

Pakistan Affairs

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ANSWER NO: 09

Pakistan Afghanistan Relations in the Post-2021 period:

Introduction:

Pakistan has always supported Afghanistan but these relations strained with Afghanistan opposition in United Nations, then at different periods its irredentist claims. However Pakistan provided its support in times of natural disasters, insurgencies or even foreign irasions. In 2021, US withdrew from Afghanistan, and Taliban took over the throne of Kabul. The Taliban government was supported in its initial years but a surge in militancy has observed after their take over which shattered the hopes of peaceful coexistence. The Afghan government provided its territory to militant groups as a shelter and launching pad to be used against Pakistan. Pakistan opposes these moves and demands the strict actions against militants perpetrating violence on its soil. But Afghan government preferred to collaborate with non-state actors. It is because the situation worsened and leads to border skirmishes and even exchange of violence between them. Border security remains the utmost concern for Pakistan's officials who thus took the bold decision of returning of Afghan refugees as they have a stable government in their home country now. A recent press conference by Afghan foreign minister at New Delhi against Pakistan highlighted that, the regional geopolitics have been changed.

1) A surge in militancy:

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations in post-2021 is mainly driven by security concerns. A surge in militancy on Pakistan's soil perpetrated from Afghanistan territory cannot go unnoticed. The foreign policy chiefly is under way as Pakistan has change its attitude of always helping its neighbour muslim state, but showing resistance and targeting militant groups even beyond the borders, escalating instability.

2) Negotiation and talks are undermined:

Both the governments exchanged several delegations but they ended with no conclusive result or collective agreement. Many Pakistani officials at Kabul failed to convince them at their terms vis-à-vis Afghan representatives no longer look to Islamabad as its Allie. In a recent SCO summit, Islamabad invited Kabul government but they did not join. It is clear that the situation got escalated and both parties are preferring their own terms and conditions.

3) Violent clashes:

In October 2025, both states exchanged violent clashes alongside their borders. Pakistan claimed that it targeted militants on Afghan soil with utmost sensitivity not to damage any civilian infrastructure. However, Kabul retaliated as said, it is a move against its sovereignty.

4) Afghan government inability to Act Against Militants:

The main bone of contention is that Afghanistan Taliban government is unable or unwilling to act against their war-time partners, now militants spreading violence in the region. They refused to cooperate in this regard.

5) Irresponsible behaviour leading to instability in the region:

The shelter of non-state actors (of violent nature), alongside their military support, as well as tech weaponry was provided to them by Afghan government is an irresponsible behaviour.

When repressive and authoritarian regimes sees their neighbour states as an opportunity to exploit, will definitely results into instability and fierce resistance.

6) India's support for Afghan Taliban: A tactic to revenge May, 2025 loss

India faced a decisive defeat in its aggression against Pakistan. They are supporting Afghanistan against Pakistan now to equal their count. A regional bullying tactics resulted into violent south Asia.

7) Strained Relations:

The aftermath in 2021 is not as much optimistic as the relations have been strained. However Doha Peace talks may bring peace and stability to the region. But a tensions will remain until solution.

Border Security:

1) Fencing and strict enforcement of sealing Durand Line (Now International Border):

Pakistan has strict management and strong border fencing in the last decade. Any illegal crossing or border violation is contained rather than ignore now.

2) Violations of Territorial Integrity:

The Kabul government and other militant groups have several times violated the territorial integrity which was resisted and contained. The situation is mainly guided by the presence of militants alongside the border region who are violating international law.

Refugee Issues:

1) The repatriation of Afghan Refugees:

The 3 million refugees repatriation by Pakistan government has deteriorated the relations. Afghan government clearly opposes this decision. However it was an outcome of tight diplomatic action against Pakistan which is unwilling to cooperate on security issues.

2) A burden which no one in the region is willing to share:

No state in South Asia is willing to share the burden of refugees. Even the home country of Afghanistan, with a stable government struggles to outsource this responsibility.

Regional Alignments:

1) China-Pakistan-Afghanistan (CPEC Nexus)

CPEC was extended in post-2021, China offered Pakistan to extend cooperation towards Afghanistan, and merge it in the regional trade.

2) India limited but cautious interactions with Kabul:

India has limited engagements with Afghanistan. But this new regional alignment is recalibrating the bilateral ties of Pak-Afghan relations.

3) US dis-engagement and Pakistan's balancing role:

US pursued a policy of dis-engagement after -2021 after Afghanistan with drawal. But Pakistan exists in the region who is balancing relations with Taliban and the West.

Conclusion:

A recent strained relations are more influencing bilateral relations. However with talks and negotiation, peace could be restored in South Asia.

Answer No: 02

Evolution of Pakistan's Political system and culture after 1999:

Since its inception, Pakistan oscillated between military rule and civilian democracy. A defining turn came into its history when General Pervez Musharraf made a move of coup causing rupture in its democratic progression. However his era and its aftermath witnessed massive constitutional developments which shaped the structure and essence of democracy in Pakistan. Through alternating phases of military rule, judicial activism and constitutional restoration.

1) Nawaz Sharif's Second term (1998-1999)

During his government, civil-military tensions emerged and escalated to a level when Musharraf's justified his coup ~~as~~ under "doctrine of necessity". Constitution was suspended, political parties were curbed and exiled, NAB created to persecute them and a semi-authoritarian regime started.

2) Musharraf's Era (1999-2007)

In 2002 referendum, Musharraf was elected as president and legal framework order reshaped constitutional order. The 17th Amendment justified Musharraf's presidency and enhanced his powers. At president while powers were devolved to local bodies.

3) PPP-led Government (2008-2013)

Democratic restoration is a marked event of this era, when PPP formed its government after 2008 elections. The most celebrated 18th Amendment restored parliamentary supremacy, removed the 58(2)(b), reduced presidential powers, strengthened provincial autonomy with NFC Award 2009.

4) Institutional Consolidation and Political Polarisation (2013-2018):

PML-N government prioritises economic focus amid civil-military tensions. Panama Papers activated judicial activism.

5) Hybrid Democracy and Political Volatility (2018-2022)

The PTI rose to power with tacit support from military - "hybrid regime." The tools of accountability were utilised as political tools against opponents. When civil-military relations strained in 2021 - it ended.

6) Coalition Government and Democratic Strain (2022-2025)

PDM government had restored order but political fragmentation was seen. Attempts were done of electoral reforms, judicial accountability to counter its assertive role. but a rise in populism shattered it.

POLITICAL CULTURE:

- ① Rise of Populism and Personality - Driven Politics: The politics is ~~not~~ no more for the upholdment of constitution or rule of law, political structural restoration happened but personality cult and principled politics became past history.
- ② Weak institutionalisation of Parties - Dynastic control (PPP (PML-N)). Despite promises of grass-root level democracy in Pakistan and several attempts, power remains in its powerful corridors of elites and strictly confined to some families.
- ③ Polarisation and erosion of Parliamentary Decorum: parties are more preferable than parliament today. politicians are more interested in their individual gains rather than parliamentary supremacy.
- ④ Civil-military imbalanced normalised: The people of Pakistan, along with their governing authorities believes in their own rule thru establishment (civil + military) while oppose it when ousted from power.

Constitutional Developments and their Impact

① LFO (2002):

Legal Framework Order introduced semi-presidential military rule with masked political government. It strengthened National Security Council (NSC) institutionalising military rule.

② 17th Amendment (2003):

This amendment justified Musharraf's presidency and his rule along with his constitutional changes, reactivating 58(2)(b); weakened the parliamentary system essence in Pakistan.

③ 18th Amendment (2010):

It restored democratic system (parliamentary sovereignty) in Pakistan by abolishing concurrent list, turning Pakistan into a true federal republic.

④ 19th Amendment (2011):

A balance between executive and judiciary was maintained; adjusted judicial appointments mechanism.

⑤ 20th Amendment (2025):

The Judicial reforms are very much famous of this development. However it encompasses several ECP, structural changes decided in the Charter of Democracy by ruling parties.

Governance and Democratic Continuity:

① Strengthened provincial autonomy improved local accountability. This era has partial success as granted provincial autonomy along with local administration induction.

② Judiciary and ECP reforms enhanced procedural democracy. Several reforms had been introduced in Pakistan to ensure democratic continuity with institutional balance.

③ Electoral Continuity from 2008-2024 reflects resilience despite crises: Pakistan has achieved somehow electoral continuity. Never in its history, it has held three to four elections consistently but in these 20 years, it has been done.

④ Bureaucratic politicisation and governance paralysis due to populist governments: The parties prioritised system in accordance to its own interest, managing structure to reconfigure it along party lines which have caused serious bureaucratic repercussions.

Scholarly Perspectives:

① Dr. Hassan Askar Rizvi: Pakistan's democracy remains procedural, not substantive, due to military tutelage.

② Ayesha Jalal: Political instability rooted in lack of institutional continuity rather than constitutional design. Pakistan reflects a "negotiated equilibrium".

Conclusion:

Pakistan's post-1999 political evolution depicts fragile yet persistent march toward democratic consolidation. Constitutional reforms; especially 18th Amendment strengthened structural democracy but not political culture. True democratic continuity requires institutional autonomy, constitutional sanctity, political maturity and civil-military balance. Without these, Pakistan's democracy risks remaining cyclical rather than continuous.

ANSWER NO: 06

THE ROLE OF THE IDEOLOGY OF PAKISTAN IN NATION-BUILDING

Pakistan emerged as a state rooted in a distinct ideological foundation; the Two-Nation theory. Ideology served as the moral and political justification for independence and later as the framework for nation-building. The ideology of Pakistan has guided the country's identity, governance and social cohesion; however, its interpretation has evolved from a pluralist vision of Muslim nationalism to various religious, political and constitutional narratives shaping Pakistan's nation-building in both constructive and contentious ways.

Historical Background:

- ① The ideology origins is rooted in the Two-Nations theory that Hindus and Muslims are two separate socio-political entities with their distinct cultural values and norms.
- ② Sir Syed Ahmad Khan educational and social awakening provided a base for the intellectual growth of ideology.
- ③ Allama Iqbal's had a spiritual and cultural independence vision for Muslims through self-governing units as expressed in his address at Allahabad (1930).
- ④ Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to execute the aims and mission of ideology in its practical form by making a democratic and inclusive state ensuring justice and equality within an Islamic framework.

IDEOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR NATION-BUILDING (1947-1958)

- ① Need to forge unity among ethnically diverse provinces and linguistic groups.
- ② Use of Islam as a binding and driving force to integrate diverse nationalities.
- ③ Objectives Resolution (1949): constitutional expression of ideological foundation.
- ④ State narratives emphasizing Islamic solidarity and moral regeneration.
- ⑤ weak institutional capacity led to overreliance on ideology for legitimacy.

EVOLUTION OF IDEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS: MAJOR PHASES

① Early Democratic Phase (1947-58)

Jinnah's Pakistan was inclusive and had a civic conception of Islamic democracy. After his demise, a tug of war was initiated between modernists and traditionalists over defining "Islamic state."

② Ayub Khan Era (1958-1969)

A new concept of "modernist Islam" and "Basic Democracies" dominated this era. An attempt was made to separate religion from politics while still used Islam for legitimacy. It is highlighted in the diluted Islamic clauses in the 1962 Constitution.

③ Bhutto Period (1970-77)

This era introduced a new synthesis of "Islamic socialism" by linking social justice with Islamic values. Islamisation of political rhetoric to counter

religious opposition. The 1973 Constitution formalised Islam as the state religion.

(4) Zia-ul-Haq Era (1977-1988)

The Pakistan transformed from mere symbolised ideological state into a more institutionalised Islamic state. As evident in the introduction of Islamic Hudood Laws, Zakat System, and Shariah courts. Ideology was used as an instrument for legitimacy and political consolidation.

(5) Democratic Transition (1988-1999)

The ideological confusion between secular-liberal and religious-political forces came to surface. The rise of ethnic and sectarian divisions started questioning ideological unity. However Islamisation and nationalism coexisted with democratic revival.

(6) Musharraf and the Post-9/11 Era (1999-2008)

The international environment and national choices made Pakistan on a track of "Enlightened Moderation" as a new ideological reinterpretation. For example, a shift toward moderate Islam aligned with global anti-extremism discourse was opted. It was an attempt to rebrand Pakistan's image internationally.

(7) Contemporary Phase (2008-2025)

This era is marked by competing narratives of Islamic identity vs. constitutional democracy. The rise of populist and right-wing religio-political movements had challenged traditional narratives. Youth-led campaigns through digital arena demands transformation into civic-nationalism.

IDEOLOGY IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE:

- ① Political leaders invoking ideology to shape legitimacy and policy.
- ② Shifts from "Islamic democracy" to "security state narrative".
- ③ Media and education promoting state-centric version of ideology.
- ④ Civil society and academia pushing for pluralist society and inclusive reinterpretations.
- ⑤ Ideological narratives reflected in curriculum, literature and national celebrations.

Scholarly Perspectives

- ① Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed: Pakistan's ideological evolution reflects a tension between faith-based nationalism and democratic modernity.
- ② Ekbāl Ahmad: The ideological state project lost coherence when used for political control rather than social justice.

Conclusion:

The ideology of Pakistan has remained both the foundation and fault line of nation-building. Its evolving interpretations reflect changing political, regional and global realities. Sustainable nation-building requires aligning ideology with democratic values, pluralism and constitutionalism. Reconnecting with Jinnah's vision of inclusivity can harmonise faith with modern governance, ensuring ideological coherence and national unity.