

1. How did newly found petroleum resources change the fate of Southwest Asian nations? Discuss.

Introduction

- Southwest Asia is the westernmost sub region of Asia
- Southwest Asia has the world's largest known oil reserves. Saudi Arabia and Iran have the largest deposits of oil.
- Oil rich countries in south-west Asia includes Iran, Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, and Yemen. These ten countries together have an area of 5.1 million square kilometres, or about 3.4% of the Earth's land surface, but they possess according to BP's 2012 Statistical Review of World Energy, 48% of world's known oil reserves and 38% of natural gas reserves.

Body

The Middle East oil fields, stretching in a great arc from Iran and Iraq around the Persian Gulf, comprise collectively the largest known petroleum deposits, approximating about two-thirds of the oil reserve of the free world.



Fig. Middle-east Asia

The region has been completely transformed due to the discovery of oil.

- Oil-producing countries have enjoyed tremendous growth in national wealth and an improved standard of living. Citizens that live in these countries may have the access to quality houses, food, health care, education, jobs, transportation, communication, and luxury items. The life expectancy in

these countries has increased by over 15 years because of advancements in healthcare, hospitals, medicines, education, etc.

- One of the results from cracks in oil rigs, oil spills, and illegal dumping of oil waste is reduction in the amount of freshwater available for drinking apart from environmental deterioration leading to climate change.

Many Southwest Asian nations became dependent on oil sales.

Global impact-

It has made some of these countries extremely rich and has led them to have a lot of control over the global economy.

Political instability-

- Some countries have grown very rich due to their oil production (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait), while countries without oil are struggling (Afghanistan, Jordan, Israel, etc.).
- Countries without oil have a much harder time improving living conditions for their population. This difference in wealth in some of the Middle East has led to conflicts among the nations.
- Anarchy/despotism in Iraq and Syria was a result of the leaders in these nations growing rich by exporting oil and not spending the revenue generated on the wellbeing of the common people.
- Interference by western nations further complicated the situation.

Even though there was drastic growth in this region, the recent issue on curbing climate change will dampen oil economy in future and many of these nations are not ready with other alternative to run their nations. They have been exploitative and never concerned about the consequences.

Conclusion:

Developments like initiation of production of Shale gas and environmental regulation under Paris agreement is surely going to bring in much required sustainability in the region. Further, development of alternative economies like livestock ranching as proposed by Saudi Arabia's prince should be a pathway for other nations to go for sustainability and help future generation.

2. In what ways did the post WWI global economy's excessive dependence on the United States of America (USA) create the platform for the Great Depression? Discuss.

Introduction

“The primary cause of the Great Depression was the war of 1914-1918,” the former president of United States of America Herbert Hoover wrote in his 1952 memoirs. “Without the war there would have been no depression of such dimensions.”

Body

Economic Turmoil after WWI Led to the Great Depression

“World War I’s legacy of debt, protectionism and crippling reparations set the stage for a global economic disaster”.

-----CHRISTOPHER KLEIN

- **America Retreats from the World:** While the United States emerged from World War I not only as the world’s leading economic power, but scarred by its involvement in what many Americans saw as a purely European conflict. The disillusionment with World War I led to a retreat from international affairs. America was going to make the world safe for democracy and came out disgusted with the whole thing. The United States emerged as the logical leader on the world stage and then cut out of that role. Not wanting to be saddled with the cost of a European war, the United States demanded that the Allies repay money loaned to them during the conflict. “The Allies took the position that if they had to do that, then they would have to collect reparations from Germany that could be used to repay the war loans.
- **German Reparations Weigh Down Europe:** The punitive *Treaty of Versailles* required Germany to pay billions of dollars in reparations to Great Britain, France, Belgium and other Allies. “The Peace is outrageous and impossible and can bring nothing but misfortune,” wrote economist John Maynard Keynes after resigning in protest as the British Treasury Department’s chief representative to the peace conference. In his international bestseller *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Keynes argued that the onerous reparations would only further impoverish Germany and exacerbate the damage caused to the European economy by the war. What ensued was a vicious flow of money back and forth across the Atlantic as American bankers lent money to Germany to pay reparations to the Allies to repay their debts to the United States. With the Allies refusing to ease reparation terms, Germany defaulted on its payments in 1923, and its economy further crumbled when factories shuttered after France and Belgium occupied the industrial Ruhr region to force German repayment. To come up with the money to meet its obligations, Germany accelerated its currency printing, which caused such hyperinflation that the German mark became virtually worthless. The exchange rate of the German mark to the American dollar plummeted from 32.9 to 1 in 1919 to 433 billion to 1 by 1924. The paper on which German marks were printed had more value as kindling or children’s building blocks than as currency.
- **Economic Barriers Restrict Trade:** While the crippled European economy whimpered, the American economy roared through the Twenties. However, social changes to the United States as a result of World War I laid the

groundwork for the ensuing economic free-fall. Due to the role they played during the war, businessmen emerged as knights in shining armor, and the business of the country is business. Policies enacted by successive Republican administrations resulted in both large tax cuts for big business owners that widened income inequality and a lack of regulation on banks and Wall Street that some historians connect to the start of the Great Depression. At the same time, the United States continued its inward turn by curtailing immigration and in 1922 enacting the highest tariff in the country's history to that point. While global guns remained silent during the 1920s, an international trade war raged around the globe that hindered economic recovery. By the time of the October 1929 Stock Market Crash, countries such as Germany, Great Britain, Canada and Japan had already fallen into recession. When American credit dried up and banks started to fail, lenders not only stopped lending to Germany, they sought prompt repayment. The added economic pressure only worsened the downturn.

- **The Global Economy Collapses:** The Great Depression did not take hold until the fall of 1930, and in the interim Hoover signed into law the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which erected the highest trade barriers in American history. At the very time you need to stimulate spending, these policies put in place a tariff that raised the price of goods and made it more difficult for Europeans to pay their bills and sell their goods in this country. As another protectionist wave swept across the globe, Germany announced the formation of a customs union with Austria in March 1931. France feared it a step toward annexation and withdrew funds from Austrian banks, igniting a banking panic in Vienna that spread to Germany. In the ensuing months, the European economy imploded.

The inward turn after World War I had now left the United States to confront the Great Depression on its own.

Conclusion

The most devastating impact of the Great Depression was human suffering. In a short period of time, world output and standards of living dropped precipitously. As much as one-fourth of the labour force in industrialized countries was unable to find work in the early 1930s. While conditions began to improve by the mid-1930s, total recovery was not accomplished until the end of the decade.

3. How far can the German military aggression during the interwar period be held responsible for the outbreak of WWII? Critically examine.

Introduction

Years after World War I but before World War II is referred as interwar period. It is also the period when the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler took control of Germany. After rising to power in Germany, Hitler began to carry out aggression towards other

nation-states in Europe and Hitler carried out actions that went against the general terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The Western European democracies of Britain and France did not want to enter into a military conflict with Germany at this time as both had been reducing their armies and ability to wage war. This lack of will to fight pushed both countries towards the policy of appeasement which involved giving into the demands of an aggressive country in the hopes that the aggression could be contained.

Body

German military aggression during the interwar period responsible for the outbreak of WWII

- Remilitarize the Rhineland – In March of 1936, Nazi Germany remilitarized the Rhineland under the direction of Adolf Hitler. France was angered by the move but lacked the ability to respond and did not have the support of Britain. This lack of a response by both Britain and France to the remilitarization of the Rhineland only confirmed for Hitler that he would not be challenged as he expanded his aggression.
- Annexation of Austria – Germany annexed Austria in 1938. The Treaty of Versailles forbid Germany from uniting with Austria but Hitler, who was born in Austria, wanted to unite all Germany speaking people under his control. Britain and France protested the move by Germany but did not respond in any meaningful way, which furthered Hitler's belief that the Allied nations would not stop his aggression.
- German aggression towards Czechoslovakia in 1938 - Czechoslovakia, as a country, was created after World War I and parts of it included German-speaking people, such as the Sudetenland. Again, Hitler pressured Europe with his military aggression in the goal of uniting all German-speaking peoples under the control of the Nazi's. A two-day conference in Munich was held in 1938 in which the leaders of Britain, France, Italy and Germany met to discuss Germany's desire to take over the Sudeten region. Western powers allowed Hitler with no resistance to take over the Sudeten region, on promise that Germany will not seek any more territory in Europe. Germany soon took control over the remainder of Czechoslovakia through a series of invasions.
- Invasion of Poland - German forces invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939. This action was what finally caused the Allied nations to stand up against Germany and Britain and France both declared war on Germany on the 3rd of September. Europe was again at war, only two decades after the end of the First World War.

Some historians have argued that if the British and French had acted earlier than the German invasion of Poland, then they may have been able to stop Hitler and the Nazi's and avoided the devastation of World War II.

Other reasons responsible for the outbreak of WWII

- Treaty of Versailles - that punished Germany for causing World War I in 1918. It humiliated and angered Germany.
- Economic downturn - Hyper-inflation hit Germany hard in 1923-4 and facilitated the early development of Hitler's career.
- Aggression by other countries – for instance Japanese militarism against China, Italian aggression against Ethiopia
- The failure of appeasement policy of Britain and France.
- Failure of League of Nations - in its mandate to prevent a second global conflict.
- Axis alliance – formed by Germany, Japan and Italy.
- Agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union in August 1939 to divide up Eastern Europe.

Conclusion

German military aggression during the interwar period was enabled by many other factors. It cannot be considered as the only driver of WWII.

4. Give a brief description of the manner in which countries aligned themselves after WWII. What were the implications of this alignment for the world at large? Examine.

Introduction

The world completely transformed during the years after the end of the Second World War in 1945. The influence and the dominations which a few European imperialist powers exercised in the pre-war years waned and the world saw the emergence of two superpowers (USA and USSR) along with newly independent Asian and African nations.

Body

- Many countries in Europe had been liberated from German occupation by the Soviet armies. The Communist parties and other antifascist parties in these countries had played an important role in liberating those countries from German rule.
- On the other hand, the United States of America was instrumental in rebuilding the Western European nations, which came under its sphere of influence.
- A major feature of the history of the world for almost four decades after the end of the Second World War was the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union and the armed confrontation between the military blocs headed by them. This was the period of the Cold War and the race in the designing and production of ever new weapons of mass destruction. It posed a danger to the very survival of humankind.

- The most important reason for the 'outbreak' of the Cold War was the Western countries' fear of communism. The United States openly declared that her policy was to prevent the spread of communism. One of the objectives of the massive economic aid that the United States gave to West European countries was also to 'contain' communism.

In 1947, The USSR set up Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) which was the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties responsible for the creation of the Eastern bloc.

The growing tension in the world was worsened by the setting up of military blocs. In 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed for defense against the Soviet Union. The members of this alliance were the United States and other west european nations.

In 1955, in response to NATO, the Warsaw Pact was formed with member states East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.

Many newly independent nations of Asia and Africa as well as many nations in other continents did not like the military blocs. They began to follow a policy of nonalignment with any military bloc. Their emergence played a very important role in reducing the intensity of the Cold War and in creating an atmosphere of peace. These countries formed the Non-aligned Movement(NAM) in 1961.

The formation of the military alliances was accompanied by another dangerous development. This was the race for deadlier weapons of destruction. Nuclear weapons were developed by both the superpowers which kept the world on the verge of destruction.

Further, the antagonism on both sides led to conflicts between the two superpowers indirectly in other countries. This was a feature of the cold war.

<p>△ 1962</p> <p>CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS</p> <p>The Soviets deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba, in striking range of Florida. President John F. Kennedy responds with a naval blockade of Cuba and the two sides are at the brink of nuclear war. After a 13-day standoff, the Soviets remove the missiles.</p>	<p>△ 1960s-1975</p> <p>VIETNAM WAR</p> <p>In 1965, the U.S. sends combat troops to aid South Vietnam in its war against Communist North Vietnam, which is supported by the Soviets and the Chinese. By the time U.S. troops leave in 1973, 58,000 Americans have died. The war ends in 1975 when Communist forces overrun the south.</p>	<p>△ 1968</p> <p>PRAGUE SPRING</p> <p>Leaders of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party attempt to institute reforms, including loosening control over the media and introducing multiparty democracy. Soviet troops invade and the reforms are halted.</p>
<p>△ 1979</p> <p>AFGHAN INVASION</p> <p>Soviet troops invade Afghanistan in support of the Marxist government, which is battling Islamic insurgents known as <i>mujahedeen</i>. With help from the U.S., Pakistan, and others, the mujahedeen wage a 10-year war against the Soviets, who withdraw in 1989.</p>	<p>△ 1985</p> <p>GORBACHEV'S RISE</p> <p>Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the Soviet Union. Grasping his nation's dire situation, he institutes capitalist reforms known as <i>perestroika</i>, and a limited expansion of political freedom known as <i>glasnost</i>. He lets the Berlin Wall come down in 1989, and Germany reunify in 1990.</p>	<p>◆ 1991</p> <p>FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION</p> <p>After popular uprisings sweep away Communist regimes in much of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union formally disbands and Gorbachev gives up power to Boris Yeltsin, the democratically elected President of Russia.</p>

The rivalry between the two superpowers also derailed the healthy and smooth functioning of the United Nations Organisation(UNO) as both had veto powers in the Security Council of the UN.

Domestic discourse in the democratic nations was subverted to some extent under the fear of spread of communism and socialism. For example, Mccarthyism in United States of America.

The space race between the two superpowers also helped in the advancement of science and technology. For example, Humans reached moon in 1969. Countries under the Warsaw Pact remained underdeveloped as was evident after the end of the cold war and many people suffered under the autocratic rule of dictators. For example, Stalin and Mao policies in the USSR and China.

Conclusion

After the Second World War, the International System came to be a totally different system where the new international system was characterised by two superpowers, the Cold War, bipolarity, non-alignment, anti-imperialism, the UNO, the presence of several new sovereign states in the world, N-weapons and the threat of Total War.

5. Examine the factors that led to the creation of the European Union. Was it successful? Critically examine.

Introduction

The Treaty of Rome was signed on March 25, 1957, cementing an economic agreement between six European countries that ultimately paved the way to today's European Union. EU is a political and economic union of 28 states formed by the Maastricht treaty in 1992 located primarily in Europe.

Body

Factors led to the formation of European union:

The second world war had exhausted the Europe with industries in ruins and defence being weak. A single country wouldn't have survived the newly started cold war and the countries came together to address the same and formed ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community). It later evolved into the EU.

- Political factors: The European Union is set up with the aim of ending the frequent and bloody wars between neighbors, which culminated in the Second World War. With communism and dictatorship on the rise, EU wanted to promote democracy, freedom, human dignity, Rule of law and Human rights.
- Economic factor: The world war had destroyed the economy of Europe and the countries came together to ease the trade and to be more competitive in the global marketplace. At the same time, it must balance the needs of its independent fiscal and political members.
- Handling common global issues: like terrorism, migration issue and so on which was gaining on the circumstances. The Maastricht treaty broadened the EU's scope, to include both economic and social issues - like education, public health, technological development, and environmental protection, to name a few.
- Safeguard the culture and respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity which was under threat after the world war and later during cold war.

The shortcomings of European union are mainly cited for the Brexit and there is a wave of Euroscepticism posing serious challenges to the EU. Yet EU is successful over the years in many aspects.

Achievements of European union:

- World's largest single market: with labor market mobility, the free movement of goods, services and capital. This in turn has boosted the economic activity making the EU accounting for 23% of world GDP.
- It gave more than 500 million people the freedom to live, study or work anywhere within the EU member states. The EU also created the Schengen Area, a zone of passport-free, borderless travel.
- EU is instrumental in maintaining peace and it was awarded Nobel peace prize in 2012 for contributing to the advancement of peace and

reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. As a upholder of Human rights, it also banished death penalty.

- For a country to join the EU, it needs to meet three criteria: political, with stable institutions underpinning democracy; economic, with a functioning market economy; and legal, with the acceptance of EU law and practice. Under this process, a number of former dictatorships and ailing ex-communist economies made peaceful transitions.
- Programs on Global issues like
 - The EU has the biggest programme of environmental legislation in the world. It also ratified the Paris agreement and collectively contributing to address environmental concerns.
 - EU Counter terrorism strategy, rules to fight money laundering and terror financing etc.,

Shortcomings of European union:

- Crisis in Europe: one of the main reasons for the formation of European union is to bring political stability. However, EU failed many times during the cold war period including bifurcation of Germany, Balkan wars of 1990s and so on.
- Immigration crisis: it was not aptly handled by the EU as per the experts which led to protests all over Europe and also a major reason of Brexit.
- Representation: EU is seen as Anti-Democratic due to its institutional setup. For the same reason there is Euro-skepticism and the citizens of EU feel excluded. The European Commission – the executive branch and most important organ of the Union – drafts the laws implemented in member-state countries. But the Commission is unelected by the people. This is against the purpose of EU which wanted to promote democratic values.
- The economic model of EU is outdated and not catching up with the latest developments. There are no big technological giants competing with Google, Facebook etc., which has made EU redundant to its purpose of competitive economic union. This has made the economic growth weak leading to even Eurozone crisis.
- The countries are not having control over monetary policies and due to hardline EU fiscal rules and suffering the deficit in growth. The failure of the EU to deliver led to Italy signing Belt and road Initiative.
- After the global financial crisis, instead of taking proactive measures, the EU rules mandated Austerity measures which only increased the Unemployment rates and low growth.

Conclusion

The EU was formed to give Europeans the convenience of one currency, to enhance mutual prosperity, and to reduce political tensions after centuries of animosity and war. However, rigid rules and undemocratic working of EU has created a problem to

achieve its purpose. There is a need of reforms in the institutional setup to give flexibility for nations in times of crisis and handle sensitive issues like migration.

