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

Ans

Pak Afghan Relations : Cooperation to conflict

In the past decade Pak Afghan relations have shown significant shift and turns. Mostly because of the changing geopolitical scenarios and regional shift of powers. The situation of relations worsened when Pakistan's government decided to send back Afghan refugees. A general notion of hatred towards Pakistan was seen by Afghan locals and Afghan immigrants that were sent back. ~~They were~~

⇒ Year 2024-25 is a major game changer

In year 2024-25 series of terrorist attacks were observed in Pakistan. The surge in terrorism and terrorist attacks were located back to Afghanistan. Pakistan claimed that Afghanistan is being used as a sanctuary for by terrorists where as Afghan Taliban government was reluctant that terrorism is an interior issue of Pakistan and Taliban have nothing to do with it.

⇒ Stained Relations and Border skirmishes

Refusal of Afghanistan to commit to eradication of terrorism from their land lead to conflict of national interests. Pakistan began targeting terrorist safe havens in Afghanistan so that cross border terrorism

could be stopped

Factors that caused conflict:

After the mediation of China in 2017 the conflict didn't halt. It was awkward for international and regional players that two neighbours who have a long social, cultural ~~and~~, political and religious history ~~could not~~ ~~and~~ ~~have~~ turn to conflict rather than peaceful solution. The analyzed factors to this conflict of interest are of geopolitical nature.

Talibans weak governance in curtailing terrorism:

When Taliban in Afghanistan couldn't control the ~~the~~ growing emergence of TLP and other terrorist groups, Regional Players tried to bring Afghanistan to table and resolve the issue by

Cooperation. Afghanistan's ~~Infrastructure~~ didn't agree to the fact that it was harbouring terrorism. China ~~expressed~~ its concerns about ~~and~~ Kurdistan terrorist organization also Russia expressed its concerns about ISIS wings in Afghanistan.

Absence of Will or Absence of Infrastructure?

This issue is of a question that ~~whether~~ ^{we} Afghanistan wants to cut the terrorism or not, another question here arises that If it wants to curtail terrorism does it have infrastructure to do it or not? These questions have been analyzed critically by regional players due to which Russia China Pakistan have engaged with Afghanistan on multiple forums to stress the need of Afghan talibans to curtail terrorism.

Indias Role in the Region.

"Enemy of My Enemy is My friend"

The Strategic Manuevering of India in the region is revolving around this phrase. India has opened an ~~official~~ Embassy in Afghanistan to engage in diplomatic cooperation.

India Although didn't formally recognized the Afghan Taliban yet it has held highest level of diplomatic talks with Kabul. India has Agreed to Invest in Afghanistans infrastructure. And has Also provided Ambulances in recent meeting with Afghan foreign Minister as a symbol of Good will

⇒ Shift in Strategic Interests of Afghans

⇒ Alternative ~~the~~ Wum water across point

= Afghanistan formerly dependent on Pakistan's goodwill port.
~~has now been~~ India now being a strategic partner of Afghanistan has offered Alternative Sea route through Chabahar.

⇒ **Talibans need of Recognition being executed**

Talibans government ~~was~~ After it took over Afghanistan in 2021 needed legitimacy and recognition. It considered Pakistan as a key strategic partner. Now Russia being the first to recognize and India engaging in diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. It is evident that Afghanistan's government considers Pakistan now a less ~~an~~ important strategic ally.

⇒ How Relations can be Improved?

Recalibration of Regional politics:

Afghanistan needs to recalibrate its strategic vision of the region. Diplomatic efforts to engage with other state is the primary right of any state yet ~~at~~ its immediate neighbour Pakistan should be of importance. Afghanistan has neglected the fact that "stability in Afghanistan is directly linked with security of Pakistan"

Afghans Commitment to eradicate terrorism

⇒ Afghanistan need to provide guarantee to Pakistan that it will take necessary measures to eradicate terrorism. Pakistan ^{defence} ~~foreign~~ minister Khwaja Asif stated that dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan shall mainly focus on eradication of terrorism from Afghanistan.

Mutual Cooperation addressing Common Interest.

Pakistan and Afghanistan need to engage in dialogue to resolve their disputes. A common ground for economic development can pave the way for strengthened mutual cooperation.

Role of Russia and China will be critical:

Russia and China are major regional players. Russia that has formally accepted Taliban government ~~that~~ should step forward in this case and demand from Afghanistan a transparent effort for eradication of terrorism. In projects of Global south like OBOR, ~~and~~ and INSTC ~~with~~ need of Afghanistan is significant. Therefore Russia and China need to build a pressure on Afghanistan for reforms on their policy.

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Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement

⇒ Provisions and Background;

SMDA was signed between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan on September 17, 2025. This is a comprehensive defence Pact which ensures the collective security of both states.

"Attack on one state would be considered Attack on the other"

This is the major clause of this Agreement that clarifies that any aggression or act of war against one state would be considered an attack against other and both the states shall jointly respond. It is exact copy of **Article 5 of NATO** that also says attack on one is attack on all.

Causes of SMIDA

⇒ **Attack on Qatar:** In September Israel attacked a building in Qatar with an Air strike. It was seen as an act of Aggression that illustrated that the Middle east is helpless ~~to~~ in regards of Defense. There is a ~~big~~ Military probably the largest military base of USA in Qatar, Israel was not deterred by it. Late on USA claimed that it didn't know of the attack and it was not informed.

⇒ **Inability of USA to protect its Allies.**

The attack in September on Qatar which was an Ally of United States, demonstrated that USA is unable to protect its allies and all the promises of mutual defence and security are Vague.

Recalibration of Saudi's Interest (presence of Israel in the region)

Saudi government analyzed the scale of danger and immediately decided to shift towards a relatively close and militarily strong, nuclear ally. The presence of Israel poses a threat to Saudi's especially when US is unable to stop Israel from its war mongering.

* Nuclear Capability of Pakistan (National stance against Israel)

Saudi's sought for a strong ally which can provide them with maximum security and inflict maximum deterrence in adversities. This is one of the main causes of a defence agreement with Pakistan.

- National stance of Pakistan against Israel was also a major reason for this agreement. Pakistan has never accepted Israel or

recognized Israel as a state. Therefore Pakistan was a good choice to be an ally with for Saudi Arabia.

Balance

~~Balance~~ Israel's Hegemony:

Israel has posed a major threat to security of ~~Pakistan~~ ~~the~~ Middle east. With its presence in the region it was necessary for Saudi Arabia to protect its sovereignty and secure its interest. Israel's attitude towards international law was another factor for Saudi to consider because Israel doesn't care about the law, it has proved it multiple times by attacking Jordan ~~and~~, Qatar and many states.

Implication of the SMDA:

⇒ Peace process between Arabs and Israel,

N Netanyahu being accused for the resurging of Islamic states due to attack on Qatar, apologized to Qatar and ensured that this shall never happen again. President of USA also ensured Arab world specifically Qatar that this shall never happen again.

⇒ Ensured Security of SAUDIA

The pact deterred any intention of aggression on Saudi and neutralized security threats related to Saudis. Israel was forced on back foot and no such attack like Qatar was seen in Saudi or neighbouring states.

Strengthened security of Pakistan

The pact strengthened Pakistan security. India who is a good trade partner of Saudi was forced on back foot. The narrative of India for Pakistan being a Terrorist state was neutralized and for the time being it ensured that India is deterred to execute any act of aggression just like operation Sindoor.

Pressure on US and fear of Islamic ~~Revolution~~ Coalition!

The pact also mounted pressure on US and general perception was derived that USA cannot protect its Allies. It was not a thing for US ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~US~~ ~~interest~~ because Saudi was the strategic ally now it had to shift its alliance towards Pakistan.

Jan. There was also a general perception that more countries will join this coalition. US was aware of the fact that it will create a parallel force that can challenge its influence in Middle East.

SDMA: Door for multidomain Cooperation.

Saudi Pakistan defense Agreement has paved way for other areas of Cooperation. As seen in AI sector Saudi has agreed for the development of AI sector through investment prior to this Saudi has invested successfully in Silicon valley's AI development. Other areas of economic and cultural cooperation have also been mobilized and Pakistan will see investments coming from Saudi. Military exercise along with exchange of Military hardware will speedup in coming years.

⇒ A collective cooperation model for other Islamic states to follow

SMDA is a model ~~on~~ of cooperation in which cooperation in one field will open doors for cooperation in other fields. This agreement may see addition of members according to some senior analysts. It is because this model of collective security and cooperation will ensure mutual interest in an umbrella where the competitors shall be deterred ~~by~~ by oil giant Saudi and Nuclear Power Pakistan.

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Revival of Militancy in KP and Baluchistan.

After operation Zarb-e-Azb KP was sanitized and terrorism activity was returned to zero.

But in last ~~now~~ few years Pakistan's western border that is connected to Afghanistan and Iran have seen a massive surge in terrorism.

Baluchistan's insurgency was considered a low level insurgency due to a separatist movement in past years that was organized by RAW and other militants, but it has also scaled and have developed a proper form of terrorist organization.

Reasons for revival of Militancy.

⇒ Involvement of India :

India

Pakistan's neighbour on the east has been funding cron

border terrorism in Pakistan through Afghanistan. In Balochistan and Indian navy officer was also arrested named as Kalbhoshan Yadav who testified how India RAW is operating in Balochistan to support terrorism.

BLA a terrorist group not a separatist:

On contrary BLA has been designated a terrorist organization by USA. This is annulled any idea of considering BLA a separatist movement.

Instability in Afghanistan

The ~~aff~~ stability in Afghanistan has direct impacts on security of Pakistan. TLP that has been operating in KP has roots in Afghanistan. Afghan government weak since and weak infrastructure has caused a massive

Surge in terrorist attacks in KP
and Balochistan.

Weak Infrastructure in KP and Balochistan:

KP and Balochistan's border areas have a weak infrastructure where there is no modern roads or modern means of communication. The situation of Law and order remains also weak in these provinces. Local governments and database system in Balochistan are weak that disrupts any chances of timely and preemptive action against terrorism.

Fragile Law and Order.

DG Ispr in a recent press brief claimed that ~~the~~ Army had sanitized and cleared the KP from terrorism. It was duty of police and other law and order institutions to sustain the peaceful environment achieved. This statement

Implied that policing and local security infrastructure needs to be improved and invested upon because it is the frontline armour of the province against ~~infiltrating terrorism~~ infiltrating terrorism.

Propaganda inflicting antinational sentiments among youth.

⇒ In past few years the BLA through power of propaganda and aid from India has convinced youth to fight against the state. The notion that is delivered to youth is that you are being oppressed and your rights will be given to you when you will hold weapon against the state. Such propaganda is also being used in ~~to~~ KP that Army from Punjab is killing your locals, hold ~~on~~ weapons against them and fight them.

Recommendations To Curtail militancy:

⇒ Immediate reforms related to Law and Order

Law and Order in a province is the basic security shield of individuals against any adversary. Police ~~and~~ ~~need~~ ~~so~~ needs to be made more effective and stronger as it has been seen in last few months that police station in Bannu and other parts of KP have been attacked.

⇒ Addressing Regional Players and UN

Regional Players like Russia, China and Iran ^{are} needed to be addressed on the situation of how Indian sponsored terrorism is being harming Pakistan. UN also needs to be addressed in this regard for ~~global~~ cooperation and immediate action.

Neutralizing the threat through Force.

Integrated operations of security forces are needed in the sensitive locations to neutralize any threats. Maximum care should be taken for civilian damage control.

Addressing grievances of Pakhtoons and Baloch.

(National Integration)

Government should take effective measures to address the grievances either they are political, cultural or economical. NFC award should be revised with a greater share of the provinces so that national integration should be achieved and a collective action against terrorism could be taken.

**Eradicating terror financing ~~and~~
through secure transactional
channels.**

Terror financing in balochistan is another major issue now is continuously funding BLA through online transaction channels these channels need to be monitored and strict measure should be taken through FIA and FBR to monitor terror financing.

⇒ "A comprehensive 'provincial policy' integrated with national policy to take steps to reduce terrorism"

The office of CM KP announced that it is against operations specific military operations in KP. It shows that there is an absence of integration of national policy and provincial policy. The institutions and provinces need to cooperate and produce a joint mechanism to eradicate terrorism.