

1. What is CPEC? Does it pose a threat to India's interests? Examine.

Introduction:

Launched in 2015, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a series of roads, railways, pipelines, hydropower plants and other development projects, being built from between China and Pakistan. The \$46 billion CPEC will connect China's largest province Xinjiang with Pakistan's Gwadar port in Balochistan. The so-called economic corridor between China-Pakistan is a flagship program of One Belt One Road.



Body:

CPEC possess multiple Sovereignty threats and security concerns to India, such as:

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor violates the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of India. This corridor passes through Gilgit-Baltistan area of Kashmir which is an integral part of India but occupied by Pakistan. It has raised various security concerns for India.
- CPEC also somewhat legitimizes Pakistan's ownership over disputed PoK and it may lead to the internationalization of Kashmir Issue which India doesn't want.
- The high economic stakes in the project will push China to ally with Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute and will make China an indirect stakeholder in Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan.
- China is State-of -Power country and they have the ability to influence Pakistan's policy and it might unofficially become 24th province of China which again will be an issue for India's security.
- Ever since the construction of the corridor is started, the Chinese military presence in the area is also embarked. These military personnel would be

deployed around the projects built by Chinese companies. China can permanently position troops on Pakistan soil not too far from the Indian.

- Chinese naval ships would be deployed at Gwadar in cooperation with the navy of Pakistan for the safeguard of port and trade under this corridor. It would enable China to wield much more powerful influence in the Indian Ocean.
- China has plans to build a naval base in Gwadar port. The presence of Chinese warship in the area implies a security threat to India's western border of Gujarat and India's investment in Chabahar port.
- China's Maritime presence in Gwadar port which can be detrimental to India's energy and economic security, as more than two-thirds of India's petroleum imports pass through the area.

Conclusion:

Projects like CPEC must be based on the universally accepted and the other recognized international norms, transparency and equality, rule of law and must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, India needs to counter CPEC by various diplomatic, economic and strategic efforts.

2. What are India's stakes in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)? What benefits would accrue from India's membership of the grouping? Discuss.

Introduction:

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), an influential Eurasian regional grouping consisting of Russia, China and four Central Asian Republics (CARs)—Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan—in 2017 formally approved membership of India and Pakistan, who had been observers, to now become permanent members of the body.

Body:

India's stakes in the SCO:

- Earlier the SCO was seen as a Chinese dominated body being run with the support of Russia. With India's addition, it will be seen as an inclusive organisation with considerably greater respectability, leverage, power and stature.
- With two of the three largest economies (in PPP terms) viz. India and China being members of this organisation, its leverage and weight is bound to increase with passage of time.
- The significance of the SCO cannot be underestimated because of the presence of large territorial and economic powers like Russia and China, as

well as the geopolitical space that the grouping occupies. The geographical and strategic space which the SCO entails is of great importance for India.

Benefits from India's membership of the grouping:

India's full membership will help in achieving regional and global stability and prosperity. It will also strengthen India's position in Central Asia.

- **Cultural and civilisation links:** India enjoys millennia old cultural, economic and civilisation links with countries of Central Asia. India and the region were inextricably bound with each other from 3rd century BC to 15th century AD through the Silk Road. India's disconnect with Central Asia came with Partition and the loss of direct geographical links. Thus, it will now be able to leverage its profound, deep-rooted ties with the region.
- **Diplomatic impetus:** Frequent and regular contacts at the highest level between India and these countries during annual SCO Summits will help deliberate with each other on a regular basis. This will help to promote understanding and open up fresh vistas and avenues of cooperation.
- **Energy co-operation:** India being energy deficient country with increasing demands for energy, it is an assured market for the resource rich Central Asian countries and Russia. SCO membership could help advance talks on the construction of stalled pipelines like TAPI (and possibly IPI later) which is of considerable importance to India's natural gas needs.
- **Knowledge sharing:** India will be able to share its expertise in information technology, software, pharmaceuticals, agriculture etc to the mutual benefit and advantage of India and Central Asia. Greater contacts and exposure to each other are also likely to provide a fillip to tourism and travel between India and Central Asia.
- **Security:** The chronic presence and increasing challenges of terrorism, radicalism, and instability still pose a grave threat to the sovereignty and integrity not only of India, but also of countries in its broader neighbourhood. India's participation in the SCO will be helpful for fighting against these problems.
- **Check the over powering presence of China:** India's presence in SCO would also ensure that China does not dictate terms in Eurasia. This is also the concern of Russia which is in a state of a 'soft competition' with China in Central Asia.
- **Organisational forums:** India would also benefit from the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent, which would help gain vital intelligence inputs on the movement of terror outfits, drug-trafficking, cyber security and Public information of the region.

Challenges:

- **Balance of powers:** Since China and Russia are co-founders of SCO and its dominant powers, India's ability to assert itself would be limited and it may also have to either dilute its growing partnership with the West or engage in a delicate balancing act.
- **BRI initiative:** Except India, all the other members of SCO have endorsed China's BRI initiative. In this regard, if in future the economic policies of SCO come to be associated with the BRI network of roads and transportation, then India would face a dilemma and even a policy setback
- **RATS:** India might face difficulties as the Indian understanding of terrorism is different from the other members of SCO. For SCO, terrorism coincides with regime destabilisation; whereas for India it is related to state sponsored cross border terrorism. SCO's targets are groups like East-Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Al-Qaeda, whereas groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network do not come under the ambit of the SCO anti-terror structure.
- **Relations with Pakistan:** SCO charter prohibits the raising of bilateral issues, a conflict situation involving Kashmir might compel Russia and China to interfere to prevent any detrimental impact on the SCO.

Conclusion:

India's membership of the SCO throws open many possibilities to achieve the huge potential of bilateral partnership. It creates a win-win situation for the organization, for Central Asia, for China, and for Russia, as well as for India. Members of SCO thus, have a huge potential to play a more substantive role in promoting peace, security, connectivity, economic development, trade, energy security, and investment within the region and beyond.

3. Examine the evolution of India's stand in the WTO negotiations. What are the challenges being faced by India from the WTO members? Discuss.

Introduction

India has been a WTO member since 1 January 1995 and a member of GATT since 8 July 1948. The Doha Round (2001) proffers a new approach to international trade in a pro development manner and sought to work around the issues that address the concerns of the developing countries in three areas (the "three pillars"): domestic support, market access, and export subsidies and related issues

Body

Evolution of India's stand in WTO negotiations:

- **Concern for food security:** During the negotiations for WTO Agreement on Agriculture in 2001, India raised concerns over food security and flexibility that developing nations must have when it comes to providing subsidies to key farm inputs. Seventeen years have passed since then and countries like India are still waiting for a permanent solution on food security and public stock holding to arrive at the WTO.
- **Concern for rural development:** India's stance on agriculture at the WTO has always been somewhat defensive. It has maintained its demand for flexibilities to carry out with its measures of support for agriculture and rural development and therefore be exempt from any reduction commitments on these counts.
- **Safeguard mechanism:** India demanded that developed countries must bring down their bound tariff rates, and suggested the creation of a separate safeguard mechanism, along the lines of SSG, for food security in developing countries.
- **Developed countries:** India continued to emphasize on food security as a prime Non Trade Concern and wanted that any measures adopted for its poverty alleviation programmes, food security and other social objectives, be exempt from any reduction commitments, while it demanded that developed countries should cut back their domestic farm support below the de minimis levels
- **IPR:** To extend protection under 'geographical indication' (GI) beyond wine and spirit, to other products and demanded restrictions on misappropriation of biological and genetic resources and traditional knowledge.
- **Service sector:** By December 2005 had realised its potential gain from service trade liberalisation and took an aggressive stance. Noticeable shift in India's stance at the WTO, but entirely within a neorealist framework driven by domestic imperatives.
- **One sided narrative:** India concern over "a one-sided narrative" being advanced by major developed countries, especially the US that disregards "issues of importance and concern to developing countries. This erodes the core principles of consensus-based decision making, non-discrimination and Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT)

Challenges faced by India from the WTO members:

- **Many countries supported:** A large majority of countries endorsed a joint proposal by India, South Africa, and seven other countries for reforming the World Trade Organization, in the face of existential threats to the survival of multilateral trading system.
- **USA:** The United States severely opposed the joint proposal saying it will unravel the Uruguay Round agreements that established the WTO.
- **Norway:** Other industrialized countries, particularly Norway, supported the joint initiative saying it offers a way-forward for strengthening the WTO in the face of a sustained assault on multilateral trading system.

Decline in role of WTO and rise of regional arrangements:

WTO was established to assure rule based global trade and commerce. But recent developments prove the weakening of WTO. India's demand such as finalisation and implementation of Doha Development, and a agreement for free services in line with FTA (Free trade agreement), etc.

Conclusion

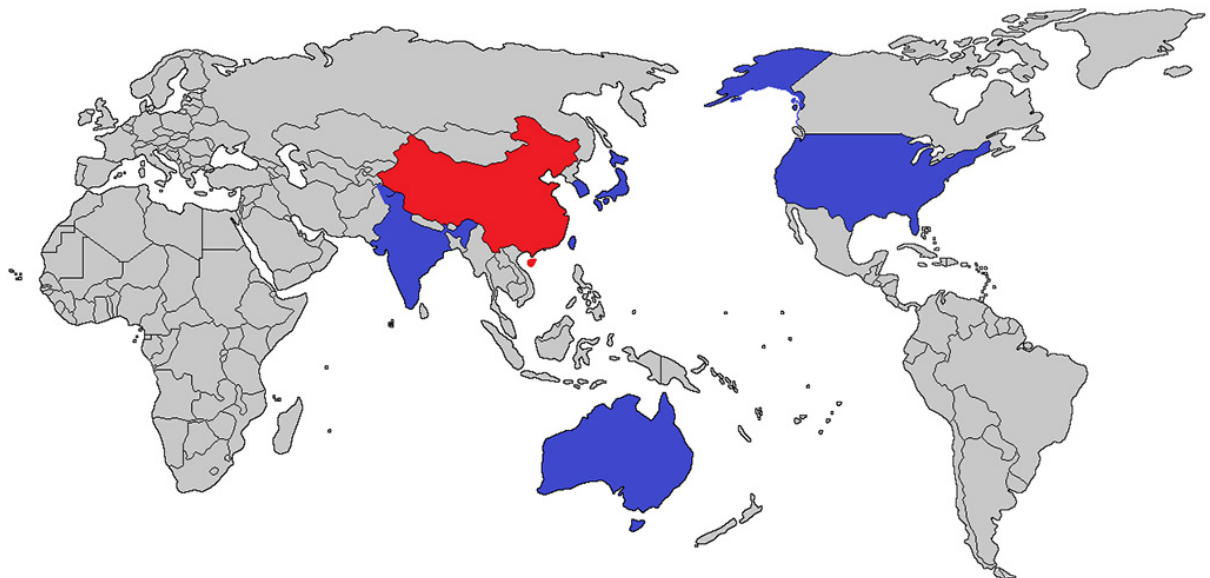
India emphasizes on the Marrakesh Agreement, establishing the WTO recognizes that international trade is not an end in itself, but a means of contributing to certain objectives including ensuring that developing countries and LDCs secure a share in international trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development."

4. The quadrilateral posturing by India, the US, Japan and Australia in the Indo-Pacific is critical to counter the aggression of China in the region. Comment.

Introduction:

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) is the strategic dialogue between four countries viz. India, United States, Japan and Australia. It was originally initiated in 2007 but later disbanded with withdrawal of Australia. It has been recently revived and is being viewed as response to increased Chinese economic and military power.

Body



Role of QUAD in countering the aggression of China:

- Free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region serves the long-term interests of all countries in the region and of the world at large.

Maritime security:

- Sea lines of communications, Maritime security, and international order based on law and rules has a common interest of India, USA, Japan and

Australia in the Indo-pacific region. The idea is to bring likeminded to achieve common objective and enhancing synergy.

- Tackle common challenges of **terrorism and proliferation**.
- While the notion of alliance as known in cold war context is perhaps not valid, there is some kind of correspondence between India and US about what kind of international order they would like to see, particularly with respect to Respect for law, Customary norms.

Finance:

- Japan has fostered and promoted infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region. India and Sri Lanka have benefited from Japanese investments and hence there is prosperity building. But never Japan has tried to influence its equity in those infrastructure. So, the investments made by it were never considered as a leverage to gain over the sovereignty of the country or area.
- Malabar exercise conducted during doklam standoff which shows Japan's reflection of distinctive type of maritime empathy.

A diamond to counter pearls:

- The Chinese are talking about the string of pearls. China is now in Myanmar, Srilanka, Bangladesh, Gwadar and Djibouti which completes the string of pearls.
- Now there is a 'diamond' which comprises of USA, Japan, Australia and India. These countries can be loosely called as concert of democracies. China is not among them.
- This is more of a partnership where there would be certain emphasis on connectivity after all India and japan are now connecting on Africa corridor. So beyond a traditional military alliance to a kind of flexi partnership which can be brought together if an exigency arises.
- Japan is conscious of presence of china in South China Sea and east Sea of Japan. Australia is concerned about certain specific Chinese initiatives specific Australia.

Focus on security:

- There is a paucity of security institutions in Asia. There is ASEAN and focus on economic aspect but Asia lacks a security aspect of multilateral institutions.
- In terms of security, there is always about reacting because if you pro-act in security, then you become unnecessarily assertive. So countries pro-act for peace, development and partnership. But for security, there is reaction. China has reacted in nine dash line but was proactive in South China Sea.
- China feels the present situation as situationally, positionally and intellectually a challenging moment. Yet, as right now US is withdrawing from cold war institutions and china would like to occupy top position.

India's Presence:

- China has been expanding in South China Sea (and says it has its exclusive economic zone there) which has tremendous strategic importance. 1/3rd of the world's shipping passes through it. It contains lucrative fisheries and huge oil and gas reserves are believed to present beneath its seabed. Patrols have to be done to counter China in this region which is trying to reach further to Indian Ocean region like Sri Lankan coast now.
- It will be good for India to have a forward presence in regions like Vietnamese coasts. US is also being expected to take a more aggressive stance against China in SCS.
- India has taken its own stand in recent past against Chinese aggression. In Doklam issue, it took security issues of land to a third nation Bhutan. It had first taken a stand against China's OBOR project and also took up security issues in Indian Ocean.

Act of Balance:

- All the countries of the Quadrilateral have major interests in China economically (being their major trade partner) and yet have major security concerns about China. So, there is a need to keep a balance between controlling Chinese rising aggression and, keeping trade relations with China in parallel diplomatically.

India should be independent

- India and USA cannot have convergence as it can be only militarily possible. India has its own relation with Iran and North Korea. Yes, they can be partners for security maintenance but cannot be military alliance. Till now exercises are going on and after a while, India and US can look forward to joint operations in naval engagement.
- India needs to have its own unique voice. India should safeguard its interest first and then forge partnerships. India has to go out and meet anyone which is going to help in nation building. India has to build its own strength. The security environment around India has never been conducive and threats to security have been persistent for half century. India should have the contradictory kind of tenure wherein when it comes to common issues, India can support and when it comes to sovereignty issues, India can defend.

Conclusion

Hence, India has to explain its foreign policy to its domestic audience as well as international audience saying that it has many layers when it comes to handling relations with Japan, China, USA and Russia and what is India's position when it comes to restructuring international institutions of governance like UN, UNCLOS. The foreign policy has to be multi-direction which will reflect India's national interest first and not tow anyone's line.

5. Should India be worried about the deepening ties between Pakistan and the US? Critically comment.

Introduction

USA has been a stronger ally to Pakistan in the past, but the relations seem deteriorating due to many factors such as China, Terrorism etc. Post 2000s there has been significant improvement in Indo-US relations and which look even better at present.

Body

Need to concern

- Recent visit by Pakistan's PM Imran Khan, where President Trump has lauded Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism and end the war in Afghan (Afghan Peace Process).
- US has resumed Military Aid to Pakistan, to fight the terrorists and for Afghan Peace talks. But, Pakistan's duplicitous policy and double games have ensured diversion of funds towards encouraging terrorism. This can prove hazardous for India, particularly when Pakistan is attempting for infiltration of terrorists in Kashmir region (Especially post Article 370 Abrogation) to create unrest.
- US is the second largest military supplier to Pakistan. With continuous ceasefire violations and creating war like situation on border. Advancement in weapon technology of Pakistan can become an issue for India.

No need to worry

- Afghan Peace Process: US wants to get out of the mess it has created in Afghanistan and for talks with Taliban, it requires Pakistan help for momentary support. So, the relations are of temporary nature and strategic bargain.
- With Pakistan's proximity with China: US would like to have a partner like India in the neighbourhood that could potentially challenge Pak-China Hegemony.
- US has placed Pakistan in Religious freedom special watch list in the category of "Countries of Particular Concern".
- President Trump has time and again accused Pakistan for their "Lies and Deceit" and for providing safe heaven to terrorists.
- US policy of Kashmir: US want the issue of Kashmir to be solved bilaterally. This is in line with Indian stand.
- US voiced concern over Pakistan's failure to do enough to contain terror funding in its soil and not registering cases against terror masterminds Hafiz

Saeed and Masood Azhar under anti-terror laws at the meetings of Financial Action Task Force(FATF), this has effectively placed Pakistan in Grey List of FATF.

Conclusion

Pakistan has been playing victim card and trying to gain sympathy from nations around. It has been spreading fake news of Human rights violation in Kashmir through sections of media. India must maintain status quo on Kashmir and not be moved by transient relations between US & Pakistan.

