

International Relations This Week: Episode 85

International relations is a very important segment of the [UPSC syllabus](#). In this series, we present an analysis of the most important international issues and developments that occurred over the past week relevant for the IAS exam. In this article, you can learn more about the latest developments in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, the Killing of Ayman al- Zawahiri, and the U.S. - China relations.

1. U.S. - China relations
2. Killing of Ayman al- Zawahiri
3. Developments in Pakistan
4. Developments in Sri Lanka

1. U.S. - China relations

Context:

- U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently visited Taiwan. China termed this a violation of the 'One China Principle'.
- The One China principle is the position held by the People's Republic of China (PRC) that there is only one sovereign state under the name China, with the PRC serving as the sole legitimate government of that China, and Taiwan is a part of China.
- China had warned of dire consequences and even military reply for the U.S.'s move in Taiwan. This has given rise to soaring tensions between China and the U.S.

Significance of Taiwan for China:

- Strait of Taiwan, claimed by Taiwan as part of its territorial waters, is critical for maritime trade through Yellow Sea and East China Sea and further. Additionally they are also crucial for free movement of navy ships.
- Taiwan ranks high among big economies. Taiwan enjoys a favourable trade relationship with China and is a major source for semiconductor chips for Chinese industries.
- Claiming and laying control over Taiwan will allow China to exert its claims over other disputed areas in the region from a more powerful position.

Consequences for India:

- The latest standoff between China and Taiwan could have some impact for India given the

impact that this standoff could have on the overall Indo-Pacific region at large. India should brace for any such consequences by looking to address its trade dependency on China.

- Taiwan's standing upto China gives other countries hope to stand up against China's economic and military might.

2. Killing of Ayman al- Zawahiri

Context:

- The U.S. recently declared that it had killed the senior-most leader of Al Qaeda, Al- Zawahiri in a military operation in Taliban controlled Afghanistan.
- Al- Zawahiri is believed to be one of the masterminds of 9/11 attacks in the U.S.

Details:

- The U.S. is believed to have used the Hellfire missiles to kill Al- Zawahiri.
- The Hellfire R9X, also called the "ninja bomb", has become the US ammunition of choice for eliminating leaders of terrorist outfits while avoiding civilian casualties.

India's stakes:

- The killing of the senior Al Qaeda leader in Taliban controlled Afghanistan is indicative of the close links between Taliban and Al Qaeda.
- Terrorist organisations like the Al Qaeda view the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan as a motivating factor for stepping up their campaign in the neighbouring regions of Central and South Asia, and globally.
- In 2014, Zawahiri announced the creation of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and according to Home Ministry, the group was trying to rebuild al-Qaeda's organisational machinery in India. The killing of the leader is expected to lower the morale of the cadre and sympathisers.

3. Developments in Pakistan

Context:

- In a helicopter crash in Baluchistan, a high ranking army officer of the Pakistan army died. There is speculation that this was an attack by the insurgent Baluchistan groups against the Pakistani army.
- Of late, the unfolding events in Pakistan seem to be indicative of Pakistani political leadership

have been side-lined by the Pakistani Army. Pakistani military is talking to international organizations for bailout package.

Impact on India:

- There continues to unrest in several regions within Pakistan- Baluchistan, Sind and North Western Frontier Province. This can have spill over effects over India's security concerns in the form of contraband trade or trade in drugs, radicalization of youth.
- Given the economic turmoil in Pakistan, as observed in some previous instances, the political classes in Pakistan could resort to diversionary tactics by raising anti-India sentiments. A similar approach has been also adopted by the Pakistani army too in many occasions before. India has to be alert to any such state sponsored anti-India activities from Pakistan.

4. Developments in Sri Lanka**Context:**

- Amidst the economic turmoil being faced by the island nation of Sri Lanka, the nation has witnessed a change in the political leadership.
- Though the leadership change has brought in some hope of change in Sri Lanka, there is the need to recognize the fact that for any economic recovery Sri Lanka would need a minimum of one to two years. Economic hardship in the form of fuel shortages, power crisis, shortage of essential supplies continue. The economic recovery will need international aid and support.

India's stakes:

- India has offered economic bailout in this time of crisis. However, India cannot continue to provide for such economic support forever.
- China can gain some leverage over Sri Lanka by offering larger economic support to it. This can give it more leverage over Sri Lanka as compared to India.
- Notably, a similar pattern is also being observed in our neighbouring country of Nepal as well.