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Q.No. 4.

Answer.

The growing economic, strategic, and geopolitical collaboration between Russia and China is a significant development in International relations, aiming to challenge the US-led world order.

Economic collaboration:

1. Trade and investment:

Russia and China have strengthened their economic ties through various agreements, such as the China-Russia Investment Agreement (2018) and the Belt and Road initiative (BRI). China has become Russia's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding \$110 billion in 2020.

2. Energy cooperation:

Russia is China's largest supplier of oil and natural gas, with the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline being a key example.

China has invested heavily in Russia's energy sector, including the Vankor oil field.

3. Infrastructure development:

China's BRI aims to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa through massive infrastructure projects. Russia has joined the initiative, with several joint projects, including the Russia-China High-speed Rail Link and the Northern Sea Route.

Strategic collaboration:

1. Military cooperation:

Russia and China have increased military cooperation, including joint exercises, such as the Vostok-2018 exercise, which was the largest military exercise in Russia's history. They have also signed several defense agreements, including a 2015 agreement on strategic stability.

Russia and China have collaborated on counter-terrorism efforts, particularly in Central Asia and the Middle East.

The two countries have agreed to enhance cybersecurity cooperation, including information sharing and joint efforts to combat

cyber threats.

Geopolitical implications:

1. Challenging US Dominance:

The Russia - China alliance aims to reduce US influence in the region and challenge the US-led world order. By strengthening their economic, strategic and military ties, they seek to create a multipolar world.

2. Regional influence:

The partnership has expanded Russia's and China's regional influence, particularly in Central Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

3. Global governance:

Russia and China are promoting alternative global governance structures, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) grouping, which challenge the US-dominated international institutions.

Challenges and limitations:

1- Divergent interests:

Russia and China have different strategic priorities, which may lead to divergent

interests and potential conflicts -

2- Economic dependence:

Russia's economy remains heavily dependent on energy exports, while China's economy is increasingly diversified. This dependence may create tensions in their relationships.

3- US countermeasures:

The US has responded to the Russia - China alliance by strengthening its own partnerships in the region, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with Japan and Australia.

In conclusion, the Russia-China collaboration is a significant challenge to the US-led world order. While they have made significant progress in economic, strategic, and geopolitical cooperation, their partnership is not without challenges and limitations.

Q.No-8.

Answer.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been facing significant challenges, leading to a slowdown in its progress. Several internal and external factors have contributed to this slowdown.

Internal factors:

1. Financial management issues:

The project's financial management has been criticized, with allegations of corruption and mismanagement.

2. Lack of political ownership:

The PTI government's initial opposition to CPEC and subsequent shift in policy created uncertainty and hindered progress.

3. Bureaucratic Red Tape:

Pakistan's dysfunctional democracy and lack of commitment have led to bottlenecks in implementation.

External factor:

1. International criticism:

The US and India have expressed concerns over CPEC, citing concerns about China's expanding global role and India's territorial claims.

2. Security concerns:

The presence of Chinese personnel in Pakistan has made them an easy target for terrorists, further complicating the project.

3. Economic pressure:

Pakistan's economic troubles, including a declining capacity to share costs, have put a strain on the project.

To re-invigorate the project and

make Phase II a tangible reality, I recommend the following options:

Islamabad's Options:

1- Streamline financial management:

Implement transparent and accountable financial management practices to alleviate concerns about corruption and mismanagement.

2- Establish clear communication channels;

Foster open dialogue between stakeholders, including the government, private sectors, and civil society, to address concerns and build trust.

3- Enhance security measures:

Implement robust security measures to protect Chinese personnel and infrastructure.

Beijing's Options:

1- Re-evaluate project priorities:

Reassess project priorities and focus on key initiatives that drive economic growth and regional connectivity.

2- Increase financial support,

Provide additional financial support to Pakistan to address ~~the~~ its economic challenges and alleviate pressure on the project.

3- Foster regional cooperation:

Encourage regional cooperation and collaboration to address shared

security concerns and promote economic development.

By addressing these challenges and implementing these recommendations, Islamabad and Beijing can re-invigorate the CPEC project and make phase II a tangible reality, driving economic growth, regional connectivity, and prosperity for both nations.

Q.No.7.

Answer.

The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have far-reaching consequences, affecting various countries, groups, and individuals. Here's a conflict evaluation of the beneficiaries and losers:

Beneficiaries:

1. United States:

The US has maintained a strong military presence in the region, securing its strategic interests, such as access to oil and control over key waterways.

2. Saudi Arabia:

The Saudi-led coalition's intervention in Yemen has helped maintain their regional influence,

while also distracting from domestic issues like the Yemeni civil war.

3- Israel:

The conflict have diverted attention away from Israeli-Palestinian issues, allowing Israel to expand its settlements and maintain its military superiority.

4- Terrorist group:

Organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Hayat Tahir, al-Sham have exploited the chaos to expand their influence, recruit members, and carry out attacks.

5. Arm manufacturers:

The conflicts have driven demand for military equipment, benefiting arms manufacturers like Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon.

Losers:

1- Syrian people:

The civil war has resulted in over 500,000 deaths, millions displaced and widespread destruction of infrastructure and economy.

2- Yemeni people:

The conflict has led to a humanitarian crises, with millions facing famine, disease and displacement.

3- Iraqi people:

The ISIS insurgency has caused

significant damage to infrastructure, economy, and social fabric.

4- Iran:

The US withdrawal from JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) and re-imposed sanctions have severely impacted Iran's economy.

5- Libyan people:

The ongoing conflict has led to a fragmented country, with various militias for power and control.

6- Refugees and migrants:

The conflicts have triggered a massive refugee crisis, with millions forced to flee their homes in search of safety and security.

7- Regional stability:

The conflicts have destabilized the entire region, creating a power vacuum and encouraging extremist groups to flourish.

Neutral Parties:

1- Russia:

Russia's involvement in the region is complex, with both military and economic interests, while they have supported some governments, they have also provided arms to others.

2- China:

China's engagement in the region is primarily economic, with significant investments in infrastructure and

energy projects. However, they have also provided military support to some countries.

In conclusion, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have created a complex web of beneficiaries and losers. While some countries and groups have gained from the conflicts, many more have suffered greatly. The humanitarian, economic, and social consequences of these conflicts are far-reaching and a lasting resolution is essential to restore stability and security to the region.
