

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

On the Global Nuclear Order

The Global Nuclear Order (GNO) emerged during the Cold War era, aimed at averting nuclear conflict and curbing the spread of nuclear weapons. This order faced certain challenges and showcased both successes and failures over time.

Elements of the Global Nuclear Order:

1. **Communication Links:** Established in 1963, direct communication channels like hotlines were set up to prevent misunderstandings and ease tensions during crises.
2. **Arms Control Agreements:** Negotiations led to significant treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
3. **Technology Transfer Controls:** In 1975, the Nuclear Suppliers Group was formed to regulate the transfer of nuclear technology, ensuring its peaceful use and preventing misuse for explosive purposes.

Positive Outcomes of the Global Nuclear Order:

- **Taboo against Nuclear Weapon Usage:** Despite global conflicts, nuclear weapons have not been used since World War II, signifying a successful deterrent effect.
- **Non-Proliferation Success:** Only a handful of countries have pursued nuclear weapons, while efforts were made to denuclearize former Soviet states.
- **Crisis Management:** Direct communication links aided in managing crises and reducing the risks of miscalculation.

Failures of the Global Nuclear Order:

- **Escalation of Arsenals:** Despite efforts to control arms, the US-Soviet arms race saw an increase in nuclear arsenals over the years.

Challenges and Negative Impacts on the Global Nuclear Order:

1. **China's Growth in Capabilities:** China's assertiveness and enhancement of naval and missile capabilities pose challenges, particularly in East Asia, raising concerns about US deterrence guarantees.
2. **Treaty Withdrawals:** The withdrawal of key treaties like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty by the US, along with Russia's de-ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, threaten the existing arms control mechanisms.
3. **Proliferation Concerns:** Instances of nuclear proliferation by nations like Israel and Pakistan, along with recent agreements like AUKUS involving non-nuclear weapon states, are raising concerns globally.
4. **Shift in Japan's Stance:** There's a noticeable shift in Japan's stance on nuclear deterrence, reflecting a changing geopolitical landscape and increased defense spending.

The evolving geopolitical scenario and policy decisions by major powers have challenged the traditional norms and stability established by the Global Nuclear Order.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – India and its neighborhood-relations.

On India-Maldives Hydrography Pact – An ‘India out’ plan that could impact the Maldives

Recent developments between India and the Maldives have sparked concerns over the revocation of an agreement for joint hydrographic surveys in Maldivian waters, a pact previously seen as a symbol of their defense ties.

Current India-Maldives Relations: Since President Mohamed Muizzu's election in the Maldives, the country appears to be distancing itself from India:

1. **Request to Withdraw Indian Military Presence:** Maldives officially requested India to remove its military presence from its shores.
2. **Skipped Colombo Security Conclave:** By abstaining from the meeting, Maldives signaled hesitancy in engaging with India on defense matters.
3. **Growing Relations with China:** Maldives' decision to exclude Indian hydrographic ships from its waters might align with China's interest in conducting marine surveys in the region.

Importance of the Hydrography Pact: Hydrographic data has dual applications:

1. **Civilian Purposes:** It aids in ensuring safe navigation, marine research, and environmental monitoring.
2. **Military Objectives:** Hydrography supports surveillance of coastal installations and military assets.

China's Interest in the Hydrography Pact: For China, marine surveys are crucial components of its maritime strategy:

1. **Strategic Importance:** It aligns with China's broader oceanographic research program and contributes to its maritime ambitions in the Indian Ocean.
2. **Military Applications:** Survey data helps in enhancing China's anti-submarine warfare capabilities, improving sonar performance and submarine detection.

Maldives' Concerns and Way Forward: Maldives expresses concerns that India's hydrographic activities might involve intelligence gathering, though UNCLOS doesn't explicitly authorize regulation of such surveys beyond territorial waters.

The author suggests that partnering with India, known for its credible hydrographic surveying, could enhance Maldives' maritime awareness and security. It's emphasized that India, unlike China, focuses on constructive collaboration rather than weaponizing ocean surveys.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS paper2- International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

No, the US-led global order is not collapsing

The US-led global order is a system where the United States, leveraging its economic and military prowess, plays a dominant role in shaping international policies, norms, and institutions. It emphasizes democratic principles, free markets, and security alliances, influencing global governance and diplomacy since the end of World War II.

Arguments Indicating a Decline in the US-Led Global Order:

1. **Military Stalemates and Conflicts:** Ongoing military standoffs in regions like Ukraine and escalating conflicts in the Middle East showcase challenges to Western military and diplomatic influence.
2. **Rise of Eastern Powers:** China's assertiveness in Asia signals a shift in global power dynamics, suggesting the waning dominance of the West.
3. **Internal Political Turmoil:** Deep political divisions within the United States weaken its global standing, impacting the cohesion of the Western-led order.
4. **Economic Factors:** The declining share of the G7's GDP in the global economy, coupled with Europe's diminishing economic weight, points toward a relative economic decline of the West compared to emerging powers.

Arguments Suggesting the Resilience of the US-Led Global Order:

1. **Historical Adaptability:** The West has demonstrated resilience, overcoming various crises and adapting its institutions to changing circumstances.
2. **Economic Strength:** The U.S. retains a significant share of global GDP, leading in innovation and cultural influence, maintaining its economic and cultural impact worldwide.
3. **Desire for Westernization:** Political forces within rival powers like Russia and China advocate for integration and accommodation with the Western-led order, highlighting its continued appeal.
4. **Current China Challenges:** Despite assumptions about China's imminent dominance, factors like economic slowdown and demographic shifts suggest it might not surpass the U.S. economy soon, maintaining Western economic leadership.

India's Position:

1. **Balanced Outlook:** India recognizes the evolving global dynamics due to Eastern assertiveness but does not seek the decline of the West. It remains cautious about China's ascendancy.
2. **Engagement with the West:** India's two-decade-long association with Western powers has equipped it with negotiation skills and confidence, fostering a strategic partnership despite occasional disagreements.

India aims to strike a balance between acknowledging the shifting global landscape and maintaining cordial relationships with both Western powers and emerging Eastern influences.