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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE II (CURRENT AFFAIRS)

SUBJECTIVE PART - PART II

Q2. The HTS Islamist rebels have toppled down Bashar al Assad regime in Syria. Critically evaluate the reasons and implications of unprecedented change in Syria.

Introduction:

Bashar al-Assad's 27 year old twenty-seven years regime came to an end after the unity of the rebel groups led by Abu Muhammad Al-Jolani, the head of Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham. The joint efforts of the rebels group took over Syria in just two weeks. The reasons and implications of the entire scenario led to an unprecedented change in Syria.

Bashar-al-Assad's Regime and joint Efforts of Rebel Groups against it :

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Bashar -al- Assads regime had been entirely a dictatorship regime. The people of Syria were averse to his control over their land. This control of Syria had been passed to Assad from his father, Hafiz Assad who, too, was a dictator. Because of his strict rules and policies, the people of Syria disliked his rule over them.

In order to bring an end to Bashar's government in Syria, the people protested multiple times. Starting from 2011, efforts have been made by the masses to topple down his government. However, each time through coercion, along with the backing of Russia and Iran these people and rebel groups' efforts would be halted.

However, a very different situation occurred recently that led to the ouster of Assad. It is said that Idani, the head of the HTS, diplomatically united the different rebel groups in Syria against Assads regime.

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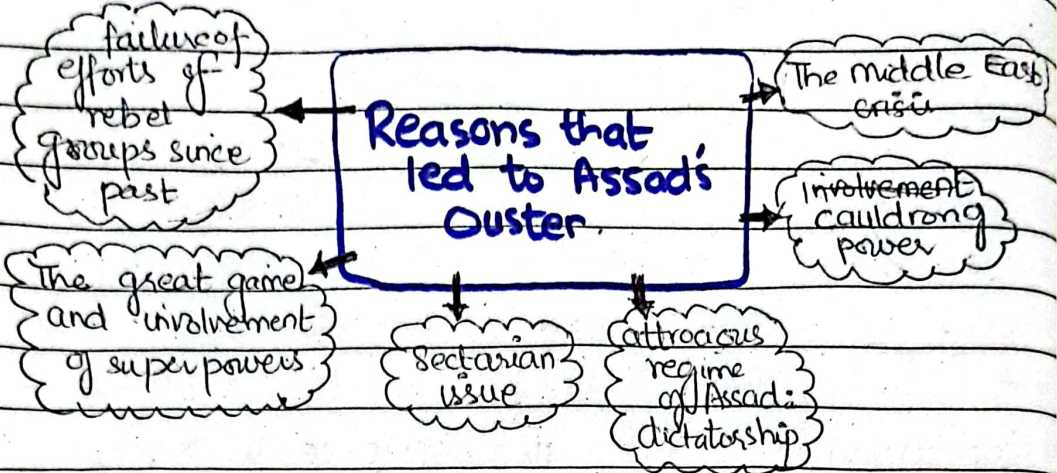
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The unity between several groups - HTS, SLA, and others - strengthened the rebellion groups against Assad, Russia, and Iran. This resulted in efforts from both side causing catastrophe. Resultantly, many were martyred, and both sides experienced losses. Moreover, many of the Syrians were dislocated and killed in the skirmishes. According to UN, the violence in Syria displaced 370,000 people.

Besides, there was an unprecedented confrontation between the two. In mere two weeks the rebels group took over four major and strategically important cities of Syria. The rebels group first took over Aleppo, then the Hama, the Homs, and eventually Damascus, the capital of Syria.

The efforts of the rebel groups involve reasons which led them take over of Damascus in a way that had never been done before. Follow Below are the reasons that led to the ouster of Assad.

A) Reasons that led to the Ouster of Assad:



(1) Failure of the Efforts of Rebel Groups Since Past:

Syria ^{had} been inhabited by different rebel groups ~~for~~ who aimed at toppling down Assad's regime. Because Assad's policies and strict rules were disliked, different rebel groups, including HTS, had been struggling individually to dethrone him. All the efforts would go in vein when Russia and Iran would back Assad. However, recently the rebel groups united against him and took over Syria in mere ten days. The head of the HTS group, ^{Jolani} in an interview with CNN

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said that the goal of their revolution is to overthrow Assad's regime. He made it possible just two days after the interview.

2) The Great Game: Involvement of Super Powers:

Since 2023, Middle-East have become a hub of crisis. While the USA and Israel loom over the social media and mainstream media for its involvement in war crimes against humanity. In order to spread influence, Russia and USA has always been, indirectly, confronting one another. It is believed that in order to achieve Israel's goal of "Greater Israel" the US backed ^{rebel} groups in Syria in order to break Russia's influence. Also, Iran could be weakened through backing the rebel groups. The Great Game becomes clearly evident after the ouster of Assad when Netanyahu released a video stating it was with the help of Israel that Syria got liberation.

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unravelling after his escape. According to a report, more than 100,000 people died in Syria's jails and detention centres from ~~200~~ 2011. Each of the detainees had a story to unfold. Many became the victims of the Assad's brutal regime.

(5) The Middle East Crisis; HTS's motive:

The HTS is an offshoot of Al-Qaeda, however, Tolani had later untangled his group because he believed the Al-Qaeda is not doing enough for his people in Syria and is more focused on other parts of the world entailing Muslims.

Additionally, the Middle East crisis had also been crucial in the situation in Syria. US and Russia's confrontation and involvement had further led to the aggravation of the crisis in Syria.

B) Implications of the Change in Syria:

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(1) The Power Cauldron:

After the ouster of Assad, Syria faced vacancy of power. The media was more focused on the future of Syria, and most importantly, who will lead Syria.

Most highlighted figure throughout the scenario was Abu-Muhammad

Al-Jolani, the head of HTS, who was believed to head Syria. Also videos had been circulating ~~where~~ on social media which portrayed the likeness of the Syrian people towards Jolani. Many ~~ref~~ referred to them as Mujahideens.

(2) Releasing Detainees: Unfolding Brutal Stories:

After victory, the prisoners, under the Assad regime, were released which conveyed many stories that the world was unaware of. These detainees not only presented Assad's brutal and atrocious control, but also presented the good image of the rebel groups. The story of a journalist who was detained in 2021 was seen as a dead shock - the world; informing them about Assad's brutality during towards common people of Syria.

(3) The Greater Israel and Syria:

It is believed that Israel helped the rebel groups through US, in order to take over Israel.

Syria. Right after the ouster of Assad, Syria Israel sent its troops to Golan Heights, and which belongs to Israel. It also started expanding its influence.

The story does not end here, Israel also pounded Syria. However, the rebel groups remain silent on the attacks of Israel on Syria.

Conclusion:

Bashar-al-Assad's regime represented atrocity, however after his ouster the future of Syria still seems to be wavering. The reasons led to the ouster, while the implications still portray Syria as an unstable nation that requires great efforts to become stronger than its previous status.

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Q3. Russia - China growing economic, strategic and geopolitical collaboration is an effort to potentially challenge the US led world order. Discuss.

Introduction:

History informs us about how power can make some friends and some foes. After the great disastrous events, like 'World War II' and 'Great Depression', US had emerged as the sole superpower. However, the world keeps on changing every minute, month, and year. Recent years have shown that the world has shifted from unipolar world to multiple-polarity. In this regard, China and Russia seemed to be collaborating in order to tackle the US influence. On the other hand, US keeps on maintaining its position. Thus, Russia and China's growing economic, strategic and geopolitical collaboration has been their effort to potentially challenge the US-led world order.

Justification :

China and Russia have been in a persistent struggle to reduce the influence of US. And because of their efforts they have become a potential threat for US.

Recent years have shown the efforts of the two. Among these efforts, one of them is the meetings regarding regional problems. Different meetings of regional organizations, as well as the meeting of COP-29 where China and Russia appeared as key players embodies their influence. Such organizations and meetings increase the trust of other states towards China and Russia and hence, increases their influence against US.

On the other hand, US. was seen penetrating into Gaza by providing military and financial aid to Israel. Many countries had criticized US. for its involvement in war crimes against humanity. This support of US. for Israel had been

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a huge setback for US.

The Middle East crisis had been one of the hot topic of the year 2023 and 2024. During this vulnerable time, China indirectly helped counter US influence by arranging meetings between Iran and Saudi-Arabia. On the other hand, Russia provided aid to the opposition of Israel. and US is combating them.

Moreover, the de-dollarization effort of China and Russia, along with some countries would be a huge setback for ~~Russia~~ U.S. This might decrease the influence if dollars are replaced with Yuan.

Additionally, the BRICS also represents China and Russia's collaboration. Their unity in different important global events have been a setback for US.

Conclusion:

The joint effort of Russia and China has been a huge setback for US, as US has been seen stuck in issues with Gaza which has led to financial losses too. This gap had provided China and Russia to increase its influence.

Q7. Critically evaluate the beneficiaries and losers of the ongoing conflicts in Middle East.

Back ground:

Since the 7th October, 2023 Middle East have become the hub of crisis. On 7th October, 2023 Hamas attacked Israel. However, Israel have had an intense retaliation. Since then it has been pounding Gaza with bombs.

Moreover, the war did not end here. Later it started attacking Lebanon, as Hezbollah of Lebanon backed Hamas of Gaza. The story

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doesn't end here, ~~Yemen~~^{Iran} also jumped
Iran also jumped into the war
against Israel and US. Russia
thus got the opportunity and
backed Iran.

later on Israel was bombed by
Hezbollah which portrayed the
inefficiencies of Israel's Iron dome.
After which, Syria crisis broke out.
Thus, Middle East had been seen
as a power cauldron lately.

→ Beneficiaries and losers of the ongoing conflicts in Middle East:

US has played a major role
in the ongoing crisis in Gaza.

However, not only has it provided
aid to ~~Gaza~~^{Israel} against Gaza, but also
has faced ~~bleet~~ backlash from countries.

The backlash and dislike became
evident in the US-presidential elections.

It is said that Trump emerged
so victorious due to the idea that
he is going to broker cease fire or
end war in Gaza.

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On the other hand; the other block; Iran; Russia and countries their allies like Lebanon had initially been the beneficiaries as the world viewed them as heroes. However, the current crisis in Syria has been a huge setback for Russia and Iran. Moreover, the Rebel groups had been supported by US and Israel. In this matter US emerged as the beneficiary.

Since Middle East has become a power cauldron. The only beneficiary throughout the crisis and conflicts was Israel. As Israel faced less damage as compared to other countries.

Moreover, we also know that China was indirectly involved in the 'Great Game'. US and Russia along with its allies was busy in conflicts while China was busy arranging great events that could help it gain the trust of other countries.

Conclusion:

Middle East had become a power cauldron after the crisis began in 2023. Due to which US and Russia directly confronted each other, by their direct involvement in war. However, China remained distant and spread its influence.

