

International Relations

Paper - II

Q: 1

Transition from Unipolar to Multipolar World and Emerging Power Dynamics of Global Powers

Introduction:

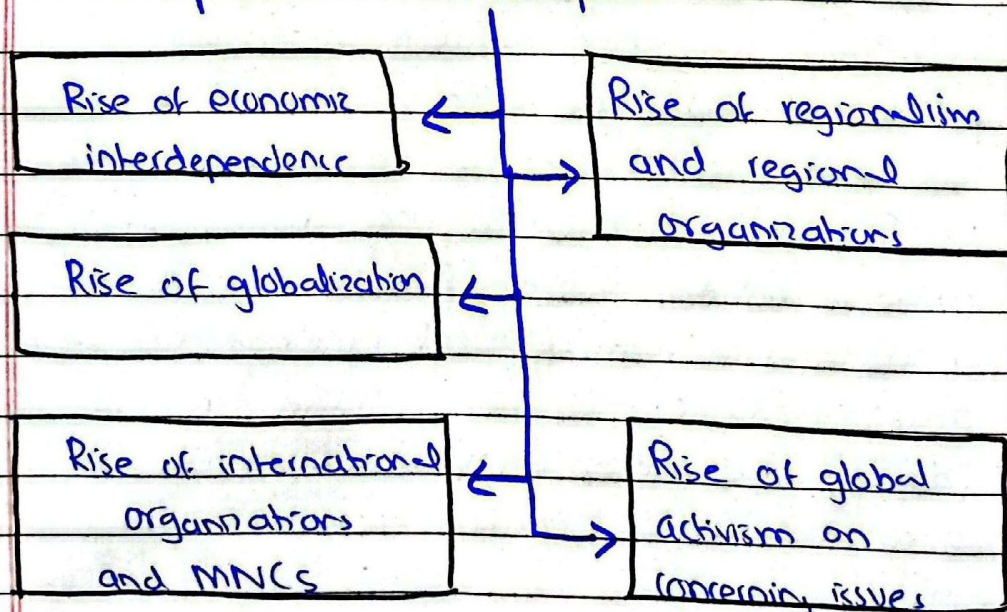
Since the end of cold war, the world had been majorly operating under unipolar world order with USA's hegemony in economic, military and technological domains. However, with the rise of China as a major economic power and revival of Putin's Russia in the 21st century and rise of other developing economies, i.e. Germany, India, Brazil, the world has majorly shifted its order from unipolar to a multipolar world. Several factors i.e. regionalism, globalization, economic rise of China, alliance politics have resulted in this transition towards a multipolar world order.

Shift from A Uni-polar World to Multipolar World

Post-cold war, USA's rise as a sole world power and dictator resulted in creation of a rigid unipolar world order from 1990s till 2012-13.

However, with the rise of following factors world order majaly shifted towards a multipole world with China, Russia, UK, France, Germany, Brazil, India, Japan emerging as global powers.

Factors Responsible For Unipolar to Multipolar Shift



Shifts Towards Multipolar World - A Liberalistic and International Society Theory - Perspectives

(i): Rise of economic interdependence :

In today's globalized world states have formed economic alliances instead of military alliances. The dependence on other states for trade and export-import, free flow of goods, services has made the use of emerging economies possible hence shifting the world order towards a multipolar world.

According to Bill Clinton:

"When people raise each other's living standards through commerce, confrontation is less likely to happen."

Liberalism is a firm advocate of economic interdependence as it makes rivalry less possible and helps bring cooperation among states. (liberal economics)

(ii) Rise of Regional Organizations - A Liberal and International Society Perspective.

Today, European Union (EU) and ASEAN have enabled the rise of economies through their efficient working models and structure.

ASEAN is the 5th largest economy of the world due to its 25% intra-state trade.

Similarly, EU has also shaped emerging regional powers which are contributing to shift towards multipolar world.

(iii): Rise of Globalization - A liberal Project:

"Globalization is the increase in interdependence, interconnectedness and integration of global economics, culture and society."

Today's world is majorly interdependent and connected in terms of economy, culture, social activism, political ideology, i.e. democracy's rise, free flow and exchange of ideas, goods, services and knowledge across borders. This transition has played a major role in the rise of emerging economies. China with its \$7 trillion trade is one of the major beneficiaries of globalization. Hence, this rise of globalization directly contributed to a shift towards multipolar world order.

(iv): Rise of International Institutions - A Liberal and International Society Perspective:

International institutions i.e. UN, WTO, IMF have provided a forum to interact with

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Other states on various terms i.e. economy, trade, barriers, climate change, humanitarian crisis.

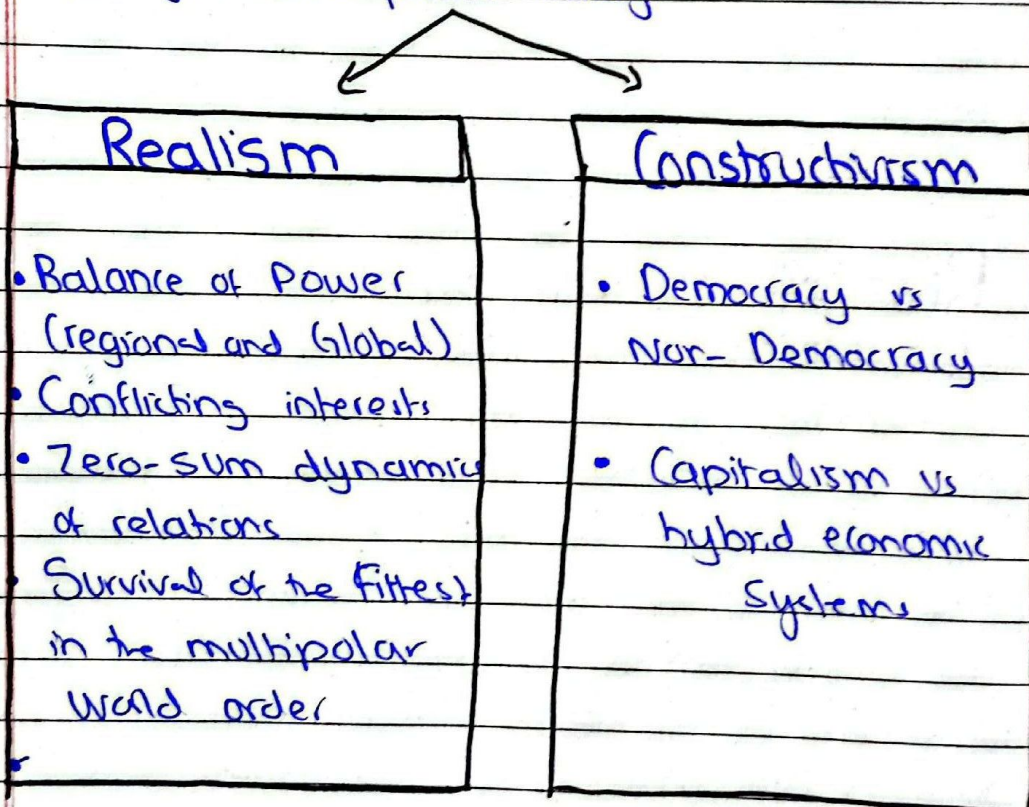
These institutions have contributed towards rise of emerging world powers by providing them authority in the form of veto and trade restrictions control via WTO. Both liberal and theory of international society as advocated by Hedley Bull belief in a world where common interests guide the cooperation among states, as manifested by international organizations.

(V): Rise of Activism on Issues Concerning the Globe:

A globalized world has also increased the rise of activism among states, giving each state contribute towards the globe and voice their concerns at international level. Today, issues like climate do not demand USA's action only to curtail them. Despite USA's exit under Trump from Paris agreement both in 2017, 2021, the world still continues its efforts to curb climate change impacts. This rise of emerging powers has made it possible to shift world order to a multipolar world where issues concerning all states especially major states are considered on international level.

Explanation of Emerging Power Dynamics Through IR Theories

Two major theories help explain the dynamics of major world powers today.



A- Realistic Perspective On Global Power Dynamics

(i): Balance of Power at Global and Regional level:

The great power politics between US and China, and the revival of Putin's Russia

in the great power politics is major shaping the world order today.

Global Level → US vs China power competition in economic, military, trade, technology and soft power is massively shaping the world power dynamics. US wants to contain China's rise by increasing the gap between the two's power. However, China strives to bridge the gap between the two by using its economy and initiatives like BRI.

Regional Level → The balance of power crisis at Indo-Pacific region among US-China is a concern for world politics. On the other hand, the ROP crisis among Russia and Europe (NATO) in eastern European region is a concern for the world.

(ii): Conflicting Interests:

USA → contain China's rise, maintain its position as a global hegemon, ensure its economic, technological and military superiority.

China → rise economically, increase free trade and economic interdependence via BRI, promote peaceful coexistence.

Russia → Revive itself as a great power, increase and maintain its sphere of influence in eastern Europe and contain NATO spread eastward.

(iii): Zero-Sum Dynamics of Relations:

All major powers today believe in a zero-sum interaction especially ~~China~~ USA which advocates



"no concession" to the competing state which could potentially result in their gain and states own loss from any collaboration.

In US-China trade → China is the major beneficiary and US is at loss as claimed by President Trump.

(iv): Survival of the fittest in the multipolar world order:

Thomas Hobbes - a realist was of the view that in an anarchic world states should ensure their survival and only the powerful can survive in a competitive world. Today, US, Russia, China, Germany, Japan etc all are in a power competition to survive in a competitive multipolar world.

B- Constructivist Perspective on Power Rivalry:

(i): The rivalry on Democracy vs Non-Democracy construct:

US, Europe → Democratic rule

China, Russia → Authoritarian rule

This democratic vs non-democratic rivalry further fuels the differences between great powers in terms of global structure of power politics.

(ii): Capitalism vs Hybrid Economy System

USA and its "US-led world order" is a major advocate of capitalist based economy of the world and encourages private ownership. On the other hand, China operates on a hybrid capitalism-socialist economic system. This has been a constant source of content between the two major power competitors of the world.

Conclusion:

The major shift of world today from uni-polar to multipolar world order is due to rise of economic interdependence, rise of China, rise of globalization and international institutions. The great power rivalry among major powers like US, China and Russia is based on maintaining their global and regional hegemony and to survive in a multipolar world order.

Q: 4

Impact of Post-Pahalgam Crisis on Indo-Pak Security Paradigms:

Introduction:

On April 2022, 2025 a terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam, India, resulted in India's one-sided narrative building of blaming Pakistan for this attack. Despite Pakistan's firm stance on not being involved India continued to escalate tensions first in the form of violation of IWT and then

proceeded to attack Pakistan on May 7, 2025 - May 10, 2025. This four day confrontation between the two has impacted the security paradigm between the two and reshaped the threat perceptions of the region. These confrontations are likely to impact the foreign policy calculations of both states, in terms of their military and international standing.

Impacts on Security Paradigm Post - Pahlgam Incident

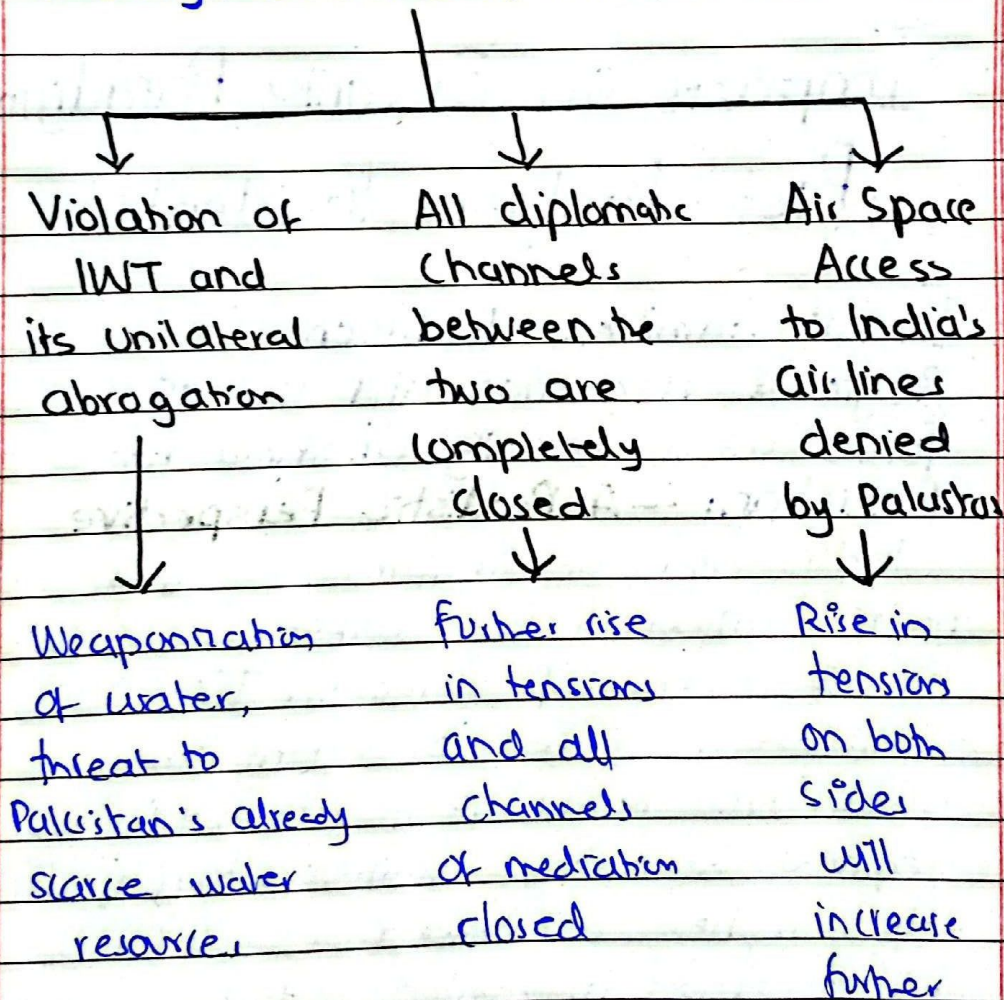
(i): India's Ambitions to become a Regional Hegemon and Use of force as a Security dilemma for Pakistan: — A Realistic Perspective

India's attack on Pakistan's sovereignty on mere allegations has created a security dilemma for Pakistan. This escalation has proved the extent to which India might go to achieve its regional hegemony ambitions. Hence, Pakistan, being a historical rival of India, has to ensure it counters India's threat to alleviate this rising security dilemma.

(ii): Threat of Escalation and Confrontation Still Persists:

India's repeated claims to continue its Operation Sindoor from where they left is a threat to the security of Pakistan and a major threat to its territorial sovereignty.

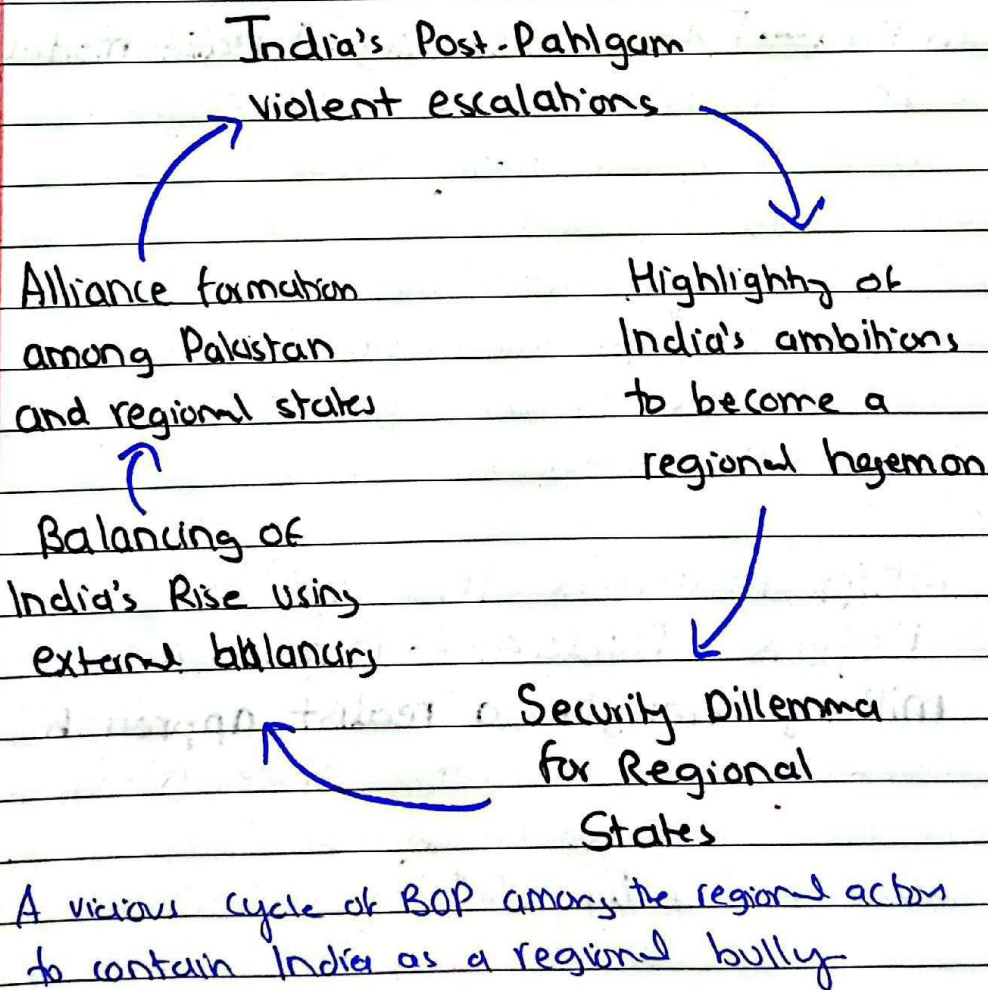
(iii): Rising Tensions on Other Fronts



Reshaping of Regional Perceptions and Strategies Post-Pahlgam Crisis

A- Alteration in Regional Perspective - Realist and Constructivist Paradigm

Realist Perspective



Constructivist Perspective:

Rise in threat perception of India as a hegemon and labelling of India as a "threat to sovereignty" "regional bully" "regional hegemon" increase the enmity of states towards India, who feel threatened from India's rise.

B- Strategies By Regional Actors To Contain India's Rise:

(i): Alliance Formation to Contain India: — External Balancing: A realist model
Pakistan and Bangladesh, China, Sri Lanka have revived their relations in the last few years. Their alliance in the region can balance India's rise and counter its violent, hegemonic actions which could threaten the sovereignty of concerned states.

(ii): Shift towards Increase In Defense Budget — increase in military strength — a realist approach
Post-fair play confrontation between Pakistan and India, Pakistan has increased its defense budget by 25% to 2.5 trillion

Similarly, India has also increased its budget by approx 25%. This has made other regional actors increase their respective defense budgets to strengthen their military response against regional conflicts.

(iii) Efforts to Revive SAARC by Bangladesh to Diffuse Regional Tensions — Liberal Approach

Regional actors especially Bangladesh has again advocated to revive SAARC. Pakistan and other states also welcome the idea because it possesses the potential to reduce regional tensions. However, India's shift towards BIMSTEC is a hurdle in SAARC's revival.

Foreign Policy Calculations

Post-pahlgam crisis has had positive outcomes for Pakistan's foreign policy. However, India due to its F.P and Pakistan's potential's miscalculation failed and continues to suffer on its F.P front.

Foreign Policy Calculations For India:



India's miscalculation and irrational decision on the part of its F.P to underestimate Pakistan's potential resulted in tilt of the confrontation's result more in the favor of Pakistan.

India now has two options majorly to improve its F.P and address its gaps.



Re-establish its military (Aerial superiority)



India by increasing its defense budget and chances of F-35 deal with US are its efforts to revive its aerial supremacy if lost in this four day confrontation



Realist approach to increase military power.

Revive its lost image in international arena



Major objective of India's today F.P is to revive the lost image due to its escalation in May and address the criticism at international level.

Foreign Policy Calculations for Pakistan.

Post-Pahlgarn crisis majaly highlighted Pakistan's Strategic autonomy and aerial superiority in the region. Based on these it has two F.P calculation fronts.

Build on strategic autonomy to:

Form Security Alliances with other states using its improved military strength

Improve its Diplomatic Standing in the International Arena

this confrontation has highlighted Pakistan's improved military strength which it can build on to form further security alliances with other states

Pakistan can further improve its position using diplomatic ties to gain its soft image in international world

Pak-Saudi defense agreement was based on this front.

Conclusion:

Indo-Pak 4 day escalation resulted in rise in tensions between the two on IWT, air space closure fronts. This has further increased the security dilemma both for Pakistan and the region; for which Pakistan and other regional states are forming alliances to counter India's rise as a sole world hegemon.

①:5

Challenges In Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

Introduction:

Pakistan and Afghanistan's relations have had many ups and downs in the past despite sharing regional, religious, ethnic and cultural similarities. Frequent regime changes in both countries, Afghanistan's internal crisis, Afghan Jihad war and war on terror further strained the relations between the two. However, recently, these strained relations resulted in border skirmishes between the two on Oct 13, 2025.

resulting in security threats and economic losses. Furthermore, India's involvement in the Afghanistan and Afghanistan's tilt towards India has escalated Indo-Pak and Pak-Afghan tensions further.

Persistent Challenges Between Paki-Afghan Relations

(i): Border Tensions - Conflicting Interests and A Threat to Sovereignty - Realist Perspective

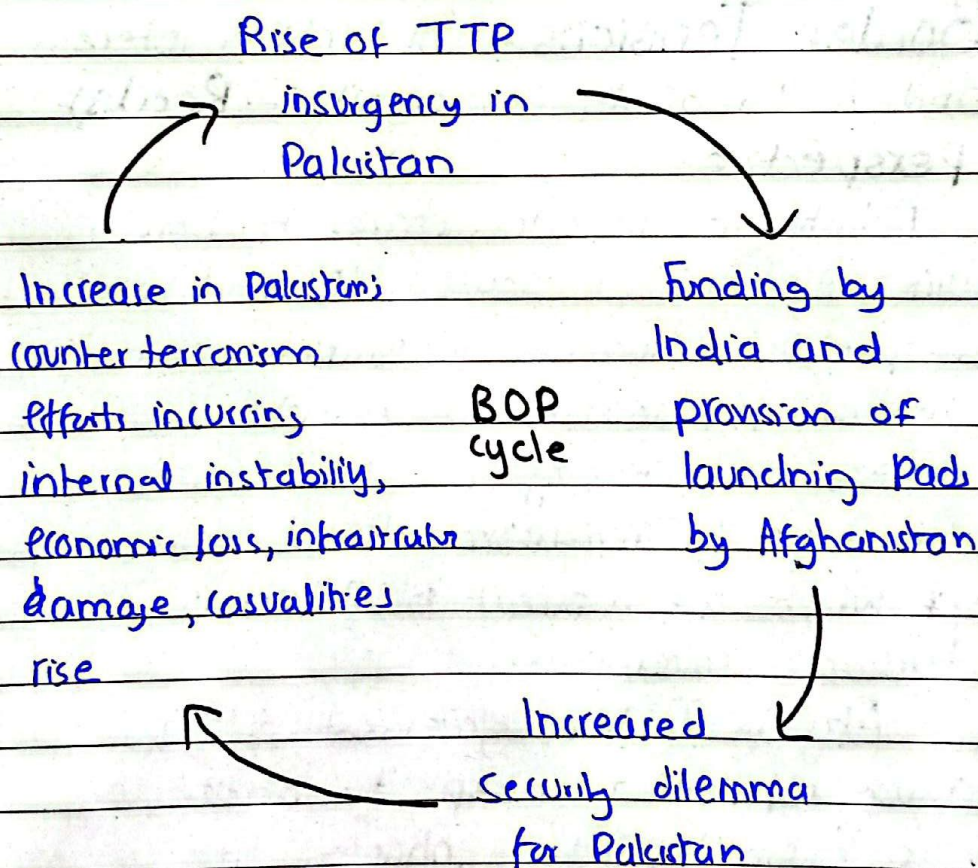
Pakistan on its west shares its border with Afghanistan called "Durand Line". Despite its international recognition as a border, Afghanistan has persistently denied its legitimacy and has been forwarding its irredentism claims, both of which are a threat to Pakistan's territorial sovereignty.

Afghan Taliban government in 2021 again refused to accept the border as legitimate, further enhancing the tensions between the two.

Future aspect:

Furthering of border tensions and no possible solution for the border can escalate cross-border terrorism and trade can also be majorly impacted.

(ii): Resurgence of TTP — insurgency a threat to Pakistan's territorial sovereignty and a Security Dilemma for Pakistan. — Realist Approach



Implications for Pakistan and Solutions:

Rise in economic loss, damage to infrastructure, increase in number of casualties, with 2015 facing the highest number of terrorism led casualties in the decade, internal instability for Pakistan, and terrorism being a threat to FDI are the major implications for Pakistan for TTP's rise.

However, highlighting of issue on international level, intelligence based operations in KP and across vulnerable areas of Pakistan this issue can be addressed but it will continue to have economic repercussions for Pakistan.

(iii): Stalled Afghan Refugee Repatriation:

Approximately 3.5 million Afghan refugees filtered into Pakistan after Afghan Jihad and war on terror. However, them being a security threat for Pakistan, in 2023 efforts were started to repatriate Afghan refugees back to Afghanistan.

⇒ Reaction of Afghan Taliban:

Afghan Taliban government criticized Pakistan's refugee repatriation policy despite it being carried out under UNHCR aid and support.

Implications for Pakistan on Stalled Afghan refugee repatriation:

(P): Afghan refugees were being repatriated by Pakistan on the stance that they were a threat to Pakistan's strategic and economic security. Stalling of efforts will again hinder Pakistan's progress towards relieving Pakistan's economy of economic threat of managing Afghan refugees.

Afghan Refugees

Security threat

Economic threat

(ii): Rise of unrest created by Afghan refugees in Pakistan:

Stalling of repatriation efforts has once again given Afghan refugees the opportunity to create unrest against government's policy of repatriation. In future, this unrest might also escalate

into threat of violence and their exploitation by TTP based on similar interests against Pakistan.

(iii): Humanitarian Crisis - stalled on Both sides of border:

Midway repatriation process being stalled has halted all progress to resolve the humanitarian crisis of international concern, on both sides of the border. Until refugees fully return and settle in their home ground the issue to manage and address their security will continue to be a burden for both Pak-Afghan governments.

External Involvement By India to Counter Pakistan Using Afghanistan - A Realist Perspective

History of Indo-Afghan relations:

2000s - 2021



Indo-Afghan relations revived and stabilized

during war and India invested \$3 billion for

Afghanistan reconstruction, Parliament formation, scholarships and dam construction.

2021-2025

⇒ Relations between the two got strained when Afghan Taliban rose to power in 2021 post Doha agreement.

2025 October

Onwards ⇒ After strained relations with Pakistan, Afghan Taliban again tilted towards India. Afghan Foreign Minister Mullahi paid a visit to India; and relations between the two again got revived.

⇒ **Stance of Afghanistan Behind Reviving of Relations,**

Afghanistan wants international recognition. So far only Russia has officially accepted Afghanistan Taliban government. Hence, revival of relations with India might help Afghanistan gain international recognition and bring Afghanistan back to global market by starting trade with India.

⇒ Stance of India Behind Reviving of Indo-Afghan Relations:

(i): India's ambitions to counter the power of both Pakistan and China in the region, and gain regional hegemony has been the sole aspiration behind its revival.

By establishing ties with Afghanistan, India encircles Pakistan within a containment arc and forces it into a "two front conflict."

(ii): Weaponization of Water:

India is funding Afghanistan's "Shahbuck" dam on Kabul river and via this controlling Pakistan's share of water from Kabul river. This will allow India to control Pakistan's access to water from both its own soil and Afghan soil.

(iii): Funding of TTP, BLA:

India is funding TTP and BLA and which are using Afghan soil as a launching pad against Pakistan violating Pakistan's sovereignty as insurgents disrupt a state's security and internal stability.

Impact on Regional Peace

Initiatives:



- (i): Failure of Pak-China-Afghan "Trilateral meeting" to address Regional Security Issue:

Pakistan and China's efforts resulted in several trilateral meetings with Afghanistan to address regional security issues and rise of terrorism. However, India's intervention has stalled all efforts made by Pakistan and China and has resulted in a failure of trilateral talks.

- (ii): Threat to BRI — a realist containment strategy of USA and its ally India against China:

Terrorism and security issues in the region is a direct threat to China's BRI project. Since success of BRI will make China a trillion dollar economy, both USA, being its global rival, and India being its regional rival, are using Afghanistan and regional instability to contain China's economic rise. India's tilt toward Afghanistan will stall China's efforts.

to secure the region for smooth functioning and progress of BRI project.

Conclusion:

Pakistan and Afghanistan despite sharing religious and ethnic ties have long been in a conflicting ~~and~~ ties. Cross-border terrorism, border issues and Afghan refugee issues further strain the ties between the two. However, Indian factor and its intervention in Afghanistan to use Afghan soil against Pakistan, has further worsen the ties between the two creating a two front war for Pakistan unmanageable but inevitable to happen.

Q:6

Sustainable Peace And Stability In South Asia

Introduction:

South Asia has long been a conflict prone and destabilized area accounting majorly to its intra-state tensions and security concerns. Afghan Jihad in 1970s and

9/11 in 2001s has destabilized Afghanistan and consequently the entire region. On the other hand, Kashmir dispute between Pak and India has largely impacted both countries and stabilization of the region.

How can a Stable Afghanistan And Resolution of Kashmir Dispute Stabilize South Asia?

(i): Realist Perspective — Easing of regional Power Politics and Security Dilemma:

A resolution of ~~the~~ Kashmir issue will resolve the great power politics between Pakistan and India which has always been a bone of content between the two. India's increase of military strength increase burden on Pakistan's economy to increase its defense budget because Kashmir stands as a flash point of conflict any minute. However, a resolution will break this BOP cycle.

Afghanistan's stability will ensure the use of Afghan soil for creating security dilemma by any other state for its rival can be stopped. This will help Pakistan break out of Afghan-India containment arc it is facing right now.

(ii): Liberal Perspective - Increase of Economic interdependence and Trade Ties:

Diffusion of tension between India and Pak on resolution of Kashmir dispute will revive the trade between two. Economic interdependence will eventually make any conflict in future less likely to happen.

Likewise, Afghanistan's stability will enable Iran, Pakistan, China and CAR to begin their trade ties with Afghanistan.

(iii): Liberal Perspective - Revival of Regional organizations and Cultural Diplomacy:

Revival of SAARC and establishment of other regional organizations is only possible if tensions in the regions are

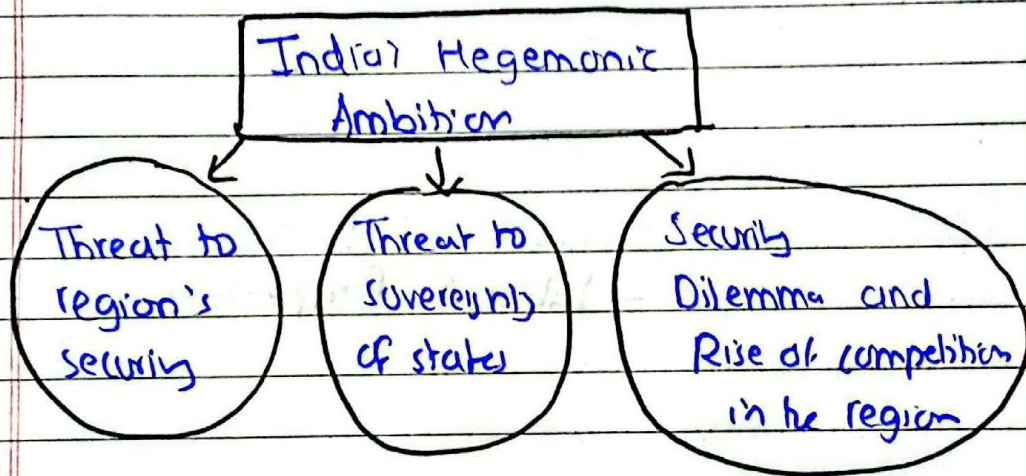
diffused. This will enable the region to revive its economic, cultural, social and trade ties to stabilize the region, which is not possible until cross border tensions are resolved.

(iv): Constructivist perspective - Counter the conflicting ideologies and ethnic conflicts:

Indo-Pak war on Kashmir has persistently resulted in narrative building on both sides against the other. This has spread rise of ideologies like "Hindutva" in India. Similarly, Pak-Afghan ethnic conflicts based on Afghan's irredentism claims have stalled any peace efforts. Hence resolution of both disputes and stabilization of region will help contain the spread of hate and conflicting narratives and ideologies against the rival state.

Obstacles In The Region's Stability

(i): India's Hegemonic Ambitions — a Realist Perspective:



(ii): Afghan Taliban's Right-wing Regime and Its Isolationist Approach
Realist Perspective

Taliban government's non-cooperative approach is stalling any efforts to revive stability and peace in the region. Their lack of trade, economic, diplomatic ties have stalled any peace-making efforts.

(iii): Absence of International Institutions Efforts — Liberal Perspective

UN → Failed to resolve Kashmir Issue and Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis

ICJ → Failed to address Kashmir Issue and give a legal binding order to end India's violation

(iv): Lack of a Consolidated Democracy In the Region — Liberal Perspective

South Asia consists of lack of any consolidated democratic govt this region only has electoral democratic governments which are stalling any efforts to control political unrest in the region.

(v): Lack of economic interdependence and efficient Trade Ties — Liberal Perspective

South Asia and SAARC has only 5% intra-region trade. This is a massive misuse of the resources and services this region has to offer. Hence, it is always more prone to conflict because there is nothing to lose in the conflict b/w two.

(vi): Ideological Rivalry In the Region makes it more prone to sectarian and ideological conflicts and unrest - A Constructivist perspective:

India → Hinduva's rise

Pakistan → Shia-Sunni conflict

Afghanistan → Pushtoonism + irredentism

Bangladesh → Bengali nationalism

Sri Lanka → Sinhalese vs Tamil conflict

Iran → Shia-Sunni conflict

Intra-state ideological rivalries among region stem from state's internal ideological conflicts. These sectarian conflicts not only destabilize the internal politics but also external relations of region.

Conclusion:

The resolution of Kashmir dispute and stability of Afghan not only possess the potential to secure the region, but also restore the BOP, economic-trade ties and cultural diplomacy. However, ethnic conflicts, India's hegemonic ambitions, lack of interstate institutions efforts, Taliban regimes lack of cooperation shall the stability of the region.