

## International Relations Class 23

27th February, 2024 at 9:00 AM

**THE CLASS STARTED (IN CONTINUATION) AT: (09:41 AM):**

**SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM ACCORD: (09:45 AM):**

- **Significance of Abraham Accord:**
- i) It was the first Western-sponsored attempt of normalization in West Asia.
- ii) It aimed to normalize the relations between the Arab world and Israel.
- iii) It could be considered as a step towards decoupling with the Palestinian cause.
- **I2U2:**
- In the Oct 2021: India, UAE, USA, and Israel held their first quadrilateral foreign ministers meeting.
- I2U2 was initially formed in October 2021 following the Abraham Accords between Israel and the UAE, to deal with issues concerning maritime security, infrastructure, and transport in the region.
- **Significance of I2U2:**
- I2U2 signifies an economic and infrastructural development in West Asia.
- Critics however argue it is West Asian QUAD, just like QUAD's objective was maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.
- I2U2's objective was to enable maritime security in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Aden.
- It also argued that just like the implicit goal of QUAD was to isolate China, the disguised goal of the I2U2 was to create a unified force against Iran.
- Since India is part of I2U2 India is not guided by this idea. India argues it is an attempt to normalize relations between Israel and the Arab world and maintain maritime security in crucial Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs).
- I2U2 signifies the growing importance of extra-regional actors like India and the USA in the geopolitics of West Asia.
- It also shows how the Arab world is de-coupling itself from the Palestinian cause.
- **What is the significance of I2U2 for India:**
- a) I2U2 indicates the rising Indian presence in West Asian politics.
- b) It will help India develop diplomatic ties with Israel without compromising its relations with the Arab world.
- c) I2U2 provides India with a deeper market accessibility in West Asia.
- d) It also offers scope for food security in South Asia.
- In July 2022, in the I2U2 talks the issue regarding the creation of the India-Middle East Food Corridor was taken, this would ensure not only food security in West Asia but will strengthen India's position as a food provider in South Asia.
- A local food supply chain, thereby substituting China's dominated supply chain.
- e) Within the I2U2 India has emerged as a partner with the USA for peace and conflict resolution and could be useful for India's position regarding other global conflicts e.g. Russia-Ukraine Conflict.
- India created new dynamics with India's Look West policy, reflecting India's act of strategically balancing this platform to exhibit India's policy of multi-alignment and it is a way toward India being a Vishwamitra and with such a positive image as a Vishwaguru shortly.

### **CHALLENGES TO I2U2: (10:15 AM):**

- a) It will be a challenge to create a synergy between the Israelis and the Arab World, especially keeping in mind the recent Israel-Hamas conflict.
- b) The recent conflict created in the Middle East is a challenge.
- c) Diverse stand of India and USA regarding Iran.
- **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):**
- **Map of IMEC:**
- **About the Project:**
- 1) The project is part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII).
- 2) The proposed corridor will consist of Railroad, Ship-to-Rail networks, and Road transport routes extending across two corridors.
- 3) It will also include an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline, and a high-speed data cable.
- 4) In addition to India and the US, leaders of the European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, Mauritius, and the World Bank flagged the corridor widely seen as a strong counter to China's Belt and Road initiative.
- **Challenges to the IMEC:**
- a) Political instability in West Asia eg amidst the current Israel-Hamas conflict it was argued that IMEC may be delayed though not derailed.
- b) Diverse positions of participant countries on regional issues e.g. India, USA, and the EU diverse stand on the Iran issue.
- c) Complex logistical planning and connectivity issues since it is a trans-continental, multi-modal transport corridor.
- d) Complications regarding coordination among member countries.
- e) Cost and financing could also be an issue.
- f) IMEC could receive challenges from the existing supply chain routes like Egypt's Suez Canal routes.

### **INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL (SPC): (10:41 AM):**

- **Key Takeaways:**
- a) Talks were made to expedite the implementation of the \$50-billion West Coast refinery project.
- b) Discussions regarding possible cooperation in various infrastructure sectors, including the power grid, gas grid, optical grids, and fiber networks.
- c) MoUs signed in the fields of New and Renewable Energy, Digitization and Electronic manufacturing, enhancing bilateral investment, seawater desalination, etc.
- In October 2023 the US under the Biden administration is leading diplomatic efforts to support an **Israel-Saudi normalization agreement**.
- **The reported probable Saudi demands from the United States are:**
- a) A defense treaty approved for ratification by the U.S. Senate with a commitment to defend the kingdom if attacked.
- b) U.S. help in constructing a civilian nuclear program with some degree of Saudi control over the fuel cycle.
- The primary U.S. quid pro quo (reciprocal demand) from Saudi Arabia could be an agreement to normalize relations with Israel.
- Saudi Arabia knows that it will not achieve a NATO-like guarantee but wants to achieve instead something akin to US agreements with South Korea and Japan.

### **JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION (JCPOA): (10:58 AM):**

- The 2015 Iran nuclear deal was signed under President Barack Obama and dismantled in 2018 by former US President Donald Trump.
- **What was the 2015 Iran nuclear deal?**
- The deal is formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- Result of long negotiations (2013 and 2015) between Iran and P5+1 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States + Germany).
- **Conditions in the deal:**
- Iran agreed to cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium, and heavy water (key components for nuclear weapons).
- Iran also agreed to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to access its nuclear sites.
- **Challenges in the restoration of the JCPOA:**
- a) Continuous confrontation between Iran and the West especially the US on issues regarding alleged human rights violations in Iran, Iran's ballistic missile program, and the continuous Uranium enrichment process.
- b) The Cold War between Iran and Saudi Arabia can be considered a challenge, however, the recent Peace Deal could be seen reducing this challenge but it would be too early to comment in this regard.
- c) Greater ties between the US and Saudi Arabia could be another challenge regarding the restoration.
- **Significance of the JCPOA for India:**
- i) The Nuclear Deal between Iran and the USA would help India revive its connectivity with Iran without compromising its position with the US.
- ii) It could help in materializing projects like INSTC and IMEEC into reality both having India as a member country.
- This would ensure along with connectivity and energy security for India.
- iii) The restoration of the JCPOA will help India access energy supplies from Iran without a diplomatic dilemma regarding the USA and its CAATSA provisions.
- iv) It will help in neutralizing the Chinese presence due to the probable increased presence of the USA and West in West Asia.
- v) The Chabahar Port of India will get a further impetus for our maritime security and safety.
- vi) Restoration of the JCPOA can solve one of the key issues of West Asia in our extended neighborhood.

## **CHALLENGES IN WEST ASIA AND ITS RELATIONS WITH INDIA: (11:15 AM):**

- Political instability in West Asia.
- The threat of terrorism and possible spillover in India.
- Issues between Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel and subsequent diplomatic dilemma for India.
- Challenges regarding the evacuation and security of our diaspora in West Asia.
- Increasing Chinese footprint in the West Asia.
- **Way forward:**
- In West Asia India should maintain its policy of multi-alignment and strategic autonomy.
- India should start focusing on areas beyond energy security and connectivity, medical tourism, financial technology, clean energy, educational collaboration, etc.
- India should start fast-tracking stalled projects like the INSTC.
- India should take advantage of Khaliji Capitalism and try to diversify not only its energy portfolio but also its financial portfolio.

## **INDIA AND THE USA: (11:37 AM):**

- India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a "global strategic partnership".
- They have shared democratic values and witness convergence of interests on bilateral, regional, and global issues.
- **Recent Context:**
- **PM Modi's visit to the US:**
- The Prime Minister led the celebrations of the International Day of Yoga at the United Nations Headquarters and held bilateral talks with President Joe Biden in Washington.
- Agreements signed between India and the United States (as part of the India and the U.S. Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership):
- **1) Defence sector:**
- 1.1) Memorandum of understanding between GE Aerospace and HAL for the production of fighter jet engines for Light Combat Aircraft.
- 1.2) Repair and service of US Navy ships.
- 1.3) India aims at procuring armed MQ-9B Sea Guardian UAVs.
- 1.4) The India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem INDUS-X.
- **2) Citizen-Centric Efforts:**
- 2.1) Domestic Visa Renewal Program and Consulate Openings.
- **3) Technology:**
- 3.1) Deliverables and Investments:
- The inauguration of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) in January 2023 is seen as an important milestone between the two countries.
- 3.2) Micron Technology, Inc:
- Micron Technology Inc. is all set to make investments in a test facility and new chip assembly in the state of Gujarat.
- **4) Space Co-operations between the two countries:**
- State cooperation between the two countries was also fostered when India joined a framework for space exploration and assented to a mission to the International Space Station in the year 2024.
- **5) Strategic Trade Dialogue:**
- Both countries promised to encourage policies and incorporate regulations that help facilitate better technology sharing, co-production, and co-development opportunities between the industries of both countries.

- **Reasons For Shift of the USA's Approach Towards India:**
- a) Adoption of LPG policies by India and the emergence of India as a huge consumer base for the USA and its industries.
- b) India's huge demographic dividend & a profitable service sector.
- c) India emerging as a strong regional economy.
- d) India's potential as a counterweight against China.
- Due to the above factors the US adopted the Pivot to Asia policy with India being the central actor.
- **On June 5, 2023: The visit of US Secretary of Defence Llyod J. Austin to India, key agreements are as follows:**
- a) Initiate negotiations for a 'Security of Supply' (SoS) arrangement.
- b) Reciprocal Defence Procurement' (RDP) agreement.
- c) Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).
- d) US-India Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X).
- **Visit of External Affairs Minister to the United States of America (September 18-28, 2022):**
- The reason for his visit officially is to 'enable a high-level review of the multifaceted bilateral agenda and strengthen cooperation on regional and global issues to further consolidate the India-US strategic partnership.
- **April 2022: India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:**
- a) Cooperation in outer space and cyberspace.
- b) Cooperation in Indo-Pacific.
- c) Launch of Defence Artificial Intelligence dialogue (joint cyber training and exercises.
- d) The US signaled that it would "continue to stand alongside" India to defend its sovereign interest, keeping in mind that China was constructing "dual-use infrastructure.
- **US Asia Pivot policy:**
- Also earlier the US adopted a hyphenated approach between India and Pakistan rather than an individual India-Pakistan policy. However, this approach witnessed a transformation under President Bush who initiated the policy of "de-hyphenation".
- **(Cover the Indo-US topic from the handouts in a comprehensive manner).**
- **TOPIC OF THE NEXT CLASS:** Challenges in the Indo-US Relations & Way forward for the same.