

QUESTION: 02

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1.

INTRODUCTION

21st century will be remembered in the annals of history as the era, where authoritarian regimes had to knee-down. Whether, it was the Arab Springs or the ouster of Hosna Sheikh from Bangladesh. The opposition is winning all around the world. Syria is another manifestation of this. Islamist rebels topple-down the half-a-century rule of Assad family, forcing him to flee the Damascus. The changing geopolitical tensions and middle-East crisis, specifically ~~the~~ since October 2023, are the main reasons behind it. This can change the trajectory of ongoing Iran-Israel conflict along with other implications. The people of Damascus needs to pay the price of freedom through patience and resilience.

2. SYRIA: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RECENT CONDITION

In early December, 2024 the Islamist rebel group, Hayat-e-Tehreek Sham (HTS), occupied Aleppo city - north of Damascus. After a while, the rebels marched on to Damascus with its leader Juhani announcing the flee of Assad to Moscow, Russia. Currently, Juhani that is backed by Turkey, Al-Qaeda is in charge of Damascus political affairs.

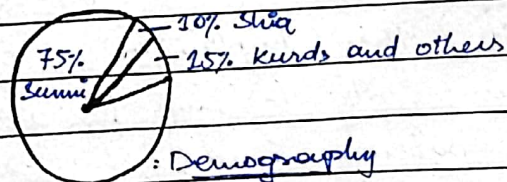
3 REASONS BEHIND THE FALL OF DAMASCUS:

3.1 IRON-HAND RULE:

Al-Asad family has ruled over Damascus for 54 years approx. In this rule, fundamental human rights, freedom, economic stability have remained a distant dream. To put things in perspective, the rebels emptied private jails of Asad and found an 11-year old in it. (-BPC).

3.2 THE CURB OF MAJORITY:

Asad and his family are Shia Muslims that ruled Sunni majority without even their consent. This created distrust for decades between the people and their rulers.



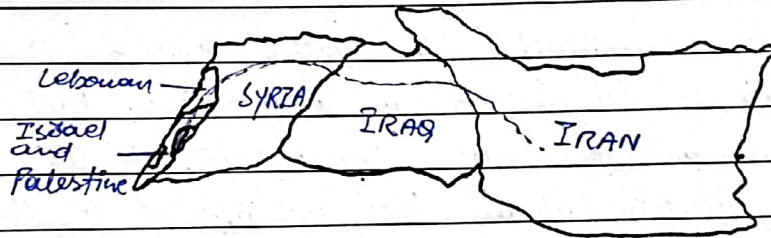
3.3 DECADE LONG UPRISING:

Back in 2013, there were protest going on inside Damascus and Arab springs. An 13-year old boy, Ibrahim, casually wrote 'Now, it's your turn, Doctor!'. The line is high/lighting towards Asad as he is also a doctor. Resultantly, Ibrahim along with his friend - all winners - were taken by Syrian forces. After physical

and mental torture, they were released, but the event created so much chaos that HTS emerged. Since then, HTS was fighting for Syrian liberation backed by Turkey, ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

3.4 ON-GOING ISRAEL WAR:

In contrast of HTS, Assad government is controlled or influenced by Iran. Through Syria, Iran aids its proxy Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.



Since October 7, 2023, Israel is engaged in proxy wars and so is Iran. Leadership of Hamas, Hezbollah has also been killed. On the other hand Russia is busy in Ukraine as well. Owing to these reasons, it was perfect time for HTS to topple Assad.

3.5 Change of US Regime :

It is also a major reason as Trump has given warning to Tel Aviv to clean-up this mess by January 20, 2024. Like his earlier rule, Trump will go hard on Iran and try to create peace in Middle-East. Hence, clipping Shia govt. wings in middle-East is the first step.

4

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FALL OF DAMASCUS:

4.4

4.1

SAFE BORDERS FOR ISRAEL:

Tel Aviv had shown concern over presence borders multiple times. As Iran keeps attacking golan north as well as golan trana. Now, the Hamas is tatters and Assad MIA, Tel Aviv can vision of greater Israel plans.

4.2

IRAN'S DOMINANCY WILL LOSE:

Middle-East has remained the battle ground of Shia vs. Sunni for a long-time. But, the change of Saudi's leadership, in the form of M. Bin Salman, has contributed to the tilt of region towards Sunni governments. This will again have the dominancy of KSA in the region.

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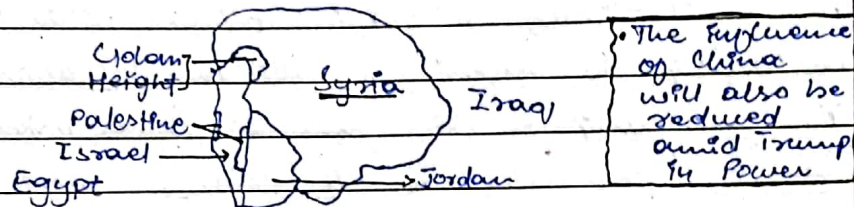
4.3

PROXY WARS WILL CEASE TO EXIST:

Middle-East proxies are majorly funded by Iran and Russia. Now, the routes for supplying arms has been cut-off. This will weak the proxies of Iran, making the dominancy of Tel Aviv and Riyadh in the region. The cry of Palestinians will be buried down in their glory. as since 2023, KSA showed merely a concern over this issue except for lip service.

4.4 ISRAEL IN WILL DOMINATE AKA USA :

The influence of USA in the region will enhance that has been curbed during Biden administration. Israel with such support has already claimed Golan heights of Syria. It is just the matter of time that Tel Aviv spread itself across the Nile and Riyadh to form greater Israel.



5. CONCLUSION

Now, it is evident that the fall of Syria is due to many actors and decade-long struggle. The timing is crucial though. The fall of Damascus will cause multiple implications on region especially over proxy wars. The region may become less polarized, but not necessarily less hostile towards each other. For now, the rebel move of Syria is more like the calm before the storm. All the actors in the helms of affairs need to take responsibility for stability in the region.

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QUESTION : 04

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, whenever a rising power challenges the hegemony of a settled power, tensions emerged. This made both the players opposing yet reliable on each other. Thucydide principle, in recent times, is visible between China-Russia partnership in contrast of USA and its allies. The partnership of these ~~countries~~ ~~three~~ ~~arion~~ countries poses challenge to USA in more than one way. This is supplanting its economic, political and military influence. Resultantly, it will affect the world order, shifting it towards multipolarity.

2. RUSSIA - CHINA GROWING PARTNERSHIP

2.1 ECONOMIC SECTOR:

China has become the biggest importer of Russian gas and oil since the start of Ukraine war. Recently, China has also send technological support turning the trade volume around \$240 billion. This has enabled Russia to fight on its South western border.

2.2 STRATEGIC COLLABORATION :

China shares border with Russia making it an inevitable partner in China's Belt-Road Initiative (BRI). The Bear's will to reach warm waters has included it with China in a close cooperation. The Euro-Asian route will be passed from Russia, Central Asian countries to Europe.

2.3 GEO-POLITICAL STEP :

Russia and China both are seen in the eye of USA, facing multiple tariffs and sanctions. The scarcity of dollar, especially for Russia, made them join the BRICS. The dollar hegemony now is in the looming threat of being replaced. BRICS countries are agree upon new currency instead with dollar for international trade.

3. IMPACT OF GROWING CHINA - ~~RUS~~ RUSSIA PARTNERSHIP ON USA :

3.1 UNIPOLARITY TO MULTIPOLARITY :

The rise of China in 21st century has proved that this world is too big to have single superpower. The Eastern wing, China-Russia, are dominating side-by-side USA economically, politically and militarily. This will create tensions in the west. USA for years desperately militarizing Pacific ocean for this region.

3.2 INFLUENCE OF USA IS DIMINISHING:

USA influence especially during the Biden administration has reduced drastically. This was manifested in China indulging freely in Middle-East peace agreements, e.g. between Hamas and Fatah and Iran and KSA. Likewise, China is dominating in South America as well. Recent inauguration of a port in Peru is its example. In Africa too, China owns 50 percent of mines. Even in Asia, its lone reliance, India is playing at both ends too - seen in Karhan declaration.

3.3 DOMINANCE OF DOLLAR IS IN QUESTION:

Fed by USA's carrot and stick tactics, developing countries are opting other options. Recently, Russia and Afghanistan signed a barter trade agreement. Likewise, China through BRICS+ is planning to introduce separate currency and monetary funds similar to IMF and WB. This is challenging USA in economy.

3.4 CURB OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE:

A super power is like a big brother of all as Ottoman Empire once was. USA has lost its glory amid Gaza war. The blind support to Tel Aviv has done more harm than good. This was seen in recent UN security council ceasefire voting. The UNSC ceasefire seized to be acted upon by USA's veto with 1/25

vote, making it alone standing on the other side of the ground. Not even its allies, France or UK, voted in favour.

3.5 Internal conflicts also ignited in USA:

There goes a proverb, "before managing external threats, set your own house in order." The on-going Gaza war, inflation and diminishing diplomacy role of USA has made its people stood against state's policy. Therefore, Trump's 'Make America Great Again (MAGA)' mantra worked too. However, the America Trump left in his first tenure was different and so was the world. Literal MAGA would be a challenge for USA especially after Trump's fall down.

4. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the growing China-Russia partnership is impacting USA internally as well as externally. This is eventually changing global order. USA is facing challenges on diplomatic, political, economical and environmental level. This is making the world question the credibility of USA on the throne of superpower. The future is unexpected but for USA, it seemed gloomy as China and Russia have shown other 190 states the other side of the world as well.

QUESTION : 07

Ans

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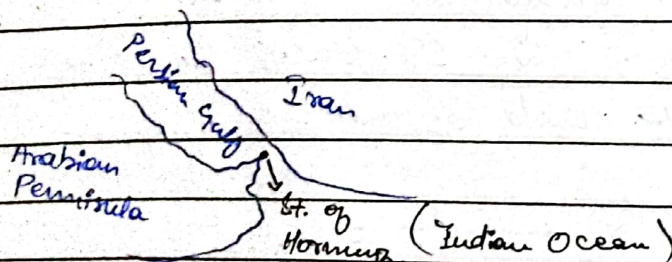
INTRODUCTION

There is a famous idiom that when two elephants fight, it is only the grass that is being affected. This situation is suitable for middle-east as well. Examining the current situation there are some actors who will get benefit while other at the loss. What matters most is how long it would take to have a peace in middle-East. The land that is sacred religiously has ironically been in war for decades. The players at the helm of affairs must commit for peace for good now.

2. PLAYERS IN MIDDLE-EAST CONFLICTS:

2.2 IRAN

Iran is a prominent player in Middle-East conflicts mainly because of its location along with the only Shia dominating country. Middle-East is influenced by Iran because 20% of world's trade passes from Persian Gulf with St. of Hormuz as the checking point.



DAY _____

DATE _____

2.2 KSA:

Saudi Arabia influence the region for two reasons. Religious sites add by it and secondly it dominates Muslim world economically - due to oil. KSA want Sunni government in all-over the Middle-East.

2.3 PROXIES:

Proxies are supported by Iran and KSA mainly - often backed by respective allies. Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis are supported by Iran to have its influence in Gaza, Lebanon, and Yemen. Likewise, KSA supports all Sunni groups opposing the Shia proxies such as HTS in Syria supported by UAE - close ally of KSA, to displace Assad regime, which is Shia.

2.4 OTHER:

China, USA and Russia also play their respective roles to have dominance in region. USA supports Israel to have a watchdog in Middle-East. China focuses on mediation and trade, while Russia supported Assad regime in Syria.

3. BENEFICIARIES OF RECENT CONFLICT:

Recently, Israel and Hezbollah had a ceasefire deal while, ^{Damascus} ~~de~~ fall and Hamas leadership is dead. This has made multiple aspects of future but for the current situation, its beneficiaries are:

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3.1

IRAN:

Iran despite losing its ally in Syria, has proved to the world that it can resist a superpower, USA, even with sanctions. Also, in Ummah Iran emerged as the only country fighting for the cause of Palestine.

3.2

USA:

USA is having advantage as Israel is holding its grounds in Middle-East. Recent ceasefire deal is done by USA between Tel Aviv and Beirut. This shows that year long fight and humiliation - it got from supporting Tel Aviv - is finally paying off. With Assad out of Damascus, things will be easy for USA.

3.3

KSA:

With Syria under Sunni rule and Iran's proxies at their weakest, KSA is emerging as reclaiming unchallenged position of leader of Muslim Ummah. OIC summit in Ghana also proved it.

3.4

LOOSERS ISRAEL:

Israel has secured its borders through this conflict. With Beirut means Hezbollah in tatters and Hamas humiliated Israel is pretty much secured. Even the Golan Heights are claimed by Netanyahu officially.

Israel likely to influence its neighbours now - AFP

Lebanon

Israel
Palestine

Syria

* Assad in Moscow gave Israel peace around borders

4. LOSERS OF CONFLICT

4.1 PALESTINE.

Muslim world has dug its head in the sand, while Tel Aviv killed 40 thousands mercilessly. Indeed, this conflict and now the trump in USA, have made the concept of Palestine as a state, a pipe dream.

4.2 IRAN:

Iran did attack Israel and made a name for itself as Israel used million dollars to counter the cheap Iranian missiles. Yet, Iran has lost its connection to support its proxies. As Syria fall, Hezbollah and Hamas are not in touch with Iran. So, Iran is win as well as lost in recent conflict.

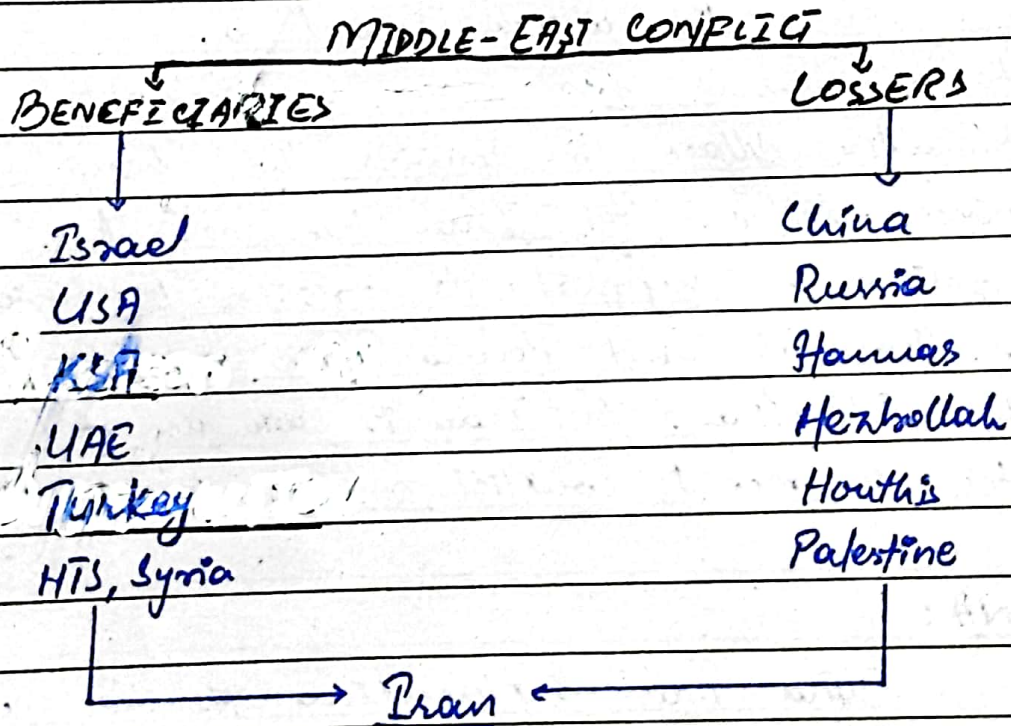
4.3 CHINA:

China was influencing the region through 'good office' and mediation. But, the recent Hezbollah deal proved that USA is back in the game now. The growing influence of China among proxies of Iran would likely to diminish as well.

5.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the losers and winners of conflict are vivid. For now, however, it is quite difficult to believe the situation be same. In geopolitics, tables may turn anytime. Yet, currently, the region has seen some major changes in regimes, influences and elimination of actors. Now, the precarious Middle-East seem to have tilted towards the west. Only time will tell for how long, but as of now, the situation has taken an unprecedented turn.



QUESTION: 08

Ans/

1.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan holds a strategic position in Asia as it is at the crossroads for central Asia at one hand while a pathway to touch warm ~~low~~ waters on the other end. This boon of Pakistan will fully be utilized in the form Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)'s flagship project China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC will make Pakistan a prominent state in world affairs on the bases of trade and commerce. Unfortunately, there has been a delay in its implementation. There are various reasons behind snail-paced progress of CPEC. Both countries need to take pragmatic actions to counter it. After all, this project is capable to make Pakistan self-reliant.

2. REASONS BEHIND SLOW-PACE OF CPEC

2.1 POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN PAKISTAN:

Every political leader in Pakistan comes with his own ideas and ambitions. This results in the halt of foregoing projects. Lack of political consensus cause projects like CPEC to stand still at the mercy of political will.

2.2 SECURITY PROBLEM:

The emergence of de facto government in Afghanistan since 2021 gave safe heavens to terrorist such as Tehreek-e-Paliban Pakistan (TTP). This made them attack CPEC developments such as on its western route and hide in the mountains or cross Durand line. Balochistan Liberation (BLA) has also been a problem for Pakistan. Recently, two engineers killed on Jinnah International Airport, Karachi by BLA, making CPEC pipe dream.

2.3 IGNORANCE OF ESTABLISHMENT:

The negligence and ignorance of Pakistani elites and establishment has deteriorated the situation in Balochistan. The province capable of feeding whole Pakistan is in distress under militants, landowners and politicians. This prevents the utilization of Gwader port, world's deepest port. Also, many right movements such as Baloch Yakjeeti movement halt CPEC.

2.4 Role of India:

India reportedly funds BLA in Pakistan to create insurgencies. The capture of Kalsushan Yachar is its example. India even planned to develop Chahsbahar port of Iran intentionally to make it opponent of Gwader. IMEC by India also shows the desperation of India to counter CPEC.

2.5 RELIANCE OF PAKISTAN ON USA:

Reliance on USA has always exploited Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy both. In the case of CPEC, USA knows that it is a game changer, the benefit of which will be enjoyed by China. The threat of multipolarity forces USA to influence Pakistan to focus on CPEC.

3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR CPEC CONTINUATION

3.1 WORK ON SECURITY:

Pakistan needs to work on security situation with China. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is its answer. More than 90 percent of border disputes are done by SCO-RATS, along with countering of militants. Comprehensive framework is necessary for the CPEC.

3.2 POLITICAL CONSENSUS:

It is the need of the hour as without internal stability, progress will remain a distant dream. All the political parties need to agree on CPEC as a project of 'National Interest'. Once done, following the same trajectory, Economic consensus can also be built with CPEC as uncompromised project.

3.3 ADDRESS LOCAL PEOPLE:

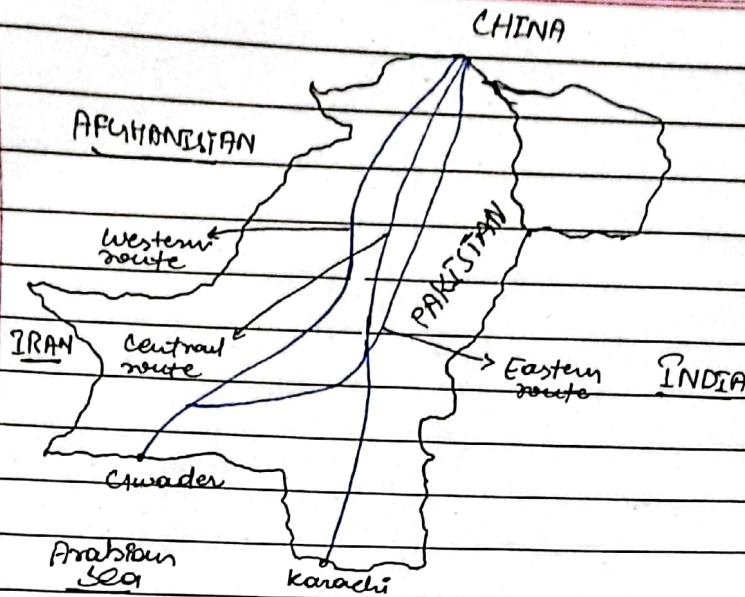
The multistage development is necessary for the stability of CPEC. The cry of the people of KP and Balochistan must be addressed. Their share in the pie must be given and opportunities should be opened for all. After all, routes of CPEC pass through these surgency-ridden provinces.

3.4 Intelligence-based operations:

This step is essential to curb the influence of India. The separatist movement must also be addressed. The one with threat perception must be dealt with from-hand. Empowerment of Counter-Terrorism Department along with Inter-services Pakistan (ISPR) is important. This will counter propaganda from Pakistan's Eastern and Western neighbour.

3.5 INDEPENDENCE WITH RESPECT TO NATIONAL INTEREST:

Pakistan needs to strengthen its economy through effective utilization of policies and countering corruption. This will prevent Pakistan to rely on the West for survival. India is example here that despite being ally of USA & QUAD, it trades off from Russia. CPEC will connect Pakistan to 75 countries and Pakistan could generate upto \$100 billion once CPEC run at its fullest.



• CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that CPEC has been halted and security concerns and other. This is impacting Pakistan adversely. CPEC is a game changer project for Pakistan. Hence, CPEC must be dealt with serious and stable policies. Pakistan needs to take pragmatic decision for it lest CPEC meets the same fate as Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline. China and Pakistan must work on the ways to complete Phase II of CPEC as soon as possible. It will benefit both eventually.

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