

New Geo-Political Realities in South Asia

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Mr.Trump’s open criticism of Pakistan is indicative of clear signs of U.S. recalibrating its ties with its long term ally.

\n

- While India sees these developments positively, there is a need for a calibrated caution as implications there are far reaching implications.

\n

\n\n

What is the context?

\n\n

\n

- Islamabad has this far been a non-NATO U.S. ally and is also a traditional friend of China in the region.

\n

- But the U.S. is clearly loosing out on the gains it intended to make in Afganistan and is also ceding space to an aggressive China in the region.

\n

- In this backdrop, U.S. is pushing for a seemingly radical shift in its Pakistan policy, which is bound to have significant fallouts for the entire South Asia.

\n

- While some vouch that this assertion would give U.S. more leverage in the region, others argue call it an empty threat that will be eventually soft pedaled.

\n

\n\n

How has Pakistan reacted?

\n\n

\n

- The US has called for tightening the noose around the Haqqani Network and Taliban, but such action has serious internal political challenges in

Pakistan.

\n

- Notably, general elections are scheduled for next year in Pakistan, and caving into U.S. demands would have grave implications for the civilian government.

\n

- Hence, the Pakistani government is now voicing angst against US and has even threatened to suspend military and intelligence cooperation with Washington.

\n

- Significantly, American aid and reimbursements for Pakistan have been declining over the past several years, which has already diluted U.S.'s clout.

\n

- While Pakistan has been already been moving steadily towards China from the American camp, the current events are expected to speeden this.

\n

\n\n

What are the larger implications?

\n\n

\n

- Some perceive these as early indications of for a new brewing cold war which will see the emergence of an anti-U.S "China-Pakistan-Russia axis".

\n

- While India will certainly be tempted towards the U.S. fold, the role of Iran, which is hostile to the US but has cordial ties with India will be interesting.

\n

- Also, India's presently increasing pro-US tilt is speculated as the beginning of the end for the special Indo-Russian ties of more than 5 decades.

\n

- The U.S. pole is likely to have India and most NATO allies on board.

\n

- But the rise of China and current pace of US withdrawal might push many countries to hedge their bets safely.

\n

- While the only U.S. ally that has immense influence in Pakistan is Saudi Arabia, it remains to be seen on how effective it will be put to use.

\n

\n\n

What are the implications for India?

\n\n

\n

- Trump's anti-pak rhetoric inherently runs the risk of even derailing India's present indirect influence in Pakistan through U.S. in terror related aspects.
- Also, the strengthening of China-Pakistan ties, without the balancing effect of the U.S. in the region, could push India further to the wall.
- Hence, the best bet for India would be to deal with Washington without closing its doors to Moscow or Beijing, which requires great diplomatic acumen.
- Such a crucial choice would also need to factor in economic relations, defence partnerships, and most of all geographic realities.
- Importantly, it needs to be realised that a sharper geopolitical competition in the region could adversely impact the overall stability in the region.
- Consequently, infrastructure development, market access, regional organisations, and regional conflict resolution mechanisms would suffer.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

