

Q. NO: 05/

Saudi Arabia and Iran both have significant place in Pakistan's foreign policy. How Pakistan can maintain friendly relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran, especially after the mediation of two countries.

Ans.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Iran and Saudi Arabia both welcomed the inception of Pakistan warmly and supported from time-to-time financially, militarily and diplomatically. Let it be wars with India or sanction on Pakistan because of nuclear programs. The Muslim brotherhood despite sectorial differences has always flourished here, hold significant importance in Pakistan's foreign policy. Despite having differences and conflicts between Iran and Saudi, Pakistan has always approached to reconcile for good. This balance approach can be further pushed after regional giant China's involvement in peace-making. Pakistan can use this event as an opportunity to have peace on Balochistan border and regain its lost glory in middle-east. by sustaining a balanced foreign policy. Overall the purpose of foreign policy had always been "to have peace within and outside of borders.", according to Mr. Jinnah.

## 2. PAKISTAN FOREIGN POLICY: IMPORTANCE OF IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA

The reason behind the importance of both states is mainly Muslim brotherhood because Islam is the basic foundation of the existence of Pakistan. Further, Iran is Pakistan's immediate eastern neighbour hence, can not be ignored. On the other hand, Saudi is our brother-in-arms that always has supported Pakistan financially as well as diplomatically. For example, Both countries has voted in favour of Kashmir Issue in United Nations (UN) multiple times. Above that, Iran holds unreplacable <sup>religious</sup> places for Muslims especially Shia like, Karbala; while Saudi holds Makkah and Medina. The reason behind cordial relations is also the economic as both are trade partners while Saudi holds most Pakistani immigrants too. For these reasons both of the states has always been the part of Pakistan's foreign policy.

## 3. REASONS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN SAUDI AND IRAN

### 3.1 PROXY WARS IN MIDDLE-EAST:

Both has supported opposing groups in middle-east to ignite wars in the region. Saudi supported

Sunni-oriented groups while, Iran supported the Shias. Hezbollah and Hamas are its examples that are Iran's proxy along with Houthis. Saudi supports liberation armies of that nation. Yemen war is its example.

### 3.2 BOTH WANT TO BE MUSLIMS-LEADER:

Both the nations spend millions to dominate their image because right now Saudi is the face of Muslim leadership globally. Iran challenges it as it believes Saudi wants Shia-Muslims to not to have religious freedom. The sectarian differences basically lead to tension, because of which even OIC has become non-functional.

### 3.2 IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BOTH:

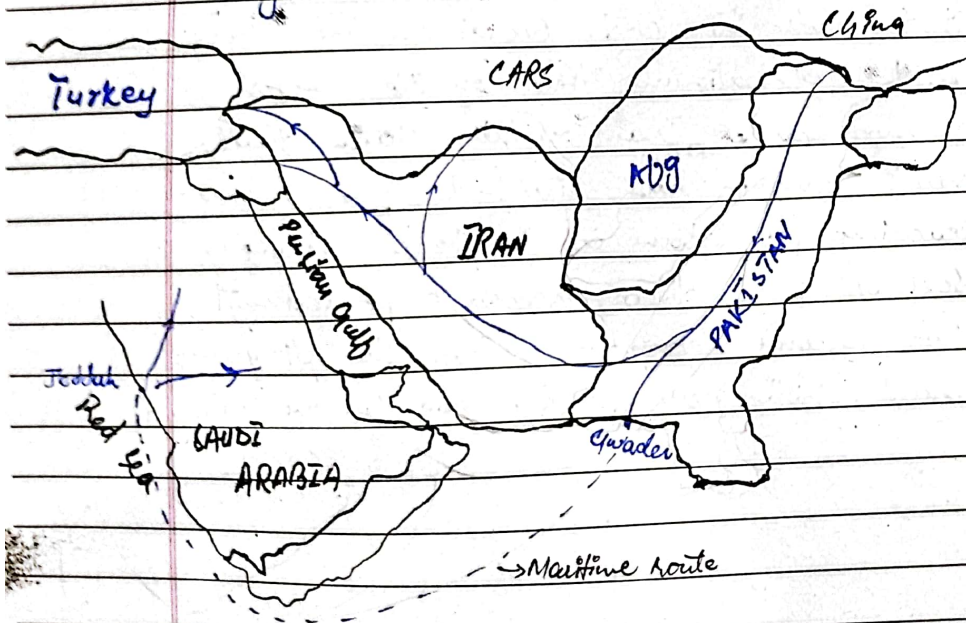
Iran wants Muslim to unite under its leadership because Middle-East especially Saudi has tilt towards the West. Saudi, on the other hand, globalizing itself on the basis of modernity. Iran further claim that Saudi Arabia has diverted from core teachings of Islam as Western culture such as bars, discos, women empowerment has become common there. This difference made both never to see eye-to-eye with.

4. WAYS THROUGH WHICH PAKISTAN CAN MAINTAIN PEACE BETWEEN BOTH

In early 2023, China brokered a deal between ~~the~~ Saudi Arabia and Iran, making history as both the states resumed diplomatic relations that was freeze for years. Pakistan, an important neighbour of China, can do alot in terms of peace through this deal.

4.1 ENCOURAGE BOTH TO BECOME A PART OF CHINA'S OBOR:

Pakistan holds the flagship project of China's one belt-one-road (OBOR) - CPEC. Pakistan, therefore, can encourage both the countries to become part of BRI & OBOR. This way China can reach Africa by land hence, easing tension between both.



## 4.2 ENCOURAGE REGIONAL GIANTS TO ENSURE PEACE BETWEEN BOTH:

Since Biden Administration Pakistan has been second-favourite in the region after India. So, Pakistan has chance to align itself to China and Russia, and to encourage them diplomatically to ensure peace among two regional rivals can be a way. Russia always wants to reach warm waters so it will be in favour of all. For example, addressing regional peace could lead to trade agreement, hence, peace in the region.

## 4.3 JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES AND TRANS-BORDER OPERATIONS:

Joint military exercises are an easy way of depicting soft image and as Pakistan is militarily powerful than both hence, it could lead the exercise. Moreover, terrorism has become a plague for region so these three ~~two~~ countries can work hand-in-glove to exterminate it. It will not only give a reason for alignment but also sustain regional peace.

4.4

### PAKISTAN MUST NOT ENGAGE ITSELF IN MIDDLE-EAST PROXY WAR:

Pakistan must not intervene in middle east wars militarily but diplomatically. As proverb says, "Wars are fought in battleground but won or lost on table." Therefore, Pakistan should avoid unnecessary engagement, and only do diplomatic efforts. This will portray soft image of Pakistan from both sides.

4.5

### PAKISTAN SHOULD USE INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS TO PROMOTE HARMONY:

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a platform that can be used to mediate between both countries. OIC should be use to ease tensions between both states. Pakistan can emerge as Muslim leader if it makes it happen. The sectorial and proxy differences should be countered through diplomatic dialogues and trade agreements.

4.6

### TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH BOTH AND FULFILLING OLD AGREEMENTS:

Before action for plans, nevertheless, Pakistan needs to be internally stable to gain their confidence. Pakistan is a home of 240m according to 2023 census that makes it a market

large enough to consume anything. Pakistan can build trade on this. Also, projects halted like Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline should be completed at all cost to build a resilient image in Ummah. That is how Pakistan can build a strong brotherhood between Saudi and Iran, maintaining peace.

### 5. REASONS THAT WHY PEACE IS ESSENTIAL FOR PAKISTAN AS WELL AS REGION:

The maintained regional peace will help Pakistan to counter its trans-border terrorism issue. Secondly, Pakistan is considered "abode of terrorism in the world" as said by Indian foreign minister; this is the chance, Pakistan through regional giants can promote its soft image. Thirdly, for the success of CPEC as well as BRI, Peace in the region is pre-requisite that will help country's economy grow exponentially. Fourthly, Pakistan suffered alot by remaining in Western-bloc so it is the chance for Pakistan to have option. Lastly, the lost glory of Muslim Ummah will be gain as Pakistan will help countering sectorial differences. Hence, Peace in Ummah. The region, resultantly, will flourish and unity of Muslim brotherhood will act as a barrier against any threat.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Pakistan, once a Muslim emerging state, has chance to regain its lost glory through situating peace between two Muslim-nations, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Pakistan on multi-national forums can depict its soft image then. Also, it will benefit the country itself as Eastern-border will be secured followed by regaining lost importance in middle-east. Through, acute diplomatic approach in formulating foreign policy, it can be achieved. The regional leaders will also be included then, promoting mutual growth for all. Most importantly, the proxy wars of middle east will come to halt. Including both in BRI, defence cooperation and diplomatic neutrality followed by economic interest are the key pathways for Pakistan to be the beacon of peace in the region.