

1. What are your views on the recent military standoff between India and China? What is the geo-strategic background of the standoff? Examine.

Demand of the question:

It expects candidates to express their views on the recent military standoff between India and China. It also expects to probe deeper in to details of the geo-strategic background of the standoff.

Introduction:

India and China are demographically two very unique countries, only two with billion plus (population) categories. Global order is observing parallel but differential rise of two countries with unprecedented disagreements over border disputes due to the expansionist policy of China based on its ancestral claims.

Body:

Indian and Chinese troops have engaged in aggressive melee, face-offs and skirmishes at locations along the LAC in Galwan valley, in eastern Ladakh including near the disputed Pangong Lake in Ladakh and the Tibet Autonomous Region, and near the border between Sikkim and the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Views on Military standoff between India and China:

- It is part of China's 'nibble and negotiate policy'. Their aim is to ensure that India does not build infrastructure along the LAC. It is their way of attaining a political goal with military might, while gaining more territory in the process.
- China views India's assertions regarding Gilgit-Baltistan, as an implicit attack on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China's flagship programme. This view of China contradicts India's sovereignty claim and threatens security infrastructure.
- The resulted casualties across the LAC are not acceptable as Indian soldiers martyred along LAC due to China's wrongful approach to gain access of the Indian territory.
- The escalated tensions across LAC have affected India's trade relations with China as India's trade deficit with China stands at \$48.66 billion in 2019-20.
- In turn it also affected Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India, as FDI from China in India has dipped to \$163.78 million in 2019-20 from \$229 million in 2018-19.
- Citing the "emergent nature of threats" from mobile applications, including popular ones of Chinese origin such as TikTok, ShareIt, UC Browser, and Weibo, the government has banned 59 apps. The app ban has resulted in loss of investment from Chinese investors in India.
- Hardly any country in Asia is willing to openly confront China, and side with India, due to China's strong economic ties with other nations.
- Recent events, suggest that escalations are highly possible. Both sides have substantial—and growing—military deployments along a mostly disputed border. This in turn has affected the peace across the border and affected lives of people who are living along the border areas.

- However, through recent skirmishes along the LAC India has shown to China that it will not take step back when it comes to securing its sovereignty.

Geo-strategic background of the standoff:

- The Indian and Chinese armies are engaged in the standoff in Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie in eastern Ladakh. Following figure 1 represents the Disputed area.



figure 1

- A sizable number of Chinese Army personnel even transgressed into the Indian side of the de-facto border in several areas including Pangong Tso.
- The actions on the northern bank of Pangong Tso are not just for territorial gains on land, but enhanced domination of the resource-rich lake.
- The stand-off at Ladakh's Galwan Valley has escalated in due to the infrastructure projects that India has undertaken in the recent years. India is building a strategic road through the Galwan Valley - close to China - connecting the region to an airstrip.
- China is opposed to any Indian construction in the area. In 1962, a stand-off in the Galwan area was one of the biggest flashpoints of the 1962 war.
- The border, or Line of Actual Control, is not demarcated, and China and India have differing ideas of where it should be located, leading to regular border "transgressions." Often these don't escalate tensions; a serious border standoff like the current one is less frequent, though this is the fourth since 2013.
- Both countries' troops have patrolled this region for decades, as the contested 2,200-mile border is a long-standing subject of competing claims and tensions, including a brief war in 1962.

Steps to resolve the issue:

- Clarification on LAC: India should take the initiative to insist on a timely and early clarification of the LAC. Pockets of difference of alignment as perceived by each side have to be clearly identified and these areas demilitarised by both sides through joint agreement pending a settlement of the boundary.
- Scaling down of military contact: India must stand resolute and firm in the defence of territory in all four sectors of the border. Contacts between the

two militaries through joint exercises and exchanges of visits of senior Commanders should be scaled down for the foreseeable future.

- Strategic communication: The responsibility of effective strategic communication too rests with political leadership. It is important to perceive the signals of transgressions on a serious note and adopt adequate strategy with clear instructions for forces.

Conclusion:

As our Foreign minister has said that, "Reaching an understanding with China is a big challenge"; we need find out more ways to open talks with China regarding border issues and Devolving a comprehensive China strategy with strong political direction, mature deliberation and coherence are keys to handling the any escalating situation in future.



2. What diplomatic measures were taken in the recent past by India to isolate Pakistan at various global forums? Have these measures been effective? Critically examine.

Demand of the question:

It expects students to write about India's diplomatic measures to isolate Pakistan at various global forums. It also expects to probe both sides of effect of the measures.

Introduction:

Bilateral relations of India and Pakistan have been under the shadow of misunderstanding, tensions and wars since 1947. To counter Pakistan, India has embarked upon a bi-dimensional strategy towards Pakistan. First, it has intensified its campaign to diplomatically isolate at various global forums. Secondly, it has inclined to use hard force when faced with terrorism.

Body:

Diplomatic measures taken by India to isolate Pakistan at various global forums:

- After the Pulwama attack steps to isolate Pakistan at various global forums gained momentum.
- India's first official response to the Pulwama attack did include an appeal to all members of the international community to support the listing of Azhar under the UNSC committee and to ban terror groups operating from Pakistani territories.
- The attempt was to expose Pakistan's terror supporting policy, isolate it from the world and force Pakistan to take "visible, credible and prompt" action against JeM and other terror groups operating from Pakistani soil.
- SAARC: Contentious relationship between the two important members of SAARC is the reason behind an unsuccessful journey of SAARC so far.
- Last year, India excluded Pakistan from the list of SAARC member countries which became part of its state-of-the-art National Knowledge Network (NKN) for sharing scientific databases and remote access to advanced research facilities.
- For regional groupings in South Asian region, India has shifted its focus from SAARC to BIMSTEC to isolate Pakistan in the regional scenario.
- Also India successfully isolated Pakistan on the Kashmir issue at the United Nations (UN). At UN Pakistan's persistent, intensive diplomacy to internationalise the Kashmir issue faced checkmate with 189 of the 193 members repudiating it.
- India also strived hard to pursue Financial Action Task force to include Pakistan in its black list, however due to some unavoidable circumstances this move of India to isolate Pakistan at this global forum has not yielded fruits as FATF continued to mention Pakistan in its grey list.

Effect of measure to isolate Pakistan:

- India has achieved success in getting Pakistan isolated even among Islamic countries, as the organisation of Islamic countries invited India for 50th anniversary meet despite the pressure from Pakistan's side.

- The isolation of Pakistan at global levels will help stop granting any aid to Pakistan, as it is reported for many of the times that Pakistan has used international aid to fund its terror activities across the border.
- It will also put a check on the terror activities, as most of the flow of fund by Pakistan to terror outfits will stop.
- It will also ensure to hamper Pakistan economically in international relations as Pakistan's trade with other countries may get affected tremendously.
- Its stature at the international forums, which in turn helps India to have greater and legitimate say when it comes to Kashmir issue on the International forum.
- It will also help to promote India's more trustworthy image on the international forum.

Though these measures are useful to some extent following factors played a pivotal role in nullifying India's efforts to isolate Pakistan:

- China factor: The China has supported Pakistan on Kashmir issue due to its vested interest in the China-Pakistan economic corridor.
- China also funded Pakistan when all other countries rejected an aid to China.
- The roots of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism are so deep in Pakistan that it became Pakistan's own headache. e.g. Attack on school in Peshawar.

For any meaningful conversation to take place between India and Pakistan terrorism has to come to an end. Also India needs to adopt more options to expose Pakistan at global forums rather than just opting to isolate Pakistan on global level.

- Both countries can continue to have dialogues through forums such as SCO as big Asian Nations are part of it.
Also, demanding a proof from Pakistan that it has left the policy of supporting terrorism, so that a mutually beneficial trade can be started.
- Initiatives such as Kartrarpur corridor can go a long way in improving relations if implemented successfully.

Conclusion:

As on the global forum Pakistan is known as a "Mad child with loaded gun", it becomes the responsibility of India to adopt a more modern and versatile approach to secure the sovereignty and integrity of India.

3. The internal affairs have had a substantial bearing on India's relations with the neighbours. Elucidate.

Demand of the question:

It expects candidates to give a clear account of how and why the internal affairs of India have a substantial bearing of India's relations with neighbours.

Introduction:

Since independence India's foreign policy has shifted manifold from the choice of Non-alignment during the Cold War period, and now transited to becoming an important Western strategic partner and providing a counterweight to China. The internal affairs in the regional international relations have played a prominent role in shaping India's relations with the neighbouring countries.

Body:

India's relations with its South Asian neighbours has always been influenced by the domestic internal factors such as ethnicity, religion, etc. Substantial bearing of internal affairs affected international relation with India's neighbours as follow:

- The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is more than 2,500 years old.
- Indian Tamils of Sri Lanka are Tamil people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. They are also known as Hill Country Tamils, Up-Country Tamils or simply Indian Tamils. Though their numbers are much lesser as compared to Indian Origin Tamils (IOTs), they are economically prosperous and are well placed.
- Their Minority rights issue have affected India's relations with Sri Lanka. In recent times to assert their strong leadership over Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan political leaders are seen to be more pro-China, by sidelining India. Also there is issue of fishing territory for fishermen in the region.
- The issue of Bangladeshi immigrants in the states of Assam and West-bengal has affected the relations between India-and Bangladesh.
- As the Bangladesh Prime Minister raised concerns over roll out of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, an exercise carried to identify genuine Indian citizens living in Assam and weed out illegal Bangladeshis.
- The Issue over the assertion of Pakistan's territorial claim of Kashmir and threat to India's sovereignty by this claim, has affected India's relation with Pakistan tremendously.
- Also the issue of drugs in the regions of Punjab and Rajasthan and human trafficking across the LOC is cause of concern for India's relations with that of Pakistan.
- The issues of AFSPA in the North eastern regions and in valley Kashmir has also impacted India's relations with neighbouring countries.
- Chinese aggression across LAC due to India's infrastructure projects has also affected India-China relations in recent Past. As infrastructure building across the Border is an internal matter of India.
- The issue of Madheshi origin people and their lineage with India has affected India's relations with Nepal. As Identity politics with India is also visible within the country.

- Nepali citizens from the Terai (Madhesis) feel discriminated as being “Indian”.
- The issue of Rohingya migrants in Myanmar and India's stand on Rohingya's affected India's relations with Myanmar. Also some of the insurgent groups in the regions of North-east have also affected India's relations with Myanmar.
- Internal Security is a major concern for India; Indo-Myanmar border is porous and lightly policed which is exploited by terrorist outfits and insurgent groups from North Eastern part of India eg. supply of trained cadres, arms trafficking.

Though some of the positive developments have also been observed in the past

- As India-Myanmar joint operation destroyed several militant camps of Arakan Army on the Indo-Myanmar border.
- India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border, which is the longest land boundary that India shares with any of its neighbours. The India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) came into force following the exchange of instruments of ratification in June 2015.
- India is also investing into Sri Lanka's infrastructure development in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Which will in turn help the people of Indian origin Tamils in Sri Lanka.

In this way the internal affairs have a substantial bearing on the relations with neighbouring countries. Certainly some steps are needed to be taken to improve the relations with neighbouring countries:

- India needs to focus more on its traditional and cultural ties to improve relations with Sri Lanka. Mutual recognition of each other's concerns and interests can improve the relationship between both countries.
- As both countries have a democratic setup there is scope for broadening and deepening the ties.
- We need to formulate a constructive mechanism to solve the immigrant and refugee issues in India, so that relations with neighbours such as Myanmar and Bangladesh can be improved.
- Proper and suitable use of the regional groupings such as SAARC and BIMSTEC to improve relations between the Nations can prove to be more useful.
- Strengthening bilateral ties by conducting bilateral military exercises with neighbouring Nations can be useful to tackle threat of terrorism. e.g. SURYAKIRAN with Nepal and Hand in Hand with China.
- Starting a joint infrastructural developmental projects will also prove to be helpful so that internal affairs of country can be tackled neatly.
- Strict adherence to the PANCHSHEEL policy approach should be adopted.

Conclusion:

As India's foreign policy has entered in to era of "Act east" from "Look East", not addressing the concerns of our neighbours due to the internal affairs might seems to be wrong move. Hence, collaborating with the neighbours for a better and prosperous future should be the way forward.