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## Current Affair

Question No 5

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?

Answer:

### Introduction:

An old arabic proverb is "choose your neighbour before your house". This is the best quote for cold war in the Islamic world. The two important countries of cold war of muslim world is Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Iran.

During cold war both with USA. Iran providing military capability to US-led forces while KSA provides funds and theological ammunition. But paradigm shift happened after 1979 of Iranian Revolution. In this time Iran established po us government and US same year KSA turned into "wahabi". Again paradigm shift happened in 2023 when both countries reopening embassies.

## Increasing Reaprocement between KSA and Iran:

On March 10, 2023 both countries resuming their diplomatic relations. After one month April 06, 2023 foreign ministers of Iran and KSA attended first formal meeting at Beijing.

**The Agreement:** The agreement was signing by both parties. In this agreement both countries re-opening their embassies. They resume trade with investment agreement of 1998.

**Boom for Iran:** As Iran is isolated and undersentions by the USA. Due to this agreement other muslim world and all of his neighbours are confident to start trade and investment in dollar. Iran also can receive dollars from china due to his 'Chabahar port'. Another big sention on Iran is its nuclear program. With this bilateral relation Iran is more confident to manage its nuclear program with efficiently.

In

Respite for Saudi Arabia: KSA has the best time to secure its border. Similarly, KSA can invest in climate and other good agenda. Saudia can also buy weapons from China as KSA not trust on USA

### Socio-political implications in Middle-East:

Middle east is an important place for both countries because both need their influence at middle east.

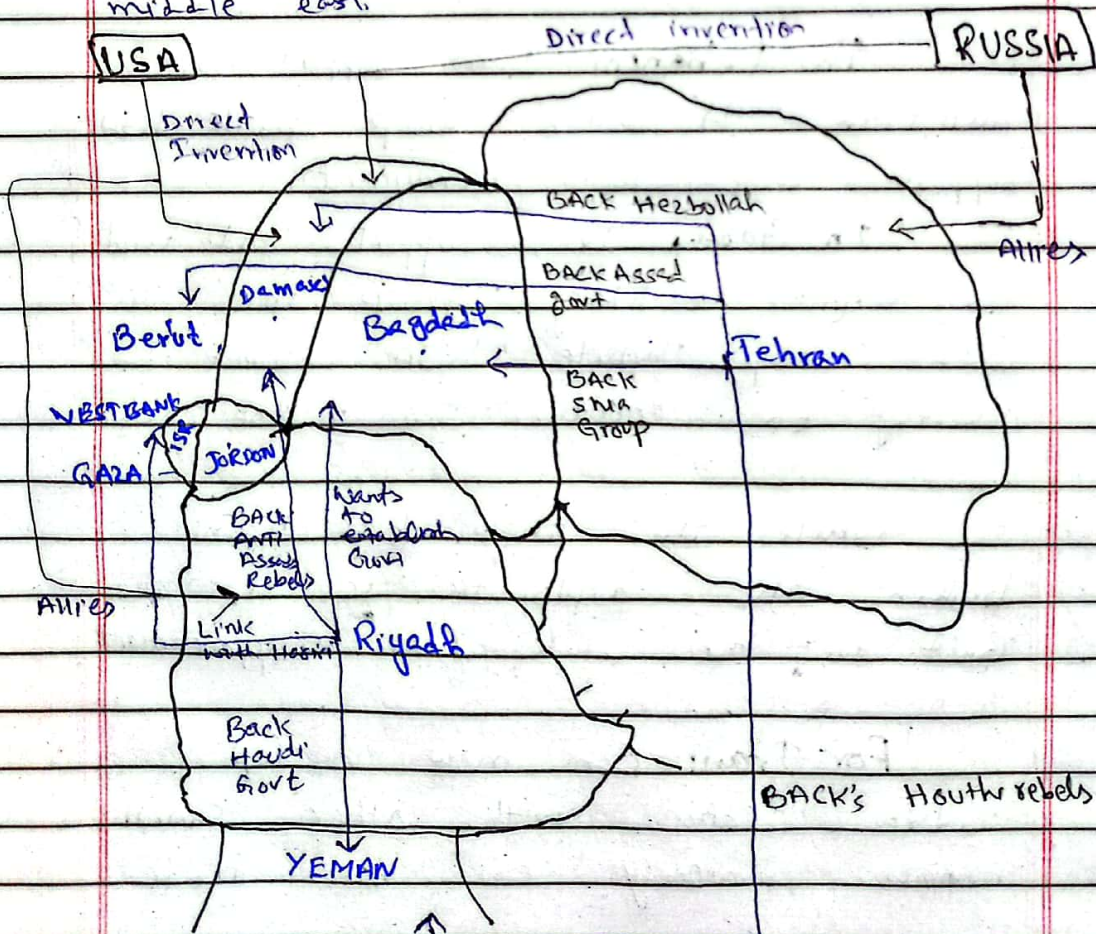


Figure 1: Saudi and Iran competing for Influence

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Middle east is divided into three categories in Pro Saudi Camp (UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt), Pro-Iran Camp (Iraq, Syria), and split between both are (Yemen, Qatar, Lebanon)

In Syria, Iran support Shia regime of President Bashar-al-Assad while KSA support Sunni Islamist rebels.

In Yemen, Iran support train and fund Houthi rebels while KSA support the regime with the help of nine other Arab nations.

In Lebanon, Iran support Shia militia Hezbollah group while KSA support Lebanese government.

In Gaza, Iran support and fund for Hamas (military group in Gaza Strip) while KSA albeit covertly to counter Iran in the region.

While this thaw has been broken the diplomatic ice in the Gulf due to Saudi-Iran reapprecement.

For Iran: Can now develop cordial relation with other Sunni nations. Similarly can now trade

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with Saudi Arabia.

For Saudi Arabia: Having benefits in both political and social, it can also modernizing its economy.

## Socio-Political Implication in Pakistan:

As Pakistan is an important country due to its geographical location and socio-political factor for both its diplomatic friends.

Iran's neighbours, Saudi Arabia, partner and China key ally, Pakistan has a very balanced friendship with all these countries.

Due to KSA: As Pakistan is military ally with the Saudi Arabia. Its partnership can be more effectively. And due to regional peace and Iran, China also part of it, KSA might thinking again to invest on Pakistan.

Due to Iran: Almost 20% of Shia population in Pakistan (2nd largest Shia population after Iran) with 80% of Sunni as well. Now Pakistan can freely trade with Iran, or Pakistan also social issue of sect can be manageable.

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China mediator. As China is the mediator between this diplomatic friendship. Now China is more interested in CPEC - BRT and might link with Iran. This is ultimate good for Pakistan. Similarly, China receive 40% crude oil from Gulf, that's why ~~the~~ China need peaceful way of trade from Gulf to China and Pakistan is in-between them.

### Recommendation for Islamabad

"This is a game changer for the region as well as the world"

(Maleeka Lodhi)

This is the golden opportunity for Pakistan. Pakistan need to warmly welcome the deal. This is good news for CPEC. Similarly, Pakistan can share border and coastline Iran and Gulf. Now Pakistan can maintaining balance dealing with both the countries. As Pakistan Foreign office said

"Important Diplomatic break through" made possible by "China's visionary leadership"

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## Conclusion:

There is a theory in International Relations that "There are no permanent friends or foes, only permanent interests." Previously the cordial relation between France and England, East and West Germany, USA and Japan, Now example of Iran and USA is just the new chapter of another cordial relation. After all, anything is better than war.