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Date: _____

Current Affairs PART - II

QUESTION # The formation of new provinces is a recurring discourse in Pakistan. Critically evaluate the hurdles and give recommendations.

Answer: Introduction

The debate over the creation of new provinces in Pakistan is a recurrent theme in national politics, resurfacing whenever issues of governance, representation, and equitable resources distribution come to the fore. Rooted in the country's ethnic-linguistic diversity and administrative imbalance, this discourse reflects the tensions between centralization and federalism. Proponents argue that new provinces can ensure better governance, while critics fear it may exacerbate ethnic fragmentation. A critical evaluation reveals that both political and structural impediments hinder this process, requiring a cautious yet pragmatic approach for reform.

Historical and Constitutional Context

Pakistan inherited a centralized administrative framework from colonial rule. The 1973 constitution, under Article 239(4), stipulates that any alteration in provincial boundaries requires a two-third majority in the concerned provincial assembly and parliament, making the process constitutionally stringent. Historically, movements such as Seraiki, Hazara province, and Bahawalpur restoration highlight longstanding regional grievances rooted in perceived

neglect, uneven resources distribution and identity assertion.

Scenario Analysis

The current debate appears sudden and politically driven rather than the result of sustained grassroots mobilisation. Historically, movements of new provinces arose out of long-standing grievances. For example

- The Sirakki belt in South Punjab has consistently argued for a separate province to address neglect in development and political representation.
- The Hazara division in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa saw mass protests in 2010 following the renaming of NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- Urban Sindh, particularly Karachi, has witnessed calls for administrative autonomy due to perceived dominance by rural Sindh.

Today, however, none of these movements are actively mobilised. Instead, Pakistan faces challenges of economic stabilisation, resurgence of terrorism, and strained foreign relations. At such a fragile moment, sudden calls for new provinces risk creating political instability.

Scenario analysis highlights two possible trajectories:

Hasty Political Push

If the issue is politicised, parties may seek to gain electoral advantage by promising

new provinces. This could result in parliamentary deadlock, street agitation, and further polarisation.

Managed Debate:

If the issue is approached with structured dialogue and informed by data, it could open space for constructive reform. But this requires consensus-building, transparent procedures, such as long term roadmap rather than short term political gains.

The absence of organic mass mobilisation, combined with fragile national circumstances, suggests caution in handling this debate.

Hurdles in the formation of New Provinces

1. Political Resistance and Power Struggles

The creation of new provinces often challenges entrenched political interests. Dominant provincial elites, particularly in Punjab and Sindh, oppose division due to fear of losing political clout and fiscal clout. Political parties exploit the issue rhetorically rather than committing to genuine reform, turning it into an electoral slogan rather than a policy agenda.

2. Constitutional and Legal Complexities

Article 239(4) poses a formidable legal hurdle, as gaining a two-thirds majority in both

provincial and national legislatures is politically challenging. The lack of a clear constitutional mechanisms for delimitation administrative restructuring and revenue division further complicates the process.

3 Ethnic and linguistic sensitivities

Pakistan's ethno linguistic diversity makes redrawing boundaries highly sensitive. Any attempt to create new provinces risks igniting ethnic polarization, as seen in the Hazara movement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Siraihi demands in southern Punjab, where identity politics intertwines with regional inequities.

4 Economic and Administrative Constraints

The fiscal capacity of the state is already strained. Creating new provinces requires substantial administrative restructuring, new bureaucracies, and redistribution of National Finance Commission (NFC) shares. In the absence of economic viability studies, new provinces might become additional burdens rather than solutions.

5 Lack of Consensus Institutional Preparedness

The absence of a national consensus, lack of coordination between the Council of Common Interests (CCI) and provincial resistance impedes progress. The debate is largely emotional rather than evidence-based, lacking institutional planning.

or feasibility assessments.

Critical Evaluation

While administrative decentralization could theoretically promote efficiency, Pakistan's experience with devolution under the 18th Amendment and Local Governments Acts demonstrates the mere fragmentation without capacity building leads to bureaucratic inefficiency. Moreover, provincial division might not automatically ensure equitable development, rather, good governance, fiscal transparency, and strong local institutions are prerequisites for success.

Recommendations:

1. Establish an Independent Constitutional Commission:

Form a non-partisan commission to assess demands for new province based on administrative, economic, and demographic feasibility rather than ethnic identity.

2. Strengthen Local Government

Rather than immediately creating new provinces, empower local bodies under Article 140-A to decentralize power effectively and bridge the governance gap at grassroots levels.

Increase content under headings

3. Consensus - Building Mechanism

Engage political parties, provincial assemblies and civil society in structured dialogues through the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to forge a national consensus.

4 Economic Viability Assessment:

Conduct cost-benefit analyses and develop fiscal frameworks to ensure new provinces can sustain administrative costs without burdening the federal exchequer.

5 Constitutional clarity and Reform

Amend Article 239(4) to provide a clear procedural framework for boundary alteration, possibly requiring a referendum in affected areas alongside legislative approval.

6 Address regional Disparities within Existing provinces.

Initiate special development packages for neglected regions like South Punjab, interior Sindh, and Balochistan to reduce grievances that fuel demands for separation.

Conclusion:

The formation of new provinces in Pakistan remains a complex interplay of political ambition, constitutional rigidity, and ethnic sensitivities. While administrative decentralization can potentially strengthen federalism and governance, the lack of political will, economic preparedness, and institutional mechanisms render the process fraught with risks. The need of the hour is not reckless fragmentation but rational federal restructuring, grounded in consensus, capacity building ensuring unity in diversity rather than division in the name of representation.

Write 8-9 lines
Add graphs and charts

QUESTION # 08

Pakistan Saudi Arabia have signed a historic defense pact. Critically evaluate the causes and implications of the deal.

Answer: Introduction

In September 2025, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA), declaring that an attack on one would be considered an attack on both. The pact remarks a watershed in their longstanding military cooperation with potential to reshape regional security from South Asia to the Middle East. However, its causes and consequences merit critical evaluation.

Causes of the Pact

Several interlocking drivers explain why Saudi Arabia and Pakistan moved to formalise this pact at this moment.

1. Geo-political and Security context

The Middle East security environment has become more volatile e.g. recent Israeli strikes (such as Doha, Qatar) and increased concerns among Gulf States about their external defence guarantees.

Saudi Arabia is seeking to diversify its security partnerships beyond sole reliance on the United States. Analysts note that Gulf States are reassessing the reliability of traditional security Umbrella.

Pakistan's own external environment,

particularly its rivalry with India and ~~Pakistan~~
 its desire to assert a larger role in the Muslim
 World, also provides motivation the pact boost
 Pakistan's strategic footprint in the Gulf

2 Economic and Strategic independence

Pakistan remains heavily reliant on
 Saudi Arabia for financial aid, oil-supply
 support and investment. The pact thus serve
 as a means for Pakistan to consolidate this
 dependence in more formal alliance structure

Conversely, the Saudi Arabia, tying deeper
 security cooperation with Pakistan provides 'security
 for economic engagement' ensuring that investment,
 energy supply and expatriate communities
 (Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia) are safeguarded
 under a stronger defence agreement.

3 Timing and Signalling

The timing of the Pact suggest that
 recent Middle East security shocks of Israeli-
 air strikes, Gulf states anxiety accelerated
 concluding the deal.

The pact sends symbolic signals to India,
 to Israel, to Iran, and to Gulf states that
 Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are deepening
 their alignment.

Implication of the Pact

The pact carries significant implications across
 various domains strategic, regional, bilateral
 domestic.

For PAKISTAN

Benefits

- Enhance Pakistan's international standing. It positions Pakistan not just as a recipient of aid but as a strategic partner in Gulf defence architecture.
- Reinforced Saudi support may translate into more favourable investment, aid, energy credit, offsetting Pakistan's fiscal stress.
- Strategic deterrent enhancement for Pakistan, closer ties with a wealthy Gulf state provided added deterrence, particularly in context of India rivalry.

Risks

- By accepting a mutual defence obligation, Pakistan may be drawn into Middle East crises (e.g. Iran-Saudi tensions) which could distract from its South Asia focus.
- Pakistan's armed forces are already stretched, deployment or deeper commitments may add burdens in manpower, logistics and budget.
- Observers warn that increasing external defence commitments may further militarise Pakistan's foreign policy and strengthen military institution vis-a-vis civilian governance.

Seem like notes

Add headings and subheadings

For Saudi Arabia

Benefits

- The pact offers Saudi Arabia a backup/incremental security partner beyond the U.S., bolstering deterrence against threats (Iran, regional stability).
- ~~Formalisation~~ Formalising defence ties may ensure Pakistan continues to support Saudi Interests.

- (oil for security, defence industry cooperation)
- The symbolic link to Pakistan's nuclear status may arise the cost for adversaries contemplating aggression.

Risks

- By entering into a defence pact with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia may impact Pakistan's adversarial relationship with India into the Gulf sphere
- If the pact is perceived to include nuclear or missile links, it could raise serious non-proliferation issues and complicate relations with the U.S. and others.
- The lack of clarity over the "how" and "when" of mutual defence may limit the pact's practical deterrent value, adversaries may test its resolve.

Global Implications

• South Asia

India is clearly attentive. It has publicly stated that it is "analysing the implications for our national security". The pact may complicate India's Gulf diplomacy, given Saudi Arabia is a major energy supplier and investment partner for India.

- Middle East Architecture The deal signals a move towards a security architecture independent of the U.S. umbrella. Gulf states may increasingly look to regional Muslim-majority states like Pakistan for defence cooperation.

- US / China Dynamics.

With Pakistan's ties to China and Saudi Arabia's balancing act between the U.S. and its own regional ambitions, the pact adds a new layer to great power competition and alliance politics.

Critical Evaluation

While the pact elevates Pakistan's status and deepens Gulf ties, it risks overstretching its resources and complicating its relations with other powers. The agreement's ambiguity especially regarding nuclear aspects could trigger regional anxieties. Without clear implementation mechanisms, the pact risks remaining symbolic rather than strategic.

Recommendations

1. Transparency and Communication

Pakistan should publicly clarify the operational ambit of the pact to allay fears among India, the U.S. and other stakeholders, reducing strategic uncertainty.

2. Economic-Defense Linkages

The defence cooperation to concrete economic outcome. Saudi investment, military production offsets, Pakistani-defence-industry participation, ensuring that military commitments translate into macro-economic gains.

3 Balanced Diplomacy

Ensure the pact does not undermine Pakistan's relations with major power (China, U.S) Russia or its regional balancing with India and Afghanistan. Diplomatic channels must continue parallel to defence realignment.

4 Regional Confidence-Building

Proactively engage with India, Iran and neighboring states to explain the Pak's defensive nature, reducing misperception of aggressive intent. Confidence building measures (CBMs) can mitigate escalation risks.

Conclusion:

The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence pact symbolizes a new strategic phase rooted in mutual security and economic necessity while it promises greater cooperation and deterrence, it also demands prudence, clarity and balanced diplomacy to prevent it from turning into geopolitical liability. For Pakistan, the real challenge lies in leveraging this alliance for stability without compromising autonomy or regional equilibrium.

QUESTION # 02

Pak-Afghan relations continue to remain tensed even after mediation by China. What do you think are major factors and how could it be improved.

Answer: Introduction

Despite geographical proximity, cultural affinity and shared religious identity, Pakistan and Afghanistan remain entangled in persistent mistrust. Even after China's mediation efforts under the trilateral mechanisms (Pakistan-Afghanistan-China Dialogue 2024-25), tensions endure. The relationship vital for regional peace, counter-terrorism and connectivity remains hostage to historical grievances, security concerns and geopolitical divergences.

Major Factors Behind Persistent Tensions

1 Cross-border terrorism and Security Concerns

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan for providing safe heavens to Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) militants who conduct attacks from Afghan soil. Conversely, Kabul blames Islamabad for supporting groups that threaten Afghan stability. The absence of effective border management has allowed infiltration and militancy to persist.

2 The Durand-Line dispute

The unrecognized border remains a major irritant. Successive Afghan government monarchical, republican and Taliban have refused

to formally accept the Durand Line as an international boundary viewing fencing by Pakistan as unilateral and illegitimate

3 Divergent Political Agendas

Pakistan desires a stable but cooperative Afghanistan, while the Taliban leadership seeks a strategic expectations of policy alignment, especially on security cooperation.

4 Refugee and Economic Pressure

Over 3 million of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan strain socioeconomic resources and occasionally become scapegoats for security incidents. Pakistan's recent repatriation drive has further fueled resentment in Kabul.

5 Geo political Competition

External powers particularly India and the U.S. complicate the bilateral equation. India's growing presence in Afghanistan is viewed by Pakistan through a security lens, while Kabul resents Islamabad's attempts to limit its external crisis.

China's Mediation and Its Limits

Beijing involvement through the China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Trilateral Dialogue (2023-25) aims to promote economic connectivity and counter-terrorism coordination under the Belt

and Road Initiative (BRI). However China's focus remain pragmatic and security driven protecting its western borders and investments rather than resolving deep-rooted political mistrust. The lack of mutual confidence between Islamabad and Kabul has limited Beijing's success.

Pathways to Improvement:

1 Institutionalized Dialogue:

Revive Bilateral security commissions and trilateral dialogues with China to ensure continuous communication. Confidence building measures (CBMs) such as intelligence sharing and border coordination centers should be strengthened.

2 Counter Terrorism Cooperation

Develop joint counter-terrorism frameworks to neutralize TTP and other militant sanctuaries.

Pakistan can offer capacity-building support for Afghanistan border forces, conditional on verifiable cooperation.

3 Border Management and Legalization

Finalize border demarcation protocols, maintain regulated crossings, and employ technology driven surveillance to manage trade and security simultaneously.

4 Economic and Trade Integration

Expand transit-trade, utilize the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (PEC) extension to Afghanistan, and create joint economic zones to generate interdependence and reduce hostility

People-to-people diplomacy

Encourage educational Scholarships, cultural exchange and youth programmes to offset state-level mistrust with societal goodwill

Critical Evaluation

Pakistan's approach often oscillates between strategic control and disengagement, while Afghanistan's Taliban leadership combine nationalism with defiance without addressing the trust deficit and security dilemma, external mediation whether by China or other can only yield temporary result. The sustainability of peace depends on internal policy recalibration within both states.

Conclusion:

Pak-Afghan relations remains strained due to intertwined historical, political and security challenges. China's mediation has provided a platform but not a breakthrough, lasting improvement demands mutual recognition of sovereignty, joint counter-terrorism efforts, economic interdependence and sustained dialogue only through pragmatic cooperation rather than zero-sum suspicion can Pakistan and Afghanistan transform their shared border from a line of conflict into a corridor of peace and prosperity.

QUESTION # 7

How Pakistan could balance its relations after the recent engagement with U.S and strategic partnership with China.

Answer: Introduction

Pakistan's foreign policy is once again at a strategic crossroads. The country has recently revived high-level diplomatic and defence engagement with the United States including cooperation and counterterrorism, energy and investment while simultaneously maintaining a comprehensive strategic partnership with China under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Managing both relationships is critical for Pakistan's economic revival, regional security, and global standing. However, the growing US-China rivalry makes Pakistan's balancing act increasingly complex.

Historical Context

Since independence, Pakistan's external relations have oscillated between Washington and Beijing.

- During the Cold War, Pakistan was a U.S ally (SEATO, CENTO) but later drifted toward China after the 1960s due to Washington's tilt toward India.
- In the post 9/11 era, Pakistan was given a key U.S ally in the War on Terror but faced trust deficit over alleged double-dealings.

→ The CPEC initiative (2015 onwards) deepened China's economic and infrastructural foot print, marking a strategic pivot eastward.

Now in the 2020s, Pakistan seeks to recalibrate by engaging both powers amid shifting global alignments.

Factors driving Pakistan's dual Engagement

Economic Imperatives

Pakistan's fragile economy compels it to seek diversified support. The US remains vital for access to global financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank while China provides infrastructure investment loans, and industrial cooperation. Economic survival necessitates engagement with both.

Security and Defence Needs

Pakistan relies on the US for advanced military equipment, training and intelligence, whereas China is its long-term defence production and strategic partner. Balancing ensures access to complementary security benefits.

Geopolitical status

The US Indo-Pacific strategy and its deepening ties with India contrast with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Pakistan's geographic position makes it a pivotal state; balancing allows Islamabad to avoid full alignment in either bloc.

Global image and Diplomacy

Re-engagement with the U.S helps Pakistan improve its international image, attract Western investments, and influence policy on Afghanistan. While China's partnership reinforces its status within the Global South and Muslim World diplomacy.

Challenges in Balancing Strategic Competition between U.S and China

The intensifying rivalry risks forcing Pakistan to "choose sides". U.S concerns over CPEC's debt burden, Chinese military access to Gwadar and cybersecurity issues add layers of complexity.

Trust Deficit With the U.S.

Despite renewed engagement, Washington views Pakistan through the lens of counterterrorism and Afghanistan, not as long-term strategic partner. The legacy of mistrust constrains cooperation.

Economic Dependency on China

China's dominance in infrastructure, energy, and digital sectors risks creating overreliance, limiting Islamabad's strategic autonomy and bargaining space with the West.

Regional Dynamics

U.S. alignment with India and China's growing assertiveness vis-a-vis India and the West complicate Pakistan's balancing- especially when border tensions or Indo-Pacific tensions escalate.

Policy Options for Pakistan

Adopt a policy of "Equidistance and Issue-Based Alignment"

Pakistan should avoid bloc politics and pursue interest-based engagement cooperating with each other's powers where mutual benefits align rather than pursuing ideological loyalty.

Institutional Strategic Dialogue

Establish parallel strategic dialogues with the U.S. and China on economy, climate and security. This can ensure transparency and reassure both that Pakistan's ties are non-adversarial.

Economic Diversification

Broaden economic partnerships with Middle Eastern, ASEAN and EU states to reduce dependency on any single power. This diversification enhances Pakistan's autonomy in foreign policy.

Strengthen Domestic Economy

A strong economy is the foundation of sovereign diplomacy. Economic resilience through

tax reforms, export diversification, and energy security would enable Pakistan to engage global powers from a position of strength.

Promote Regional Connectivity

Pakistan can position itself as a bridge between BRI and the U.S backed IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Corridor), using geography to turn rivalry into opportunity rather than confrontation.

Strategic Communication and Diplomacy

Pakistan must clearly communicate that cooperation with one power is not a zero-sum game against the other. Confidence building diplomacy, transparency, and pragmatic signaling can mitigate suspicion.

Leverage Multilateral Platforms

Active participation in SCO, OIC, UN and ASEAN forums allows Pakistan to project neutrality and engage both powers in collaborative global issues such as climate change and counter terrorism.

Critical Evaluation:

Pakistan's traditional foreign policy of oscillation between superpowers has often been reactive rather than strategic. The current geopolitical order demands smart balancing anchored in economic self-reliance, policy consistency, and

Instructions to get good marks in current affairs paper

Date: _____

Important Note:

Marks would be given on the following parameters

a- Content 60% References 15% Subject specific language 15% Graphs and charts 10%

Add 12-13 headings in each question and write 8-9 sides to get above 15 in each question

the questions carry 3_4 parts... each part has equal weightage so discuss all equally

Give examples from present events to justify answers

Give attractive introduction and Conclusion as well

always give headings from the question statement.. take words from the statement

link each of the argument to the asked part in the question... if you fail to do so, no matter how accurate content is, if your heading is not align with what is asked in the question, it won't be accurate

Good Luck

Substantially low answer