

Part - II

Q No: 2

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

The two military alliances emerge in Syria in 2011.

① Russia Military Alliance

Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, Bashar - al - Assad alliance.

② US - GCC

Gulf cooperation council (Rebels)

① Al - Usra ② Pre - Syrian Army
supported by KSA and US with weapons and finance.

Rebels were declared as freedom fighters by US and GCC. Russia and Iran declared as terrorist.

The priority of US and GCC supported rebels to topple down

Assad government. while Assad priority was to lost territory. There started unprecedented war SDF government an opportunity to strengthen their own territories.

Al Qaida in Iraq 2003 established by Al-Zarqawi. Al Nusra in 2005 by Al-Zarqawi has an ideological difference between with Al-Qaida and made new group. The Islamist militant group Hayat Tahir al-Sham (HTS) and allied rebel ^{Jolani fighters} factions member of Al-Qaida, Al Nusra. Al-Qaida joined in 2003, at the age of 21. He then joined Al-Nusra and ISIS. He belongs to Syria. He made 2016 group HTS due to his political and ideological difference with other groups.

Rise of HTS ^{and} Fall of Damascus

HTS is a militant Sunni Islamist group that emerged as a dominant force in the Syrian civil war.

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HTS and allied rebels factions launched a major offensive in north-western Syria. The rebels last stronghold was in Aleppo and Idlib provinces which border Turkey and it was dominated by HTS, Turkish backed rebel factions also controlled territory with the supported by Turkish troops. On 27 November, HTS and its allies launched their surprise attacks. After 3 days, they took control of most Aleppo - Syria largest city and then swept southwards down the highway to the capital Damascus, as military collapsed. Within 3 months majority of territory were captured without fighting. Kabul was captured without firing a single bullet. USA and NATO troops left. Ashraf Ghani and close allies left. 54 years long Assad dynasty fell. Close allies of Assad fled PM along with key 18 ministers decided not

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to cease country and approach
Jolani for negotiation. Jolani
accepted negotiation as objective
was achieved Assad fled away
and Damascus was neutralize
and PM offer negotiation.

Agreement:-

Transitional government under PM
to conduct free and fair
elections in Syria.

Reasons of fall of Damascus

- ① Russia was instrumental to the
victory of Assad from 2015-2018.
It could not help Assad at this
time. Russia fired skud missiles
from 2015-2018, SC0 30, SC0 35 Tet
bombs were used as bombardment
Helicopters were also as bombardment
more than 10 thousand soldiers
fought on ground.

Training, scouting centers, military hardware, ~~electronic~~ economic resources primarily oil and gas in control of ISIS were attacked. Russia is stuck in Ukraine war, launched all-out war in 2022. Facing financial crisis due to sanctions. Resultantly military capacity of Russia is bequeered. It was an attempt of US to drag Russia in two warfronts and Russia deny it as result Assad did not had enough capacity to fight on his own.

② Iran was instrumental in 2015-2018 Assad victory. Iran provided variety of weapons, hardware and drones. Revolutionary guards were fighting.

③ Key role in victory of Assad and against rebels and ISIS. Same Iran is stuck in between growing security compulsion.

It could not provide the desired support to Syria. (1)

(1p) Hezbollah was key Allies of Assad government from 2011-2022. He sent armed groups like Russia and Iran to Syria to fight against Sunni rebels on one hand and ISFs on other hand. The fight came on sectarian ground. Now Hezbollah has faced severe setbacks at the hands of Israel. Key leadership is being killed. Israel attacked southern Lebanon and different hold of Hezbollah and has lost its strength. and resultantly could not provide support to Assad. (2)

The national defense forces to Syria has become immensely weak as has fought more than a decade war.

Weapons was exhausted and outdated for example Syria has 5 operational Combat Helicopters 12^m Med Assad. Financial capacity of government decreased.

Implications:-

- ① Role of Iran in ME would decline significantly. Iran has been pursuing its objective in ME through proxies of for example Houthis in Yemen, Hamas in Gaza, Lebanon in Hezbollah. Iran remained Strategic Ally of Assad regime. Iran has been major supply of weapon to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Role of Iran in Damascus will curtail and role of Turkey and Arab world will increase.
- ② Refugee crises have placed immense strain on host countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan creating social and economic pressure.
- ③ Erosion of state sovereignty. The Assad regimes' reliance on foreign powers like Russia and Iran has weakened Syria's sovereignty. Their influence in the region has deepened, altering the

Balance of Power in the Middle East.

④ Syria became a battleground for proxy conflicts involving global powers (US, Russia) and regional players (Iran, Turkey, Gulf states). This has exacerbated the conflict and prolonged its resolution.

⑤ Shift in Global Power Dynamics: Russia's military intervention in Syria solidified its role as a key global actor and centered its influence in the ME. The US fluctuating policy in Syria reflected its declining dominance in the region, raising questions about western commitment to global stability.