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Batch # ISB OB 83

Mock Exams

"Pakistan Affairs"

Q No. 2

Evaluation of Pakistan's political System and Culture after 1999

Introduction:

In the last 26 years, Pakistan politics and its culture has continue to evolve in which Pakistan politics has been marked by a cyclical powers struggle between Civilian governments and the military establishments, with the military often wielding significant behind-the scenes influence even during civilian rule. The period began with a military coup under

General Pervez Musharraf in 1999, which transitioned to a "hybrid" governments where civilian institutions functioned within a framework controlled by the military. The 18 Amendment in 2009 was a landmark shift towards greater civilian supremacy and parliamentary powers, but the military's influence has remained a consistent factor, impacting elections and political stability through various means, including interference and a support for specific politicians, like Imran Khan.

Pakistani culture showing a blend of traditional values and modern changes influenced by technology, globalization and shifts in social attitudes, particularly regarding women's roles, while remaining deeply rooted in family, religion and diverse ethnic influences.

Key Characteristics of Pakistani politics over the last 26 years

Pakistan has experienced periods of military rule, though the most recent one ended in 2008, as noted by the BTI 2024 report. Despite the return to democracy, the military continues to hold significant power, particularly in key policy areas like security and foreign affairs.

The country has faced persistent political instability, driven by factors like corruption, nepotism and a lack of accountability. Weak governance structures and institutions have struggled to address these issues effectively.

A major challenge has been economic instability, including a high debt burden, inflation and food and energy crises,

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as discussed in this Bundesministerium article. The political situation has exacerbated these issues, leading to further economic slowdown and reduced investment.

The political landscape is highly polarized, with political parties often disagreeing on national security and other crucial issues, according to this NDU Journal article. This lack of consensus has hindered policy-making and contributed to ongoing political turmoil.

Following the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, there has been an increase in terrorist activity within Pakistan, particularly from groups like the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), as noted by the BTI 2024 report.

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Younger voters have been drawn to parties like the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), viewing them as an alternative to traditional political dynasties, notes ~~as~~ a study in PubMed Central. However, even new parties have faced ~~sign~~ significant challenges.

Evolution of Pakistani Culture over last 26 years

Urban sprawl and rapid development have led to the destruction of historical sites and architectural landmarks. And insufficient government funding for heritage sites and political instability have hindered the preservation of important cultural and historical landmarks.

Some analysts suggest that cultural confusion and extremism stem from misinterpretations of religious principles, leading to push for or against certain cultural practices.

Key developments include the rise of a more middle class liberal middle class, the impact of globalization and western influences, and a growing urban population can lead to tension between tradition and modernity.

Constitutional Development in Last 26 Years

In the last 26 years, Constitutional developments have shaped democratic continuity and governance through reforms that aim to strengthen democratic institutions and address political instability, ~~the~~ though some amendments have also sparked controversy regarding judicial independence and the separation of powers. Examples include Pakistan's 18th Amendment, which aimed to shift power back to government the parliament, and the 26th Amendment, which sought to reform judicial appointments while also leading to debates about the government's influence on the judiciary. Additionally, the establishments of various Rights Commissions and the signing of international human rights treaties have created a legal framework, even as implementation continues to be a challenge.

Q No-5

Changing Dynamics of Pakistan-US relationship

Introduction:

The Pakistan-US relationship is showing signs of improvement after the new governments, with increased high level engagement, though analysts caution it remains transactional and that military cooperation is more stable than political ties. Following a recent visit by Pakistan's Prime Minister and Army Chief to the White House, there's a sense of thawing in relations, with a focus on broadening the partnership beyond security and addressing economic issues. The US has shown renewed interest in engaging with Pakistan, contrasting with the previous low-level equilibrium.

Strategic readignment and global Power Shift

The U.S. views Pakistan's relationship with China as a challenge to its strategy of containing China, but also sees opportunities for cooperation. Pakistan's significant deposits of critical minerals like copper and gold at Reko Diu are attracting U.S. interest as Washington seeks to secure supply chains and counter potential Chinese control over these resources.

Despite the U.S. withdrawal from ~~the~~ Afghanistan, counterterrorism remains a key area of cooperation, with Pakistan's continued efforts receiving positive signals from Washington.

The relationship is increasingly focus on economic partnerships, including U.S. foreign direct investment, trade agreements and potential U.S. involvement in developing Pakistan's

mineral wealth. And Military ties remain a stable and consistent aspect of the relationship, evidenced by ongoing joint exercises and advisory roles.

Changing dynamics and future outlook

The relationship is moving towards a more cooperative model, evidenced by recent high-level visits and talks, a stark contrast to the previous cycle of estrangement and "do more" demands. Pakistan is strategically navigating its relationship with both the U.S. and China, signaling its openness to commercial partnerships with both sides regarding its mineral resources. The U.S. still views Pakistan as a crucial player in regional stability, particularly in the context of Afghanistan and the broader Indo-Pacific region. The future trajectory of the

relationship will be shaped by four main factors:

- (i) Pakistan relationship with China
- (ii) U.S. relationship with India
- (iii) The evolving situation in Afghanistan.
- (iv) Pakistan's domestic political and economic stability

Transactional Cooperation between Pakistan and U.S.

Pakistan and US relations are currently experiencing a "re-awakening" with renewed cooperation, focusing on counterterrorism, strategic opportunities and economic ties. Key areas of recent focus include the potential for US investment in Pakistan's critical minerals and technology, a shift towards a more transactional relationship, and high level discussions on regional issues like Afghanistan. While there are challenges, high-level dialogues are frequent and both countries see

Strategic benefits in working to gather, despite differing goals in the Indo-Pacific. ~~region~~.

The transactional nature of the new Pakistan-US relationship is also apparent. At a recent international minerals Conference in Islamabad, the US sent three separate delegations — from the White House, the State Department and the Department of Commerce — underscoring strategic importance Washington now attaches to Pakistan's untapped natural resources.

According to Mr Kugelman, "Pakistan has managed to present itself as well-positioned partner to deliver on the issues that interest the administration the most — crypto, critical minerals and cooperation to track down terrorist that threaten the US"

But, as he points out, Pakistan's critical

minerals are mostly found in highly insecure areas. "This administration could well lose interest and move on. It's nothing if not fickle".

Mr Nawaz, meanwhile, says that Pakistan "will have to be creative about how it brings its \$3 billion surplus to zero", perhaps by buying US technology and services or offering access to rare earth minerals in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan.

"The question is how it will finance those investments without upsetting China or Iran," he notes

Conclusion:

In Summary, the relationship is evolving, marked by both cooperative and strategic alignments driven by shared interest in counterterrorism and economics, particularly in critical minerals. However, it remains a complex dynamic with underlying strategic competition and transactional elements at play.

