



India's Role In Multilateral World Order

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This article is based on "**Resuscitating multilateralism with India's help**" which was published in The Hindu on 07/05/2020. It talks about India's role in the revival of declining multilateralism.

The **Covid-19 pandemic** has highlighted the varying nature of the challenges faced by the world. First, these challenges are **cross-national** in character. They respect no national boundaries and are not amenable to national solutions only. Second, these challenges are cross-domain in nature, with strong feedback loops. A disruption in one domain often cascades into parallel disruptions in other domains.

The intersection of cross-national and cross-domain challenges demand multilateral approaches to reach out any solution. However, there has been an upsurge in narrow nationalism, an assertion of parochial interests over the pursuit of global (shared) interests, and a fostering of competition among states rather than embracing collaboration. Thus, multilateralism is possibly at its weakest today.

In this context, Indian Prime Minister remarks that the world is facing a huge challenge in the form of Covid-19 and the way to combat this pandemic is through the resolution of '**Collaborate to Create**'. Thus, the current pandemic may be an opportunity for India to help revive multilateralism.

Issues Pertaining to Multilateralism

Increasing Incidences of Lawfare

It means the misuse of existing International and national laws by several countries (via forced technology requirements, intellectual property rights violations, and subsidies), to gain an unfair advantage over other countries. For example:

- Paralysis of the World Trade Organization (WTO), due to the tussle between the developed and developing world.
- The imposition of **extraterritorial sanction (under CAATSA) by the US** has affected development in developing economies like India and China.
- **The trade war between the US and China** has challenged the existing global trade.

Dual Use of Global Supply Chain

Some of the developed countries have jurisdiction and control over global supply chains. Due to growing convergence between commercial interests with strategic goals, these supply chains enables them to have vast extraterritorial influence and has created new power asymmetries. For example:

- **China through BRI** is enhancing its role in global economic governance.
- The internet has become a distributed system of surveillance.
- There are fears pertaining to dual-use (commercial viability and military application) of **Industrial Revolution 4.0**.

Lack of Global Framework

- The global community has not been able to come on a single platform or frame a Global Agenda on issues related to terrorism, Climate Change, cybersecurity etc.
- Also, due to the lack of any global public health framework, Covid-19 has spread into a pandemic.

India's Role in Reviving Multilateralism

Shift from Non-Alignment to Multi-Alignment

- In the Post cold war era, Indian foreign policy has moved from a policy of non-alignment (policy of being neutral with US and USSR blocs) to the policy of Multi-alignment (India is having friendly relations with almost all great powers and developing world).
- Multi-alignment is the very essence of India's foreign policy and the economic policy of India today.
- This presents an opportunity for India to become a global mediator and help in developing a framework on Global Issues.

India's Role in International Activism

- India is a key G-20 member country and the world's fifth-largest economy (and 3rd largest on purchasing power parity) with a long tradition of international activism and promotion of rule-based multilateralism.
- India's foreign policy is based on the ethos of "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" and Good Samaritan. In pursuance of this:
 - India's long-standing commitment to multilateralism can be reflected in the call for **U.N. system reforms.**
 - India has taken the lead in promoting various multilateral initiatives like **International Solar Alliance**, proposing **CCIT for combating terrorism**, **Asia-Africa Growth corridor.**
 - India is the **pharmacy to the world** (world's largest producer and exporter of cost-effective generic drugs).

Collaborating with Like-minded Countries

Working together with a group of countries from the developed and developing countries could further amplify India's voice.

- Here, India could work closely with the **Alliance for Multilateralism** (an initiative launched by Germany and France) to shape both the alliance itself and the reform agenda at large.
- India must redouble its efforts, along with partners such as the USA, to push for a multi-stakeholder model of internet governance.

Alliance for Multilateralism

The "Alliance for Multilateralism" launched by the French and German Foreign Ministers is an informal network of countries united to promote a rules-based multilateral order for international stability and peace and addressing common challenges.

- The Alliance aims to renew the global commitment to stabilize the rules-based international order, uphold its principles and adapt it, where necessary.
- It aims to protect and preserve international norms, agreements and institutions that are under pressure or in peril.
- It seeks to pursue a more proactive agenda in policy areas that lack effective governance and where new challenges require collective action.

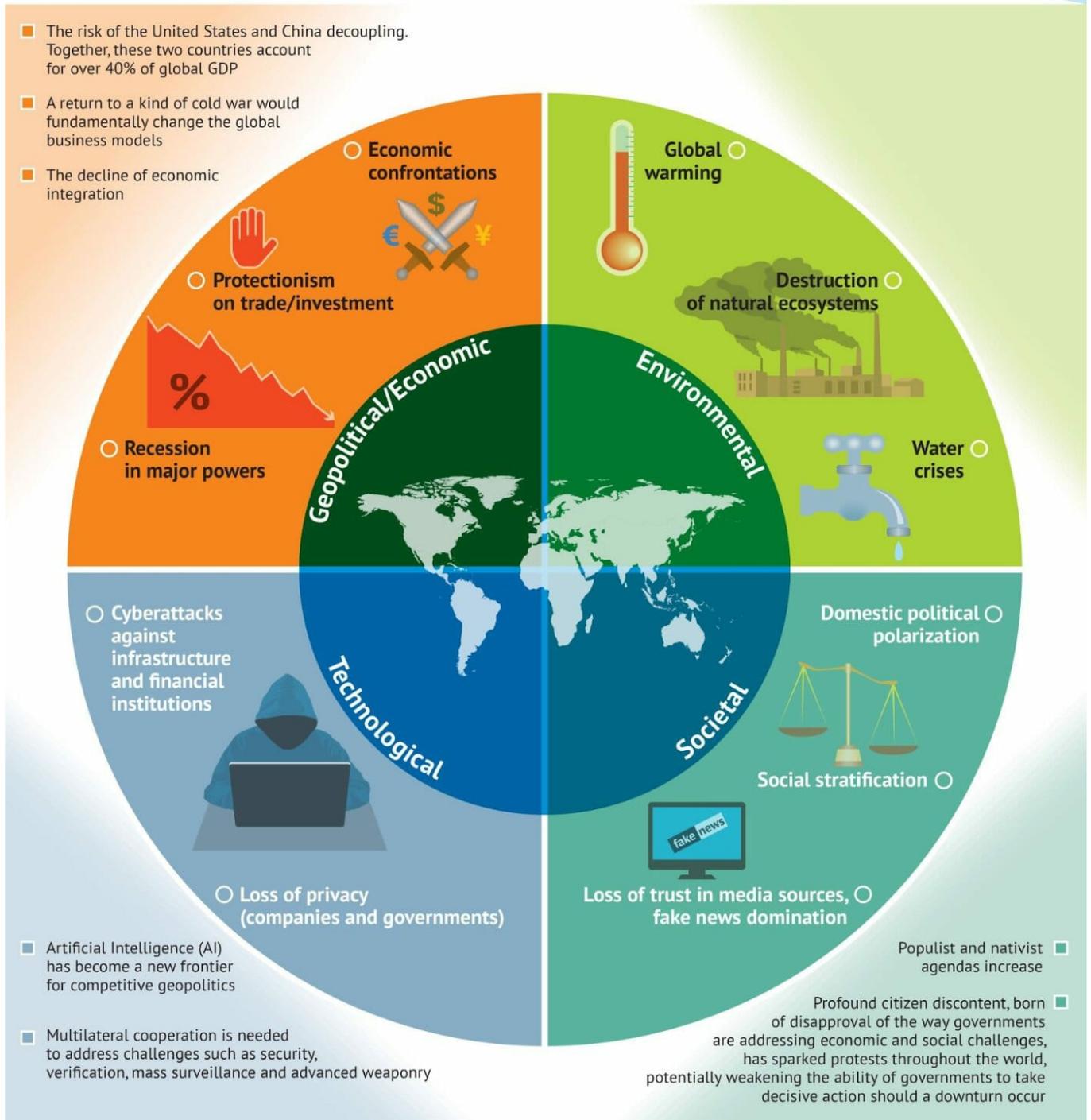
Decoupling From China: Opportunity for India

- China has been the factory to the world, but global investors have been seeking a gradual decoupling from China. This is due to the increasing cost of production and the trust deficit in China after Covid-19 pandemic.
- This provides India with an opportunity to become the world's manufacturing hub and stable economic power. This will help India in assuming leadership roles and maintaining a stable global economic system.

Conclusion

Despite hardships, India can, and must, take the lead in bringing the world together to practice a new multilateralism that places the common interests of humanity above narrow national interests. In this context, India has taken initiatives to develop a **joint response in bringing SAARC together to fight the pandemic.** This neighbourhood collaboration should be a model for the world.

Global Geopolitical Challenges-2020



Drishiti Mains Question

India is uniquely placed in global politics to take up the leadership role in the framing of a new multilateral world order. Analyse.



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This editorial is based on **“Back home: On return of Indian expatriates”** which was published in The Hindu on 07/07/2020. Now watch this on our Youtube Channel.