



The Changes in Geopolitical Developments Present India With Opportunities That Outweigh Risks”. Discuss. (250 words / 15 M) (GS-2 International Relation)

Approach:

1. general intro.
2. Mention the geopolitical developments.
3. Chart out India’s risks & opportunities.
4. Conclusion.

Geopolitics is in efflux. Four geopolitical developments mark **significant shift in regional and global geopolitics**.

The 4 geopolitical developments:

- (a) **withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan and its complete Taliban control;**
- (b) **significant domestic political changes in China, including ideological & regulatory assault against its dynamic private high-tech companies and real estate companies. This has heightened risk perception among global businesses, who had seen China as huge commercial opportunity;**
- (c) **the AUKUS alliance, representing a major departure in US strategy and reflecting a clear strategic choice by Australia to be on the US side despite considerable economic & commercial equities in China;** and
- (d) **convening of the QUAD physical summit in Washington is a major step towards formalising as an influential grouping in the Indo-Pacific, beyond security.**

These 4 developments present India with **risks as well as opportunities**.

India’s risk & opportunities:

- Afghanistan situation is a **set-back for India in the short run**. The **political capital & economic presence** that it had built over the past two decades lies **eroded**. The Taliban government will help deliver Pakistani agenda, **preventing a revival of Indian diplomatic presence & developmental activity** in Afghanistan. In the **longer run**, it seems **unlikely** that Taliban will **abjure its obscurantist & extremist agenda**. This may lead to domestic **inter-ethnic & sectarian conflict**, denying both Pakistan & China the anticipated pay-off from US withdrawal.
- This presents an opportunity to India to **bide its time, strengthen defence against cross-border terrorism, keep faith with ordinary Afghan people, provide refuge and join international effort to deliver humanitarian assistance**. This will place India as an **important stakeholder** in Afghanistan.



- Domestic political change in China has **reigned in the vibrant private sector**, while the **State Owned enterprises are taking the central role**. This has led to **deepening concern among foreign investors**. E.g., **Blackstone & Qualcomm**, both are heavily invested in China, but are reconsidering exposure there. ***If India can play its cards well, significant capital & technology flows can be diverted towards India from US, Japan and Europe.***
- India's **benign political partnership with US, Japan and Europe** is constrained by **policy unpredictability, regulatory rigidities, and bureaucratic red-tapism**. Some of these issues are being addressed like, ***dropping off the retrospective taxation***. In this context, India should consider ***joining the RCEP. Applying to join the more ambitious Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) signals India's determination to be back at the centre of the Asian economy.*** India should also ***revive its application to join APEC.***
- The **AUKUS** and the progress of **QUAD** serve to **raise the deterrence level against China**. This presents an opportunity, as, being preoccupied with threats from eastern flank, ***China could reduce tensions on its western flank, chiefly with India.*** From the Chinese perspective, now, **QUAD** is a **second order threat**. ***This suits India, which is not ready to embrace a full-fledged military alliance, thus creating manoeuvring room for itself.***

Some **bold initiatives** are needed to take advantage of the short-lived narrow window that has opened up. This will ***shrink the power asymmetry with China & expand India's diplomatic options.*** Faced with **enhanced uncertainty and danger in the Indo-Pacific**, ***India should not be caught off guard. Failure of deterrence in the Indo-Pacific will have consequences beyond the region, changing geopolitical context for India.*** Now, ***time is unexpectedly propitious for India to advance its economic prospects.***