

## How the current geopolitics of technology is playing out globally?

The emergence of new technologies is eliciting different reaction from different countries. Broadly these reactions can be divided into two categories:

- **Technologically authoritarian reaction:** Countries that have closed their data markets and restricted the flow of technology- such as China- would come under this category.
- **Technologically democratic reaction:** Countries that are guided by judicial standards, the rule of law, and support the freer — but not always free — movement of data and technology can be classified under this category.

The interplay between these two types has created political, ideological and economic tensions in the global realm and have generated following geopolitical debates:

- **What effect will technology have on future of US-China relationship?** The current technological competition within the countries and US's apprehension over threat from rising China has created a tendency of decoupling with regard to technology, talent and investment in these countries. The way this issue moves forward will have large impact on future of technology and associated geopolitics.
- **Will internet break into 'splinternet'?** As internet governance thickens, the worldwide web could segment into a collection of independent digital ecosystems or "splinternets." This emerging model could be attractive to states and businesses that seek to exert greater market control in cyberspace and exclude foreign competition.
- **Is creation of a global regulatory regime possible?** Although the current trends point towards a deglobalized and segmented world, but the growth of technology has been fastest when it was accompanied with global coordination. Keeping this idea in mind, it is possible that gradually national and regional regulatory regimes may come together in the near future.

## What is India's standing in the current geopolitical scenario and what should it do?

India may not currently have a clear regulatory framework for emerging technologies, but it has a standing in this geopolitical debate by virtue of being the largest open data market in the world. Close to 600 million Indians currently use 4G data. India also has the highest per capita consumption of data (above 10 GB per month) anywhere in the world.

To sustain its standing and exert its influence in geopolitical debate on technology, India will have to generate sustained technological development. To ensure this, following steps could be taken for better technological regulation:

- **Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL):** Accelerate the enactment of the PDPL as it will provide clarity on cross-border movement of data and regulate use of personal data among others.
- **Regulatory clarity on new technologies:** India's response on new technologies like Blockchain, Drone technology etc. has been ambivalent, which has hindered their development. Clear approach will pave the way for faster adoption both by Public and Private sector.
- **Evolve a clear stand for global stage:** Having a clear stance on how technologies like 5G, Blockchain need to be governed lends more credibility to India's position. Also, this stance needs to be consistent with the domestic approach.
- **Tech diplomacy:** The ministry of external affairs created the new, emerging, and strategic technologies (NEST) division in 2020. This idea can be taken further by appointing dedicated **technology ambassadors or technology coordinators**.
- **Making technological access a key part of diplomatic relations:** Access to technology should be a key feature of bilateral relations in the future especially for a developing country like India which has a large absorptive capacity.

The geopolitical maneuvers can improve global regulation in India's favor and increase access to technology. But this can only be capitalized if it is accompanied with domestic technological development. Efforts could be made on lines of creating entrepreneurial culture, increasing investment in R&D, providing the ecosystem to encourage private sector research and most importantly implementation of education reforms as envisaged by the New Education Policy 2020.