

1. ISIS is flourishing less because of its internal strengths, but more due to dubious geopolitics leading to a selective war on terrorism and more than deserved importance given by the stakeholders to their own political agenda instead of united front. Examine.

**Answer:**

- ISIS traces its origins both to the terrorist training grounds of Osama bin Laden's Afghanistan and to America's invasion of Iraq in 2003, and it achieved its resurgence through two single-minded means: control of territory and unprecedented cruelty.
- Further, it was the growing chaos in Syria's civil war, which was giving Islamic militants there and in Iraq the space to spread and flourish.
- Attempts by the United States or Islamist rebels to topple authoritarian regimes—in Iraq, Libya, and now Syria—create power vacuums. This empty political space will be filled by extremists unless the United States and its allies build strong local forces that can suppress terrorist groups and warlords both.
- However, in this case it is not the only factor which has led to emergence and increased strength of ISIS, rather, it is the domestic political factors of Middle-east, which has led to the failure among the states to form a joint front.
- For example, in case of the Kurdish people, the phenomenon of ISIS represents a grave threat but also a new opportunity. On the one hand, they are one of the most visible target of the state, similarly, on another such attacks have united the Kurds spread across 3 countries and may give them a power vacuum in future, whenever, ISIS goes down to create a Kurdish nation.
- Similarly, the differences between Jordan, Turkey, and Syria, the 3 major countries which surround the area controlled by the ISIS, have not allowed a joint-front between them and they don't allow each other's troops in their territory and nether do they allow each other air space.
- One of the biggest drivers of conflict in the Middle East today is the enormous tension and violence between Sunni and Shia. The wars in Syria and in Yemen split largely between Sunni and Shia. In Iraq, the country and its politics are divided between Sunni and Shia, which is part of what allowed ISIS to rise among the Sunni minority there.
- But that conflict isn't really about religion, even if it's expressed along religious lines. Rather, it's driven by the cold war struggle for influence between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Because both are theocracies, and Iran claims to represent the world's Shia and Saudi Arabia claims to represent its Sunnis, they have sought to fight one another on Sunni-Shia lines — thus making that religious division much more violent and fraught. Because of this division, both the countries, which are very powerful and can control the ISIS, aren't focusing on it and are rather busy in gaining edge over each other in different conflicts.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### **Answer the following Questions**

1. Examine the contemporary relevance of Gandhiji's talisman as a means of resolving ethical dilemmas in day to day life. (150 words)
2. "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." Assess whether such an objective can be achieved within the existing system of education in India. (150 words)

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