

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q5(a)

Discuss the strategic implications of India's Look East Policy transforming into Act East Policy.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 2 · 10 marks · India and South Asia

India and South Asia: Regional Co-operation; South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; South Asian Economic cooperation; Impediments to regional co-operation; India and the Look East / Act East policy.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the strategic implications of India's shift from **Look East** to Act East
- Keep the answer within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Look East opened India to ASEAN after 1991.

Act East thickens defence, connectivity, and Indo-Pacific talk.

China and the Himalaya give the policy a balancing edge.

ASEAN centrality is still the diplomatic method.

It is alignment, not a formal eastern NATO.

Introduction

Look East began as a post-1991 economic turn to ASEAN. Act East, named in 2014, keeps that trade core and adds security, connectivity, and the Indo-Pacific. The implication is a more military-diplomatic east, not a renamed brochure.

Body

From Look to Act

- P. V. Narasimha Rao's **Look East** sought investment, ASEAN dialogue, and a post-Cold War Asian identity.
- **Act East raised the tempo:** summit regularity, north-east and Myanmar connectivity, and defence exercises with Vietnam, Japan, Australia, and the United States.
- The **Quad**'s revival sits in the same theatre even when India refuses NATO language.

Strategic implications

- **China is the unspoken referent:** Himalayan pressure and the South China Sea make the east a second front of balancing.
- **ASEAN centrality** remains the diplomatic ticket. India must deliver on connectivity or Act East looks like speeches.
- The north-east becomes a land bridge, which ties internal security to foreign policy.
- Indo-Pacific vocabulary links the Bay of Bengal to the wider maritime commons.

What does not follow

- It is not a military alliance. It is issue-based alignment plus economic unfinished business.

Flow diagram

Look East 1990s -> Act East 2014
Act East 2014 -> ASEAN trade
Act East 2014 -> Security Quad Indo-Pacific
Act East 2014 -> Connectivity north-east

Conclusion

Look East was trade and ASEAN belonging. Act East adds deterrence, connectivity, and Indo-Pacific presence. The strategic implication is hedging China while staying inside ASEAN-led process.

Facts & figures

Look East

Narasimha Rao-era policy of economic and diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asia after the Soviet collapse.

Act East 2014

Rebrand that added security partnerships, north-east connectivity, and faster ASEAN summitry.

Quad

Australia, India, Japan, United States consultations that sit in the Act East / Indo-Pacific theatre.

ASEAN centrality

India's preferred diplomatic geometry so that Act East is not read as a China-containment pact only.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-2/2021/discuss-the-strategic-implications-of-indias-look-east-policy-transforming-into-act-east-policy/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com