

How do you see the increasing rapprochement between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran? Also analyse its socio-political implications in the Middle East and Pakistan. What measures would you recommend for Islamabad to follow?

### Introduction:

Rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran has major implication on global politics. It is not a blessing for every country as some countries including America is not much happy. However it has a positive impact on Middle East and Pakistan. Pakistan should avail itself this opportunity as it can bring social, political and economical changes. According to Chinese diplomat, "This is a victory for dialogue, a victory for peace,



offering major good news at a time when th. of much turbulence in the world."

## Saudi - Iran Reapprochement

Reasons which lead to this rapprochement:

US - Saudi distance

- Failed regional policies of Saudi Arabia in Yemen and Syria

- Threat to Saudi Arabia from Houthis rebels and Iran's ballistic missiles

- China has good ties with both Saudi Arabia and Iran

- Isolation and domestic pressure on Iran

- Crumbling economy of Iran



## Deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran:

- Opening of embassies
- Respect for others' sovereignty
- Revival of agreements: General Agreement for Cooperation and Agreement of Security signed in 2001.

## Major implications of Saudi-Iran Rapprochement:

a) Decline of US hegemony: America and China are in continuous tug of war where both want to develop their hegemony in the region. America wants to contain China by making diff allies and creation of AUKUS and QUAD. On the other hand, China is pulling West Asia into its favour. However, recent move of China leads to the decline in US hegemony.

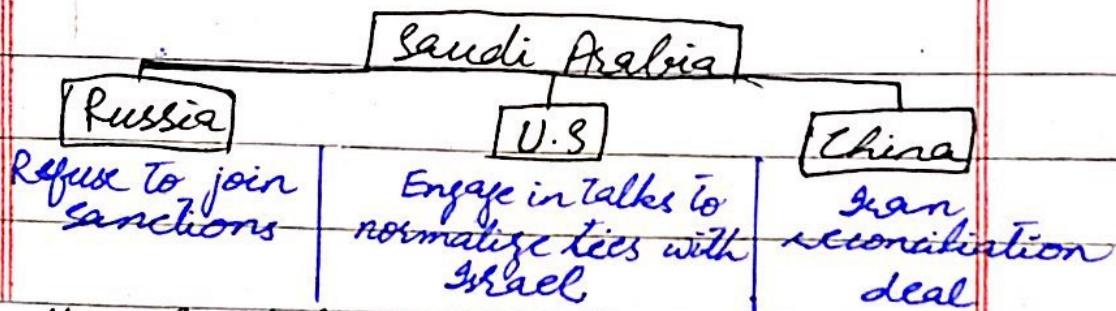


b) Rise of China as a leader:

China is creating its image as a leader by reconciling Saudi Arabia and Iran. America is busy in punishing Russia and China is silently making its ties stronger with Middle East countries.

c) Drift of Saudi Arabia from US:

Saudi relations with US take its turn after 2018 when the Saudi journalist ~~was~~ ~~Rashoffi~~ was murdered and US criticized openly. However, Saudi Arabia still wants to maintain its ties with US as US is the major supplier of defense equipment to Saudi Arabia.



∴ How Saudi Arabia is balancing with Global power



d) Rapprochement with Israel and Arab will take a jolt:

US wants to make Saudi Arabia and Israel come to a single table. However, Israel has invested much in Abraham Accords. After Saudi Arabia reconciliation with Iran, it will be difficult for Saudi Arabia to take any action against Iran.

e) It can be a setback to Indian policy:

India has major strategic relations with America. On the other hand, it has <sup>border</sup> clashes with China. The growing power of China is a challenge for Indian foreign policy.



- f) Benefit the global economy:  
Middle East is a supply-house of gas and oil to the world. There is a significant rise in oil and gas price after US sanctions on Russia - major oil exporter. Reducing clashes in Middle East will stabilize the global economy by providing cheap gas and oil.

## Implication of Saudi-Iran Rapprochement on Middle East

- a) Peace and stability in the region:  
There was a cold war between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both of them are involved in proxy wars in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq.



### i) Peace in Yemen:

Yemen was divided into two categories i.e. Western and Southern. <sup>some</sup> Tribes people were supporting & Houthi rebels who were Shiite in religion and some were supporting Hadi's government. Iran and Saudi Arabia were supporting their Shiite and Sunni groups respectively. However, reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia will lead to bring peace in Yemen.

### ii) Peace in Syria:

Iran and Saudi Arabia were fighting proxy wars in Syria. Iran Hizbullah had a support of Iran and Saudi Arabia was on the side of Bashar Al-Asad's government. Sunni Shia clashes were also prevalent in Syria.



However, after reconciliation Iran will lead to settlement of ~~the~~ Hizbullah and Saudi Arabia.

iii) Safe border of Saudi Arabia with Iraq.

After US-attack, US-Iran government came to an end, which was major concern for Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is an immediate neighbour of Iraq and wanted to eliminate Iran influence in Iraq. However, after reconciliation Saudi Arabia has no threat from Iraq.

iv) Peace in Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia had a threat from ballistic missiles of Iran.

Houthi rebels, in 2019 attacked on oil industry. After reconciliation Saudi Arabia will enjoy the peace in Middle East.



1) Iran's economy will stabilize:

US withdrawal from JCPOA and revival of sanctions have led to economic crisis in Iran.

However, Iran after reconciling with Saudi Arabia and China as a mediator, will stabilize its Yuan. Joining CPEC is the major interest of Iran to stabilize its economy.

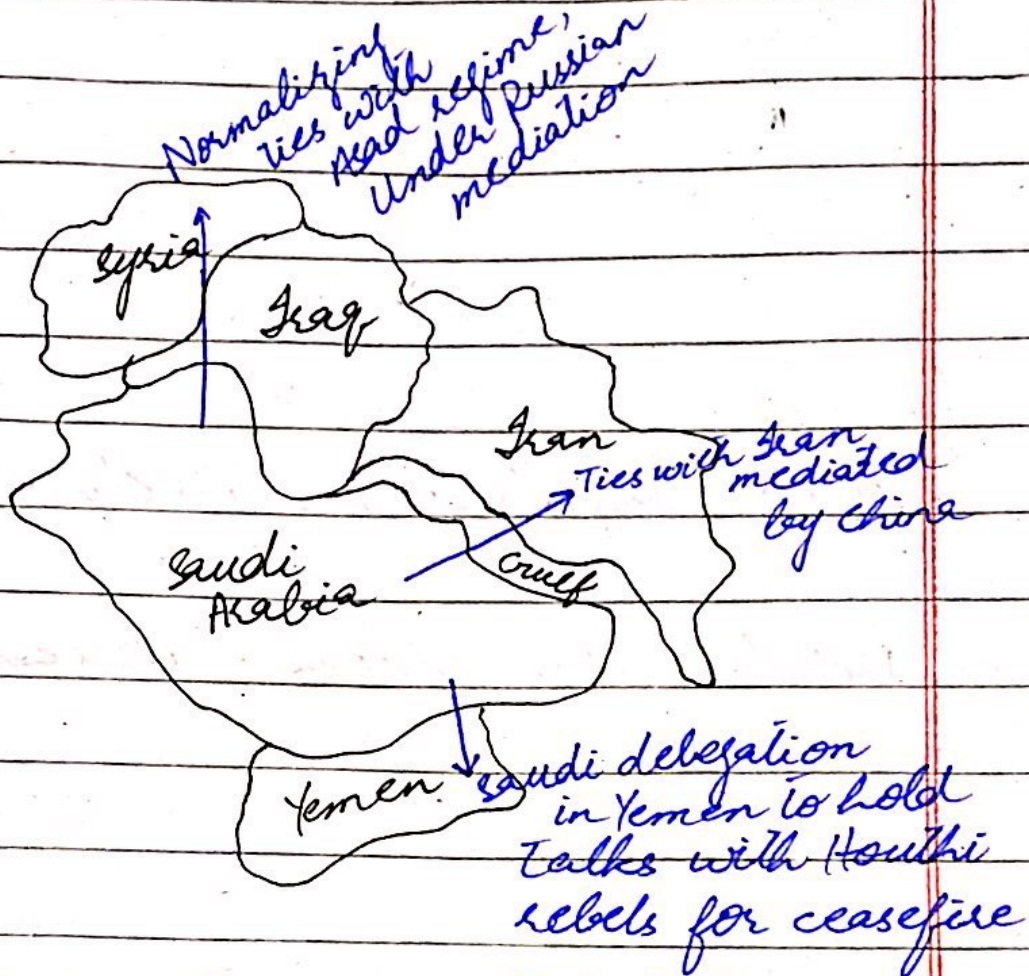


Figure: Growing stability in Middle East



## Implications On Pakistan

### a) Opportunities of Trade:

Iran has always been a trading partner of Pakistan. Pakistan can grow its economy by strengthening of ties with Iran. If Pakistan and Iran, as a part of BRI, can grow their trade.

### b) Energy security in Pakistan:

Pakistan can secure its energy by strengthening ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia. Despite having pressures from US, Pakistan should take a serious step over Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline.

### c) Pakistan can increase its remittances

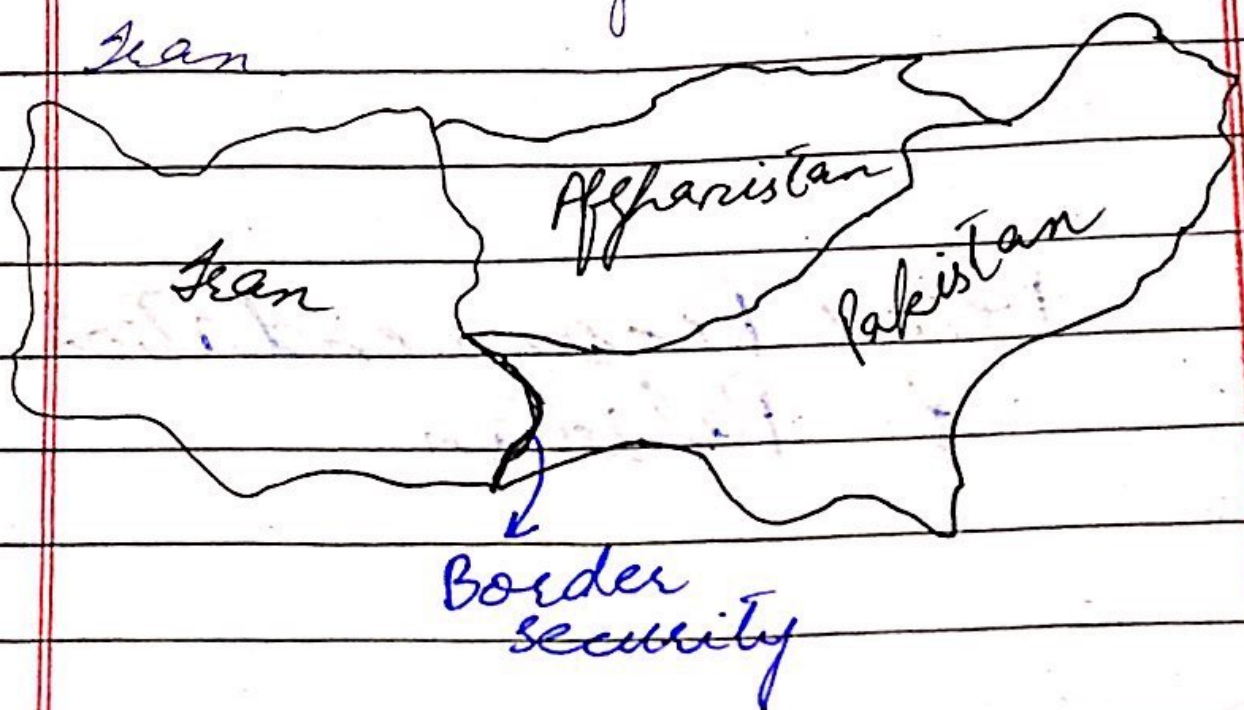
Pakistan has a large diaspora in Saudi Arabia. After reconciliation of Saudi Arabia-Iran, Pakistan can strengthen its ties with Saudi



Arabia. 300 million overseas  
Pakistani diaspora is in Saudi  
Arabia, which will grow remittances  
of Pakistan.

d) Lessen sectarian violence:

Saudi-Iran rapprochement will  
reduce the tensions with Sunni  
Shiite Muslims. There will be  
more security on both side of  
the borders of Pakistan and  
Iran.



e) Counter-Terrorism cooperation:

Pakistan-Saudi-Iran trilateral  
cooperation can counter the  
growing terrorism; specifically



Targetting outfit such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

f) Reconciliation with India - growth of trade.

Saudi Arabia and Iran enjoys cordial relations with Pakistan and India. Saudi Arabia and Iran can reconcile Pakistan and India by using the platform of SCO; as Saudi Arabia is also wants to join SCO.

## Policy Recommendations of Pakistan

→ Promote the participation of Iran in CPEC.

→ Materialize Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. It can provide 775 mil cub ft gas.

→ Paki-Iran-Turkey railway



Track needs expansion for increase in social, economic and political engagement.

- Promote reconciliation of Iran-Saudi Arabia and China as a mediator.
- Balance its relations with America as it is the super power.
- Strengthening of ties with China and Russia.
- Enhance brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia.
- Strengthen ties with India by taking to help of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

### Critical Analysis:

The growing ties of Saudi Arabia and China will further broaden the gap of China with America. The world will divide into



Two groups as the cold war between US and America is growing day-by-day. Pakistan can also face severe challenges in its foreign policy as China is taking the lead of world and America is trying to contain it.

### Conclusion:

Iran Saudi rapprochement has implication on the global level. Pakistan and Middle East has can enjoy the fruit of stability and growth of economy. Moreover, Pakistan needs to make its foreign policy which can strengthen its ties with Iran, Saudi Arabia and China.