

QUESTION NO: 02 41/80

Reasons and Implication Of Unprecedented Change In Syria:

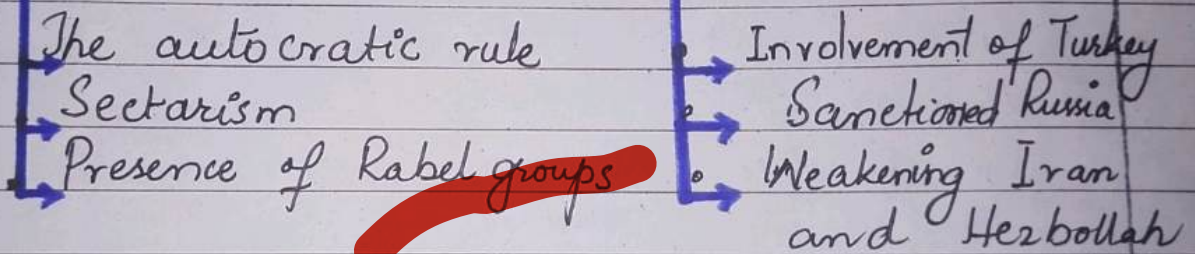
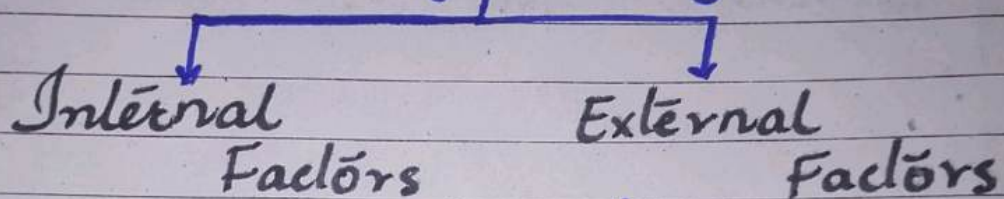
11/20

INTRODUCTION :-

It is said that "Every rise has its fall", Bashar al Asad's throne has been overturned by the HTS Islamic rebels. An era of about 53 years came into its end, On 7th december 2024. The HTS, Islamist rebels have toppled down Bashar-al-Asad regime in Syria. There are various factors and reasons due to which this could happen. The reasons include external as well as internal forces. The internal factors includes, the conflict between Shia and Sunni, presence of different rebel groups. However the ~~int~~ external factors includes the support of Turkey, Sanctions on Russia, weakening of Hezbollah and stop of aid from Iran to Syrian government. It cause severe implications in the

Country, region and overall world. The situation of uncertainty within Syria, the involvement of Israel in the Syria and a shock to Russia and Iran are few of implications of this unprecedented change in Syria.

The Reasons for Unprecedented change in Syria



The Autocratic Rule of Bashar-ul-Asad:

Bashar-ul-Asad was considered to be an autocratic ruler, marked by centralization of power, suppression of dissent and lack of democratic freedom for the people. For decades Syria was under emergency law that was lifted in 2011, which curtails so many basic rights of people. The

brutality of Asad regime from inception of civil war till its end is not hidden. More than five million people were killed. A report published in Amnesty International claims that "The International Community has condemned Asad's action and wanted legal proceeding in International court of justice against him for the torture and other human rights violation."

Sectarianism:

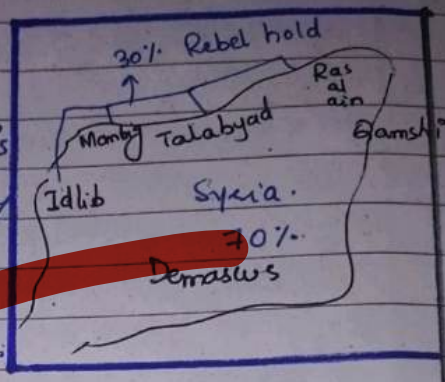
The Country was actually suffering from an internal war within Shia and Sunni. Bashar al Asad himself was a Shia and ruling on 80% Sunni Muslims. This internal conflict give rise to hate against Bashar al Asad government and it served as a big reason of Bashar al Asad downfall.

Syria	
Sunni =	80%
Shia =	20%

The Presence of Various Rebel groups within Syria

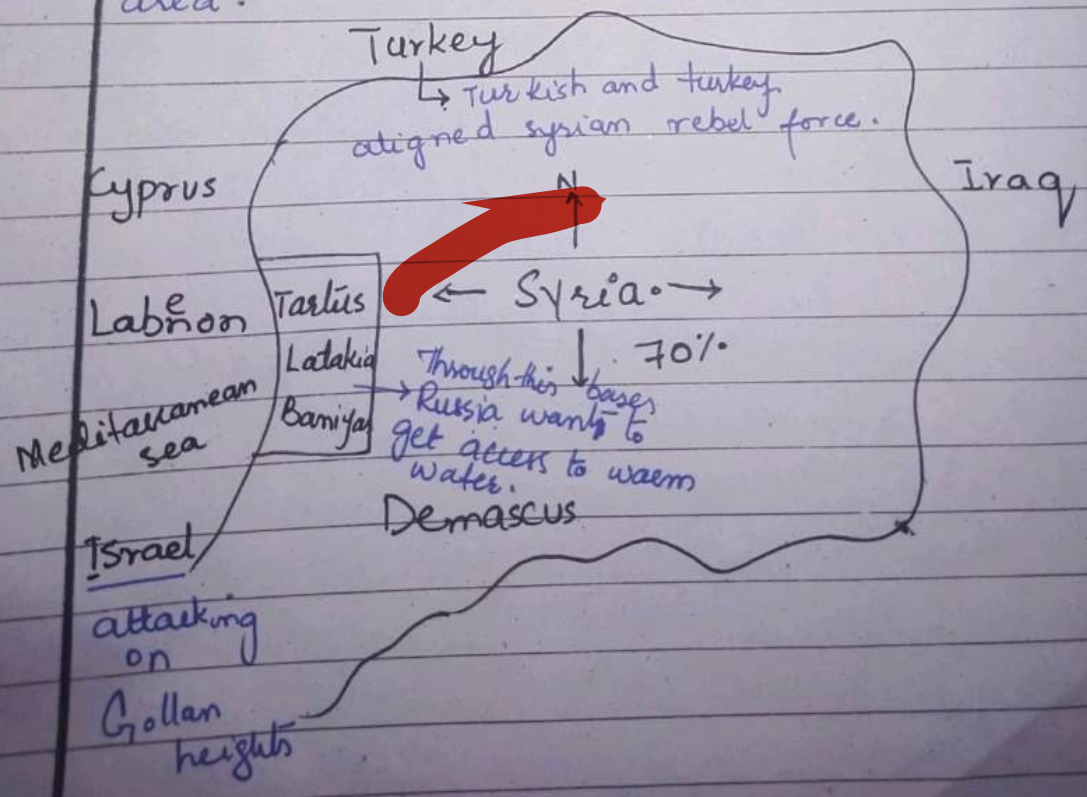
About 70% area of Syria was under control of Bashar al Asad government, rest of 30% area was occupied by different rebel

groups. These groups were posing various challenges to Assad's government and they also served as a reason of down fall of Assad's government.



Support from Turkey

According to International experts, Turkey was supporting the rebel group by giving, training to the respective groups. Turkey is in the north of Syria and in the same location Turkish aligned rebels are occupying some area.



Sanctioned Russia

Russia was supporting Bashar al Assad government because of two reasons, the friendship with Iran and Russia wants access to Mediterranean sea's warm waters. But due to Russia-Ukraine war, Russia was unable to pay proper attention to Syria. Moreover US and other European states impose Sanctioned on Russia which weaken Russia economically. The Russia gave political asylum to Bashar al Assad which is a ~~reason~~ proof that it was supporting Syria.

Weakening Iran (Axis of Resistance):-

Due to Israel's continuous attacks on Lebanon on Hezbollah, and assassination of strong political leadership of Hezbollah, which was a strong ally of Iran, the Organization has been weakened. Israel - Iran rivalry engaged Iran on the opposite front and Iran which was previously providing support to Syria, could not aided the respective government. This serves as main cause of down fall of Bashar al Assad, government.

Implication of this Unprecedented change in Syria :-

- Rise of Orientalism
- Rise of Israel's Brutality
- Involvement of Super power in the regions
- Polarization in Muslim Ummah

Rise of Orientalism:

Orientalism is a phenomenon use by west to represent culture, language, ethnicity and religion of muslim in a bad way to justify their own brutality. With the downfall of Syrian government the rise of Orientalism has been seen in the world. HTS which was previously an ally of Al-Qaida now heading a country in the middle east. This is defaming the entire muslim ummah, according to

Some experts.

Rise in Israel's Brutality

Right after downfall of Syrian government Israel continued its brutality in the Syria. Israel is targeting military installation in Golan heights, claiming that Israel wants to save chemical weapons of Syrian government. But the reality is something different. Professor Gibert, University of SOAS said, "Syria has no chemical weapons, but Israel is trying to weaken Syria as it hates Bashar al Assad."

Involvement of Super power in the Region:

Recently, Trump has made an statement that "America has nothing to do with whatever is happening in Syria". But the presence of Israel is a proof that US is supporting Israel in order to remain as an hegemon within Middle East. America's double standards has not been hidden from anyone. The involvement of US in Syria in future will have an implication of downfall

of Basharal-ul asad government.

Polarization of Muslim Ummah:

2024, proved to be the better ~~net~~ year for ~~Iran~~ Iran - Saudi arab relations, as both country initiated good relations. But this unprecedented change in Syria now changing the dynamics, and increasing polarization between muslim states. As Iran was a supporter of Basharalasad while Turkey and Saudi arab was supporting the rebellions.

Conclusion

There are various factors that leads to down fall of Syrian government. The Downfall of Basharal asad affects not only Syria but the whole world. The ball is in the court of America because the situation is favorable to U.S.

QUESTION NO: 05

Opportunities and Challenges for neighbours in Post Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh: Opportunities for Pakistan

Introduction

11/20

The resignation of Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, has significantly reshaped Bangladesh's political landscape. It presents huge opportunities for its neighbouring countries like economic engagement, regional co-operation, strategic geopolitical collaboration, energy co-operation. However, it may pose challenges too, like shift in foreign policy alignment, domestic political instability, security risks. Pakistan can leverage several opportunities to approach Dhaka, as it can address historical grievances, trade and economic partnership, educational and cultural diplomacy, leveraging in Multilateral platform and Humanitarian co-operation.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, during efforts to
normalize post 1971 relations of Pakistan
- Bangladesh said,

"We must learn from history,
But not be prisoner of it."

~ Z.A Bhutto

Opportunities For Neighbors in Post - Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh

Strategic Geopolitical
Collaboration

Economic Co-operation
and Trade Growth

Regional Stability
through Multilateralism

Energy Co-operation

**Economic CO-OPERATION And
Trade Growth; can be
Enhanced**

Bangladesh has been one of
the fastest growing economies in
South Asia with GDP growth rate

of 6%. Neighbor countries like India, China and Nepal can leverage this period to negotiate favorable trade agreements. Moreover, Bangladesh can boost trade through land and maritime routes. With India it can advance trade agreements like Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement (CEPA) while with China through Belt and Road Initiatives.

Strategic Geopolitical Collaboration can be Enhanced

Bangladesh's geographical location makes it a gateway for China's Belt and Road Initiative and India Act East Policy.



The geopolitical location of Bangladesh is an opportunity to enhance connectivity projects like BBIN Motor Vehicle agreement

Regional Stability Through Multi-Lateralism: an opportunity for neighbours

Bangladesh's active partnership in SAARC and BIMSTEC offers opportunities for regional issues cooperation like climate change, maritime security and trade integration.

Neighbours Leverage Opportunity by Co-operation In Energy sector

According to UN(ESCAP) ~~World Bank~~
The Bay of Bengal could emerge as hub of renewable energy collaboration. Bangladesh is increasingly reliant on imported energy. The energy sharing agreements to meet Bangladesh's energy demand may

Seize as opportunity.

Challenges for Neighbors In post Hasina Bangladesh

Shift in foreign policy alignment

A new government may reconsider or may not Bangladesh's close ties with India. As Bangladesh is asking for extradition of Sheikh Hasina, to which Indian government is not responding.

Foreign government will continue to shelter her along with her former cabinet ministers unless Bangladesh abolishes death penalty.

~ Human right watch

However, China's strategic investment in Bangladesh under the BRI may face scrutiny under different leadership.

Security Risks can emerge for neighbors:

Political vacuum can lead to the resurgence of extremist groups that could destabilize the region. According to International Crisis Group cross border challenges to Bangladesh like Rohingya refugee management could strain relations with Myanmar and India.

Opportunities for Pakistan to Approach Dhaka

Pakistan can Rebuild economic ties:

Pakistan can initiate reconciliation by addressing past grievances, particularly related to events of 1971 through formal diplomatic channels.

Enhancing Economic Relations

Bilateral trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh has remained below potential valued at only 800 million dollars in 2013. A new government offers the opportunity to enhance trade in textile, pharmaceuticals and agricultural products.

Cultural and Educational Initiatives

Pakistan can propose joint academic and cultural exchange programs, focusing on universities and think tanks to foster goodwill.

Leveraging Shared Challenges

According to World Resource Institute Both nations face similar challenges in climate change and energy shortages, offering an opportunity for collaborative efforts in renewable energy projects and environmental conservation.

Conclusion

The post Hasina era presents both opportunity and challenges for South Asia. Bangladesh geopolitical importance and economic growth make it a critical player for regional stability and development. Neighboring countries must adopt a balanced approach, promoting co-operation while navigating uncertainties in Dhaka's domestic politics. For Pakistan, this is a crucial moment to reset strained relations through economic diplomacy, historical reconciliation and multilateral initiatives.

QUESTION NO: 1

Reason of Slowing down the CPEC Project: Measures to Re-invigorate

Introduction

10/20

CPEC, a game changer for Pakistan successfully covered its 10 years in 2025 despite several challenges and hurdles. However, there are several reasons of its slowed down progress. For instance security concerns particularly in Balochistan, Country's financial instability and high debt, political instability and policies inconsistencies and geopolitical tensions. Therefore, urgent need of reinvigoration is required for projects to ^{make} Phase II a tangible reality. The recommendations includes enhanced security collaboration, economic stability, Political and Governance Reforms, Strategic geopolitical outreach and prioritizing social development.

Reasons of Slowing down the Projects

- 1- Security Concerns
(Terrorist attacks on Chinese nationals)
- 2- Poor Management
- 3- Economical crisis in Pakistan
(IMF loan denial)
- 4- Persistent economic instability
- 5- Government under US influence
- 6- Geo political tensions
(US-China rivalry)

Security Concerns and Rising Insurgency:

In 2024, there were several attacks targeting Chinese nationals in Pakistan. Notable incidents include the Shangla attack on March 26, 2024, and an explosion near Jinnah International Airport on Oct 7, 2024, particularly targeting Chinese nationals involved in CPEC projects. Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed serious concerns regarding the safety of Chinese nationals. It is the prime reason of slowing down CPEC project.

Poor Resource Management: Main reason of CPEC projects Delay:

Out of total 62 billion dollars which were planned to invest on CPEC, about 40 billion has been already spent, but still significant delays in project are seen. For instance Gwadar Port dredging delayed due to cost over runs and potential penalties.

Economic Crisis; results in Delay of Project:

Since Covid-19, pandemic, ^{that} disrupted global supply chains, delaying projects timeliness, the persistent economic instability exacerbated by high external debt and inflation resulted into slowing down of the Project.

Political Instability:

Political instability and policies inconsistencies results into Lack of Consensus on CPEC's long-term vision

weakens its progress. In May, 2024, the IMF highlighted that ongoing political uncertainty could have profound impact on economic stability.

US influence On Pakistan Government results into CPEC Delay:

U.S do not directly oppose CPEC, but its intention to counter china are not hidden. US officials has repeatedly warned Pakistan about the economic risks of heavy reliance on chinese investment particular debt burden. As per reports from "The Diplomat, (2024)", U.S political pressures and policies have influenced Pakistan's decision regarding the speed and scope of CPEC projects, leading to delays.

Geo Political Tensions results into US CPEC Delay

Growing competition between US and china coupled with India's

opposition to CPEC results into delay of Projects as Pakistan and china's inadequate response undermine project's image internationally.

Recommendations For Islamabad And Beijing : to reinvigorate CPEC and make CPEC II a tangible Reality

- Addressing security concerns
- Enhancing Political stability
- Institutional reforms and better Governance
- Promoting transparent and sustainable investment
- Strengthening Regional connectivity

Addressing Security Concerns should be the top priority to re-invigorate CPEC:

In order to reinvigorate CPEC and

to make CPEC II a tangible project, Islamabad and Beijing both can collectively address the security issues. Both countries can deploy specialized force by establishing special security divisions and enhancing intelligence gathering to preempt threats, suggested by "Islamabad Policy Research Institute"

Enhancing Political stability

Pakistan must establish a national political consensus on CPEC by forming a bipartisan committee that includes all major political parties, stakeholders and provincial representatives to ensure the continuity of policies and decision-making beyond political transitions. This approach will minimize policy disruptions, build investor confidence and demonstrate political stability to China and international observers. (Wolf, S.O (2020), China Pakistan Economic Corridor of the Belt and Road Initiative: concept, context and assessment.)

Institutional Reforms and Better Governance:

World bank report "Pakistan's Governance and Institutional reforms: challenges and opportunities" suggested that Pakistan must establish an independent "National Commission for Institutional reforms" mandated to audit, restructure, and modernize key state institutions including bureaucracy, judiciary and law enforcement. The Commission should focus on meritocracy, transparency and digitization to eliminate corruption improve efficiency and ensure accountability.

Promoting transparent and Sustainable Investment.

According to UNCTAD 2020, "International production beyond the Pandemic" Pakistan must establish a comprehensive investment policy framework focusing on transparency, sustainability and Investor's protection. This can be achieved by implementing e-governance.

rules to streamline processes, ensuring full disclosure to project details and adhering to international environmental and social standards. Strengthened legal frameworks and independent regulatory bodies will further build investor confidence and ensure sustainable economic growth.

Strengthen Regional Connectivity:

Pakistan must adopt a Regional Connectivity strategy by fostering diplomatic relations and economic Partnership with neighboring countries like Afghanistan, Iran and central Asian states. This includes developing transnational transport corridors, energy pipeline and trade agreements to integrate CPEC into the broader regional infrastructure. Enhanced connectivity will reduce geopolitical tensions, secure trade routes and amplify CPEC's economic potential. (Wolf S.O, China Pakistan economic Corridor of the belt and road initiatives: Concept, context and Assessments, 2020.)

QUESTION 04

Islamabad - Kabul Tensions
TTP, Using Afghan Land
as Launching Pad for
terrorist attacks:
Recommendations

Introduction

9/20

Following the Taliban ascension in Afghanistan in 2021, Pakistan anticipated a reduction in cross border military. Contrary to these expectations, the TTP has intensified its operation leading to violence within Pakistan. In 2024 alone, over 2500, fatalities were attributed to terrorist incidents, marking a significant rise from previous year. Pakistan can should strengthened diplomatic engagement with Bangladesh, enhance regional and Multilateral Co-operation, enhance border management, address root cause, engage Taliban through incentives.

**Islamabad - Kabul tensions
Lingers due to TTP using
Afghan Land as launching
pad for terrorists attacks
in Pakistan :**

TTP Strengthening :

The group has access to advanced weapons left by US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. According to Institute of Strategic Studies their attacks target military and civilian infrastructure in Pakistan.

Role of Afghan Taliban

The Afghan Taliban despite Pakistan expectations, has shown reluctance to curb TTP. There are several reasons to this, such as ideological ties, fear of internal division and reluctance to antagonize TTP members who might defect to Islamic state Khorasan province IS-KP.

Cross Border Challenges

Despite the fencing of 97% of Durand line, cross border infiltration continues. Economic instability in Afghanistan contributes to Taliban's weak control over militant factions.

Impact On Pakistan Afghanistan Relations:

Pakistan's airstrike on TTP hideouts in Afghanistan have exacerbated the situation. The Afghan Taliban accuses Pakistan of violating its sovereignty, while Pak blames Afghanistan for harboring terrorists.

Recommendations to Stable Relations Between Pakistan and Islamabad

- Strengthened Diplomatic engagement
- Regional and Multilateral Co-operation
- Enhancing Border Management
- Engage Taliban through Incentives
- Addressing Route causes

Both Countries should Strengthened Diplomatic Engagement:

Both countries should establish a formal Pakistan Afghanistan joint security Task Force for intelligence sharing and counter terrorism operation

Regional and Multilateral Co-operation should be Enhanced:

Platforms such as SCO to encourage regional powers like China and Russia to mediate and press the Taliban to act against TTP.

Projects like CASA-1000 and TAPI pipeline making economic interdependence a tool for reducing tensions.

Enhancing Border Management

Smart technology like drones and surveillance systems along Durand line - to minimize infiltration

Engage Taliban Through Incentives

Pakistan can support for Afghanistan reconstruction projects to enhance goodwill and economic stability.

Addressing Root Cause

Counter Radicalization programs should be launched and education programs in militant prone regions.

Conclusion

The Islamabad Kabul relations remain fraught due to TTP use of Afghan soil for terrorism against Pakistan. Resolving this requires a balanced diplomacy, regional collaboration and border management.