

- Q. US-India growing strategic partnership is mainly to contain China, but it also has massive negative implications on Pakistan. Recommend policy options for Islamabad to follow.

Ans. **INTRODUCTION:**

The US-Indian relationship, over the past years have seen many ups and downs. A dramatic shift came at the turn of 21st century in US-India tie, as China was emerging on the globe as an economic giant and potential threat to US hegemony.

On June 2023, Indian PM Modi gave visit to US, that too with the highest protocols. It is crucial to remember that, Modi was once benched in US, owing to his role in anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002. But the irony, perfectly sums up the phrase, in international relations there are no permanent friends, and no permanent enemies.

→ **US-India Defense and Technology Partnership:**

The United States has considered India a linchpin in new strategic partnerships. As according to Quincy Institute for Responsible Stewardship; The United States does not conduct its foreign policy based

on democracy and human rights. It conducts its foreign policy on its interests.

China's growing military power, and assertive claims have become a source of concern for nearby Asian countries such as Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, and India. The US has worked to fashion alliances with many of those countries, India in particular, in an attempt to contain China's expanding influence.

In the latest US-India meeting, substantive decisions were taken in the fields of military and technology. General Electric of US and India's state owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited will manufacture advanced fighter jet engines in India.

The US has also agreed to set up a facility in India produce battle-tested armed drones.

For decades, Russia remained the major supplier of arms to India with 65% share, now reduced to 45%, while US share has jumped from 1 percent to 11 percent.

The other major decision was that US memory chip giant Micron Technology will invest upto \$325 million to build semiconductor assembly in India.

-> Implications for Pakistan:

The growing strategic partnership between US-India has created serious negative implications for Pakistan's internal and external security domains.

i) Threat to Economic Development:

Pakistan is going through the worst economic turmoil of the history. Growing US-India partnership in technology domain, has helped India to create millions of job opportunities, and multiple ventures for foreign investment. As according to World Bank 2022 report, India acquired 5th position in world's economy, while Pakistan ranked 42. This signifies a stark difference among economic development between India, and Pakistan. Also, Pakistan has to pay \$7.5 bn in external debt, from 2022-26, for a \$350 bn economy, this is a hefty burden.

ii) Threat to National Security:

The transfer of advanced military hardware to India, would undermine the

strategic, and conventional balance of power in South Asia. Such advancement will help India to pursue its goal of establishing regional hegemony. To acquire military deterrence against India, Pakistan will need to indulge in arms race for balance of power. This would result in spending more budget for defence, and leaving meagre resources for economic development. According to Stockholm based Independent Research Institute, India's military expenditure was \$81 billion, while Pakistan reserved only \$8 billion in 2022. This signifies the existing parity between the two states, which now likely to be increased by such hefty cooperation of the United States in India.

iii) Threat to Pakistan's Global Presence:

India, in global terms wishes to take its place as one of the greatest power. In that context India, acquired membership in G20, BRICS, and to build long term strategic partnership; It also actively joined COVAX, and ~~WTO~~ is also on quest for

permanent membership of UN Security Council. India's active diplomacy and engagement in intergovernmental organizations, on one hand helps to strengthen its economic, military build up, while on the other hand along with serving U.S. purpose to contain China, it poses a great threat to Pakistan's say in the global domain.

(Javed Hussain / India's Future Path / 2023)

India's growing influence, mainly due to its strategic partnership with U.S., has led Pakistan on a back-foot on Kashmiri cause. The world sets aside human rights violations, when it comes to economic gains or interests.

→ Recommendations for Pakistan:

To counter US-India growing ties - potential threats, Pakistan needs to revise its internal and external policies.

i) Revive Political & Economic Stability:

Stable economy is crucial for the progress and development of the state in all domains. Likewise, political stability

is crucial for economic development, As local as well as for foreign direct investment, peace and stability is the key factor to boost inflow of investments.

Moreover, Pakistan should embark on structural reform, and for that fiscal discipline must be embraced wholeheartedly; includes shift of reliance from indirect to direct taxation, as well as expanding tax regime. This will stabilize fiscal sector & will significantly result in sustainable economic development.

ii) Investment in Technology.

Although Pakistan, in present times, is not in state to indulge in space, it is still crucial to initiate investment in the technological domain, in order to close the gap with India. Since most of the technologies being pursued in contemporary times is of dual-use, it will be appropriate for Pakistan to invest in such technologies to reap benefits in both civil as well as military domains. India's space quest is a lesson for Pakistan to pay heed to the priority area of space technology.

iii) Strengthen Ties with China and Russia:

The growing US-Indian partnership has made Pakistan less relevant for US foreign policy. As India by all means, military as well as economic buildup, is more suitable for US purpose to contain China. But that certainly left Pakistan to strengthen its bilateral relationship with China and Russia, in the economic as well as military domain.

Both, China and Russia will help boost economic development, through investment in trade. Pak-China economic corridor is one such example. Further cooperation with the global powers, China and Russia, not only will help in domestic woes, but will also substantiate Pakistan's presence in the global sphere.

→ Conclusion:

US-India strategic partnership in several military and technology domain, aims mainly to contain China, but it also imposed negative regional and internal implications for Pakistan.

Consolidating ties further with China and Russia, crucial for Pakistan's better global posture.