

Q3)

Introduction

Iran and Saudi Arabia's relationship can be characterized by long history of disputes, hostilities, and proxy wars. The two countries have long engaged in a tussle for dominance in the middle east. The conflict in Syria and Yemen serve as a testament of this rift.

In Syria, there is a shia-majority government led by Bashar-ul-Asad, who is backed by Tehran. However, Syria has a sunni-majority population. ~~This~~ Saudi Arabia wants ~~this~~ a sunni dominant government in Syria that is why it supports Al-Nusra, an ~~freedom~~ organization of freedom fighters that are trying to overthrow Asad's government. Similarly in Yemen, Iran is supporting a ~~freedom~~ group of jihadists that aims to overthrow Mansoor Hadi's Saudi backed government. The ~~&~~ conflict started in 2014 when Saudi Arabia declared

war in Yemen against Houthis. In 2016, a Shia cleric was executed in Saudi Arabia which led to an assault on the Saudi embassy in Iran. This event was the final nail in the coffin for Saudi-Iran relations, as it led to the complete shut down of diplomatic channels between the two countries.

A brief overview on Saudi-Iran Reapproachment

In recent times, Iran and Saudi Arabia have once again opened diplomatic channels. The process was facilitated by China's arbitration. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia have opened embassies. The president of Iran has extended an invitation to de facto ~~king~~ ruler of Saudi Arabia, Muhammad bin Salman, to visit Tehran, while the latter has also sent an invitation to the former to visit Riyadh.

Implications of KSA-Gran Reapproachment on Middle East

a) Stability in Syria; Ceasefire b/w Al-Nusra & FSA

Ksa-Gran reapproachment can induce stability in Syria. The country has witnessed damages of unprecedented proportions. However, with this development, the ongoing conflict between FSA and Al-Nusra will also thaw. The latest ceasefire between the two is an indication that things will change for the better.

b) Stability in Yemen:

With ~~stability~~ the ceasefire in Syria, there is high probability that situation in Yemen ~~to~~ will start to stabilise. Since Saudi Arab. and Gran ~~are~~ ~~major~~ offer major patronage to their respective allies in Yemen, peace between the two will have positive implications on

c) Stability in Middle East at large:

The instability caused in Yemen and Syria is not only confined to these countries but extend to other neighbouring countries in the region. ~~Saudi~~ Houthi attacks on Turkey and Saudi Arab reflects the complex security challenges the region is embroiled in. However, with the rapprochement of KSA - Iran, the turmoil in the middle east ~~will~~ will also start to diminish.

d) Secular Violence will decrease:

Since Iran and Saudi Arab are home to major religious sites ~~as well as~~ as well as home to major muslim sects, peace between these two countries will reduce sectarian violence in middle east and ~~etc~~ in world at large.

e) Oil producing capacity of Middle East
can improve

Iran has long been at daggers drawn with the GCC countries. This is why Iran, though Iran is the third largest oil producer, is not a part of GCC. However, with the ~~draw~~ ~~draw~~ thaw in relations between Saudi Arab and Iran, there is a possibility that this would improve the latter's relations with other GCC countries, which could lead to cooperation and ~~or~~ sharing of technology that could boost Iran's ~~produce~~ oil production capacity and, in turn, boost middle east's capacity of producing oil.

f) United Arab against Israel:

The reapproachment between Saudi Arab and Iran can provide an impetus to other countries in the region

to resolve their conflicts with each other and unite under the banner of Islam. With this the Muslim countries can collectively combat the larger issue of the Ummah such as Israel's annexation of Palestine.

Implications on Pakistan

a) Reduce in Internal Security Challenges

As already mentioned, the rift between Saudi Arabia and Iran ~~was~~ is the cause of sectarian violence. This rivalry has also given rise to sectarian conflicts ^{in Pakistan}. However, with the reapproachment of Saudi and Iran, there is a big possibility that sectarian issues in ~~the~~ Pakistan will decrease.

b) Less Tensions in Pak-Iran border:

Pakistan has long faced tensions on

Indo-Pak and Pak-Afghan border. The relations with Iran have mostly been friendly so tensions on Pak-Iran border are not as severe. However, Pakistan's tilt towards Saudi Arabia, due to economic significance, has been a source of annoyance for Iran, which sometimes leads to increased tensions on Pak-Iran border. However, with KSA-Iran rapprochement, the border tensions will reduce.

c) Enhance Regional Integration:

~~Pakistan has remained~~

KSA-Iran ties have hindered the regional connectivity. However, with the Saudi-Iran rapprochement, Pakistan can enhance trade and connectivity with both countries leading to increased regional integration.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, KSA - Iran rapprochement will have numerous impacts on the region and on Pakistan. However, how long these friendly relations last remains to be seen. ~~But~~ None the less, this development can not only induce stability in the middle east but can go a long way in uniting the muslim ummah as a whole.

(2)

Introduction

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative. Not only will CPEC provide a much shorter route for China to access middle east cutting the distance from 16000 km to 2500 km, but will also provide a safer alternative to the trade route from Strait of Malacca which can easily be cut off during

a war. ~~It~~ On the other hand, the project brought many benefits to Pakistan's socio-economic outlook. ~~It~~ It has been a decade since the project commenced, let's discuss some of the benefits and failures of this project:

Successes and Failures of CPEC

a) Successes

→ Infrastructure Development

CPEC has connected Kashgar, China with Pakistan's Gwadar port through a network of roads, railways. This has rapidly developed the country's infrastructure. There are two routes connecting Kashgar to Gwadar port ~~as~~ ~~from~~ Eastern route which

goes through KP and Punjab & Western route ~~that~~ ~~is~~ through Sindh.

→ Energy Projects

~~CPEC~~ ~~has~~ Under CPEC, many energy projects have been built in Pakistan. Sahiwal coal fire powerplant, Quaid-Azam solar Park are a few examples. These energy projects can go a long way in assisting the country's energy production.

→ Trade and connectivity with China

There are made Trade routes created between China and Pakistan under CPEC. This broader network of trade routes can facilitate ~~and~~ ~~#~~ trade between both the countries.

→ Pakistan-China Strategic Partnership

With the CPEC Project underway, China's interests in Pakistan have increased as well. Pakistan's safety can have direct impacts on CPEC, this ~~is~~ has led to an increase in strategic ties between the two countries, with China providing advance defence systems to Pakistan and helping the latter establishing its very own ~~is~~ ~~maritime~~ maritime navy to combat Indian threat at Gwadar.

→ Employment opportunities:

CPEC has brought numerous employment opportunities for Pakistanis. Under the CPEC project, nine special economic zones are to be created which would not only improve ~~the~~ ~~state~~ industrialization but will also

provide jobs for Pakistanis. Rashakai special economic zone is the first economic zone established which is expected to provide employment for 200,000 Pakistanis.

→ Regional Integration

CPEC has served as a means to enhance Pakistan's regional integration. Under the CPEC project of Gawadar port has been extensively modernised to ~~be~~ be able to support trade with other countries of the region. Chah Bahar port in Iran has been built to be integrated with Gawadar port.

b) Failures

→ Security Concerns

CPEC has put Pakistan in a

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Vulnerable spot, ~~being~~ exposed to serious security challenges. There are many countries like India that want to sabotage CPEC project and in doing so pose a serious security threat for Pakistan.

→ Local opposition:

CPEC project has also courted much criticism from locals who see this project a threat to their local businesses. Furthermore, the government had to purchase land from many locals in order to create the wide network of roads for this project. Most of these lands were ~~taken~~ purchased at a lower value, which further made people resentful.

→ Geo - Political Implications

China and USA are in an

active tussle. The former poses a threat to the latter's global hegemony. With this project underway, Pakistan will be seen as a strategic partner of China which might bring certain consequences for the former.

→ Debt Sustainability

Pakistan has borrowed huge debts for the completion of the project. This large amount of debt will have serious economic repercussions for the country. Many countries have already said this to be a debt trap for Pakistan.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, CPEC project is a revolutionary project that promises to change the socio-economic outlook of the country. Though there are certain drawbacks

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associated with the project with enhance
defence and economic ~~com~~ cooperation
with china Pakistan can ~~be~~ navigate
through these challenges.