India-US Geopolitical Relations

Why in news?

The relationship between the India and US has been put under severe stress by Russia's Ukraine war.

How about the evolution of bilateral ties over two decades?

- **Bill Clinton Period-** Much of the western world came down heavily on India for the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998.
- Then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote to President Bill Clinton, putting China in the frame.
- The rapprochement and subsequent strengthening of bilateral ties paved way for the historic visit of President Clinton in 2000.
- **Bush Presidency**- The Indo-US nuclear deal of the George W Bush years elevated Indo-US ties to a higher strategic trajectory.
- **Barack Obama's Tenure**- Barack Obama became the only President to make two visits to India.
- He hosted both Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi in the White House.
- **Donald Trump Period**- During Trump's tenure, ties continued to improve and the Quad framework was revived.
- The defence partnership was strengthened with the signing of the foundational agreements.
- **Joe Biden Presidency**- The rhythm has been maintained, especially on the Indo-Pacific strategy, even though the chaotic US exit from Afghanistan left New Delhi vulnerable.

What is the current geopolitical situation?

- **Russia's invasion of Ukraine** - India's refusal to criticise Moscow's war has made the US deeply uncomfortable.
- When Prime Minister Narendra Modi told President Vladimir Putin in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2022 that "today's era is not of war", the US was pleased with the articulation.
- **Buying oil**- The US was unhappy with India for buying more oil from Russia than earlier.
- But, India argues that it must protect its citizens from the inflationary impact of the war.

- **F-16 Programme**- India blasted the United States for its move to provide Pakistan with the F-16 case for sustainment and related equipment.
- However, the US framed it as a continuation of the old programme that is necessary for Pakistan to fight terrorism.
- Some analysts view the renewal of the US-Pakistan military engagement as a message to New Delhi for its strategy of "issue-based alignment".

What lies ahead?

- With the recent "no-limits" ties between Russia and China, issues in the US-India relationship present potential weak spots.
- Since both India and the US see China as the biggest threat and rival, it is time to accommodate and invest in the bilateral relationship.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/india-us-ties-depth-nuance-russias-ukraine-war-tension-trust-8183481/

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