

# International Relations:

Paper: II:

Part: II

Q.03.

From the cold war in ideological settings, to the cold war of economic fronts, the scenario has changed but the story remains same. Comment.

## Introduction:

The transformation of cold war confrontations between the US and Soviet Union to contemporary economic rivalries reflects a shift in the tools and arenas of global power politics. The essence of international relations, however remains constant: states seek to maximise their influence and power and within an anarchic global order. Using the lenses of liberalism and realism, the analysis can be done to find out whether the current dynamics signify continuity or departure from the cold war paradigm, with realism still appearing as a dominant framework in shaping state behaviour.

## a. Ideological Cold War:-

: (Realism In Practice):

During the cold war (1947-1991), the U.S and USSR were entrenched in a zero-sum game, embodying realism's focus on power maximizing and survival. Proxy wars (e.g., Vietnam and Afghanistan), the nuclear arms race, and balance of power politics defines this era. Despite the ideological rhetoric, both super power operated under realist principles for maximizing national security and influence. Liberal ideals, such as fostering democracy were secondary to strategic considerations, as seen in the U.S alliances, with authoritarian regimes.

## b. Economic Fronts:

: (Liberalism meets Realism)

The post cold war period saw the rise of globalisation, heralded by liberalism's emphasis on economic interdependence and co-operation. Institutions like WTO and initiatives like China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI) embody liberal aspirations for shared prosperity. However, economic competition between the US and China reveals the enduring relevance of Realism. The US-China

trade war, restrictions on semiconductors, and technological rivalries in AI and 5G illustrate states leveraging economic tools for power projection, akin to cold war-era geopolitical competition.

## The Dominance Of Realism:

Realism has remained dominant despite liberal frameworks underpinning international institutions. States prioritize sovereignty and security over co-operation when interests diverge. For example, China's assertive policies in South China sea challenge liberal ideals of international law.

Similarly, US efforts to decouple from Chinese supply chains reflect realist priorities of relative gains and security concerns.

## The Ongoing Rivalry:

The ongoing US China economic rivalry exemplifies how the strategic competition for global hegemony has changed from ideological to material terms.

1. Trade and tariffs Restrictions: The US imposed tariffs of \$350 billion on Chinese goods starting in 2018, while China retaliated with tariffs on \$100 billion US products. These measures significantly impacted bilateral trade, with

US imports from China decreasing by 35% - 40%.

## 2. Technology and Innovations

The US has restricted China's access to advanced technologies like semi-conductors, citing security concerns, commonly known as starting of a "Chip War". For instance, bans on Huawei and export controls on AI technologies aim to curb China's progress in high-tech industries. China in response is heavily investing in indigenous innovation to reduce dependency of foreign technology.

## 3. Global Supply Chains:

Both countries are shaping global supply chains to serve their strategic interests. The US encourages companies to re-locate production out of China, while China expands its BRI to build economic influence.

## 4. Economic alliances:

The US reinforces partnerships through mechanisms like Indo-Pacific Economic framework to counter balance China's influence in the region. Meanwhile China strengthens ties with countries in global south and is building alternate financial institutions like Asian Infrastructure Development Bank.

## Conclusion:-

As of the first cold war, the dynamics of this war also follows the power-maximization motives of the great powers. On the other hand, US is again using same phenomenon but in economic terms to maintain status quo, and that is "containment". However, the competition continues to influence the global markets, technological advancements, and diplomatic alignments, as it was in the war with USSR but a single factor changed that is the focus has shifted from purely military objectives towards economic and technological ones.

## P. 5:-

Revival of terrorism and insurgency --

## Introduction:

The revival of terrorism and insurgency in Pakistan particularly along its western borders, is deeply intertwined with instability in Afghanistan. Over decades, Afghanistan's turmoil has acted as a catalyst for military spillover with instability in Afghanistan, and a spillover to Pakistan, destabilizing its security landscape. The Taliban's return to power

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in August 2021 under Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has further compounded the challenges, with fluctuating bilateral relations affecting counter-terrorism efforts. The porous border, the cross-border militant activities, and Pakistan's complicated engagement with the IEA demand a nuanced approach to address the evolving security dynamics.

## Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan's

### Security:

Afghanistan's instability has historically been a breeding ground for terrorism in the region. The rise of militancy during the Soviet-Afghan war and subsequent civil conflicts fostered groups like the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Post-2001, NATO operations drove many militants into Pakistan's tribal areas, exacerbating insurgency. The return of Taliban to power has emboldened extremist factions, with the TTP increasing attacks within Pakistan. Reports suggest a 51% increase in terrorism incidents in Pakistan in 2023 compared to previous years, primarily attributed to TTP sanctuaries in Afghanistan. The resurgence undermines regional stability and Pakistan's efforts for internal security.

## Pakistan - IEA relations and Security Challenges:

Pakistan initially viewed Taliban's return as an opportunity to stabilize Afghanistan and reduce external influence. However, tensions have emerged. Despite IEA's assurances, TTP elements operate freely in the Afghan territories, posing direct threats to Pakistan. The Taliban's reluctance to curb these and their hardened stance on the Durand line issue have strained relations. Incidents like cross-border shelling and militant infiltrations illustrate the deteriorating trust between Islamabad and Kabul.

Additionally, Afghanistan's engagement with India for economic and strategic purposes complicates Pakistan's regional security calculus.

## Policy measures for Western Borders:

### 1. Strengthening Border Management:

Pakistan should accelerate the fencing of the Durand Line and enhance surveillance technologies, including drones and biometric systems, to curtail cross border movement of the militants.

### 2. Diplomatic Engagement:

Maintaining open channels of communication with the Taliban leadership is crucial.

Confidence-Building measures and negotiations focused on mutual security concerns can bridge trust deficit.

### 3. Regional Collaborations

Engaging regional powers like China, Russia and Iran in dialogue to ensure Afghanistan's stability can help neutralise external interference. Pakistan must advocate for mutual and multilateral frameworks addressing terrorism and economic aid for Afghanistan.

### 4. Rehabilitation of Tribal areas:-

Socio-economic development in Pakistan's western regions can counteract militancy. Investments in education, infrastructure, and local governance can deter extremist recruitment.

### 5. Leveraging International Support:

Pakistan must work with global actors to ensure Taliban adhere to their commitments, such as preventing their territory from being used for terrorism. Utilizing platforms like the UN can amplify the efforts.

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## Conclusion:

Afghanistan's instability and Taliban's governance have profound implications for Pakistan's security, especially on western borders. By adopting comprehensive border management, fostering regional collaboration, and engaging diplomatically with the IEA, Pakistan can mitigate these challenges. Stability in Afghanistan remains pivotal for peace in Pakistan, and strategic, pragmatic policies must guide Islamabad's approach in this complex geopolitical landscape.

## Q. 6:

Middle East has resurfaced as a hot spot of global power politics. ----- of IR.

## Introduction:

The Middle East has re-emerged as a critical arena for global power competition, shaped by regional conflicts, shifting alliances, and external powers' strategic interests. The region's geopolitical importance stems from its energy resources, key maritime ~~routes~~, and its role as cultural and religious nexus. The interplay between internal instability and external intervention has intensified rivalries, creating a landscape deeply embedded in IR theories.

# The Cause Effect Relationships

## a. Geopolitical Importance of Oil and its effect on Power Struggle:

Middle East's vast oil reserves, that are of 48% of global oil reserves, remain a critical driver of global power politics. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Iraq sit atop some of the world's largest reserves, making the region essential for energy security. This wealth has attracted the involvement of major powers like the US., which historically maintained influence through alliances with Gulf monarchies. However, the effect has been twofold: while oil wealth has boosted regional economies, it has also fostered internal rivalries and external dependencies. For instance, the US. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 reignited tensions between Iran and west, exacerbating instability across the region.

## b. Sectarianism as a catalyst of Proxy wars:

The Sunni-Shia divide has long fueled conflict in the Middle East, with states like KSA and Iran using sectarianism to project their powers. The cause lies in their competing ideological visions for the region, with Iran supporting groups like Hezbollah and KSA backing Sunni factions. The

effect has been the proliferation of proxy wars, most notably in Yemen, Syria and Iraq. In Yemen, for example, Saudi led coalitions confront Iranian supported Hezbollah and Houthi rebels, creating a humanitarian crisis and deepening geopolitical divides. The sectarian contestation destabilises government structures and delays regional peace efforts.

### 3. Arab Spring and Authoritarian's Rises

The Arab Spring was a watershed moment, driven by demands of political reforms and economic justice. However, the effect of these uprisings has largely been the entrenchment of the authoritarian regimes or the descent into chaos. In Egypt, the rise and fall of muslim brotherhood underscored the challenges of democratisation. In Libya and Syria, civil uprisings developed into protracted conflicts, drawing in external actors like Russia and Turkey. These interventions often framed as security measures, have instead prolonged instability and created spheres of influence that exacerbate regional polarisation.

### 4. Israel's Deals and Implications:

Abraham accords spearheaded by the US, mark a significant cause of shifting alliances. By normalising relations between Israel & several Arab states, the agreements aim to counterbalance Iran's influence. However,

The effect has been reordering of traditional alliances, with Palestine's plight increasingly marginalized. This has fuelled discontent among regional populations and complicated relations between Israel and non-signatory states like Lebanon and Iran, who see these accords as a threat to their strategic objectives.

## Analysis under Theoretical Constructs:

Under realism, the Middle East epitomizes a struggle for power and security in an anarchic system. The US seeks to preserve hegemony, while emerging powers like China challenge this dominance. Liberalism however, highlights the potential for co-operation, as seen in the OPEC and Abraham Accords and China's mediation between Iran and KSA.

**P. 8:**

Failure of liberal internationalism has  
----- Atlantic regions.

## Introduction:

The post world war-II era was largely dominated by liberal internationalism, which promoted global co-operation, the spread of democracy and economic integration through multilateral institutions like UN and the WTO. However, in recent years, liberal internationalism has faced significant challenges.

leading to resurgence of realpolitik, characterized by power centric policies, national interests, and the use of force or coercion. This shift is evident in both the Asia-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions, where rising powers and changing security dynamics are reshaping the international order.

## Asia Pacific and Return of Realpolitik

Asia Pacific is the most notable manifestation of realpolitik. There, it is the growing rivalry between the US and China. China's assertive actions in South Asia and South China Sea, where it has materialised artificial islands and defied international legal rulings, have prompted a US response grounded in strategic containment rather than liberal cooperation. The U.S.'s "Indo-Pacific Strategy" and its strengthening of alliances with countries like Japan, India and Australia represent a return to real-politik, as these actions prioritise national interests and regional dominance over multilateral engagements. Additionally, the economic coercion used by both countries, such as tariffs and sanctions, exemplifies the use of power to achieve strategic goals, sidelining international institutions meant to foster collaboration. In this context, realpolitik not only informs military policies but also shapes economic and technological competition, particularly in areas like 5G technology, where both view each other's rise as a threat of global influence.

## Euro-Atlantic Region: A shift Towards Realpolitik

In Euro-Atlantic region the failure of liberal internationalism is evident in the rise of populism and nationalism, undermining the co-operative frameworks that characterised the post-cold war era. The EU has struggled to maintain unity in face of crisis like Brexit, which exemplifies the prioritisation of national sovereignty over collective European integration. The UK's withdrawal from EU is the direct challenge to international liberal order, as it underscores the rise of realpolitik; the pursuit of national interest at the expense of broader co-operation. Furthermore, the ongoing tensions in Ukraine, where Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its 2022 invasion of Ukraine represents a blatant rejection of international norms, exemplify a return to power-driven, zero-sum approach. NATO's response, focused on military deterrence and strategic alliances, reflect the resurgence of Realpolitik.

## The Decline of Liberal Internationalism

The decline of liberal internationalism is also visible in the broader geopolitical landscape, where countries are increasingly questioning the effectiveness

economic decoupling, particularly between the US and China, signifies nationalist turn in trade policies.

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of multilateral institutions in managing global challenges. The US under Trump administration, largely abandoned multilateral agreements, such as the Paris Climate Accord and Iran nuclear deal, opting for bilateral negotiations and "America First" policies. Similarly, Russia's actions in Ukraine have shown a disregard to liberal international order, as it seeks to influence in its near abroad through force, once again invoking real politik.