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Q8(b)

Discuss the significance of "West Asia Quad" in the light of India's 'Look West' policy

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 2 · 15 marks · Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy

Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy: India's position on the recent crisis in Afghanistan, Iraq and West Asia, growing relations with US and Israel; vision of a new world order.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the West Asia Quad (I2U2) in the context of India's Look West policy
- Write at 15-mark length

Revision summary

Look West treats the Gulf and Israel as central to energy, labour, and investment.

I2U2 is India, Israel, UAE, and the United States in a 2022 project grouping.

Food parks and clean energy are the public work, not a mutual-defence treaty.

Abraham Accords politics made the table easier.

Iran and Palestine remain outside its scope and still constrain India's full West Asia map.

Introduction

I2U2 groups India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. It is the so-called West Asia Quad. Look West, or Think West, is India's effort to treat the Gulf and Israel as seriously as Act East treats ASEAN. I2U2 is a project arm of that turn, not a NATO in the Gulf.

Body

Look West

- Energy imports, Indian workers in the Gulf, remittances, and later defence and investment with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Israel made West Asia a core interest, not a transit zone.
- The Abraham Accords reduced the cost of India dealing openly with Israel and Gulf States at the same table.
- Chabahar and Iran remained a parallel, harder file, which is why Look West is a set, not a single alliance.

What I2U2 does

- Announced in 2022, it has worked on food parks, hybrid energy, and water and space-related cooperation rather than on a joint army.
- It uses US technology, Gulf capital, Israeli innovation, and Indian scale and food demand.
- For India it is economic statecraft and status among West Asian partners, consistent with multi-alignment.

What it is not

- It is not a substitute for NAM or for Global South diplomacy. Several NAM States oppose Israeli policy. India separates I2U2 projects from UN votes that still use older language.
- It does not resolve Palestine, Yemen, or Iran. Tehran reads the geometry as unfriendly, which feeds the 7(c) challenge.
- It cannot police the Strait of Hormuz by itself. US and local militaries still dominate hard security.

Fit with theory

- **Keohane's clubs:** a small regime for specific goods. Mitrany's function: food and energy tasks first.
- **Mearsheimer's map:** the United States knitting partners on China's western approaches and on Iran. India participates where projects serve growth.

Flow diagram

Look West energy diaspora -> I2U2 2022
 I2U2 2022 -> Food energy water projects
 Iran Palestine files - .not solved. -> I2U2 2022

Conclusion

I2U2 is a functional West Asian club that fits India's Look West bet on Gulf capital, Israeli technology, and US partnership. It extends multi-alignment into projects. It does not replace Iran policy, Palestinian diplomacy, or Indian labour protection in the Gulf.

Facts & figures

I2U2

India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, United States; first leaders' virtual summit in 2022.

Abraham Accords

2020 normalisation between Israel and several Arab States, including the UAE, which eased four-way diplomacy.

Look West / Think West

Indian policy language for a thicker Gulf and West Asia policy alongside Act East.

Gulf labour

Millions of Indian workers whose remittances and welfare are a standing Look West interest.

Food corridor talk

I2U2 hybrid food-park ideas linking Indian farms, Gulf capital, and Israeli agri-tech.