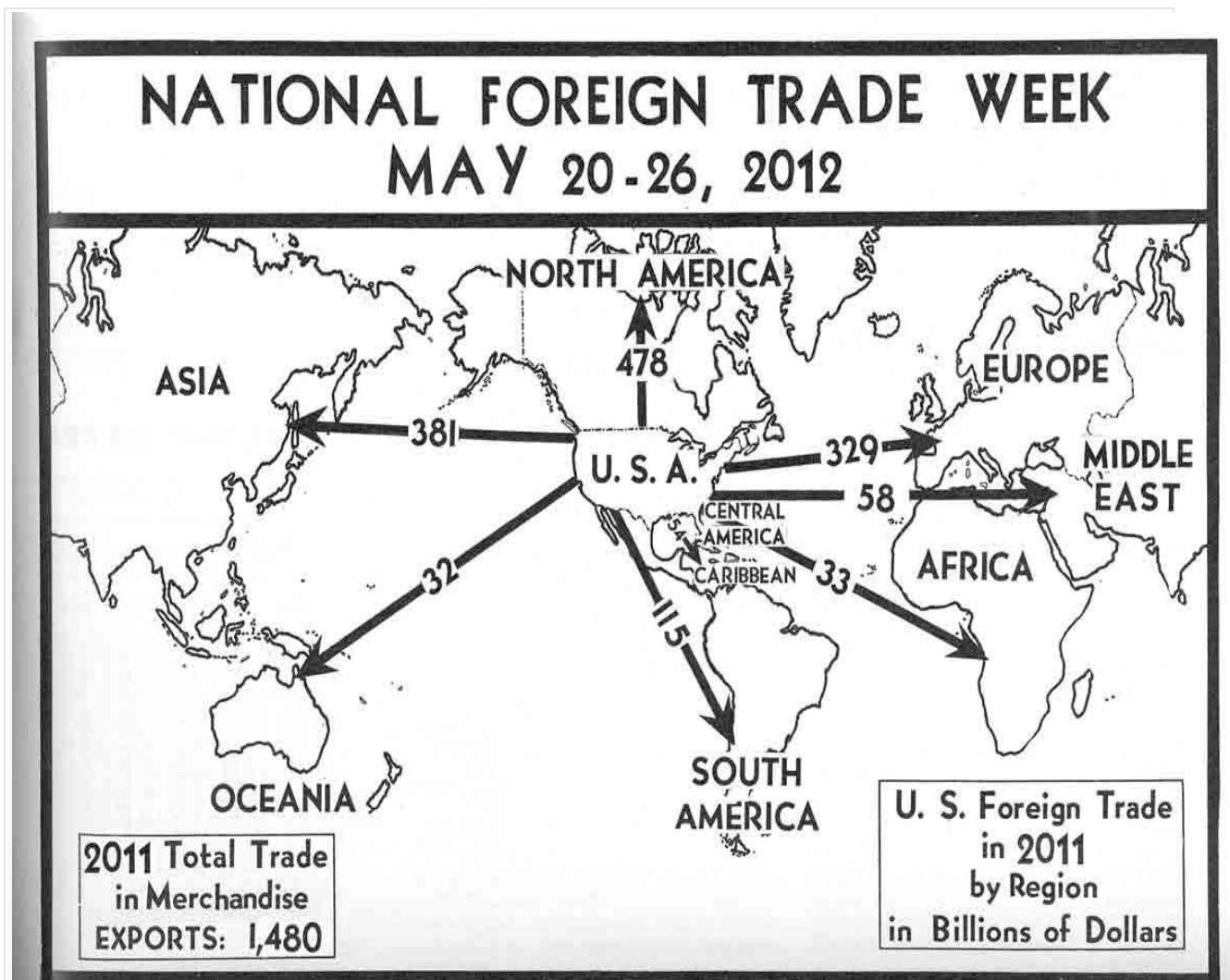


Introduction of foreign trade:

The Meaning and Definition of Foreign Trade or International Trade!

Foreign trade is exchange of capital, goods, and services across international borders or territories. In most countries, it represents a significant share of gross domestic product (GDP). While international trade has been present throughout much of history, its economic, social, and political importance has been on the rise in recent centuries.



All countries need goods and services to satisfy wants of their people. Production of goods and services requires resources. Every country has only limited resources.

No country can produce all the goods and services that it requires. It has to buy from other countries what it cannot produce or can produce less than its requirements. Similarly, it sells to other countries the goods which it has in surplus quantities. India too, buys from and sells to other countries various types of goods and services.

Generally no country is self-sufficient. It has to depend upon other countries for importing the goods which are either non-available with it or are available in insufficient quantities. Similarly, it can export goods, which are in excess quantity with it and are in high demand outside.

International trade means trade between the two or more countries. International trade involves different currencies of different countries and is regulated by laws, rules and regulations of the concerned countries. Thus, International trade is more complex.

Major current trends in foreign trade are as follows:

Current trends are towards the increasing foreign trade and interdependence of firms, markets and countries.

fluence of several major trends. Among these trends are:

1) Forced Dynamism:

International trade is forced to succumb to trends that shape the global political, cultural, and economic environment. International trade is a complex topic, because the environment it operates in is constantly changing. First, businesses are constantly pushing the frontiers of economic growth, technology, culture, and politics which also change the surrounding global society and global economic context. Secondly, factors external to international trade (e.g., developments in science and information technology) are constantly forcing international trade to change how they operate.

2) Cooperation among Countries:

Countries cooperate with each other in thousands of ways through international organisations, treaties, and consultations. Such cooperation generally encourages

the globalization of business by eliminating restrictions on it and by outlining frameworks that reduce uncertainties about what companies will and will not be allowed to do. Countries cooperate:

- i) To gain reciprocal advantages,
- ii) To attack problems they cannot solve alone, and
- iii) To deal with concerns that lie outside anyone's territory.

Agreements on a variety of commercially related activities, such as transportation and trade, allow nations to gain reciprocal advantages. For example, groups of countries have agreed to allow foreign airlines to land in and fly over their territories, such as Canada's and Russia's agreements commencing in 2001 to allow polar over flights that will save five hours between New York and Hong Kong.

Groups of countries have also agreed to protect the property of foreign-owned companies and to permit foreign-made goods and services to enter their territories with fewer restrictions. In addition, countries cooperate on problems they cannot solve alone, such as by coordinating national economic programs (including interest rates) so that global economic conditions are minimally disrupted, and by restricting imports of certain products to protect endangered species.

Finally, countries set agreements on how to commercially exploit areas outside any of their territories. These include outer space (such as on the transmission of television programs), non-coastal areas of oceans and seas (such as on exploitation of minerals), and Antarctica (for example, limits on fishing within its coastal waters).

3) Liberalization of Cross-border Movements:

Every country restricts the movement across its borders of goods and services as well as of the resources, such as workers and capital, to produce them. Such restrictions make international trade cumbersome; further, because the restrictions may change at any time, the ability to sustain international trade is always

uncertain. However, governments today impose fewer restrictions on cross-border movements than they did a decade or two ago, allowing companies to better take advantage of international opportunities. Governments have decreased restrictions because they believe that:

- i) So-called open economies (having very few international restrictions) will give consumers better access to a greater variety of goods and services at lower prices,
- ii) Producers will become more efficient by competing against foreign companies, and
- iii) If they reduce their own restrictions, other countries will do the same.

4) Transfer of Technology:

Technology transfer is the process by which commercial technology is disseminated. This will take the form of a technology transfer transaction, which may or may not be a legally binding contract, but which will involve the communication, by the transferor, of the relevant knowledge to the recipient. It also includes non-commercial technology transfers, such as those found in international cooperation agreements between developed and developing states. Such agreements may relate to infrastructure or agricultural development, or to international cooperation in the fields of research, education, employment or transport.

5) Growth in Emerging Markets:

The growth of emerging markets (e.g., India, China, Brazil, and other parts of Asia and South America especially) has impacted international trade in every way. The emerging markets have simultaneously increased the potential size and worth of current major international trade while also facilitating the emergence of a whole new generation of innovative companies. According to “A special report on innovation in emerging markets” by The Economist magazine, “The emerging world, long a source of cheap labor, now rivals the rich countries for business innovation”.