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PAKISTAN AFFAIRS

TEST-03

QUESTION NO. 1

How does Pakistan's foreign policy navigate the complex balance between economic growth, security concerns, and regional influences?

ANSWER

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by its economic diplomacy, security measures, and regional engagement aiming at ensuring national interest amidst a challenging global and regional environment. Since the inception of Pakistan, security has dominated its foreign policy. Highlighting the geostrategic location of Pakistan, it has been tangled in the territorial conflicts. Pakistan has fashioned a foreign policy where it delves into a combination of critical issues such as Kashmir, Afghanistan and terrorism, apart from other self-serving interests. Economically, Pakistan seeks partnerships with China. In terms of security, Pakistan emphasizes counterterrorism efforts and strengthening its defense capabilities, often seeking military cooperation with allies like US, China, and Turkey. Regionally, Pakistan pursues influence through multilateral forums like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation,

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while balancing relations with neighbouring Iran and Afghanistan to ensure stability and counter strategic encirclement. This nuanced approach reflects Pakistan's attempt to align its foreign policy objectives with its internal priorities and external challenges.

FOREIGN POLICY NAVIGATING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic development is a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. The country prioritizes economic diplomacy by fostering bilateral trade relations and securing foreign investment. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) - symbolizes Pakistan's ambition to achieve infrastructure growth and connectivity, leveraging China's economic partnership. Additionally, Pakistan collaborates with global financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank to stabilize its economy, despite stringent conditions.

SECURITY CONCERNS HIGHLIGHTED IN FOREIGN POLICY

Security remains a vital concern for Pakistan due to its strategic location and geopolitical challenges. The country's policy emphasises counterterrorism initiatives, nuclear deterrence, and military modernization. Pakistan's defense alliances with China, Turkey

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and Saudi Arabia are pivotal in maintaining its security architecture. Relations with the United States are also crucial focusing on counterinsurgency and stability in Afghanistan.

REGIONAL INFLUENCE ON FOREIGN POLICY

Regionally, Pakistan's foreign policy seeks to maintain a leadership role in South Asia and the Islamic world. As a founding member of OIC and an active member of SAARC, Pakistan advocates for collective solutions to regional challenges. It also balances relations with neighbouring Afghanistan and Iran to address border stability and trade, while ~~actively~~ actively countering Indian hegemony, particularly in the context of Kashmir and strategic encirclement.

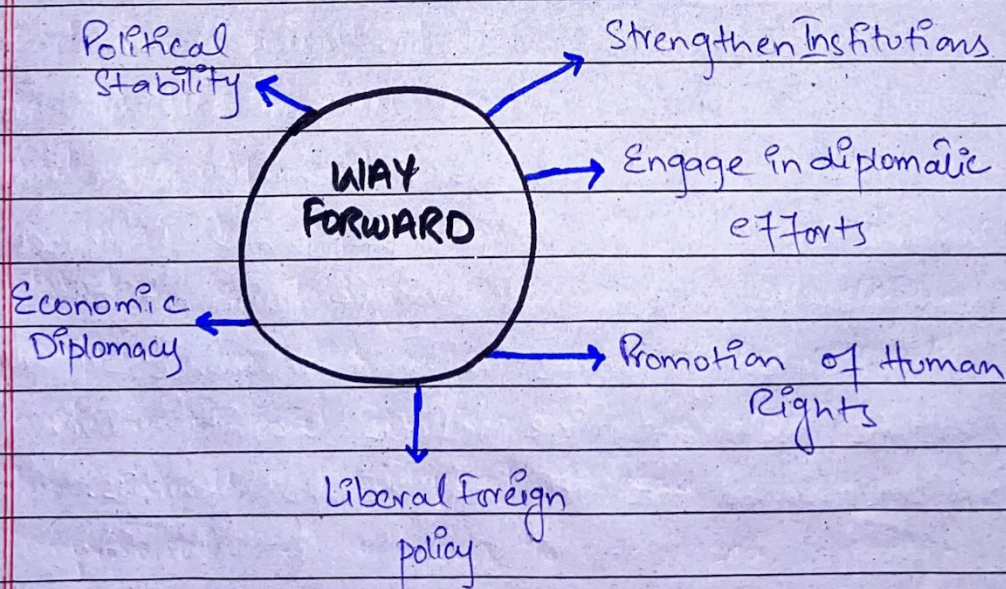
INTERPLAY OF FOREIGN POLICY

The interplay of Pakistan's foreign policy elements can be linked to the realist bloc, which emphasize the pursuit of national interests through power and pragmatism. CPEC is an example which showcases economic pragmatism and strategic alignment with China, countering India's regional dominance. Similarly, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine reflects security-driven realism, aimed at deterring external threats.

Pakistan often faces negative perceptions and stereotypes in the international community, significantly impacting its foreign policy objectives. Over the years, Pakistan has been blamed for various issues, from human rights violations within its borders, persecution of minorities, harbouring militants, sponsoring the Afghan Taliban, and hosting safe havens for Al-Qaeda and the Islamic state militants. Pakistan needs to actively improve its image through effective communication strategies, promoting cultural diplomacy, and highlighting the contributions to regional and global peace.

STEPS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pakistan must enhance its soft power through smart diplomacy to improve its image in the regional and global hemispheres. Pakistan must take some steps, such as:



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Focusing on such developments can help Pakistan improve in many ways and fight with the problems faced currently. This will also improve its international reputation and earn friendly support from international community.

As Mohammad Ali Jinnah's vision was also based on peace, which he highlighted in following words,

"Our objective should be peace within and peace without. We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial and friendly relations with our immediate neighbours and with world at large."

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, Pakistan's Foreign policy integrates economic priorities, security imperatives, and regional aspirations. While the challenges are also significant, as the pragmatic approach to diplomacy and strategic alliances continue to guide Pakistan in navigating complex international dynamics. Therefore, Pakistan needs to work on its soft power and internal stability to fight against the world and stay relevant to the global politics.



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QUESTION NO. 2

In what ways has Pakistan's approach to regional security challenges, including terrorism and border disputes, impacted its relations with neighbouring countries such as India, Afghanistan, and Iran?

ANSWER

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's approach to regional security challenges is driven by its commitment to safeguarding sovereignty, combating terrorism, and fostering regional stability. The foreign policy of Pakistan also focuses on balancing its relation with neighbouring countries. However, the recent incident on borders of Pakistan, shared with neighbouring countries have increased tensions due to which Pakistan had to step back from the stance of trade and positive bilateral relations. Now the foreign policy of Pakistan revolves around counterterrorism, border management, and the pursuit of regional stability. Pakistan has shifted to realist perspective of state survival and security and as the friction among the countries sharing borders with Pakistan continues. Pakistan is facing issues and is stranded in conflicts in the region affecting its bilateral and multilateral relations at global level and the overall stability of Pakistan is being compromised which needs to be addressed urgently.

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ADDRESSING TERRORISM

Pakistan has taken decisive steps to address terrorism by launching military operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasad, which helped a lot to dismantle militant networks. These efforts improved domestic security and garnered recognition from allies like China. However, the relations with neighbours like India, Afghanistan and Iran remain strained due to the mutual allegations of cross-border terrorism. Despite this, Pakistan consistently advocates for peace at borders.

RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN:

Relations of Pakistan and Afghanistan have been on good terms as Pakistan's role in Afghan peace processes highlighted its focus on regional stability. Pakistan highly supported Afghanistan in Doha Accord against US. Additionally, Pakistan's longstanding support for millions of Afghan refugees highlights the commitment of Pakistan. However, the disputes over Wakhan corridor continue among the two states increasing the tensions at the border. Afghanistan support group - Tehreek-e-Taliban - was recently banned by the government of Pakistan to counter the terror attacks on the public and the diplomats as well, which further gave rise to heated dialogues among both states.

COOPERATION WITH IRAN:

Pakistan's relations with Iran have always been a mix of security concerns and economic aspirations. While managing border challenges such as smuggling and tensions, both nations have developed collaborative frameworks like joint border patrols. Projects like Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline indicate Pakistan's willingness to balance security issues with economic partnerships, showcasing a pragmatic approach.

Pakistan's strategies emphasize the importance of diplomacy and regional collaboration. Initiatives like CPEC and partnerships within frameworks like the ~~ECO~~ ~~ECO~~ ECO aim to integrate regional economies while addressing shared security concerns.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan's foreign policy demonstrates a balanced approach to regional security challenges. By combating terrorism, facilitating peace talks, and fostering economic partnerships, Pakistan aims to navigate its complex relations with India, Afghanistan and Iran. These efforts reflect Pakistan's commitment to regional stability, economic development and a peaceful coexistence with its neighbours.