

~ (General Knowledge II) ~
~ (Current Affairs) ~

~ (PART - II) ~

~ (Ans no. 2) ~

Reasons and Implications of HTS Islamist Rebels Toppling Bashar al-Assad's Regime in Syria.

→ Introduction:-

The recent developments in Syria, particularly the toppling of Bashar al-Assad's regime by the HTS Islamist rebels, mark a significant shift in the geopolitical landscape of the region. This unprecedented change can be critically evaluated through lenses including political, social & international implications.

→ Background of the conflict:-

The syrian civil war has been ongoing since 2011 leading to a complex & multifaceted conflict. Initially sparked by protests against Assad's regime, the situation escalated into a full-blown civil war involving various factions, including government forces, opposition groups, and extremist organizations. Over the years, the war has caused immense suffering, with hundreds of thousands killed & millions displaced.

→ Reasons Behind the Change:

1) Public discontent with Assad's Regime:-

Assad's regime has been marked by human rights abuses, corruption, and failure to address the needs of the people. This created widespread dissatisfaction, making syrian

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more open to alternatives like HTS.

2) HTS's Military Strength:

HTS grew stronger over time, using effective insurgency tactics & military strategies. Their ability to exploit weakness in Assad's forces helped them gain control of key areas.

3) Regional Support:-

HTS received backing from regional powers, particularly Turkey, which provided military aid & support.

4) Assad's over-reliance on foreign Assistance :-

While Russia & Iran provided critical military & diplomatic backup to Assad, the regime's over-reliance on foreign powers

of Assad's regime is a major setback for Russia & Iran, both of which have invested heavily in supporting him. Russia, in particular, has seen its regional influence diminish with the loss of its primary ally in the region.

5) Rising extremism & Terrorism:-

HTS's

rise could inspire other Islamist extremist groups in the region, while HTS itself is not affiliated with ISIS, its victory could embolden other radical groups to pursue similar agendas.

6) Potential for Divided Syria:-

Syria

could face further fragmentation as various groups vie for power.

while HTS may control large parts of the country, other factions

6)

weakened its legitimacy among Syrian population. The lack of domestic support, coupled with Assad's regime's failure to win back the trust of ordinary Syrians, created an opportunity for HTS to rise.

4) Fragmentation of Syrian Military - Assad's

military faced divisions & defections, weakening its control. HTS capitalised on these fractures & expanded its influence in areas abandoned by Assad's forces.

5) Ideological Appeal:

HTS's mix of jihadism & nationalism resonated with disillusioned Syrians, offering an alternative to Assad's authoritarian rule. They gained local support by providing governance & stability.

6) Geopolitical shifts :-

As Assad became more isolated, his support weakened. HTS took advantage of the changing geopolitical dynamics to strengthen its position & gain legitimacy.

7) Economic collapse :-

The prolonged war led to economic hardships, & Assad failed to address Syria's resource shortages. HTS offered local relief & governance, further undermining Assad's power.

→ Implications of the change :-

1) Political change & uncertainty :-

With the fall of Assad regime, Syria faces a period of political instability. HTS, a deeply Islamist group.

including Kurdish forces, remain powerful in the north.

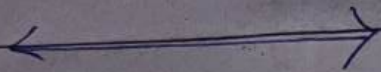
7) International Response & Intervention

The international community may struggle to find a cohesive approach to this situation. While some countries may recognise HTS as a legitimate authority, others, particularly western nations, will likely view them as a terrorist organisation.

→ Conclusion:-

The unprecedented change in Syria brought about by HTS's success in toppling Bashar al-Assad's regime is a complex phenomenon with a far-reaching consequence. The reasons for this shift are rooted in the regime's weakened state & HTS's strategic consolidation of power.

the situation remains fluid, and the future of Syria will depend on how these dynamics unfold in the coming years & months



~ (Ans no. 6) ~

→ COP 29 summit: failures & commitments:-

The 29th conference of parties (COP 29) to the United ~~States~~ Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Baku, was an important event in the global climate ~~policy~~ action agenda. While it showcased some advancements in climate negotiations & pledges, the summit faced significant criticism for not delivering the urgent, transformative actions required to address the escalating climate crisis. Below

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a critical evaluation of failures
& commitments made during COP29,
~~talked etc the context of~~
~~Political Challenge against~~
~~climate progress~~

→ Failures of COP 29

1) Lack of ambitious Emission Reduction
Targets :-

Despite widespread acknowledge-
ment of the growing threats posed by
climate change, COP 29 failed to
set sufficiently aggressive emission
reduction targets to limit global
temperature rise as major emitters China, India,
and the US resisted more stringent
measures.

2) Inadequate Climate Financing :-

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A recurring issue in global climate negotiations is the lack of adequate financial support for developing nations. COP 29 made limited progress in increasing climate finance commitments, particularly in the face of rising adaptation & mitigation costs for developing countries. The 100\$ billion annual pledge made at COP15 in Copenhagen has not been fully met, and COP 29 did not offer any clear path to bridge this gap.

3) Failure to Address Loss & Damage:-

One of the key issues that remained unaddressed at COP 29 was the concept of "loss & damage" associated with climate change impacts. Countries like Pakistan, which ^{are} ~~have~~ already experiencing

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the burnt of climate related disasters, have been advocating for mechanisms that allow developing countries to receive compensation for irreparable damage caused by climate change.

4) Weak Accountability Mechanisms

COP29

failed to introduce stronger accountability mechanisms to ensure countries fulfil their climate promises.

5) Insufficient Action on Carbon Pricing:-

Despite discussions on carbon pricing mechanisms, COP29 failed to create a unified global framework to implement effective carbon pricing or a global carbon tax.

6) No clear & Transition Plans for fossil fuel Dependence :-

COP29

lacked a clear roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels, particularly for countries highly dependent on them, which delayed the necessary global energy transition.

7) Limited focus on Adaptation for vulnerable countries :-

Although

Adaptation plans were discussed, there were no specific actionable plans or substantial support to help the most vulnerable nations, like Pakistan, build climate resilience.

8) Failure of finalise ~~per~~ Article 6 of the Paris Agreement :-

the long awaited finalisation of carbon markets under Article 6 of Paris Agreement was again postponed.

7) Lack of concrete Action on

Biodiversity :-

COP 29, missed the opportunity to address the interconnectedness b/w climate change & biodiversity loss.

10)

Action on Methane Emissions :-

COP 29 failed to implement effective global strategies or binding commitments to reduce methane emissions from industries like oil & gas.

➤ Commitments Made at COP 29 :-

1) Global Net Zero Emissions by 2050 :-

It reaffirmed the commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

2) Strengthening the Paris Agreement,
countries agreed to continue working
toward the full implementation of Paris Agreement.

3) Climate Finance Mobilisation
A Commitment was made to increase climate
finance for developing countries, pledged
to fully fill \$100 billion annual finance by 2020.

4) Establishing Loss & Damage fund:-
COP29 marked an important step in
establishing a fund to support developing
countries affected by climate-induced loss & damage.

5) Accelerating Renewable Energy
Transition:-

G20s pledge to accelerate the global transition
to renewable energy sources.

6) Phasing out coal:-

several countries made
commitments to phase out coal fired
power plants & transition to cleaner
energy sources.

7) Promoting Climate Adaptation in vulnerable Regions
COP 29 recognized the importance of adaptation.

8) Strengthening carbon Markets
countries agreed to strengthen international carbon markets.

9) Protecting forests & Biodiversity :-
commitments to increase efforts to halt deforestation & promote sustainable land management practices.

10) Investing in Green Technologies :-
COP 29 saw a pledge to significantly invest in the development of green technologies.

•) Conclusion :-

COP 29 in Baku was a mixed bag of outcomes. While there were commitments to green technology, adaptation, nature based solutions, the summit failed to deliver on crucial issues such as ambitious emissions reduction, climate finance & accountability.

(Ans no. 8) ~

→ Introduction:-

The CPEC has been a corner stone of bilateral relations b/w Pakistan & China, aiming to enhance connectivity, trade, & economic development. However the progression of CPEC projects has encountered several challenges, particularly in the transition from phase 1 into phase 2.

→ Challenges Hindering CPEC progress:-

1) Political Instability:-

Pakistan's political landscape has been characterized by frequent changes in government & policy shifts. This instability has led to inconsistent implementation of CPEC projects.

2) Economic constraints:-

Economic challenges faced by Pakistan, including fiscal deficits, inflation & a depreciating currency, have strained the country's financial resources & limited the government's capacity to co-finance CPEC.

3) Security concerns:-

The resurgence of terrorism & regional instability, particularly following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Attacks on infrastructure & personnel have raised concerns about the safety of investments & feasibility of large scale-projects.

4) Geo-political Tensions

Regional geopolitical dynamics, including tension with neighboring countries & global power rivalries, have complicated the strategic environment for CPEC.

5) Administrative & Bureaucratic Hurdles:-

Cumbersome bureaucratic procedures delay in land acquisition, &

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regulatory challenges have impeded the swift implementation of projects.

6) Environmental & Social concerns:-

Environmental degradation & displacement of local communities due to infrastructure development sparked public opposition, leading to project delays

7) Debt sustainability issues:-

The escalating debt burden associated with CPEC financing has raised concerns about Pakistan's long term debt sustainability, affecting the pace & scale of the project implementation.

→ Recommendations to Reinvigorate CPEC & ensure the success of Phase II :-

1) Enhance political stability:-

A unified approach to CPEC can mitigate policy discontinuities & build

investor confidence.

2) Strengthen Economic reforms:-

Implement comprehensive ~~and~~ economic reforms to address fiscal imbalances, promote sustainable growth & improve investment climate & provide solid foundation for CPEC.

3) Improve Security Measures:-

Enhancing security protocols, particularly in sensitive regions, and fostering cooperation b/w Pakistani & Chinese security agencies.

4) Engage in Diplomatic Initiatives:-

Proactively engaging in diplomatic dialogues to resolve regional tensions & align CPEC with broader geopolitical interests can create a more conducive environment for project implementation.

5) Streamline Administrative Processes:-

Simplify bureaucratic procedures, expedite land acquisition, and establishing clear regulatory frameworks.

6) Address Environmental & Social Impacts:-

Conducting thorough environmental & social impact assessments, involving local communities in decision making.

7) Ensure Debt sustainability :-

Adopting prudent debt management strategies will address concerns about debt sustainability & maintain fiscal health.

8) Foster Technological collaboration :-

Encouraging joint ventures and technology transfer between Pakistan & China can enhance the quality & efficiency of infrastructure projects.

9) Promote Regional connectivity :-

Linking with neighboring countries infrastructure, can enhance economic integration and open new markets.

10) Implement Transparent Monitoring Mechanisms :-

Establishing independent oversight bodies to monitor ~~project~~^{project} progress, financial expenditures, and adherence to environmental and social standards will ensure accountability & build public trust.

→ Conclusion :-

By addressing these challenges & implementing recommended strategies, Islamabad & Beijing can revitalize CPEC, ensuring that Phase II becomes a tangible reality that delivers sustainable economic benefits to both nations.