

Current Affairs.

Q US India's growing strategic partnership is primarily to contain China but it has far reaching implications for Pakistan too. Critically evaluate the statement and recommend policy options for Islamabad.

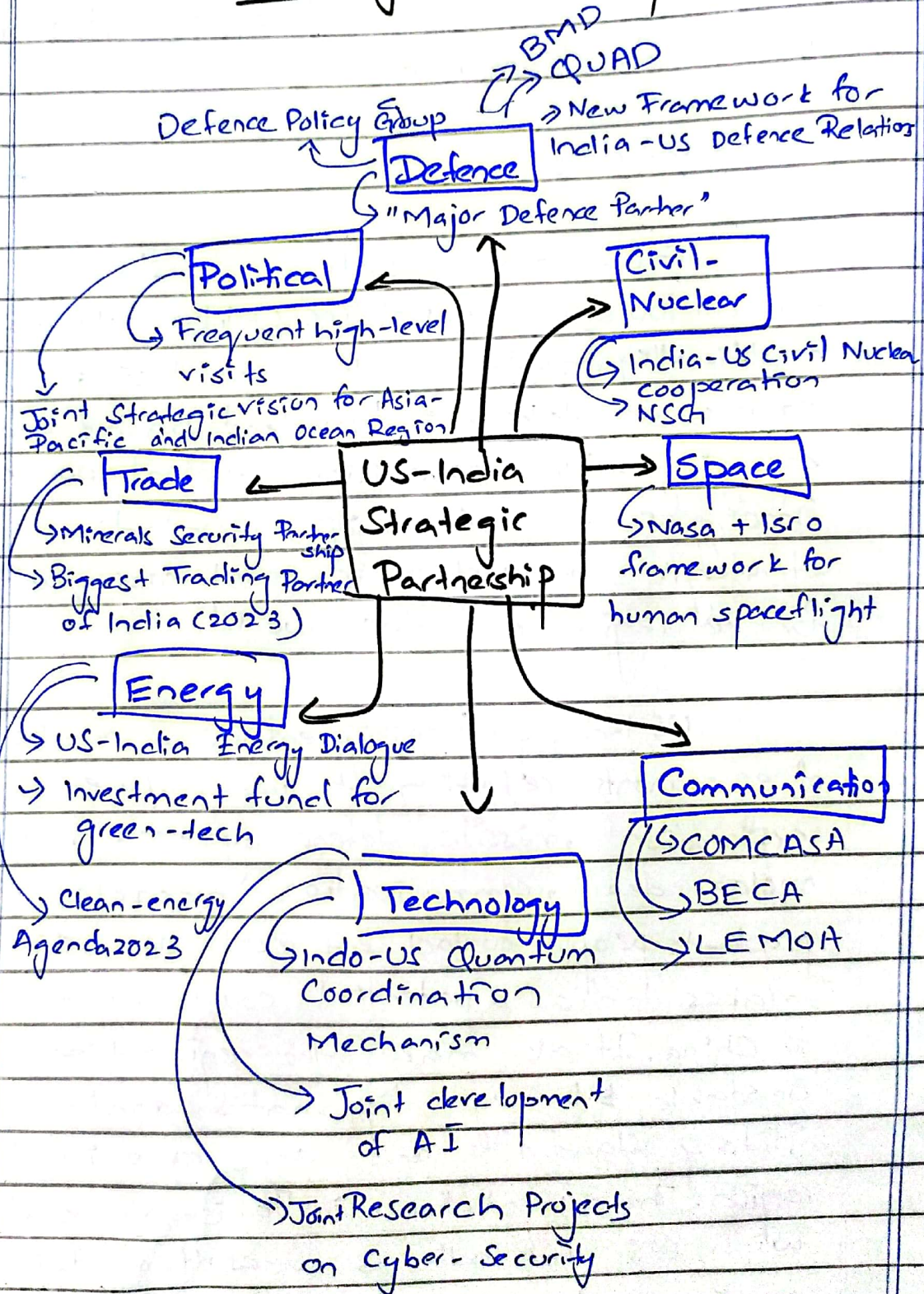
Introduction:

Great power competition is shaping the contours of geopolitics. Unlike cold war, multi-alignments are the norm. Rising powers are taking independent paths and engaging with multiple global powers. Among such partnerships, US-India strategic partnership is most consequential for the region and the world.

US-India partnership entails a number of agreements relating to trade, space exploration, missile defence system, civil-nuclear deal, communication technologies, people-to-people contact and much more. This makes India a potential counter-weight to China. It also makes the region highly unstable through diplomatic confrontation, military stand-offs and arms race in the region. The current thaw in Pakistan's relations with US and India is a result of their growing partnership. However, Pakistan can take a number of policy steps to ensure

a peaceful region while fortifying its own national interests.

US-India Strategic Partnership :-



US-India Political Relations :-

US-India Relations are based on converging interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. There are frequent high-level visits and exchanges between US and India. Joint Strategic vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian-Ocean Region is notable in this regard.

US-India Defence cooperation :-

Defence cooperation among the two countries is a major pillar of their partnership. US recognized India as a "Major Defence Partner" and thus share collaborates for defence co-production and co-development. Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Program is a milestone in forging closer ties between the states. This advances India's military while challenging stability of Asia.

US-India Communication Agreements :-

US-India strategic communication relations are most alarming for the region. CSOMIA 2002 allows militaries to share intelligence, LEMOA 2016 gives access to one another's military facilities, for re-fueling, COMCASA 2018 lets transfer

of sensitive communication security equipment from USA to India, and BECA 2020, allows sharing of geo-spatial and satellite data with each other. This gives India an edge in military communication.

US-India Partnership in containing China

India - a counter-balance to China

India presents itself as a natural counterbalance to China. As a major and rising economy, it can outpace China's economic growth. Similarly, its demographic growth have exceeded China's. India, with respect to its economic, demographic and military represents a potential counter-balance to China.

US-India Partnership - affecting balance of power in Asia: Indo-Pacific: -

US-India partnership largely affects balance of power in the region. US's Indo-Pacific policy strategy seeks to eliminate Chinese economic, diplomatic, military and technological might in Indo-Pacific. Alfred Mahan, US strategist said, "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean

2

dominate Asia ; -the destiny of -the world will be decided on its water". So -there is a Sino-Indian tug of war to dominate Indo-Pacific region. US gives its support to India to win -the race.

US-India Partnership ~ a quest to dominate sea lines of communication :-

US and China have naval presence in Indian Ocean. India is also US Base in Diego Garcia and Chinese presence in Djibouti are indicators great power's aim to dominate trade routes. India also has presence in Indian ocean via its own sea ocean waters as well as in Sri Lanka and Maldives. US-India partnership largely contests Chinese dominance in Indian Ocean.

US-India defence partnership ~ Arms race in South Asia :-

Indo-US cooperation in arms deals and missile technology transfer -threatens security in -the region. Indo-US This cooperation on PAC-3 Anti-missile system and BMD are focused towards China and Pakistan. It invokes arms

race in South Asia thereby invoking strategic stability in Asia and beyond.

India ~ a counterweight to Chinese economy :-

India and China are emerging economies. India can potentially outweigh China. China is the second-largest economy while India is the fifth-largest economy. Indian population has already exceeded Chinese population. ~~India~~ This continued growth is likely to dominate world economy in next years to come. However, their quest to dominate surpass one another remains constant. USA is investing heavily in India. US is third-largest investor in India with investment of \$62.25 bn according to official estimates. Thereby US is betting on India to prevail over China

India ~ a potential hindrance to BRI :-

USA sees India as a country that can potentially and effectively impede progress of BRI. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an infrastructure

of China, will broaden China's economic and political influence. This threatens both US and India. India is trying to make it unsuccessful through acts of terrorism and illegal actions. CPEC is the flagship project of BRI and ~~is a~~ there are increasing terror attacks to stop it.

Implications for Pakistan:-

Military insecurity in Pakistan:-

Indo-US Partnership in defence and nuclear cooperation negatively impacts Pakistan's security. Intelligence sharing, ballistic-missile development and other defence cooperation will make Pakistan's military landscape increasingly insecure. Through COMCASA and BECA, India will get critical information and real-time geospatial intelligence thereby enhancing its military capabilities against Pakistan.

Power asymmetry with India:-

US-India cooperation would create power asymmetry and shift balance

of power in India's favor. India gets membership and waivers in Nuclear Suppliers group. It will continue to increase and improve nuclear and conventional weapons. It can also create proxies in such forums to stop Pakistan from getting membership. This ~~could~~ shifted balance of power will compel Pakistan to resort to arms race.

India's increasing assertiveness in
↳ Indian Occupied Kashmir :-

With US on its side, India has become increasingly assertive in IOK. The world has turned blind eye on aggression against Kashmiris in IOK. India's revocation of Kashmir's autonomy by revoking Article 370 of the Constitution, is a direct result of its a clear indicator of its nefarious designs. Similarly it has changed citizenship laws aimed at changing its demography. Indian Supreme Court has validated these acts which are direct contravention to UNSC Resolution. Thus, India is emboldened by US's support.

Diplomatic stagnation with India and USA :-

There is a diplomatic deadlock with both India and USA. US-India Partnership has also isolated Pakistan to some extent. There is a ~~little~~ slight thaw in relations with USA while a complete "no-contact warfare" with India. Indian Secretary for EA, J. Shankar in his letter wrote that India will ^{not} hold dialogue over Kashmir Issue. If this dispute lingers on, it will jeopardize peace in South Asia.

Indian Hybrid War against Pakistan :-

India has waged an all-out hybrid war against Pakistan. India, by virtue of its economy, have resorted to lobbying tactics in FATF, IMF and World Bank. It is also involved in deploying terrorism in Pakistan. Arrest of Kulbushan Yadav is a clear indication of it. It is also involved in sponsoring online propaganda against Pakistan. Disinfo Lab has repeatedly revealed Indian sponsored propaganda. In its quest to dominate South Asia, India has resorted to hybrid warfare against Pakistan.

Policy options for Pakistan:-

Multi-alignment in Foreign Policy:-

Pakistan must go for an independent foreign policy. For this purpose, Pakistan must balance its relations with all global powers. It must maintain its stance on 'partner in peace, not in conflict'.

Foreign policy continuity:-

Economics at heart of foreign policy:-

The future foreign relations of Pakistan must be based on economic cooperation. With Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Pakistan must attract investment deals rather than engaging in strategically destroying agreements.

Developing people to people contact:-

Pakistan must develop people-to-people contact with USA. It must invest in IT so its IT graduates can establish themselves in Silicon Valley. ^{USA} It is already a preferred destination.

for Pakistan's medical graduate. This people-to-people diplomacy will help thaw relations between us and Pakistan.

Fortifying ties with China:-

Pakistan's ties with China has been strong, but it can continue to fortify it further in economic and strategic landscape. To attain balance of power, Pakistan can collaborate with China on numerous defence projects.

Engaging with India on equal footing:-

It might not be possible to engage with India bilaterally, multilateral routes can be taken for dialogue. Michael Kugelman of the Wilson Centre also said that the diplomacy must be viewed from a "multilateral lens". However, Kashmir issue must take primacy in dialogue.

Economic ties with India:-

Both countries are on losing side from disengagement. World Bank estimates a potential of approximately \$37 bn from Pakistan-India trade. Trade can be made possible through multilateral forums.

Engagement in ^{diverse} multiple sectors :-

Pakistan can engage with USA and other countries on untapped and diverse sectors like space exploration, climate change, IT, and mines and mineral industry. Climate change, for instance, affects everyone. It is a point of convergence for all.

Economic Openness with the World :-

Pakistan must open trade corridors and encourage investment in the country. SIFC and CPEC, if implemented correctly can earn great dividends for Pakistan and bring much needed peace and stability in the region.

Conclusion :-

US-India Strategic Partnership aims to contain China's geo-economic rise. It is creating hindrances to stop China's rise. It also has implication on Pakistan's security and economic landscape. However, through sustained diplomacy and globalization, Pakistan can overcome high-waters and establish itself as a stable country.