

PART-II

SUBJECTIVE PART

Q-2

UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE IN SYRIA

Introduction:

The recent toppling of Bashar - al - Assad's regime by the HTS (Hayat Tahrir - al - Sham) Islamist rebels marks a significant shift in the political landscape of Syria. This collapse of the Assad regime was mainly due to reasons like military weakness, withdrawal of the external support, unity of the rebel group, economic and social strains. The implications on this regime change will be both immediate and long-term. It will lead to power vacuum and instability, impact the regional allies, humanitarian crisis and a global geopolitical shift. We will further discuss these reasons and implications in detail.

Background:-

Syria has been divided into three parts, ruled by three different groups in each part. More than 30% of the territory was controlled by SDF. The bordering areas of Turkey were under the control of Kurds. Also Turkey had captured the bordering areas creating a buffer zone. The rest of the country was

under the control of Assad since 2016.

HTS has been an affiliated group of ISIS and Al Nusra under the leadership of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. HTS is a declared terrorist organization by U.S, E.U. and the UN. Over the years HTS has evolved itself into a more politically accepted organization in Syria and an organized militant group.

In Early December 2024, within a week, it captured Aleppo and Hama within the next three days. Now Hms is under seige and it is heading towards Damascus. Thus the government was toppled down and Bashar al-Assad flew away.

Reasons for Regime's Collapse

1 Military Weakness

Assad military has been severely weakened by years of conflict losing manpower, equipment and morale. The army was completely ineffective to defend the country against the advances of the rebels. While on the other hand, the HTS rebels had organized themselves so well over the years as a great military group they emerged

2- External Support Withdrawal:-

The Assad regime was heavily dependant on the support from Russia as well as Iran. With ~~the~~

its own on-going war against Ukraine, Russia was in no position to give manpower, economic or military help to Assad. Similarly, Iran has its own delimitations going on with the Israel so it was of no major help at present of Assad, as it has been in the past.

3. Rebel Strategy and Unity

The HTS led a very well coordinated, organised and well executed offensive. The speed with which it captured the cities was impressive. It got Aleppo in a week, Hama in the next three days. Damascus showed a little resistance but they did manage to capture it too.

4. Economic and Social Strains:-

Syria's economy has been devastated by years of wars. The infrastructure had been ruined. It spread widespread poverty and thus fueled discontent and rebellion among the population. It paved an easy path for the HTS to capture Syria and topple Assad's regime.

Implications of the Regime Change.

1. Power Vacuum and Instability:-

The fall of Assad has created a power vacuum in Syria. This could result in a prolonged instability and further conflict.

i) Impact of Regional Allies:-

The impact on the regional allies will be prominent as the regime change in Syria impacts Iran, Lebanon and Russia the most amongst others. The fall of Assad weakens Iran's influence in Syria. It will undermine its ability to support Hezbollah in Lebanon. Russia also stands to lose its strategic military bases in Syria, thus reducing its influence in the region.

ii) Humanitarian Crisis:-

Syria has already been under severe humanitarian crisis over the years of conflict. With the present situation millions of people displaced from their homes. The devastating economy will further aggravate poverty.

iii) Global Geopolitical Shift

The weakening position of both Iran and Russia in the region could shift the balance of power in the Middle East. This could potentially benefit U.S., Turkey and Israel.

The Future of Syria:-

The future of Syria remains uncertain. HTS has promised to protect the minorities and establish a non-sectarian government, but there is a great concern about the ability of

HTS to maintain stability and inclusivity.

Conclusion :-

The fall of Assad's regime is a pivotal moment in Syria's history, with far-reaching consequences for the country and the middle-east region for that matter. How HTS move forward from this point will be crucial in shaping the political and social landscape of Syria.

Q-7

CONFLICTS IN MIDDLE EAST

Introduction :-

The Middle east has been a region of significant geopolitical tension and conflict zone for decades. These conflicts stem from a mix of historical grievances, religious and ethnic divisions, territorial disputes and some external factors.

Some clear beneficiaries of these conflicts are Iran, Turkey, Russia and non-state actors like Hamas or Hezbollah. The only loser in the Middle East conflict is the common man. The civilians of Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon and Palestine are the losers of conflicts in the Middle East.

Background:-

There have been constant conflicts in the Middle East in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. Syria has been under ~~the~~ civil war for decades and recently its HTS group had toppled down the Assad's regime. Since 2014, Yemen has been severe humanitarian crisis in the conflicts of the Houthis rebels and the Yemeni government. The long-standing conflict of Israel and Palestine escalated since October 2023 has now seen world history's one of the biggest humanitarian crisis and violence. Iraq has faced years of violence and instability. Lebanon is affected two ways, one by the spillovers from Syria civil war and then has tensions with Israel, particularly involving Hezbollah.

Beneficiaries

In the Middle East conflicts, it is clearly the third-party countries or Non-State Actors who are beneficiaries on the cost of Human Rights and lives.

Iran:-

Iran has expanded its influence in the region by supporting proxy groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and various militias in Iraq and Syria.

Iran does this to strengthen its strategic position and challenge its regional rivals.

Turkey:

Turkey has taken advantage of the chaos to assert its influence in northern Syria and northern Iraq. It has created its buffer zones in the Syrian regions near its borders. It aims to expand its geopolitical reach.

Russia:

Russia has capitalized on the conflicts to reassert its presence in the Middle East. It had its military bases in Syria under Assad's regime.

Non-State Actors:-

There are many non-state actors like the Hamas and Hezbollah who have now gained international attention through their roles in Gaza and Lebanon.

Losers

The losers of the Middle East conflicts clearly are the civilian. We see it a little in detail with respect to each region.

Syria:-

The people of Syria have suffered immensely in the decades of civil war. Hundreds of them killed and millions displaced. Assad regime imprisoned

many innocents. The country has been devastated, both in infrastructure and economic ruins.

Iraq:-

Iraq has been through great violence and instability. First with American attacks and then with the clashes of Houthis and government there has been a significant number of casualties.

Yemen:-

Yemeni people have faced world's worst humanitarian crisis with widespread disease, famine and displacements.

Palestine:-

It has now been over an year that the people of palestine in Gaza are in a dire situation with constant bombarding increasing the casualties and destruction on one hand to the limited or no access to the basic necessities like food, shelter, water on the other worsening the situation. The limited medical help and devastating situation might cause health epidemics.

Regional Stability:-

The conflicts of Middle East undermine the regional security and stability. The situation of Middle East completely remains volatile and unpredictable. The more conflicts may

erupt into war any second.

Conclusion :-

The situation in the middle east is fluid and complex. Various actors pursue their interest at the expense of civilian and regional stability. The resolution and implication of the conflict remains uncertain but the humanitarian impact keeps getting worse.

Q.6

COP 29 - FAILURES AND COMMITMENTS

Introduction :-

COP-29 summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, concluded with mixed outcomes. It was held from November 11 till November 21. The major highlights of COP29 were climate finance and the submission of new NDCs till 2025. One major point has been the pledge to keep the global warming below 1.5°C . We further discuss the failures and commitments taken during COP29.

Failures :-

COP29 has been a disappointment due to the following reasons:

Climate Finance Disappointment:-

Developing countries hoped \$1.3 trillion annually in climate finance but the final agreement fell short with the developed nation pledging only \$300 billion per year by 2035. This did not meet the urgent financial needs of vulnerable nations:-

Lack of consensus over fossil fuels:

There was no agreement on how to implement last year's pledge to transition away from fossil fuels. The decision was deferred to COP30 in Brazil, showing a lack of progress on one of the most crucial issues.

Conflict of Interest:-

Azerbaijan, a country heavily reliant on fossil fuels was the host which led to the accusations of conflict of interest.

Chaotic Negotiations:-

The summit faced chaotic last-minute negotiations with countries, including India and Nigeria, accusing the COP29 presidency of pushing through deals without proper consent.

COMMITMENTS

Climate Finance Goal:

Despite the disappointment, a new collective quantified goal (NCQG) was established, aiming to channel at least \$300 billion annually into developing countries by 2035.

Carbon markets:-

An agreement was reached on the rules for a UN-backed global common market, which will facilitate the trading of carbon credits and incentivize countries to reduce emissions.

Gender and Climate Change:-

The Summit extended a program focused on gender and climate, highlighting the importance of addressing gender disparities in climate actions.

Support for LDCs:-

There was an agreement on support for the least developing countries to carry out national adaptation plans.

Conclusion:-

While the Summit made some progress, the overall outcome was seen as a mixed bag, with significant gaps remaining in the global climate action. The commitments made will need to be honored and build upon to address the urgent challenges posed by climate.

Q3

PRIVATIZATION OF SOES

Introduction:-

State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in Pakistan indeed have been a significant burden on country's budgetary economy. Most of the SOEs in Pakistan operate in loss which the government has to bear. The inefficiency of SOEs due to bureaucratic management, lack of competition and outdated technology often results in poor financial performances. They are a prominent burden on the national budget. We look into detail evaluation of why SOEs of Pakistan should be privatized and how it can be done.

Why Privatization is Necessary?

Financial Drain

SOEs have accumulated massive losses over the years. For example PIA and Pakistan Railway have cost taxpayers billions of rupees. The total losses of major SOEs amount to around Rs. 5.59 trillion (\$26 billion).

Inefficiency:-

Many SOEs suffer from administrative, management and policy issues leading to poor service delivery and financial viability. This drains the national budget.

and hinders economic prosperity

Fiscal Burden:-

The continuous financial support required to keep these enterprises afloat exposes the economy to fiscal vulnerabilities.

Market competition:-

Private sector entities often operate more efficiently due to competition and profit incentives. Privatising can introduce competition, leading to better services and innovation.

HOW to Privatize?

Identification of SOEs:-

There should be a thorough assessment to identify which SOEs are viable candidates for privatization. The ones that constantly are in loss and have no strategic importance should be privatized.

Transparency and Fairness:-

The process should be transparent and fair to avoid corruption and ensure public trust. This includes a clear criteria for selecting buyers and fair pricing mechanism.

Regulatory Framework:-

There should be a robust mechanism to oversee the process to ensure that the new private owner

adhere to regulations and standards.

Employee Protection:

There should be measures to protect the rights and jobs of the employees.

Public awareness and gradual implementation :-

Public support is crucial for the success of Privatization. This should be a gradual process to avoid sudden disruptions and for a smooth transition.

Conclusion:-

Privatization of the state owned enterprises (SOEs) can help alleviate the financial burden on Pakistan's economy and improve efficiency and service delivery. However, the execution should be carefully planned to ensure that it benefits the state in the long run.