

Q.No: 2

Saudi-Iran Negotiations (Brokered by China)

Introduction:

Saudi Arabia and Iran had resumed their diplomatic missions. There are Chinese efforts behind such a significant development. It implies that Beijing is ready to play the role of mediator. Due to multiple reasons, China has taken the seat of mediator role previously held by US. The deal is beneficial to not only Saudi Arabia and Iran but also for China and for world at large. Thus, the re-approachment is an important strategic event.

Saudi-Iran Negotiations: A Brief Overview

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran came forward to resume their bilateral relations. Both countries had a long-standing rivalry.

over religious and political differences. They had also face each other at several battle grounds - Yemen, Syria and so on.

However, they have tried to remove such differences through Chinese-brokered deal.

Negotiations Signed on: 10 March 2023

Main Stakeholders: Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Brokered by: The People's Republic of China.

Main Provisions:

- (i) Reopening of embassies.
- (ii) Work to revive a security pact.
- (iii) Resumption of trade and economic activities.
- (iv) Resuming cultural records.

Role of China as a mediator.

China has assumed its role of mediator in the region. It is based upon following reasons:

1- Chinese deepening interests in the region.

China pertains various interests, politically, economically as well as strategically in that region.

2) Political Interests:

China has good relations with its regional powers. So, any potential action based upon Saudi-Iran rivalry could threaten China's bilateral relations with both of countries.

For instance: China has recently accepted Iran as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) member. On the other hand, Saudi and China are experiencing cooperations in energy and One Belt One Road (OBOR) China's Initiative. Thus, it could

be difficult for China to balance its relations with two major powers.

b) Economic Motives;

China is much interested in energy resources of the Gulf nations. Such resources are necessary for China to run its economic activities. So a peaceful Middle East is crucial to China.

For Instance: China is Iran's largest trade partner. They had signed a '25-year Strategic Partnership' in 2021. Under such partnership, China would invest billions in exchange of Iranian oil.

c) Strategic Objectives;

Saudi Arabia and Iran are located in the Gulf region. The region is responsible for the trade activities — shipping of goods.

For Instance: The 80% of oil used in China passes through Gulf region. Thus,

Security of the region is crucial for China.

2- Role of Saudi Arabia's Interests

Behind Chinese mediator ship, there are factors related to Saudi Arabia.

a) Saudi Vision 2030.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched Saudi Vision 2030 in 2016. The vision is synergised on form of China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBR). Thus, protecting the vision, Saudi had better option 'China' to deconcoilliete with Iran.

b) Economic Relations of Saudi with China.

Like Iran Saudi Arabia is also largest trade partner of China. China is the biggest importer of Saudi oil while Saudi takes technoscientific support from China. Hence, China while keeping significant

Relations with both powers is ready to be a mediator.

3. Iranian Factors For China's Mediator Role

Being faced with an economic crisis, Iran was in need to reconcile with Saudi Arabia. China being Iran's strategic partner was in better position to play role of mediator.

2) China's role in Iran's Grappling Economy.

Since 1979 Iranian Revolution, the economy of Iran had several set-backs. In recent times, the difficult economic situation has arisen from Iran's Nuclear Programme. China has always helped Iran in such situations.

For instance: Amid tensions between the US and both Iran and China, President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi called about Iran - China friendship

'Friends in difficult situations'

This reveals the importance of Chinese readiness to play a role as a mediator.

Why China Over the US?

China is preferred over the US as a mediator due to following facts:

1- US pullout of promises.

The US has repeatedly broken its promises on several occasions. It has removed a lack of confidence among the countries - especially Iran.

For instance: The US unilateral pull out of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018. Such withdrawal crippled the Iranian economy with re-imposing sanctions.

2- China has good relations with both states, while the US has not.

Unlike China, the US has only significant relations with Saudi.

Arabia.

For instance: Trade between the US and Saudi Arabia has increased by 122% since 2021 to \$55 billion in first 6 months of 2023. However the US trade with Iran in the same period was recorded at \$25.57 million.

3. China's non-interference policy; It is China's policy that it did not intend to meddle with internal affairs of other countries. Most of regional powers including Saudi Arabia and Iran are influenced with this foreign policy. It gives China a leverage over the US to play role as a mediator.

For instance: There are examples of the US interference in the internal matters of Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and so on. While China is working from Asia to Africa and world with its non-interference foreign policy.

Conclusion:

Saudi - Iran Reapproachment is a significant move not only for participants but world at large. Various factors play their key role in Chinese step towards mediation in long-standing rivalry. Moreover, the limitations presented by the US gave China an upper hand to play such a historical role.

Q.3 US. China Rivalry and International Peace

Introduction:

The US and China have remained at odds for their opposite ideologies. Several other factors like geo. political interests, economic ambitions play their role in giving push to the rivalry. Both countries' conflict is manifested in their international relations, domestic policies and weaponisation. Meanwhile, their strained relations have direct impact upon international peace and security. Respect for an international rule-based order and accepting each other as a major power can minimize far-reaching impacts of bilateral and regional conflicts.

Ambitions of the US and China.

The ambitions of both countries differ with different ideologies and motives.

- 1- Communism and Capitalism;
China got independence

under Mao Zedong's revolution; ~~while~~
the ~~US~~ thus supports Communism
as its basic ideology. While
the US possesses a Capitalist ideology.

2. Economic Supremacy: Both Countries
are ambitious to be economic
leaders of the world. The US
holds the best of economic
superpower. But China is also
an emerging economic power. It
is also predicted by global
institutions that China is potential
to replace the US as an economic
superpower of the world.

3. Technological Advancement:
China and the US, both
are technological advanced
nations. They are competing
in the field of technology
especially over manufacturing
of semi-conductors.

Role of the US - China
Reflections in the
International Peace
The US and China
perclaim the significant role in
the international peace.

1- Support for opposite players:

Both countries are supporting opposite factions at various occasions. Such support is detrimental for an international peace.

For instance: The US's support for India against China is making Indian Ocean as a flash point for any possible war. Both countries have already involved in the Galwan valley battle in 2020.

2- Increasing militarisation:

China and the US are competing with each other for acquiring sophisticated weapons. This wave of militarisation is not limited to them. As many regional powers are also following their foot-steps. Besides, these countries also equip their bilateral partners with military equipments.

For instance: AUKUS (Australia, the UK and the US) a trilateral pact under which the UK and the US will give

nuclear sub-marine to Australia.

3- Dividing world into blocks:
The US and China divisions are manifested into world leading to blocks. Some countries are supporting China for their economic gains. While others are in the US side. It makes difficult for countries to balance their approach for both nations.

For Instance: Russia, North Korea and Myanmar support Chinese claim over Taiwan. However the US and its allies do not.

Way Forward: Resolving bilateral and regional conflicts.

The adverse impacts on International Peace can be minimized through resolution of bilateral and regional conflicts.

1- Respect for International Order:
Both countries should respect each other's sovereignty.

and international order.

2. Stop indulging in trade wars:
Trade wars between both states must be stopped. Imposing sanctions upon the other is not feasible for both.

3. Control over militarisation:
The US and China must work with each other for check and balance over their military ambitions.

4. No support for opposite actors:
Regional conflicts arise from support of one or the other regional forces. Thus, stopping such supports could resolve the problem of deteriorating regional conflicts.

Conclusion:

The international peace is at stake due to the US and China. Both countries with their varying ambitions are posing threat to the peace. Taking effective measures could resolve conflicts.