

Mark-6

CS-2025

International Relations Paper-II

Question No: 8

Introduction:-

Liberal internationalism, rooted in ideals of democracy, human rights, free trade and global cooperation, has long been a cornerstone of the post-World War II international order. However, its perceived failures, stemming from its inability to address inequalities, rising authoritarianism and the resurgence of national interests have pushed states toward realpolitik, a pragmatic and power centric approach to international relations. The Asia-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions, in particular, highlight the limitations of liberal internationalism and the increasing dominance of realpolitik frameworks, as nations prioritize security, economic interests and balance of power strategies.

Failure of liberalism and the Rise of Realpolitik in International Relations:-

The post WWII era marked the ascendancy of liberal internationalism, characterized by a rules-based order advocating democracy, economic interdependence and multilateralism. However, recent global developments have exposed its limitations in addressing power imbalances, rising authoritarianism and geopolitical conflicts. The failure of liberal internationalism has shifted the focus toward realpolitik, a pragmatic, interest-driven framework. This shift is particularly evident in Asia-Pacific and Euro Atlantic Regions.

Contemporary developments in Asia-Pacific:-

1) Us-China Rivalry:

i) Strategic Competition:

The contest for regional dominance in the Asia-Pacific showcases realpolitik.

The U.S. has strengthened its alliances, such as the Quad (US, India, Japan, Australia) and AUKUS, to counter China's rise. Meanwhile China employs economic initiatives like BRI and militarization of South China Sea.

ii) Taiwan issue :-

The Taiwan Strait crisis exemplifies realpolitik, with the U.S. supporting Taiwan militarily to deter Chinese aggression, while China uses coercion and military posturing to reinforce its "one China" policy.

2) Regional Alliance Dynamics:

i) ASEAN fragmentation:

While ASEAN promotes liberal ideals of cooperation, its members increasingly adopt realpolitik approaches. Nations like Vietnam and Philippines deepen ties with US while Cambodia align with China.

ii) North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions:-

Pyeongyang's pursuit of nuclear weapons underscores realpolitik, prioritizing regime survival over global norms. Efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula reflect strategic maneuvering by both regional and global powers.

3. India's Strategic Balancing:-

India exemplifies realpolitik by balancing its Quad membership with strategic autonomy, maintaining relations with Russia and China while countering Beijing's influence in South Asia.

Developments In Euro-Atlantic

Region:-

1) Ukraine-Russia Conflict:

i) Geopolitical Power Play:-

Russia's invasion of Ukraine reflects a rejection of liberal internationalism, emphasizing territorial expansion and security interests. NATO's response expansion and military support for Ukraine is rooted in realpolitik, focussing on counterbalancing Russian aggression.

ii) Economic Weaponization:-

The conflict has exposed Europe's dependence on Russian energy, prompting a strategic shift toward alternative energy sources and bolstering NATO unity.

2) NATO's Strategic Evolution:
While NATO was founded on liberal ideals, its expansion and military interventions reflect realpolitik. The organization now prioritizes collective defense and deterrence, as seen in deployments along eastern Europe's borders.

3) Rise of Nationalism and Populism:

In countries like Hungary, Poland and post-Brexit UK, nationalist policies challenge the liberal framework of the European Union. These nations emphasize sovereignty and domestic priorities, often at odds with EU multilateralism.

Comparative Analysis of failures:-

1) Economic inequality:
Liberal internationalism's promise of equitable globalization remains unfulfilled, as evidenced by disparities in vaccine distribution and development aid.

2) Democratic Backsliding:-
Authoritarian regimes in Russia and China, as well as illiberal democracies in Europe challenge liberal norms, undermining democratic governance's universality.

3) Institutional ineffectiveness:-
Multilateral institutions like the UN face limitations in addressing conflicts, as seen in their inability to resolve crises in Ukraine or prevent Chinese assertiveness in Asia.

Conclusion:-

The failure of liberal internationalism to address contemporary challenges has led to the resurgence of realpolitik in both Asia-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions. While liberal ideals like democracy and cooperation remain rhetorically relevant, power dynamics and national interests increasingly define global interactions. This evolution needs an approach that harmonizes liberal principles and realpolitik in an era of intensified geopolitical competition.

References:-

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2- Do Morals Matter? Presidents and foreign policy from FDR to Trump. J.S. Nye (2006)

Question No: 6

Introduction:-

The middle east has long been at the center of global power politics due to its strategic geographic location, abundant energy resources, and historical significance. In recent years, the region has once again emerged as a hotspot for international relations as various global powers and regional powers vie for influence. This renewed focus can be analyzed through key IR theoretical constructs, such as realism, liberalism and constructivism each offering unique perspective.

Causes of Regional Dynamics in the Middle East:

1) Realism: Struggles for Power and security:-

Realism, emphasizing the anarchic nature of the international system, sees the Middle East as a

theater for power struggles and security dilemmas:

i) Balance of Power:

Key players such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey and Israel, along with external powers, strive to maintain or shift the balance of power.

Example: Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities triggers a security dilemma, prompting countries like Saudi Arabia to enhance military alliances with Western powers.

ii) Great Power Competition:

The U.S.'s partial retreat from the region, coupled with Russia's assertive involvement in Syria and China's increasing economic presence has transformed Middle East.

Example:

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq has allowed Iran and Russia to expand their influence in Syria and Iraq.

2) Liberalism: Economic and institutional interdependence:

Liberalism highlights the role of international institutions, economic interdependences and cooperation in shaping Middle Eastern politics.

i) Trade and energy dependencies:

The Middle East's dominance in oil and gas exports creates dependencies that tie the region to global markets.

Example:

The OPEC + alliance, particularly the Saudi-Russian Partnership, influences global energy prices.

ii) Institutional Engagement:-

Regional organizations, like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and international institutions, such as UN, aim to mediate conflicts and foster economic cooperation.

Example:-

Efforts to resolve the Yemen conflict involve international actors like UN and regional stakeholders, like Saudi Arabia and Iran.

3) Constructivism: Identity and Ideological Contestation.

Constructivism, focusing on the role of ideas, identities and norms, views the Middle East's instability through the lens of sectarianism, nationalism and ideological conflicts.

i) Sectarian Rivalries:-

The Sunni-Shia divide, epitomized by the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, deeply influences regional politics.

Example:

Proxy wars in Yemen, Syria and Iraq are manifestations of this sectarian and ideological rivalry.

ii) Islamist vs Secular Ideologies:-

Competing visions for governance, such as Turkey's neo-Ottoman aspirations, Iran's theocracy and Saudi Arabia's modernization under Vision 2030, contribute to regional fragmentation.

Effects of Regional Dynamics:-

1) Increased instability ^{and} proxy wars:
The interplay of realism and constructivist factors has intensified conflicts across the Middle East.

Example: The Syrian civil war involves actors like Russia, Iran, Turkey and U.S., each supporting different factions to advance their interests.

2) Shifting alliances:

The region's shifting alliances reflect both realist power dynamics and liberal economic interests.

Example: The Abraham Accords, normalizing relations between Israel and several Arab states like UAE and Bahrain realigning against Iran.

3) Global repercussions:

The Middle East dynamics have ripple effects across the globe, influencing energy market, migration patterns and international security.

Example:

The Russia Ukraine War has led to increased Middle Eastern oil production to offset energy shortages.

4) Emerging Multipolarity:

China's and Russia's growing influence, combined with U.S.'s recalcitrance, signals transition to multipolarity in ~~Middle East~~.

Example:

China's ~~mediation~~ of the Saudi-Iran

detente highlights its rising role as a diplomatic powerbroker.

Conclusion:-

The resurgence of the Middle East as a focal point of global power politics underscores the intricate interplay of realist, liberal and constructivist dynamics. While realism highlights the struggle for power and security, liberalism points to opportunities for economic cooperation and institutional engagement. Constructivism, on the other hand, underscores the region's deep-rooted identity and ideological conflicts. Addressing region's challenges that balanced power with diplomacy and cooperation.

References:-

1- The Israel lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy. J.J. Mearsheimer. (2007)

2- The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of World order.
S.P. Huntington. (1996)

3- The Middle east in World Affairs. M. Khadduri. (1956).

Question NO: 2

Introduction:

The term "World War" carries a significant weight due to its association with two of the most destructive and transformative conflicts in modern history: WWI and WWII. These wars reshaped the global order, altered geopolitics and set the stage for the modern era. However, due to the usual usage of the term for contemporary global tensions, historians and analysts often hesitate to reuse it formally. This reflects the reluctance due to complexity of defining "World War" and consequences involving such powerful terms. The contrast between casual usage and formal reluctance creates dynamic space for exposition.

1) Historical Significance of the term:-

The term "World War" is historically anchored to specific conflicts that met certain criteria: global participation, widespread destruction and profound political, social

and economic consequences.

Example:- WWI (1914-1918) and WWII (1939-1945) involved a majority of the world Nations, spanned multiple continents and led to fall of empires, decolonization and establishment of UN.

Comparative Insight:-

Modern conflicts, such as the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war or the U.S.-China trade tensions, have global implications but lack the universal military engagement and transformative outcomes.

2) Reluctance to invoke Alarm:-

Analysts and historians are cautious with the term to avoid sensationalism or fear mongering, especially in era of heightened media influence and public anxiety.

Example:-

During the cold war tensions between U.S and Soviet Union were immense & yet conflicts like Korean and Vietnam wars, despite their international dimensions were not labeled "world wars".

Comparative insight

The misuse of the term in describing modern issues trends on social media

during heightened crises, dilutes its gravity.

3) Evolving Nature of Conflict:
Warfare today is asymmetric and multifaceted, involving cyber warfare, economic sanctions and proxy battles, rather than direct confrontations of widespread military use.

Example:

The U.S. led war on terror involved coalition of nations but lacked clear-cut state-to-state confrontation.

Comparative insight

The nature of globalization means many conflicts have far-reaching effects, yet they are categorized differently (e.g. regional wars, civil wars) to reflect their specific dynamics.

4) Popular vs. Scholarly Usage:

Popular culture and media often employ "world war" metaphorically to describe events with widespread impact such as Covid-19 pandemic or climate change.

Example:

Terms like "World War C" (for Covid-19) or "World War E" (for energy crises) highlights the

popular-tendency to dramatize events.

Comparative insight:

Historians aim for precision, while the public uses the term broadly, reflecting differing priorities in communication.

Conclusion:-

The reluctance of historians to reuse the term "World War" stems from a commitment to preserve the historical identity and specificity of the term. While popular discourse embraces the dramatic and evocative potential of the phrase, experts emphasize the need for rigorous definitions and historical parallels.

Understanding this dynamic underscores the importance of careful terminology in shaping our collective memory and future discourse.

References:-

- 1- The Rise and fall of Great powers: Economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000, P. Kennedy (1989)
- 2- Reports of RAND Corporation and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).