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PART-3

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2021

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November 2021

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China's New Land Border Law

Issue

- On October 23, China's top legislative body, passed a new land law for the "**protection and exploitation of the country's land border areas**" which will come into effect from January 1, 2022.
- This law was first proposed in March 2021.
- This is expected to pose a challenge for India, which has a **3,488-km unsettled border with the country**.
- This law deals with the country's patrolling activities on its **22,100-km land border with its 14 neighboring countries**.
- Considered to be the first such policy move in China's modern history.

What Does This Chinese Law Talks about?

- Sovereignty and territorial integrity of China are sacred and inviolable
- Take measures to safeguard territorial integrity and land boundaries and **guard against and combat any act** that undermines these efforts.
- China can take measures "to strengthen border Defence, support economic and social development as well as improve public services and infrastructure across the border areas.
- This law suggests a **push to settle** civilians in the border areas.
- Follow the principles of "equality, mutual trust, and friendly consultation".
- Handle land border related-affairs with neighboring countries through **negotiations**.

China's Neighbouring Countries



Implications For India

- As per Chinese officials, the **law is not specific** to the borders towards India.
- However the law might be concerning since China has no significant land border conflicts with any other bordering nation other than India.
- This law does give an **impression** of the Chinese willingness to openly claim a **military approach to solve conflicts**.
- As per *Lt Gen D S Hooda (retd)*, With this new law in force from next year, it is **unlikely that the PLA will be pulling back from any other area** (in Ladakh).
- The law has stoked some curiosity as it comes amid India's year-long border dispute with China in Ladakh.
- Some experts feel it is not what the law says, but what China does on the ground that matters.

Line of Actual Control



Does it Change the Realities on Ground?

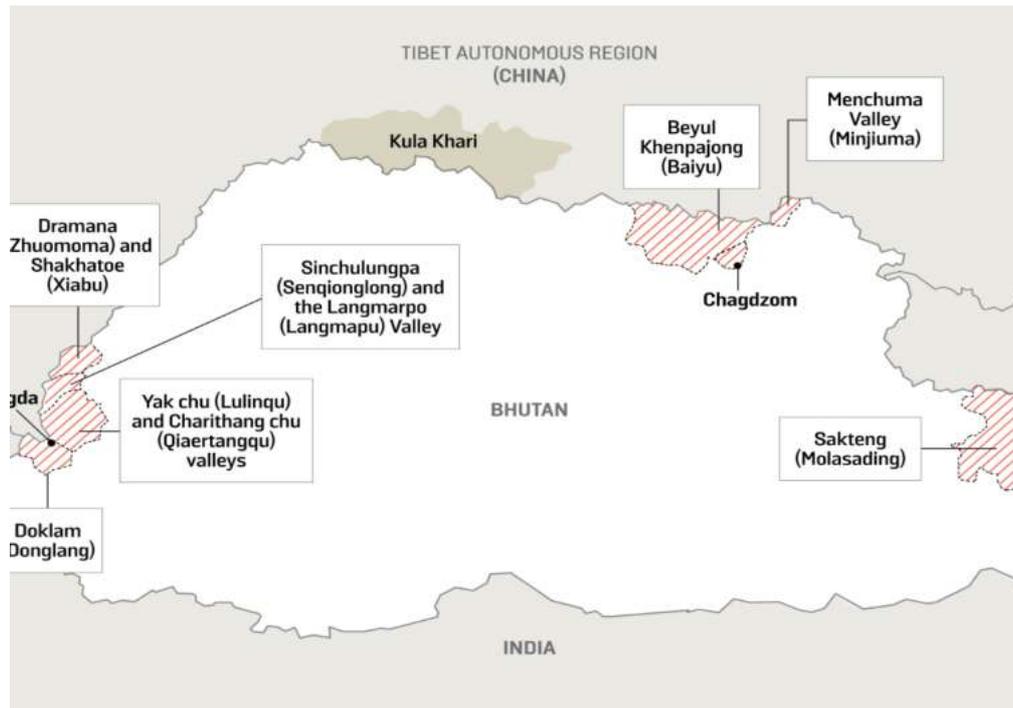
- As per Gautam Bambawale, former Indian Ambassador to Beijing and Thimpu-
 - If this new law was a message to India, then it has fallen flat on its face as **it does not change the situation on the ground at all.**
 - Legitimate for every country to protect their territorial integrity, but question is **why should India consider China's interpretation of their borders.**
 - China seems to be **tired of trying** to resolve the boundary or the LAC **through negotiations** & hence they're indicating they'll do it **through use of force.**

Using Civilians As Shield

- China has been building "well-off" border Defence villages across the LAC in all sectors.
- China's "**Dual civil and military use**" (Eastern Part of LAC) of border villages is a concern for India.
- China has "always been using the civil population to reinforce their claims"
- Whenever there is an opportunity for Negotiation to settle the border disputes, China claims to **legitimize their interpretation** of the borders using the shield of **civilians settlements.**

Bhutan- China Dispute

- With Bhutan, China has a 477 kms border.
- China has taken de facto control over the disputed Doklam plateau.
- China is building 628 "moderately well off villages".
- This is being done to encourage the herders to settle in the disputed areas in border areas.



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S 400 Triumf Missile & India



What is the S 400 Missile System?

- A missile Defence system is intended to act as a shield against incoming ballistic missiles.
- The Russian-built S-400 Triumf – identified by NATO as the SA-21 Growler – is the world's most dangerous operationally deployed modern **long-range surface-to-air missile system**.
- It is considered much more effective than the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system developed by the US.
- The S-400 is a mobile system that integrates a multifunction radar, autonomous detection and targeting systems, anti-aircraft missile systems, launchers, and a command and control center.

Capability of S 400 Missile

- It can be deployed **within five minutes**, and is capable of firing three types of missiles to create a layered Defence.
- It can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, and ballistic and cruise missiles within a range of 400 km, at an altitude up to 30 km.
- It can simultaneously track **100 airborne targets**, including super fighters such as the **US-built F-35 (Lockheed Martin F-35)**, and engage six of them at the same time!!
- The **S-400 was made operational in 2007**, and is responsible for defending Moscow.
- It was deployed in **Syria in 2015** to guard Russian and Syrian naval and air assets.

How Does S 400 works?

- The S-400 missile Defence system is **largely untested** in a real war situation.
- But that is the case with most modern weapons platforms.
- Each S-400 battery comprises.
 - Long-range radar
 - Command post vehicle

- Target acquisition radar
- System that erects and launches the missiles simultaneously.
- On paper, the S-400 is a **cutting-edge system** that the US and its NATO allies are wary of because it can detect and take out stand-off platforms such as AWACs (**Airborne Warning & Control Systems**), drones, missiles, and aircraft.
- S-400 system installed near Delhi to protect the national capital can shoot down an incoming missile near Amritsar, at an aerial distance of nearly 400 km.

Technical Specifications

- It's long-range radar can see farther than the missile can fly – nearly 600 km.
- (LR) radar will be able to see beyond Amritsar, more than half the distance between Lahore and Islamabad (270 km).
- The S-400 can be armed with four different types of missiles with ranges of 400 km, 250 km, 120 km and 40 km.
- The LR radar can track more than 100 flying objects simultaneously while being able to engage a dozen targets.

Why Does India Need S-400?

- To protect against attacks by missiles, or fighter jets from **China or Pakistan**
- From the perspective of the Indian Air Force, **“there is no alternative system capable of serving its long-range air Defence requirements, from the standpoint of either capability or cost”**.
- S-400 can be deployed within five minutes, compared to 25 minutes for **Patriot (MIM- 104 Patriot, USA Manufactured)**
- Russia has started supplying S-400 air Defence system to India, and the first division will be delivered by the end of 2021. **(Deal worth USD 5.4Billion)**
- India has placed an order for five units in October 2018. India is slated to receive first of the five units it bought by end of the year.
- What concerns India is that China placed an order in March 2014, and the delivery began in 2018.
- During the standoff in eastern Ladakh, which began in May 2020 and remains unresolved, China had reportedly deployed its S-400 along the Line of Actual Control. (China has deployed a few S-400 systems in Tibet).

Why is USA upset with this decision?

- US wants India to **wean off its traditional reliance** on Russian Defence systems.
- Russia has been the **largest Defence partner for India** over the decades.
- Larger cause of concerns about the deal for Indo-American relationship lies in a **2017 law passed** by the

US named **Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**.

- CAATSA'S objective is to counter American adversaries **Iran, Russia and North Korea** through punitive measures.
- CAATSA is the US response to Moscow's alleged interference in its **2016 presidential election and its annexation of Crimea in 2014**.
- In January 2021, a US Congressional report **warned** India's multi-billion dollar deal to purchase the **Russian-made S-400 air Defence system** may trigger US sanctions on India under CAATSA.

CAATSA & Turkey

- In the past Turkey, a NATO ally, has come under CAATSA sanctions for the purchase of the S-400 system.
- These sanctions include denials of export licenses, loans and credits by American financial institutions to the importing Turkish entity.
- **Denial of visa to Turkey's personnel** and blocking of their assets in the US.
- India is no Turkey and Washington has to do a deep think about imposing sanctions.

Ministry of External Affairs Response to CAATSA

- "India and the US have a comprehensive **Global Strategic partnership**".
- "India has a Special and privileged strategic partnership with Russia".
- "India has always pursued an **independent foreign policy**."

"This also applies to our Defence acquisitions and supplies which are guided by our national security interests."

Presidential Waiver in CAATSA

- This was written into the law after **much persuasion** and is interpreted as one crafted to **accommodate** countries like India.
- The "**modified waiver authority**" allows the President to waive sanctions in certain circumstances.
- He has to decide whether the move is in American interest & does not endanger the country's national security.
- Country in question should be taking steps to bring down its inventory of Defence equipment from Russia.
- Sanctions have the **tremendous potential of pulling down** the upward trajectory of the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and India, which now spans 50 sectors, especially in the field of Defence.

Can India do Fine balancing between USA & Russia?

- CAATSA also impacts the United States' ties with India, and dents its image when it is **trying to project India as a key partner in its Indo-Pacific strategy**.

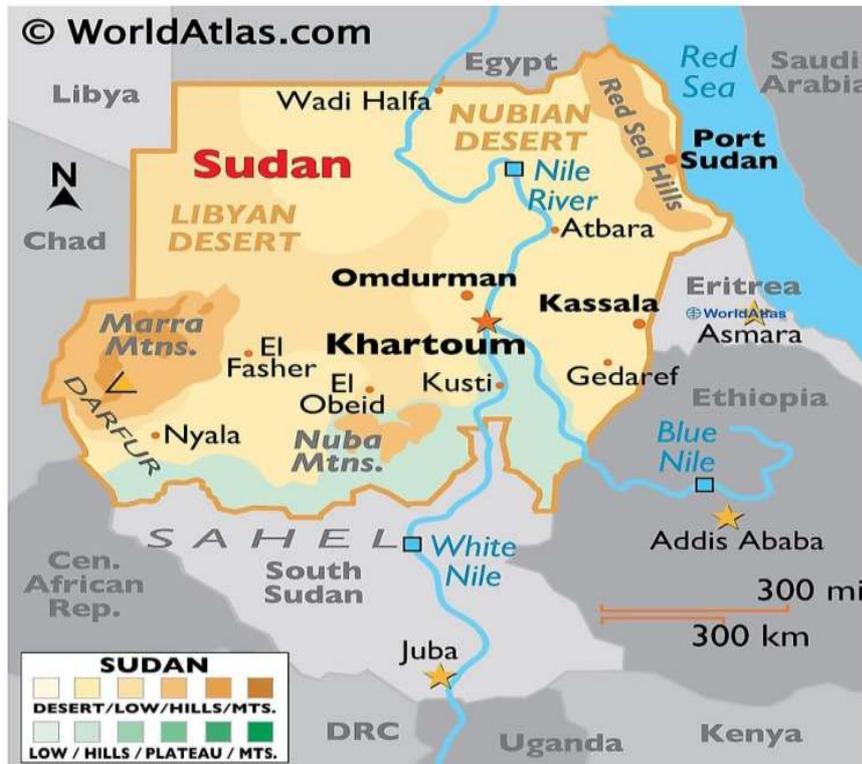
- Secretary of Defence James Mattis had asked some **relief from CAATSA** for countries like **India**.
- Over the last decade, **US Defence deals with India have grown from near zero to worth \$15 billion**, including key Indian acquisitions such as C-17 Globemaster and C-130J transport aircraft.
- In July, the US communicated that it was **ready to grant India (along with Indonesia and Vietnam)** a waiver on the CAATSA sanctions.
- The waiver also conveyed the acceptance by the US that India could not be dictated on its strategic interests by a third country.

Way Forward

- In the last Decade, India's military purchase from Russia has steadily declined.
- India's **import of arms decreased by 33%** between 2011-15 and 2016-20 and Russia was the most affected supplier.
- Government-to-government deals with the **U.S. touched \$20 billion** and deals worth nearly \$10 billion are under negotiation.
- **U.S. designated India as a Major Defence Partner in 2016** & gave India Strategic Trade Authorisation-1 which allows access to critical technologies.
- The CAATSA test will determine the course of the India-U.S. strategic partnership.

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Sudan Crisis



What is Happening in Sudan?

- Sudan began a **transition to democracy** after a popular uprising and the **ouster in April 2019 of President Omar al-Bashir**, an Islamist shunned by the West who had presided over the country for nearly three decades.
- Under an August 2019 agreement, the **military is sharing power with officials appointed by civilian political groups** in a ruling body known as the **Sovereign Council**, meant to lead the country to elections by the end of 2023.
- Military's role is supposed to be **largely honorary**, civilians have repeatedly complained of **military overreach** in foreign policy and peace negotiations.
- The military has accused civilian parties of mismanagement and monopolizing power
- A **coalition of rebel groups and political parties** have aligned themselves with the armed forces and have sought to dissolve the civilian cabinet.

Conflict between Military & Civilian Parties

- Point of tension is the pursuit of justice over allegations of war crimes by the military and its allies in the conflict in Darfur from 2003.
- Another is an investigation into the **killings of pro-democracy protesters** on June 3, 2019, in which military forces are implicated.

- Activists and civilian groups have been angered by delays in making the investigation's findings public.
- **Civilians have also pushed for oversight and restructuring of the military**, particularly through the integration of the powerful, paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Volatile Neighbourhood of Sudan

- Sudan is in a **volatile region**, bordering the Red Sea, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa.
- Several of its neighbours, including Ethiopia, Chad and South Sudan have been affected by political upheavals and conflict.
- **Ethiopia's Tigray region** has pushed tens of thousands of refugees into eastern Sudan and caused military tensions in disputed agricultural lands along the border.



Authoritarian Rule of Omar- Al- Bashir

- In June 1989, Al-Bashir, as colonel, led the military in a bloodless military coup to overthrow then Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi.
- After seizing control of the government, al-Bashir became Sudan's dictator for the next 30 years.
- He appointed himself as president in 1993, banned all rival parties and consolidated full control over legislative and executive processes within Sudan's central administration.
- Multi-party elections weren't even held until 2010.
- For the first two decades of his rule, al-Bashir de facto ran for president uncontested.
- On 19 December 2018, protests erupted in several cities in Sudan due to high costs prevalent all over Sudanese society and the worsening of economic and financial conditions.
- Al-Bashir tried to strike back using his army, but he was **quite unpopular among the soldiers as well**.
- On 11 April 2019, Omar al-Bashir was ousted by the Sudanese Armed Forces and placed under house arrest.

Sudan Post Omar Al Bashir- Sovereignty Council

- Sudan's **nascent democratic order emerged in 2019**, in the second wave of the Arab Spring uprisings, when demonstrators across the country demanded the removal of the **entrenched President, Omar al-Bashir**.
- This led to a transitional arrangement in which power would be shared for about four years between the armed forces and the civilian administration.

- This will be followed by free elections and civilian rule.
- At the head of the country would be a “Sovereignty Council” which, in the first instance, would be headed by the Army chief, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, supported by a civilian Prime Minister.

Coup in October 2021

- On October 25, a month before handing over the Sovereignty council to a civilian leadership, Gen. Burhan declared a state of emergency, suspended the Constitution and the Sovereignty Council.
- He placed the **Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok**, under house arrest and arrested several Ministers and activist.
- However, a month later, on November 21, in the face of massive public protests, Gen. Burhan released Mr. Hamdok and agreed to restore the transition process.

What led to the Coup at the First Place in October 2021

- Prime Minister Hamdok had spoken of getting the former President, Omar al-Bashir, tried by the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- The **generals feared their own role** in perpetrating human rights abuses in Darfur and during the 2019 uprisings would also be **exposed**.
- But the larger issue that agitated them was Mr. Hamdok’s insistence that the military give up its control over business.
- It is believed that the armed forces control about 200 companies, valued at \$2 billion
- Some generals, like **Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo**, who heads the notorious Rapid Support Forces, are said to **control gold mines in Darfur**.
- On November 10, Gen. Burhan announced a new Sovereignty Council headed by him, with General Dagalo as his deputy, signalling the end of Sudan’s encounter with a democratic order.

Why has Abdalla Hamdok been Reinstated as PM Now?

- Two days after the killing of 15 protesters, Gen. Burhan released Mr. Hamdok from house arrest, on November 21.
- He signed an agreement with him to head a **new “technocratic” government**.
- The 14-point deal commits Gen. Burhan to the transition arrangements of 2019 and the release of all political prisoners
- Gen. Burhan did not anticipate the country-wide popular protests led by civil society organisations whose agitations had brought about the transition arrangements of 2019.
- Western, Arab and African nations have called for a return to civilian rule, and **the US suspended \$700 million in aid as it strongly condemned the coup**.
- Protesters have flooded the streets in the biggest demonstrations since those that ended al-Bashir’s three-

decade reign in 2019, and **security forces have killed more than 40 demonstrators since the coup.**

What is the Role of International Community in this crisis?

- The coup was widely criticized internationally, but the generals have influential friends
- Several commentators have seen the hand of **Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt** in engineering the overturning of the democratic processes in Tunisia and Sudan.
- These countries have **cultivated close ties with Burhan** since the uprising against al-Bashir.
- The Wealthy Gulf states view the Generals as a bulwark against the influence of rivals like Turkey and Qatar.
- **Israel is also seen as a potential ally of the generals**, who were the guiding force behind Sudan normalizing relations with Israel last year.
- Israel had pumped USA to remove Sudan from the **list of terror sponsoring countries.**
- However, The Biden administration froze aid worth \$700 million after the coup and made it clear to the generals that any improvement in ties would be linked to the reinstating of Mr. Hamdok.

Will Reversing the Coup Solve any Problem for Sudan?

- The Pro-democracy parties and organisations have already dismissed the deal between the military and Mr. Hamdok.
- His decision to reach a deal with the generals has turned at least sections of the protesters against him.
- The pro-democracy movement has **vowed to keep up the street protests** until the military hands over power to civilians.
- Hamdok can work with the generals to pave the way for elections (2023), potentially **leveraging his position** and international support to get the political transition back on track.
- The Military does not want to lose at any cost it's control over the nation's mining & other commercial sectors.
- The Sudanese civil society view this reinstatement as a temporary arrangement played by the Army under International pressure.

December 2021

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Narcos - Afghanistan



Context

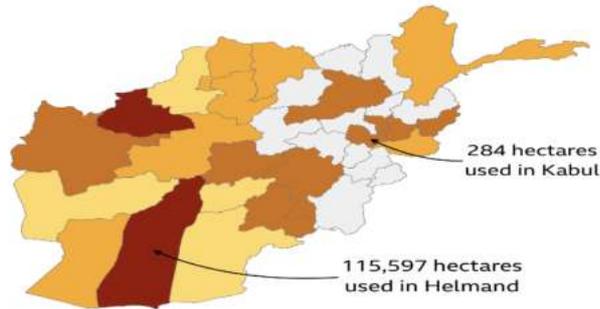
- **AFGHANISTAN PRODUCES 90%** of the world's illegal opium, the tacky gum harvested from poppies that can be turned into heroin.
- As per UN, Today the opium trade is worth between **6% and 11% of Afghanistan's GDP**.
- Opium poppies have been **cultivated in Afghanistan for centuries**, but growing them became especially **popular after the Soviet Union** invaded in 1979.
- According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), opium production in Afghanistan has crossed **6,000 tonnes for the 5th consecutive year**.

Entry Into India

- Afghan opiates have entered India through circuitous routes, sea as well as air, involving **Pakistan, Sri Lanka & Some African countries**.
- Massive recoveries made in various States of Western India, have only been the proverbial tip of the iceberg.
- Recently there were huge recoveries of heroin in Gujarat alone- **3,000 Kgs in September 2021. and 120 Kgs in October 2021**.
- Taliban may have initiated free-for-all narcotic smuggling waves, which unless checked, have the potential of destabilizing India's security.

Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan

Hectares used by province, 2020

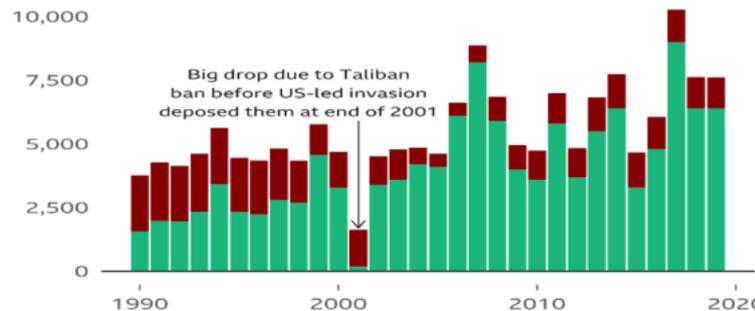


Source: UNODC

BBC

Afghanistan is responsible for more than 80% of global opium production

Opium production in tonnes, 1990-2019



Source: UNODC

BBC

Illicit Economy

- Over the years, the Taliban have **minted money from this sector**, by promoting its production, taxing it and also by overseeing its **smuggling either into Pakistan or Iran**.
- This has helped Taliban in **strengthening linkages to terrorist groups** like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Hezbollah.
- According to United Nations officials, the group likely earned more than **\$400 million between 2018-19 from the drug trade**.
- United States Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) estimated that the **Taliban derive up to 60% of their annual revenue** from illicit narcotic trade.

What is the Role of International Community?

- There is a global consensus that narcotics itself can **devastate societies** and money derived from the **narco-trade can fuel organized crime and terror activities**.
- However, Taliban seem to be taking advantage of the vacuum and detached attitude of the international community.

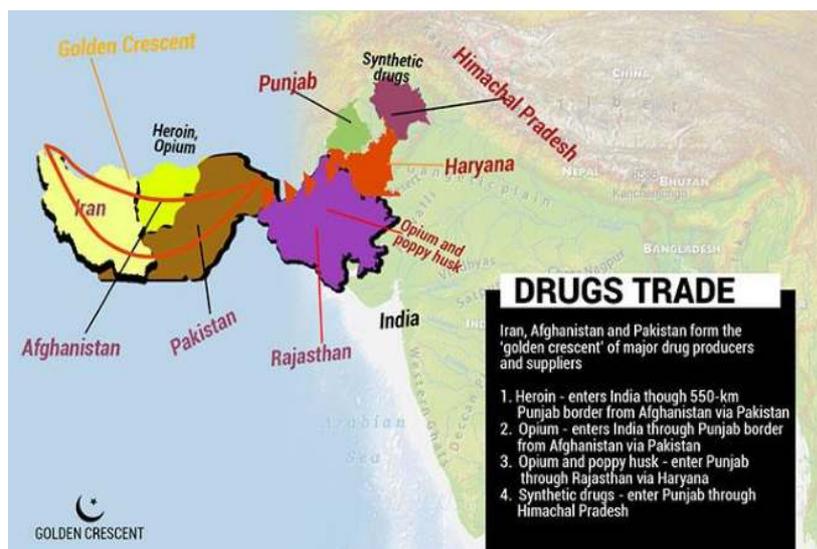
- This is rooted in the **global failure** in adopting an appropriate **counter narcotic policy** to rein in the narco-trade originating from Afghanistan between 2001 and 2020.

Role of UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime)

- UNODC's achievement in this regard was limited to ensuring a minor dip in the area under poppy cultivation and production of opium.
- **Promotion of alternate livelihood programmes** and pushing farmers to grow other cash crops largely **failed**.
- This was also because of **punitive policy** advocated by the international community which sought the **use of force to destroy standing opium crops**.
- This was done **without adequately compensating** the farmers or providing them with alternative livelihoods.

What are the Implications For India?

- Countries with the best of intentions and abilities fail to turn the tide, which is fueled by such an unholy nexus.
- Afghanistan is emerging as a major narco-empire, where neither the intention nor the ability to disrupt the trade exist.
- From New Delhi's perspective, its **efforts to curb terror finance** at home would achieve only **limited results**.
- This is so as **Anti-India groups** such as the **Lashkar-e-Taiba** and the **Jaish-e-Mohammed**, which if operating in Afghanistan, will manage to tap into the **money from such narco-trade**.
- A failed state in the neighborhood combined with narco terrorism cannot be ignored and will have serious consequences for India's security in the days to come.



Way Forward

- The antidote to this phenomenon is a legitimate, responsible, empowered, and inclusive government in Kabul.
- Economic collapse of the Afghan state and the evolving humanitarian crisis must be prevented.
- **Reaching out to the Afghans and amplifying their voices** in having a government that is legitimate and acceptable to them would be a first step in the right direction.
- India should look for new alliances in Central, West, and South Asia to stitch a coalition of the willing countries which can assist in humanitarian aid to Afghan Civil Society.

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The New World Disorder

Retreat of America?

1. 2021 will most likely go down in history as one of the pivotal years in the post Cold War period.
2. Too early to say how the American withdrawal from Afghanistan would **shape regional geopolitics in Asia**.
3. There are Two dominant narratives about the American withdrawal
 - U.S. exited the country **on its own will** as it is undertaking a larger **realignment** in its foreign policy.
 - The other one is that the U.S. failed to win the war in Afghanistan and, like in **the case of Vietnam**, was **forced to withdraw** from the country.

Flip Flops From the Past

- Superpowers have in the past suffered **military setbacks** at the hands of **weaker force**.
- Britain, whose **imperial glory** came to an end with the **Second World War**, took time to come to terms with that reality.
- Joined by France, it backed Israel's misadventure in the Suez in 1956, only to be repudiated by the U.S. and the Soviet Union.
- In the 1970s, the **U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam was read in Moscow** as a weak moment for the Western bloc in the Cold War.
- In 1978, communists, backed by the Soviet Union, seized power in Kabul
- The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, after failing to defeat the Mujahideen and Islamist guerillas who were **backed by the U.S.**

Geopolitical Scramble Defying USA

- The Afghan withdrawal was **not an isolated incident**.
- In Iraq and Libya, **USA failed to establish political stability** and order after invasions.
- USA could **not stop Russia** taking **Crimea** from Ukraine in **2014**.
- The return of the Taliban to power strengthened perception of great power fatigue and **emboldened America's rivals** to openly challenge the U.S.-centric "**rules-based order**."

Challengers To USA

RUSSIA

- Russia has amassed about **175,000 troops** on its border with Ukraine.
- **Western intelligence** agencies claim that Russian President Vladimir Putin could order an invasion of Ukraine by next month!
- Mr. Putin is unmistakably sending a message to the West that the region stretching from the **Baltic Sea to the Black Sea**, the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a **Russian sphere of influence**.

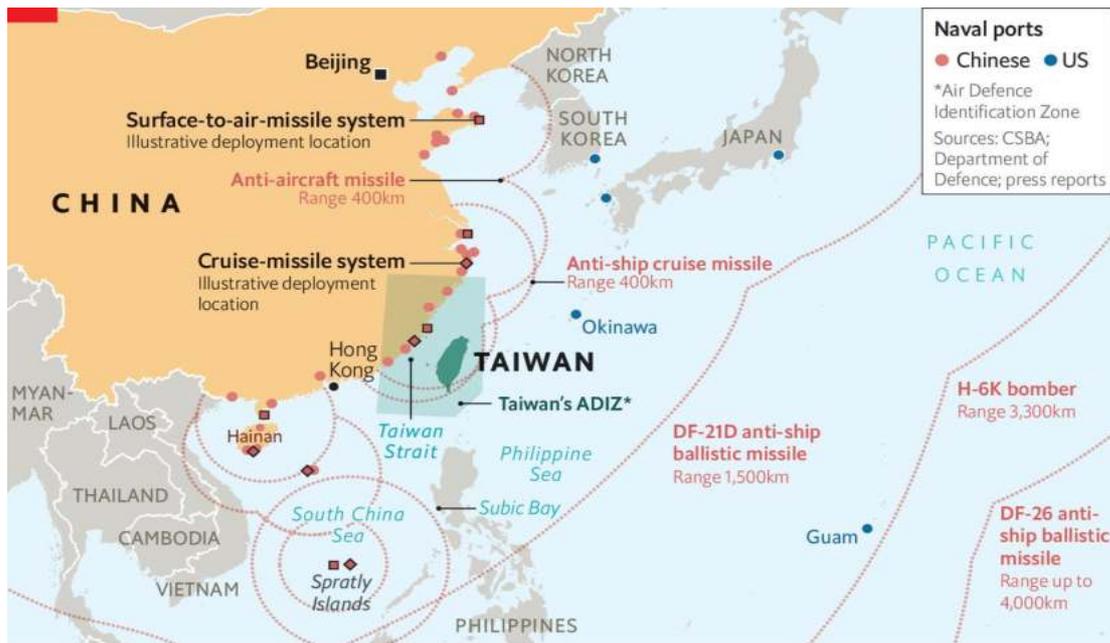


IRAN

- Iran has **refused to hold direct talks** with the U.S. post the withdrawal of JCPOA (2015) by Trump Administration.
- The Biden administration has promised to lift nuclear sanctions on Iran if the Islamic Republic **returns to the deal**.
- But Iran insists that the U.S. should **first remove the sanctions** and give assurance that a future President would **not violate** the terms of the agreement.

CHINA

- China is sending dozens of fighters jets into the so-called **Taiwan Air Defence Identification Zone** almost on a weekly basis.
- U.S. is trying to **shift its focus** to the Indo-Pacific region to tackle China's rise.
- AUKUS pact was signed within two weeks of America's Afghan pull-out.
- China is becoming more and more assertive in its periphery, **seeking strategic depth**.



The Economist

The Road Ahead For USA

- What could the U.S. do to deter Mr. Putin from making the next military move in Europe?
- Biden has understandably **ruled out a military confrontation** with Russia over Ukraine.
- **Imposing Economic sanctions** will also drive **Russia further into the Chinese** embrace, strengthening the Eurasian partnership
- With regard to Iran, **if the U.S. blinks first and lifts the sanctions**, it could be read as another sign of weakness.

The New Dilemma

- The Afghan withdrawal and the **downsizing in West Asia** suggest that America's **strategic focus** has shifted towards China
- Ideally, the U.S. would **not prefer to get involved in another conflict** as the structures of the new Cold War are taking shape
- **Inconclusive wars** the U.S. fought in recent years and the **associated great power fatigue** have opened up space for its regional rivals, who are trying to **maximize their influence**.

Strategic Dilemma For USA

- Either To stay focused on China, preparing itself for the next bipolar contest or continue to act as a global policeman of the liberal order.

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Winter Olympics

Winter Olympics

- It is a **major international multi-sport event** held once every four years for sports practiced on **snow and ice**.
- The first Winter Olympic Games, the 1924 Winter Olympics, were held in Chamonix, France.
- The Games were held every four years from 1924 to 1936, interrupted in 1940 and 1944 by World War II, and resumed in 1948
- In the past, there were calls to **boycott the 1936 Olympics**, which were held in Nazi Germany.
- Interestingly, The U.S. decided not to boycott those Olympics
- The 2022 Winter Olympics will take place in Beijing between 4 and 20 February 2022.

Why has the U.S. announced a 'diplomatic boycott' of the Beijing Winter Olympics?

- On December 6, the U.S. Government said it will **not send any official** representation to the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing.
- The decision elicited a **strong response from China**, which slammed the move as a *"political stunt"*
- The spat over the Winter Olympics is the latest clash between the U.S. and China, adding to a long list of differences on **Trade, Taiwan, human rights and the South China Sea**.
- There has largely been support for the move in USA. If anything, the criticism has come from **Republicans** who say the **decision does not go far enough**.

What does a 'diplomatic boycott' of the games mean?

- **No U.S. official** will be present at the Winter Olympics in Beijing.
- This stops short of a complete boycott, which would have meant the non-participation by U.S. athletes.
- The absence of official representation will not impact the games as much as an athletic boycott would have had.
- Chinese Official have said that the USA's **"political agenda was doomed to fail"**.

What are the Reasons Given By USA for Boycott?

- China's *"human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang"*.
- The USA alleges serious human rights abuses against ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.
- It is alleged that hundreds of thousands of Uighurs, a Muslim minority, have been sent by Chinese authorities to **"re-education" camps**.
- Beijing initially denied the existence of the camps, but subsequently **claimed the centres were for**

“vocational training”.

- Beijing described U.S. allegations of “genocide” in Xinjiang as “*the biggest lie of the century*”.

Who else is ‘diplomatically boycotting’ the games?

- So far, **Australia, Canada, and New Zealand** have also announced that their officials will **not be present** at the games.
- **None, however, has said their athletes will not attend**, which means the games themselves are unlikely to be impacted.
- **Russian President** Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, has said **he will travel to Beijing** for the opening of the Winter Olympics, while China has been garnering support from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Last month, the **Russia-India-China (RIC) foreign ministers in New Delhi** also voiced support for the games in the statement issued after the meeting.
- At the end of China- African Nations summit, the 53 Nations of Africa also agreed to participate in the event.

How is China reacting to the boycott?

- Beijing has sought to play down the impact saying the concerned countries **were not invited**, while on the other, its Foreign Ministry threatened “**countermeasures**”.
- There is certainly a **domestic political undercurrent to the games**, which are meant to **showcase China’s strength** and re-emergence to a domestic audience.
- Beijing wants to utilise this opportunity to **enhance the reputation** of the Communist Party and **President Xi Jinping at home**.

What will be the Impact on U.S.-China relations?

- In a virtual summit last month, the **U.S. and Chinese Presidents** committed to “**responsibly**” manage **their growing competition** amid increasing conflicts.
- President Joe Biden called for “common sense guardrails to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict”.
- Mr. Xi emphasized the “need to treat each other as equals”.
- Xi Jinping warned **against “drawing ideological lines”**, calling on the U.S. “to meet its word of not seeking a ‘**new Cold War**’”.

What other boycotts have happened in past Olympics?

- The most **prominent boycott came in 1980**, when more than 60 countries, led by the United States, **boycotted the Summer Games in Moscow** because of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan the previous year.
- In 1984, the Soviet Union led more than a dozen countries in a boycott of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles.
- First major boycott of an Olympics came in **1976** when about 30 African nations sat out the **Montreal Games**.
- They contended that because a New Zealand rugby team had toured apartheid South Africa, New Zealand should be barred from the Games.

January 2022

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Challenges to Indian foreign Policy - 2021

Rise Of Taliban

- Taliban's recapturing of Afghanistan has meant a challenging time ahead for India.
- New Delhi, which had begun the process of re-engagement, was finally forced to shed its hesitations and established publicly declared contact.
- Now New Delhi is looking at the Taliban as a political actor, burying the ghost of the IC-814 hijack.
- India expressed its readiness to extend humanitarian aid.

China's Muscle Flexing

- In a world occupied with the pandemic, China has been flexing its muscle in the Indo-Pacific region.
- There are reports on China's deployment of choppers and bombers in eastern Ladakh • China has raised fresh territorial claims with Bhutan, and is building villages in border areas of Arunachal Pradesh.
- "Beijing's decisions must have been made at the highest levels for political and strategic, not just tactical, reasons" - Former NSA, Shivs Shankar Menon.
- As China becomes more powerful, both economically and militarily, and it seeks to establish its hegemony over the Indo-Pacific, the interests of India and China will begin to rub against each other.

USA Under Biden

- He brought the US back to the global table by walking back into the Paris climate agreement.
- From India's perspective, he has made countering Beijing "Priority Number 1" in foreign policy.
- Biden signed up on the famous AUKUS deal with UK and Australia, to counter Beijing's assertiveness.
- India was Kept in the dark about the US negotiations with the Taliban.
- India now finds itself having to deal with the diplomatic and strategic fallout of the Taliban takeover.

Unrest In Myanmar

- Myanmar was rocked by massive protests after the military coup on February 1.
- India, which had stopped short of condemning Myanmar's military regime, has now started engaging with them.
- This outreach came after incidents in the Northeast where Indian Army personnel were targeted by insurgent groups.

Relations With Russia

- The standoff with China has shown Russia's importance in India's strategic calculus.
- Russia has remained a key supplier of Defence equipment for seven decades, despite diversification to the US, France, Israel and others.
- Procurement of S-400 will test India's ties with the US, and raises the potential threat of US sanctions once this missile system is deployed.
- Moscow has emerged as one of the key stakeholders in Afghanistan, and its ties with Beijing influences some of its decisions.

Opportunities Amidst Challenges

- India's efforts to engage with regional and global players on Afghanistan is an effort to put its foot in the door.
- Pakistan controls the levers in Kabul through ISI's handpicked Taliban leaders and groups.
- India's steps in that direction include getting Central Asian countries, Russia and Iran in the NSA-level dialogue was a step in that direction.
- India also has to worry about the events in Afghanistan emboldening radical groups in Kashmir.
- India's strategic response to the standoff with China has been guided by a thinking that one has to stand up to the bully.
- A potential window of opportunity to unlock the standoff lies in the BRICS summit 2022, scheduled in China.

Click [here](#) to watch the following topic on YouTube

Protests in Kazakhstan & CSTO



What is Happening in Kazakhstan?

- The protests started on 2 January in the western town of Zhanaozen.
- They were apparently prompted by the doubling of gas prices in the hydrocarbon-rich country.
- The protests also brought to the fore popular grievances over structural problems like corruption and socio-economic inequality as well as calls for regime change
- The situation in Kazakhstan is a classic case of the dilemma of transfer of power in strongman regimes, something which resonates in Russia as well.
- The protests have not ended despite the resignation of the Government and the removal of the unpopular Nursultan Nazarbayev. He resigned as Chairman of Country's Security Council.
- He was also the former President who ruled the country for 28 years (1991-2019).

What was The Response to the Protests?

- The Kazakh President Kassym Jomart Tokayev has called on the CSTO, for help to deal with the protests.
- The CSTO responded swiftly by sending around 2,500 troops on January 6, including Russian paratroopers and Belarussian special troops.

- This is the first time the CSTO has deployed troops under Article 4 of its treaty.
- This can be used in the case of attacks against member states which could affect their stability or sovereignty.

What is Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

- The CSTO is a Russia-dominated security alliance & Russia contributes 50% of its budget.
- Post the fall of USSR, some members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) signed a mutual Defence treaty named Collective Security Treaty.
- Meant as a replacement for the Warsaw Pact, the Treaty came into force in 1994.
- The CSTO has six members today: Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.
- In 2002, CSTO came into existence.

Warsaw Pact

- Formally known as the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, the Warsaw Pact was created on 14 May 1955
- It was created immediately after the accession of West Germany to the Western Alliance
- It was established by the Soviet Union and 7 other Soviet satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania were it's members.
- The Warsaw Pact embodied what was referred to as the Eastern bloc
- The break-up of the Warsaw Pact (February 1991) was shortly followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

What do we Know About CSTO?

- CSTO is based on the principle of collective security or the idea of "one for all and all for one".
- An aggressor against any one state in the organisation is considered to be an aggressor against all other states.
- All the members would act together to repel the aggressor.
- Collective Security is also the principle on which NATO, the UN and earlier the League of Nations were founded.

Why has the CSTO Intervened?

- Interestingly, CSTO did not intervene last year during the stand-off between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- This Time Russia intervened because-
 - Russia is concerned that political instability in the country could lead to the rise of ultra-nationalists.
 - Ethnic Russians comprise about 19% of the Kazakh population

- Radical Islamic forces which could then spread across the region and into Russia itself which shares an open border over 7,500 km long with Kazakhstan.
- Russia wants to send a clear message that it will not tolerate any attempts of interference in its “sphere of influence”.

Limiting Multi Vector Diplomacy

- Putin knows that if the protests are controlled, the Kazakh regime would be indebted to Russia
- This would effectively end Kazakhstan’s long-standing multi-vector foreign policy of balancing among Russia, China, the West, and Turkey.
- This might hold true for the other Central Asian Republics as well.
- Thereby, Russia would have a more dominant role in their foreign policies.

What Lies Ahead?

- It remains to be seen if or when the protests will die down.
- Even if the protests cool down, question is Whether the CSTO troops will leave?
- As per U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken -
- “One lesson of recent history is that once Russians are in your house, it’s sometimes very difficult to get them to leave.”
- China, Kazakhstan’s other big neighbour, is embroiled in a competition for influence with Russia in the Central Asia Region.
- China is also keenly watching these events Unfold as China has made big investments under the BRI in Kazakhstan.

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Ukraine Crisis



About Ukraine

- Ukraine is the second biggest country in Europe after Russia itself.
- Ukraine has major ports on the Black Sea and shares borders with 4 NATO countries. (Poland, Moldova, Romania, Hungary)
- It is a major exporter of corn and wheat.
- Ukraine has Rich Reserves of Natural Gas as well.
- Ukraine is not a NATO member but has a promise dating from 2008 that it will eventually get to join.
- Since toppling a Pro-Russian president (Viktor Yanukovych) in 2014, it has become closer politically to the West.
- Present President of Ukraine- Volodymyr Zelensky.

About NATO

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a military alliance between the United States, Canada, and their European allies.
- The founding members of NATO signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949.
- NATO's primary purpose was to defend member nations from threats by communist countries.
- On December 1, 2015, NATO announced its first expansion since 2009, offering membership to Montenegro.

- Currently there are 30 Member States in NATO.

How Does NATO Work?

- It offers Protection of Freedom & Stability for Members & Their Regions.
- When One NATO nation is attacked, all NATO nations will retaliate.
- USA Contributes to Almost 75% of NATO's Budget.
- NATO protection Does not extend to Civil wars or Internal Coups.

Historical Background of Russia & Ukraine

- With the 1991 break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia lost control of 14 former republics it had previously dominated.
- However, the loss of Ukraine was very Painful.
- The two had been linked since the 9th century when Kyiv became the capital of the ancient state of Russia.
- From 1654, Russia and Ukraine were united by a treaty under the rule of the Russian tsar
- The Two countries speak closely related languages and later formed, with Belarus, the Slav core of the Soviet Union.
- Many Russians feel a connection with Ukraine that they do not feel with other former Soviet republics.
- Putin- Russians and Ukrainians were one people who shared a single "historic and spiritual space".

Rising Tensions in 2022

- Tension is mounting along the border of Ukraine, where Russia has deployed over 100,000 troops.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has insisted that his country is not on the warpath.
- United States and its allies have threatened fresh sanctions in response to one wrong move.
- The current military buildup along the Russia-Ukraine border is reminiscent of 2014.
- Russia had then annexed Ukraine's southern Crimean Peninsula.
- Since 2014, Russia has been backing separatists who were able to capture much of eastern Ukraine. (Donbas Region).

Russia Vs NATO

- Since the Cold War ended, NATO has expanded eastwards by taking in 14 new countries.
- This includes the states of the former Warsaw Pact and the 3 Baltic nations that were once in the Soviet Union.
- Russia saw this as a threatening encroachment towards its borders.
- Russia continues to say it was a betrayal of Western promises at the start of the 1990s.
- Russia Blames NATO for endangering and undermining it's regional security by upping its military presence in Eastern Europe.
- Clearly, Putin is no Gorbachev and is wanting RESPECT from the Western World.



What is Putin Demanding?

- Russia has been reluctant to accept Ukraine's independence.
- He has repeatedly accused Ukraine's leadership of running an "anti-Russian project".
- Putin demanded that no former Soviet states, such as Ukraine, be added to NATO.
- He wants NATO to withdraw its presence in Eastern Europe.
- This would mean that NATO countries would have to pull out all their combat units from Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania.
- Putin seems to be using the threat of war as a bargaining chip to force the West to reassess its position in eastern Europe.



What is USA’s Take on the situation in Ukraine?

- The US and its allies have roundly rejected Putin’s demands
- Biden is convinced Russia will soon invade Ukraine, but warned that Moscow would have to pay a heavy price for its actions.
- As per the Charter of NATO, the organisation can invite any willing European country that can help ensure security in the North Atlantic area.
- The US and its allies have threatened to impose severe economic sanctions if Russia engages in fresh aggression against Ukraine.
- As of Now, The US has made no concessions to the main Russian demands over Ukraine.
- As per Joe Biden, “NATO has an open-door membership policy”, and will not be intimidated by Putin’s advances.

What Lies Ahead?

- Putin has devoted his presidency to restoring Moscow’s influence throughout the post-Soviet space.
- Keeping the world guessing about a possible invasion of Ukraine is consistent with those aims.
- It will be a difficult balancing for the EU to make by prioritising it’s economic ties with Russia over Ukraine’s security.
- Germany & Italy would want to put business ties with Russia ahead of solidarity with Ukraine.
- Joe Biden has made it clear that USA will not accept any Demands coming from Putin.
- However, it can’t be ignored that despite all the paraphernalia, NATO couldn’t do anything when Russia annexed Crimea back in 2014.

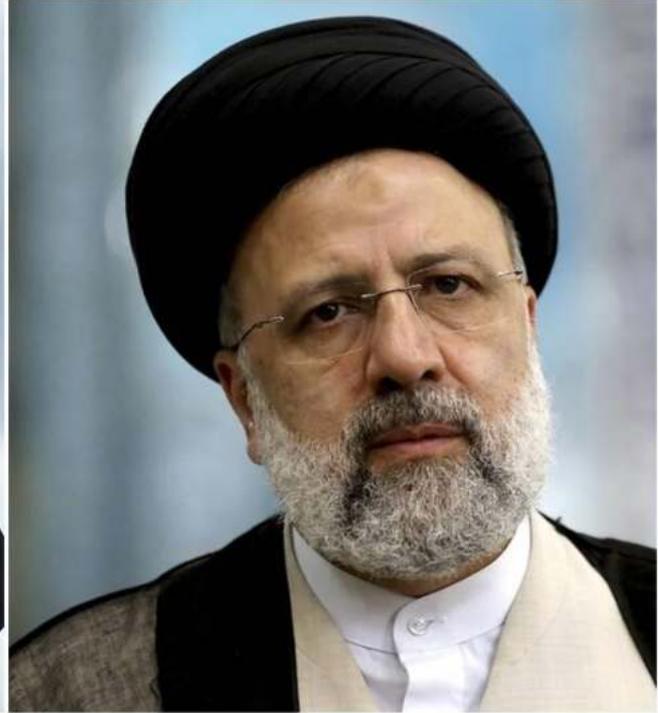
Why Should India Be Alarmed?

- If Moscow again takes military action against Ukraine, it will significantly complicate India's objectives vis-à-vis Russia, China, the US, Europe, and even Ukraine
- Hinder Delhi's interest in preventing a further deepening of Russia's ties with China.
- Amidst western backlash over Ukraine, Moscow will need Beijing's diplomatic support even more.
- Moscow that is more beholden to Beijing would be particularly problematic when India is dependent on Russian military supplies.
- Deteriorating situation in Europe could draw US attention away from the Indo-Pacific theatre.
- This at a time when Delhi wants Washington to be focused on the China challenge.

February 2022

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JCPOA- Iran Nuclear deal



Why are We Discussing This?

- Western diplomats have set a **deadline of late February** to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.
- This deal was **signed under President Barack Obama**, and **dismantled in 2018 by President Donald Trump**.
- American officials are concerned about Iran's Rapid Nuclear Escalation after the **US abandoned the deal**.
- President Joe Biden has said that the **US will rejoin the agreement if Iran complies with the terms of the original deal**.
- Iran has **rejected any deadline** imposed by the West.
- There is a new President in Iran Since 2021, **Ebrahim Raisi**, who is **considered a hardliner** unlike his predecessor.

What was the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal?

- The deal, formally known as **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**.
- This was a landmark accord signed between Iran and a coalition of world powers including the **US, the UK, China, Russia, France, and Germany (P5 + 1)**
- The relatively moderate regime of President Hassan Rouhani agreed to **dismantle much of Iran's nuclear programme**.
- Iran also agreed to **open its facilities** to greater international monitoring.

- In return, the **world powers agreed to lift many of the sanctions** imposed on the country.
- This would help **opening its economy** to billions of dollars of lost revenue.

What were the Objectives of JCPOA?

- The world powers wanted to **restrict Iran's nuclear capabilities** to the point that **it would take Tehran at least a year** to build a weapon.
- This would give USA an **adequate time to prepare and respond**.
- Before the agreement, analysts estimated that Iran had reached a point from where it could **build a weapon in approximately 3 months**.
- While the terms of the agreement were complex, in essence, they **focused on eliminating Iran's stockpiles of enriched uranium** and plutonium.
- Tehran also agreed to **implement a protocol** that would allow **inspectors from the IAEA** to access its nuclear sites!
- While the **West agreed to lift sanctions** related to Iran's nuclear proliferation.
- Other sanctions addressing **alleged abuses of human rights** remained in Place

Critics of The JCPOA Deal of 2015

- Iran's economy, after suffering years of recessions, currency depreciation, and inflation, **stabilised significantly**.
- **Israel**, America's closest ally in the Middle East, **strongly rejected** the deal.
- **Saudi Arabia**, complained that Iran's nuclear programme posed **security risks for every country in the Gulf Region**.
- Critics also point out that since 2015, **Iran has increased its support for regional proxies**, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)
- However, **backers of the deal believe** that it succeeded in its main objective, which was to **contain Iran's nuclear capabilities**.
- Post abandonment of the Deal, Iran has returned to approximately **97% of its pre-2015 nuclear capabilities!!**



Post USA Withdrawal from the Deal

- Mr. Trump and his administration said that the JCPOA was a **flawed deal**.
- Partly because it **didn't also address Iran's other destabilizing influence in the region** nor the country's **ballistic missile program**.
- **In April 2020**, under Trump's presidency, the US announced its **intention to snap back sanctions**
- Initially **following the withdrawal**, several countries continued to **import Iranian oil under waivers** granted by the Trump administration.
- A year later, the **US ended the waivers** to much international criticism and, by doing so, **significantly curbed Iran's oil exports**.

Post Exit reaction of Iran?

- Since the U.S. withdrew from the deal, Iran has made significant leaps in its nuclear program.
- This includes **raising uranium enrichment to 60%**, its highest level ever.
- What it would take for Iran to produce enough weapons-grade enriched uranium fuel for a nuclear weapon is now just a matter of weeks.
- In 2021, **Iran announced new restrictions on the IAEA's ability** to inspect facilities, and **later ended its monitoring agreement** with the agency
- Trump had claimed he would get **Iran back to the negotiating table** and force it to accept harsher terms.
- Instead, Iran was able to **double down on its nuclear and military activities in the region!!**

Geo Political Tensions as a Catalyst to Revive Deal?

- The US would have to factor in not only Iran's nuclear programme but also its **increasingly hostile behaviour in the region**.
- It would also have to take into consideration the **reality of the new multipolar world**, in which its **unilateral leadership** is no longer guaranteed.
- Iran, for its part, would have to consider the rapidly changing **dynamics in the Middle East**.

- This is so as **Israel has recalibrated its relations** with several Middle Eastern Arab countries in recent years.
- **Internal political dynamics** in both Iran and the US will have a role to play.

Way Forward

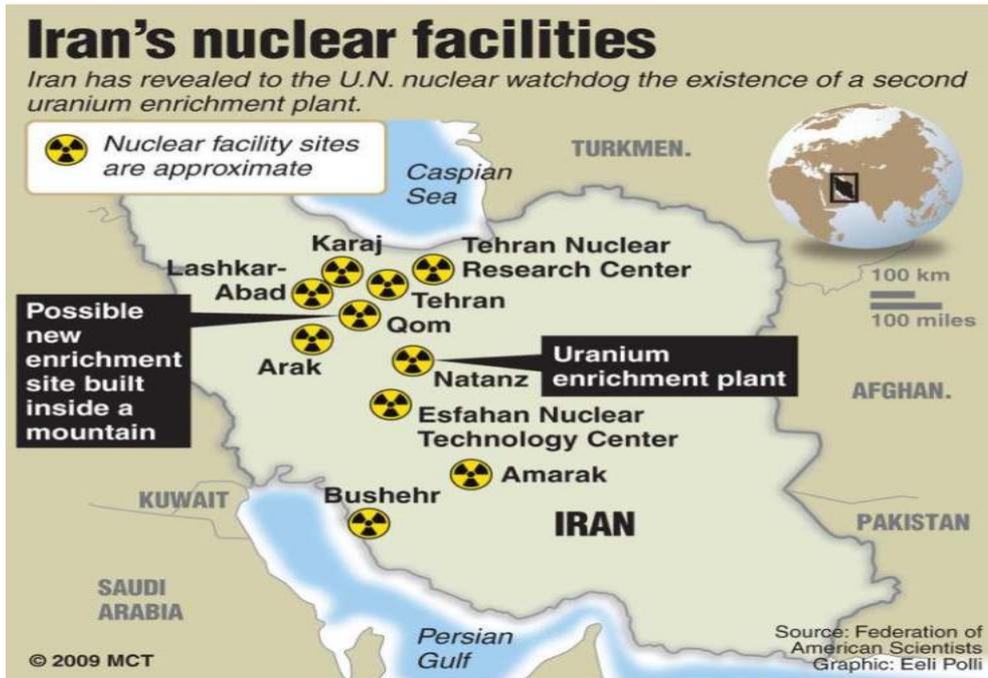
- For now, negotiators have **thrown the onus back** on their political leaders for the next move.
- The **U.S. and Iran are the main players in this drama** – they need to talk
- **Reviving the 2015 agreement is a high-stakes game.**
- If it fails, Iran could be the *next country to exit the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, as North Korea did in 2003.*
- The Move Towards reviving the deal was progressing well until the **election of Raisi in June 2021.**
- President Ebrahim Raisi has **taken a hard position** that the US should lift most sanctions against Iran **in exchange for nuclear compliance.**
- However the **U.S. wants Tehran to walk back (First)** its advanced centrifuges and stockpiles & then will it **CONSIDER lifting sanctions!**

Iran & NPT

- Iran is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).
- NPT is the **internationally accepted rules-based system** governing nuclear activity by states.
- Iran had signed the NPT as a “**non-nuclear-weapon**” state in 1968.
- In so doing, Iran undertook **not to develop nuclear weapons.**
- As required by the NPT, **Iran’s nuclear facilities** are and always have been **under IAEA supervision.**
- Iran’s leaders have **repeatedly denied that they have any ambitions** to develop nuclear weapons.
- In return for surrendering its right to develop nuclear weapons.
- NPT **grants “non-nuclear-weapon” states** like Iran the right to **develop a civil nuclear programme!**

5 February 2022- Sanctions Relief For Iran

- Iran welcomed **US sanctions relief intended to entice Iran** back to the 2015 nuclear deal, but called it insufficient.
- Secretary of State Antony Blinken **signed several sanctions waivers** related to **Iran’s civilian nuclear activities.**
- It comes as **US negotiators return to Vienna** for what could be a **make-or-break session**
- In the short term, the **waivers will exempt foreign countries** and companies that **work in Iran’s civilian nuclear sector** from American penalties.
- However **Iran has demanded the restoration of all sanctions** relief it was promised under the deal **before it returns to compliance**



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War in Ukraine & Sanctions On Russia



The Conflict

- Russia and Ukraine have been in a state of conflict since 2014, when Russia invaded and seized control of the Crimea Peninsula from Ukraine.
- In response, the US enacted a series of sanctions against Russia, including economic sanctions.
- Washington is willing to inflict “more severe economic consequences” in the wake of recent developments.
- Economic sanctions are the West’s most powerful weapon in their foreign policy arsenal.
- But there are question marks over how far they can go in 2022.

Fierce Sanctions?

- On February 22, USA rolled out the first of what the US says could be an **ever-fiercer cascade of financial sanctions**.
- Biden administration says those more **sweeping penalties** would **cripple Russia’s ability** to do business at home and abroad
- US considers these sanctions **crucial to the Kremlin** and Russia’s military.
- Another new US measure **limits Russia’s power to raise money abroad**.

War Clouds- 24 February 2022

- Russia has granted official recognition to two provinces, **Donetsk and Lugansk/Luhansk**, in Eastern Ukraine's Donbass region.
- They have been seeking autonomy from Ukraine since 2014.
- Moscow has sent its army, **under the guise of being 'Russian Peacekeeping Forces'**, to **protect the separatists and Russian ethnic minorities**.
- A war in Ukraine would be a **disaster for Europe** and the world.
- Security of **one military alliance** at the cost of the other will not work.
- Separatist leaders supported by Moscow seized these two regions and declared the '**People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk**' in 2014.



Economic Sanctions

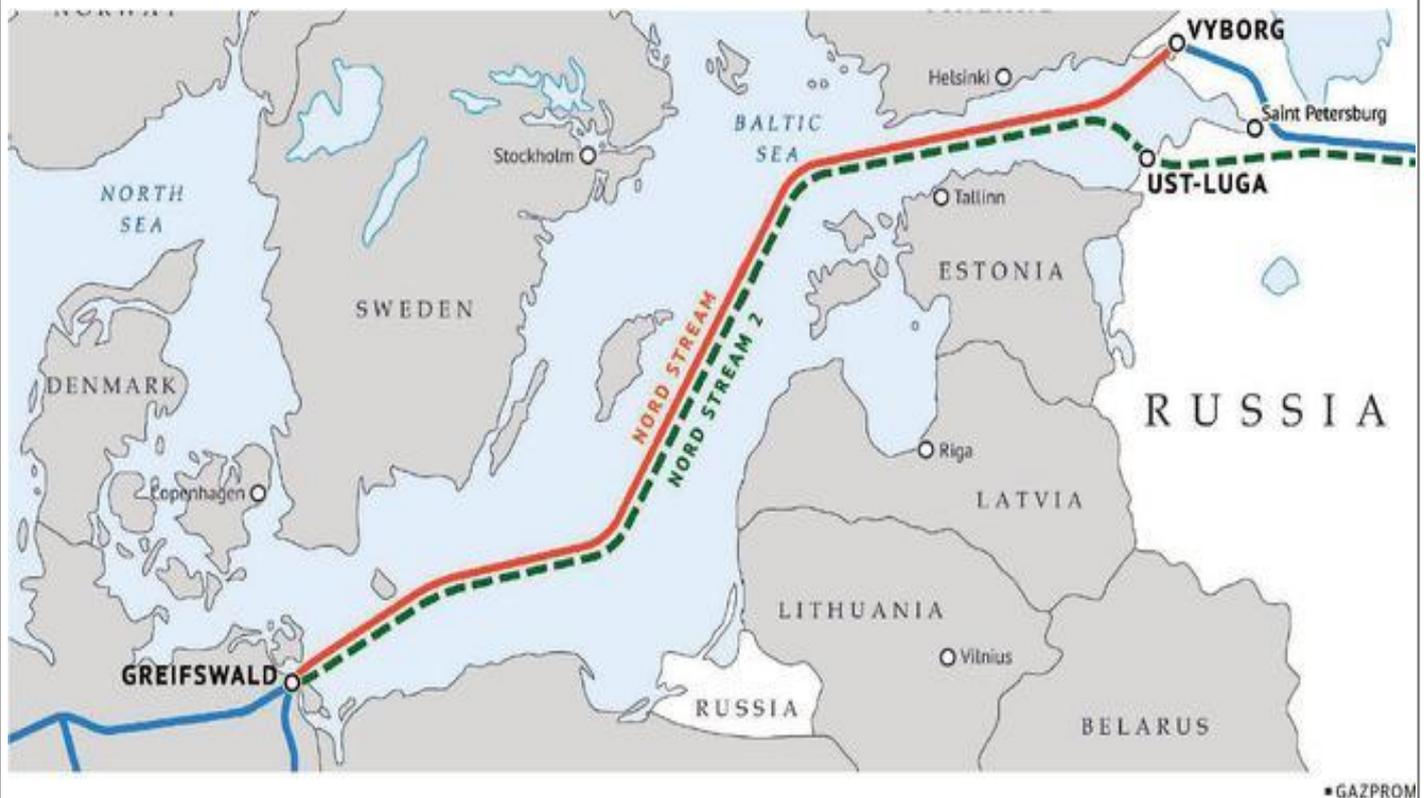
- After **Russia annexed Crimea in 2014**, the US quickly imposed a series of sanctions that **mainly targeted Russia's access to financial markets**.
- But the question is that **did those those sanction indeed hurt** Russia's economy?
- It is clearly a **divided house** on whether the imposition of the **previous round of economic sanctions** have kept Russia under check.
- There is a **growing alternative** view that the **economic sanctions have been largely ineffective**.
- Immediate move by Washington to curb investments in Donetsk & Luhansk is *likely to be symbolic, rather than anything else*.

Russian Economy in 2022 vs in 2014

- Russia in 2022 is not what it was in 2014-15.
- Russia was **economically far weaker then**, going through a recessionary phase following the financial crisis in 2014.
- Back in 2014 Russia underwent **massive currency devaluation**.
- Over the last seven years, Moscow has been able to stabilise the financial system and had **nearly \$635 billion in gold and forex reserves as of early February**.
- Possible Western sanctions against Russian banks could lead to a **surge in market volatility**.
- Russia is **likely to be able to withstand restrictions** due to its abundant reserves

Nord Stream 2

- Nord Stream is a gas pipeline that **connects Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea**.
- The **\$11-billion gas pipeline project** has already driven a wedge between Germany and the US
- The project, owned by **Russia's state-owned Gazprom**, runs from **Western Siberia to Germany**.
- It has **double the capacity (110 Billion Cubic meters)** of the already-in-use Nord Stream 1 pipeline.
- The US has viewed the pipeline as a **geopolitical tool for Russia to increase Moscow's leverage over Europe**



Germany & Nord Stream 2

- Germany would **suspend its certification** of the newly built but never operated **Russia-Germany Nord Stream 2 pipeline**.
- Biden has **warded off repeated attempts** to impose financial sanctions on **any company or person that does business that involves Nord Stream 2**.
- **Biden- “there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it,”**
- While **Germany is a big beneficiary**, some of the gas is also meant to be piped to **Austria, Italy and other Central and Eastern European nations**.

SWIFT BAN

- The SWIFT system stands for the **Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication**
- It is a secure platform for **financial institutions** to exchange **information about global financial transactions such as money transfers**.
- While **SWIFT does not actually move money**, it operates as a **middleman to verify information of transactions**.
- Being cut off from SWIFT would make it tough for **Russians to send money overseas or receive money from outside**.
- The US has succeeded before in persuading the SWIFT system to kick out a country – **Iran, over its nuclear program**.
- But kicking Russia out of SWIFT would **also hurt other economies**, including those of the U.S. and **key ally Germany**.

Export Controls

- US export controls could **cut off Russia** from the **high tech** that helps **warplanes and passenger jets fly** and makes smartphones smart.
- That could include adding Russia to the most **restrictive group of countries for export control purposes**.
- The other countries already in the group are **Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Syria**
- That would mean that **Russia’s ability to obtain integrated circuits, and products containing integrated circuits**, would be severely restricted

Sanctions on Individuals, Business Entities

- Overall, the **US and its allies aim to impose sanctions** that compel Putin to change his ways.
- At the same time hoping to **minimize the harshest impacts on ordinary Russians**.
- Sanctions are imposed on individuals listed on a **Specially Designated Nationals**.
- The list includes **individuals and companies** owned, controlled by or acting **on behalf of a targeted country**.
- Traditionally, their assets will be blocked and the US is almost **completely prohibited from dealing with SDNs**.

India's Diplomatic Dilemma

- West views this as condoning Russia's actions and applying double standards while India raises the issue of **"territorial integrity and sovereignty" when it comes to China.**
- India's **strategic ties with Russia** and its dependence on Russia for military supplies.
- **60 to 70% of India's military hardware is of Russian-origin.**
- India's worry remains its **20,000 Indian students** and nationals, many of them who **live close to the Ukraine-Russia border.**
- It is a debate within the Indian establishment about what to choose.
- **Principles and values** on one side, and **pragmatism and interests** on the other side.

Can Anything Deter Putin?

- The Russian economy has **worked to sanction-proof itself since 2014**
- Russian banks have been testing its **ability to survive** without access to **Western software.**
- Sanctions on the current production of oil and gas could also have an impact.
- **U.S. and Europe could also see spikes in prices.**
- The sanctions put in place were **not the most severe option available.**
- They targeted institutions specific to raising funds and Russia's defense sector, **instead of institutions that ordinary Russians use.**

Fortress Russia

- Worth pausing in this moment of anger to consider that in one crucial respect **sanctions have made Russia stronger.**
- The 2014 **Twin shocks of decline in Oil Prices & Sanctions** seemed to persuade president Vladimir Putin that enough was enough.
- Once among the most crisis-prone emerging nations, Russia is now one of the most conservative and stable.
- **Russia entered the Pandemic crisis with the lowest government debt** among the 20 largest emerging economies.
- **Just 14% of gross domestic product.**
- Russia's short-term foreign debts amount to barely 10% of its foreign currency reserves.
- *It will take more than just ratcheting up targeted sanctions to dent the walls of fortress Russia.*

For More Information Watch

A Few Minutes Series- Crisis In Ukraine- 28 January 2022

Watch Editorial Analysis-

1. **Ukraine as a Matryoshka doll set of crises (24 February 2022, The Hindu)**
2. **The Ukraine Dilemma (22 February 2022, Indian Express)**
3. **Ukraine on Brink (17 February 2022, Indian Express)**

March 2022

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No Fly Zone?



What is a No Fly Zone?

- In simple terms, a No-Fly Zone refers to a particular airspace wherein aircrafts, **excluding those permitted** by an enforcement agency, **are barred from flying**.
- **United Nations Charter** dealing with 'Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression' **are invoked to authorize a potential no-fly zone**.
- **Article 39** dictates the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** to determine the probable **existence of any threat** to peace or an act of aggression.
- In **Non-combat situations**, No fly zones can be imposed **permanently and temporarily** over **sensitive installations** or for high profile events like Olympics.

Have They Been Implemented Before?

- No fly zones have been implemented **without** UN mandate too.
- In **1991 after the first Gulf War**, U.S. and its coalition partners imposed **Two no fly zones over Iraq** to prevent Saddam Hussain from attacking ethnic groups.
- This was also imposed during the civil war in **Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1993-95**.

- The UNSC had banned **all flights in the Libyan airspace** post adoption of **Resolution 1973 in 2011** in response to the Libyan Civil War.
- During the Libyan Civil war in 2011, the **member states** could bar **any entity from flying**.
- If they found **reasonable grounds** to believe the aircraft is ferrying **lethal or non-lethal military equipment**.

Zelensky Demanding a No Fly Zone

- Russia's attack on **Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant** has renewed calls for NATO to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine.
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr is asking the people of Western Europe to **demand that their leaders change course**.
- **"Immediate closure of the skies over Ukraine is needed,"** he said.
- However, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that the organisation would **not designate** the Ukrainian airspace **as a 'No Fly Zone'**.
- Experts warn that **declaring a No Fly Zone** would lead to a full-fledged **war in Europe**.
- Thereby this will **involve many more countries** resulting in greater human suffering



- The **Zaporizhzhia** nuclear power plant, built between 1984 and 1995, is the **largest nuclear power plant in Europe**
- It has six reactors, each generating 950MW, and a total **output of 5,700MW**, enough energy for roughly 4m homes.

- In normal times it produces 1/5th of **Ukraine's electricity** and almost **half the energy generated** by the country's nuclear power facilities.

What Would a No-fly zone achieve?

- Ukrainian authorities and people cowering **night after night** in bomb shelters say a **no-fly zone would protect civilians** – and now **nuclear power stations**.
- What Ukrainians actually want is a **broader intervention** like the one that occurred in **Libya in 2011**.
- In 2011, **NATO forces** launched **attacks on government positions**.
- Ukrainians want to see the **West kind of sweeping in** and taking out the **rocket artillery** that's pummeling Ukrainian cities.

What is the feasibility of 'No fly zone' over Ukraine?

- No-fly zone declarations are **essentially a compromise** in situations **demanding a response to ongoing violence**.
- Imposing a No Fly Zone would mean **NATO deploying aircraft** and assets which would result in a **direct confrontation with Russia**.
- This may require **NATO shooting down Russian fighters** or taking down its air Defence systems.
- Indeed Russia has an **overall superiority** over Ukraine air space.
- *But it has not demonstrated that so far in its offensive in Ukraine.*

Way Forward

- NATO would continue to provide **significant support** to Ukraine and **impose heavy sanctions**.
- Imposing No Fly would **involve NATO to send fighter planes** into the **Ukranian airspace first**.
- Military Experts suggest **not to involve NATO forces directly** or indirectly in the Ukrainian conflict, **neither on ground or in space**.
- **No fly zone' would achieve very little**.
- Majority of the Russian attacks on Ukraine are **coming from ground attacks rather than air strikes**.
- This was also **reiterated by U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson** last week during a visit to Poland.
- *No Country wants to Engage in direct combat with Russia!*



Click [here](#) to watch the following topics on YouTube

India's Arctic Policy



Arctic Council States

- Russia
- Finland
- Denmark
- Norway
- Sweden
- Greenland
- USA
- Canada

Arctic Council

Eight Arctic countries poised to sign a multilateral treaty to coordinate search and rescue operations in the region

Draft treaty

- Drawn up by foreign ministers in Iceland on December 16
- Divides the Arctic into specific search and rescue areas



About the Arctic Council

- The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among-
- Arctic States
- Arctic Indigenous peoples
- Other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues
- Issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic are discussed in this forum.
- It was formally established under the Ottawa Declaration in 1996.

Member States of Arctic Council

- The Ottawa Declaration defines these states as Members of the Arctic Council.
- The 8 States have territories within the Arctic and thus carry the role of stewards of the region.
- Their national jurisdictions and international law govern the lands surrounding the Arctic Ocean and its waters.
- The Northern regions of the Arctic States are home to more than four million people.
- Their health and well-being is on the top of the Arctic Council's agenda

6 Permanent Participants- Indigenous People



AIA

Aleut International
Association



AAC

Arctic Athabaskan
Council



GCI

Gwich'in Council
International



INUIT

ICC

Inuit Circumpolar
Council



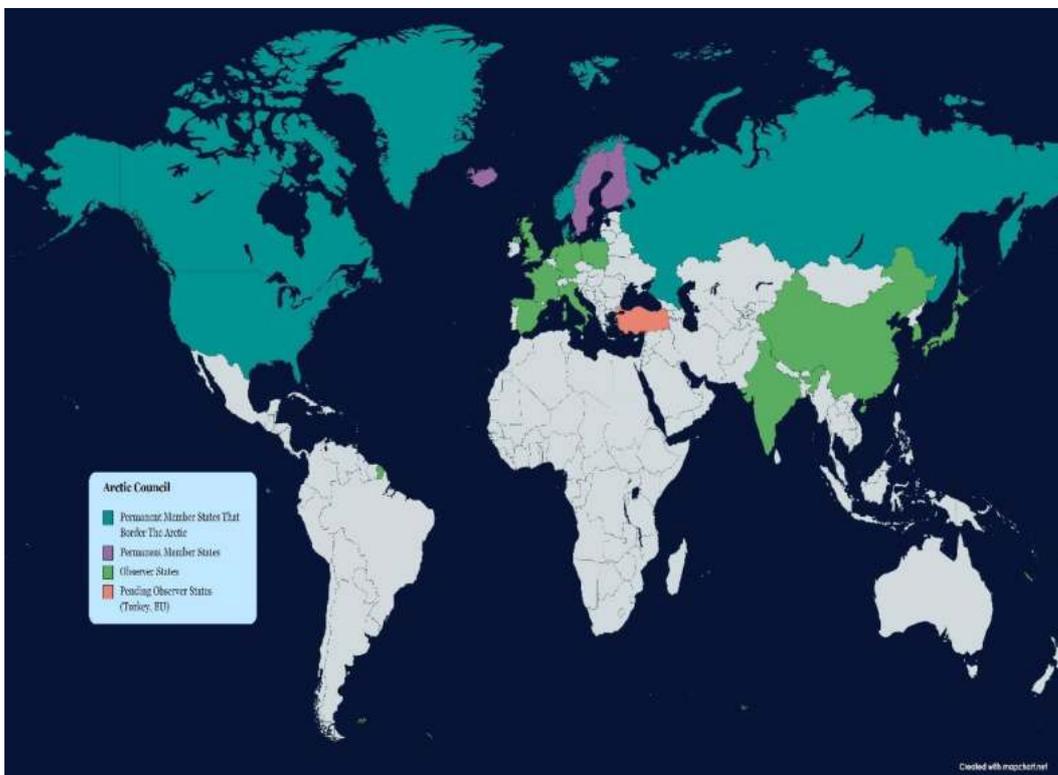
RAIPON

Russian Association
of Indigenous Peoples
of the North



Saami Council

Observer States - Arctic Council



- Germany, 1998
- Netherlands, 1998
- Poland, 1998
- United Kingdom, 1998
- France, 2000
- Spain, 2006
- China, 2013
- India, 2013
- Italy, 2013
- Japan, 2013
- South Korea, 2013
- Singapore, 2013
- Switzerland, 2017

India & Arctic

- India's association with Arctic is over 100 years old, having been one of the original High Contracting Parties to the Svalbard (formerly Spitsbergen) Treaty in February 1920.
- The treaty was signed on 9 February 1920 and submitted for registration in the League of Nations Treaty Series on 21 October 1920
- Even today, the Treaty provides the right of visa-free access and conduct of economic and commercial activities to the citizens of India in Svalbard.
- India got a Permanent Observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013 along with other Asian States, China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.
- India's first scientific expedition to the Arctic Ocean in 2007
- Indian research station 'Himadri' at Ny-Ålesund was dedicated to the nation in 2008.

- India is the only developing country apart from China to have an Arctic research base.

Svalbard

- The Svalbard Treaty (originally the Spitsbergen Treaty) recognises the sovereignty of Norway over the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, at the time called Spitsbergen.



India's Arctic Policy

- India's Arctic Policy, released by the Government of India on 17 March 2022.
- This fulfils a longstanding need for a clear articulation on a rapidly transforming Arctic.
- Arctic is warming three times faster than the rest of the world.
- This is leading to major transformation of global shipping routes and increased availability of mineral and hydrocarbon resources.
- India's Arctic Policy is timely and is likely to provide a direction to India's policy-makers on contours of India's engagement with the region.

Pillars of The Arctic Policy

- Science and research.
- Climate and environmental protection
- Economic and human development
- Transportation and connectivity
- Governance and International cooperation
- National capacity building

How Should India Navigate it's Arctic Policy

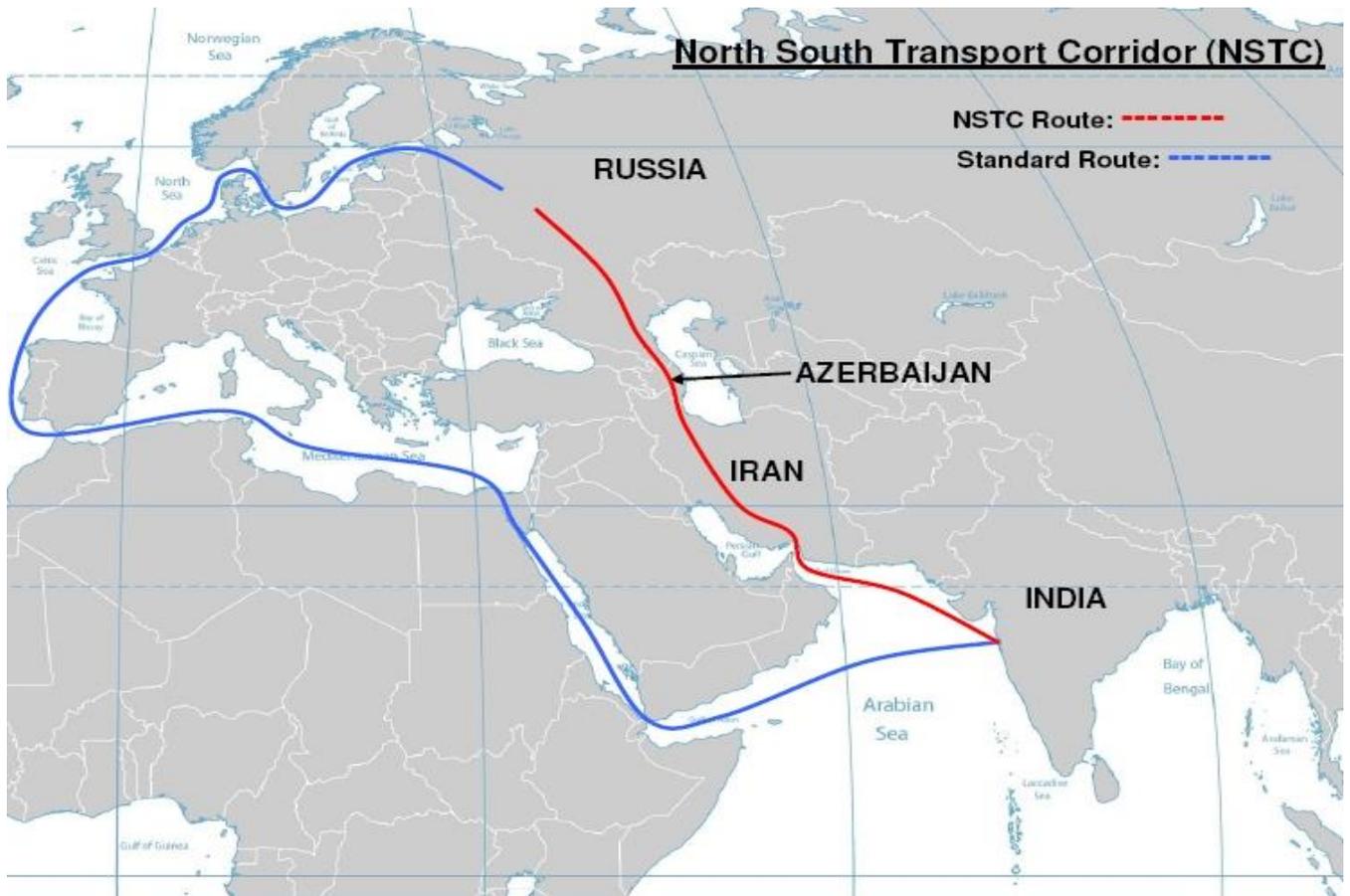
- First, India needs to advocate for sustainable resource development and management.
- Collaboration in terms of capacity, technology, monetary contribution and incentive-based management to protect the ecosystem in the region should hereon be structured.
- Both in the foreseeable and unforeseeable future, Russia will remain India's strongest partner in the Arctic.
- Russia accounts for almost half of the Arctic in terms of area, coastline and hydrocarbons, with the region contributing 12-15% to Russia's GDP.
- Vast eastern Arctic area, as it thaws owing to global warming, is giving Russia access to tens of millions of acres of agricultural land.

China's Role in The Arctic

- In January 2018, China's White Paper on Arctic policy called itself a 'Near-Arctic State'.
- It also referred to trans-Arctic shipping routes as the Polar Silk Road, identifying it as a third transportation corridor for the BRI.
- China's assertion has been highly contested by the US, which has demolished China's locus standi in the Arctic declaring that "there are only Arctic States and Non-Arctic States"
- China has made significant investments in the Arctic, primarily in infrastructure and energy sectors, to the tune of US\$ 90 billion, between 2012 and 2017

Connectivity

- Arctic's ice meltdown and its geographical location ensuring shortest sea distance between America, Europe and North East Asia, is likely to transform the global maritime commerce.
- The opening up of Arctic shipping routes will result in huge savings of cost and time, with the major gainers being the North East Asian ports of Japan, South Korea and China.
- India's Arctic Policy targets linking of International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) with the Unified Deep-Water System (UDWS) of Russia and its further extension to the Arctic.
- The intent of connecting INSTC with UDWS is commendable, and is likely to unlock trade potential of over US\$ 250 billion.
- This can bring the much-needed progress, prosperity, stability and peace through the areas of the region that it traverses.
- INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.
- The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail and road.



- Unified Deep Water System of European Russia is a system of inland waterways in Russia linking the White Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Volga River, Moscow, the Caspian Sea and – via the Sea of Azov – the Black Sea.



- Guaranteed depth - 4 m
- Total length - 6 500 km
- Fully functional since 1975
- The shortcut connecting all the European seas

Conclusion

- A strong thrust on the Arctic has emerged with India increasing its investments in promising projects.
- India's participation in the development of natural resources of the Russian Arctic would be beneficial amid increasing western sanctions.
- The policy is focused scientific research including an enhanced understanding of linkages between monsoons and climate change in the Arctic.
- In keeping with India's civilizational ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – the world is but one family.
- India's Arctic Policy is inclusive and participative wherein India offers its readiness to “play its part and contribute to the global good”

PYQ from UPSC

Consider the following countries: (2014)

1. Denmark
2. Japan
3. Russian Federation
4. United Kingdom
5. United States of America

Which of the above are the members of the 'Arctic Council'?

- A. 1, 2 and 3

- B. 2, 3 and 4
- C. 1, 4 and 5
- D. 1, 3 and 5

The term 'IndARC', sometimes seen in the news, is the name of (2015)

- A. an indigenously developed radar system inducted into Indian Defence
- B. India's satellite to provide services to the countries of Indian Ocean Rim
- C. a scientific establishment set up by India in Antarctic region
- D. India's underwater observatory to scientifically study the Arctic region