

US-China Relations

A CURRENT SUPERPOWER AND A POTENTIAL SUPERPOWER

Sample Questions

- ▶ Examine the emerging strategic and economic competition between China and US and its impact on global order?
- ▶ Discuss the possibility of clash between the United States and China with special reference to US-China Trade war and strategic competition in the South China Sea.
- ▶ How the US is trying to keep its dominant position in the Asia-Pacific and what is China's response to it?
- ▶ Explain the salient contours of the US 'rebalancing' policy and China's assertive policy in South China Sea and latter's disputes with the regional countries. Critically evaluate.
- ▶ Discuss the impact of economic development of China on World Order.
- ▶ Critically analyse the dynamics and prospects of US-China relations in the context of China's rise and the development of One Belt and One Road (OBOR).
- ▶ Discuss the importance of Pakistan as the most important foreign country in the ultimate success of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Major Domains of US-China Relations

- ▶ Trade and investment issues
- ▶ South China Sea and maritime disputes
- ▶ Cyber interference issues
- ▶ Energy and climate change
- ▶ Global governance
- ▶ Asia-Pacific regional rivalry
- ▶ North Korean nuclear threat
- ▶ Taiwan and Hong Kong
- ▶ Human rights
- ▶ Defence and military relations

Clash or Interdependence: A Theoretical Understanding

The Neo-realist View: An Unpeaceful Rise?

- ▶ Neorealist scholars like Mearsheimer suggest a sub-branch of realism known as 'offensive realism' to describe this scenario, arguing that the anarchic global order forces states to behave aggressively towards each other in order to preserve their own security.
- ▶ In the long-term, China will try to control Asia the same way the US has controlled the West, and this would lead to a face-off as both powers try to prevent the other from acquiring more power at its expense.
- ▶ Glaser explains this security dilemma by suggesting that China will ultimately be forced into competition with the US even if it does have benign intentions, as Washington will likely react to Beijing's economic growth with assertive measures of its own and thus initiate a vicious cycle that magnifies each side's suspicions of the other.

Conflicting Areas for Neo-realists

- ▶ China's Military Modernization
- ▶ China's Aggressive Military Posture in South China Sea
- ▶ Preserving the Power of the CCP
- ▶ National Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity issue such as Taiwan and Hong Kong
- ▶ China's New Security Concept to Replace American Model of Security for the Region.
- ▶ "THUCYDIDES TRAP" IN US-CHINA RELATIONS

The Neo-liberal View: The 'New Security Concept'

- ▶ The 'new security concept', introduced by President Jiang Zemin in 1997, is based on the idea that peaceful coexistence and regional stability can be achieved through mutually beneficial economic interactions. After all, an assertive and militarily ambitious China will only risk jeopardising its economic expansion, especially if two important stakeholders – the US and Japan – react negatively. Therefore, it is argued that China has opted for an approach more resonant with the neo-liberalist belief, by turning itself into a 'market for regional states and a provider of investment and technology for the region'. CPEC and BRI are part of such examples.
- ▶ China's peaceful rise is very much dependent on whether it could pursue its national interests in coordination with other regional players and not at their expense.
- ▶ To Avoid suspicions, China has been recently actively participating at multilateral Forum like Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN, WTO and SCO.

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Trade Interdependence

Wal-Mart in China



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US companies in China



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Chinese footprints in USA



American View of China

- ▶ **China Wants to Replace US**
- ▶ **Clash of Political Values**
- ▶ **Modernization of Economy and Import of Technology**
- ▶ **Modernization and Build-up of Chinese Military**
- ▶ **BRI and China's Strategic Goal in Asia Pacific**
- ▶ **China Wants to Substitute the Existing International System**
- ▶ **Aggressive Activities in South China Sea**

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Unipolar World

EU
Japan
Russia
India
China

US

A balance scale is shown against a brown background. The scale is tilted significantly towards the right side, which is labeled 'US'. The left side, which would hold the other major powers, is elevated. The scale consists of a horizontal beam supported by a central vertical pillar. Two pans hang from the ends of the beam. The right pan is much lower than the left pan, indicating it is heavier.

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT US-CHINA RELATIONS THROUGH MULTIPLE FACTORS

- ▶ Unipolar Nature of the Existing International System
- ▶ China's Proactiveness in South China Sea
- ▶ China's Domestic Politics
- ▶ American Business Community's View of China

US-China Relations in the Context of BRI

- ▶ **BRI: Economic Initiative or Strategic Initiative?**
- ▶ **BRI: 'Win-Win Initiative' or 'Debt Trap Diplomacy'?**
- ▶ **BRI: To Improve Development Patterns or Serve China's Geostrategic Agenda?**
- ▶ **Adjustment and Change in Sino-US Narratives regarding BRI**

THREE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES ABOUT US-CHINA INTERACTION AND BRI

1. **First Possibility: Indo-Pacific Region as an Arena of Competition**
2. **Second Possibility: Dialogue and Coordination**
 - The Platform of AIIB**
 - The Platform of Paris Club**
3. **Can China and the US Improve their Development Approaches?**

South China Sea Issue

(also part of Asia Pacific Issue)

Why is South China Sea so much Important?

- ▶ **The Issue:** The South China Sea Issue involves both island and maritime claims among several other states adjacent to the sea.
 - ▶ claimants involve Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia.
 - ▶ non-claimant states like the United States want South China Sea to remain international waters.

China's Recent Actions in South China Sea

- ▶ use of coastguard to more actively police its claims in the region.
- ▶ oil rig in contested waters in Vietnam's exclusive economic zone
- ▶ undertaken massive land building, reclamation and construction work on various islands in the region
- ▶ Building of several airstrips long enough to accommodate Chinese military aircraft.

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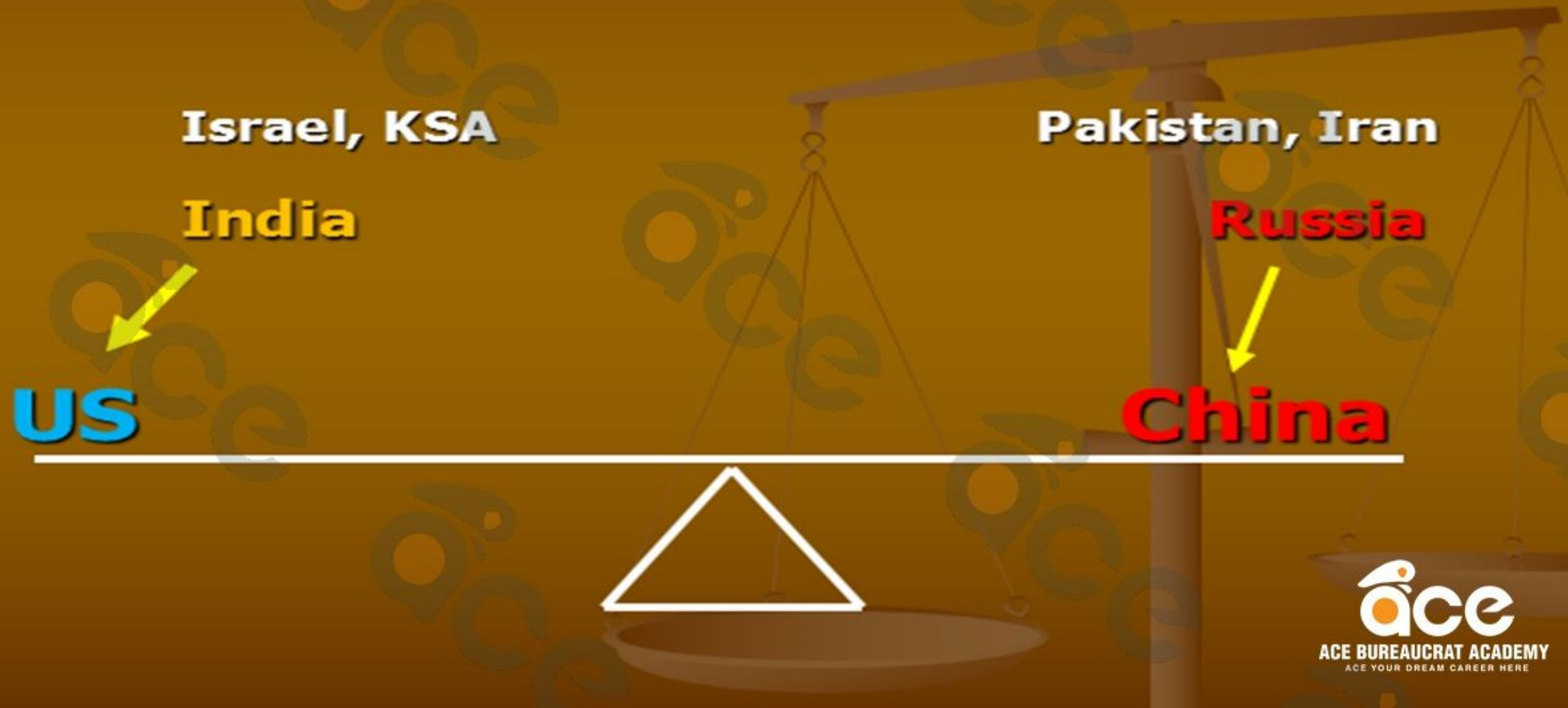
Disputed Claims in the South China Sea



Comparison of Possible US-China Cold War with US-Soviet Cold War

- ▶ Possibility of Economic Cold War
- ▶ Possibility of Geo-Political Cold War
- ▶ Geo-strategic Cold War
- ▶ Ideological Cold War
- ▶ Technological Cold War

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Short-run and Long-run Scenarios

If the US-China competition and confrontation on trade, technology and the South China Sea continue for a long time and become more serious, the competition and confrontation are much more likely to expand into other areas such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, the East China Sea, Korean Peninsula, and Iran. China is also not in agreement with US on other regional and global issues, such as on Iran, Syria, the Middle East, and at the United Nations.

- ▶ In the short run
- ▶ In the long run
 - ▶ Trade War and Intellectual Property Rights
 - ▶ China is likely to resist US Pressure Tactics
 - ▶ Military Competition in South China Sea
 - ▶ The Taiwan Issue
 - ▶ Stance on North Korean Nuclear Issue
 - ▶ Chances of Cooperation

Way Forward

- ▶ Avoiding Security Dilemma and Thucydides Trap.
- ▶ Working for Shared Benefits is the way forward.
- ▶ Working Together to control COVID-19 humanitarian crisis
- ▶ Avoiding mutual mis-calculations
- ▶ Keeping constant communications lines
- ▶ Empowering the global institutions for dispute resolution
- ▶ Need to engage in constructive trade talks.
- ▶ Establishing a Robust anti-cyber crime mechanism along with empowering Interpol.