

Q The 21st century Great-Game is being fought over technology. Critically evaluate Pakistan's strategic options as it navigates the deepening Sino-US tech rivalry.

INTRODUCTION:

A Great-Game is being played by the two-major rivalries of the world. But, this time the Battleground of these rivalries is not in context of conventional war, but a Tech-war. US and China are competing each other in all domains - economy, military, import export and now in technology. The development of AI, 5G Telecommunication and Semiconductors are one of the example. Since, Pakistan possesses a significant importance as a strategic partnership of both China and US, it has to critically analyse option that could secure national security as well as national interest.

CHARTING A COURSE BETWEEN U.S AND CHINA :

Pakistan has always been the center of strategic dynamics between the both countries. ~~It has~~ Pakistan is part of mega project of BRI - CPEC and ~~it also has~~ long-standing relations with the U.S.

ALIGNMENT WITH CHINA :

Pakistan is already being enjoying the technologies of China - like, ~~HWA~~ HUAWEI and ZTN etc. Besides this, many microcomputers and chips are imported from China.

Advantages: By relying on China's technology, Pakistan can attain rapid and affordable means of technology. This will also foster the development of CPEC. In this manner, Pakistan can gain significant benefits by becoming the

regional supporter of China's technology.

Disadvantage: If Pakistan only rely on the Chinese technology then this stance will create a barrier between West and Asia trade balance. Pakistan's foreign policy is laid on the foundation of balancing the relations and securing the National Interest. But, in this way, Pakistan will turn itself into tech isolation and over-reliance on the single provider.

BALANCING ALLIANCE WITH CHINA AND THE WEST:

Pakistan has significant geographical and strategic asset to utilize and gain maximum benefit. To secure the national Interest, Pakistan can align with both rivalries - US and China - (including the west - European Countries).

Advantage: If Pakistan enhance its diplomatic flexibility and diplomatic skill, it is likely that Pakistan can balance its relations. Also, it is possible that Pakistan might help to remove the trade barriers between the both countries. The strategic significance of Pakistan can only be attained by diplomacy.

Disadvantage: It is difficult to create a neutral balance between U.S. and China's intense rivalry. This intense battle of technology can create trust imbalances.

For instance, using any rivalry's tech can hinder the tech security of other. This would create trust deficit. ~~and~~ Besides this, the recent ~~trade~~ Trump ~~tariff~~ war expresses the stance of non-alignment and choosing any one option, or else face

the trade barriers.

PAKISTAN'S INDEPENDANT DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY.

The last option that can be considered is that Pakistan neither rely on U.S nor on China for its technological demands. But, this is only possible through developing own technological capabilities.

Advantage : If Pakistan creates foster its tech-manufacturing industry, it will uphold the economy tremendously. Pakistan become one of the tech-exporter without relying on any country. In this manner, a global tech-industry's would be part would be Pakistan.

Disadvantage : The drawback of this option is that Pakistan lack the resources to manufacture technology on its own.

This requires major chunk of budget to start tech-industry and also Pakistan also lack in human capital in this regard. So, it is less likely that Pakistan can become a tech-industry without investing into the technological sector and education.

CONCLUSION: A PRAGMATIC STEP FORWARD:

The most beneficial option for Pakistan in this global Great Game of Tech is to maintain a balanced relations. Pakistan must adopt a ~~hyde~~ hybrid foreign Policy to align with both the U.S and the China. For this purpose, Pakistan has to focus on flexible and effective diplomatic efforts.