

CURRENT AFFAIRS - Mock Exam 2026

PART - II

Q:- Pakistan Saudi Arabia have signed a historic defense pact. Critically evaluate the causes and implications of the deal.

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share a deep-rooted relationship based on historical religious and strategic ties. The foundation of their alliance can be traced back to Pakistan's independence in 1947, as both nations are Islamic states with shared cultural and religious values. Over the decades, their relationship has evolved by economic, military and diplomatic cooperations. Their relationship was based on the following key historical factors such as:

• **Religious Bond:** The relationship is strongly anchored in Islam, with Saudi Arabia being the custodian of the two holiest sites in Mecca and Medina. This religious connection fosters mutual respect and solidarity. Saudi Arabia has often supported Pakistan on Islamic causes, such as during the 1974 Islamic Summit in Lahore.

• **Economic Ties:** Saudi Arabia has been a key economic partner, frequently providing financial aid and oil supplies to Pakistan during economic crisis. In the 1970s, the Saudi

government provided significant support to Pakistani workers, creating a large diaspora that contributes to Pak's economy through remittances

Military Collaboration: Pak has provided military expertise and training to Saudi forces. Thousands of Pakistani troops have served in Saudi Arabia as part of defense agreements. In 1991, during the Gulf War, Pakistan deployed troops to protect Saudi Arabia's holy sites.

Strategic support: Saudi Arabia has backed Pak on critical international issues, including its stance on Kashmir. Pakistan supported Saudi Arabia during the Yemen conflict by deploying troops for non-combat roles.

NUCLEAR PROGRAM: Saudi Arabia has reportedly supported Pak's nuclear program financially, viewing Pakistan as a counterbalance to regional rivals, particularly Iran and Israel.

HISTORIC DEFENSE PACT BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA:

The historic defense pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, officially

called the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMOA), was signed on September 13, 2005, during a high-level meeting in Riyadh, between Prime Minister Shohbaz Sharif and crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. This agreement marked a significant milestone in the decades-long, close relationship between the two nations, elevating their partnership to a formal, strategic alliance.

FEATURES OF HISTORIC DEFENSE PACT:

1. **MUTUAL DEFENSE CLAUSE:** The pact includes a clause stating that an attack on one country will be considered an attack on both nations. Both countries commit to providing military and logistical support in case of external aggression faced by either party. This clause strengthens the security umbrella for both nations, ensuring their sovereignty is protected amidst rising regional tensions.

2. **MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMME:** Pakistan agreed to provide extensive training for Saudi military personnel, including the army, air force and navy. Pakistani military experts were stationed in Saudi Arabia to train Saudi forces in modern warfare and counterinsurgency tactics.

3. TROOP DEPLOYMENT:

The pact allowed for the deployment of Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia to safeguard the country's holy sites and ensure the kingdom's internal and border security. At its peak, around 20,000 Pakistani soldiers were stationed in Saudi Arabia under this agreement.

4. JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES:

The agreement encouraged regular joint military drills to improve operational coordination and readiness. Exercises focus on desert warfare, counterterrorism and modern combat techniques.

5. COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION:

The pact emphasized collaboration on combating terrorism and insurgencies, especially as the region faced growing threats from extremist groups.

Intelligence sharing between the two nations became a critical part of the defense pact.

6. ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT:

Alongside military cooperation, Saudi Arabia provided Pakistan with financial aid and concessional oil supplies, strengthening Pak's economy in exchange for its defense support. Pak's commitment to Saudi Arabia's security reinforced the kingdom's position in the Gulf region.

CAUSES OF THE DEAL:

1. SHARED HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BONDS

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's relationship spans nearly eight decades, built on Islamic solidarity and strategic cooperation. Saudi Arabia is home to Islam's holiest sites, making its security a matter of religious significance for Pakistan.

2. REGIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS:

The growing influence of Iran in the Middle East, coupled with its support for Yemen's Houthi rebels, has pushed Saudi to seek stronger security guarantees. Pak, with its battle-hardened military, offers a reliable partner to counterbalance Iranian ambitions.

The pact also reflects concerns over Israel's rising military assertiveness in the Middle East, particularly in its actions in Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Both nations share a commitment to counter such threats.

For Pak, the SMOA strengthens its deterrence posture against India, particularly after recent escalations in Kashmir and cross-border tensions. Saudi Arabia's potential support in a conflict scenario is a valuable strategic partnership.

3. **Economic Independence**
Pak's struggling economy depends heavily on Saudi financial aid and concessional oil supplies and investment. The pact serves as a pro quo, with Pak providing military expertise and security assurance in exchange for economic support. Saudi Vision 2030 aimed at diversifying its economy and boosting defense capabilities, aligning with Pak's defense industry which offers technologies like drones and arms manufacturing expertise.

IMPLICATIONS OF DEAL

1. STRENGTHENED REGIONAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK:

The pact establishes a NATO-style mutual defense commitment, where an attack on one country is treated as an attack on both. This creates a formal military alliance, significantly enhancing deterrence against external threats like Iran and Israel. It reinforces joint defense, providing a stronger security umbrella for both nations, especially amidst ongoing instability in the Middle East and South Asia.

ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC BENEFITS FOR PAK.

the pact cement Saudi Arabia's role as a key economically, ensuring continued financial aid, deferred oil payments and investments in Pak defense and infrastructure. For co-production and exports, with Saudi Arabia investing in advanced military technologies like drones and weapon systems.

3. Shift in regional geopolitics.

The agreement signals Riyadh's pivot away from sole reliance on the U.S. for security, reflecting its growing desire for strategic autonomy. ~~get~~

For Pak, it elevates Islamabad's standing in the Muslim world, positioning it as a key guarantor of Islamic security and strengthening its influence in the Gulf. The pact also challenges India's regional calculus, as Saudi closer alignment with Pak could weaken Indian's ties with G.S. (Gulf states).

Q4. There is dangerous revival of militancy in KP and Baluchistan. critically evaluate the reasons and give recommendation.

MILITANCY IN KP AND BALUCHISTAN.

Militancy in KP and Baluchistan stems from a complex interplay of historical grievances, socio-economic deprivation, ethnic tensions and external dynamic.

REASONS: KP

1. SPOILS FROM AFGHANISTAN:

The porous border with Afghanistan allows militants like TTP and ISIs-K to operate across borders. Post-2001 Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, KP has seen increased militant activity. Pak's border management efforts (e.g. fencing) have been partially effective but insufficient to curb cross-border movements.

2. GOVERNANCE GAPS IN EX-FATA.

After the merger of FATA into KP (2018) governance challenges persist. Lack of effective policing and judicial systems in ex-FATA fuels instability.

Integration into KP was a step forward, but slow implementation of reforms and limited resources hinder stability.

3. Socioeconomic Deprivation:

High poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment in KP make recruitment easier for militant groups. Addressing economic grievances through development is critical to reducing militancy, but progress has been slow.

REASONS: Balochistan.

1. Ethnic and Nationalist Grievances.

Baloch nationalist groups cite exploitation of natural resources and lack of provincial autonomy as reasons for their struggle. While some Baloch grievances are legitimate, militant groups like the BIA use violence, alienating the broader Baloch population from the state.

2. Economic Marginalization:

Despite resource wealth, Balochistan remains underdeveloped. Locals feel excluded from economic benefits of resource extraction. Development projects e.g. (CPEC) could address grievances but risk exacerbating tensions if locals perceive them as exploitative.

3. Security Operations and Human Rights Concerns:

Military operations in Balochistan have led to allegations of human rights abuses, fueling resentment.

A balance between security and addressing grievances is needed. Excessive force without dialogue risks deepening mistrust.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Socio-Economic Development:

Invest in infrastructure, education, healthcare and job creation to address poverty and underdevelopment in both KP and Balochistan. Ensure locals benefit from resource extraction through profit sharing mechanisms and employment quotas.

2. Political Dialogue and Reconciliation

Engage with ethnic and nationalist groups (e.g. Baloch nationalists, tribal leaders in KP) to address grievances and reduce violence. Initiate peace talks with militant groups willing to renounce violence.

3. Strengthening Governance and Rule of Law

Improve governance in ex-FATA regions of KP by integrating effective policing, judicial systems and local administration. In Balochistan, ensure transparent governance and address corruption to build trust.

Q3: How Pakistan could balance its relations after the recent engagement with US and strategic partnership with China.

Balancing Relations with the US and China: Pakistan Strategic Approach:

Pakistan's relations with both the US and China are critical to its foreign policy, economic growth and security interests. Balancing these relationships amid shifting geopolitics require careful diplomacy and strategic prioritization.

1. Leveraging Strategic Partnerships:

• **China:** The China-Pak Economic corridor remains a cornerstone of Pak's economic ambitions with investments in infrastructure, energy and connectivity. Pak must ensure CPEC's progress while addressing concerns about debt sustainability and local impacts.

• **US:** Engagement with the US is vital for security cooperation, counterterrorism efforts and access to technology and markets. Pak seeks US support for economic stability through IMF programs.

2. AVOIDING OVER-DEPENDENCE ON ONE PARTNER:

Pak needs to avoid being caught in the US-China rivalry by maintaining

diplomatic flexibility, Pak can navigate tensions b/w the two powers without compromising its sovereignty or strategic interest.

Multi-vector diplomacy: Engaging with other partners like the Gulf, EU and ASEAN can reduce over-reliance on US-China dynamics.

3. Economic Priorities:

- **CEPEC vs US Relations:** While CEPEC drives economic growth, Pak must balance this with its need for US aid, trade and investment. For instance, US support via the IMF can stabilize Pak's economy.

- **Trade-off:** Pak may need to address US concerns on issues like terrorism financing while protecting its strategic ties with China.

4. Security and geopolitical Considerations

- **US-PAK security ties:** Cooperation on counterterrorism (e.g. in Afghanistan) remains important for Pakistan's security.

China's Strategic Interests: Pak must align with China on regional security issues (e.g. in the context of India) while navigating entanglement in US-China disputes.

5. DIPLOMATIC NUANCE:

Pak should emphasize its role as a bridge between powers, highlighting its need for balanced partnerships to ensure stability in South Asia. Pak's relations with neighbors like India and Afghanistan will influence its US-China balancing act.

Q3:

Ans: Hurdles in the Formation of New Provinces in Pak and recommendation

1. ETHNIC AND REGIONAL DIVISIONS

Demands for new provinces often stem from ethnic or regional grievances (e.g. or a South Punjab province). These divisions can deepen tensions between communities. Creating provinces along ethnic lines risks fragmenting national unity and exacerbating local rivalries.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES:

New provinces would require significant financial resources for governance infrastructure (e.g. capitals, bureaucracies, judiciary). Pak economy is strained; adding provinces could increase costs without guaranteed economic benefit.

3. **Political Resistance and Constitutional Barrier:**
Existing provinces may resist losing territory or resources. Politicians from established provinces often oppose new divisions to protect their influence. The constitutional process for creating new provinces is complex (making it politically challenging).

4. **Fear of Balkanization:**
Critiques argue that creating provinces based on ethnicity or region could lead to further fragmentation and weaken national cohesion. Historical examples of subnational movements (e.g. in Balochistan) fuel concerns about separation.

Recommendations:

1. **Address grievances through decentralization:**
Instead of new provinces, strengthen decentralization within existing provinces to empower local government and address regional grievances. Improve resource distribution and development in underrepresented areas to reduce demands for separate provinces.

2. Dialogue and Consensus:

Encourage national dialogue involving all stakeholders to discuss grievances and

potential reform. Build cross-party consensus to avoid politicization of province - creation debate.

3. Focus on governance reform.
Improve governance and service delivery in existing province to reduce the push for new one. Address issues like resource allocation, representation and development disparities within current province.

4. Avoid Ethno-linguistic Divisions.
Base any potential reorganization on administrative efficiency rather than ethnic or linguistic lines to prevent deepening divisions.