governance by devolution to the tehsil and local level.

(ii) Division of large provinces into administrative zones

Instead of the creation of new provinces, the large areas could be divided into administrative zones. UNESCAP (2022) recommends 20-25 million people per zone. Thus administrative councils could be developed instead of new provinces.

(iii) Creation of dual or rotational capitals

This would help equitable distribution of resources within the provinces. By creating dual provinces, major sectors of bureaucracy could be divided and thus the burden could be reduced. South Africa and Malaysia have dual capitals.

(iv) Adopting Fiscal Equalization

The NFC award allocates 57.5% of divisible pool to the provinces. An intra-provincial NFC could help reduce inequality by ensuring better allocation. Canada's Equalization program sustains poorer provinces.

(v) E-governance and digital decentralisation

Digital diversion by creating citizen portals and service apps could reduce traffic and ensure that problems are quickly solved. This would allow for better governance, efficiency and cost effective model.

Estonia's e-governance model manages 99% of public services through digital platforms, enhancing responsiveness.

Instructions to get good marks in current affairs paper

Day: _____

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Important Note: V. CONCLUSION

Marks would be given on the following parameters

a- Content 60% References 15% Subject specific language 15%. Graphs and charts 10%

New provinces is an ongoing debate within academic circles. The risks include heavy costs, fragmentation and divide along with political instability. However, alternatives in the form of local governments, administrative units, dual or capital system and a governance could be used as an cost effective and efficient alternative.

Add 12-13 headings in each question and write 8-9 sides to get above 15 in each question. the questions carry 3-4 parts. Each part has equal weightage so discuss all equally.

Give examples from present events to justify answers

Give attractive introduction and Conclusion as well

always give headings from the question statement.. take words from the statement

link each of the argument to the asked part in the question... if you fail to do so, no matter how accurate content is, if your heading is not align with what is asked in the question, it won't be accurate

Good Luck