

Question no: 2

US India growing strategic partnership is primarily to contain China but it severely hurt the interests of Pakistan too. Critically evaluate the statement and find out ways for Islamabad to follow.

Framework of Indo-US Strategic Partnership:

The foundation of Indo-US strategic partnership was laid down during Bush era and in 2005 it got pace when USA agreed to transfer nuclear technology to India.

In 2012, US and India sign Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). Later in 2016,

India was declared a major trade partner and defense partner of USA. In 2016, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

was signed. The revival of QUAD in 2017 was one major point to contain China through this partnership. In 2018, 2+2

dialogue process started that yielded to most important agreements. First,

COMCASA (Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement) in 2018, that allows the high-tech defense technology import by India. Other was signed in

2020, called BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). BECA ~~allows~~ ^{will}

provide India with real time images from USA satellites at the time of crisis and peace.

Recently, QUAD summit was held in Tokyo, Japan, that further strengthen the partnership. China was criticized and the parties agreed that they wanted the implementation of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on Law of Seas)

After that, ~~the~~ Indian PM Modi was invited to USA. There were agreements related to trade, energy, technology, combined space missions and cyber security.

India's position has become so strong in the region, that USA has made it his ally to contain China in the Indo-Pacific. Pakistan being the ally of China and the historical rival of India, shares border with both the countries, will have certain implications regarding this partnership. This Indo-US partnership will affect Pakistan strategically, Economically and politically.

¹⁰ Strategic Implications on Pakistan:

1) Arms race in the region:

India has become an economic power and with the help of USA, it is able to weaponize the space.

India conducted an ASAT test in 2019.

This increase in power of India and weaponization of space will lead to the arms race in the region. It can be seen that India's nuclear program is shifted from its declared civilian purposes. This creates a ^{sense of} insecurity among Pakistan and to ensure its safety Pakistan would have to increase its defense budget.

2) Regional Instability:

Increase in power of China, India, and USA are trying to counter it.

With India's strong economy and combined naval exercises, China would need to counter this action. China's reaction forces India to counter. India and Pakistan relationship is described as Action Reaction paradigm. So, the Indo-US partnership is creating a security dilemma in the region.

3) Afghanistan's Vulnerability:

Pakistan shares a border with Afghanistan and as of now ~~the~~ relationship with Afghanistan is not a good one. If India could impact Afghanistan and establish better relations with it, Pakistan would have to face problems on its western borders.

along with the rise in terrorism across the country.

4) Threat to the CPEC:

India has always been against CPEC as it passes through a disputed area of Kashmir. Through this strategic partnership, India might attempt to hinder the process of completion of CPEC that would be detrimental to Pakistan's progress.

5) Balochistan Issue:

Balochistan is an important part of CPEC and Pakistan is facing certain issues in the province. India is always supporting highlighting Baloch issue, this could lead to the internal conflicts in the country.

6) QUAD and AUKUS:

Under QUAD and AUKUS, USA, UK, Japan, Australia and India will perform combined military exercises in the Indo Pacific region. This will lead to an increased military in the region. Any policy to contain China will have an impact on Pakistan.

Political Implications on Pakistan:

1) Possibility of Cold War 2.0:

India is working as a lapdog of USA in the Indo Pacific region to contain China. With ^{is an} increased engagement between USA and anti-China countries. This hints in the possibility of another cold war. ~~that~~ Pakistan could become a potential proxy battle ground for the countries due to its proximity and border sharing with India and China.

2) Rise of multipolarity:

For decades, USA has been only major superpower of the world. Pakistan had a close relation with USA. It also became a front line ally of USA during Global war on terror. Ever since, the rise of Russia and China, USA is not the only superpower and there is a tilt of Pakistan towards China due to CPEC. This could create a conflict of sphere of influence and it can be a problem for Pakistan.

3) Indian Hegemonic nature:

India was always trying to be the hegemon of the region and with the help of USA, India will be able

to do so Indian hegemony is a great threat for Pakistan as both countries have decades old rivalry. India will always try to suppress and violate Pakistan's interests.

4) Severing ties with USA:

Indo-US strategic partnership can sever the ties between Pakistan and USA. Pakistan has always been in good relations with USA. After the USA withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan is not of much importance to USA and USA now needs India to contain China and maintain its influence in the region.

5) Kashmir Issue:

As India is becoming an economic and military power, it may be able to influence the international decisions on disputed territories in its own favor.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS ON PAKISTAN

1) Economic Instability:

Pakistan will have to increase its defense budget as there is a lack of peace dividends. Pakistan

is facing an economic decline and the fact that it will be forced to spend on defense can further weaken its economy.

2) Threat to trade routes:

Pakistan's 98% trade is through sea. The deployment of military in the ocean can affect the trade.

Pakistan's trade is dependent on secure sea routes and it is not economically strong to make check posts for the secure trade.

3) Threat to the ports:

Due to several agreements there is an increase in military in Indo Pacific and in case of naval conflict ports of Pakistan will be at the direct threat.

4) Threat to BRI and CPEC:

An attempt to contain China could be by attacking BRI and CPEC. CPEC is important for Pakistan's economy and any attempt to stop the completion of CPEC will hurt the economy of Pakistan.

Policy options for Islamabad.

1) Good diplomatic relations:

Pakistan's diplomats need not to pick sides. There should be a balance between relationship with China and USA. Islamabad need to secure its national interests by having good relations with both the countries.

2) Political stability:

Political instability in the country can give a chance to external interferences that can create internal conflicts. To save its interest Islamabad need to create political stability, in order and set aside the differences.

3) Economic stability:

Economic stability is important, so the country is not influenced to do something that might hurt it in future. In the current scenario Pakistan need to increase its defence budget. It is only possible if the economic conditions of the country are stable.

4) Maintaining bilateral relations with QUAD members:

Islamabad should have bilateral relations with QUAD members and

developments related to QUAD must not hinder this bilateral relationship.

5) Making Pakistan Internally strong.

Only way to ^{successfully} secure the country from external threats is to have a strong internal hold against internal threats. Internal problems needs to be solved and the country should progress.

Conclusion:

Pakistan is vulnerable to serious internal and external threats as a result of Indo-US Strategic partnership. This every increasing cooperation is ~~the~~ capable to hurt Pakistan economically, strategically and politically. Pakistan need to have clear and strong policy to secure its interest and the country from any threat it would have to face as a ripple down effect of containing China.