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Q. 2.

Introduction:

In December 2024, Hayat-Tu-Tahrir-Al-Sham (HTS) ~~led~~ accompanied by other militant groups toppled the throne of long-term dictator Bashar-ul-Asaad. The significant reasons behind this move are repressive regime of Asaad, Russian forces stuck in Ukraine, weakening of Iranian proxies in the Middle East and re-organization of HTS from scraps of Al-Nasr. It has far-reaching implications for the global and regional powers, including another hotspot of terrorism in the Middle East, Israel's incursions into Syria, US resurgence as a player of Middle East and disruption of supply-chain for Hamas and Hezbollah. Moreover, Turkey has also emerged prominently in this game of chess.

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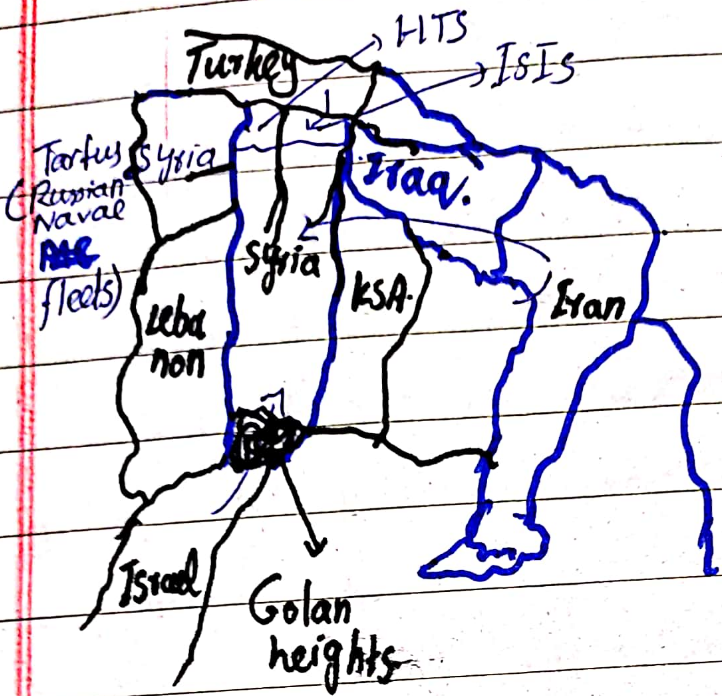
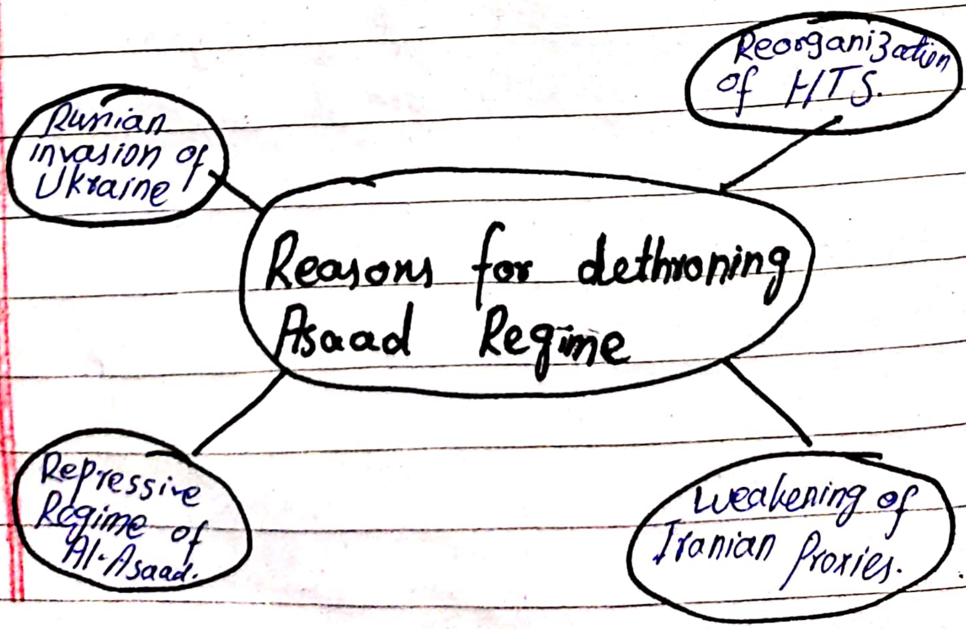
An overview of regime change in Syria.



In December, 2024, an alliance led by Mohammad Al Jolani of HTS toppled thrones in Damascus in a surprise move. This group was crushed by Asaad Regime with Russia and Iran, in 2015.



i) critical evaluation of the repressive measures taken by Bashar-ul-Asaad:

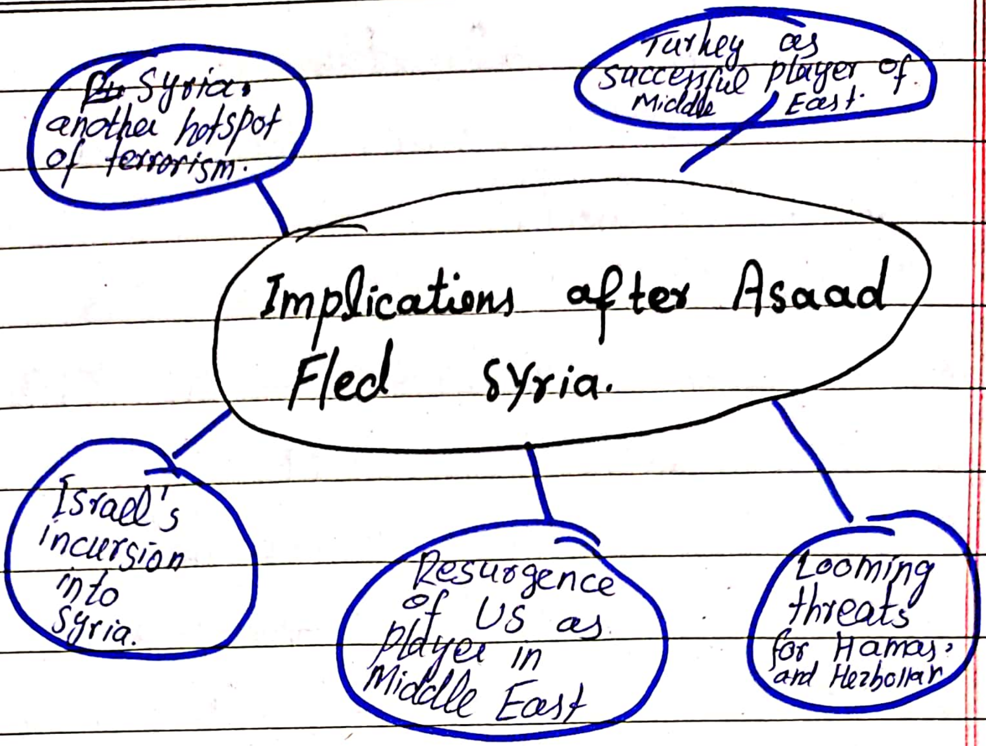
Bashar-Al-Asaad had been ruling Syria from 25 years after death of his father in 2011. He used chemical weapons against his own people to suppress opposition. He incarcerated opposition leader in notorious jail "slaughter house" of Damascus. It all incidates that his repressive regime fuelled resentment enough to topple his regime.

ii) Russia Stuck in Ukraine:

In 2011-15, Asaad claimed 90% of territory because of Russian assistance. ~~But~~ As for now, Russia is stuck in Ukraine, which turns ~~abou~~ out to be opportunity for HTS militants.

iii) weakening Iranian proxies:

Iranian supported Asaad with its proxies including Hezbollah and Houthis. However death of Hasan Nasrullah left Syria out of external help leading to increase in militant capabilities of HTS.



i) Critical evaluation of the possibility that syria will convert to hotspot of terrorism drawing analogy with Afghanistan.

After American withdrawl from Afghanistan in 2021, it became haven for terrorist factions. TTP, ISIL, ISK-P still involved in destabilising Afghanistan. In the same way, Syria will be further destabilised when a terrorist faction assumes the office of government.

ii) Critical evaluation of Israel's incursions into syria

Israel alway aspired to capture

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Golan Heights. After the fall of Asaad, Israel invaded "Internationally declared buffer zone" and occupied it. ~~These~~ It is a testament to expansionist ambitions of Israel.

iii) Critical evaluation of resurgence of US as a player in the Middle East.

After 2015, US badly failed in Syria when Al-Nusrah militants were crushed with the help of Russia and Iran. However, return of Al-Nusrah in the form of HTS is a testament to US winning this global power rivalry.

iv) Looming threats for Hezbollah and Hamas due to supply chain disruption:

On December 20, 2024, Hezbollah announced "**We are facing setback in supply of Ammunitions.**" The same setback will be faced by Hamas, which recieved weapons via Syria. It can change the regional equation if Israel dismantles Hezbollah and Hamas.

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v) Critical evaluation of Turkey as ~~new~~ successful player in games of Middle East:

Turkey supported Al-Nusrah in the Northern Syria to drive PKK and YPG, kurdish separatists groups, out from Syria. This tit-for-tat help from Turkey is also being cited to topple Asaad regime in Syria.

~~conclus~~ Conclusion:

It is evident that Syria has fallen into the hands of HTS, led by Mohammad Al-Jolani. It was motivated by weakening of Iranian proxies, Russian inability to help Asaad etc. However, it reintroduced US in the chess-board of Middle East and led to success of Turkey.

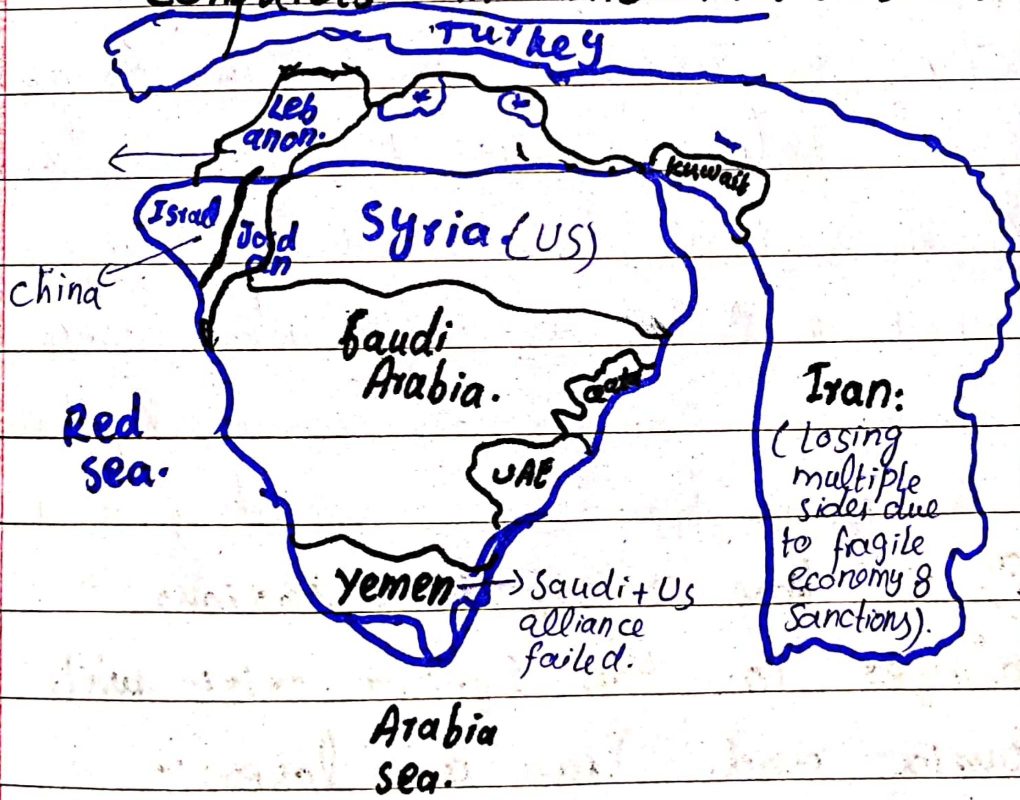
x———————x

Q.7.

Introduction.

The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East includes Israel-Palestine conflict, Israel-Lebanon Conflict, Yemen crisis and recent regime change in Syria. In all these conflicts, US is emerging victorious, while China, Russia, Iran and Turkey alongwith Saudi Arabia has little gains in the Middle east.

Conflicts in the Middle East:



In Middle East, a range of conflict are shaping the geopolitics of globe. Israel-Palestine conflict, which has claimed the lives of millions is just a strategic move for global powers. This ongoing struggle for supermacy has left multiple losers and gainers.

winners and Losers in Ongoing crisis the Middle East:

Following list shows the lost and gains in the Middle Eastern crisis.

(i) ~~US~~ China is emerging as real winner in ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine:

China is emerging as real winner in Israel-Palestine conflict. It is because of the fact that it tilted public opinion in Middle East, on its side. Moreover, in November 2024, a deal that unified all factions of Palestininian Resistance, was brokered by china.

(ii) US has emerged victorious player in the Syrian crisis while Russia and Iran as losers:

From 2011-15, Asaad Regime reclaimed 90% of the territory because of Russian and Iranian troops

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In meantime, they have been weakened by engaging their troops in Ukraine and Lebanon, which prompted Hayat-tul-Tahreer Al-Sham to reclaim Syrian throne. US regarded this as its strategic triumph.

(iii) critical evaluation of the fact that US ~~ha~~ is winner of game in Israel-Lebanon conflict while Iran has lost:

In October 2024, Hezbollah became a major issue for Israel. It engaged Israeli troops on both fronts i.e. Hamas and Hezbollah. However, Israel started its military operation in Lebanon in November 2024. In this conflict, US brokered ceasefire deal and emerged as prominent player.

(iv) Yemen is a pivotal point for Iran from where it can alter the equation of Middle East:

In 2015, Saudi Arabia alongwith ~~GCC~~ Gulf cooperation countries started operation in Yemen against Houthis. However, Iran-led alliance thwarted this operation. Thus, Iran still has a prominent say by its presence in Yemen.

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(v) Turkey as successful player in the games of Middle East: A critical appraisal:

According to Ministry of Foriegn Affairs, Republic of Turkiye, Turkiye started its operations against kurd separatists in ~~the~~ Syria. The precursor of HTS, Al-Nasrah was its major ally. Thus, this new equation in Syria is also being believed by many as a win for Turkey.

(Syrian whirlwinds: Arab News: 2024).

(vi) US has major gains in all the conflicts of Middle East with multiple losers:

By assessing all the conflicts in the Middle East, it can be deduced that US has still prominent say in affairs of Middle East.

(Mathew crobidge: Order, Not peace: Foriegn Affairs Magazine: 2024).

Conclusion:

It is evident that Middle East is marred by a range of conflicts ranging from Palestine to Iran. This fire is burning the lives of civilians but cooking the foreign policy of US, Russia, Iran, China, where they have losing as well as winning sides.

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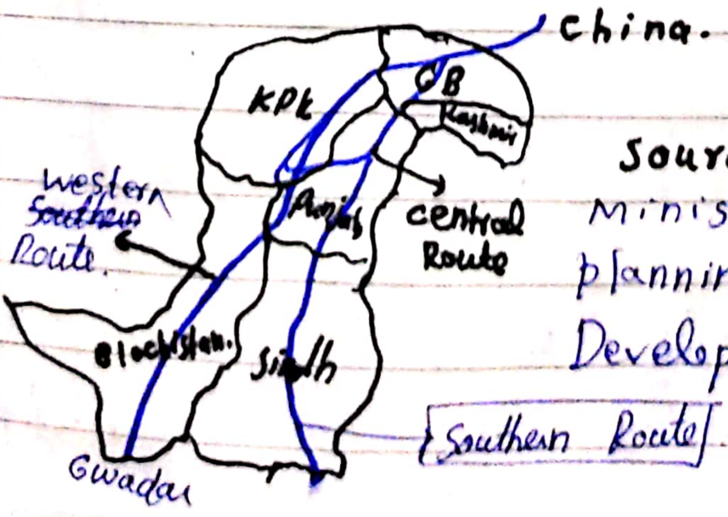
Q. 8.

Introduction.

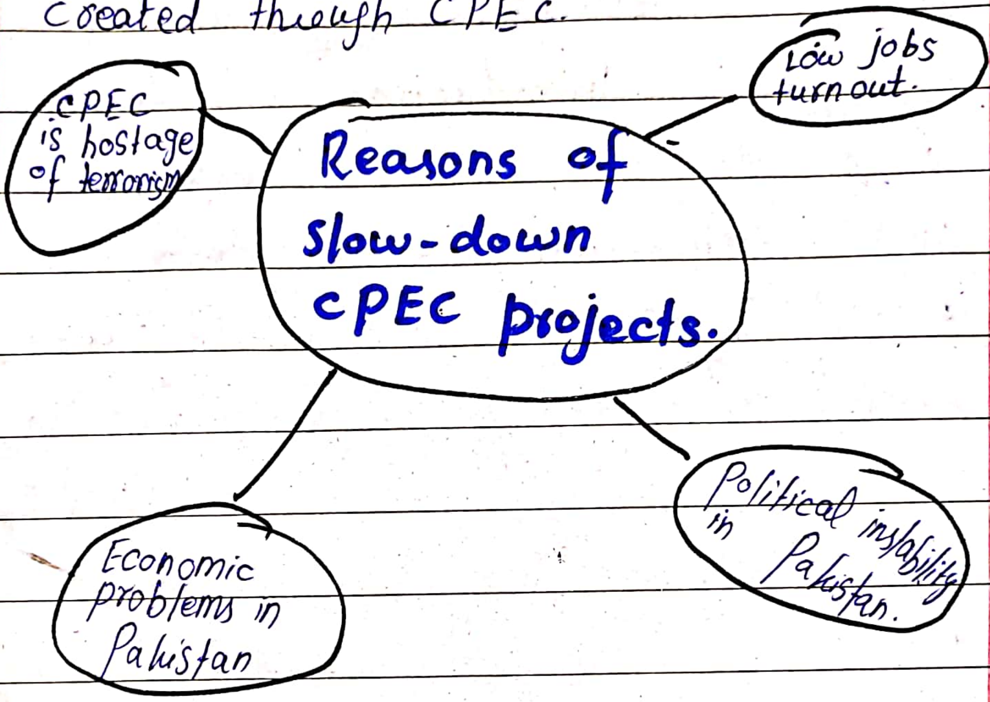
There are multiple factors, which have caused the snail-pace progress of CPEC products. These causes include terrorism in Pakistan, economic and political instability, low job opportunities as expected etc. However, these factors can be amicably removed following a course of action both by Beijing and Islamabad.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor: An overview.



Source: Ministry of planning and Development.

under CPEC, Sukki-Kinari Hydropower project and Karot Hydropower project are fully functional. In addition, Hakla-D.I. Khan infrastructure project has been completed. Moreover, ~~73~~,23,000 jobs were created through CPEC.



(i) CPEC: Hostage of violence:
~~In~~ CPEC has become a hostage of terrorism and protests. In March 2024, Chinese Nationals were killed in Bomb Blast in Dasu hydropower project. As per Strategic research institute, 800 chinese Nationals have been killed in 2024, working on CPEC.

(ii) Economic turmoil of Pakistan has slowed down the capability

of Pakistan to support CPEC project:

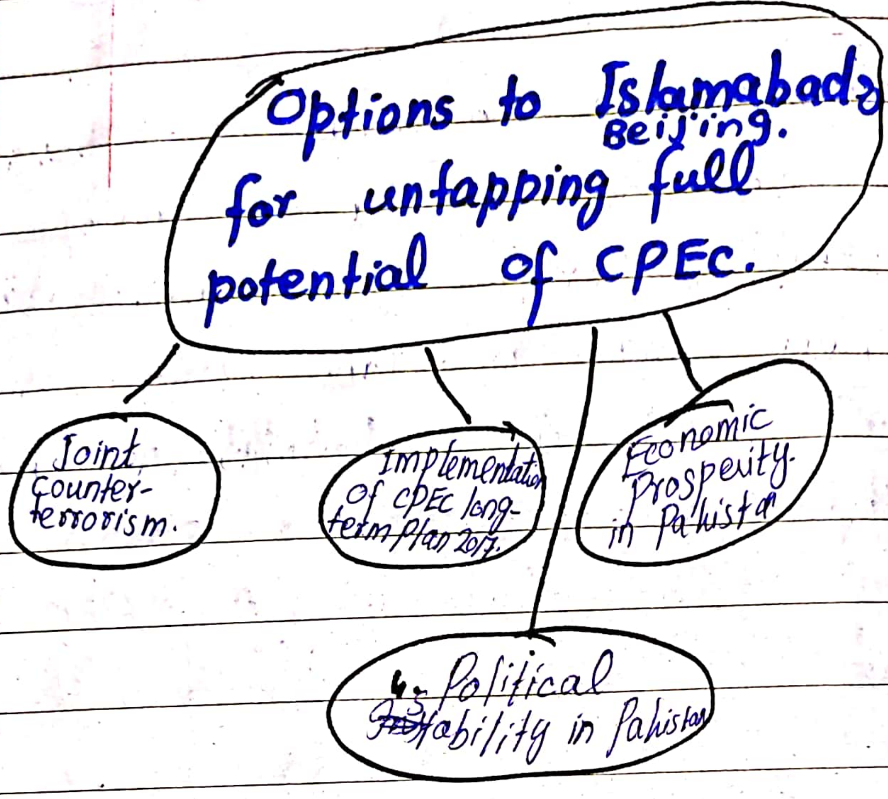
Pakistan ~~fa~~ is a country where economic deterioration led to dwindling reserves. Moreover, Pakistan's economy is a protectionist economy, which is opposite to terms and conditions signed in CPEC.

(iii) Political Instability in Pakistan is another reason of slow-down of CPEC:

~~in~~ In Pakistan, ~~a~~ governments could not fulfill their electoral tenure. After change of government, certain suspicions were raised regarding CPEC in 2018. As politics stabilised, government was ousted in 2022, resulting in political deadlock.

(iv) Low turnout of jobs as aspired by CPEC resulted in resentment among locals.

In CPEC document released by Ministry of Planning and Development, 2014, 36000 new jobs were expected to be created. However, on ground, only 16000 jobs are created. It filled resentment among the public about terms and conditions of CPEC.



(i) **Joint counter-terrorism is an effective strategy to ~~curb~~ make CPEC a tangible project.** Beijing and Islamabad can callobrate on counter-terrorism efforts. It is because East-Turkeminastan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is threat to china. Joint efforts can dismantle outfits, which are threat to CPEC.

(ii) **Full implementation of CPEC long-term plan can lead to promising results from CPEC.** Long-term plan (2017-25) was

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(iii) ~~Economic prosperity in Pakistan is a key to CPEC tangibility.~~

signed between Ministry of planning and Development, Pakistan and China. It reformed various initiatives under CPEC. These long-term plans can ascertain the promises which were made in initial document.

(iii) Economic prosperity in Pakistan is key to CPEC tangibility:

Pakistan can utilize CPEC for economic stability. It can utilize modernised farming initiatives under CPEC and export zones to revive its economy. This will stabilise economy of Pakistan and create reserves to stabilise CPEC.

(iv) Political stability in Pakistan can make CPEC a tangible project:

In Pakistan, there is urgent need of political stability for stable policies under CPEC. It can be ensured by political consensus about all projects

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Conclusion:

A number of detrimental factors have compromised the ability of CPEC to deliver as per expectations. However, if domestic efforts by Islamabad and foriegn initiatives by both Islamabad and Beijing are implemented in letter and spirit, CPEC will be a tangible project.

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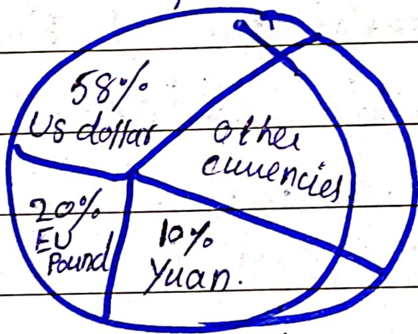
Q. 5.

Introduction

Dollar and SWIFT are extensively used by ~~to~~ US to sanction any country by freezing their financial assets. Moreover, dollarization of economies is used as bargaining chip by US. However, BRICS+, an emblem of unity of global south, can deter this threat by its New Development Bank, currency swap agreements, regionalisation of economies, relocation of new industries etc.

How dollar and SWIFT are used by US as weapon against the countries.

SWIFT is interbank transaction system between countries across the globe. As most of the trade is done in US dollar, so it forms 58% of SWIFT system.



SWIFT Banking system.

Thus, whenever, US has to sanction any countries, it freezes its assets in the foriegn banks. Moreover, it uses SWIFT to stop its currency exchange.

BRICs+ : A flash in the Pan:

BRICs+ is ~~an~~ multilateral organization consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa, UAE, Somalia, Ethiopia and Iran. Thus,

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a diverse combination of civilizations across the world. It is also referred as representative of Global south in face of G7.

Critical Evaluation of the ways BRICS+ counter SWIFT weaponization and dollar hegemony:

(i) New Development Bank can provide alternative loans to countries decreasing share of dollar:

In ~~KA~~ Kazan BRICS summit, 2024, countries vowed to develop an alternative banking to IMF. It was called as New Development Bank. It can offer loans to other countries in mutual currencies to stop weaponisation of dollar.

(ii) BRICS+ "common currency" can devalue the dollar's share in SWIFT:

If BRICS+ countries develop a common currency, it will decrease the transactions in dollar, carried out across the globe.

(iii) "oil agreements" can be carried out in common currency by BRICS+ countries:

UAE and Iran can enter into agreements with other countries in currency other than dollar. These two oil giants are a part of BRICS+ can strike ~~suffer~~ a heavy blow to the dollarization still heavily based upon oil.

(iv) Regionalisation of markets can lead to falling dollar shares in the global market:

Belarus-EU corridor and Russian Independent Railway Network were signed in Kazan summit, 2024. It can lead to regionalisation of markets in the central Asian region. Thus it can be a challenge to dollar and SWIFT hegemony.

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(v) Barter trade between BRICS+ can decrease dollar dominance in the world:-

B2B agreement is used for trade between Russia, Iran and India. Moreover, Russia can enter agreements with Brazil and Middle East in their mutual currency resulting in decline of dollar in global currency war.

conclusion:-

Although, it seems unrealistic that dollar can be challenged by BRICS+ countries, having different interests, it can be possible that Global South can challenge hegemony of dollar. It can be done by regionalisation of economies, exchanging oil in other currencies and new transaction systems. It can, atleast, offer sigh of relief to countries suffering from debt-diplomacy.