

QUESTION NO # 02

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations continue to remain tensed even after mediation by china. what do you think are major factors and how could it be improved.

Introduction:

When Afghan-Taliban took over in Afghanistan in 2021, Pakistan was hoping strong bilateral relations with Taliban government. Pakistan tried to maintain friendly relations with Afghanistan because Pakistan cannot afford clashes on two-front borders. However, due to multiple factors relations between both the countries remained fragile and restrained even after mediation by china. The recent escalation at Pak-Afghan border and Pakistan's military strikes in Kabul further deteriorated the already flickering relation. There are multiple reasons for tensed relations between two neighbouring muslim countries which are need to be addressed in order to strengthen and stabilize relations to ensure regional peace and security.

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Major Factors Behind Tensed Relations Between Pakistan and Afghanistan

1-Durand Line and its unacceptance by Afghan government

Durand line was drawn in 1893 on the request of Ameer of Afghanistan. In 1947, Afghanistan denied to accept durand line as border and claim FATA and territory in KPK as part of Afghanistan. Pakistan rejected the claims and made double border. Since then Afghanistan had been ridiculing Pakistan and supporting nationalist in Pakistan. Even after mediation by China and other regional states, this factor remained a prominent reason for tense relations.

2- Myotic policy of Afghan-government to Support TTP

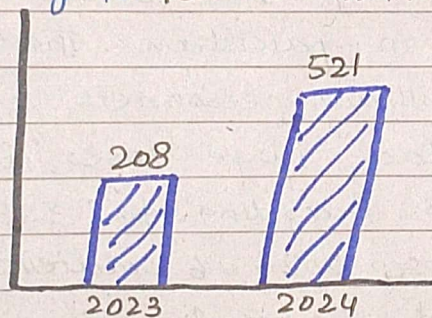
Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has got good relations with Afghan Taliban due to ideological and ethnic reasons. Which made Afghan-Taliban reluctant to go for operations against TTP on Afghan soil hence unable to stop TTP from using Afghan soil as a launching pad for terrorist activities in Pakistan. According to Ambassador Asif

Durani:

"no 'guests' can be surrendered, but no guest use the home of their host to carry out terrorist activities."

3- Revival of militancy in pakistan leading to tense relations

There is a surge in terrorist attacks in pakistan and Afghan government support to militants is considered to be the prime reason of revival of militancy. According to Pakistan institute for peace studies



Terrorist attacks in pakistan

4- Repatriation of Refugees to Afghanistan

Given the lack of cooperation regarding countering TTP, Pakistan decided to send back Afghan regu refugees to Afghanistan. This tactic used by Pakistan to pressurize Afghan government to make them stop supporting militancy in Pakistan.

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5- Afghanistan accuses pakistan of Supporting US against Afghanistan

Afghanistan accuses pakistan of providing air space to US for drone strikes in Kabul. Al Qaid chief Ayman al-zawahiri was killed by US. which is also one of the factor responsible for sour relations between the two neighbouring countries.

6- Military personnels are being targeting by terrorist factions

Terrorist attacks are frequently rising in pakistan. These militants are targeting military personnels and pakistan has face huge loses due to terrorist attacks. According to ISPR:

"On 20 Sep 2024, 6 soldiers martyred in cross fire in merged districts. these attacks were led by TTP."

7- Rising Afghan relations with India:

Pakistan is deeply concerned with the reviving relations between Afghan government and India. This Nexus could be threatening for pakistan's security. India is upgrading office in Afghanistan

to embassy status."

Way forward to Improve Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan

1- Pursue regional diplomacy over Confrontation:

Pak-Afghan relations can be improved through regional diplomacy. By engaging regional stakeholders including China, Russia and other neighbouring countries relation could be improved. Moreover, confidence-building measures such as regular meetings, cultural exchanges, and joint commissions can help rebuild trust.

2- Joint Counter-Terrorism mechanism

Establishing a joint counter-terrorism coordination cell to address threats from TTP, IS-K, and other cross-border militants

3- No - safe- heaven policy should be pursued by Afghanistan

Kabul must ensure that its soil is not used against Pakistan, while Pakistan must stop unilateral strikes that violate sovereignty.

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4- Border management and Surveillance:

Completely and jointly monitor the Durand line using advanced surveillance tools. Introducing electronic border passes, legal trade routes, and customs cooperation to reduce smuggling and illegal crossings.

5- Refugee and Humanitarian Coordination:

Work with UNHCR to manage refugee returns humanely, avoiding sudden deportations. International partners should support vocational and employment initiatives for returnees to reduce social unrest.

6- Regional and multilateral Cooperation:

Use of regional platforms such as SCO and ECO to develop joint strategies against terrorism, narcotics, and border crimes. Encourage Kabul's participation in CPEC and TAPI, turning rivalry into shared development.

Conclusion

Lasting peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan demands

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mutual respect, political maturity, and shared security vision. Dialogue, not confrontation, should define their future relationship. If both nations shift their from security-centric to a development-centric approach, they can transform their turbulent relation into a corridor of cooperation connecting south and central Asia.

QUESTION NO #4

Introduction

In the year 2008, military operation Rah-e-Raast was launched in Malakand division. In 2009, Rah-e-Nijat was launched in South Waziristan. In 2014, series of operations were launched. Mother of all operation, Zarb-e-Azab was also launched in 2014. Rad-ul-Fasad was launched in 2017-18. Resultantly, militancy was apparently defeated in Ex-FATA, Malakand division, and Balochistan as thousands of militants were killed or captured by state. Policy makers thought they have defeated militancy once for all, but unfortunately the defeat was temporary as there has been a dangerous revival of militancy in the war-zones in Pakistan. There are numerous factors that are responsible for the revival of militancy in Pakistan. State needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to eliminate the menace once and for all.

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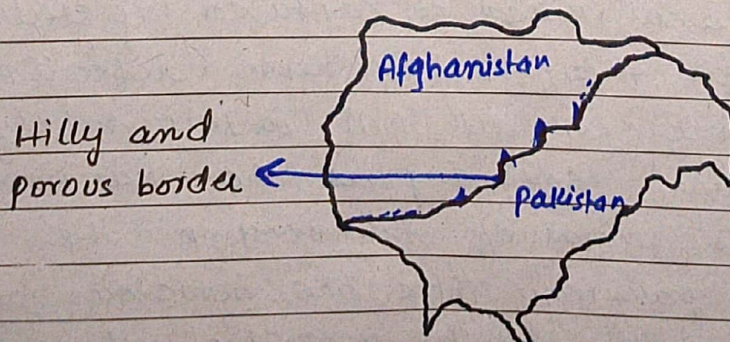
Reasons for revival of militancy in Pakistan

1- Victory of Afghan-Taliban against NATO and US encouraged TTP militants to challenge the writ of state.

Victory of Afghan-Taliban against US and NATO forces act as an encouraging factor for TTP to launch attacks in Pakistan. This served as an ideological motivation and inspiration from Afghan-Taliban to capture Islamabad.

2- Leverage of using bordering areas as a launching pad for militant activities.

Militants use Pak-Afghan border as a launching pad for terrorist activities. Because most of the bordering areas are hilly areas which is porous, militants easily cross border and infiltrate into Pakistan.



Pak-Afghan border
(Durand line)

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3- Ambiguous policies of government

Ambiguous policies of government have been responsible for revival of militancy in Pakistan. Governments keep blaming each other on political forums. The crux of debate is that Pakistan allowed militant fighters back to their homes without any conditions which proved to be a big policy blunder.

4- Close relations of militant groups with Afghan Taliban

Militant groups especially TTP have good relations with Afghan Taliban. Due to which Afghan government is reluctant to launch operations against TTP in Afghan soil. Support of Afghan Taliban encouraging militant groups to terrorize Pakistan.

'TTP and Afghan Taliban are the two faces of same coin'— Dawn

5- Loopholes in policing system

Although police act of 2018 was extended to merged districts, police cannot enter villages and house of people due to which they are unable to implement the writ of state in those areas. Furthermore, police are not

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trained and equipped enough to fight such trained insurgencies. Counter-terrorism authorities as deficient of resources. According to Counter-terrorism department of Baluchistan:
 "They do not have their own building and has to hire a private property."

6- policy of appeasement

Around six peace deals had been failed with TTP. engaging with militant groups at a point of weakness provide them enough time and space to revive and organize again.

National counter terrorism authority has noticed that peace talks contributed to TTP's rise of attacks in Pakistan."

7. Merger of Terrorist factions:

Since 2022, TTP under the leadership of Mufti wali Masud is focusing on uniting different terrorist factions together. Which enhanced the operational capacity and regional outreach of these terrorists.

"Since 2022, around 22 terrorist factions joined TTP; enhancing its operational strength and expanding its geographical outreach."

Recommendations to combat reviving militancy in Pakistan

1. Police Reforms:

Police system must be strengthened. Well-trained and highly equipped police system is necessary to implement the writ of state. Equipping security forces with the latest technology and providing adequate resources to effectively counter the terrorist threat.

2. A grand strategy for de-weaponization of society:

First option should be volunteered dropping and handing over the weapon and such people should be financially benefited. Secondly, search operation. This policy of de-weaponization should be start with merged districts, KP and Balochistan.

3. Intelligence-Based operations

Major operations have huge economic cost and massive social cost. Intelligence operations should be gear-up but should be targeted and precise that do not result in collateral damage.

4- Negotiations at a point of strength

There would always be a group within the insurgent groups who would be tamed and convinced to drop weapons and join the mainstream. This would happen only when they are socio-economically benefited.

5- Diplomatic pressure on Afghanistan to stop supporting TTP

Regional stakeholders should be engaged and Afghan government should be pressurized to not to allow militant groups to use their territory as a launching pad against Pakistan.

Conclusion

Although militancy has been revived dangerously over the few years, Pakistan can combat the situation with strategic steps. Pakistan has faced many repercussions due to rising militancy and frequent attacks. Pakistan must adopt a holistic approach to fight the militants. There is need of policy reforms and socio-economic development to defeat the reviving militancy in Pakistan.