

Current Affairs

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Q:4 (Russia - Ukraine War)

I. INTRODUCTION:

The Impossible talks concerning possible Russia-Ukraine peace have begun in the power corridors. Concerning it, Russia, NATO, and United States have different point of views on how to end it. While Ukraine is now showing some flexibility, Russia remains reluctant to advance talks of withdrawing and Trump's version is caught in the middle.

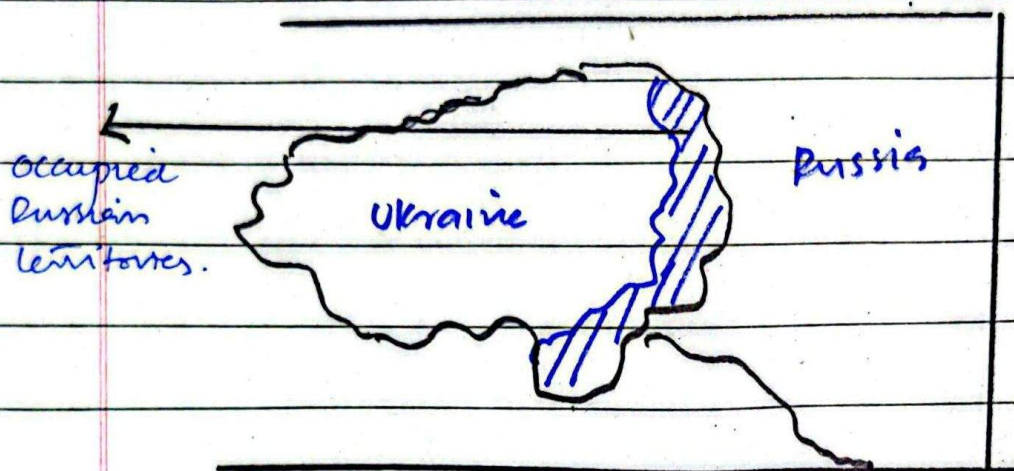
II. Russia's Stance on ending the war in Ukraine:

Currently, Russia has control over key Ukraine regions including Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Crimea. It is demanding to end the war with annexation of

these territories.

"we will not cede the territories
that are already ours"

- Putin



III. NATO's stance on ending the war in Ukraine:

While initially,
NATO's stance was hard
concerning the occupied territories
post Feb 2022 war, it is now
considering a pathway, by taking
Zelenskyy on board, to end
the never-ending war. Also
while Zelenskyy also neglected
ceding any territories to Russia,

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"we will defend every
inch of Ukraine"

-Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

He is now considering DMZ's (Demilitarized
zones) as options.

IV.

Trump's stance on
ending the war in
Ukraine:

President Donald

Trump has continuously trying to
mediate and devise the path
forward for Russia and Ukraine
peace. He has proposed a
middle way which includes
allowing some Ukrainian
territories that are already occupied
by Russia to be annexed. His
28 point plan emphasises on
stopping the battle and role
of Russia in reconstruction.

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V.

Critical Analysis on the dead lock on how to end the war in Ukraine :

After Feb 2022, when the war on Ukraine by Russia began, there were no signs of its ending soon. However, the talks of devising a plan to end the war have taken place. Pressure of Zelensky has increased to hold elections and bring out results in the war. Trump's role as mediator is now being questioned for its inefficiency and he has shown 'frustration' on Putin's behaviour. Putin, on the other hand, has sustained all the sanctions and pressure tactics by the US and EU and now is in a strong position for negotiations.

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vi.

Recommendations for going about ending the Russia Ukraine war:

Amidst the stalemate,
there are possible pathways
which will prove substantial in
ending of the war. Following are
the recommendations.

- Diplomacy among all
the stakeholders including
Russia, Ukraine, NATO,
and US:

Diplomatic
shutdown should be avoided.

Diplomatic talks are the only
way forward in devising a
plan. Recent developments concerning
the war are a relief that took
place in Miami, Florida.

- Demilitarized zones as
a viable option to
move forward:

Putin's reluctance
and strong claim over the
occupied 4 regions has prove
to be a deal breaker. Russia
should move on with considering
the option of demilitarized zones (DMZ).

- Role of US as indispensable
in the peace process:

United States
should continue to play its
role. Its role is indispensable
in this global catastrophe.

Gaza peace plan amid never
ending Israeli Aggression is
an example that role of
US is important.

- Going forward under UN Mandate to substantiate the peace process:

Any process to take place should move forward under the mandate of United Nations Security Council to make the whole process comprehensive and legitimate under UN.

(vii) CONCLUSION:

The talks of possible end to Russia and Ukraine war have engaged with all players presenting their own version. Pragmatism should prevail in this key and crucial time to end the for global peace by taking adequate measures.

Q. NO. 5 (PAK-KSA Agreement)

I. INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have signed a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement. Following it, major geo-political achievements have taken place for both the stakeholders. Moreover, along with getting geopolitical gains, Pakistan has also benefited from it when it comes to economic opportunities. These include increased Saudi and Gulf cooperation and economic relations.

II. Pak-KSA Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement: A brief overview

The timing of the signing was crucial for

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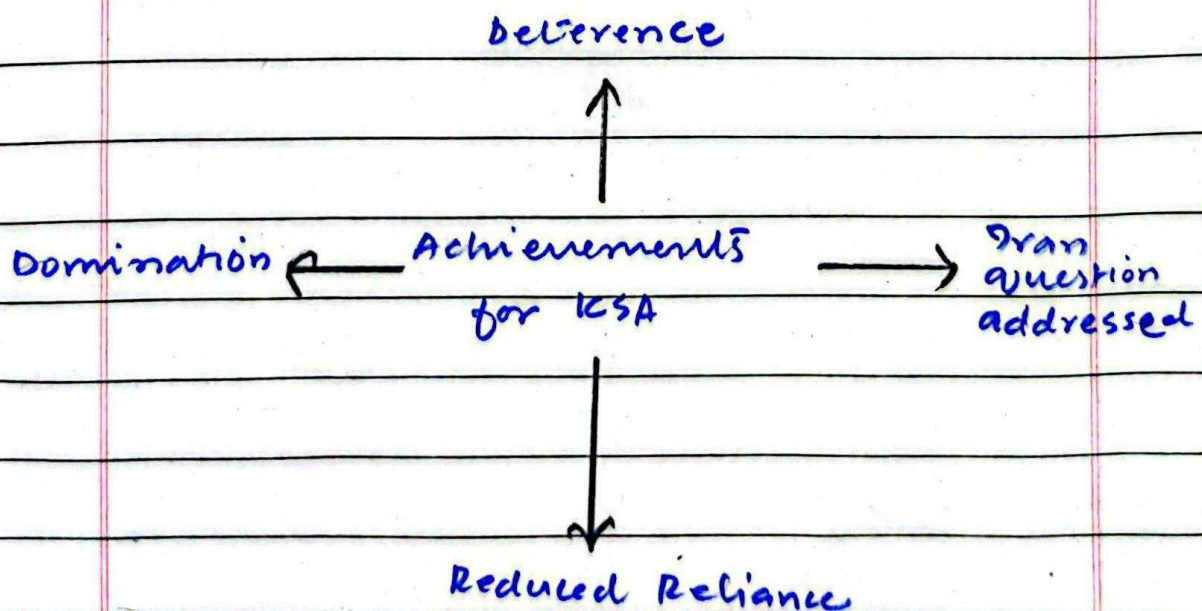
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both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan amid geopolitical and regional tensions.

Therefore, both devised a NATO-like treaty. It mentioned only one important text.

"The attack on one country shall be considered an attack against both"

III. Geopolitical Achievements for Saudi Arabia due to Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement:

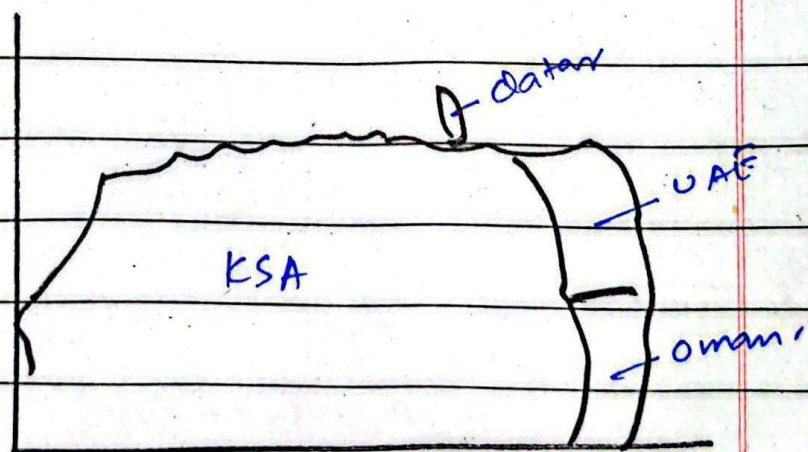


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- Deterrance maintained
against possible Israeli
Aggression:

The treaty folled
the 'Israeli attacks on Qatar.'
while the talks on this agreement
were going on for a while. The
Israeli attack on Doha became an
immediatē trigger. Because Qatar
is a close neighbour of KSA. Also,
major escalation in Middle East will
also grasp KSA.



→ map showing KSA and Qatar.
as near neighbours.

- Reduced reliance on United States as security provider:

The role of US as net security provider faded and came under question after Israel attacked Qatar - closest US ally. Now KSA is under Pakistan's 'Nuclear umbrella' as per many defense analysts.

- Continue to dominate as key power in the Middle East:

While economically, KSA was dominating, the recent security situation in the region posed a challenge to Saudi dominance. After the SMDA, Saudi will continue to dominate without looking over its shoulders.

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- Less worrying of Iran question due to Pak-Iran growing cordiality:

Iran and Pakistan have boosted their ties in the recent times. Following the SMDA Abbas Araghchi (Iranian foreign minister) said this is not a matter of concern for us.

IV. Geopolitical Achievements for Pakistan due to (SM DA):

Pakistan was navigating through major crisis in the geopolitical arenas. However, it has benefited from SM DA in the following ways:

- SMDH as a deterrence
against possible Indian
Aggression :

This Agreement proved to be a major shock against India. While the treaty remains symbolic, it has deterred India from future misadventure because of USA's geopolitical posture.

- Recognition in Global
diplomatic arenas owing
to prestige of USA:

A NATO-like agreement in the defense arena has resulted in major recognition of Pakistan at global level. It has proved the defense capabilities of Pakistan.

- SMDA as a pathway
towards further such
kinds of Agreement:

Pakistan's Defense

Minister, after the treaty
reiterated that this treaty
is not limited to KSA only.

Pakistan is open to such partnership
with other Gulf countries.

V. Economic opportunities for Pakistan due to (SMDA):

- Opportunity to increase
economic ties with
Saudi Arabia and Investment:

While

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has
always been a phenomenal

economic partner and supporter of Pakistan. This treaty has paved the way enhance that cooperation.

- More such treaties will improve economic ties with cash rich Arab states:

Arab Nations including Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates are now skeptical regarding their security. Therefore, partnership with them will bring massive influx of investment in Pakistan.

- Capitalizing on Defense capabilities as net security provider of the region:

After the

Pak-India skirmishes, Pakistan's dominance, and defense treaty with Saudi, Pakistan can now act as a US ally to play its role as net security provider in the region. This will improve economic ties with Middle East.

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CONCLUSION:

There is no doubt in the fact that Pak-Saudi Mutual Defense Agreement for both the stakeholders at geo-political level and economic opportunities especially for Pakistan. Therefore, it is essential for Pakistan to continue such cooperation to achieve global geopolitical goals and capitalize on economic opportunities.

Q:7 (US- China Trade War)

I. Introduction :

In the changing global dynamics, new unconventional wars are emerging. Trade war is prime among them. US has used chip dominance to confront China while China has capitalized on its dominance in the rare earths. This war may have future repercussions.

II. United States using Chip as weapon against China :

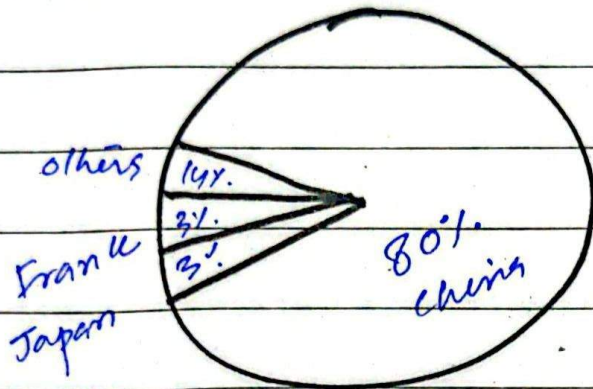
USA has domination in the chip sector. Taiwan is its key ally and draw

support from China USA is
confront China and aspire
independence. Taiwan controls and
manufacture 90 percent of
the global chip semiconductors.
Therefore, China as a result, faced
the challenge in this sector and
USA uses it against China.

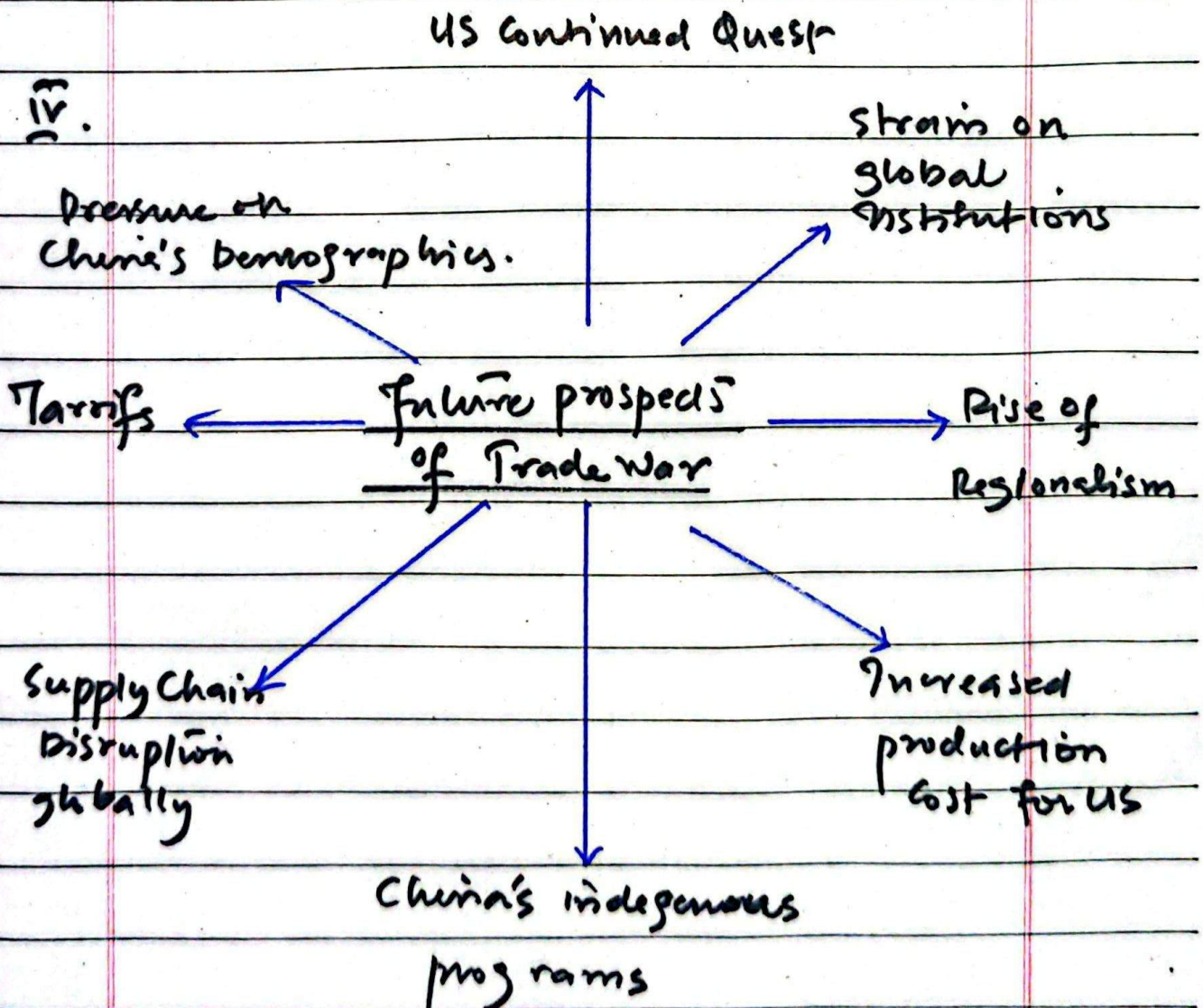
III China's Counter with monopolizing the dominance in the rare earth's sector :

While USA controls
chip, China has dominance
in the Rare earth minerals
and metals sector. Rare
earths are crucial in modern
technology and industry
concerning defense sector. China
control 80% of global chip
RE's production and 90%.

of global rare earth deposits.



• US Rare Earth Imports



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- US will continue its quest for rare earth dominances

Keeping in view the Chinese monopoly in the rare earth sector, USA is looking for alternatives to reduce dependency on China. These includes annexing Rare Earth rich Greenland from Denmark.

- China to continue indigenous Chip production:

China has initiated domestic and indigenous productions of chips. Recently, China's capability was manifested when they produced indigenously and cheaply the chip to make deepseek. Resultantly, Nvidia's share dropped enormously.

- Trend of Protectionism
will rise: Security driven
economies

The uncertainty in the markets following global shocks due to global integrated nature of markets due to globalization. Resultantly, countries have started to protectionism their industries.

- Production cost for domestic
US industries will remain
high:

Chinese products were cheap and better. After that in imports, local industries are manufacturing these products. Resultantly, production cost is higher due to Chinese cheap labour against US.

- Tariffs will increase pressure on China and further growth of the trade war:

China's national interest insisted on the non-protectionism due to its aspirations of becoming a global hegemon. But tariffs are acting as impediment and China is retaliating with reciprocal tariffs.

- Supply chain of relevant materials will fragment globally:

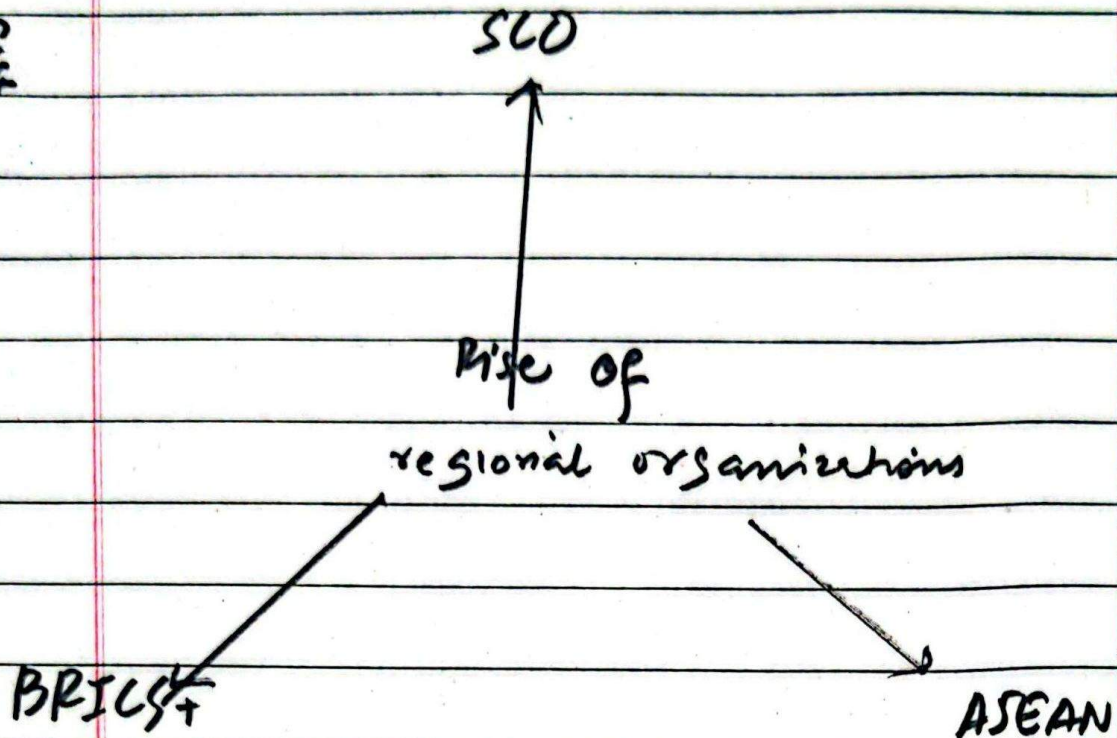
Global Supply chain of these materials will be disrupted with both supply and demand being in a disproportionate amount,

- Strain on International Conflict Resolution Mechanisms will increase owing to trade war:

All the trade conflicts will end up in World Trade Org's Dispute Resolution Council. Resultantly, the load and pressure will increase on it resulting in stalled decisions

- Rise of Regional trade blocks is sustain shocks:

Keeping these problems in view, regional trade blocks are emerging including SCO, BRICS+, and European unions increasing emphasis on non protectionism.

~~III~~V.CONCLUSION:

USA and China are in a trade war with China dominating in rare earth sector and USA, in the chip making. Resultantly, all world is facing shocks of this war of two major economic powers.

Q.8 (Implications of Gaza Peace Plan)

I. INTRODUCTION:

US President Donald Trump introduced Gaza Peace plan in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. While the peace plan was comprehensive, its shortcomings have rendered its credibility questioned. Moreover, Islamabad policy concerning the plan is discussed along with possible fallouts.

II. A Brief Overview of Gaza Peace plan:

The Gaza peace plan consists of 20 points. It is divided into

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3 phases.

PHASE 1:

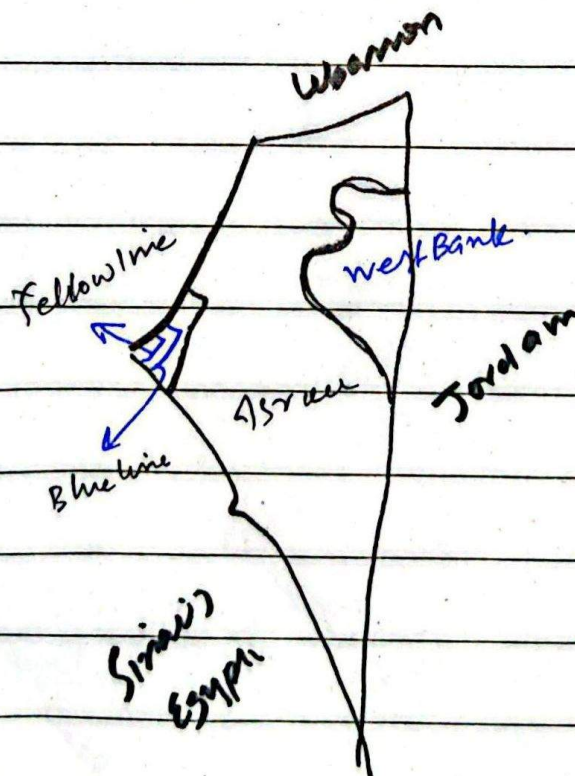
- Cease fire
- Hostage exchange

PHASE 2:

- Demilitarise Gaza
- weapons Handover
- ISF
- Israel to recede to Blue line

PHASE 3:

- SEZ
- Technocratic Government.



III. Reasons why the chances of the success of Gaza peace plan are low:

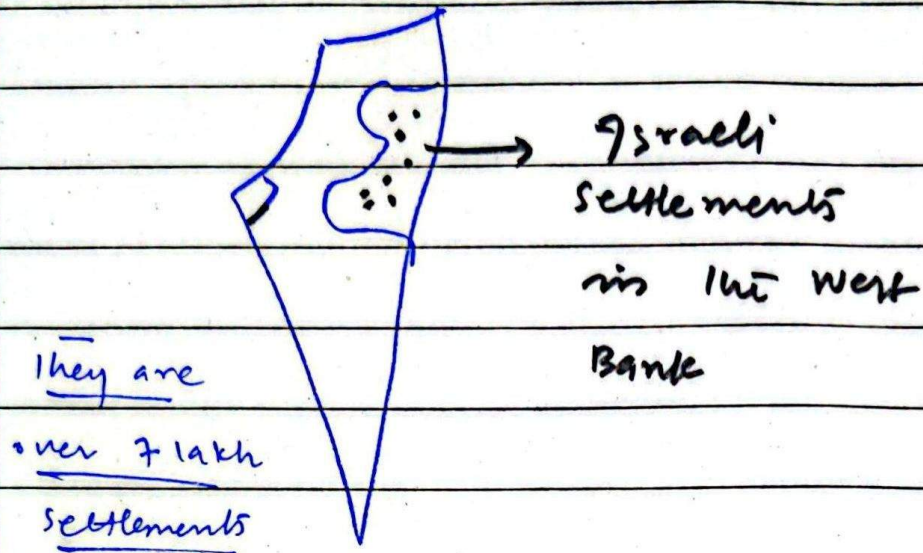
There are many shortcomings in the Gaza peace plan. Therefore, its chances of success, as discussed further in the para, are grim.

- Israel's continuous violation of ceasefire and its adventurism in the west Bank:

Israeli continue to weaponize basic supplies and it has increased settler violence in the west Bank.

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- Vague Pathway to a viable Palestinian Statehood :

While the
locally mentioned that it
will promote a pathway
towards a credible state
of Palestine, No timeline
or pathway was discussed
or mentioned. Resultantly,
it is considered as one
sided.

- Concerns on the
mandate of the
International Stabilization
Force:

Muslim countries including
Pakistan have been asked to
join ISF. However it's
mandate remains vague on
whether it will control or
fight against Hamas.

- No proper timeline given
in the peace plan:

while the
3 phases mentioned a
pathway, timeline is
not mentioned. Resultantly,
the plan rendered weak
and questionable.

IV. Islamabad has still not
showcased its confirmation
to join ISF and does
not fully agree with
the peace plan :

Upon the
criticism from the public
regarding the plan. Foreign
minister Ashraf Dar said
that the published version
was not theirs and that
it was completely new.
However, Islamabad reiterated
its support to President
Trump regarding the peace
plan.

"The Published version
is not what we
agreed to"

-FM Dar.

(v) Possible Fallouts on
Pakistan of Gama peace
plan :

Pakistan is a potential candidate to join ISF and also supporter of the peace plan. However, fallouts may follow within.

- United States pressure to
join ISF :

Pakistan, after so much thaw in relations, have finally paved its good relations with US. However joining ISF presents a dilemma for Pakistan. due to International Stabilization Force's vague contents.

- Internal resistance and pressure on government following the ISF joining:

There are already talks emerging from different quarters in the country. If Islamabad moved on with joining it, it will face criticism from the public.

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CONCLUSION:

The chances of the success of Gaza peace plan are slim owing to its vague contents. Also, Islamabad should tread carefully in dealing with matters relating to Gaza peace plan or there is a risk of possible fallout within.