

Question #04:

Analyze the trajectory of Pakistan-Afghanistan --- ties?

Answer #04:

i) Introduction:

After the return of Taliban's power in Afghanistan in August 2021, Pakistan and Afghanistan relations have experienced both the period of cooperation and escalating tensions. The trajectory shows a complicated mix of safety issues, changes in world politics and the diplomatic approach towards each other.

Pakistan initially viewed Taliban's takeover an opportunity to solidify its influence over Afghanistan. Pakistan facilitated peace talks between the Taliban and Tehrik-i-Taliban in 2022 ~~and~~ aiming to address cross-border militancy. However by 2023 the relations become worst. Pakistan accused Taliban for supporting TTP and cross border militancy. Afghanistan soil was continuously used against Pakistan. The attack on Jaffer express in 2025, was handled from Afghanistan. Same as the case of terrorist attacks in Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa, mostly on security personals. The reports

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of intelligence agencies marked these activities handled from Afghanistan. Pakistan conducted airstrikes targeting TTP leaders in Kabul. On the other hand Afghan forces target Pakistan in multiple places in Durand line. Which escalated tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

2) Role of border security:-

Pakistan and Afghanistan share 2640 Km long border called Durand Line. It passes ^{nearby} through Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa and Balochistan. Afghanistan is often declining the border and consider it a flaw in past, due to which it not only made hurdles in fencing but did attack on forces points on Durand line. In the late December 2024 intense fight occurred between Afghan and Pakistani forces in Kurram area. Again in February 2025 a dispute rised because of Afghanistan constructing border post at Torkham. Which leded to a clash and Torkham border closure.

In October 2025, the clashes started once again.

On 11, October 2025 Afghan forces launced attacks on Pakistan military posts, resulted

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in significant casualties on both sides. Following this escalation, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to a ceasefire mediated by Turkey and Qatar.

The border security concern affected the bilateral relations, resulting in increasing the risk of future attacks. It also affected the trade between the two countries, as crossings are still closed.

According to Customs Pakistan, due to this closure the trade is losing around 3 million US dollars per day.

3) Refugee Issue and bilateral relation:

Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan Refugees since 1980. The prolonged stay has created social, economic and security challenges for Pakistan.

Pakistan has now initiated large scale deportation of undocumented Afghan refugees.

By mid of 2025 Pakistan has expelled over 8 lac. Afghans, with plan to remove upto three million by the end of this year. This deportation has been criticized by Afghan government which argue that Pakistan is violating the human rights and could lead

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lead to humanitarian crises. On the other hand, mass return of Afghan refugees raised more trouble for the fragile Afghan government. Moreover the Afghan students getting education in Pakistan are also facing problem in the continuation of their Education. Along with this the suppressed women rights in Afghanistan, made it difficult for their independence and rights.

Keeping in view these issues, the returning Afghan refugees become an issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Which is influencing the bilateral relationship badly. The Afghan Taliban government has called for a dignified return of Afghan refugees, emphasizing mutual arrangements rather than forced deportation. International organizations, including UNHCR, have repeatedly urged Pakistan to slow down the process and do it stepwise. While Pakistan argue the security threats linked to militants and cross border attacks as a justification for stricter measure against the Afghan refugees.

3) Influence of Regional Allignment :-

Post 2021 era has witnessed a significant reshaping of regional dynamics surrounding Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Taliban's return in Power, has created both opportunities and challenges for Pakistan.

Initially Pakistan thought to maintain influence over the Taliban government, to counter TTP. However increasing attacks on Pakistani soil by militants operating from Afghan land forced Pakistan to adopt its policy. Pakistan as a key regional part avoid direct confrontation with Taliban to maintain diplomacy.

Influence of Regional Powers:-

China:

China played a mediating role in border disputes and encouraged dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan. China growing economy and strategic presence in both countries make it important for them to maintain regional stability. The CPEC 2.0 is the extension of CPEC through Pakistan to Afghanistan, which is an important part for China to reach western part of Asia. For which peace between Afghanistan and Pakistan

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is necessary.

India:

India have started its relation back with Afghanistan, aiming to gain influence in Afghanistan. In October 2025 India reopened its embassy in Kabul after the visit of Amir Mutaqi to India. This improvement of India with in Afghanistan created strategic competition for Pakistan.

Regional realignments added pressure on Pakistan to manage Afghanistan internal stability while safeguarding its own security. Diplomatic isolation of Taliban limits the scope for Pakistan to achieve strategic objectives such as controlling cross boarder militancy or influencing governance decisions in Kabul.