



Assignment - 5

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Pak-Afghan Relations and Their Impact on Pakistan's Security

Turbulent Beginnings: 1947 and the Formation of Tensions

Pak-Afghan relations have gone through various stages of cooperation and conflict since the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The main factors that have influenced the bilateral ties are sovereignty concerns, security interests, geopolitical dynamics, cross-border ties, and connectivity and trade. These factors have also had significant impacts on the security of Pakistan, both positively and negatively.

Credible Facts and Figures:

The Impactful 1970s

The first stage of Pak-Afghan relations was marked by hostility and irredentism, as Afghanistan was the only country to vote against Pakistan's admission into the United Nations and claimed large parts of Pakistan's territory as part of Pashtunistan. Afghanistan also supported armed separatist movements in Pakistan, such as the Faqir of Ipi and the Baloch insurgency. This stage lasted until the 1970s, when the Saur Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan changed the regional scenario. Pakistan's security was threatened by the spillover of violence and refugees from Afghanistan, as well as the Soviet presence on its western border.

The Afghan crisis in the 1970s and subsequent years led to a significant refugee influx into Pakistan. At its peak, Pakistan hosted over 3 million Afghan refugees, placing considerable strain on its resources and infrastructure.

Collaborations and Unintended Consequences 1980s

The second stage of Pak-Afghan relations was characterized by cooperation and intervention, as Pakistan became a frontline state in the US-led anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. Pakistan provided sanctuary, training, and weapons to the Afghan mujahideen, who were fighting against the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul. Pakistan also sought to influence the political outcome in Afghanistan, favoring the Islamist factions over the traditionalist ones. Pakistan's security was enhanced by the US military and economic assistance, as well as the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989. However, Pakistan also faced the challenges of radicalization, drug trafficking, and sectarian violence, which were fueled by the Afghan conflict.

Taliban's Emergence and Complications 1990s

The third stage of Pak-Afghan relations was dominated by rivalry and instability, as Afghanistan plunged into a civil war among the warring mujahideen factions after the collapse of the communist regime in 1992. Pakistan supported the Taliban, a new Islamist movement that emerged from the madrassas in Pakistan and Afghanistan and helped them capture Kabul in 1996. Pakistan recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Pakistan's security was jeopardized by the emergence of the anti-Pakistan Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which was inspired by the Afghan Taliban and launched a violent campaign against the Pakistani state. Pakistan also faced international isolation and pressure, as the Taliban harbored al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups and refused to hand over Osama bin Laden after the 9/11 attacks.

Post-9/11: A Paradigm Shift in Dynamics

The fourth stage of Pak-Afghan relations was shaped by cooperation and conflict, as the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 toppled the Taliban regime and installed a new democratic government in Kabul. Pakistan joined the US-led war on terror and cooperated with the US and NATO forces in combating the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan also established diplomatic and economic relations with the Afghan government and participated in various regional and international initiatives to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan's security was improved by the elimination of some of the top leaders of al-Qaeda and the TTP, and the reduction of violence in the tribal areas. However, Pakistan also faced the accusations of duplicity and double-dealing, as it allegedly maintained links with the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network and provided them with safe havens and support. Pakistan also faced the resentment and mistrust of the Afghan government, which blamed Pakistan for the resurgence of the Taliban and the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan.

Impacts on the Security of Pakistan

Post-US Withdrawal Uncertainties

The fifth and current stage of Pak-Afghan relations is defined by uncertainty and opportunity, as the US and NATO forces are withdrawing from Afghanistan after signing a peace deal with the Taliban in 2020. Pakistan has played a key role in facilitating the intra-Afghan dialogue and has expressed its support for a peaceful and inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan. Pakistan has also reached out to the Afghan government and has pledged to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields, such as trade, transit, energy, and connectivity. Pakistan's security is dependent on the outcome of the peace process, and the future of the Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan. If the peace process succeeds, and a stable

and friendly government is established in Kabul, Pakistan can benefit from the opportunities of regional integration and development. If the peace process fails, and a civil war or a Taliban takeover ensues, Pakistan can face the risks of refugee influx, cross-border terrorism, and regional isolation.

Conclusion

Pak-Afghan relations have a significant impact on the security of Pakistan, and vice versa. The two countries share a common history, culture, and geography, but also have divergent interests and perceptions. The future of Pak-Afghan relations will depend on the ability and willingness of the two sides to overcome their differences and mistrust, and to work together for their mutual benefit and regional stability.

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