



## Mains Practice Question

Q. India must reassess its strategic convergence with the US, as the foreign policy of the USA in the middle east is impacting India's interest. Comment. (250 words)

03 Sep, 2019 GS Paper 2 International Relations

### Approach

- Mention the importance of Middle-East for India in the introduction.
- Write about recent US foreign policy actions in the middle-east and how it impacts Indian interests in the region.
- Mention the steps that India should take in view of its national interest.

### Introduction

- The Middle-Eastern region represents a key focus area of India's foreign policy. It is not only critical for India's energy security but would also act as a gateway to Central Asian and European countries in the future through Chabahar port of Iran. Thus, stability in the region is of utmost importance for India.
- But because of the American interference, the relationship and interests of India in the region, especially with Iran and Afghanistan, are getting compromised.

### Body

USA's Middle-East policy impacts on India:

- Following the USA's **sanctions on Iran**, India had to cut its oil imports from Iran to zero. This poses a huge risk for India's energy security and has the potential to negatively impact the Indian economy.
- Indian investments in Chabahar port of Iran is also at risk from USA's interventions.
- USA's decision of **withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan** can negatively impact the peacebuilding measures in the country. Being geostrategically important for India, and unstable Afghanistan can affect India's security as well as its economy.
  - **Involvement of Pakistan by the US in the ongoing peace deal with Taliban** has security implications for India too, as Pakistan may use Jihadi groups like Al-Qaeda for creating unrest in Kashmir.
  - Also, the USA's withdrawal will open **opportunity for China's inroads in Central Asia and Eurasia** through its Belt and Road Initiative. This continental encirclement of India poses threat to it.

Steps to be taken to reassess strategic convergence with the USA:

- India must **explore diplomatic cards** to gain concessions from the USA.
  - New Delhi needs to highlight its reliance on Iranian crude oil and the strategic importance of Chabahar for the success of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
  - India should **use international forums** to highlight its security concerns due to instability in the middle-east. The recent meeting of PM Modi and US President Donald Trump on the

sidelines of G7 summit in France 2019, shows how strong leadership can help to project the utmost importance of the country's national interest.

- India should not ignore **Pakistan's deep strategic depth** in Afghanistan. India must open up new channels of engagement along with its soft-power diplomacy in Afghanistan.
- India should **mobilize world public opinion** on the consequences of the Taliban coming to power and the future of democracy.
- Given the current state of its relations with Pakistan, India should engage bilaterally with the Middle Eastern countries and try to persuade them utilizing its strong economic credentials.

## Conclusion

- As an emerging power, India cannot remain confined to South Asia, a peaceful extended neighbourhood (Iran-Afghanistan) is not only good for Indian trade and energy security but also plays a vital role in India's aspirations of becoming a superpower.

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