

Current Affairs

PART-II

QUES : NO : 2

PAK - AFGHAN RELATIONS

Pakistan - Afghanistan ties have been cyclical-oscillating between cooperation and mistrust. Recent Chinese-mediated talks (Beijing, May 2025) produced gestures of dialogue, but fundamental drivers of tension remain. Major factors of this tension are:-

Major Factors:

1 Security and cross-border militancy:

Islamabad accuses elements in Afghanistan of sheltering groups that attack Pakistan (TTP and other militants), producing cross-border raids and retaliatory strikes. These security concerns are a principal driver of distrust.

2 Territorial and border management issues

Porous Durand line, contested local control and ambivalent border management cause frequent incidents and civilian casualties.

3 External influence and geopolitics

India's reengagement with Kabul and rivalry for influence in Afghanistan exacerbates Pakistan's threat perception; China, meanwhile, seeks stability to protect its investments and has offered mediation.

4 Political - military disconnect

Civilian diplomatic openings often coexist with hardline security responses, producing mixed signals and undermining confidence-building.

Ways to Improve:-

Following are some of the recommendations to improve the relations between both the countries.

1. Institutionalize border mechanisms:

Joint border management centers, hotlines between field commanders, and agreed SOPs for cross-border incidents to prevent escalation.

2. Security cooperation with verification safeguards:

An agreed framework for action against trans-border militant sanctuaries with third-party observers (e.g. China or a mutually acceptable regional monitor) to lower mistrust.

3. Economic and development incentives

Create small cross-border economic zones and trade facilitation to build local stakeholders in peace (reducing militant recruitment incentives)

4. Multilateral engagement:

Involve regional stakeholders (China, Iran, Central Asian states) to diffuse zero-sum perceptions and offer guarantees for any security cooperation

5. Sustained diplomacy:

Continuous high level engagement rather than episodic mediation; parliamentary and civil society dialogues to build wider buy-in.

Conclusion:

Short term confidence measures (hotlines, operational SOPs) plus medium-term economic integration and multi-lateral guarantees are the realistic path to durable de-escalation.

Ques: No. 3:

Formation of New Provinces
in Pakistan

Debates over new provinces in Pakistan surface periodically as groups seek administrative autonomy, resource control, or political recognition. While provincial recognition can improve governance and representation, it is politically sensitive and constitutionally complex.

Hurdles:-

1 Constitutional and legal complexity:

Article 239 and amendment procedures require wide parliamentary consent and provincial consultation, the process is cumbersome and politically fraught.

2 Ethnic/linguistic cleavages

New provinces can energize identity politics; competing claims (e.g. Balochistan, Southern Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) risk inter-group tensions.

3 Resource distribution and fiscal viability:

New provincial borders change resource allocation (hydrocarbon rents, fiscal transfers); poorer provinces fear loss of revenue or administrative capacity.

4 Administrative capacity and governance:-

Creating a province requires institutions, human resources, and public services, hastily formed provinces may lack capacity.

5 Political manipulation:

Ruling parties may use reorganization to manipulate power or placate vote banks, eroding public trust.

Recommendations:

1. Clear Legal roadmap:

legislate transparent criteria (population, contiguity, administrative viability, economic sustainability) and a stepwise procedure (feasibility studies, provincial referendums, parliamentary votes)

2. Independent feasibility assessment:

Neutral commissions should assess fiscal viability governance needs, and conflict risks before any decision

3. Phased devolution and capacity building:-

If new units are approved, provide transitional federal funds and capacity building programs for institutions, civil service and justice systems.

4 Equitable resource sharing formula:-

Update fiscal federalism rules to ensure fair transfers and avoid creating unviable provinces ; include dispute-resolution mechanisms.

5 Public consultation and safeguards:

local referenda, minority protections and guarantees for interprovincial infrastructure projects to avoid marginalization.

Conclusion:

Province formation should be treated as a policy of institutional reform - guided by objective criteria and insulated from short-term partisan gains - to improve governance rather than exacerbate divisions.

Ques: NO: 7:

Pakistan balance in
Relations with US and
China

Pakistan's foreign policy has long involved balancing great-power relations. Recent renewed engagement with the U.S. alongside a deep strategic partnership with China requires careful hedging to preserve strategic autonomy and economic stability.

Options and policy prescriptions

1. Hedging, not choosing
maintain core strategic partnership with China (CPEC, defense cooperation) while accepting tactical cooperation with the U.S. on counterterrorism, economic support, and regional issues; avoid exclusive alignments.
2. Issue-by-issue diplomacy:
compartmentalize relations:
cooperate with China on defense and infrastructure while engaging the U.S. on trade, investment, counterterrorism, and institutional reforms.
3. Economic diversification:
Reduce vulnerability by diversifying trade and investment partners (Middle East, Central Asia, EU) so external pressure

don't force zero-sum choices.

4. Transparency with the partners:

Reassure China that tactical U.S. engagement is transactional and does not threaten the strategic core; similarly reassure Washington that Pakistan's China tie is not aimed against U.S. interests.

5. Strengthen domestic institutions:

Economic reforms and governance improvement make Pakistan a more reliable partner to all sides and reduce leverage that external powers can wield.

Conclusion:

Pakistan's best strategy is calibrated hedging - preserve strategic depth with China while engaging the U.S. pragmatically on mutual interests, complemented by economic diversification and domestic reform to minimize coercive vulnerabilities.

QUES: NO: 4

Revival of Militancy in K.P
and Baluchistan

After relative decline following major operations, militancy has resurged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan driven by complex local and regional drivers. Data through 2023-2025 show rising incidents in both provinces.

Reasons:

1. Political instability and governance gaps

Political fragmentation at local levels, weak service delivery, and absence of legitimate dispute-resolution increase grievances that militants exploit.

2. Economic marginalization and unemployment

Especially in Balochistan, perceptions of resource extraction without local benefit (LPEC tensions) fuel separatist narratives. KP's displaced populations and limited livelihoods aid recruitment.

3. Regional spillovers and sanctuary networks:

Cross-border dynamics (Afghanistan) and competition among militant groups (TTP, IS-KP, Baloch factions) sustain operations and tactical innovation.

4. Factionalization and criminal linkages

Militant groups fragment into smaller, more violent cells or combine with organized crime.

(smuggling, narcotics), complicating counter insurgency.

5 Intelligence and political-military friction:

Lapses in community intelligence, distrust between local police and security forces and uneven application of justice degrade the counter-terrorism posture.

Recommendations:-

1 Integrated civil-security approach
combine targeted operations with police modernization, community policing, and judicial reforms to ensure arrests to lead to prosecution.

2 Economic inclusion and targeted development
focused job programs, revenue sharing for resource projects and local procurement clauses for CPEC projects in Balochistan.

3 Border management and regional diplomacy:-

Constructive engagement with Afghanistan to deny sanctuaries confidence-building mechanisms and intelligence sharing.

4 Counter narrative rehabilitation

Scale up counter-radicalization in schools, madrasas, and through religious leaders, expand credible deradicalization and reintegration programs.

5 Strengthen local governance..

devolve service delivery to district/tehsil level with accountability mechanisms so citizen see state benefits

Conclusion:-

Military action alone is insufficient, durable reduction in militancy requires political inclusion, economic opportunity, regional cooperation, and justice-sector reform.
