

PART-II

Q:- Iran and Pakistan tension is on the rise as both the countries launched air strikes on each other's territories. Critically evaluate the reasons and beneficiaries of this tension. Also find ways the de-escalation of tension and attaining normalcy.

I. Introduction

Iran and Pakistan have involved in violating air space of each other in recent time. The conflict started with the Iran's military air-strikes on Pakistan followed by Iraq and Syria's space violation by Iran. The unfortunate incidents takes place after Middle-East volatile situation due to Israel and Palestine war. Moreover, due to Israel's brutal genocide, Iran has been actively engaged in the region ^{particularly} either by its militant groups in various countries. However, the

Recent endeavour of BRICS to expand its members also include Iran. This involvement has helped Iran boost its potential to evade from western-imposed sanctions thus urged it to remain active in the region.

ii- Iran-Saudi Arabia rapprochement boosting Iran's confidence

Iran-Saudi Arabia rapprochement mediated by China also incites the sentiments of bravery in Iran's officials to carry out such attacks.

iii- Israel's increasing brutal violation of human's rights

Recent brutal genocide of Israel on Palestine and its undue support to Palestine has urged Iran to carry attacks to tell Israel about its potential.

iv- Iran-China investment

Iran-China investment consists of

agreement of about \$420 billion. Such a huge investment enables Iran to boost its sovereignty and to emerge as a regional player.

v- Pakistan's aversion to IP-gas pipeline project

The delayed project of IP-gas pipeline due to western-imposed sanctions on Iran has intensified the feelings of apprehension among Iran, which could be one of the reasons to attack Pakistan.

vi- Pressure on Iranian leadership on the account of terrorism

Recent attacks on Kerman in Iran has killed 94 and injured 294. To mitigate the anger to Iranians, Iran is doing cross-border attacks to soothe its public.

v- The beneficiaries of the attack

i- Generation of fertile ground for India to malign Pakistan

India would be the greatest beneficiary of the conflict. It has generated various opportunities to operate anti-Pakistan missions from the land of Iran.

ii- Increasing USA's aspiration of isolating Iran

USA has long been involved in isolating Iran socially, politically, and diplomatically. Such attacks help USA propagate its mission.

iii- Israel's desire of wiping of Palestine

Involvement of Iran in regional conflict could help Israel in wiping out Palestinian as opined by Israel.

VI- Current efforts of de-escalation of Tensions

Despite the chances of further de-escalation, the two countries sagaciously negotiated to end the conflict; and it

is mediated by China and Turkey. They have agreed to carry out diplomatic relations.

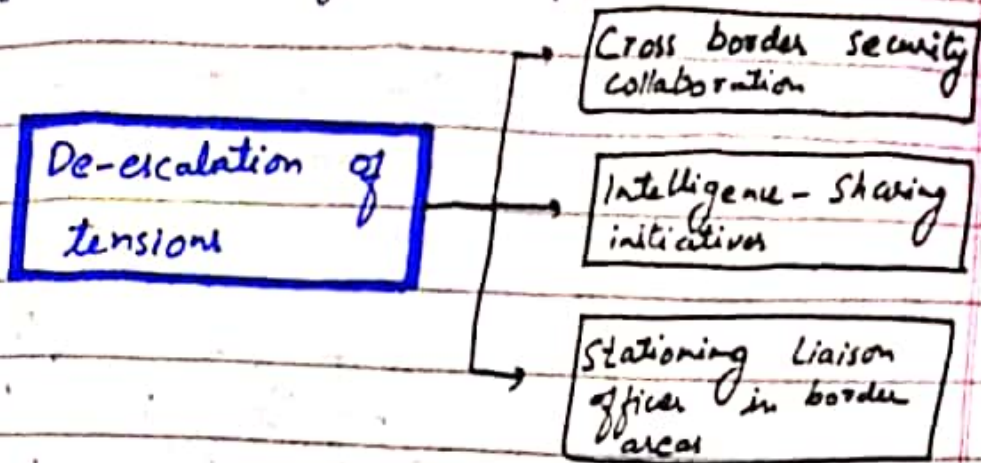


Figure: Collaboration after cross-border tension

VII. What measures should be followed to avoid future conflict?

i- Promotion of economic and energy cooperation

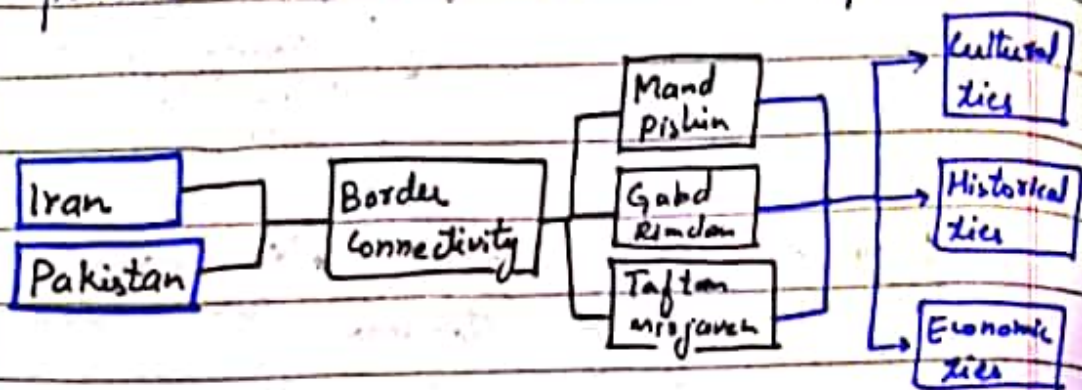
Current trade agreement between Iran and Pakistan revolves around \$1.2 billion. There should be encouraged for taking more agreements.

ii- Completion of IP-gas pipeline project

IP-gas pipeline, which is in limbo from Pakistani side for many years, should be completed as soon as possible.

iii- Opening of border security instances and market opportunities

Opening of border markets for economic boost along with security imperative could be the viable option.



VII. Conclusion

Iran-Pakistan recent air-strikes have generated the sense of fear among Pakistanis and Iranian. Iran first targeted anti-Iran terrorist group in Pakistan followed by Pakistani attack. The conflict has generated after Iran's active involvement in the region. The strained efforts could have enhanced the opportunists like Iran, USA and Israel to benefit from the scenario. However, Iran-Pakistan's endeavours to not expand the conflict has marred their aspirations. Thus, economic, security, and cultural connectivity between Iran-Pakistan can work further closer.

Q:- How do you see Pak-Afghan relations in the wake of repeated attacks by TTP and ISKP in Pakistan using Afghan land against Pakistan and in turn Islamabad decided to pull out Afghan refugees?

I. Introduction

Pakistan and Afghanistan diplomatic relations have strained for many years.

After Taliban takeover of Kabul, the relation has not improved, yet it has continued to deteriorate further.

One of the main reasons for deteriorating relations is the rise in terrorist activities in Pakistan, particularly on military officials. Pakistan has many times asked Afghanistan to take any actions against TTP, but it is reluctant to take any major action. Thus, following the bad situation, Pakistan has to take bold decision.

It has expelled Afghan refugees to put pressure on Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the relation has strained further.

Therefore, it is mandatory for both sides to act sagaciously and improve relation cordially in order to bring regional stability.

II- Rise of Terrorism and its Implications on Pakistan

Following Taliban takeover of Kabul, terrorist activities has increased significantly in Pakistan.

1- Uptick of Terrorism

The terrorist activities have risen drastically after Taliban has captured Kabul. This has distorted the relations and disrupted Pakistani internal stability.

"There is 51 per cent rise of terrorism in Pakistan after Taliban takeover of Kabul."

(Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services)

ii- Disruption of Pakistani internal stability

The rise in terrorist activities has dismantled peace efforts by Pakistani officials. Owing to the rapid pace of attacks particularly on Pakistani security forces, the Pakistan Afghanistan relation has deteriorated.

iii- Socio-economic disparities

The terrorist activities have resulted in socio-economic disparities among Pakistani public. Drug trafficking, dollar smuggling, CPEC dismantling have enhanced due to such effects.

iv- Issues on border fencing

Taliban and Pakistan have involved in issues regarding border fencing. Taliban did not recognize de-facto border, thus causing huge influx of terrorist from Afghanistan.

v- Enhancing separatist movement

Terrorist groups like TTP, Al-Qaeda, IS-K are secretly involved in enhancing separatist

movement among Pashtuns to make Pashtunistan.

III. Rise in Terrorism and Pakistan's counter response

i- Decision to expel Afghan refugees

In response, Pakistan has decided to expel all Afghan nationals refugee that are dwelling in Pakistan.

ii- Presence of Afghan's nationals in Pakistan and their statistics

There are various Afghan nationals of various categories in Pakistan.

Afghan nationals	→	3.7 million
Registered	→	1.3 million
Afghan. citizen- ship card holders	→	8,40,000
Undocumented	→	7,75,000
New entries	→	600,000

United Nation Higher Commission
for Refugees (UNHCR)

iii- Aspirations of putting pressure on Taliban government

Afghan refugee expulsion by Pakistani government is under the strategy to put pressure on Afghan Government.

iv- Current development regarding Afghan refugee expulsion

After the decision, many undocumented refugees have been sent back to Afghanistan with only Rs 50,000.

IV- Pakistan-Afghanistan relations after such events

i- Border security challenges

The relation has dismantled and the border security challenges and skirmishes have increased dramatically.

ii- Disrupted diplomatic efforts

The relations after recent development has damaged the diplomatic efforts to negotiate on important issues.

iii- Possibility of close relation of India with Afghanistan

There is a rise of concerns about close relation of Taliban with India to malign Pakistan's stability.

iv- Blame game on both sides

Afghan nationals have blamed Pakistan about Afghanistan's internal chaos and mayhem and Pakistan does the same.

v- Taliban officials calling Pakistan a theft of refugees' property

Pakistan did not allow to take more than 50,000 PKR with Afghan refugees. Thus, Afghans called them a theft of refugee property.

V- Measure to improve the relations

i- Economic and security cooperation

There must be economic and security cooperation between both the countries. Trans-Afghan Railways to connect Uzbekistan to Pakistan is one such move.

ii- People to people contact

There must be people-to-people collaboration on multiple fronts to engage constructively to improve the relations.

iii- Multilateral partnership

Multilateral partnership between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, China, Central Asian Republics, and Turkey can make the relation better.

iv- Trust-building efforts

It is mandatory on both sides to work on trust building efforts so improve the relations. Such efforts should include cultural, historical, and economic ties.

VI- Conclusion

In a nutshell, Afghanistan Pakistan relations have faced many setbacks due to uptick in terrorism. These activities have disrupted Pakistan's internal peace. In counter-response, Pakistan has expelled many of Afghan refugees to put pressure on Afghanistan. Such efforts have dismantled the cordial relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, economic and security cooperation, people-to-people contact and trust building efforts can make positive outcomes.

Q:- SIFC is expecting huge FDI from Middle East and China. How do you see change of investment in Pakistan.

I. Introduction

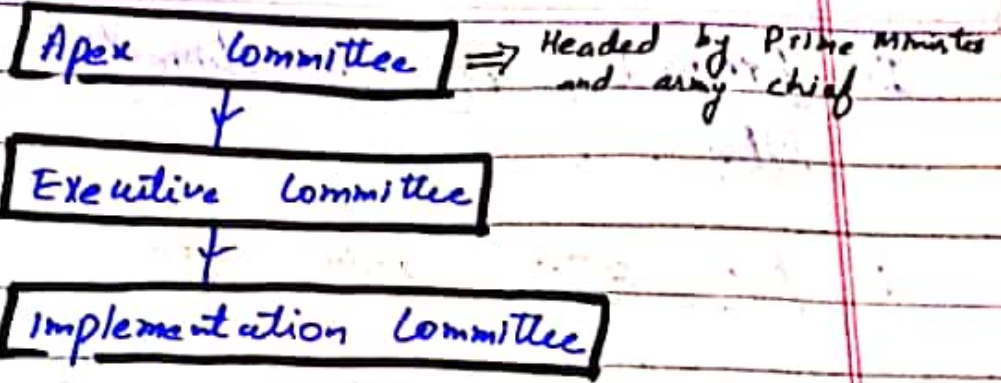
Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) holds profound significance in the realm of socio-political and economic stagnation of Pakistan. With the incultation of military role, it promises to bring the country out of economic crisis. Moreover, the special focus ~~on~~ in SIFC has been placed on the attraction of foreign direct investment, particularly from Gulf countries and China. For that, many provisions are in place to ensure the 'conducive' environment of business. Furthermore, it acts a attracting ground for investors by negating the challenges which deemed to hinder the business environment in Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan, with proper implementation of suggested provisions under SIFC, could experience a better economic growth due to huge influx of investment facilities.

II. What is SIFC?

Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is a hybrid model having civil and military officials. The council has emerged at the time when Pakistan is at the brink of economic catastrophe. With bleak economic indicators, SIFC would serve as a guarantor for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to make the country's growth on right track. For that purpose, the role of army has been added so that it would ensure the smooth process of business for foreign investors.

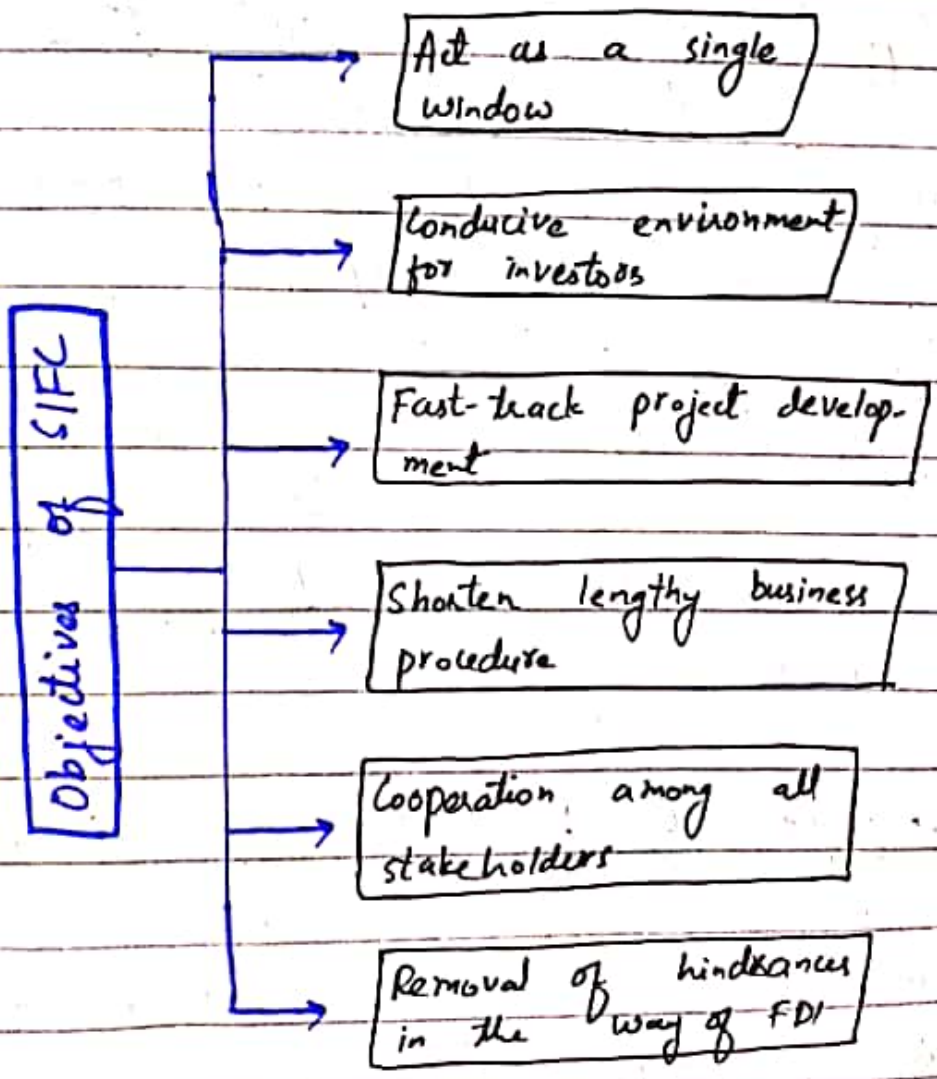
III. Composition of SIFC

The framework of SIFC consists of unified approach for addressing economic disparities. It institutionalises the army's role in the decision-making body to make investors comfortable with the business environment.



IV. Objectives of SIFC

With the focus on improving the economic conditions of the country, SIFC has the following objectives.



IV. Prospects for investment under SIFC

i- Key sectors under SIFC

SIFC has promised to bring an ample benefit by focusing on certain key areas. Such dimensions consists of Defense, Information Technology, energy, mining, agriculture, domestic and foreign investment.

ii- Approval of projects under SIFC

Many projects have been approved under SIFC. For example, Saudi Aramco Refinery, Thar Coal Rail Connectivity, hydropower projects of 245 MW in Gilgit Baltistan, construction of Diamer Basha Dam, investment in agriculture sector and many more.

iii- Improving visa policy to ease investment

To ease the investment in Pakistan, new visa policy has been introduced.

To Removing the long procedure for acquiring visa, SIFC has come up with the policy of providing visa within 24 hours.

There are many provisions of providing five years, three years, and one year visa policy.

iv- Pro-active diplomacy increasing the prospects of investment

Pro-active diplomacy involves the negotiation and dialogue of Pakistan with many countries for FDI.

Special focus has been given to Middle East countries, Gulf countries, and China. Such diplomatic efforts are crucial for invitation of FDI.

v- Legislative plan for cooperative framing on private land

Many procedures are involved to safeguard land and increase the prospects of agricultural investment.

V- Reorientation of the path of FDI through SIFC

Various areas have already been addressed under SIFC, as indicated by caretaker prime minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

i- Repatriation of dollar

Considering the severe depletion of foreign exchange reserve, SIFC has come up with practical approach to attract dollars in the form of investments and remittances.

ii- Removal of bureaucratic hurdles

Bureaucratic red-tapism, which has undermined the business culture, is now addressed with due consideration. For instance, it includes the permission ^{for business} which would be given within 15 days for foreign investors.

iii- Organisations of investment platforms

The organisation of Pakistan Investment Roadshow by SIFC in Dubai under

G2G (Government to Government) and G2B (Business to Government) have opened vistas for FDI in Pakistan

iv. Expanding the role towards local investors

Local investors also uphold the profound significance for economic growth in Pakistan. Thus, special focus to local investors has also been given.

v. Army role as a guarantor

The role of army has observed as a guarantor for continuity of policies. Moreover, it also provides security to investors.

vi. The role of SIEC in economic development

Increase in economic growth

Opportunities for employment

Reduction in poverty rate

Conducive environment for business



A new wave of Industrialization



Privatization of SOEs

VII. Conclusion

To conclude, the SIFC's role in maintaining ^{better} economic sector of the country through attracting FDI cannot be denied. A civil-military hybrid framework could serve as a platform, where foreign investor could find a chance to invest in different sectors without any threat of non-implementation strategies. Moreover, the economic indicators of the country would be improved when FDI provides a chance of employment opportunities, poverty reduction, and building effective trust mechanisms. Hence, SIFC holds the chance of making Pakistan a better country economically.

India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor is projected as a competitor of BRI of China. Critically evaluate the potential and future prospects of the two projects.

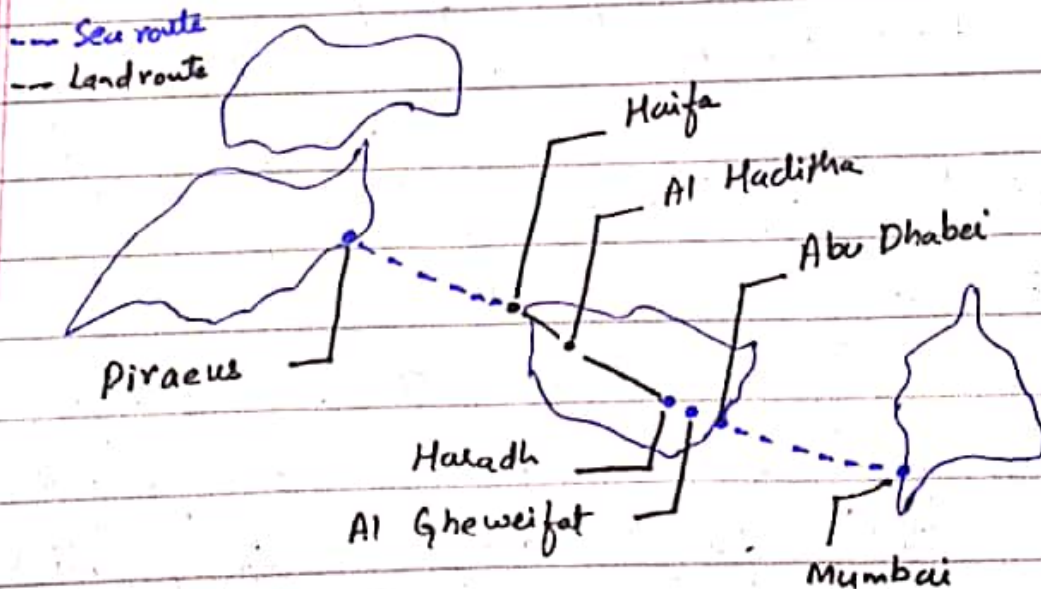
1. Introduction

In the changing dynamics of geo-political and geo-economic scenarios, the role of economic corridors prove to be dominant feature to attain a global hegemon. Considering the prospects of such corridors, India, along with ~~soo~~ other countries, has come up with its corridor namely India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). In defining the proclaimed purpose of trade, commerce, economy and people-to-people contact, the hidden objective cannot be ignored. Ostensibly, countering China's Belt and Road Initiative seems to be the priority of IMEC project. While both the corridors have some future prospects of economic boom, integration, and political leverage, the IMEC still far below in its potential as compared to BRI.

II- What is IMEC?

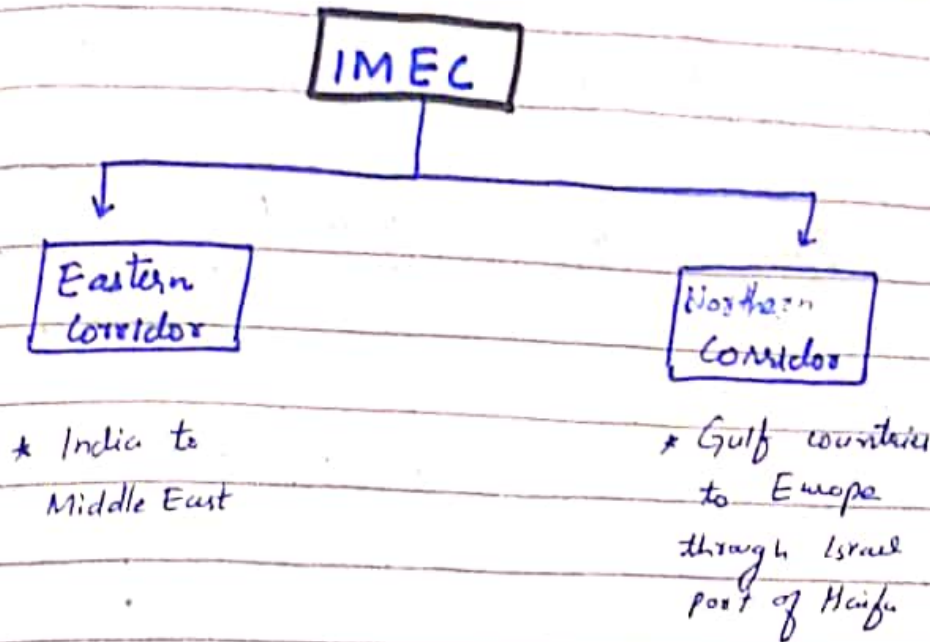
India-Middle-East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is the economic corridor announced by India, along with other countries, at the forum of G-20 Summit held in India in September 2023. Analyzing the potential implications of soft power of China under BRI, the India has come up to attain its endeavor of ^{regional} global dominance to undergo paradigm shift for creating enormous geopolitical repercussions. It is a multibillion project connecting India, Middle East, Mediterranean Sea and Europe.

i- Key elements and connectivity of IMEC



ii- Economic Corridors of IMEC

IMEC has two corridors.



III IMEC as the potential competitor of BRI

The main objective of IMEC is to counter China's growing influence through its mega project of BRI. However, the potential of IMEC is not enough now to surpass the huge project of BRI. Following reasons are enough to prove the stance.

i- Initiation and Progress

BRI was launched in 2013 and

it has completed many of its projects. While IMEC is in initiation step with the status of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by relevant parties.

ii- Scope and investment

BRI has allocated \$US 8 trillion by Chinese government; whereas, IMEC is a small project of few billion dollars.

iii- Geographical coverage

BRI has covered almost 150 countries with huge investment potentials. The countries are primarily developing spanning over Asia, Africa, Europe. In contrast, IMEC is connecting only 20 countries mostly of developed economies.

iv- Transportation mode

Almost 70% of investment in BRI has been focused on land-based routes.

Rail, sea routes have also been included. In IMEC, sea transportation, rail, roads connections have been included.

v- Scope of Project

In BRI, the focus has been centered on energy, infrastructure, economy, culture, agriculture, and industry. Whereas, IMEC has limited scope with particular focus on rail, road, and shipping infrastructure.

vi- Financial responsibility

China is the sole financial donor for BRI. Its exclusive financial responsibility is held responsible for the success of BRI. In contrast, IMEC project has no clear defined financial responsibility.

IV- Is IMEC a potential threat to BRI?

Considering the above mentioned stances, it is evident that IMEC is

not capable enough to replace or surpass BRI. With limited in its scope, financial mayhem, less geo-graphical outreach, IMEC requires a lot of time to make itself comparable to BRI.

V. Future prospects of the two projects

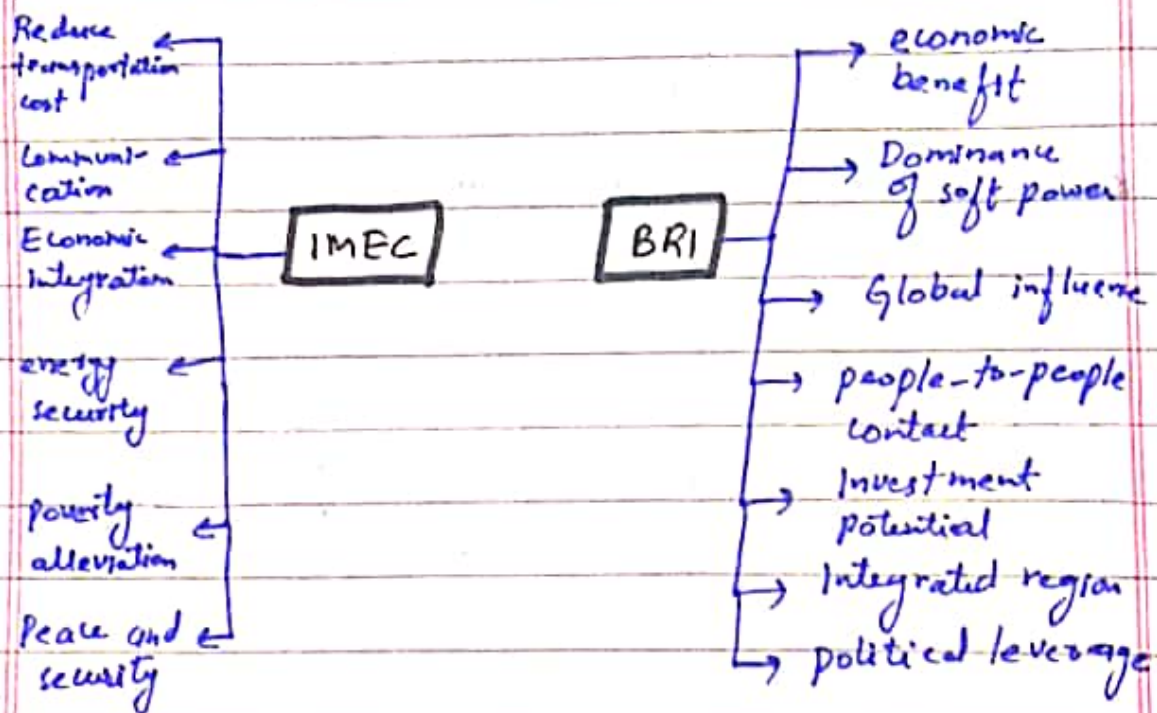


Figure 1: The future prospects of the two projects

I. Economic Integration

Both the projects have the opportunity

of economic integration. As BRI has spread over 150 countries and completed most of its projects, the enormous economic impacts are already perceived. Whereas, IMEC in the preliminary stage has the potential for economic boom in near future.

ii- Source of global influence

Considering the possible outcomes of the two projects, BRI and IMEC have the potential of political gains and hegemonic influence. The influence of BRI has already sensed; however, IMEC would leverage the project for attaining possible outcomes.

iii- Enhancing people-to-people contact

Both projects, with the help of trade liberalization, have the potential of enhancing people-to-people contact. Sharing cultural ties and traditional values, the prospects of making the world a global village is perceived under the realm of BRI and IMEC.

VI. Conclusion

To conclude, economic corridors serve as the political chessboard for ~~attaining~~ attaining global influence. The possibility of integrating different regions is measured through the practical aspirations of BRI and IMEC. The two projects, with subtle differences, particularly in terms of global reach and financial contributions, would serve as the peracea of global inequalities. However, IMEC ~~is~~ ~~is~~ is lacking in real spirit to counter BRI. It could not be considered as the potential threat to BRI. Despite having differences, the two projects have the prospects of economic integrations, poverty alleviation, and people-to-people contact.