

ideological differences, and regional alignments. During the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), Pakistan, with US and Saudi support, played a central role in supporting Afghan mujahideen against the Soviet Union. This period established Pakistan's strategic influence in Kabul and deepened its interest in Afghan politics. ~~B~~

b- 1990s Era

In 1990s, Pakistan was one of the few countries to recognize the Taliban regime (1996-2001), seeing it as a stabilizing force in Afghanistan. However, the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent US-led intervention against the Taliban in 2001 strained relations, as Pakistan was forced to balance its cooperation with United States against its historical ties with the Taliban.

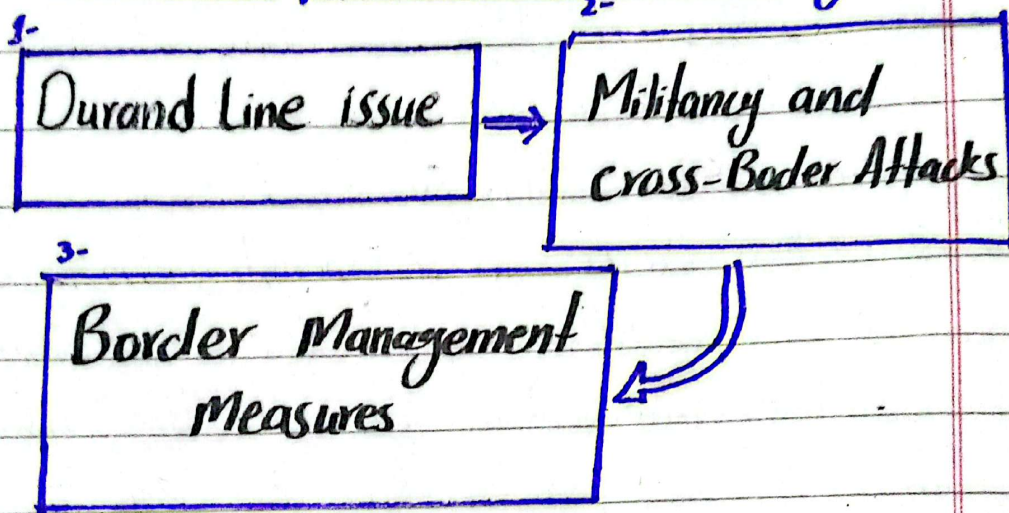
c- Post-2001 Era

The post-2001 era saw Pakistan attempting to influence Afghanistan's political landscape while combating

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Spillover terrorism including attacks by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), cross-border militancy, refugee inflows and disputes over the Durand Line dominated the bilateral agenda. This historical trajectory sets the stage for understanding post-2021 dynamics under the Taliban's return.

c. Border Security: The Durand Line Dispute and Militancy



1- The Durand Line Issue

The Durand line, stretching over 2,670 km, has always been a flashpoint. Afghanistan refuses to recognize it formally, claiming parts of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

and Balochistan as Pakistan Pashtun homeland.

2. Militancy and Cross-Border Attacks

Since the Taliban's return, Pakistan accuses the Taliban of harboring ~~The~~ Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants who conduct attacks inside Pakistan. Conversely, Afghanistan denies these allegations, claiming no hostile groups operate from its territory.

3. Border Management Issue

Pakistan has fortified the border with fencing, surveillance, and rapid reaction forces. Despite these measures, cross-border skirmishes continue. For example, in October 2025, ~~Reuters~~ Reuters reported that fighting forced temporary closure of Torkham and Chaman crossings, disrupting trade and movement. As Pakistan's National Security Adviser said in 2024:

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"Security along Pakistan-Afghanistan border is not merely a bilateral matter of regional peace and stability."

D. Afghan Refugees: Humanitarian

Challenges and Diplomatic Tensions

1- Surge in Refugees Post-2021

The Taliban's return triggered renewed migration flows. By mid-2023 over 600,000 new Afghan refugees had entered Pakistan, adding to millions already residing there from previous conflicts.

2- Pakistan's Policy on Refugees

Pakistan has oscillated between temporary accommodation and mass deportation. From 2023-2024, 1.4 million Afghan refugees whose Proof of Registration (PoR) cards had expired

were stated for deportation. Security and economic concerns drove these actions, though the UNHCR warned of humanitarian repercussions.

3- Diplomatic Frictions

Afghanistan criticized Pakistan's approach, while the international community, including UNHCR, urged phased, voluntary returns.

As UNHCR spokesman Boris Cheshirkov said in 2023:

"The forced return of Afghan refugees could destabilize Afghanistan further and create a humanitarian crisis."

Regional Realignment: Shifting Alliances and Strategic Calculation

1- India's Engagement with Taliban

India has restored diplomatic and development ties with Kabul, providing humanitarian aid and investing in infrastructure projects. This is viewed

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as a strategic counterbalance to Pakistan.

2. China's Strategic Interests

China maintains close ties with both Pakistan and Afghanistan to ensure the stability of its Belt and Road initiative projects.

3. U.S. Involvement

The United States has maintained a limited diplomatic presence, focusing on counterterrorism and humanitarian aid, signaling that Afghanistan remains strategically important. As Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said in 2022:

"Pakistan must engage Afghanistan diplomatically while ensuring that its national security is not compromised by regional rivalries."

F. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

1. Opportunities for Cooperation

- 1- There should be joint border management and intelligence sharing.
- 2- Proper trade facilitations through official crossing.
- 3- Coordinated counterterrorism initiatives.

2. Potential Challenges

- 1- Continuation of TTP militancy from Afghan soil.
- 2- Refugee crises and mass deportations.
- 3- Regional rivalry pressures, especially with India and other actors.

6. Conclusion

The post-2021 Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship is shaped by historical legacies, security concerns, humanitarian challenges and regional power dynamics.

Border security, refugee flows, and shifting alliances have tested bilateral trust. Without proactive diplomatic and

cooperation, tensions may persist. Both nations, along with regional stakeholders must prioritize dialogue, conflict resolution and humanitarian cooperation to ensure stability in South Asia. As former Pakistani diplomat ~~Atta~~ Abdul Basit, said in 2023:

"Peace and stability on both sides of the border are not only in the interest of Pakistan and Afghanistan but also crucial for the region as a whole."

QNo:1

Climate Change vs. Pakistan's Environmental-Hazardous Development

Ans

Introduction

Pakistan is recognized as one of the Vulnerable 20 (V20) countries, a group of nations most at risk from climate change. Ranked consistently among the world's most

Climate-vulnerable countries Pakistan faces recurrent floods, droughts, heatwaves, and glacial melt. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2022, Pakistan was the 8th most affected country globally in terms of climate-induced disasters.

The key debate revolves around whether Pakistan's vulnerability is primarily due to external climate change factors, or whether internal environment-hazardous development policies exacerbate the risk. Both factors interact, but a careful analysis suggests that Pakistan's development model significantly amplifies its climate vulnerability.

Climate Challenge

A- Climate Change: An External sector

- 1- Global Warming and Glacial Melt
- 2- Extreme Weather Events
- 3- Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Vulnerability.

1- Global Warming and Glacial Melt

Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability is significantly influenced by global warming, leading to the accelerated retreat of glaciers in the Himalayan Karakoram-Hindu Kush (HKH) mountain range. These glaciers feed the Indus River, which is vital for Pakistan's agricultural and water supply. The retreat of these glacial threatens the river's flow, leading to reduced water availability during dry seasons and increased flooding during monsoon periods.

2- Extreme Weather Events

Pakistan has witnessed record-breaking heatwaves (June 2022, up to 51°C in Sindh) and unprecedented floods (2022 monsoon floods displaced over 33 million people). The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that South Asia is a climate hotspot, where

small changes in rainfall and temperature have changes in rainfall and temperature have amplified socio-economic impacts.

3- Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Vulnerability

Coastal regions like Karachi and Thatta are threatened by sea-level rise, leading to saline intrusion, coastal erosion, and loss of livelihood for millions of fishermen. According to UNDP Pakistan, 2022:

"Climate change is a reality; its impact are no longer a future risk but a present disaster for countries like Pakistan."

B- Pakistan's Environmental-Hazardous Development Model

- 1- Deforestation and Land Management
- 2- Unplanned Urbanization
- 3- Industrial Pollution and Unsustainable Agriculture
- 4- Poor water and Irrigation Management

1- Deforestation and land Management

Pakistan's forest cover is only 5%, one of the lowest in South Asia.

Deforestation for timber, agriculture, and urban expansion reduces soil retention, increases landslides, and magnifies flood risk.

2- Unplanned Urbanization

Cities like Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad suffer from rapid, unplanned urban growth, poor drainage, and encroachment on natural wetlands.

During monsoon floods, these unplanned settlements exacerbate waterlogging and urban disasters.

3- Industrial Pollution and Unsustainable Agriculture

Heavy reliance on fossil fuels, coal-based energy, and chemical-intensive agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation. Air pollution in urban centers, such as

Lahore and Faisalabad, routinely exceeds World Health Organization (WHO) Safety Limits.

4- Poor Water and Irrigation Management

Pakistan's water mismanagement, including overuse of rivers, poor dam maintenance, and inefficient irrigation, amplifies droughts and floods. The Indus Water Commission notes that sedimentation and mismanagement reduce flood resilience. As Prof. Pervez Hoodbhoy, said in 2022:

"Climate hazards alone do not kill people; human mismanagement and poor planning magnify disasters."

c- V20 Membership: A Reflection of both Factors

Pakistan's inclusion in V20 is a result of both global climate stressors and internal developmental practices. While external climate change drives floods,

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heatwaves, and glacial melts, poor governance, deforestation, urban sprawl, and industrial pollution amplify Pakistan's exposure and reduce resilience.

Example The 2022 floods, which affected 33 million people and caused \$30 billion in damages, were intensified by deforestation in upper catchments, river encroachments and inadequate drainage system in cities.

Thus Pakistan's environmental-hazardous development model is a key multiplier of climate risk, making it disproportionately vulnerable.

D. Strategies to Mitigate Environmental risks and Enhance Resilience

- 1- Strengthen Climate Governance
- 2- Sustainable Land and Water Management
- 3- Urban Planning and Infrastructure Resilience
- 4- Transition to low-carbon Development
- 5- Community-Based Adaptation

1- Strengthen Climate Governance

- 1- Integrate climate adaptation into national and provincial development plans.
- 2- Establish early warning systems for floods, heatwaves, and droughts.
- 3- Enhance institutional capacity for disaster response and risk management.

2- Sustainable Land and Water Management

Reforestation programs e.g. 10 billions

Tree Tsunami must be expended.

Protect wetlands and river catchments to reduce floods vulnerability.

Improve irrigation efficiency and water storage to manage droughts.

3- Urban Planning and Infrastructure Resilience

- 1- Enforce zoning regulations to prevent encroachment on floodplains.
- 2- Upgrade drainage and sewerage systems in major cities.
- 3- promote climate-resilient housing and infrastructure.

4- Transition to low-carbon Development

Increase renewable energy share in electricity generation.

Promote sustainable agriculture and reduce chemical inputs.

Implement strict industrial pollution controls and emission monitoring.

5- Community-Based Adaptation

Educate communities on climate risk management.

Promote local participation in disaster preparedness.

Use social safety nets to reduce vulnerability of marginalized groups.

E- Conclusion

Pakistan's status as V20 country is the result of both climate change and its environmentally hazardous development model. While global climate change is an external reality beyond Pakistan's control, its unsustainable land use, deforestation, unplanned urbanization, and pollution amplify the disaster risk. To reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience, Pakistan must adopt integrated climate-smart development strategies, strengthen governance, invest in adaptation infrastructure, and promote low-carbon growth. As UNDP Pakistan stated in 2023:

"Pakistan can survive the climate crisis, but only if it stops amplifying its hazards through mismanagement and embraces sustainable development as a national priority."