Q.4)

Introduction

The lingering tensions between Islamabad and Kabul, driven by the presence of the TTP using Afghan territory underscores a complex and volatile dynamic in the region. This issue not only strains bilateral relations but also exocerbates regional instability. Addressing this challenge requires a nuanced understanding of the underlying factors, coupled with strategic recommendations to foster peace, security, and mutual understanding

Brief Overview - Recent Developments

→ Islamabad - Kabul tensions have grown over the years, with the issue becoming more pronounced since Taliban's return to power in August 2021

→ in 2024, Pak experienced an alarming surge in terrorist incidents with over 2,500 fatalities, marking a 73% increase compared to the previous year (Arab News)

→ resurgence poses a severe challenge to Pakistan's internal security, economic stability, and regional influence

Causes of TTP's Cross-Border Attacks

①Sanctuaries + Safe Havens in Afghanistan
→ with Afghan Taliban's ascent to power,
TTP has found a more permissive
environment to operate
→ although Afghan Taliban has repeatedly
assured Pakistan of its commitment to
preventing use of Afghan territory, little
concrete action has been taken
  ↳ E.g. Pakistani security forces claim
       80% of terrorist attacks in Pakistan
       in 2024 were orchestrated from
       these regions (DAWN News)

②Access to Advanced Weaponry
→ US + NATO withdrawal in 2021 left
  behind a significant amount of military
  equipment, much of which has fallen into
  the hands of various militant groups
→ weapons have allowed TTP to enhance
  its operational capabilities

③Release of Militants After Taliban Takeover
→ Taliban's takeover led to the release
of thousands of imprisoned fighters,
including key TTP commanders
  ↳ E.g. TTP leader Noor Wali Mehsud
       who had been lying low,
       reemerged to lead attacks

Impacts of TTP's Attacks

Humanitarian Cons- equences

Security Deterioration + Civilian Casualties

Impact of Attacks on Pakistan

Political Tensions

Economic Instability

① Security Deterioration + Civilian Casualties
→ widespread insecurity across Pakistan, particularly in KPK and Balochistan
→ group's attacks on civilian + military targets have significantly increased death toll + created climate of fear

* Over 2,500 fatalities reported in terrorist incidents in 2024 *
(Arab News)

② Economic Instability
→ insecurity discourges foreign direct investment and disrupts economic activities in affected regions

→ Eg. CPEC projects faced multiple
     delays due to security concerns
(→ disrupts trade, tourism, and infrastructure
  projects

③ Political Tensions + Refugee Issues
→ forced government to adopt stringent
measures such as deporting Afghan refugees
  ↳ Eg. Over 1.5 million Afghan refugees
     given deadlines to leave Pakistan,
                    (Dawn News)
→ polarized domestic political discourse,
→ reduces likelihood of bilateral
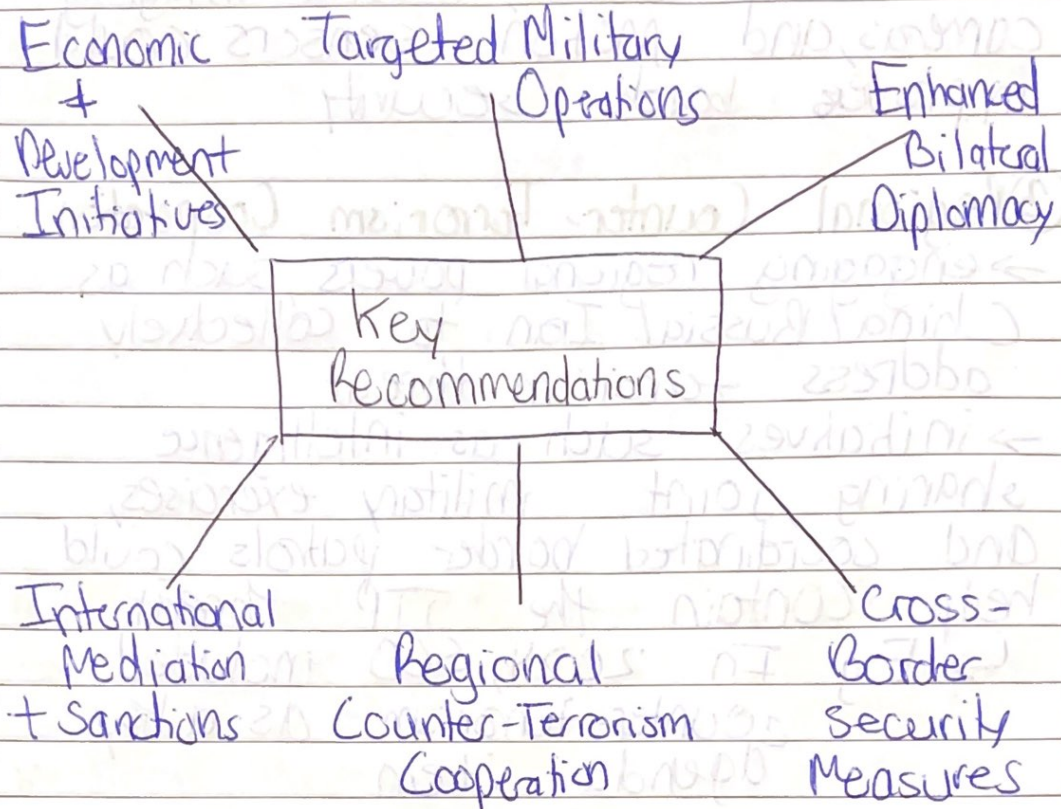 cooperation

④ Humanitarian Consequences
→ heightened violence has displaced
thousands of families, particularly in
tribal regions, creating a humanitarian
crisis
→ access to education, healthcare, basic
services widely disrupted
→ placed additional pressure on
  Pakistan's already overstretched
  social services and infrastructure

⭑ In North Waziristan, over 100,000
people displaced as a result of
military operations against TTP ⭑
               (Dawn)

Solutions to Address TTP Challenge

Economic &
Development
Initiatives

Targeted Military
Operations

Enhanced
Bilateral
Diplomacy

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┌─────────────────┐
│      Key        │
│ Recommendations │
└─────────────────┘
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International
Mediation
+ Sanctions

Regional
Counter-Terrorism
Cooperation

Cross-
Border
Security
Measures

① Enhanced Bilateral Diplomacy
→ Strengthening diplomatic dialogue to
build trust and agree on mutual
counter-terrorism strategies
→ Afghan Taliban have resisted Pakistan's
demands for actions against TTP
→ this makes it imperative for Pakistan
to offer incentives

② Cross-Border Security Measures
→ strengthening border management and
surveillance to prevent TTP militants
from crossing into Pakistan

→deploying advanced technologies such as drones, thermal imaging cameras, and motion sensors could improves border security

③Regional Counter-Terrorism Cooperation
→engaging regional powers, such as China, Russia, Iran to collectively address terrorism threat
→initiatives such as intelligence sharing, joint military exercises, and coordinated border patrols could help contain the TTP threat
↳ E.g In 2024, SCO included counter-terrorism as a key agenda item

④Targeted Military Operations
→conducting precise counter-terrorism Operations to dismantle TTP infrastructure in border regions
→targeting TTP strongholds can disrupt their command structure and weaken operational capacity
→aim is to push militants out of key areas and reduce terrorist activities
E.g. Operation Zarb-e-Azb (2014-6) is a success story of this

⑤ Economic + Development Initiatives

→ addressing socio-economic grievances of marginalized regions to reduce the appeal of militant groups like TTP

→ poverty, unemployment, and lack of education are key drivers of recruitment for militant groups

→ integrating such regions into national economy and political system is also critical for long-term stability

⑥ International Mediation + Sanctions

→ involvement of international organizations such as UN and OIC could help mediate tensions and encourage compliance with counter-terrorism agreements

→ international community could also impose sanctions on Afghan regime if it fails to act against TTP

Conclusion

The Islamabad-kabul tensions over TTP activities present both challenges and opportunities for regional peace and stability. The causes and impacts of this crisis are multifaceted. Ultimately, sustainable peace will depend on addressing root causes and building a collaborative framework