

Current Affairs

~~Ans No. 2B~~

Introduction

Gone are the days when states could exist in isolation and still survive. The world currently has become much more globalized and some body has rightly pointed that it has become a global village. Our economies and supply chains have become interdependent as well as interconnected, which means decision taken by executive in Washington can directly impact decisions in the Beijing. The US emerged as a global super power at the end of the cold war and for a decade it does not had any serious challenges. But, the rise of China and its policies regarding Taiwan and south-china sea have triggered anxiety among the US and its allies.

To counter Chinese influence in the Asia-Pacific region, US has involved into numerous alliances such as AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom and United States) as well as quadrilateral dialogue which involves Chinese rival India too known as Quad Alliance.

→ Apart from South China Sea, Taiwan is becoming a potential source of conflict between both the great powers.

Chinese Policy on Taiwan

China sees Taiwan as a breakaway province and therefore it considers it as a part of Chinese territory. Moreover, China's stance on Taiwan is clear in the form of 'One China Policy'.

→ The US adheres to China's this policy but only on diplomatic level, which increases insecurity among China's

armed forces. China on numerous occasions has made very clear to stay away from its internal affairs and it will use force in case the sovereignty and integrity of China is threatened.

→ The escalation in Taiwan can trigger a bigger conflagration between two superpowers which also possess deadly nukes, it will not only impact them but the entire world also as the GDP of US stands approximately at 27 trillion dollars and China's at 17 trillion dollars (and increasing).

US Stance on Taiwan

US while adhere to the 'One China Policy' which posits that Taiwan is a part of China but at the same time US supports Taiwan People's right to self determination!

Moreover, US successive administrat-

ions have shown the importance of Asia-Pacific region in the form of 'Pivot to Asia Strategy'

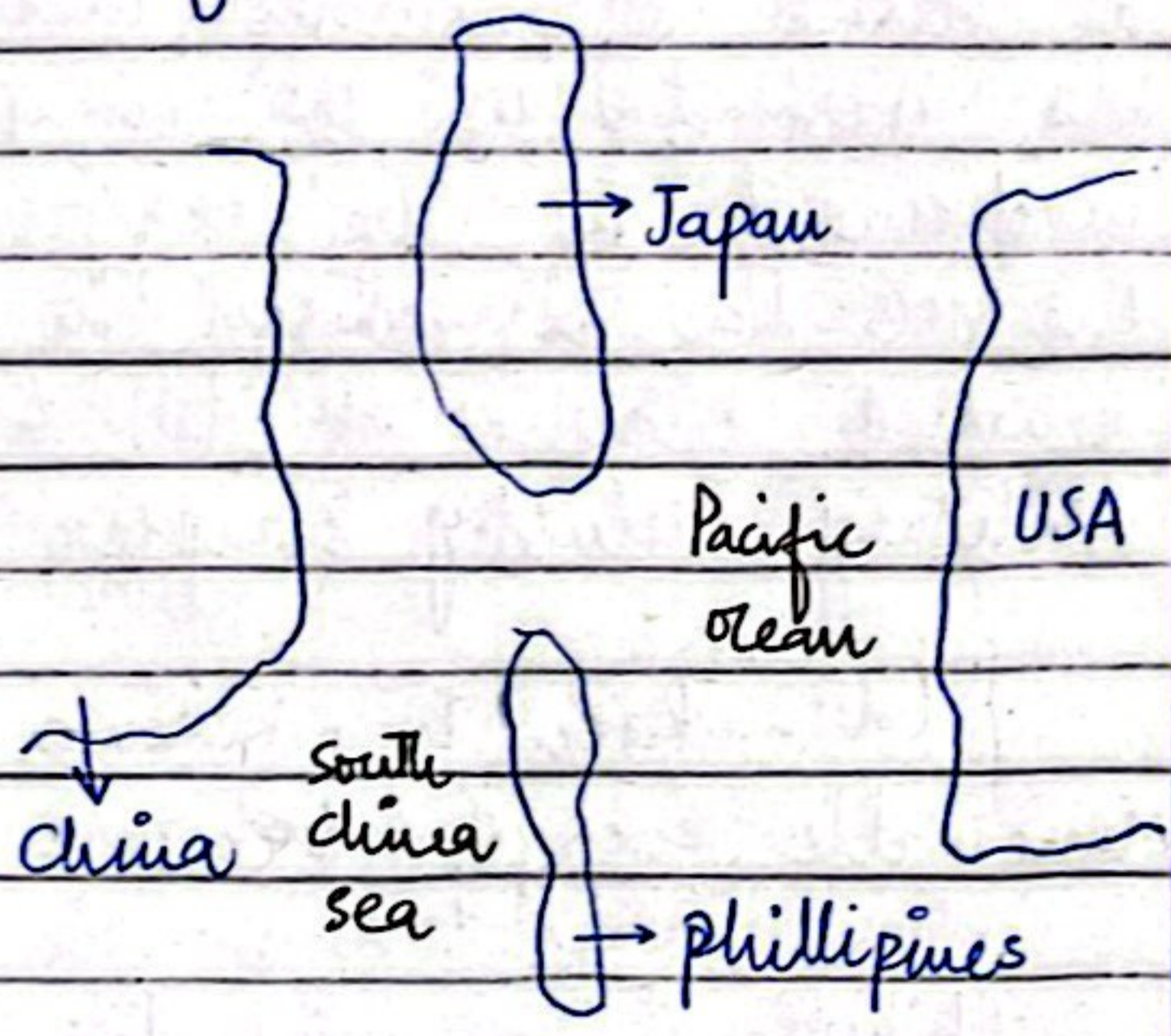
According to US officials, the 20th century was attributed to Euro-Atlantic region but the 21st century is completely of Asia-Pacific or to be more precise Asia Pacific.

Reasons of Potential Conflict between US and China on Taiwan issue

(a). Geo-Strategic importance of Taiwan.

Taiwan is very important for both nation from geo-strategic point of view. While the China has provided substantial autonomy to Taiwan in terms of governance but it has strict control and influence over defense and foreign policy decision making. Similarly, US and Taiwan have involved in conde

ding joint military exercises and US has done that to continue its presence in the region and counter Chinese influence



(US web of alliance in Asia-Pacific to contain Chinese aggression against Taiwan)

(b). Geo-economic importance of Taiwan

Taiwan is known for its semi-conductor chip industry which is crucial in all the electronic components from daily driven things to military equipments.

(c). Arms sales and Military equipment

US arms sales recently worth of billions of dollar is a source of concern and China has warned US to limit its involvement in the region. But, the US has a interest in new market because of its huge military industry complex.

(d). Race to become global renewable energy leader

While, it is evident that China is winning the new race in renewable energy by being the largest producer and exporter of EVs and solar panel. US wants to limit it and continue trade war by incentivizing Taiwan to stop trade of crucial components to China.

Ways to Avoid Conflict

The leaders in Beijing and Washington should realise

that the world is already burning due to Middle East tensions and opening of a new front between two nuclear state can easily set the stage for WW3 when other parties will also step in.

(a). US to limit intervention in Taiwan by reducing arm sales.

(b). China to normalize its stance on Taiwan and South China so that surrounding states do not feel vulnerable.

(c). Elimination of Trade war will result in collective good of humanity.

(d). Respecting mutually to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each other.

(e). Adherence to the international law; as UN discards the threat or use of force under article 2(4).

—(Ans No. 3)B—

Introduction

Due to Israel's decades long terrorism in Gaza, the Hamas (Political and resistance armed group) attacked Israel which killed nearly 1200 Israelis. In response, Israel launched barbaric assault in Gaza which killed around 43000 civilians including women and children to date! Israel was machine since then committed atrocities and barbarity, and unproportionate killings with great impunity primarily due to the staunch support of US and its western allies, which not only made Gaza the biggest open air prison but also exposed western dual standards and hypocrisy.

Historical evolution of Israel and

Arab countries relationship

The territory of Palestine

once belonged to the native muslims. After the world war 2, the Nakba took place which in arabic language means 'The Great Disaster'. Arab countries resisted Israel's forceful imposition in Palestine which manifested in 'Six days Arab-Israel war' in which Arabs were defeated. Since then, US has relentlessly tried to normalize relations between Arab and Israel in the form Abraham Accords and Camp David accords where many countries like Jordan and Turkey normalize relations with the Israel due to diplomatic and economic interest.

Prior to October 7th, The KSA was also in line to normalize the relationship, but the war on Gaza laid bare the intention of Zionist regime and permanently deteriorated the image of US as a neutral arbiters in the Gaza.

US unconditional support

US congress under the Biden administration has provided billions of dollars in financial and military aid to Israel so that it can continue its bloody campaign in the forsaken territory.

(a). Military equipment in the form of bunker bombs which killed Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah

(b). THAAD missile system

(c). US warships in the Mediterranean sea to deter all the adversary

(d). Joint operations against Houthis in the Red sea to continue trade supply to Israel.

(e). Recently more than \$3 billion dollars were approved by congress

(f). Intelligence support of CIA to Israel's intelligence which allegedly helped in killing Hezbollah's chief.

→ All of the US unconditional support through diplomatic means have backfired also, which has triggered public pressure against the Biden to instill a ceasefire

(g). Numerous resolutions were drafted and put forward in UNSC but US vetoed almost all of them.

Israel War Crimes and

Western Hypocrisy

An overview of Israel's war crimes in Gaza

(a) Using food and starvation as a weapon

(b) Killing civilians (children and women, and elderly)

(c) - Unproportionate attack violates the international laws of war.

(d) - Destruction of hospitals, education institutes and mosques.

(e) - Stopping the supply of oxygen in Gaza's hospitals (many infants died due to lack of oxygen)

(f) - Obstruction of oil supply; absolutely vital for keeping the hospitals running.

↳ many sick and babies died because of insufficient supply of electricity to run the ventilators.

→ US has been proved to be 100% complicit in conducting the war crimes because it is evident that it has significant amount of leverage over Benjamin Netanyahu, which Biden not even once tried to use it.

Moreover, the one fundamental problem with west is that they fail to realise that they share the planet with equals not with inferiors. If the people in Ukraine has right to live with dignity so do Palestinians.

Effects on US's Image

(a) - Muslim countries realization

→ Many muslim countries have realized the western dual standards. Therefore they have realized that US do nothing more than lip service.

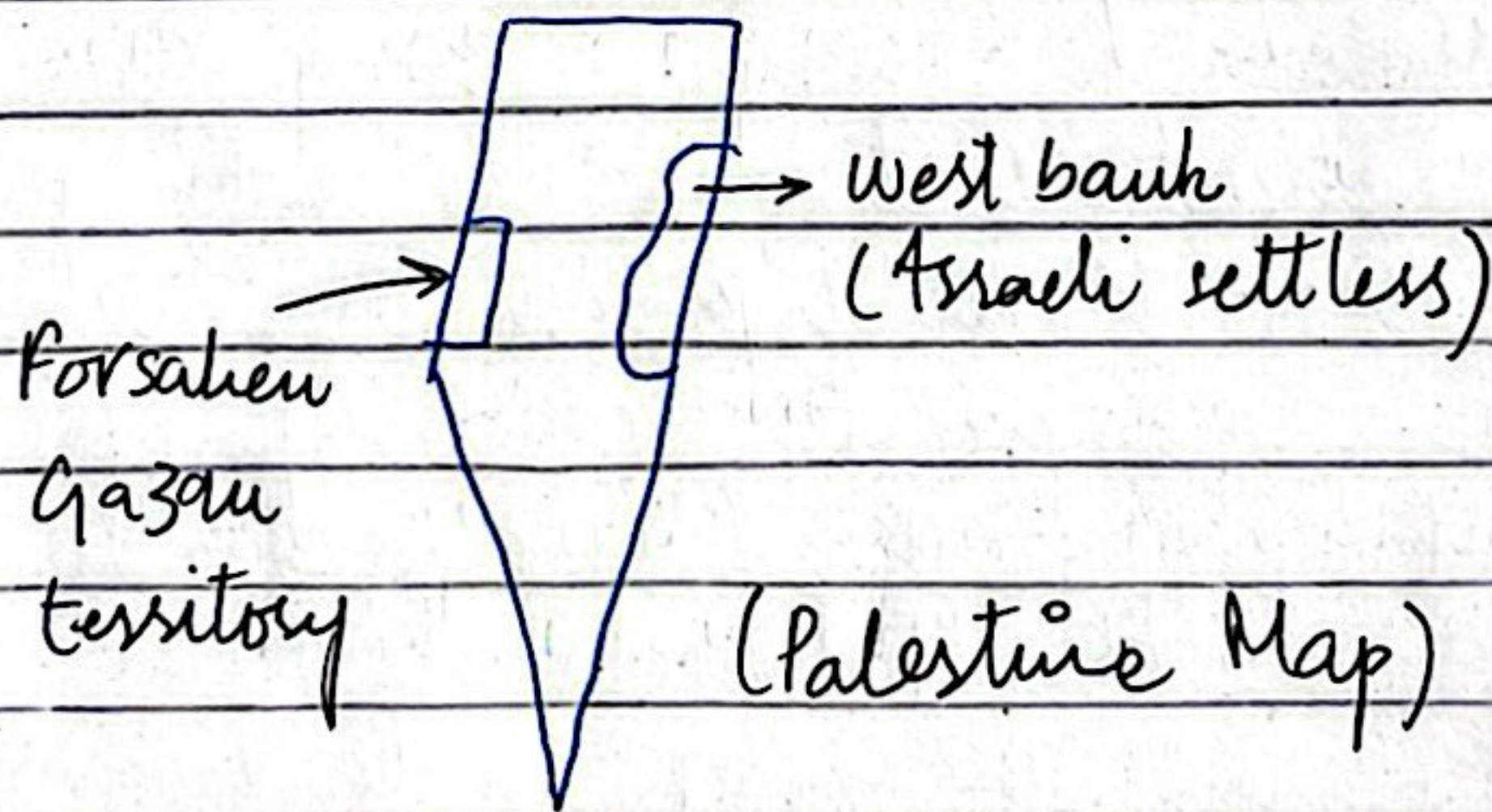
For example, US secretary of state Antony Blinken came to meet Muhammad Bin Salman, the king made him wait for long and only met him for 20 minutes. Similarly, Turkey cut his diplomatic and trade ties with Israel and condemned US.

Moreover, Jordan official also refused to meet US SOS.

(b). Biased Mediator

→ It has been clear that US does not want a sustainable solution because at one hand it supports ceasefire and two-state solution but on other hand it provides aid to Israel.

→ US also want a two state solution but on the basis of status quo, where more than 700,000 settlers are already present in the Palestine.



(c). Diplomatic Isolation

Arab as well as other countries of the world such as South Africa do not consider US as the central player in

the internal arena and the brave move by South Africa of filing a genocide case in ICJ shows that international community has given its verdict against the insanity of US and Israel.

An opening for Russia and China

As the western dual standard are clear in front of the world, it automatically provides diplomatic space for Russia and China.

→ As far as China, it has strengthened its role as a neutral arbiter or mediator by a successful Iran-Saudia deal. Therefore, world's focus has shifted to China to similarly set a table for negotiation in the Middle East!

→ The biggest difference between US and China's diplomatic approach

is that US impose the decision while China only facilitate a deal by setting & negotiating table.

Similarly, US and western attempt to diplomatically isolate Russia in wake of Ukraine-Russia war has also been futile. As the scenes from recent BRICS summit held in Kazan, Russia shows that Putin is no more isolated and a major player in the sphere of geo-politics.

→ With the BRICS expansion and addition of Iran, and soon Saudi Arabia, illustrates that Russian and China has already successfully penetrated into Middle East!

— Ans No. 4 B —

Introduction

The current state of Pakistan's economy is in complete contrast to the vision of our founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Our economy for years, posting a very weak growth rate due to the structural problems in our agriculture, industry, IT, power sector and tax system of Pakistan. Successive governments have tried to revamp the economy but failed due to cosmetic changes and avoiding structural reforms.

An overview of Pakistan's Economic

Challenges

(a). Low Growth rate

According to Economic Survey (ES) of Pakistan 2023-24; Pakistan has posted a growth of around (2.6 - 2.8%).

which in comparison to our immediate neighbour India is very low. (India's growth rate is around 6-6.5%)

(b). Twin deficit

Our country is currently running extremely low on foreign reserves due to structural problems associated to financial institutions. Moreover, our country is spending more than half of budget on debt servicing (FY 24-25)

Similarly, our expenditures are way more than our revenue. Recent, 7bn dollars (loan) bailout package has helped us push the economy. But, it is not viable, as it is like rolling the stone further down the road.

→ Pakistan's economy is on ventilator for years due to numerous reasons such as;

(c). Poor taxation system

(d). Inconducive environment for business; which affects our industry and makes our exports uncompetitive due to;

↳ Lack of continuous electricity supply

↳ High energy prices; raises the production costs of goods.

Therefore, to completely turn around our economy, comprehensive structural reforms are needed in Agriculture, Industry, IT sector, power sector and Tax-system.

Structural Reforms:

(a) - Agricultural Reforms

According to ESP 23-24, Agriculture has been among the top contributors to Pakistan's economy has shown growth.

(a) - Cotton

(b) - Rice

(c) - fruits and vegetables

all have posted growth but its

not enough. According to WB report Pakistan can double its agriculture yield by 2030, if it sticks to new modernized techniques.

“Agriculture is responsible for more than half of the employment of labour workforce and biggest source of earning foreign exchange”

Reforms

(a). Incentivizing small scale farmers by providing them access to credit.

(b). Taking initiatives such as “Hello Tractor” as in Africa; which provides modern equipment on rental basis. Similarly, taking initiative as taken by Tata Industry in India which linked Farmer direct to consumer through an online application.

(c). Establishing competitions

such as Hutter Prize on national level to ensure food security.

(d). Government led investment in post-harvest storage mechanism.

→ cold storage system.

(Pakistan losses around 40% of the food after harvest due to unavailability of storage mechanism)

(e). Shift to Regenerative agriculture

(b). Tax reforms

Pakistan's tax to GDP ratio is around 9.1. which is fairly low as compared to other countries. Therefore;

(a). Taxing the under-taxed.

(b). Broadening the tax-base.

(c). Strong action against the tax evaders.

(d). Relying on Direct tax

rather than Indirect taxations which only put strain on the poor middle class.

(C). Industrial Reforms

According to ESP 23-24, Manufacturing and mining industries have posted a minute growth and the trade remained affected due to geo-politics.

Reforms

(a). Encouraging Entrepreneurship culture by organizing programs like Shark Tanks as in US or India.

(b). Creation of Exclusive economic zones; ensuring unhindered supply of electricity to make export competitive.

(c). Credit Access to new-startups.

(d). Shifting to export-oriented economy.

(d). Power Sector

Pakistan's power sector is overwhelmed due to dependency on imported hydrocarbons, line and transmission losses due to theft and poor infrastructure, and unreliable and expensive agreements with IPPs.

Reforms

(a). Renegotiation of IPPs agreement.

(b). Payment should be in national currency to local IPPs.

(c). State's writ against energy theft.

(d) - Government investment should be focused on upgrading and repairing existing infrastructure rather than spending millions in Mega projects!

e. IT Sector

Pakistan is a land of youth which is overwhelmed with talent but lack of opportunity hinders their prospect of progress.

Reforms

(a) Government led IT school and university; as competitive as IIT Bombay and Mumbai in India

(b) Role of HEC; in incentivizing ~~research~~ research and development in the universities.

(c) Provision of scholarships to talented youth to polish their skills in IT sector.

"IT industry is a major source of bringing foreign currency into Pakistan"

→ These structural reforms will create Pakistan's economic turnaround.

Ans No. 7 B

Introduction

Israel has launched its blood lusty campaign on October 7th in response to Hamas attack, which according to all the books of international law proves Israel's intentions of war crimes and genocide in Gaza.

According to simple definition provided by some scholars;

"An act of total and deliberate extermination of population, race or ethnicity constitutes a genocide"

An overview of International

law in the wake of war

crimes in Gaza.

UDHR (1948)

According to UDHR, all the human beings without any discrimination have basic fundamental human rights which none can violate.

↳ UDHR highlights around 30 articles fundamental human rights.

Similarly, Helsinki accords, ICCPR, Vienna convention also clearly explain that Israel is in complete violation of Int. law and is acting with impunity.

Moreover, UN convention on genocide, and UN convention on torture also proves the barbaric attitude of Israel towards Gaza.

Israel's War crimes and

violation of Int. law

(a). Destruction of cultural heritage (such as mosques)

(b). Devastation of hospitals, and colleges and universities i.e direct attacks on Kafah hospital.

(c). Food as the starvation weapon.

(d). Collective punishment of all people (killing 43000 including women and children)

(e). Restriction of basic supplies food, water and medicine.

(f). Restriction on supply of electricity and oil; which deprives people from communicating

(g). Killing of Media Journalists and restriction on entry i.e Al Jazeera has been banned from reporting

(h). Unproportionate attacks violates Law of war

(i). Extreme levels of torture against prisoners of war;

↳ mental and physical torture in cells

↳ no food and water

↳ inhumane conditions

(j). Using settlers in Gaza as well as West Bank to induce damage to people.

The list of Gaza's predicament is so long that anybody can keep going.

→ International community has vocally condemned Israel's atrocity apart from its few western allies. The most prominent example is South African genocide case.

Genocide Case and ICTJ's

Filing

While the filing of genocide case against Israel by the South Africa is commendable, but it would have been more significant if one of the Muslim country has shown a similar amount of courage.

→ Israel has largely defended the case by arguing that to prove a genocide, evidence of intention is absolutely crucial. While, South Africa has argued that Israel being a party to genocide convention has violated the treaty.

Moreover, statements by Israeli's officials also give ample evidence of genocide in Gaza.

→ While, ICTJ can only provide provisional measures to stop war crimes in Gaza, but the

the ICJ ruling's against Israel was celebrated across the Arab and Muslim world and they declared it a moral victory.

Impacts of ICJ decision

- (a) - Diplomatic isolation
- (b) - Complicity of US in war crimes
- (c) - Eliminated the prospect of normalization with the Arab world.
- (d) - Strengthened the Palestinian cause.
- (e) - Support for Two-state solution has increased world-wide.

US response and impact on

Arab world

- (a) - condemned Hamas

(b) - Provided billions in military and financial aid (recently congress approved more than \$3 billions)

(c) - THAAD Defense

(d) - Bunker bombs which killed Hassan Nasrallah.

(e) - Diplomatic support by providing lip service and at well as vetoing numerous resolutions of cease-fire

Impacts on Arab World

(a) - Western hypocrisy has been exposed

(b) - Muslim and Arabs have realized that US is not a neutral mediator; as it provide aid and called for ceasefire at the same time.

(c) - Stops the normalization process between Arabs and Israel (such as Saudi Arabia)