GIST OF IDSA

OCTOBER 2020

I N D E X

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1. ARMENIA AZERBAIJAN CONFLICT

Why in news?

Recently an armed conflict has been broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

What is the genesis of the ongoing conflict?

- The dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan is one of the several "frozen conflicts" in the post-Soviet Union space.

- The province of Nagorno-Karabakh comprises a majority Armenian Christian population, but belonged to Azerbaijan during the Soviet times.

- This was a carefully crafted policy by Soviet leader Josef Stalin to enmesh populations in order to stymie ethnic aspirations.

- Nagorno-Karabakh was severed from Armenia and allotted to Azerbaijan in the 1920s.

- A significant Armenian population was subsequently pushed into the region by Stalin, thereby turning it into a majority Armenian Christian region in an otherwise Muslim-majority Azerbaijan.

- With the dissolution of the former Soviet Union in 1991, the binding glue that kept peace and harmony in the region came off.

- This provided conditions for the two newly independent countries to fight an irredentist war between 1991 and 1994 over this landlocked mountainous region, resulting in thousands of casualties.

- The war also led to about 20 per cent of the Nagorno-Karabakh province of Azerbaijan coming under Armenian control.

- A "no war no peace" situation has prevailed between the two countries since then, albeit interspersed with periodic ceasefire violations.

What is the status of regional geopolitics situation?

- It appears that most of the regional countries support either of the two warring sides.

- **Turkey**, a majority Sunni state, proclaims cultural and linguistic affinity with Shia-majority Azerbaijan.

- In fact, Turkey is Azerbaijan's key military and economic partner.

- This has seen Ankara refuse to accord diplomatic recognition to Armenia.

- It has imposed economic sanctions on Yerevan and shut their common border.

- **Israel** supports Azerbaijan and supplies it with military hardware even though it maintains diplomatic relations with Armenia.

- On the other hand, Shia-majority Iran supports Armenia by proxy, through Russia.

- Interestingly, Iran also supports Azerbaijan due to its historical, cultural and religious linkages.

- It also does not want Azerbaijan to be drawn completely to the Turkish influence.

- This is especially so as Azeris constitute the largest ethnic minority group in Iran.

- **Russia** considers the South Caucasus region as its "sphere of influence" as it remains the dominant power in many countries that were part of the former Soviet Union.

- Azerbaijan is rich in oil and gas and is the region's largest economy.

- It is also a key ally of the West. It has adopted a multi-vectored foreign policy that seeks to build good ties with both Moscow and Washington.

- Armenia, on the other hand, shares close ties with Russia which is also its principal security partner.

- **The United States' (US)** muted role in the conflict, though baffling, can be attributed to the distraction caused by the impending elections, the global corona virus pandemic.

What is India's Position in the issue?

- India's bilateral trade with the region also remains low: annual trade with Azerbaijan is a shade more than US $1 billion, while that with Armenia is less than $65 million.

- India signed a friendship and cooperation treaty with Armenia in 1995 and has received three head of states from the country, but none from Azerbaijan.

- India recently won a US$ 40 million contract to supply four Swati Weapon Locating Radars to Armenia.

- Meanwhile, Indian companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Company (ONGC), ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), and Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) have made investments in oil and gas projects in Azerbaijan.

- Armenia has supported India over Kashmir whereas Azerbaijan has supported the Turkey-Pakistan tandem.

- Turkey's attempts to build a block comprising Pakistan, Malaysia and Iran as a counter to India's influence has not gone well with New Delhi.

- Iran's renewed stance on the Chahbahar project has also caused discomfiture in the country.

- India has, therefore, taken a balanced and neutral stand expressing concern while calling for restraint, and an immediate cessation of hostilities and resolution of conflict through diplomatic negotiations.

2. INDIA AND NTP

What are the issues?

India finds Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)is 'discriminatory' in nature.

What is NPT about?

- NPT is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of disarmament.

- It represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.

- Nuclear-weapon states parties under the NPT are defined as those that manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device before January 1, 1967.

- India did not sign it as the treaty was discriminatory.

- India argued that treaties like NPT were selectively applicable to only non-nuclear powers and legitimized the monopoly of nuclear power by a few.

- Consequently India conducted nuclear explosion test in May 1974, all along maintaining that it was committed to peaceful use of atomic energy.

- In 1998, India again conducted a nuclear explosion tests, and acquired the capacity to use nuclear energy for military purposes.

How India framed its NPT decision?

- NPT as the reason for India's perennial opposition and that the treaty, as drafted by the then superpowers, cannot facilitate disarmament and, instead, could only sustain a world of nuclear 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

- China since 1964, had seemingly shaped India's decision to reject the treaty at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1968.

- During initial disarmament negotiations in the early years of the 1960s, Indian quest was largely for a comprehensive disarmament instrument that could also address issues like nuclear test-ban, ending production of fissile materials as well as delivery systems, reducing stockpiles and facilitating their total elimination.

- This was India's key position at the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC), which was convened in March 1962 to negotiate such an instrument.

- However, the Indian approach began to change on the eve of the impending Chinese nuclear test with India's representative.

- Two key features of India's NPT decision are evident from these documents:

- The decision to reject the NPT was made before the joint US-Soviet draft

was tabled in ENDC (March 1968) and UNGA (April 1968), and.

- Beyond the call of a third world crusader, the NPT decision was seemingly based on national interest, including keeping the nuclearisation option open, even while depicting a larger 'idealist' cause at work.

What is India's alternative move to NPT?

- To alleviate the fears of a world community, India formulated a comprehensive nuclear doctrine.
- The major tenets of this doctrine are:
    1. Maintenance of a credible minimum nuclear deterrence.
    2. Professes no first use policy.
    3. Commitment to global veritable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament leading to a nuclear weapons free world.
- India has abided by both NPT and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) even though it is a non-signatory.
- This along with its commitments on nuclear non-proliferation under NSG waiver in 2008 provides India with a strong basis for membership in NSG.

3. ISSUES IN FUNCTIONING OF FATF

What is the issue?

The listing regime ofFinancial Action Task Force (FATF) has been largely ineffective.

What is the working structure of FATF?

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris.
- The FATF Plenary is the decision making body of the FATF, It meets three times per year.
- The objectives of the FATF are
    1. Set standards and promote effective implementation of legal,
    2. Regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering,
    3. Terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- Member Countries: it consists of thirty-seven member jurisdictions, India is one of the members.
- FATF has two lists:
    1. Grey List: Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.
    2. Black List: Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

What are the existing issues in FATF mechanism?

- When faced with jurisdictions like Pakistan that offer cooperation in form but not in substance, FATF's listing regime has been largely ineffective.
- The present categorization of lists—white, grey and black—may be too rigid to effectively address such risks.
- The grey list has very low economic or political costs as compared to the black list, which has led to a high threshold and barrier in taking effective action.
- As Pakistan continues to fail to meet the successive deadlines set by the FATF, the threats from the organization are becoming shriller and, in response, so are protestations from Islamabad.
- Some literature indicates the not-so-serious monetary effect of black listing and also calls for even tougher a FATF regime for non-cooperative jurisdictions.
- By and large, however, there is a larger consensus that black listing leads to severe consequences for the target economy.
- Currently, only Iran and North Korea are placed on the FATF black list, which may indicate its seriousness.
- It appears that as far as severity of consequences is concerned, the black list is a quantum jump over the grey list.
- This structural weakness in the FATF is also reflected in the somewhat brittle or simplistic categorization structure of different jurisdictions into so-called white, grey and black.

What measures are needed?

- A possible option worth exploring may be to generate policy options for graduated but firm response while moving between the grey and black lists, that is, there may be a scope for darker shades of grey.
- Though the FATF has adopted a Risk Based Approach, the grey list shows countries as diverse as Mauritius, Pakistan, Syria, Jamaica, Iceland and Barbados being clubbed together.
- The countries which may be willing to act but lack capacity should be given technical support.
- But countries like Pakistan, which largely lack the will to implement, may be put in the darker shade of grey and sanctioned more severely. This should help in better targeting.
- After categorizing the severity of the source of risk followed by whether the country has the necessary capacity/will, or not, a graduated response may be designed in consultation with different constituents like credit rating agencies, banks, IMF and WB, etc.
- This approach may provide more flexibility in tackling jurisdictions which may be undermining the FATF by repeatedly giving assurances but

not acting on them in any substantial way.

4. BASIC EXCHANGE AND CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

Why in news?

India and USA has signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA).

What is BECA?

- The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement largely pertains to geospatial intelligence, and sharing information on maps and satellite images for defence.
- BECA will provide Indian military systems with a high-quality GPS to navigate and missiles with real-time intelligence to precisely target the adversary.
- It will give access to topographical and aeronautical data and products that will aid navigation and targeting.
- BECA is the last of four foundational defense agreements between India and USA.
- The other three agreements are GSOMIA, LEMOA, and COMCASA.
  1. The General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) was signed in 2002, aims to protect the military information shared by the US.
  2. The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed in 2016, it

aims to provide mutual logistics support around the world.
  3. The Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) signed in 2018, aims to facilitate communication between the weapons platforms of the two armed forces.

What is the significance of signing of BECA?

- BECA allow a much higher level of military cooperation in technology, interoperability, and defense manufacturing.
- The signing of the BECA marks the end of the prolonged phase of mutual trust-building and sets the stage for more expansive security cooperation.
- **Converging Indo-Pacific Strategies** - Signing of BECA will fast-forward the integration of the Indo-Pacific strategies of their two countries.
- Further, this is in sync with increasing formalization of QUAD, which can be seen in the recent joining of Australia in the Malabar naval exercises.
- India will be able to keep a close watch on the movements of Chinese warships in the Indian Ocean.
- **Deep Military Implications -**While LEMOA means one partner trusts the other enough to expose its valuable assets, COMCASA means one is confident that it can rely on encrypted systems to connect the two militaries, and BECA means it can share highly

classified information in real time without fear of being compromised.

- All this signals the level of trust that has developed between the two countries and their militaries, faced with an increasingly aggressive China.

- BECA allows more intensive engagement between the armed forces —from interoperability to intelligence-sharing and joint defense research to production of weapons.

- **Multi-Polar World Order** - Substantive and institutionalized cooperation between the two defense establishments will serve the long-term interests of a rising India and an America that is restructuring its global security burden.

What are the issues involved?

- Signing of these four foundational agreements would mean India getting strategically more close to US.

- From the perspective of the US, in order to counter China, it would want India to be getting close to an alliance system.

- However, one aspect which remains unchanged is the Indian strategic establishment's aversion to the term alliance.

- From the heyday of non-alignment to the present day possibilities of multi-alignment, this idea that alliances are inherently bad has been a constant in India's mainstream strategic thinking.

- India is one of the world's biggest defense equipment buyers, but

around 60-70% of its inventory is supplied by Russia.

- Further, the US wants India to move away from Russian equipment and platforms, as it feels this may expose its technology and information to Russia.

- Many foreign policy experts in India are of the view that, by synchronizing its systems with those of the US, it will enable the US to enter its decision-making loop.

- It is something that no sovereign country would like.

What lies ahead?

- If both the US and India want India to become a genuine strategic balancer to China, they need to leapfrog economic and technological cooperation.

- Thus, the US and India are now in talks of an "innovation partnership" that must develop along with all the military-to-military bonhomie taking place.

- India must clarify to the US that, it can sign the civil nuclear pact, it can sign foundational defense agreements, it can converge on the Indo-Pacific but it won't lead to an alliance relationship.

- Further, India should realize agreements are a scrap of paper, unless they are backed by a mutuality of interest at the given time.

- Therefore, must continue its efforts of strategic hedging with our global powers.

5. ISSUES IN INDIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD DIPLOMACY

What is the issue?

India in the recent years has been losing clout in its neighborhood.

What are the challenges in Indian Regional diplomacy?

- **Chinese Influence:** China annexed Tibet 1950-51, this marked the arrival of China at the Indo-Tibetan frontier.
- This profoundly transformed the geopolitical condition of India.
- Beyond the bilateral territorial dispute between India and China, the emergence of a powerful state on India's frontiers affected India's relationship with its neighboring countries.
- **Economic Protectionism** - Independent India's conscious choice was in favour of protectionism, which led to a steady deterioration of commercial connectivity with the neighbors.
- India's domestic politics always had an impact on our regional policy.
- The same is true of our neighbors, whose domestic politics impact their engagement with India.

What measures are needed?

- The size of India is an important factor in the way our neighbors view India and its policies.
- India accounts for a major chunk of the land area, population, economic activity, resources, of South Asia.
- Therefore, India needs to be conscious of its neighbor's discomfort of having to deal with a big neighbor and must follow the policy of non-interference in domestic affairs.
- Similarly, neighboring countries must ensure their relations with other countries must not undermine strategic interest of India.
- India must strive for resolution of border by establishing a border commission.
- Integrating India's regional economic and foreign policy remains a major challenge.
- Therefore, India should resist compromising bilateral relationships with neighbors for short economic interests.
- Further, the countries in India's neighborhood should strive for economic integration that has helped countries to overcome their political differences by creating economic interdependencies.
- Improving Regional Connectivity: India's economic reorientation since 1991 and the rediscovery of regionalism did open possibilities for reconnecting with its neighbors.

- Thus, connectivity must be pursued with greater vigor while security concerns are addressed through cost-effective, efficient and reliable technological measures which are in use in other parts of the world.

- Neighborhood first policy must be anchored in the sustained engagement at all levels of the political and people to people levels, building upon the deep cultural affinities which are unique to India's relations with its neighbors.

6. NEW INTERNET PROTOCOL

Why in news?

Chinese administration has proposed the radical idea of a New Internet Protocol (IP), replacing the prevalent TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol and Internet Protocol).

What is TCP/IP and IP protocol about?

- The Internet Protocol (IP) is the principal communications protocol in the Internet protocol suite for relaying datagrams across network boundaries.

- Its routing function enables internetworking, and essentially establishes the Internet.

- IP has the task of delivering packets from the source host to the destination host solely based on the IP addresses in the packet headers.

- For this purpose, IP defines packet structures that encapsulate the data to be delivered.

- It also defines addressing methods that are used to label the datagram with source and destination information.

- The Internet protocol suite is toften referred to as TCP/IP.

- The TCP/IP model is based on a five-layer model for networking.

- From bottom (the link) to top (the user application), these are the physical, data link, net- work, transport, and application layers.

- Not all layers are completely defined by the model, so these layers are "filled in" by external standards and protocols.

What is China's plan on IP?

- China's desire to be at the fore-front of the race in networking/communications technology, be it 5G or the Internet in this case, arises from its deep-rooted and enduring resentment with the present state of affairs.

- Having been left out from the development process of the present generation of networks, China often protests about the unfair allocation of IP resources and the inability to enforce a centralized control on the Internet.

- It basically had no say in the overall design and development of these

technologies and their corresponding Standards.

- To overcome this handicap, China initiated state-backed research on next-generation networks, which includes telecommunication networks and the Internet, towards the end of the 1990s.

- The flagship China Next-Generation Internet (CNGI) project spearheaded by the National Development and Reform Commission oversees the country's complete transition to an IPv6-based network and research on network security issues.

- The nation's 13th Five-Year Plan committed to push forward research in 5G mobile networks and the next-generation Internet.

- Looking beyond the 5G horizon, China has set its eye on the revamp of the Internet.

- Recently Chinese company Huawei proposed a new suit of network protocol for 5G and beyond highlighting the limitations of the existing Internet infrastructure to meet the specific requirements of bandwidth, latency and service assurance.

- Its application are
  1. Holographic tele-presence,
  2. Industrial Internet,
  3. Autonomous vehicles.

What are the concerns in IP?

- The very idea of a New IP has faced sharp criticism especially from the

Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the premier Internet standards organization.

- It has been termed "harmful", "threatening", and against the ethos of the Internet, questioning the very need of a New IP and the unstated intentions behind the idea.

- A discussion paper from the Internet Society outright dismisses the case of New IP, contending that interconnecting heterogeneous networks is the core design goal of the evolution of Internet and the TCP/IP for that matter was built specifically to meet that purpose.

- The evolution and the subsequent success of the Internet as a technology are credited to the endless efforts made by voluntary groups in open platforms based on rough consensus.

- This working-model for the development of technology and governance of resources had never been experimented with earlier, and it continued to evolve and mature with time into what is now known as multi-stakeholder approach.

- China's ambitions to reach the "commanding heights" in scientific and technological competition and to build "China into a cyber-power" have been expressed time and again.

- The New IP essentially clears the way for China to finally "have a say" in the

technical and governance matters pertaining to the Internet.

- China finds this an opportune time to mold the future networks aligned with its vision, values and ideology.
- It also gives the opportunity to incorporate security features which reinforce state control and censorship on the networks of the future.

What lies ahead?

- China and the entities building futuristic scenarios might well be within their rights to pitch forward-looking ideas and advance research in their direction.
- It would also be inappropriate to stifle futuristic research and deem an idea to be a threat based solely on the country of origin of the entity proposing it.
- However, the organizations, structures and approaches which have nurtured the Internet till date should not be tampered with.
- The ideas departing from the fundamental values of openness, transparency and user-centricity or detrimental to the ethos of the Internet should be resisted.
- The development of the Internet is a collaborative approach, and therefore, overlapping and duplication of efforts is completely unwarranted.
- It is hard to ascertain whether the idea of a New IP is backed by technology vision or political ambitions.

- China's endorsement of a multilateral approach to Internet governance is well-known.
- Pursuing the idea of New IP at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-T) Telecommunication Sector.
- ITU-T is completely in line with China's preference for a multilateral approach, and runs right opposite to the prevalent approach to the development of Standards.
- Being a multilateral body, the ITU is susceptible to political influences, unlike the IETF where decisions are made purely on technical grounds.

7. RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN GEO-POLITICS

Why in news?

2nd October every year is celebrated as International day for non-violence in memory for Mahatma Gandhi.

What are major Gandhian ideologies?

- **Truth and Non-violence:** They are the twin cardinal principles of Gandhian thoughts, here truth is the relative truth of truthfulness in word and deed, and the absolute truth, i.e. the ultimate reality.
- This ultimate truth is God and morality, the moral laws and code are its basis.
- Nonviolence, far from meaning mere peacefulness or the absence of overt violence, is understood by

Mahatma Gandhi to denote active love - the pole opposite of violence, in every sense.

- **Satyagraha:** It is an overall method of nonviolent action Satyagraha.

- It means the exercise of the purest soul-force against all injustice, oppression and exploitation.

- It is a method of securing rights by personal suffering and not inflicting injury on others.

- **Sarvodaya:** this term meaning 'Universal Uplift' or 'Progress of All'.

- The term was first coined by Gandhi ji as the title of his translation of John Ruskin's tract on political economy, "Unto This Last".

- **Swaraj:** Although the word swaraj means self-rule, its crux is an integral revolution that encompasses all spheres of life.

- Swaraj of people meant the sum total of the swaraj (self-rule) of individuals and so he clarified that for him swaraj meant freedom for the meanest of his countrymen.

- And in its fullest sense, swaraj is much more than freedom from all restraints, it is self-rule, self-restraint and could be equated with moksha or salvation.

- **Trusteeship:** Trusteeship is a socio-economic philosophy that provides a means by which the wealthy people would be the trustees of trusts that looked after the welfare of the people in general.

- **Swadeshi:** it is adjectival form, means of one's own country, but can be loosely translated in most contexts as self-sufficiency.

- Swadeshi is the focus on acting within and from one's own community, both politically and economically.

- It is the interdependence of community and self-sufficiency.

What is the relevance of Gandhian ideologies in geopolitics?

- **Peace and Stability in the World** - Non-Violence is a key component of Gandhianism, which was the great weapon used by Gandhiji during the freedom movement of India against British Raj.

- Non-violence and tolerance require a great level of courage and patience.

- In a world that is moving through the phases of war marred by violence and terrorism, there is a significant requirement of Gandhian idea of Non- violence more and more today than the past days.

- **Secularism** - Gandhianism was tolerant towards all religions and the world today needs more and more religiously and faith wise tolerant people in societies where

violence is committed in the name of religion.

- Tolerance in the society will help in neutralizing the ethnocentric bias in the globe that is taking place day by day on the basis of religion, caste, ethnicity and region etc.
- **Gandhian Socialism -**Gandhian view of socialism is not political but more social in its approach, it is thought of a society with no poverty, no hunger, no unemployment and education and health for all.
- These Gandhian ideologies will continue to act as the lighthouse for global policy makers.
- **Decentralization -**Gandhian idea of decentralization of power can be implemented in democracies through empowered local self-governments at grass root level.
- Indian government, for instance, has implemented local self-government by adopting the Panchayat Raj and Municipality system in rural and urban areas respectively.
- Sustainable Environment - Gandhi held that "Earth has enough for Human needs, But not for Human greed's".
- These lines of Mahatma Gandhi reflect upon how human behavior destroys nature and how a sustainable way of living is the need of the hour.

- The world is whirling under the burden of global warming, climate change and resource crunch and all environmental conservation treaties and sustainable development efforts must implement this Gandhian philosophy.
- **Ethical Importance -** On the ethical and behavioral part Gandhianism has much significance today because society is witnessing the degradation of values.
- Societal values have degraded to such an extent that people don't hesitate to kill someone for the gratification of their own needs.
- Respect for women is one of the major ideas of Gandhian philosophy and the world is witnessing the increased level of violence, subjugation women face nowadays in society.
- Thus, Gandhian dream of a safe country necessitates social consciousness and women emancipation.