Significance of America’s UN Ambassador

Why in news?

US President Trump's choice for US's UN ambassador post, Ms Heather Nauert, has withdrawn her nomination for the post.

Who is a UN Ambassador?

- A UN ambassador is a premier diplomatic role, one of the top foreign policy jobs that anyone can have.
- Formally known as the permanent representative, the ambassador is the leader of the US Mission in the case of U.S.
- She/he represents the country on the Security Council, the most powerful body of the 193-member United Nations.
- In U.S., the ambassador is nominated by the President and must be confirmed by the Senate.
- Although not a member of the Cabinet, she/he often has been given Cabinet-level rank.

Why is the withdrawal so significant now?

- Former UN ambassador of the U.S. and Trump's first ambassador Nikki Haley announced earlier that she was leaving at the end of 2018.
- Haley’s departure has left the Trump administration devoid of a high-profile presence at the United Nations, for nearly two months now.
- Ms Nauert said the decision was made in the best interest of her family.
- However, her withdrawal underscores Trump's challenges in filling the job.
- It is speculated that Trump administration officials have difficulties in finding a successor to Haley.

How significant is the UN ambassador's role?

- A UN ambassador is in many ways America’s face to the world.
- So successive White House administrations have been cautious in choosing the right person to represent it in the United Nations.
- The ambassador is seen as having a direct line to the White House and

access to the President.
- A UN ambassador can provide an additional perspective to the President that the secretary of state and national security adviser cannot.
- Notably, a strong-willed ambassador can get things done for the US in the global forum.
- E.g. In 2017, Haley was central to persuading the 14 other members of the UNSC to approve tough sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear and missile activities.
- Significantly, she persuaded the Chinese and Russian ambassadors, who historically have been most averse to the use of sanctions.

Is leaving the post vacant a concern?

- A few months is not necessarily a long time to leave any ambassador post empty.
- But it comes in the backdrop of Trump's suspicion of multilateral institutions like the UN and his disregard for some its major achievements and programs.
- Over the past two years, his administration has renounced various pacts on climate change and migration.
- The U.S. has stopped contributions to the UN Population Fund and the agency that aids Palestinians who are classified as refugees.
- Trump has also withdrawn the U.S. from UNESCO and the Human Rights Council, diminishing American influence in those agencies.
- Given these, leaving its representation in the United Nations empty is a diplomatic concern.
- The support staff of diplomats at the U.S. Mission has always been strong and professional.
- But not having a permanent representative for a long time limits the dialogue and sends a negative signal.

Source: Indian Express

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