

CURRENT AFFAIRS

PART - II

QUESTION #2

ANSWER

A) INTRODUCTION:-

Pak-Afghan relations remained strained due to many underlying unresolved and overlooked factors. Doing so does not ease the tensions between the two neighbours rather, it only exacerbate the conditions. Some of the many factors behind unstable Pak-Afghan relations include the durand line dispute, persistent relations of mistrust, use of Afghan land as launching pad for attacks in Pakistan, infiltration across the border, repatriation of Afghan refugees, and mockery of the Pakistan's security concerns by Afghanistan. However, to improve the relations and ease the Pak-Afghan tensions, there are ways which can be utilized - Some of these include border dispute resolution, fencing the border to prevent infiltration, dismantling the terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan, mutual dialogue and mediation of international or regional hegemon.

2) MAJOR FACTORS BEHIND PAK - -AFGHAN STRAINING RELATIONS:

1) DURAND LINE DISPUTE = A CONSTANT FLASH POINT

The historic boundary dispute between the two neighbours since the independence of Pakistan is a constant flash point for Pak-Afghan straining relations. Both have exchanged military confrontation at the border many times.

But no government of Afghanistan accepted the durand line border thereby ^{remaining} a constant line of dispute between the two countries.

2) USE OF AFGHAN LAND AS A LAUNCHING PAD FOR ATTACKS IN PAKISTAN:

Many senior journalists observed that the tensions among the two neighbours remain intact due to continuous use of Afghanistan land for launching attacks in Pakistan. The most recent report by UNSC also reaffirmed the fact that the terrorist

Organisations have found safe hideouts in Afghanistan and they used it for cross-border attacks.

3) CONTINUOUS INFILTRATION ACROSS THE BORDER IS DEEPENING THE DISPARITY AMONG RELATIONS =

Pakistan shares a long porous border with Afghanistan without fencing. This allows the militants and insurgents to easily cross the border in difficult mountainous terrains as showed by the border security forces. This fact is also reaffirmed by ISPR. Hence, the persistent infiltration across the border also undermines the stability of both relations.

4) REPATRIATION OF AFGHAN REFUGEES: EMERGENCE OF HATE RHETORIC AMONG AFGHANS

Pakistan's government has successfully started the repatriation of Afghan refugees after hosting them for more than a two decades. However, the reluctance of Afghan gover-

nment to rehabilitate its citizens gave rise to a hate sentiment against Pakistan. The Afghan government further exploited it by politicizing it and considered Pakistan's move a ^{violation} of humanitarian norms. So, they used it as a tool to (divert the world's) justify their legitimacy by further igniting the already tense relations.

3) PERSISTENT HISTORICAL MISTRUST: A WEAK TRANSACTIONAL APPROACH FURTHER STRAINING RELATIONS

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a long history of mistrust and transactional approach in their relations. At many distinct Afghanistans aligned itself with Pakistan such as for security purpose during Soviet invasion. However, it aligned against Pakistan with India during the Pakistan India historic standoffs. This shows the weak approach of the country to ease the Pakistan and Afghanistan tensions.

6) MOCKING THE NEIGHBOURS SECURITY CONCERNS INSTEAD OF ADDRESSING THEM:

Afghanistan is overlooking the Pakistan's security concerns which is also the reason of the declining relations. One of Afghan's ministers recently remarked that Pakistan should question the strength of its security institution instead of questioning Afghanistan's complacency. This shows the non-seriousness of Afghan side to resolve the tensions among the two neighbours.

3) WAY OUT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS:

1) RESOLUTION OF THE LONG WITH-STANDING BORDER DISPUTE:

The improvement in relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan is mainly possible by resolving the border dispute between the two countries. Since, it is already considered as an international border but a reaffirmation by both sides to

adhere and respect the border lines would provide a way for improvement in Pak-Afghan relations.

2) FENCING OF THE BORDER TO AVOID INFILTRATION:

Since both countries share a porous border, so, to prevent the infiltration the fencing of border ~~is a~~ provides a way for improvement of relations between the neighbours. Although, it is a mammoth task, it is difficult to fence such a long border. In this context, international assistance is a viable option.

3) DISMANTLING THE TERRORIST HIDEOUT AND DISARMING THE MILITANT GROUPS:

Pakistan's Foreign minister emphasized that it ~~do~~ will not allow any terrorist hide out in Afghanistan which is causing insurgency in Pakistan. Therefore, in the

content of contemporary conditions, the relations will improve only with the ^{either} dismantling of terrorist safe heavens or disarmament of the insurgent groups in Afghanistan.

4) MUTUAL DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION OF INTERNATIONAL HEGEMONISM=

Pakistan and Afghanistan mutual dialogue is a positive progress towards the improvement of relations. However, the mediation of international hegemon will be a good step to ease the relations between the two since, it already halted the nuclear confrontation between the two nuclear neighbours through alternative trade deals. In the same way, it can use the same (relations) technique here.

5) LEARNING FROM REGIONAL COUNTRIES : China Vs - India

Pakistan and Afghanistan can also learn from China's and India's strategy

to ensure peace at border without undermining their security. Pakistan and Afghanistan relations can also move towards a better direction by employing the way of relations between the other two regional neighbours.

4) Conclusion:

Although there are persisting tensions at the borders and ^{mutual} relations, still there exists the ways which can be employed to ease the turmoil between the two neighbors. However, the result of these relations depended on their commitment to maintain stability in the region and above all in their countries without undermining their ^{national} security.

QUESTION # 8

ANSWER

A) INTRODUCTION:

The recent Pakistan-Saudi defence pact is a reaffirmation of long historic cooperation of both countries. The pact was signed due to number of causes, some of which include the recent military and strategic success against a nuclear rival, maintenance of credible nuclear deterrence, revival of Pakistan at diplomatic front, the realignment of Pakistan's foreign policy towards a balancing approach. Moreover, the pact resulted in immediate implications including change in regional alliances, emergence of bilateral security agreements, prominent role of Pakistan in Gaza peace deal and viewing Pakistan as a net security provider for middle eastern region.

B) CAUSES BEHIND THE PAKISTAN - SAUDIA DEFENCE PACT:

1) STRATEGIC AND MILITARY SUCCESS : A MAJOR CAUSE OF THE PACT

The prominent strategic and military success in May 9 standoff paved the way of Pakistan signed defence pact. Pakistan positioned itself as the net security provider of the region, thereby expanding its way to wealthy gulf nations.

2) MAINTENANCE OF CREDIBLE NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

Pakistan maintained the nuclear deterrence in the region successfully. This strategic position (increased the) presented the capability of Pakistan to entrench its security to other countries as well. Being a developing country and spending around \$2 trillion on the defence which is far less than its nuclear rival neighbour, proved its unwavering military capabilities. It was also reaffirmed when Pakistan won two of the top places in a military and air might show internationally.

3) REVIVAL OF PAKISTAN'S DIPLOMACY AT INTERNATIONAL FRONT: A WAY TO STAY CONNECTED IN DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENTS

The Saudi Arabia and Pakistan defence agreement also resulted from the vigorous diplomacy of Pakistan at the international front recently. KSA found a way to stay invested in the latest diplomatic developments.

4) ALIENATION FROM THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY GUARANTOR: AN ALTERNATIVE TO SECURE THE COUNTRY

The alienation among the Gulf states emerged ~~among~~ when a country being guaranteed the security by international hegemon attacked by the hegemon's closed ally. So the Gulf countries are looking for alternatives to reduce their dependencies on the international hegemon. Therefore, Pak-Saudia defence pact is the result of mistrust that developed among the Gulf nations and on

alternative to secure its national security.

5) ~~VIENTIANE~~ **PAKISTAN- OFFICIAL RE-AFFIRMATION OF PAK-SAUDIA HISTORIC COMMITMENTS AND COOPERATIONS :**

The recent pact can also be considered as the reaffirmation of long withstanding commitments and cooperation of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Since the partition, in 1950's Pakistan became member of Islamic bloc. The two countries have been collaborating since then. So, this pact is just a realization of long and deep rooted collaborations about the two countries.

6) **IMPLICATIONS OF PAK-SAUDIA DEFENCE PACT :**

6) **EMERGENCE OF BILATERAL SECURITY DEALS INSTEAD OF REGIONAL:**

The pact gave rise to a new tradition in the rapidly changing world

Order. Instead of making the regional security deals, it marked the start of bilateral security deals. Furthermore, it places the interest of Pakistan at the heart of deal — ^{realization of} capability to maintain deterrence.

2) VIEWING PAKISTAN AS A NET REGIONAL PROVIDER:

The pact positioned Pakistan under the view of new security provider of the region. Due to Saudi Arabia's collaboration in security, many other Gulf nations like Kuwait and Oman are considering to sign the security pact with Pakistan, thereby presenting Pakistan as a net security provider.

3) PAKISTAN'S PROMINENT POSITION IN CONCLUDING THE GAZA PEACE DEAL:

The pact increased the proximity between the Arab world and Pakistan. This was evident from Pakistan's prominent role in

concluding Gaza peace deal and initiating ceasefire in Gaza. The deal's significance was also endorsed by the President of United States of America himself.

4) AN ECONOMIC SECURITY ASSURANCE - NCE BY THE PACT:

The sign of pact between the two countries also brought the economic security assurance for Pakistan during crisis. This news also became a media sensation for some time but what it carries is way more significant specially economically for Pakistan.

5) HISTORIC TIME FOR PAKISTAN DIPLOMATICALLY AND STRATEGICALLY:

The year 2025 is considered by many analyst as historic time in Pakistan foreign policy. As it has not only successfully maintained its deterrence in the region but also become

a balancer between the global powers. The pact was signed at the greatest times of Pakistan diplomacy and added strategic leverage and weight to it. The former ambassador of Pakistan, Maleeha Lodhi considered the pact a strategic win for Pakistan both diplomatically and strategically.

4) CRITICISM:

Although, most of the analysts considered this pact a win-win situation for Pakistan. At the same time, they warn about the cost of the pact. Many experts believe that the verification "attack on one is attack on both" may involve Pakistan into multiple rivalries, specially from middle east. They also predicted that although, it carries a great economic opportunity for Pakistan but the lack of skilled youth may decrease the predicted economic capital by three to four times.

5) CONCLUSION:

Although there are some risks affiliated with the pact but they depend on the policy of its use. Moreover, it puts Pakistan at a strategic position to strengthen its alliances with the middle eastern nations.

It also added to the ~~rigorous~~^{active} diplomatic posture of Pakistan. Furthermore

Pakistan together with Saudi Arabia showed its capability to influence the global order by initiating a new tradition in global security politics. Therefore, the pact increased the strategic leverage of Pakistan at the global front.

QUESTION # 4

ANSWER

A) INTRODUCTION:

The militancy in KP and Balochistan have revived but with a greater intensity than ever before. The reasons behind this dangerous revival are not limited to national boundaries but also associated with the foreign or non-state actors. Among the many other reasons, some of the causes of revival of militancy include public alienation from the government in the areas, lack of provision of attributed funds, a soft corner for militancy in locals, unprotected borders and foreign funding networks and involvement of non-state actors. However, the stability and law and order can be attained through way various ways. Some of them include devolution of powers to local governments, investing in infrastructural projects in the areas, addressing the grievances of the people, protecting the borders and cutting off the foreign funding.

B) THE REASONS OF THE REVIVAL OF MILITANCY IN KP AND BALUCHISTAN:

i) PUBLIC ALIENATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT; FILLED BY MILITANTS = A GAP/VACUUM

The public alienation between these border areas and the government created a vacuum which created the best conditions for militant revival. Therefore, the militants grabbed the opportunity and filled the vacuum creating the turmoil in these areas by gaining strength.

ii) LACK OF PROVISIONS OF ATTRIBUTED FUNDS = UNEMPLOYMENT CON-PELLED MANY TO JOIN MILITANTS

The lack of funds provision for the areas undermined the infrastructural developments there which further squeezed the living standards of people creating unemployment. This

lack of developmental projects created a job vacuum which compelled them to join the vast militant groups which paid them well to support their life.

iii) A SOFT CORNER FOR MILITANTS AMONG LOCALS = ANOTHER ASPECT OF MILITANCY REVIVAL

The ^{apparent} deromament of the militant groups in these areas in 2021 created a people to people bond between the locals and the militants. The strengthened militants gained and the soft corner they earned from locals help them further consolidate their presence in the regions. Therefore, it is also a significant prospect of military revival in Pakistan.

iv) UNPROTECTED BORDERS AND TERRITOR FUNDING NETWORKS CONSOLIDATED THE REVIVAL OF MILITANCY:

Pakistan shares borders with Afghanistan

-istan and Iran through these provinces. Due to difficult terrain of the areas, the fencing is improbable at many areas, thereby providing an edge to long and strengthened foreign terror-funding networks and infiltration. Thus, the unprotected borders and sophisticated terror funding networks provided efficient hideouts to these militants to regain their strength.

V) SUPPORT OF NON-STATE ACTORS SIGNIFICANTLY ASSISTED THE REEMERGENCE OF MILITANTS:

The non-state actors' support in both provinces also played a major role in revival of militancy. The Fitna-al-Mullewat in Balochistan has been long supported by India and Fitna-al-Khawarij in KP is backed by Afghanistan Talibanis. Therefore, the support of non-state actors significantly contributed to the revival of militancy in both provinces of Pakistan.

c) RECOMMENDATIONS TO RENUE LAW AND ORDER AND DISMANTLE MILITANTS :

i) DEVOLUTION OF POWERS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC-GOVERNMENT DISPARITY :

The revival of militants can be discouraged by decreasing the disparity between public and government. This can be done by devolving powers to grass root levels. By empowering local government, people will feel connected to government and stay away from militant influences.

ii) INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS TO PROVIDE AMPLE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES :

By investing in infrastructural projects, employment opportunities will be created. People will have a job to increase their life standards. Doing so will ~~defeat~~ prevent them from being diverted and keeping

them independent. Thus, investment in infrastructure will also undermine the revival of militancy.

3) ADDRESSING THE GRIEVANCES OF THE PROVINCES WILL DISBURGE THE MILITANT SENTIMENTS =

Addressing the grievances of the locals will decrease their inclination towards the militant sentiments as they will feel addressed and connected to the country. The feeling will keep them away from indulging in any disloyalty towards its own country.

4) PROTECTING THE BORDERS =

Since the revival of militants occurred in the border areas, it is now imminent to protect the border through militarization. This can be achieved only by declaring the border zones as military zones, free from the influence of civilians for their

Security. Doing so can minimize the chances of military revival in the border areas of the provinces.

5) CUTTING OFF THE FOREIGN FUNDING AND SUPPLY OF WEAPONS:

Dismantling the terror financing networks and their assistants inside the territory can stop the revival of militancy. This can be done by establishing the formal relations with regional rivals specially the neighbours. By involving collaborating in mutually benefiting bilateral projects and agreements can automatically reduce the funding and weaponary supply in the country.

6) PROMOTING THE UNIQUE AND DIVERSE CULTURE OF THE AREAS AT NATIONAL AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS:

The promotion of unique and diverse cultures of the locals in the bordering areas will also make them feel affiliated. This

will significantly reduce the extremist influences and radicalisation towards the militants.

D) CONCLUSION:

Although, the country is currently facing the peril of militancy revival, it can be reduced significantly through strong commitments and implementation. Moreover, fulfilling the long withstanding promises of the locals can significantly complete half of the job. Therefore, it is possible for Pakistan to gain the same law and order in the bordering provinces of KP and Balochistan as they were in before the revival of militancy.