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UPSC Mains 2024 PSIR Paper 2

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Q1(a) · 10 marks

Discuss the interpretive approach to the study of comparative politics.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Approaches to the Study of International Relations

Revision summary

The interpretive approach studies political action as meaning in context, following **Weber's** verstehen and later cultural and linguistic turns.

It replies to behaviouralism's search for covering laws by asking how votes, nations and authority are understood locally.

Thick description, ethnography and discourse analysis are typical tools.

It explains legitimacy, nationalism and everyday state practice that a constitution or a class map alone cannot supply.

Limits are relativism, weak generalisation, and neglect of material and institutional constraint if used alone.

Introduction

The interpretive approach to comparative politics studies political life as **meaning in context**. It asks how people understand authority, nation, caste, party and protest, rather than treating those words as empty boxes to be filled with numbers. Institutions still matter. They matter as they are lived and named.

Body

What the approach claims

Max Weber's verstehen asked the analyst to grasp the subjective meaning of action. **Clifford Geertz's** thick description treated a ritual, a courtroom or a vote as a text that must be read in a local language of symbols. **Charles Taylor** argued that social science cannot copy physics because humans are self-interpreting. In comparative politics this becomes a method: constitutions, elections and revolutions are compared through the **stories, categories and practices** that make them intelligible to participants.

The approach grew as a reply to mid-century **behaviouralism**, which privileged surveys, covering laws and a search for universal regularities. Interpretivists do not deny that turnout can be counted. They deny that the count is the whole of politics. A vote in a consociational

bargain, a vote in a clientelist village, and a vote in a polarised presidential republic may share a ballot paper and not share a meaning.

What it explains

It explains **legitimacy, nationalism, religious politics and everyday the state**. Why do similar federal texts produce unlike centre-state fights. Why does a coup in one country look like liberation and in another like crime. **Benedict Anderson's** imagined community, **James Scott's** hidden transcripts of resistance, and ethnographic work on Indian elections sit in this family even when the authors are not labelled 'interpretivists' on a syllabus list. Comparative politics needs this layer because **culture is not a residual**. It is how power is recognised.

The method uses ethnography, discourse analysis, history and close reading of law as practised, not only as printed. Cases are often few and deep. The payoff is a map of **political languages**: civic republicanism in one setting, divine kingship in another, developmental nationalism in a third.

Limits

Interpretation can slide into **relativism**, where every practice is only 'true for them' and comparison dies. It can become **impressionistic** if the scholar's reading is not checked against archives, votes and budgets. **Theda Skocpol** and historical institutionalists remind us that organisations, armies and tax systems constrain what meanings can do. **Immanuel Wallerstein's** world-system and class analysis remind us that meaning sits inside a material hierarchy of core and periphery. The interpretive approach is strongest as a **necessary reading of politics**, not as a claim that structures do not exist.

Flow diagram

Interpretive approach -> Meaning and context
Interpretive approach -> Culture legitimacy language
Behavioural counting -.incomplete without. -> Interpretive approach
Structures institutions economy -.constrain. -> Interpretive approach

Conclusion

Comparative politics needs interpretation because people act on meanings, not only on incentives printed in a model. The approach recovers culture, legitimacy and everyday power. It must still sit beside institutions and political economy, or comparison becomes a collection of local stories.

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Q1(b) · 10 marks

Explain the central tenets of the World-Systems Theory.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Approaches to the Study of International Relations

Revision summary

Wallerstein's unit is the capitalist world-economy since the long sixteenth century, not the isolated nation-state.

Core, semi-periphery and periphery form a durable three-tier division of labour.

Unequal exchange and strong/weak states move surplus toward the core.

The theory rejects modernisation's national ladder and differs from Waltz's interstate anarchy as first cause.

Limits include economic determinism and underplaying state autonomy and culture; mobility exists but hierarchy persists.

Introduction

World-Systems Theory, associated above all with **Immanuel Wallerstein**, treats the modern world as a single **capitalist world-economy** that has existed since the long sixteenth century. States are units inside that economy. They are not a set of separate national developments that happen to trade. The central tenets are about hierarchy, surplus and time, not about a list of poor countries.

Body

The unit of analysis

Wallerstein rejected the idea that 'society' equals the nation-state. The meaningful whole is the **world-system**: a large zone with a single division of labour and multiple polities. The modern system is a **world-economy**, not a world-empire. No single political centre owns all surplus. Capitalists and states compete. That competition is what keeps the system capitalist rather than a universal empire.

Core zones concentrate high-skill production, strong states and capital. **Periphery** zones specialise in low-wage extraction and weak or captured states. **Semi-periphery** zones sit between, mixing both roles and stabilising the hierarchy so that polarisation does not immediately smash the system. Movement is possible - the Netherlands, Britain and the United States have been hegemonic cores in sequence - but the **three-tier structure** persists.

Mechanism

The mechanism is **unequal exchange** and a world division of labour, drawing on **dependency** writers and on **Fernand Braudel**'s long duration. Wages, technology and state strength differ systematically. Surplus flows toward the core. **Antonio Gramsci**'s hegemony, later used by **Robert Cox** for world order, sits nearby: the core's lead is not only guns. It is also consent around trade rules, money and culture. Wallerstein himself stressed cycles of hegemony and Kondratieff-type economic waves.

This is a direct attack on **modernisation theory**, which pictured each country climbing the same ladder from tradition to modernity. In world-systems thinking, the periphery is not late. It is **produced** as periphery by the same historical process that produced the core.

What it is not, and limits

It is not **Kenneth Waltz's** neorealism. Waltz starts from anarchic states and relative military power. Wallerstein starts from a capitalist division of labour that states help to police. Great-power war still happens, but it is read as a fight over who organises the world-economy.

Limits are real. Critics say the theory is **too economic**, too deterministic about the periphery's fate, and weak on culture, gender and domestic politics that the interpretive approach studies. **Theda Skocpol** and others argued that states have more autonomy than a pure world-market story allows. China's rise, East Asian industrial policy and India's partial climb complicate a frozen core-periphery map, even if they do not abolish hierarchy. The tenets remain useful as a **structural picture of global inequality**, not as a prophecy that no country can change position.

Flow diagram

Wallerstein world-economy -> Core

Wallerstein world-economy -> Semi-periphery

Wallerstein world-economy -> Periphery

Core -> Unequal exchange

Periphery -> Unequal exchange

Unequal exchange -> Hegemonic cycles

Conclusion

World-Systems Theory says the modern world is one capitalist economy with core, semi-periphery and periphery, held by unequal exchange and hegemonic cycles. It explains global hierarchy better than a ladder of national modernisation. It does not replace every other theory of the state or of war.

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Q1(c) · 10 marks

The expansionist tendencies of the current Russian regime indicate its intentions for the realization of a Greater Russia on the lines of the Soviet era. Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

Russia's wars in Georgia and Ukraine, plus pressure on Belarus and nuclear signalling, show expansionist intent in the post-Soviet space.

The Greater Russia story denies full independence of neighbours, especially Ukraine.

- **The Soviet analogy fits geography of control more than ideology:** today's regime is nationalist and oligarchic, not a communist world-system.

Morgenthau and Waltz explain power and structure; they do not make the war merely defensive.

- **Comment:** accept expansionism; reject a simple USSR restoration.

Introduction

The current Russian regime has used force, frozen conflicts and energy pressure in the post-Soviet space. The statement that this shows an intention to realise a **Greater Russia on Soviet-era lines** is therefore a serious claim. It should be **partly accepted**. The expansionist pattern is visible. The Soviet analogy is incomplete.

Body

What is visible

Georgia 2008, the seizure of **Crimea in 2014**, the war in the Donbas, and the **full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022** are not defensive border incidents. They are attempts to rewrite another state's territory and to deny its independent foreign-policy choice, especially a path toward the European Union and **NATO**. Official language about 'one people', historical Russia, and the denial of Ukrainian nationhood is a **Greater Russia** script. **Belarus** is bound by Union-State structures and military basing. The **CSTO** and energy leverage over neighbours show a sphere of privileged interest. Nuclear signalling and the suspension of New START-era restraints show that the regime will raise the cost of Western help to Ukraine.

Hans Morgenthau would read this as a classic interest defined as power, dressed in national history. **Kenneth Waltz** would add structure: a former superpower in a unipolar-then-contested system, facing NATO's eastward enlargement, choosing revision rather than adjustment. Those theories explain aggression. They do not excuse it.

Why 'Soviet era' is only a partial match

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was a **party-state** with a planned economy, a Marxist-Leninist claim, and a Warsaw Pact of communist regimes. The present regime is **nationalist, oligarchic and capitalist** in property form, even when the state directs energy and war industry. It does not export a communist international. It exports influence, mercenaries, and a civilisational story of Orthodoxy and empire. Restoration of 1991 borders of Soviet control is a **maximum nationalist horizon**, not a return of Gosplan and the Comintern.

The Soviet Union also contained Ukraine as a Union republic with a seat at the United Nations. Putin's war treats Ukrainian statehood as a mistake. That is imperial nationalism, closer to Tsarist and Eurasianist themes than to Lenin's formal federalism.

Comment

Expansionist **intention** toward a Greater Russia in the near abroad should be accepted as a working description of the 2010s-2020s. Equating that project with a **Soviet restoration** overstates ideology and understates the new mix of kleptocracy, television nationalism and conventional war. NATO's role is part of Moscow's justification and part of the security dilemma. It does not turn the invasion into a purely defensive act. The honest comment is: **sphere rebuilding, yes; USSR 2.0, no.**

Flow diagram

Russian regime -> Force in near abroad
Force in near abroad -> Ukraine Georgia
Russian regime -> Greater Russia nationalism
Soviet era -.geography not system. -> Greater Russia nationalism

Conclusion

The Russian regime has shown expansionist conduct aimed at a privileged sphere and at denying Ukrainian independence. That is a Greater Russia project. It is not a recreation of the Soviet system. The Soviet analogy helps as a map of geography. It misleads as a map of ideology.

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Q1(d) · 10 marks

Explain the various facets of the idealist approach to the study of international relations. Comment on its contemporary relevance.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Approaches to the Study of International Relations

Revision summary

Idealism in IR treats law, morality, public opinion and organisations as real forces, not only military power.

Kant's perpetual peace and Wilson's League/UN lineage are the core facets, with collective security and disarmament as programmes.

It is not naive pacifism; it seeks to change incentives through institutions.

- **Morgenthau and Waltz remain the main critique:** interest, anarchy and self-help.

Contemporary relevance is institutional and normative - UN, NPT, courts - not a claim that power politics has ended.

Introduction

The **idealist approach** to international relations holds that world politics can be steered by **law, morality, public opinion and institutions**, not only by relative military power. It is older than the word 'idealism'. **Immanuel Kant** and **Woodrow Wilson** remain the syllabus names. Its facets still organise the United Nations, arms control and human rights. Realists say those facets are decoration. The comment must judge **contemporary relevance**, not nostalgia.

Body

Facets of the approach

First, **human nature and progress**. Classical idealism, unlike **Morgenthau's** account of interest defined as power, treats education, commerce and republican government as forces that can reduce war. **Kant's** Toward Perpetual Peace linked republican constitutions, a federation of free states, and cosmopolitan hospitality. Second, **international law as a real constraint, not a slogan: treaties, arbitration, and later the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court**. Third, **international organisation**: the League of Nations after Wilson's Fourteen Points, then the United Nations Charter's ban on aggressive force. Fourth, **collective security** rather than shifting alliances. Fifth, **disarmament and open diplomacy** as moral-political programmes. Sixth, in later liberal form, **economic interdependence** and democratic peace as empirical cousins of the older moral claim.

Idealism is not the claim that states are already good. It is the claim that **institutions and norms can change incentives** and that foreign policy should be judged by justice as well as by survival. **Wilson** tried to replace the old diplomacy of spheres with national self-determination and a league. The 1930s punished that hope. The 1945 Charter tried again with a Security Council that admitted power through the veto.

Realist objection

Morgenthau argued that politics among nations is a struggle for power and that moral crusades produce hypocrisy. **Waltz** argued that anarchy forces self-help regardless of the goodness of leaders. The League failed in Manchuria and Abyssinia. The United Nations fails

when a permanent member is the aggressor, as in Ukraine. Those facts are the realist brief.

Contemporary relevance

Idealism remains relevant as **the working language of order**. Climate agreements, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, refugee law, and the everyday work of the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization are unintelligible if one counts only tanks. **NATO** itself claims a community of democracies, which is an idealist wrapping on a realist alliance. The International Criminal Court's warrants, however uneven, show that atrocity is still named as crime.

Relevance is **partial**. Great-power war, tariff nationalism, and the stalling of disarmament (question 1(e)) show that Kantian peace is not the structure of 2024. Idealism is relevant as a **standard and as a set of institutions**, not as a prediction that power politics has ended. A PSIR answer that discards it cannot explain why states still sign charters. An answer that treats it as sufficient cannot explain Ukraine, Gaza, or nuclear modernisation.

Flow diagram

Idealist approach -> Kant perpetual peace

Idealist approach -> Wilson League UN

Idealist approach -> Law organisations disarmament

Morgenthau Waltz -> Power and anarchy

Law organisations disarmament -.constrains but does not abolish. -> Power and anarchy

Conclusion

The idealist approach joins Kantian peace, Wilsonian organisation, international law and the hope of progress. It is still the grammar of the UN and of much arms-control talk. It is not a complete theory of the 2020s. Its contemporary relevance is as constraint and aspiration inside a still-anarchic system.

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Q1(e) · 10 marks

The changing global order and ongoing regional conflicts, with the global powers taking sides, have jeopardized the progress made towards disarmament in the past. Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Changing International Political Order

Revision summary

Post-1968 progress included the NPT bargain, INF and START/New START cuts, and chemical and biological bans.

Russia's war, INF collapse, frozen New START practice and China's expansion reopen nuclear politics.

Great powers taking sides in regional conflicts raise the value of nuclear hedges and missiles.

Idealism's institutions remain; Waltzian anarchy is again the loud fact.

Jeopardised is accurate; total erasure of the non-proliferation majority is not yet true.

Introduction

- **The decades after 1968 built a thin but real disarmament and arms-control architecture:** the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty**, bilateral United States-Soviet and then United States-Russian cuts, and bans on chemical and biological weapons. The statement that a **changing global order** and **regional wars with great powers taking sides** have jeopardised that progress is **largely right**. The comment should say how, and how far.

Body

What progress existed

- **The NPT created a bargain:** non-nuclear-weapon states abstain; recognised weapon states pursue disarmament in good faith; civilian nuclear cooperation is allowed. The **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty**, START and New START cut and capped deployed strategic arms. The Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention set legal floors. Nuclear-weapon-free zones and IAEA safeguards were the daily machinery. None of this abolished nuclear weapons. It **slowed spread and reduced some inventories**.

How the present jeopardises it

Great-power rivalry has returned as the organising fact. **Russia's** war on Ukraine, discussed in 1(c), came with nuclear threats and a breakdown of cooperative verification. The **INF Treaty** collapsed earlier amid United States-Russian accusations. New START's implementation has been frozen in political terms even when paper remains. **China's** arsenal expansion sits outside the old bilateral frame. The **United States**, **NATO** allies and Russia treat nuclear weapons again as usable political currency, not as a residual Cold War stockpile.

Regional wars pull patrons in. Ukraine is a NATO-supported defence against a nuclear-armed invader. In West Asia, great-power alignment around Israel, Iran and armed groups raises the value of missiles and, for some states, of a nuclear hedge. The **Korean** peninsula and **AUKUS** nuclear-powered submarines show that proliferation and naval nuclearisation remain live. Export controls and sanctions replace inspections when trust dies. **Waltz** would say anarchy was always there. The idealist machinery of 1(d) needed a minimum of great-power concert that no longer exists.

Conventional arms racing, hypersonic missiles, and dual-use space and cyber tools further blur the old counting rules of warheads and bombers.

Comment

'Jeopardised' is the correct verb. Treaties are unravelling or unused. Disarmament Article VI of the NPT looks empty when weapon states modernise. The progress is **not fully erased**: most states remain non-nuclear; chemical weapons still carry stigma; the IAEA still inspects. A comment that says 'disarmament is over' is too neat. A comment that says the architecture is healthy is false. The 2020s are a **backsliding decade** for arms control, driven by revisionist war and by a order in which the United States, China and Russia do not share one security regime.

Flow diagram

Past gains NPT START INF -> Jeopardy
Changing order -> Jeopardy
Regional wars patrons -> Jeopardy
Jeopardy -> Modernisation threatens frozen verification

Conclusion

Past gains in non-proliferation and bilateral cuts depended on a workable great-power bargain. Sided regional wars and a contested order have broken that bargain. Disarmament is jeopardised. It is not yet a blank page, because the NPT membership and the stigma of some weapons still exist.

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Q2(a) · 20 marks

"Deglobalisation is displacing globalisation." Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

Globalisation meant deep cross-border production and GATT/WTO-style rules that treated efficiency as first.

Deglobalisation names tariffs, sanctions, pandemic reshoring and U.S.-China tech security.

The WTO's weakness and regional rewrites such as USMCA show politics back in trade.

Trade and data still move; regionalisation is not 1930s autarky.

- **Comment:** hyper-globalisation is being displaced; a closed world is not the completed fact.

Introduction

Globalisation after the 1990s meant deeper cross-border flows of goods, capital, data and production, under rules associated with the **World Trade Organization** and with the spirit of **GATT**. The claim that **deglobalisation is displacing globalisation** says those flows are now shrinking or being re-routed by politics. The comment should **agree in part**. A thicker border is real. A closed world is not yet the fact.

Body

What globalisation was

It was not only more trade. It was **production networks**, container shipping, multinational firms, and a legal bet that most-favoured-nation treatment and bound tariffs would keep politics off the dock. **Wallerstein** would say it was the latest deepening of a long world-economy. Liberal institutionalists would say it was regimes lowering transaction costs. For two decades after 1995 that description fitted the data better than a 1930s picture.

What deglobalisation names

COVID-19 exposed single-point supply failure. The United States-China strategic contest turned semiconductors, telecom and critical minerals into **security goods**. **Tariffs** returned as ordinary tools, including under the Trump administration and in later industrial policy on both sides of the Pacific. **Sanctions** after Russia's invasion of Ukraine weaponised finance, energy and technology. The **WTO** dispute system, treated in 4(b), no longer polices the largest players. Firms speak of friend-shoring, China-plus-one, and national industrial policy. **NAFTA's** replacement by the **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement**, treated in 2(c), is a regional rewrite of openness, not an expansion of global multilateralism.

This is displacement in the sense that **efficiency is no longer the first rule**. Security, labour politics and great-power rivalry now sit in the trade ministry.

Comment

Displacement is **not a full reversal**. Trade-to-output ratios have wobbled rather than collapsed to 1970. Digital services, ideas and capital still move. Regional blocs - the European Union, USMCA, RCEP - are **re-globalisation at a smaller scale**, or regionalisation, not autarky. India still seeks markets and supply-chain roles even while it defends food stocks and digital policy space at the WTO.

The accurate comment is that **hyper-globalisation** of the 1990s-2000s is being displaced by **managed, securitised interdependence**. Deglobalisation as a slogan overstates autarky. As a description of the death of naive openness, it is fair.

Flow diagram

1990s globalisation -> Securitised trade
Securitised trade -> Tariffs sanctions friend-shoring
Securitised trade -> Regional blocs
Regional blocs -.not full autarky. -> Still cross-border flows

Conclusion

Tariffs, sanctions, pandemic shocks and strategic industry policy have pushed against the old globalisation. They have not ended cross-border production. Deglobalisation is displacing the unpolitical version of globalisation. It is not replacing it with a world of closed states.

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Q2(b) · 15 marks

What are the distinctive features of the post-modern state in the advanced capitalist economies? Analyse.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · State in comparative perspective

Revision summary

The post-modern state, especially in the EU core, pools sovereignty, lives by regulation and rights, and has often subcontracted hard security to NATO.

Advanced capitalist features include post-industrial production, welfare-regulatory capacity and networked authority with firms and courts.

Cooper's post-modern zone is an IR shorthand, not the end of the state.

Brexit, borders and rearmament show reversibility.

The type is a phase of the capitalist core, not a universal stage of history.

Introduction

The **modern state** in the Westphalian picture is territorial, sovereign and war-capable, with a clear inside and outside. The **post-modern state**, a term used in European international thought for **advanced capitalist** polities especially in the **European Union**, is a state that has **pooled** parts of that sovereignty, thickened regulation, and shifted legitimacy toward rights, markets and identity rather than toward mass conscription and border conquest. The question asks for distinctive features and for analysis, not for a claim that the state has vanished.

Body

Distinctive features

First, **pooled and legalised sovereignty**. EU members apply directly effective European law, share a single market, and in the eurozone share a currency without a full federal treasury. Borders inside Schengen are thin for people even when they remain real for migration politics. Second, the **regulatory and welfare state**: risk is managed through agencies, social insurance and consumer law more than through imperial tariffs. Third, **post-industrial capitalism**: finance, services and global production chains, which **Wallerstein** would still place in the core of the world-economy, reduce the old national factory as the sole material base. Fourth, **identity and rights politics**: gender, race, sexuality and multicultural claims become first-order, alongside class. Fifth, **networked security**: **NATO** and U.S. guarantees have allowed many West European states to under-provide national armies relative to a classical modern state, a bargain now under stress after Russia's war. Sixth, **porous authority**: firms, ratings agencies, Brussels, and courts share the stage with the cabinet, which is the domestic face of the transnational actors problem.

Robert Cooper's typology of pre-modern, modern and post-modern zones is the usual IR shortcut: the EU as a post-modern security community internally, still meeting a modern Russia and a pre-modern belt of state failure at the edges.

Analysis

These features are **real in Western Europe, Canada, Japan and parts of the Anglosphere**, and uneven in the United States, which is advanced capitalist but still a hard military sovereign. The post-modern state is not weak in surveillance or in tax capacity. It is

weak in the classical sense of **autonomous war-making** when it has subcontracted security to an alliance.

Analysis must also note **reversibility**. **Brexit** showed that pooling can be politically rejected. Border fences, industrial policy and tariff talk in the 2020s show the modern territorial state returning inside post-modern economies. **Gramsci** would ask whether the historic bloc of embedded liberalism still produces consent. When consent thins, the post-modern state looks like a market without a nation, and populist parties demand a modern border again.

So the distinctive features are legal pooling, regulation, post-industrial core production, rights-based legitimacy and alliance security. They describe a **historical phase of the capitalist core**, not a destiny for every state.

Flow diagram

Modern Westphalian state -> Territory war sovereignty

Post-modern state -> Pooled law market rights

Post-modern state -> NATO and regulation

War and populism -.press. -> Post-modern state

Conclusion

In advanced capitalist economies the post-modern state is territorial still, but it shares law, money and market rules, and it has lived under alliance security. Those features are distinctive. They are under pressure from war, migration politics and industrial policy, which pull the modern state back into view.

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Q2(c) · 15 marks

What were the limitations of NAFTA? How did its replacement by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement counter them? Explain.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

NAFTA deepened North American production but was blamed for wage pressure, weak labour and environment side deals, ISDS and U.S. political backlash.

Mexico-U.S. asymmetry and the absence of EU-style adjustment funds were structural limits.

USMCA tightened auto rules of origin and wage-related content, added a rapid-response labour mechanism, and moved environment into the core.

ISDS was narrowed; digital trade and a sunset/review clause addressed legitimacy and a 1990s text.

The replacement is managed regionalism, not a social union.

Introduction

The **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**, in force from 1994, locked **Canada, Mexico and the United States** into a regional free-trade area. It deepened auto and manufacturing chains. It also accumulated political enemies. The **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)** replaced it in 2020. The question is what NAFTA could not solve, and how the successor tried to **counter** those limits.

Body

Limitations of NAFTA

First, **labour and wages**. Critics in the United States argued that firms moved production to Mexico, hollowing industrial towns, while Mexican wages and union freedom did not rise in line with productivity. Second, **environment**. The side accords were weaker than the commercial core; pollution and weak enforcement at the border remained a campaign fact. Third, **asymmetry**. Mexico was the developing partner in a deal written around U.S. law and investor comfort. **Wallerstein's** core-periphery language is too crude for Mexico's industrial upgrade, but the power imbalance was real. Fourth, **investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS)** allowed firms to sue governments in ways that looked, to publics, like a veto on regulation. Fifth, **agriculture and dairy** fights, especially with Canada, never disappeared. Sixth, **no development or adjustment politics equal to the shock: there was no EU-style cohesion fund**. Seventh, **legitimacy**. By the 2016 U.S. election NAFTA was a symbol of globalisation's domestic cost, which is the politics behind question 2(a).

NAFTA did raise intra-North American trade and locked in Mexican liberalisation. The limitations were **distribution, democracy of regulation, and political consent**.

How USMCA tried to counter them

USMCA kept the regional production club and rewrote the bargain. **Rules of origin** for automobiles were tightened so that more content had to come from North America and from higher-wage labour, a direct reply to offshoring politics. A **rapid-response labour mechanism**, especially aimed at Mexican factories, gave the United States a tool that NAFTA's side agreement lacked. **Environmental** provisions were moved into the core text

with stronger dispute potential. **ISDS** was narrowed sharply between the United States and Canada and limited with Mexico, a reply to the regulatory-chill charge. **Digital trade** chapters updated a 1990s text for data and platforms. A **sixteen-year sunset** with periodic review was meant to stop the deal from looking eternal and unaccountable. Canadian **dairy** access was adjusted in the U.S. interest. Intellectual property terms were tightened in ways critics still call Northern.

How far the counter goes

USMCA is **managed trade**, not a labour international. Mexican labour reform is incomplete; U.S. industrial decline has many causes besides NAFTA; climate is still not a full North American industrial plan. The replacement **countered the most explosive political limits** - labour optics, ISDS, auto origin - so that regional integration could survive deglobalisation talk. It did not turn North America into a social union.

Flow diagram

NAFTA limits -> Labour environment ISDS
NAFTA limits -> Lost political consent
USMCA -> Auto origin labour mechanism
USMCA -> Narrower ISDS sunset digital
Auto origin labour mechanism -> Partial counter

Conclusion

NAFTA's limits were labour dislocation, weak environment and labour teeth, investor privilege, and lost consent in the United States. USMCA countered them with tighter auto rules, a labour rapid-response tool, a stronger environmental text, trimmed ISDS and a review sunset. The repair is political and partial, not a new theory of equality.

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Q3(a) · 20 marks

Discuss the major recent social movements related to the physical rights of women in various countries of the world.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Politics of Representation and Participation

Revision summary

Physical rights of women concern safety, reproduction and control of the body in public.

#MeToo, Ni Una Menos, India's post-Nirbhaya protests, Argentina's Green Tide, Poland's abortion strikes and Iran's Woman, Life, Freedom are major recent cases.

Gains include legal reform and public naming of violence; losses include U.S. abortion rollback and repression in Iran.

The wave is transnational in method and local in outcome.

Counter-movements are part of the same comparative story.

Introduction

Physical rights of women are rights in the body: safety from sexual and domestic violence, control over reproduction, freedom from forced dress and genital harm, and the right to be in public without assault. Recent years have seen large social movements on these claims in several countries. They are not one organisation. They are a comparable wave.

Body

Violence and public safety

After the 2012 **Nirbhaya** case, Indian streets, campuses and later the legal debate on rape law showed a mass demand for bodily safety, still unfinished on marital rape and on conviction rates. **#MeToo** from 2017, beginning in the United States and travelling through media and workplaces in many countries, named sexual harassment as a public fact rather than a private shame. **Ni Una Menos** in Argentina and across Latin America made femicide a political crime, not a private tragedy. In **South Africa** and elsewhere, campus and township protests against rape repeated the same demand in a different social structure.

Reproductive body

The **Green Tide** in Argentina won a legal right to abortion in 2020 after years of street mobilisation, then influenced debate in parts of Latin America. **Poland's** near-total abortion restriction produced mass women's strikes. In the **United States**, the end of federal constitutional abortion protection in 2022 sent the fight back to states and to electoral politics, a reminder that movements can lose as well as win. These are physical-rights movements because they concern medical control of the female body.

Dress, morality police and theocratic control

In **Iran**, the death of **Mahsa (Jina) Amini** in 2022 and the **Woman, Life, Freedom** rising made hair, face and public presence a human-rights claim against compulsory hijab and the morality police. Related dissent over dress codes and guardianship appears in other West Asian settings. This is physical rights as **the state's hand on the body in the street**.

What 'major' and 'recent' means for PSIR

- **The comparative point is that** bodily autonomy **has become a transnational repertoire:** hashtags, strikes, green or violet colours, and legal reform campaigns. **Cynthia Enloe's** question 'where are the women?' is answered in the square, not only in the ministry. Success is uneven. Argentina's legislative win, India's partial criminal-law response, Iran's unfinished revolt, and the U.S. judicial reversal are four endings, not one.

- **Movements also meet** counter-movements: religious conservatism, party polarisation, and online harassment. Physical rights are therefore not a completed global norm. They are a live comparative conflict inside both democracies and autocracies.

Flow diagram

Physical rights -> Safety from violence

Physical rights -> Reproductive autonomy

Physical rights -> Dress and public body

Safety from violence -> MeToo Ni Una Menos Nirbhaya

Reproductive autonomy -> Green Tide Poland US

Dress and public body -> Iran Woman Life Freedom

Conclusion

Recent women's movements on rape, femicide, abortion and compulsory modesty are movements about the body in public and in law. They have changed statutes and speech in some countries and have been reversed or crushed in others. Comparative politics should treat them as a wave of physical-rights claims, not as a single happy ending.

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Q3(b) · 15 marks

Critically examine the role of political parties in sustaining and stabilising democracies in the developing societies.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Politics of Representation and Participation

Revision summary

Parties can sustain developing democracies by aggregating conflict, training elites and making peaceful turnover possible.

Huntington's institutionalisation and India's early Congress incorporation illustrate the positive case.

Failures include family vehicles, ethnic census parties, clientelism and polarising attacks on referees.

Existence of parties is not the same as a party system that can lose.

- **Critical verdict:** necessary organisations whose quality decides whether democracy thickens or hollows.

Introduction

In developing societies, **political parties** are often the main machine that turns a constitution into a living democracy. They recruit leaders, aggregate demands, fight elections and, in the best case, accept defeat. The question asks for a **critical** examination of that role in **sustaining and stabilising** democracy. The verdict is mixed: parties are necessary, and they are frequently the source of the instability they are asked to cure.

Body

How parties can stabilise

E. E. Schattschneider said democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties. **Samuel Huntington** treated institutionalised parties as the difference between participation that strengthens order and participation that wrecks it. In a poor or post-colonial society, parties can: (1) **aggregate** language, caste, class and region into a bargain instead of a militia; (2) **train** a political class that knows how to run ministries; (3) offer **peaceful turnover** so that losers still have a future; (4) link the village to the capital through patronage that, at its least bad, is a form of incorporation. India's **Congress system** in the early decades, whatever its later decay, did this incorporation. Later **coalition years** and a competitive national party system showed that democracy can survive without a single dominant party if parties still treat the **Election Commission** and the Constitution as binding.

Elsewhere, **South Africa's** ANC after apartheid, **Chile's** concertación years, and parts of **Ghana** and **Senegal** show parties as roofs over social conflict. Internationally, party internationals and election observation try to socialise that role.

Critical failures

Many developing democracies have **parties that are not organisations**. They are vehicles for a family, a business house or an ethnic census. **Mainwaring and Scully's work on institutionalisation is the standard warning: where labels change every election, voters cannot reward or punish a programme, and presidents rule through deals.** **Ethnic parties** can mobilise turnout and also lock minorities out, turning democracy into a rotating capture of the state. **Clientelism** buys the poor at the cost of public goods.

One-party dominance can freeze opposition until the street explodes. Military-tutelary systems keep parties as decoration.

Parties also **polarise**. When they treat opponents as enemies of the nation, they eat the referees - courts, election bodies, the press - which is the backsliding path known from **Levitsky and Ziblatt**. Developing societies with young institutions are more exposed to that path because alternative organisations (unions, professional bodies) are thinner.

Verdict

Parties sustain democracy when they are **programmatic enough to be accountable** and **restrained enough to lose**. They destabilise democracy when they are militias in party clothing or when they become the private property of a leader. The critical examination therefore refuses two cartoons: that parties are a Western luxury poor countries cannot afford, and that any party system is automatically a democratic good. **Stabilisation is a quality of party institutionalisation**, not of the mere existence of party names on a ballot.

Flow diagram

Parties -> Aggregation turnover institutions
Parties -> Ethnic personal clientelist capture
Aggregation turnover institutions -> Stabilised democracy
Ethnic personal clientelist capture -> Unstable or hollow democracy

Conclusion

Political parties remain the ordinary instrument of democratic stability in developing societies: they aggregate, incorporate and allow defeat. They also organise ethnic capture, clientelism and executive assault on referees. The role is indispensable and double-edged. Institutionalised, bounded parties sustain democracy. Personal and ethnic machines consume it.

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Q3(c) · 15 marks

Do you agree with the view that the USA uses NATO as a traditional tool of strategy to perpetuate its hegemony in the world?

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Changing International Political Order

Revision summary

NATO has been U.S.-led since 1949 in guarantee, command and expeditionary capacity.

Post-Cold War enlargement and out-of-area wars used the Alliance as a strategy tool beyond territorial defence of 1949.

Ukraine policy and Nordic accession again centred Washington in European security.

Gramscian consent and Ikenberry's liberal hegemony explain why many Europeans want this hierarchy.

Agree with the hegemony thesis; qualify it with allied demand and occasional European refusal.

Introduction

NATO was founded in 1949 as a transatlantic **collective defence** pact. From the start the **United States** supplied the nuclear guarantee, the command spine and much of the expeditionary capacity. The view that Washington still uses NATO as a **traditional tool of strategy to perpetuate hegemony** is **largely convincing**. The comment should add that hegemony here is **allied hegemony**, not rule without Europeans.

Body

Traditional tool

John Ikenberry described the U.S. order as a liberal hegemony that binds others through institutions. NATO is the security core of that order in Europe. **Gramscian readings of hegemony, taken up in 4(a), would add that consent matters: European elites have wanted the U.S. presence as much as they have resented it. Morgenthau and Waltz** would strip the moral language: an alliance is an instrument for aggregating power. For the United States, NATO multiplies bases, standardises militaries, and gives legal-political cover for operations far from the North Atlantic.

How it perpetuates primacy

After 1990 NATO did not dissolve. It **enlarged** into Central and Eastern Europe, which extended a U.S.-centred security system to Russia's doorstep - the grievance Moscow names, and the choice many of those states made. **Out-of-area** war in **Kosovo, Afghanistan**, and the **Libya** campaign showed NATO as a toolbox for U.S. and allied strategy beyond **Article 5** defence of Europe. The 2022-24 response to Russia's war on Ukraine - intelligence, weapons standards, and a larger NATO that Finland and Sweden joined - again placed the United States at the centre of European security. Burden-sharing debates, including under President Trump, confirm the hierarchy: Europeans are asked to pay more **inside** an American-led structure, not to replace it.

Hegemony is visible in command (SACEUR as a U.S. officer), in nuclear sharing, and in the fact that a European 'strategic autonomy' remains a speech more than a substitute army.

Limits of the claim

- **The United States does not always get its way:** France's early withdrawal from the integrated command, the Iraq 2003 split, German energy choices, and Turkish veto politics show **allied friction**. NATO is also a **demand from the weak**: Baltic and Central European states want U.S. hegemony as protection, not as a chain they secretly wish to break. Calling NATO only an American imposition misses that consent.

Still, as a **traditional tool of U.S. strategy**, the description holds. It is the durable military arm of Atlantic primacy. It is how Washington remains a European power. A unipolar moment without NATO would have been more expensive and less legitimate. That is hegemony in the ordinary IR sense.

Flow diagram

United States -> NATO command and guarantee command and guarantee
NATO command and guarantee -> Enlargement out-of-area Ukraine
European members -> Consent and friction
NATO command and guarantee -> Allied hegemony

Conclusion

NATO remains the principal institutional tool through which the United States organises European security and projects power with allied cover. That is hegemony by consent of many members, not only by command. The view in the question is right as strategy. It is too simple if it erases European choice and intra-alliance bargaining.

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Q4(a) · 20 marks

"The Gramscian theory of hegemony provides many valuable insights into the nature of global power." Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India and the Global Centres of Power

Revision summary

Gramsci's hegemony is leadership through consent in civil society, backed by coercion, organised in a historic bloc.

- **Cox applied this to world order:** Pax Americana as material power plus institutions and ideas.
- **Insights:** global power includes WTO rules, culture and elite consent, not only armies; resistance includes counter-hegemonic ideas.

NATO and liberal order are hegemonic tools in this sense.

- **Limits:** still need Waltz on anarchy and Wallerstein on the world-economy; the term must not mean every cultural flow.

Introduction

Antonio Gramsci wrote hegemony as a form of class power in which **coercion is wrapped in consent**. The ruling group leads in culture, education, church and everyday common sense, not only in the barracks. The claim that this theory gives **valuable insights into the nature of global power** is **right**. The comment should show how the insight travels from Italy to world order, and where it stops.

Body

Gramsci's core

- **Hegemony is not mere domination. It is a historic bloc:** material force plus ideas that make the existing order look natural. **Organic intellectuals** produce that common sense. Civil society is a trench system where battles of position are fought before a war of manoeuvre. A state that must rule only by force has not achieved hegemony; it is in crisis.

Scaling to global power

Robert Cox took Gramsci into international political economy: world order as a configuration of material capabilities, ideas and institutions. Pax Britannica and Pax Americana were hegemonic orders when other states and elites consented to rules on trade, money and security. The **United States** after 1945 did not only occupy. It offered the dollar, reconstruction, **NATO**, and a liberal vocabulary that many allied elites made their own. That is why question 3(c) and this question belong together. **Wallerstein's** hegemonic cycles in the world-economy name a similar peak of organising power, in a more economic idiom.

Insights follow. Global power is **not only tanks**. It is standard-setting in the **WTO**, rating agencies, university rankings, Hollywood and digital platforms. Resistance is not only anti-colonial armies; it is counter-hegemonic common sense - Bandung, NIEO, and today's Global South claims on climate finance. **Passive revolution** and trasformismo help explain how elites absorb dissent without redistributing power.

Limits

Gramsci does not replace **Waltz**. Anarchy and nuclear balances still structure war, as Russia's campaign and U.S. extended deterrence show. He does not replace a map of **unequal**

exchange. Insights are richest on **why the strong are obeyed when they are not present**, and why they fail when consent collapses - Vietnam, Iraq, or the present contest over who writes digital and green rules. The theory can become vague if every cultural export is called hegemony. Used tightly, it remains one of the best accounts of **power as leadership plus force**.

Flow diagram

Gramsci hegemony -> Consent plus coercion
Gramsci hegemony -> Historic bloc intellectuals
Cox world order -> Ideas institutions capabilities
Consent plus coercion -> Global power as leadership

Conclusion

Gramscian hegemony shows global power as consent organised through institutions and common sense, backed by force. That insight explains American-led order, NATO, and fights over trade and culture better than a purely military count. It does not abolish structure or capitalist hierarchy. It makes them politically intelligible.

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Q4(b) · 15 marks

The return of trade barriers and economic sanctions has diminished the spirit of GATT. In this context, discuss the factors contributing to the decline of WTO in recent times.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

GATT's spirit was MFN, bound tariff cuts and legal dispute settlement rather than bilateral retaliation.

Recent tariffs, export controls and economic sanctions treat trade as a security and industrial tool.

- **WTO decline factors:** blocked Appellate Body, failed Doha round, consensus among a huge membership, U.S.-China systemic clash, food-security and S&DT fights, and an outdated digital text.

Megaregionals and plurilaterals moved rule-making away from Geneva.

The WTO still functions as a forum; it has weakened as a binding constitution.

Introduction

The **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade** was a political bet that trade should be **non-discriminatory**, tariffs should be bound and cut, and disputes should be legal rather than retaliatory. The **World Trade Organization** of 1995 gave that bet a court and a wider rule-book. The return of **trade barriers and economic sanctions** has diminished that spirit. The decline of the WTO in recent times has **several causes**, of which great-power unpolitics is only the loudest.

Body

GATT's spirit, diminished

Most-favoured-nation treatment and national treatment were the legal heart. Exceptions existed - regional trade agreements, security, safeguards - but they were meant to be narrow. **Tariffs** as ordinary industrial policy, **export controls** on technology, **green border taxes** that poorer exporters read as protection, and **sanctions** that cut whole economies out of finance sit badly with that heart. Weaponised interdependence after 2022 made trade a tool of war policy. **NAFTA/USMCA** and other megaregionals moved rule-making out of Geneva. This is the deglobalisation of question 2(a), now named at the organisation that was supposed to prevent a 1930s repeat.

Factors in WTO decline

First, the **Appellate Body** was emptied by United States blocking of appointments. Members can appeal into the void. The policeman of the 1995 deal lost his court. Second, the **Doha Development Round** never closed. Agriculture, industrial tariffs and services could not be bargained into one package. Third, the **consensus rule** lets a few large members halt outcomes, while a much larger membership than 1947 GATT makes consensus harder. Fourth, **China's accession produced a systemic clash: subsidies, state enterprises and forced technology transfer claims that the old GATT text does not settle, and that Washington now prefers to fight with tariffs rather than with panels.** Fifth, **developing-country coalitions**, including India, refuse to treat special and differential treatment as a sunset slogan, especially on **public stockholding** for food security. That is

clout, treated in Paper II's India questions; it is also gridlock if no bargain is offered. Sixth, **digital trade, e-commerce and investment** sit poorly in a 1994 text, so willing clubs write plurilaterals outside the single undertaking. Seventh, **domestic politics** in the United States turned the WTO into a symbol of lost factories, so compliance with adverse rulings became optional.

The organisation still notifies, still hosts talks, and still matters to states that cannot win a tariff war. It has declined as a **binding constitutional order of world trade**. That is the precise sense of decline.

Flow diagram

GATT spirit MFN bindings spirit MFN bindings -> WTO 1995 court 1995 court

Tariffs sanctions industrial policy -> Decline

Dead Appellate Body -> Decline

Doha consensus US-China -> Decline

Conclusion

GATT's spirit was non-discrimination and legalised tariff politics. Sanctions, industrial tariffs and security controls have pushed that spirit aside. The WTO has declined because its court was disabled, Doha failed, consensus jammed, and the United States-China clash outgrew the 1994 text. The shell remains. The policeman does not.

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Q4(c) · 15 marks

Do you agree with the view that the EU has thus far proved to be the most successful experiment in the regional integration processes? Account for its successes and also some of the recent challenges that it is faced with.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

- **The EU is the deepest regional integration:** single market, supranational law, euro for many, Schengen and enlargement conditionality.

Success is clearest against ASEAN, SAARC, Mercosur and NAFTA/USMCA in legal depth and peace among former enemies.

- **Challenges:** Brexit, Hungarian and Polish rule-of-law conflicts, migration splits, Russia's war and energy shock, and incomplete fiscal union.

NATO still holds the hard-security core.

- **Verdict:** most successful experiment so far, under a live stress test of political consent.

Introduction

- **Regional integration is a crowded field: ASEAN, African Union, Mercosur, USMCA, SAARC.** The claim that the **European Union** has so far been the **most successful experiment** is **justified** if success means depth of law, market and peace among former enemies. The same answer must **account for recent challenges**, or it becomes a brochure.

Body

Successes

The EU turned a coal-and-steel bargain among states that had destroyed each other twice in a century into a **single market**, a dense body of **directly effective law**, a **Court of Justice**, and, for many members, a **single currency**. **Schengen** made internal movement ordinary. Repeated **enlargement** spread democratic conditionality to Southern and then Eastern Europe. No other regional body has pooled so much **regulatory sovereignty** or produced so much intra-regional trade as a share of members' lives. In the language of question 2(b), it is the home of the post-modern state. Compared with ASEAN's informal consensus or SAARC's freeze, the EU is a **legal community**, not only a meeting calendar.

Peace among France and Germany is the foundational success. The euro, for all its faults, is a political fact that NAFTA never attempted. Global standard-setting - data protection, chemicals, digital markets - gives the EU power beyond its military weight.

Recent challenges

Brexit was the first major secession. It showed that pooling is reversible and that identity politics can defeat market logic. **Rule-of-law fights with Hungary and Poland exposed a gap: the Union has tools against backsliding, and it uses them slowly.** **Migration** after 2015 split front-line and interior states and revived internal borders. **Russia's war** on Ukraine ended the cheap-energy model and forced a security debate that NATO still dominates, which is the limit of EU strategic autonomy. **Debt and inflation** after the euro crisis and COVID strained North-South solidarity; joint borrowing was a step, not a finished federal treasury. Enlargement toward Ukraine and the Western Balkans will test absorption again.

These challenges are **serious**. They have not dissolved the single market or the Court. Success is therefore **comparative and incomplete**.

Verdict

- **Yes:** the EU remains the most successful regional integration experiment in depth and in transforming interstate war into domestic-style law. No: it is not a finished federation, and the 2010s-2020s have been a stress test of consent. Other regions should copy **institutions and law**, not a fantasy of frictionless identity.

Flow diagram

European Union -> Peace market law euro
European Union -> Brexit rule of law migration
Brexit rule of law migration -> Ukraine energy debt
Peace market law euro -> Most successful comparatively
Ukraine energy debt -.stresses. -> Most successful comparatively

Conclusion

The EU's successes are peace among historic enemies, a single market, supranational law and a currency union for many members. Recent challenges - Brexit, rule of law, migration, war and fiscal strain - show the limits of consent. As a regional experiment it is still first in class. It is not beyond examination.

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Q5(a) · 10 marks

"India must strive to become a semi-permanent member of the UNSC, rather than a permanent member without the right to veto." Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India and the UN System

Revision summary

India's G4 line seeks a permanent UNSC seat; the P5 have no wish to multiply vetoes.

A permanent seat without veto is prestige without the instrument that makes permanence matter in crises.

Semi-permanent renewable long terms would increase India's presence and coalition practice, closer to elected-term diplomacy.

The comment is right as a ranking of second-best outcomes, not as a demand to abandon the public permanent-seat claim.

What India needs is a Council that cannot ignore it; recurrence plus coalitions may beat a mute nameplate.

Introduction

India has sought a **permanent seat** on the **United Nations Security Council** as part of a reformed Council that matches twenty-first-century power. The statement that India should instead strive to become a **semi-permanent member**, rather than a **permanent member without the veto**, is a comment on **what is worth having**. It should be taken seriously. It should not be read as a surrender of India's case.

Body

The existing Indian line

India argues from population, democracy, peacekeeping, and a nuclear-and-economic weight that the 1945 P5 does not reflect. The **G4** (India, Japan, Germany, Brazil) has asked for permanent seats. The **Uniting for Consensus** group, including Pakistan and Italy, has blocked easy expansion. African states want two permanent seats of their own. The **veto** is the core of P5 privilege. Existing permanent members have no incentive to multiply vetoes that could bind them. A 'permanent' Indian seat **without veto** has therefore appeared in some compromise talk. It would give a continuous presence and prestige. It would not give the power that makes the Council oligarchic.

Semi-permanent as a design

Semi-permanent membership usually means **longer, renewable elected terms** - for example eight-year seats for a small set of major states, possibly with consecutive re-election, unlike the present two-year non-renewable elected six. India would sit more often, build chair-experience, and still need coalitions. That is closer to how India already operates when it wins an elected term: as a **voice of the Global South** on terrorism, development and Council working methods, not as a veto player.

Comment

A permanent seat without veto is **status without the instrument** that defines permanence. In crises - Ukraine, Gaza, Syria - the veto is the fact. India would be a distinguished non-P5

with a better chair. **Semi-permanent** membership, if the term is long and renewable, can yield more **practical influence** than a hollow permanent badge, and it is more negotiable with the Coffee Club and with Africa.

The statement is **too neat** if it asks India to drop the permanent-with-veto claim in public diplomacy. That claim is leverage. It is **right as a ranking of outcomes: veto-less permanence is a poor second prize**; a designed semi-permanent seat with real recurrence may be better than that prize. India's interest remains a Council that cannot ignore Delhi. Frequency plus coalitions can serve that interest more than a nameplate beside a mute gavel.

Flow diagram

India UNSC aim -> Permanent with veto

India UNSC aim -> Permanent without veto

India UNSC aim -> Semi-permanent renewable

Permanent without veto -> Prestige weak power

Semi-permanent renewable -> Usable recurrent influence

Conclusion

India should not treat a veto-less permanent seat as victory. The veto is the Council's hard currency. A well-designed semi-permanent, renewable seat could give more usable presence than an empty permanent title. The public claim for full permanence can still be kept as bargaining stock.

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Q5(b) · 10 marks

Bhutan has historically been an ally of India, but the China-Bhutan border-related issues have become a security issue for India. Discuss.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India and the Global Centres of Power

Revision summary

Bhutan is India's closest Himalayan partner through treaty history, hydropower and military training.

China-Bhutan boundary talks and Chinese construction at Doklam in 2017 made the trijunction an Indian military crisis.

The Siliguri corridor and the LAC context turn Bhutan's western sector into Indian strategic depth.

Sakteng and possible China-Bhutan diplomatic normalisation add political pressure.

India must back Bhutanese sovereignty without treating the trijunction as a purely bilateral China-Bhutan file.

Introduction

Bhutan has been India's closest Himalayan partner: a friendship treaty, coordinated diplomacy, Indian military training, and hydropower as the economic spine. China-Bhutan border talks, and Chinese pressure on that boundary, have become a **security issue for India** because Bhutan's northern and western frontiers sit on India's strategic depth. The relationship remains an alliance in practice. The border file is no longer only Thimphu's.

Body

Historical ally

The 1949 treaty, updated in **2007**, ended the requirement that Bhutan be guided by India on external affairs, but the security partnership continued. India is the primary market for Bhutanese hydropower. The Indian Military Training Team still sits in Bhutan. For a small state between two giants, that bet on India has been the structure of survival.

Why the China border is India's problem

China and Bhutan do not have formal diplomatic relations, yet they have held many rounds of boundary talks. Beijing's claims in the **western sector**, near the trijunction with India, and occasional pressure in the **east** (including statements around **Sakteng**), matter because they rearrange the map above the **Siliguri corridor** - the narrow link between India's northeast and the rest of the country. In **2017**, Chinese road-building at **Doklam** on Bhutanese territory produced a **73-day stand-off** with the Indian Army. Delhi treated an alteration of the trijunction as a direct threat, not as a bilateral China-Bhutan technicality.

A boundary 'package' that traded northern pastures for western territory could, in a worst case, bring Chinese presence closer to the ridge that overlooks the corridor. Even without a settlement, Chinese villages, roads and patrols along the disputed line create facts on ground that India must read as **LAC-adjacent**. Bhutan's wish to settle with China and perhaps open diplomatic relations is rational for Thimphu. It is a **two-front cartographic risk** for Delhi already facing China on the **Line of Actual Control**.

Discuss, do not panic

India cannot veto Bhutanese diplomacy without looking like a patron and thereby pushing Thimphu to balance. The workable line is: support Bhutan's sovereignty, keep hydropower and people-to-people density, and insist that **trijunctions are trilateral in effect**. Doklam showed that India will physically contest a change. The security issue is real. It is managed by partnership, not by treating Bhutan as a district.

Flow diagram

India-Bhutan partnership -> Hydropower training treaty
China-Bhutan border talks -> Doklam 2017
Doklam 2017 -> Siliguri corridor risk
Siliguri corridor risk -> Indian security issue

Conclusion

Bhutan remains India's ally in the Himalaya. China-Bhutan border moves, especially at Doklam and toward the Siliguri approaches, are Indian security business because geography ties the three states. Delhi's task is to keep the alliance by respecting Bhutanese agency while refusing unilateral change at the trijunction.

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Q5(c) · 10 marks

"Nothing is going to move within the WTO negotiations unless India is on board." Discuss the main reasons behind India's increased clout in the WTO.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement

Revision summary

The claim that WTO talks cannot move without India is shorthand, not a literal rule of the house.

Clout grew from market size, consensus voting, G33 coalitions and a non-negotiable public-stockholding/food-security line after Bali.

India also has offensive services interests and defensive digital policy space, so it matters on more than farms.

The U.S. and China can still freeze the system on their own; plurilaterals can proceed without Indian enthusiasm.

On a multilateral development bargain, India's consent is now a political requirement.

Introduction

The remark that **nothing moves in WTO negotiations unless India is on board** is diplomatic shorthand. It is **overstated** as a law of Geneva. It is **fair** as a description of India's **increased clout** since the Doha years. India is no longer a quiet developing member. It is a veto-capable coalition maker on the issues that still define the round.

Body

Why the clout grew

First, **economic weight**. A large and growing market, a major agricultural population, and a competitive services and generic-pharma sector mean that a deal which ignores India leaves a hole in any 'world' trade bargain. Second, the **consensus rule** of the WTO, discussed as a cause of decline in 4(b), turns a determined large developing member into a blocking player. Third, India learned to **organise**: the **G33** on food, alliances with African and Caribbean states on public stockholding, and a consistent line on special and differential treatment. Fourth, **food security** after the 2008 price spike and **India's National Food Security Act** made **public stockholding** a non-negotiable. The **Bali 2013 peace clause** and later fights to make it permanent showed that the membership cannot close agriculture without Delhi. Fifth, **services and movement of people** (Mode 4) give India offensive interests, not only defensive farm politics. Sixth, **digital and e-commerce** plurilaterals meet Indian caution on data and policy space, so 'willing clubs' still feel India's absence as a legitimacy problem. Seventh, after the Appellate Body crisis, political bargains matter more than panel law; a vocal India in G20 and Voice of Global South settings carries that politics into Geneva.

What the slogan gets wrong

The United States and China can still move or freeze the system without India, as tariffs and the appellate crisis show. Many plurilaterals proceed with India in the room as a sceptic or outside as a non-party. 'Nothing moves' is **caucus language**. **The true statement is: on development, agriculture and a multilateral single undertaking, India's no is still a hard no**, and India's yes is now needed for any claim that the South consented.

- **Clout also comes from coherence:** India links WTO food rules to livelihood, and links that to a democratic mandate. That is harder to buy off than a small member's tariff line.

Flow diagram

Indian clout -> Market consensus G33
Indian clout -> Public stockholding food
Indian clout -> Services data policy space
Public stockholding food -> Hard to close Doha-type deals

Conclusion

India's WTO clout rests on market size, consensus, G33 coalition practice and an immovable food-security file. The slogan that nothing moves without India is too absolute. It is accurate for the surviving multilateral development agenda. That is why Geneva still waits on Delhi.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-2/2024/nothing-is-going-to-move-within-the-wto-negotiations-unless-india-is-on-board-discuss-the-main-reasons-behind-indias-increased-clout-in-the-wto/>

Q5(d) · 10 marks

Discuss the rationale behind replacing the "Asia-Pacific" strategy with the new term "Indo-Pacific" strategy.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

Asia-Pacific centred East Asian production, APEC and U.S. Pacific alliances, with India at the edge.

Indo-Pacific is a maritime theatre from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.

- **Rationale:** energy and trade sea lanes, China's naval and port reach, India's Act East, Abe's FOIP language and the Quad.

U.S. official strategy made the label bureaucratic.

The term keeps ASEAN centrality in Indian usage while re-ranking Delhi as a hinge power.

Introduction

Asia-Pacific named a rim of East and Southeast Asia plus the Americas, organised around APEC, U.S. hubs-and-spokes alliances, and China-centred production. **Indo-Pacific** names a wider maritime system from the eastern African littoral through the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific. The new term is not a fashion. It is a **strategy label** for a changed map.

Body

What was incomplete in 'Asia-Pacific'

The older term under-weighted the **Indian Ocean**, energy routes through the **Malacca** strait, and **India** as a resident power. It fitted a world in which Japan, the Asian Tigers and then China were the growth story, and in which Washington's alliances ran through Tokyo, Seoul and Canberra without needing Delhi. **ASEAN** sat at the centre of that vocabulary. The vocabulary did not disappear. It was too small for Chinese naval reach, for African and Gulf energy, and for India's Act East.

Rationale for Indo-Pacific

- **First**, geography of trade and energy: a large share of world oil and goods moves on waters India can affect. Second, **China's maritime rise** - South China Sea pressure, dual-use ports in the Indian Ocean, and the Belt and Road at sea - made a purely Pacific frame look like a half-board. Third, **India's** willingness to be named as a net security partner, not only as a NAM spectator. Fourth, **Japanese** language under **Shinzo Abe** (confluence of the two seas; later **Free and Open Indo-Pacific**) gave allies a phrase. Fifth, the **Quad** - Australia, India, Japan, the United States - needed a theatre name that included the Indian Ocean. Sixth, the United States officially shifted documents and commands toward an Indo-Pacific strategy, making the term bureaucratic fact.

The strategy is **inclusive in Indian official speech** (ASEAN centrality, IPOI) and **more oppositional in some U.S. versions** (a China-challenge frame). That ambiguity is part of the term's success: several states can inhabit it.

What the rename does

It relocates India from the edge of Asia-Pacific charts to a **hinge**. It justifies minilateral naval practice and quality infrastructure as public goods. It does not dissolve ASEAN or APEC. It **re-ranks** who must be in the room when sea lanes and China are discussed. For PSIR, the

rationale is strategic geography plus a coalition, not a poetic preference for two oceans.

Flow diagram

Asia-Pacific -> East Asia APEC hubs
Indo-Pacific -> Indian Ocean plus Pacific
Indo-Pacific -> Quad FOIP Act East
China maritime rise -> Indo-Pacific

Conclusion

Asia-Pacific described an East Asian economic rim and U.S. Pacific alliances. Indo-Pacific adds the Indian Ocean and India because China, energy routes and the Quad made the older map too narrow. The new term is a strategy, not a synonym.

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Q5(e) · 10 marks

Despite deep ties, India's relations with Sri Lanka have seen strains due to China's growing influence in Sri Lanka through investments and economic dominance. Analyse.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy

Revision summary

India and Sri Lanka share people-to-people, security and neighbourhood-first ties, including the civil-war and 13th Amendment file.

Chinese infrastructure credit, Colombo Port City and the Hambantota lease created economic presence with strategic meaning for Delhi.

Colombo used China to hedge Indian political weight, especially on Tamil issues.

The 2022 debt crisis restored India's role as first financier and IMF-era partner.

Strain is real omni-enmeshment, not a finished Chinese capture of the island.

Introduction

India and **Sri Lanka** share religion, language zones, a narrow strait, and a long security intimacy, including India's role in the civil-war years and in the **13th Amendment** debate. Those **deep ties** have been strained as **China** financed infrastructure and gained **economic presence**, most famously at **Hambantota**. The analysis must hold both facts: strain is real; geography and the 2022 crisis still pull Colombo toward Delhi.

Body

Deep ties

Tamil Nadu politics, fisheries, Buddhism, and Indian tourists and investment are everyday links. India is a first responder in disaster and, in 2022, in **credit, fuel and currency support** when Sri Lanka's sovereign debt collapsed. Defence dialogues and the neighbourhood-first claim treat the island as vital ground in the Indian Ocean, which is why the Indo-Pacific vocabulary of 5(d) includes Sri Lanka whether Colombo likes the label or not.

China's economic dominance as politics

Chinese loans and contractors built ports, highways and the **Colombo Port City** vision. **Hambantota** port's long lease after debt distress became the global example of a strategic asset shifting under commercial stress. For India, a Chinese-run deep port on the southern flank, plus possible dual-use visits, is a **security externalities** problem like Bhutan's border, only maritime. Colombo's earlier governments used Chinese money to reduce dependence on India, especially when Delhi was associated with Tamil concerns and with 1987 intervention memory.

Strains show up as delayed energy projects with India, mixed messages on Chinese 'research' vessels, and domestic Sri Lankan politics that treat Indian proximity as interference and Chinese proximity as development.

Analyse, do not flatten

China did not buy Sri Lankan identity. It bought **time and concrete** when Indian and Western finance were slower or more conditional. The 2022 default damaged the Chinese model's reputation as costless. India's aid, IMF-linked recovery, and renewed talk of connectivity

(ports, power, tourism) showed that **economic dominance is reversible in influence if not in every lease**. Tamil aspirations and fishermen's livelihoods remain Indian domestic constraints that China does not carry.

- **The relationship is therefore a triangle:** Colombo hedges; Beijing builds; Delhi both resents and remains indispensable. Strain is the price of a neighbour's omni-enmeshment. It is not a completed loss of the island.

Flow diagram

Deep India-Sri Lanka ties -> Strain
China loans ports -> Hambantota
Hambantota -> Strain
2022 crisis Indian support -> Residual Indian cards

Conclusion

India-Sri Lanka ties remain thick in people, security and crisis finance. Chinese investment, Hambantota and port-city politics have strained that intimacy by giving Colombo another paymaster. The 2022 crash showed the limit of that paymaster. Analysis should register strain without writing India out of the map.

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Q6(a) · 20 marks

Would you concur with the view that of late, India's foreign policy has been in a transition mode from Nehruvianism to Neoliberalism? Support your answer with the help of suitable examples.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy

Revision summary

Nehruvianism meant NAM, UN moralism and refusal of blocs; neoliberalism in this debate means markets, U.S. partnership and globalisation.

1991, Act East, the U.S. nuclear bargain and the Quad are the visible transition.

India still refuses formal alliance, keeps Russia, defends WTO policy space and talks Global South - Nehruvian residues.

- **Concur partly:** instruments have shifted; doctrine of autonomy has not been abolished.

Multi-alignment is the mix, not a clean replacement of one school by the other.

Introduction

Nehruvianism in foreign policy meant non-alignment, Afro-Asian solidarity, UN moral language, and suspicion of military blocs, with a weak material base. **Neoliberalism** here does not mean only domestic market reform. In the foreign-policy debate it means engagement with global capital, closer ties to the United States, and comfort with economic globalisation. The view that India has been **in transition from Nehruvianism to neoliberalism** is **partly right**. It is wrong as a completed story.

Body

Where the transition is visible

1991 opened the economy and forced diplomacy to seek capital, oil and technology. **Look East / Act East** replaced a purely continental NAM map with ASEAN and later the **Indo-Pacific**. The **civil nuclear** path with the United States, the 2+2s, **LEMOA**, **COMCASA** and **BECA**, and revival of the **Quad** are not **Nehru**'s instruments. India signs trade talks, courts supply chains, and speaks the language of ease of capital. **C. Raja Mohan** and others have described this as a turn from idealism to a more interest-based, market-compatible diplomacy. Examples are concrete: India as a lower-cost manufacturing hedge in China-plus-one; ITEC plus digital public infrastructure as exports; a G20 presidency that sold investment as much as NAM memory.

Where Nehruvianism has not died

India still refuses a **NATO-like alliance**, which is the point of 7(c). It still buys oil and platforms with **Russia**. It still uses **strategic autonomy** and Global South voice - a Nehruvian habit in a new accent. It did not join a condemnation camp on Ukraine in the way neoliberal Atlanticism demanded. At the **WTO**, India defends food stocks and policy space rather than a pure open-market catechism. Neighbourhood policy still uses civilisational and security language that is not reducible to FDI.

So the transition is **in the economic and U.S.-facing layers**. It is not a conversion of the whole doctrine. **NonAlignment 2.0** already tried to name autonomy after NAM's bipolar script died. Multi-alignment, treated in 8(c), is the current mix: Nehruvian refusal of a camp,

neoliberal use of markets and minilaterals.

Comment

Concur **in part**. Late Indian foreign policy has moved toward markets, the United States and issue-based coalitions. Do not concur that Nehruvianism has been replaced. The state still wants **autonomy in a hierarchical world-economy** that **Wallerstein** would recognise. Neoliberal tools serve that autonomy. They have not abolished it.

Flow diagram

Nehruvian NAM UN -> 1991 Act East US nuclear
1991 Act East US nuclear -> Quad markets
Nehruvian NAM UN -> Autonomy Russia WTO food
1991 Act East US nuclear -> Partial transition

Conclusion

India has used neoliberal economic diplomacy and U.S. minilaterals that **Nehru** would not have signed. It has not become a camp follower or a free-trade fundamentalist. The transition is real in instruments. The end remains autonomy. That is a partial, not a total, shift.

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Q6(b) · 15 marks

Does the idea of the 21st century as 'Asian century' continue to remain feasible given the growing friction between India and China?

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India and South Asia

Revision summary

The Asian century meant a shift of growth and weight to Asia with China and India as co-engines.

Doklam, Galwan, a hard LAC and Chinese Indian Ocean presence make China India's central strategic problem.

Trade can continue without a political concert; the Quad and BRI are rival organising projects.

Economically the shift to Asia can still happen; politically the century looks contested or bipolar, not harmonious.

Feasible as theatre of world politics, not as a Sino-Indian team.

Introduction

The **Asian century** is the claim that this century's growth, population and eventually security weight would sit in Asia, with **China and India** as co-engines beside Japan, Korea and ASEAN. **Growing friction between India and China** asks whether that co-engine still exists. The idea remains **feasible as arithmetic**. It is **less feasible as a shared political project**.

Body

Why it looked feasible

East Asian industrialisation, China's rise, and India's post-1991 growth produced a shift of GDP and manufacturing toward Asia. Demography, a middle class, and regional production networks (even after deglobalisation) still point east of Suez. An Asian century did not require India-China friendship. It required both to grow inside one world-economy.

What friction does

Doklam 2017, Galwan 2020, a militarised **Line of Actual Control**, and China's partnerships with Pakistan and in the Indian Ocean (**Hambantota**, other ports) turn China from a fellow Asian riser into India's **principal strategic problem**. Trade remains large, but investment screening, app bans, and border deaths poison the political story of a joint Asian leadership. The **Belt and Road** is a Chinese order, not a Sino-Indian one. If Asia's security splits into a Chinese sphere and an **Indo-Pacific** coalition around the **Quad**, the century is Asian in location and **bipolar in structure**. That is not the harmonious Asian century of early 2000s speeches.

- **Friction also wastes resources:** both states arm the Himalaya; India must still grow with a two-front problem; China must still manage the United States. **Waltz** would say two large neighbours in the same system tend toward rivalry. **Kant's** pacific federation is not the LAC.

Verdict

The Asian century **continues as a feasible economic description** if China and India keep growing even while they quarrel - just as Europe's century of power included Franco-German

enmity. It **does not continue as a feasible concert**. Leadership of Asia will be contested. ASEAN will try to avoid choosing. India's role becomes hinge of a multipolar Asia, not co-chair of a Beijing-friendly century. Feasible, then, with a **changed meaning**: Asia as the main theatre of world politics, not Asia as a team.

Flow diagram

Asian century claim -> China plus India growth
India-China friction -> LAC Galwan Doklam Galwan Doklam
India-China friction -> BRI Indian Ocean Indian Ocean
LAC Galwan Doklam -> Bipolar Asian security
China plus India growth -.still possible. -> Economic shift

Conclusion

India-China friction does not cancel Asian economic weight. It cancels the idea of a joint, peaceful Asian leadership. The Asian century remains feasible as a shift of wealth and attention. It is no longer feasible as a Sino-Indian partnership project.

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Q6(c) · 15 marks

Discuss the potential role that India could play as the leader of the Global South in realising the goal of establishing a new international economic order in the 21st century.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India and the Global South

Revision summary

NIEO sought fairer trade, finance, technology and voice for developing countries; it stalled in the late 1970s.

India's potential is to convene the South (G20, Voice of Global South), defend WTO food space, and offer generics and digital public infrastructure.

Quad-plus-BRICS seating lets India translate between South and G7.

China is the capital competitor; India is not a global paymaster; neighbourhood gaps weaken the claim.

Realistic leadership is coalition and agenda-setting toward a less overcentralised order.

Introduction

The **New International Economic Order (NIEO)** of 1974 asked for fairer commodity prices, technology transfer, more voice in the IMF and World Bank, and policy space for development. It stalled against Northern power. The question is what **India** could do **as a leader of the Global South** to revive that goal in this century. The potential is as a **coalition builder**, not as a substitute for Chinese capital or a new Bretton Woods by itself.

Body

What a twenty-first-century NIEO would mean

It would mean reformed **IMF quotas**, a usable **WTO** for food and industrial policy (India's clout in 5(c)), **climate finance** that is not only a Northern sermon, digital public infrastructure that is not only Silicon Valley's, and South-South value chains. It would still face **Wallerstein's** hierarchy: core money and technology do not move by speech.

India's potential role

India can **convene**. The **Voice of Global South** summits and the **G20** presidency put African Union membership and development language on a high table. At the WTO India already speaks a food-and-livelihood dialect many poor members share. Vaccine manufacturing and generic medicines are a material NIEO fragment: health goods at Southern prices. **Digital public infrastructure** can be offered as a public good rather than as a Chinese smart-city bundle or a purely American platform. ITEC training and peacekeeping remain people-to-people leadership. On climate, India can insist on equity and still run a large renewable programme, which is more credible than a pure rejectionist line.

- **India can also** translate **between the South and the G7**: it sits in the Quad and in BRICS, which is the multi-alignment of 8(c) used for economic order, not only for security.

Limits

China claims South leadership with actual banks and BRI contracts. Many African states want Indian trust and Chinese speed. India's own neighbourhood delivery is uneven, which weakens moral leadership. A new international economic order needs **finance**. India is not yet that

paymaster. If leadership becomes anti-West theatre only, NIEO 2.0 will repeat 1974's communiqués. If it becomes only a brand for Indian exports, the South will notice.

The potential role is therefore **agenda-setting and coalition-making** toward a more Southern-sensitive globalisation, the same problem named in other papers as overcentralised globalisation. That is achievable. A full NIEO is not a one-state project.

Flow diagram

NIEO 1974 goals 1974 goals -> Voice finance technology

India -> Convene G20 WTO climate

India -> Generics DPI ITEC

China capital -.competes. -> India

Convene G20 WTO climate -> Coalition not paymaster

Conclusion

India can lead the Global South toward a twenty-first-century NIEO by convening, by defending food and digital policy space, and by offering affordable health and digital public goods. It cannot fund a new world-economy alone. Leadership here is a coalition, or it is a speech.

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Q7(a) · 20 marks

Discuss the future of SAARC in the light of India's increased focus on other regional groupings like ASEAN and BIMSTEC.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Regionalisation of World Politics

Revision summary

SAARC aimed at South Asian cooperation but stalled because of India-Pakistan hostility and terrorism-related diplomatic freeze.

ASEAN is India's Act East and Indo-Pacific diplomatic centre.

BIMSTEC offers Bay of Bengal connectivity without Pakistan.

India is practising variable geometry, not a formal abolition of SAARC.

SAARC's future is frozen and technical at best unless the Pakistan political file changes.

Introduction

SAARC was meant to be South Asia's regional club: trade, people and a soft security community among India and its neighbours, with Pakistan inside the room. India's increased focus on ASEAN and BIMSTEC is a response to SAARC's **political freeze**. The future of SAARC is therefore the future of a body that still exists on paper and barely works in practice.

Body

Why SAARC stalled

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation never matched **ASEAN's** convening success or the **EU's** legal depth (4(c)). India-Pakistan hostility, especially after cross-border terrorism and the post-2016 diplomatic freeze, made summits impossible. Connectivity and a serious free-trade practice could not outrun the security veto. Smaller members feared Indian dominance; India feared a ganging-up with extra-regional players. SAARC became a **lowest-common-denominator calendar**.

ASEAN and BIMSTEC as substitutes

ASEAN is the diplomatic centre of Act East and of the **Indo-Pacific** claim in 5(d). It offers markets, a China-balancing room, and a method (consensus) that does not require Pakistan. **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative) links India to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan - the eastern and Bay neighbourhood **without Pakistan**. Energy, coastal shipping and the northeast's outlet are the practical files. For Delhi, BIMSTEC is SAARC minus the blockage, plus a Southeast Asian hinge.

- **This is rational** variable geometry. **It is also a signal to Islamabad:** regionalism will proceed around you. Neighbours still use SAARC language when they want a South Asian roof that includes Pakistan. They use BIMSTEC when they want projects.

Future of SAARC

Legal death is unlikely; no member wants the funeral. **Functional future** is poor unless India-Pakistan politics thaw, which is not the 2020s baseline. SAARC may survive as a **humanitarian and technical** label (health, standards) and as a dormant summit. India's primary regional bets will remain **BIMSTEC, ASEAN, IORA and bilateral neighbourhood first**. **The honest discussion: SAARC's future is marginal**, not resurrected, unless the

Pakistan file changes. India should not spend political capital pretending otherwise, and should not insult smaller members who still value a South Asian name.

Flow diagram

SAARC -> Pakistan terrorism freeze
India -> ASEAN Act East Act East
India -> BIMSTEC without Pakistan
BIMSTEC without Pakistan -> Working regionalism
SAARC -> Marginal future

Conclusion

SAARC stalled on the India-Pakistan security veto. ASEAN and BIMSTEC give India working regionalism aligned with Act East and the Bay of Bengal. SAARC will likely remain a frozen brand rather than a dead treaty. Its future is limited unless politics with Pakistan change.

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Q7(b) · 15 marks

Critically examine India's persistent refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) despite being recognized as a de facto nuclear power.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Contemporary Global Concerns

Revision summary

The NPT recognises five weapon states and asks others to stay non-nuclear; India rejected this as nuclear apartheid.

China-Pakistan nuclear conditions and empty P5 disarmament made signature look like unilateral abstinence.

There is still no legal path for India to join as a weapon state; the 2008 waiver worked around the treaty.

Persistent refusal is therefore structural, not mood.

Costs remain in export controls and non-proliferation politics; a test moratorium and minimum deterrence are how India manages them.

Introduction

India has stayed outside the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** since 1968. It is now a **de facto nuclear-weapon state** with a declared doctrine after 1998, and it has a **civil nuclear waiver** through the Nuclear Suppliers Group politics of 2008. The refusal to **sign the NPT** has nonetheless persisted. A critical examination must show why the treaty still looks like a cage, and what the refusal still costs.

Body

Why India would not sign

- **The NPT froze a hierarchy:** five recognised weapon states, the rest as non-weapon states. India called this **nuclear apartheid**. Article VI disarmament by the P5 was never completed. China, a recognised weapon state and a neighbour with a border dispute, would remain legal; India would become a permanent have-not. **Pakistan's** programme, linked to China, made abstinence look like unilateral disarmament. The **CTBT** fight of the 1990s confirmed Delhi's reading that new legal locks would close India's options without opening the P5's. **Kantian** disarmament idealism, discussed in 1(d) and 1(e), failed the Himalayan test.

Why refusal persists after de facto status

Signing now as a **non-weapon state** would require giving up a tested arsenal - politically impossible. The treaty has **no honest accession path** for India as a weapon state. That legal fact is the whole persistence. The U.S. civil nuclear deal and NSG waiver were designed to **work around** the NPT, not to put India inside it. Joining as a weapon state would explode the treaty's core bargain and is not on offer. So India remains a stand-out, like Pakistan and Israel in different ways, while practising **unilateral moratorium** on tests and a declared **credible minimum deterrence**.

Critical examination

The security case is **strong**. A China-Pakistan nuclear environment does not reward NPT conversion. The moral case against a hierarchy treaty is **consistent** with India's old UN disarmament speeches. The costs are also real. India still faces **export-control** friction, some

technology denial, and the charge of undermining universal non-proliferation just when 1(e)'s order is already unravelling. A purely status-driven refusal, if it ever outran security, would be harder to defend. In fact security and status have been fused since 1998.

- **Criticism should also note:** India wants membership of the **NSG** as a maker of rules it once defied. That is interest, not hypocrisy only - every nuclear state does this - but it should be owned. Persistent refusal is rational. It is not costless. It is not a temporary sulk waiting for a better NPT. The treaty would have to change its categories, or the world would have to disarm, before India's signature as presently demanded made sense.

Flow diagram

NPT hierarchy hierarchy -> Indian refusal

China Pakistan -> Indian refusal

De facto 1998 -> Waiver not accession

Waiver not accession -> Indian refusal

Conclusion

India refuses the NPT because the treaty offers no weapon-state seat and would lock it below China. De facto nuclear status and the NSG waiver did not create a legal door. The refusal is sound as security. It still carries non-proliferation political costs that Delhi manages through doctrine, a test moratorium and selective regime entry.

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Q7(c) · 15 marks

"India and USA have become such strong strategic partners that they need not become formal allies." Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Comparative Politics

Revision summary

The India-U.S. partnership includes the nuclear deal, 2+2s, foundational pacts and the Quad.

It is already thick on maritime and China-overlapping interests.

A formal alliance would demand camp discipline India will not accept and a LAC guarantee Washington will not cleanly give.

Interests diverge on Russia, trade and Pakistan; a partnership can be elastic, a treaty cannot.

Agree with the statement; keep 2+2 and Quad habits so a political swing in Washington does not empty the file.

Introduction

- **India and the United States now share a** strategic partnership: the civil nuclear bargain, 2+2 ministerial meetings, logistics and communications pacts, intelligence-adjacent arrangements, and the **Quad**. The statement that they have become **so strong that they need not become formal allies** is **right**. An alliance treaty would add a legal chain without adding the cooperation they already choose.

Body

How strong the partnership is

The relationship moved from sanctions after 1998 to a **de facto** technology and maritime partnership. Foundational agreements allow refuelling, secure communications and geospatial sharing. Defence industry talk, student mobility, and a shared **Indo-Pacific** vocabulary (5(d)) are thicker than any Cold War non-aligned distance. On China, interests overlap even when language differs. This is already **alliance-like in parts of the military-technical stack**.

Why not a formal ally

Formal allies take **Article 5-type** obligations. India will not promise to fight the United States' wars, and Washington will not write an unambiguous guarantee for the LAC that binds Congress on India's terms. **Strategic autonomy** - Russia oil and platforms, Iran energy memory, WTO fights, and a Global South voice - would look like breach of camp discipline. U.S. domestic politics (human rights, tariffs, immigration) would enter Indian elections as treaty politics. For the United States, a non-allied India is still useful: it looks less like containment cosplay to ASEAN.

Morgenthau would say an alliance should match defined interests. Here interests **overlap on China and the sea** and **diverge on Russia, trade and Pakistan**. A partnership can be issue-based. A treaty cannot be as elastic.

Comment

- **Agree: they need not** become formal allies. The partnership is strong **because** it is not a camp. Residual friction - export controls, CAATSA-type sanctions threats, data and farm trade, and U.S. comments on Indian domestic politics - is easier to manage without a treaty that turns every friction into a loyalty test. The risk of the statement is complacency: without some institutional density, a change of U.S. administration can still thin the partnership. The Quad and

2+2s are that density. They are not NATO, and they should not try to be.

Flow diagram

India-US partnership -> Quad 2+2 pacts

India-US partnership -> Autonomy Russia WTO

Formal alliance -> Article 5 costs

India-US partnership -> Strong enough without treaty

Conclusion

India and the United States have built a strategic partnership that already does much of an alliance's work on China and the Indo-Pacific. A formal alliance would cost autonomy and would not clarify the LAC. They need not become allies. They do need to keep the partnership's habits, because strength here is practised, not sworn.

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Q8(a) · 20 marks

Critically examine the continuity and change in India's Palestine policy in the wake of the ongoing Israel-Hamas War.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Indian Foreign Policy

Revision summary

Baseline India policy was anti-colonial support for Palestine, two states, and UN voting with the South.

From the 1990s-2010s India de-hyphenated and built defence and technology ties with Israel.

After October 2023 India condemned Hamas's terror quickly and kept humanitarian and two-state language as the war widened.

Continuity is the diplomatic formula; change is partner hierarchy and the terror frame.

- **Critical need:** keep both sentences, because dropping either one breaks either the South or India's own terrorism diplomacy.

Introduction

- **India's** Palestine policy **began as anti-colonial solidarity:** recognition of Palestinian self-determination, UN voting with the South, and a two-state formula. In the same decades India also built quiet, then open, ties with **Israel**. The **Israel-Hamas war** after October 2023 is a test of **continuity and change**. Both are present. A critical answer must not pretend that nothing moved, or that India simply switched camps.

Body

Continuity

India still states a **two-state solution**, still has relations with the Palestinian Authority, and still sends **humanitarian** assistance to Gaza. It did not empty its UN history in a week. The neighbourhood-first and Global South identity still makes a total alignment with one West Asian party costly among domestic Muslims, among NAM-era partners, and at the UN. That continuity is **real**, if thinner in rhetoric than in the 1970s.

Change, already underway before 2023

From the 1990s, and publicly from the 2010s, India treated Israel as a **defence, agriculture and technology partner**. Prime-ministerial visits, I2U2, and intelligence cooperation against terrorism re-ranked Israel in Delhi's West Asia matrix. De-hyphenation - talking to Israel without every sentence passing through Palestine - was the change. It fitted the neoliberal-era partnership style of 6(a) and the U.S. intimacy of 7(c).

The war as accelerator

After Hamas's attack on Israeli civilians, official India **condemned terrorism** in language closer to Israel and to India's own Pakistan file than to classical NAM communiqués. It also spoke of civilian suffering in Gaza and of humanitarian law as the war's death toll rose. That **twin sentence** is the current doctrine: terror is named; a two-state horizon is not formally dropped. Critics say the balance tilted toward Israel in speed and warmth of the first response. Supporters say India finally aligned words with its own experience of mass-casualty terror.

Critical verdict

Continuity is the **formula** (two states, humanitarian aid, no embassy withdrawal from the Palestinian cause as a file). Change is the **hierarchy of partners** and the **counter-terror frame**. The war did not create the Israel partnership; it revealed how far de-hyphenation had gone. A policy that only condemns Hamas and forgets occupation will lose the South. A policy that only repeats 1974 language and ignores Hamas's massacre will look disconnected from India's terrorism diplomacy. The critical path is the twin sentence, honestly kept, not a slogan from either embassy.

Flow diagram

Continuity -> Two-state UN humanitarian
Change -> Israel defence de-hyphenation
Israel-Hamas war -> Terror language plus Gaza aid
Continuity -> Twin track
Change -> Twin track

Conclusion

India's Palestine policy still names two states and humanitarian duty. It has changed by making Israel a strategic partner and by reading October 2023 through a counter-terror lens. Continuity is the formula. Change is the weight. The war accelerated a shift that began in the 1990s, it did not invent it.

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Q8(b) · 15 marks

Discuss the implications of the scrapping of the Free Movement Regime with Myanmar by the Indian Government on the complex ethno-political dynamics of the north-eastern region.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · Changing International Political Order

Revision summary

The FMR let border highland communities cross a short distance because Naga, Chin, Kuki and Mizo kin were split by the India-Myanmar line.

Delhi's restriction is driven by insurgent sanctuaries, narcotics, post-2021 refugees and Manipur's 2023 conflict.

Security gains are possible in counting and fencing.

Ethno-political costs fall on hill kinship, humanitarian Chin-Kuki links and Naga cross-border society.

A harder border can also empower illegal brokers if political settlement on both sides is absent.

Introduction

The **Free Movement Regime (FMR)** with **Myanmar** allowed hill communities to cross the border for a short distance without a full visa, because the boundary cuts **Naga, Chin, Kuki, Mizo** and related kin. The Indian government's move to **scrap or severely restrict** that regime is a security decision with **ethno-political costs** in the northeast. Both sides of that ledger belong in the discussion.

Body

What the FMR was

Colonial and post-colonial borders split highland societies. The FMR, in its operational form, recognised that **livelihood, marriage and markets** do not stop at a pillar. It was a rare official admission that the northeast is a **transnational ethnic space**, not only a map of Indian districts.

Why Delhi moved against it

After the **2021 Myanmar coup**, refugee inflows, arms, and narcotics routes thickened. Indian insurgent groups have long used Myanmar's side as a rest area. The **Manipur** conflict from 2023, with its Kuki-Meitei polarisation and charges about illegal immigration and poppy, made an open 16-kilometre belt look, in New Delhi and in Imphal's valley politics, like a **security hole**. The government paired FMR restriction with talk of **fencing**. From a classical state view, this is ordinary border modernisation: one regime, one document, one count.

Implications for ethno-political dynamics

For **Mizo and Chin** kinship, and for **Kuki-Zo** communities, the FMR was a humanitarian and cultural right, not a loophole. Closing it during a Myanmar civil war can be read as **abandoning kin** and as taking a side in Manipur's demographic argument. That hardens ethnic mistrust toward Delhi and toward valley majorities. For **Naga** politics, cross-border Naga identity is already the sensitive core of ceasefire and integration talks; a harder border can cut insurgent logistics and also cut the social world that any political settlement must live

in.

A fenced, visa-heavy border may reduce some armed and drug movement. It will not dissolve ethnic maps. It may **push movement into illegal brokers**, raising the power of those who sell crossings. It may worsen refugee suffering without ending insurgency, if the Myanmar junta and rival armed groups still hold the other side.

The northeast's stability has always required **both** a hard state against guns and a political recognition of kinship. FMR scrap tilts toward the hard state. The ethno-political risk is that Delhi wins a map and loses consent in the hills.

Flow diagram

FMR kinship 16 km kinship 16 km -> Scrap restrict fence

Scrap restrict fence -> Drugs insurgency refugees

Scrap restrict fence -> Naga Chin Kuki-Mizo strain

Naga Chin Kuki-Mizo strain -> Manipur polarisation

Conclusion

Restricting the FMR answers real problems of drugs, insurgency and post-coup inflows. It also cuts a recognised kinship belt and feeds Manipur's demographic conflict. Implications are mixed: more border control, more hill alienation, and a test of whether northeast peace can survive a fully modern frontier.

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Q8(c) · 15 marks

"India has of late, chosen to debunk non-alignment in its pursuit of multi-alignment." Comment.

PSIR GS 2 · 2024 · India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement

Revision summary

Non-alignment was no-camp autonomy in a bipolar world; multi-alignment is many partnerships at once in a multipolar one.

India's Quad and U.S. pacts would have broken NAM orthodoxy; BRICS, SCO and Russia keep the other side of the ledger.

The aim remains strategic autonomy, as in NonAlignment 2.0.

'Debunk' overstates: the method has been updated, the aim has not been ridiculed.

Agree on the pursuit of multi-alignment; reject a cartoon of India mocking **Nehru**.

Introduction

Non-alignment was India's Cold War doctrine: no military camp, voice for the South, room to deal with both blocs. Multi-alignment is the present practice: many partnerships at once, including security minilaterals with the United States. The statement that India has debunked non-alignment in pursuit of multi-alignment captures a real shift. The verb **debunk** is too theatrical. India has **re-tooled** autonomy, not mocked its own past in a seminar.

Body

What has changed

India sits in the **Quad** with three U.S. allies, holds 2+2s with Washington, and uses **Indo-Pacific** language (5(d)). That would have been unintelligible as NAM orthodoxy. At the same time it sits in **BRICS** and the **SCO** with China and Russia, buys discounted oil, and refuses a Ukraine condemnation camp (the autonomy of 7(c)). It convenes the **Voice of Global South**. This is **issue-based coalitions**, which **S. Jaishankar** has named in public. It matches the partial neoliberal turn of 6(a): markets and U.S. technology without a treaty.

Multi-alignment is not equidistance. It is the right to be **closer to Washington on China** and **closer to Moscow on platforms**, in the same year.

What has not been debunked

India still will not sign a **NATO-like alliance** (7(c)). It still uses NAM membership and South language when useful. The **end** - strategic autonomy in a hierarchical world - is Nehruvian even when the **means** are minilateral. **NonAlignment 2.0** already wrote this in 2012. To say India has 'debunked' non-alignment is to confuse **instrument** with **aim**. The instrument of a 120-member movement as the first tool has been set down. The aim of not being a junior ally has not.

Comment

Agree that **multi-alignment is the pursuit**. Disagree that non-alignment has been thrown out as a false theory. NAM was a method for bipolarity. Bipolarity ended. The successor method is multi-alignment. Continuity is autonomy. Change is the willingness to join the Quad without calling it a camp. An honest comment uses those two sentences, not a culture-war

word like debunk.

Flow diagram

Non-alignment bipolar method -> Multi-alignment

Multi-alignment -> Quad US Indo-Pacific

Multi-alignment -> BRICS SCO Russia

Multi-alignment -> Global South voice

Multi-alignment -> Same aim: autonomy

Conclusion

- **India pursues multi-alignment:** Quad and the United States beside BRICS, SCO and Russia, plus a Global South voice. That is not classical NAM theatre. It is still autonomy. Non-alignment has been superseded as method. It has not been exposed as a fraud. Multi-alignment is the update, not the funeral oration.

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Compiled answer key

Last pages of this pack. Each question links to the WRAP model answer on wrapexams.com.

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Q1(a) 10 marks	Q1(b) 10 marks	Q1(c) 10 marks	Q1(d) 10 marks
Q1(e) 10 marks	Q2(a) 20 marks	Q2(b) 15 marks	Q2(c) 15 marks
Q3(a) 20 marks	Q3(b) 15 marks	Q3(c) 15 marks	Q4(a) 20 marks
Q4(b) 15 marks	Q4(c) 15 marks	Q5(a) 10 marks	Q5(b) 10 marks
Q5(c) 10 marks	Q5(d) 10 marks	Q5(e) 10 marks	Q6(a) 20 marks
Q6(b) 15 marks	Q6(c) 15 marks	Q7(a) 20 marks	Q7(b) 15 marks
Q7(c) 15 marks	Q8(a) 20 marks	Q8(b) 15 marks	Q8(c) 15 marks

Question-wise key

Q1(a) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(b) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(d) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(e) · 10 marks Solution

Q2(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q2(b) · 15 marks Solution

Q2(c) · 15 marks Solution

Q3(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q3(b) · 15 marks Solution

Q3(c) · 15 marks Solution

Q4(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q4(b) · 15 marks Solution

Q4(c) · 15 marks Solution

Q5(a) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(b) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(d) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(e) · 10 marks Solution

Q6(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q6(b) · 15 marks Solution

Q6(c) · 15 marks Solution

Q7(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q7(b) · 15 marks Solution

Q7(c) · 15 marks Solution

Q8(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q8(b) · 15 marks Solution

Q8(c) · 15 marks Solution

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