

DATE: _____

DAY: _____

Part-II

Q No. 2

Ans: Introduction:

The Cold war containment policy, articulated by George Kennan in 1947, was designed to prevent Soviet expansion without direct war.

It combined military deterrence, economic aid, and ideological framing.

Through the lenses of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, containment's strengths and weaknesses become clear. Applying this framework to US-China tensions highlights both continuity and change in global strategy.

Realist Perspective:

Containment reflected balance of power logic. By 1950, US defense spending had risen to \$50 billion annually (about 5% of GDP), compared to the USSR's estimated \$20 billion.

DATE: _____

DAY: _____

NATO's creation in 1949 institutionalized collective defense, with 12 founding members contributing nearly 1 million troops to Europe.

- **Strengths:** The military superiority deterred Soviet aggression in Europe.

- **Limitations:** The security dilemma escalated into an arms race — by 1962, the US had 25,000 nuclear warheads, versus the USSR's 3,300, creating instability despite deterrence.

Liberal Institutionalism:

Containment relied on institutions like the Marshall Plan (1948 - 1952), which injected \$13.3 billion into Western Europe, raising industrial output by 35% and stabilizing economies. Bretton Woods institutions embedded US leadership in global finance.

- **Strengths:** Economic recovery legitimized US leadership and reduced communist appeal.

DATE: _____

DAY: _____

• Limitations: Burden-sharing was uneven — by 1970s, US allies contributed less than 2% of GDP to defense compared to America's 5-6%, creating alliance fatigue.

Constructive Perspective:

Containment framed the USSR as an ideological threat. US propaganda spending rose to \$2 billion annually in the 1950s, finding Voice of America and cultural diplomacy.

• Strengths: Ideological mobilization secured allies in Western Europe and Asia.

• Limitations: Overemphasis on ideology misread nationalist movements — Vietnam's war cost the US 58,000 lives and \$168 billion, undermining legitimacy.

Application to US-China Rivalry:

Realist Adaptation:

US defense spending in 2024 was

DATE:

DAY:

\$877 billion (3.4% of GDP), compared to China's \$296 billion (1.6% of GDP). The US maintains alliance with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and India, fielding 11 aircraft carriers versus China's 3.

Strength:

Balancing through Quad and AUKUS prevents Chinese hegemony

Limitation:

Risk of escalation in South China Sea Incidents.

Liberal Institutionalism:

US-China trade totaled \$658.9 billion in 2024, with a US deficit of \$295.5 billion. Institutions like World Trade Organization (WTO) and Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) are arenas of competition. The new trade war is also a result of these tensions between the US and China.

DATE: _____

DAY: _____

Strengths:

Rule-shaping in trade and digital standards sustain legitimacy.

Limitations:

Tariff wars 12.5% reduced to 10% in 2025 negotiations show fragility of regimes.

Constructivism:

Narratives of "free and open Indo-Pacific" counter China's "community of shared destiny." US semiconductor controls (2022) restricted China's access to advanced chips affecting \$400 billion worth of trade flows.

Strength:

Normative framing attract allies

Limitations:

Overuse of ideological rhetoric risk alienating swing states.

Comparative Table

Domain	US position	China Position	Stats	Tool of Containment
Defense	\$877B, 11 carriers	\$296B, 3 carriers	US 3x spending	Balancing deterrence

DATE:

DAY:

Domain	US	China	Stats	Tool of
	Position	Position		Containment
Trade	\$143 B exports \$39 B imports	Largest US Partner	Deficit \$295B	Selective decoupling
Technology	CHIPS Act Subsidies \$52B	Rare earth dominance	\$400B chip trade	Export controls
Alliances	NATO, QUAD AUKUS	Limited formal	30+ allies	Institutional lock-in

Conclusion:

Containment succeeded by combining realist deterrence, liberal institutions, and constructive narratives. Its strengths lay in coalition-building, economic acid, and strategic patience, while its limits included over extension and ideological rigidity. Applied to US-China tensions, containment evolves into a containment-lite strategy: selective denial, coalition-building and narrative

legitimacy. Quantitative data - defense budgets, trade flows, and technological controls - show that while the US retains advantages, China's ^{rise} demands calibrated tools and legitimacy-first approaches to avoid catastrophic escalation.

Q No. 8

Ans: Introduction:

BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have explained their agendas, reach, and membership, positioning themselves as platforms for Global South coordination and multipolar governance amid perceived ^{or} limitations of Western-led institutions. Their recent summit and enlargement debates since 2023-2025 signal ambitions to recalibrate global rule-making - economically through BRICS+ and security regionally through the SCO.

Theoretical lens:

By examining the whole scenario from the lense of neo-realism, the theory of 3rd great debate following the approach of functionalism such as ; Balancing and soft balancing.

Power aggregation: BRICS and SCO pool capabilities of major regional powers (China, India, Russia), enhancing bargaining leverage against Western dominance without formal alliances — a classic case of soft balancing via institutions, finance, and agenda-setting rather than military blocs. Security externality: SCO's security focus (counterterrorism, stability in Eurasia) complements Russia — China strategic coordination while avoiding overt military confrontation with NATO, indicating balancing via regional security architecture.

DATE: _____

DAY: _____

Comparative Table Old Vs. New Multilateralism

Dimension	Old multi-lateralism (Post 1945)	New multilateralism (BRICS/SCO led)
Governance Center	US/Eurocentric core institutions	Plural, regional hubs with Global South voice.
Institutional design	Universal membership; formal treaty regimes	Variable geometry; flexible coalitions; minilateral formats
Norm emphasis	Liberal order (market openness, democracy promotion)	Sovereignty, non-interference, development-led cooperation
Tools	Bretton Woods finance, NATO security, OECD norms	BRICS+ dialogue, development finance, SCO security cooperation.
Strategy	Rule-making from center to Periphery	Rule-reshaping via parallel forums and agenda-setting.

DATE: _____

DAY: _____

BRICS - SCO as challenge to the US-led international Order:

Both organization aspects to challenge US-led leadership chiefly through soft balancing, ✓ agenda-setting, and parallel institution-building, but so far-reshape rather than replace the order.

The trajectory remains gradual and contingent on internal cohesion and material capacities. Challenge posture:

Commentaries and ✓ regional analyses highlight these forums as catalysts for multipolarity and alternative governance models, questioning NATO-centric security and Western economic dominance. Expert assessments caution that transformation will be incremental; SCO and BRICS add Pressure points and alternatives, but deep ✓ structural change depends on sustained coordination, resource mobilization, and reconciling member divergences.

Changing global order:

SCO's Eurasian security coordination complements BRICS' economic agenda - together they build connective tissue for multipolar ~~claims~~ while testing the resilience of the liberal order's central norms. The global order is becoming multilayered and networked, where US-led institutions face competing narratives and parallel venues. The most defensible verdict: gradual rebalancing rather ~~than~~ sudden replacement, with norm pluralization and regime complexity intensifying across the 2020s.

Conclusion:

BRICS and SCO expansion reflects a layered transition toward new multilateralism: networked, flexible, and ~~global~~ South-centric, aimed at ~~soft~~ balancing and norm pluralization, rather than hard bloc confrontation. Neo-realism illuminates the shift; power aggregation without

DATE:

DAY:

alliance entrapment, regime complexity
without systemic rupture, and identity-
driven norm entrepreneurship. The challenge
to the US-led order is real but
strategic and incremental reshaping
pathways of influence and legitimacy
while operating within an evolving,
contested, and more plural global
architecture.

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8/20