

Key Concepts in International Relations

Day 32. National interest, power, security, balance of power, deterrence, transnational actors, collective security — the working vocabulary of the IR paper, compressed for fast recall. **Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.**

Questions from this unit (UPSC 2016–2025): 4 × 10-markers · 7 × 15-markers · 3 × 20-markers.

PART A National Interest

1 The Concepts, and Why They Are Contested

“International politics is a struggle for power.” — **Hans Morgenthau**

- This unit supplies the vocabulary through which states read and act on the world — **national interest, power, security, balance of power and deterrence, transnational actors, collective security, the world capitalist economy.**
- Every concept is contested → realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism and the critical approaches read the same word differently; no single definition closes the debate.
- The thread running through the unit → how states pursue survival and advantage under anarchy, and how far that account survives globalisation, interdependence and non-state actors.

2 National Interest — Meaning, Nature, Components

- The foreign-policy equivalent of public interest; the material on which foreign policy is built.
- Two layers → a **constant / permanent motivation** (survival) and a **variable content** that shifts with systemic factors.
- Core interest → security, sovereignty, strategic autonomy. Variable interest → India's non-alignment in the Cold War shifting to multi-alignment thereafter.
- Hans Morgenthau** ties survival to three identities → **physical** (territory), **political** (the political-economic system), **cultural** (historical values).
- Broader components → economic, security, geopolitical, ideological / cultural interest.

3 Classification — Thomas W. Robinson's Six Categories

Category	Content and illustration
Primary	Non-negotiable → political, cultural and physical integrity.
Secondary	Protection of citizens abroad; diplomatic immunities.
Permanent	Enduring → the USA's control of sea-lanes.
Variable	Contingent on leadership, party politics, narrative.
General	Broad goals shared across states → peace, disarmament, arms control.
Specific	Logical extensions in time and space → India advocating a new international economic order.

4 Definitions, and the Four Readings

- Charles Lerche** → “the fulfilment of general, long term and continuing purpose which the state, the nation, and the government all see themselves as serving.”
- Vernon Van Dyke** → what states seek to protect or achieve in relation to each other.

Approach	National interest is...
Realist	Rooted in human nature and the drive for power. Morgenthau : “The main signpost that helps political realism find its way is the concept of interest defined in terms of power.”
Liberal	An aggregation of domestic group preferences; pursued through cooperation, trade and institutions.
Constructivist	Not objectively given but socially constructed through interaction (Alexander Wendt); preferences are changeable, not a priori.
Marxist	A mask for the ruling class; an obfuscation of class conflict — rivalry among capitalist powers presented as the nation's interest.

5 An Essentially Contested Concept

- **Joseph Frankel** → the search for a theory of national interest is futile; the term is used so loosely it defies definition (he cites the Pakistani Army invoking “national interest” for self-interested ends).
- **Raymond Aron** → a **pseudo-theory**. **K.J. Holsti** → “as an object of inquiry [it] is a bottomless pit.”
- **Furniss and Snyder** → “national interest is what the nation decides it is.”
- **Charles Beard** → a deceptive term serving ruling elites. **Scott Burchill** → used for legitimisation but lacking substance.
- **Achin Vanaik** → its power derives from being a **principle of legitimisation**.
- Despite the vagueness, the concept is indispensable for describing, explaining and justifying state behaviour → **Henry Kissinger**: discerning national interest is essential to effective policy.
- Illustration → “national interest” has justified Russia’s action in Ukraine, US weapons programmes, and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

UPSC 2022 · 10m National Interest is an essentially contested concept. Comment.

6 Instruments and Methods of Promotion

Instrument	Working content
Diplomacy	The oldest and most effective method → negotiation on behalf of sovereigns.
Propaganda	The art of persuading others of the rightness of one’s goals; Francine Frankel ’s “systematic attempt to affect the minds, emotions and actions of a group” (Hitler, Mussolini); soft-power projection.
Alliances and treaties	NATO, the Warsaw Pact; Panchsheel (mutual non-aggression and non-interference).
Economic means	Aid, grants, loans; China’s debt diplomacy through the BRI (“cheque-book diplomacy”).
Coercion — the stick	Intervention, embargoes, sanctions, boycotts, reprisals, retorsion (CAATSA).
Non-state / deep-state route	Hiding behind non-state actors → Pakistan’s use of terrorism against India.
Diaspora	Remittances, cultural exchange, technology transfer (India–Nepal, India–Bhutan).
Technology and IOs	Virtual summits; UN and WHO platforms shaping a conducive environment.

Realist toolkit → military build-up, balance of power, intelligence, strategic autonomy. Liberal toolkit → institutions, international law, economic interdependence, soft power, development assistance. Globalisation and technology keep adding to both.

UPSC 2016 · 20m Explain the instruments and methods devised for the promotion of national interest.

7 The Dynamic Nature — and “Whose Interest?”

- Core interests stay constant; dynamic interests shift with systemic change (**Morgenthau**) → leadership, narrative and the balance of forces all move the content.
- China aligned with the USA for growth, then turned assertive as its power grew → interest is adaptive.
- US insistence on freedom of navigation in the South China Sea as a “core” interest; North Korea–US deterrence dynamics; diplomacy advancing dynamic interest (the JCPOA, 2015); propaganda reshaping interest-narratives (the Russia–Ukraine information war).
- **Whose interest?** → governments frame it as collective will, but elites, lobbies and ideology shape it — US–China rivalry benefiting defence and manufacturing; Brexit framed as sovereignty yet opposed by business and youth; Atmanirbhar Bharat and India’s Ukraine neutrality contested at home; fossil-fuel lobbies weakening climate commitments.

PART B Power

8 Power — Meaning, Definitions, Features

- A **relational** concept → the capacity to shape the behaviour of others.
- **Hans Morgenthau** → the ability to influence the thoughts and actions of others.
- **Georg Schwarzenberger** → the capacity to impose one’s will on others through effective sanctions.

“A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.” — **Robert Dahl**

- Dahl’s reading → power is relational, multidimensional and impermanent.
- Evolution → from the military-centric view of the classical realists (**Thucydides**, **Machiavelli**) to the economic and soft-power dimensions of modern theory.
- **Features** → both a **means and an end**; **dynamic and relative** (India’s standing fell after 1962, recovered after 1965 and 1971); **actual vs potential** (available strength vs latent capacity mobilised in crisis); **unequal** — no two nations hold equal power.

9 Elements and Dimensions

- **Elements** → geography and location (**Napoleon's** emphasis; England's naval rise), size, natural resources (US near-self-sufficiency), demography, military power, economic status, social cohesion (homogeneity strengthens, heterogeneity complicates), technology and R&D, intelligence (RAW, IB), leadership and personality.
- Elements skilfully used become **determinants** of power.
- **Dimensions** → **military** (a precondition for great-power recognition), **economic** (satisfies needs; controls others by granting or denying access to goods and services), **psychological** (opinion, image, propaganda, persuasive negotiation — amplified by mass media, NGOs and social movements). The three are inseparable.

10 Classification of States by Power

Class	Test	Examples
Superpowers	Cannot be defeated by all enemies combined	USA, USSR (Cold War)
Great powers	Defend their interests on their own	Russia, France, UK
Middle powers	Defend their interests through coalitions	India, Australia, Turkey, Israel, Germany
Small powers	Need assistance even with coalitions	Maldives, Bhutan, Sri Lanka

11 Types of Power — Hard · Soft · Smart · Sharp · Fast

The two poles — and the four newer coinages between them

HARD POWER

Coercion and command — military and economic sticks; most effective against weaker states



SOFT POWER — JOSEPH NYE

Co-option and attraction — making others want what you want

Christopher Walker — **sharp power**: manipulative influence by authoritarian states (Russia, China) exploiting the openness of democracies.

John Chipman — **fast power**: speed as a determinant of national power; "survival of the fastest" — rapid deployment, adaptability, fast-track diplomacy.

SMART POWER — coined by Suzanne Nossel, popularised by Joseph Nye: the two, mutually reinforcing (carrot + stick). India at Doklam — rapid troop deployment alongside the Wuhan Summit.

Nye's three sources of soft power

Culture — when attractive

Political values — democracy, human rights, rule of law, applied consistently

Foreign policies — when seen as legitimate and just

- Instruments → cultural diplomacy, education, media, public diplomacy — China's broadcasting, the EU's multilateralism, India's yoga diplomacy.
- Relevance → complements hard power; central to reform of multilateral institutions, climate justice, peacekeeping and non-proliferation; its weight rises with interdependence and information technology.
- Limit → **Dhruv Jaishankar**: soft power not backed by hard power is pointless — hence Nye's own call for smart power. Attraction supplements material capability; it does not replace it.

UPSC 2018 · 10m

What, according to Joseph Nye, are the major sources of a country's soft power? Discuss its relevance in contemporary world politics.

12 Scholarly Views, and the Constructivist Reading

- **Kenneth Waltz** → a bipolar order is the most stable; national interests align with bloc interests.
- **Robert Gilpin** (*War and Change in International Politics*) → states alter the system as their interests evolve, using military, economic and technological capabilities.
- **John Mearsheimer** (offensive neorealism) → a hegemon strengthens itself and weakens rivals to dominate its region.
- **Joseph Nye** and **Robert Keohane** (*Power and Interdependence*) → **asymmetrical interdependence** is itself a power resource.

Constructivist view

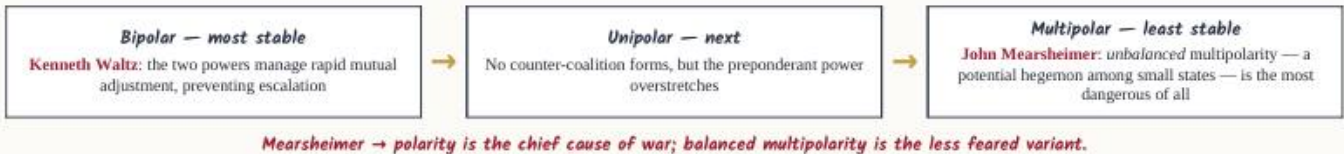
- Power is rooted in shared meanings, identities and norms, not fixed material facts → we never see the world through naked eyes.
- **Nicholas Onuf** and **Alexander Wendt** → ideas shape how states define interests and threats — and ideas can change.
- **Giambattista Vico** and **Immanuel Kant** → the social world is human-made and filtered through consciousness; intersubjective meanings produce outcomes.
- **Anthony Giddens** (**structuration**) → by thinking differently, actors can transform structures — including anarchy itself.
- Challenge to realism → anarchy and the security dilemma are intersubjective, not given. Challenge to liberalism → it goes past institutions, democracy and trade to ask how an issue becomes "security" at all.

"Anarchy is what states make of it." — **Alexander Wendt**

13 Polarity of Power

- The structure of the international system read off the distribution of great-power capability → unipolar, bipolar, multipolar.
- A vague concept → **Morgenthau** noted four connotations of “balance,” **Ernst Haas** eight.
- Unipolar** → one preponderant power, no comparable rival. **Monteiro**’s features → an anarchic system, no balance of power, mutual relations without overarching control; proponent **William Wohlforth**. Risk → an overstretched hyperpower turning megalomaniac.
- Bipolar** → two blocs; alignment, competition, zero-sum dynamics (the Cold War).
- Multipolar** → several centres competing to fill vacuums (the Concert of Europe, the interwar period).

The stability debate — how structural realism ranks the three



14 Hegemonic Stability, and the Relevance of the Polarity Thesis

- Hegemonic Stability Theory** (**George Modelski**, **Robert Gilpin**, **Stephen Krasner**) → a dominant hegemon with capacity and will sustains order; Krasner’s hegemons → the British Empire, then the USA.
- A hegemon must hold three attributes together → capacity to enforce rules, willpower, and commitment to a mutually beneficial system. Hegemons supply **collective goods** and counter the **free-rider problem**.
- Limits → it struggles to stabilise order, may generate conflict among hegemons, and cannot absorb uneven growth.
- Is polarity still useful?** Questioned → America’s post-Soviet unipolar rise produced no counter-coalition; **Nehru**’s “nervous peace” critique. Criticised for oversimplification (it sets aside ideology, culture, economics), unclear measurement of power, and the dynamism of the system.
- Revival → China’s rise and counter-coalitions like the Quad reinforce the thesis; iterations such as the balance of terror and the nuclear balance extend it. **David Hume** → so long as common sense holds, the idea stays relevant.
- Verdict → limited, but indispensable for mapping the distribution of power.

15 Contemporary Centres of Power

- Global power** → worldwide influence, hard and soft capabilities. **Paul Kennedy** → a great power’s strength varies historically and with the political environment. **Martin Wight** → a dominant power can create, define and monopolise international conflicts.
- Kenneth Waltz**’s **five requirements of a great power** → population and territory; resource mobilisation; economic output; political stability; military strength and outreach.
- Regional power** → a major share of regional GDP and trade, dominant military, political and cultural influence (India, Brazil). **Sub-regional power** → influence over neighbours on a smaller scale, aspiring to regional status.
- Post-Cold War emergence → decline of bipolarity, rise of globalisation, emergence of non-state actors, redistribution of power. **Robert J. Guttman** → a 21st-century superpower needs economic and military strength, a strong market and technological prowess, a young educated workforce, and global vision.

Centre	Sources of weight — and the constraint
China	~1.4 billion people; the “global factory”; largest armed forces; String of Pearls; Belt and Road Initiative.
Russia	Largest territory; ~30% of natural resources; second-largest nuclear arsenal; influence in Central Asia, Syria, Crimea.
India	Young workforce; fastest-growing major economy; Act East, the Asia–Africa Growth Corridor, the Quad.
BRICS	~40% of world population; the New Development Bank; the Contingent Reserve Arrangement — strained by divergent interests and Chinese dominance.
European Union	27 states; an integrated market and currency; the largest humanitarian donor — constrained by Brexit and the absence of a unified military.

16 Balance of Power — Meaning and Assumptions

Working definition

A system ensuring that no single state becomes strong enough to dominate the others. It is operational in **multipolarity**.

- Traceable to the War of Spanish Succession and the Congress of Vienna (1815) → the Concert of Europe gave Europe roughly a hundred years of peace —

the “golden age” of the balance of power.

- Assumptions → no international authority; anarchy; states are rational and pursue national interest; the security dilemma; states are power maximisers ready to wage war; none permits another's preponderance.
- Classical realists (**Morgenthau**) → the balance of power is a deliberate **policy choice**.
- Neorealists (**Kenneth Waltz**) → it arises **automatically** from the anarchic structure.

“Balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive.” — **Kenneth Waltz**

17 Types of Balancing, and the Techniques

- **Internal balancing** → building one's own military and economic capacity. **External balancing** → forming alliances; also **asymmetrical** and **soft balancing**.
- When threatened, a state may **balance** (ally against the threat) or **bandwagon** (align with it); other tactics → **buck-passing**, **chain-ganging**.
- **Techniques** → alliances and counter-alliances (NATO, the Warsaw Pact); arms race and disarmament; **compensation** (territorial annexation or division); partition (Germany after 1945); demilitarisation; reparations (Versailles); the creation of buffer states.
- Indian strategic tradition → **Kautilya's Shadgunya Niti** as an indigenous balancing doctrine.

18 The Problem of Definition, and the Modifications

- **Martin Wight** → the notion is “notoriously full of confusion.”
- **Inis Claude** → the trouble “is not that it has no meaning, but that it has too many meanings.”
- **Morgenthau** gave four meanings → a policy; an actual state of affairs; equal distribution; any distribution. **Ernst Haas** gave eight → from equilibrium, to power politics, to a universal law of history, to a guide for policy-makers.
- **Sidney B. Fay** → a “just equilibrium... as will prevent any one of them from becoming sufficiently strong to enforce its will upon others.” **David Hume** → the balance of power is “common sense.”
- Sources of the confusion → power is hard to measure, interpretations differ, and relations between states are unpredictable.

Modification	Claim
Balance of threat — Stephen Walt	States balance against <i>threats</i> , not power alone.
Balance of interest — Randall Schweller	Interest, not capability alone, drives alignment.
Soft balancing — T.V. Paul, Michel Fortmann, James Wirtz	Balancing the USA directly is too costly; diplomacy and institutions are the realistic route.

19 Relative and Absolute Gains

- **John Mearsheimer** → states think in **relative** gains — military advantage over others matters more than absolute capability.
- **Joseph Grieco** → survival requires a “proportionate advantage,” so even allies may not cooperate.
- **Robert Keohane** (neoliberal institutionalism) → cooperation presumes the pursuit of **absolute** gains.
- The pay-off → a preference for relative gains makes balancing more likely; a preference for absolute gains favours deep institutions and security communities (**Duncan Snidal, Robert Axelrod** on the dynamic interaction).

20 Criticism, Appraisal and Contemporary Relevance

- Liberals → it legitimises and entrenches rivalry, breeding instability; **Woodrow Wilson** wished the “great game” of balance of power “forever discredited.”
- Constructivists (**Alexander Wendt**) → it overlooks norms and values. Feminists → it encodes a gendered conception of power.
- It may produce the **stability-instability paradox** — deterrence prevents high-intensity war but encourages proxy and low-intensity conflict. And it stops operating in unipolarity: after 1991 no counter-coalition formed against the USA.
- As a basis for peace it is inadequate → it failed to prevent two world wars; war itself becomes a means of conflict resolution within the system, producing “unnecessary war and the unnecessary extension of war.”
- Not relevant, say the critics → globalisation and interdependence, global-governance institutions, non-state actors and transnational threats (terrorism, pandemics, climate) all defy power balancing.
- Yet realists hold it durable → **Waltz**: unipolarity is the least durable structure because dominant powers overstretch and weaker states fear them. **Mearsheimer** → the Cold War “long peace” rested on bipolarity, rough US–Soviet equality and nuclear weapons.
- Present scenario → US–China rivalry; NATO expansion and the Russia–Ukraine war; the Quad and Indo-Pacific alignments; the EU's collective bargaining; small states pursuing nuclear weapons (North Korea); technology empowering small and non-state actors.

“As nature abhors a vacuum, so international politics abhors unbalanced power.” — **Kenneth Waltz**

UPSC 2016 · ISm “The notion of balance of power is notoriously full of confusion.” In the light of this quotation, do you think that the concept of balance of power is relevant?

PART D Deterrence & Security

21 Deterrence — Meaning, Basis, MAD

- A psychological and relational concept resting on the rationality of actors → an adversary is dissuaded by the **credible threat of unacceptable cost**.
- Bernard Brodie** → a credible nuclear deterrent “must be always at the ready, yet never used.”
- Thomas Schelling** → strategy is now the art of coercion and intimidation, not the science of military victory; the power to hurt is bargaining power, most effective when held in reserve.
- Developed by game-theory and strategic thinkers → **Bernard Brodie, Herman Kahn, John Mearsheimer, Thomas Schelling**. Evolution → from conventional to nuclear deterrence, offered as an alternative to the balance of power.

Mutually Assured Destruction

- Nuclear-armed adversaries avoid war for fear of catastrophic, mutual destruction → the emphasis falls on **second-strike capability**; some advocate a first strike (**NUTS** — Nuclear Utilization Target Selection).
- It drove arms races; the USA adopted “flexible response” under Kennedy. **Tactical nuclear weapons** (Pakistan and India — HATF, Prahar); **extended deterrence** for Japan and South Korea.
- Stability-instability paradox (Schelling)** → nuclear weapons confer large-scale stability between nuclear states but push competition into smaller-scale instability — proxy wars and minor conflicts.

22 Advantages, Limitations and the Proliferation Debate

Advantages	Limitations
Prevents global conflict — even minor powers can deter majors.	Does not prevent small-scale conflict (Henry Kissinger).
The nuclear taboo (Nina Tannenwald) — reluctance to use since 1945 exceeds cost-benefit logic.	Creates global inequality; encourages proliferation.
Bargaining power; flexibility of triad delivery.	Ineffective against non-state actors; no guarantee of peace (the Cuban Missile Crisis).

A second strike usually needs a **nuclear triad** (USA, Russia, China, India); the UK and France hold only sea- and air-based weapons.

More may be better — or worse

- Kenneth Waltz** → “more may be better”; MAD makes nuclear war irrational and states become “exceedingly cautious.” **John Mearsheimer** agrees → nuclear weapons are “a superb deterrent.”
- Scott Sagan** → organisational pessimism — weapons are controlled by organisations with parochial biases, not by rational statesmen.

“Nuclear weapons do not produce perfect nuclear organisations; they only make their inevitable mistakes more deadly.” — **Scott Sagan**

- National prestige theory** → some authoritarian regimes seek weapons for status and regime survival.
- Frank Zagare** → deterrence theory is logically inconsistent and empirically inaccurate; rational-choice scholars propose **perfect deterrence**, varying states by the credibility of their threats.
- In 2007, **Henry Kissinger, William Perry, George Shultz** and **Sam Nunn** reversed their position → in a world of many new, poorly safeguarded nuclear states and the risk of nuclear terrorism, the weapons had become a source of extreme risk.
- India–Pakistan** → India’s **credible minimum deterrence** and **No First Use** against Pakistan’s tactical weapons compensating for conventional asymmetry. It has prevented full-scale war since 1998; restraint held in the 2019 Pulwama–Balakot crisis. But it does not stop sub-conventional conflict — Pakistan’s use of non-state actors below the nuclear threshold complicates India’s calculus. **Manoj Joshi** → strategic-level stability still requires strong conventional capability and diplomacy.
- Contemporary challenges → resurgent Cold War dynamics (US–China), diminished inter-state trust, the risk of inadvertent escalation, rogue states (North Korea), and the failure of deterrence against actors who do not follow state-based calculations.

Discuss the utility of Nuclear Deterrence Theory in the context of the recent standoff between India and Pakistan.

23 Security — the Security Dilemma and the Insecurity Dilemma

- The core concept of the discipline, which is often called Security Studies. **Hobbes** → security of life is the fundamental value. For realists, security is **national security** defined by military power.
- Security dilemma** → a defensive build-up by one state is read as aggressive by others, triggering retaliatory build-ups. Developed by **John Herz** from the Hobbesian state of nature; **Robert Jervis**'s offence–defence theory explains its severity. **Booth** and **Wheeler** → “the quintessential dilemma of international politics.”
- Insecurity dilemma** → **Brian Job** (*The Insecurity Dilemma*): in the Third World, people are at risk from their own state; national security defined as **regime security** is pitted against ethnic, social and religious demands. **Georg Sorensen** → 21st-century states suffer internal threats from ethnic movements, non-state actors, failed states and civil wars.

Two dilemmas, one loop — and each feeds the other



- Liberal response → collective security shifts the focus from national to international security; security communities and interdependence dampen the dilemma. **Amitav Acharya** → the security dilemma may not fit Third World states at all.
- Overcoming it → trust-building, transparency in military activity, international institutions, strong and stable societies. Contemporary backdrop → Russia–Ukraine, Israel–Gaza, US–China.

24 Theoretical Perspectives on Security

School	Security is...
Realist	National security through military power (Morgenthau).
Liberal	Security of state and individual → functionalism (David Mitrany), economic interdependence (Thomas Friedman , Richard Rosecrance), democratic peace (Michael Doyle), institutionalism (Woodrow Wilson); international and collective security.
Marxist	Human security from capitalism, through revolution. Immanuel Wallerstein → “either socialism or barbarism.”
Feminist	Traditional security is gendered and too narrow. Ann Tickner → it heightens rather than reduces individual insecurity; Cynthia Enloe → the “protection myth” masks militarised sexual violence.
Constructivist	The security dilemma and self-help are products of ideational structure. Wendt → security is what states make of it.
Critical	Human emancipation through cosmopolitan, post-territorial moral boundaries (Andrew Linklater).
Copenhagen School	Securitization — security as a speech act (Barry Buzan).

The cut examiners like → instrumentalist theories (realist, liberal, Marxist) against reflectivist theories (feminist, constructivist, critical, Copenhagen).

25 Human Security

- Shifts the referent from the state to the individual → freedom from fear, want and indignity.

Economic Food Health Environmental Personal Community Political

- T.D. Truong** → states may be economically secure while their people face violence, patriarchy and environmental harm; the focus must move from freedom from fear to freedom from want.
- Economic security is not human security → a working woman may earn well and still face harassment; income guarantees neither dignity nor safety. Feminist critique → traditional national security is masculine-biased and creates a “security paradox” (**Ann Tickner**).
- Barry Buzan** (*People, States and Fear*) → **five sectors of security** — military, political, economic, societal, environmental — interconnected, so that a threat in one affects the others.
- Illustrations → COVID-19 (health security), the Syrian refugee crisis (societal security), the Rohingya crisis (political security), climate-driven displacement.
- Realist caution → so deepened as to be nearly meaningless; states’ resources are finite and the concept raises false expectations. Human security complements economic security; it does not replace it.

UPSC 2016 · 20m Why does global human security need to be emphasized along with economic security? Explain with examples.

26 Securitization and Security Communities

- **Securitization** (Copenhagen School) → the process by which actors transform an issue into a matter of existential security through **speech acts** — declaring something a security issue makes it one. Scholars → **Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde**. Examples → the Arctic framed as an existential threat; migration in Europe.
- **Security communities** → **Karl Deutsch** (1957): a region where war becomes improbable or unimaginable and problems are solved by peaceful change.
- Two kinds → **amalgamated** (merger under one authority — the USA and its thirteen colonies) and **pluralistic** (sovereignty retained — USA–Canada).
- Conditions → compatible core values and the capacity to respond predictably and non-violently; **Carole Weaver** adds balanced multipolarity.
- Redefined after the Cold War by the constructivists **Emanuel Adler** and **Michael Barnett** around shared values and identities → ASEAN, MERCOSUR, the Pacific Islands Forum, SAARC. The lesson → anarchy can be transcended through shared norms.

27 Third World Security, and the Amorphous-Concept Debate

- **Mohammed Ayoob** (*The Third World Security Predicament*) → traditional security studies lack the tools to analyse the weak, post-colonial states of Asia, Africa and Latin America; their core problem is internal, not external.
- **Amitav Acharya** ("The Periphery as the Core") → the dominant understanding of security wrongly fixes on the inter-state level, excludes non-military threats and trusts the global balance of power; Cold War hegemony armed the Third World without democratic filters.
- **Caroline Thomas** → arbitrary colonial boundaries ignored ethnicity and geography, breeding conflict.
- Sources of insecurity → weak nationalism, weak institutions, poverty, legitimacy deficits, dependence on great powers; **Homer-Dixon's** scarcity conflicts (simple-scarcity, relative-deprivation, group-identity).
- **Peripheral realism** → the major threat to the Third World comes from within; developed states are mere facilitators.

Has "national security" been widened out of meaning?

- The concept has widened from military defence to economic instability, cyberattacks, pandemics and climate change.
- Concern → an over-broad concept becomes vague and is misused to justify surveillance, curbs on liberty and intervention — the securitization of non-military issues.
- Defence of the widening → military and non-military threats now blur; a narrow definition leaves cyber, economic and environmental vulnerabilities unaddressed. **Buzan's** five sectors give a structured way to widen without dissolving the concept.
- The balance → transparency and public discourse; strong oversight; prioritisation and graduated response. Widening is necessary, but bounded — so that security enables rather than inhibits human flourishing.

PART E Transnational Actors & the Crisis of the Nation-State

28 Complex Interdependence

- Introduced by **Robert Keohane** and **Joseph Nye** in the 1970s as a neoliberal critique of realism.
- Three features → **multiple channels** between societies; **absence of a hierarchy of issues** (no automatic primacy of military matters); **decline of military force** as a usable instrument.
- Implication → less use of force and more interdependence raise the probability of cooperation, and elevate transnational non-state actors.
- **John Burton's cobweb model** similarly recognises transnational actors.
- Criticism → questionable in the post-colonial world; it assumes growth is intrinsic to all states; it still treats states as rational; it downplays military issues. **Mearsheimer** → institutions merely reflect the distribution of power.

UPSC 2021 · ISm What is 'complex interdependence'? Discuss the role of transnational actors in the international system.

29 Transnational Actors

Markus Thiel

Political, social, cultural and economic agents with trans-societal relations across borders, pursuing goals somewhat independently of governments.

- Types → MNCs and TNCs; NGOs; terrorist and criminal organisations; religious groups; diasporas; ethnic groups; IOs (World Bank, IMF, UNESCO); advocacy networks; epistemic communities.
- Mechanism → strategic engagement with domestic actors to build "winning coalitions" for new norms. Functions → norm development, agenda-setting, policy implementation, rule enforcement, conferring legitimacy.
- **J.A. Scholte** → they have forced states into **post-sovereign governance** (the Basel Committee, OECD frameworks, FATF) to fill the regulatory void.
- **Robert Cooper** → in Europe, states have become "postmodern states" within security communities.
- Formal inclusion → the ILO and the EU as exceptional cases; the Cardoso Report and the Global Compact (**Kofi Annan**) deepening engagement.
- Contemporary examples → the Taliban and Hamas gaining recognition; NGOs (Doctors Without Borders, Amnesty International) in Syria, Myanmar and Ukraine; MNCs (Google, Amazon, Apple) shaping tax and labour policy.

- The democratic claim → they speak for those affected by global decisions who otherwise lack a voice.

“We cannot even start theorizing about the contemporary world system without taking their influence into account.” — **Thomas Risse**

UPSC 2025 · 15m Transnational actors have qualitatively transformed the world by the way of their fresh insights and actions. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

30 Multinational Corporations

- Origins → the colonial trading companies (the East India Company); a strong modern presence propelled by globalisation. UNCTAD 2010 → about 82,000 MNCs / TNCs, up from around 7,000 in the 1970s; roughly 90% based in the developed world.

A new road to growth	Or a machine of underdevelopment
Milton Friedman and the Chicago School, Jagdish Bhagwati → knowledge economies, FDI, employment, material welfare; India's services sector.	Neocolonialism → Andre Gunder Frank 's "development of underdevelopment"; Gunnar Myrdal 's "backwash effect"; the NIEO demand of the 1970s; private armies in Latin America.
Thomas Friedman 's "Golden Arches" and "Dell" theories of globalisation.	Thomas Piketty → widening inequality; sweatshops in Bangladesh.

- **Joseph Nye** ("MNCs: The Game and the Rule") → MNCs exert direct, indirect and unintended pressure on governments; states lose control over currency and foreign trade; transfer mispricing, trade misinvoicing and treaty shopping produce **extraterritoriality**.
- **Joseph Stiglitz** (*Globalization and Its Discontents*) → MNCs limit the political sovereignty of developing states; **Immanuel Wallerstein**'s core-periphery; **Edward Said** (*Orientalism*) on Northern cultural hegemony eroding indigenous identity — against which **Arjun Appadurai** sets cultural hybridisation, or **glocalisation**.
- Governance response → post-sovereign governance and global re-regulation (Basel, OECD). Stiglitz's own conclusion → a fairer globalisation, and reform of the democratic deficit in the World Bank and the WTO.

UPSC 2018 · 15m Some feel Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are a vital new road to economic growth, whereas others feel they perpetuate underdevelopment. Discuss.

31 Non-Governmental Organisations

- Voluntary, independent, democratically structured bodies operating across sectors.
- **P.J. Simmons** ("Learning to Live with NGOs") → NGOs shape domestic and foreign policy by setting agendas, negotiating outcomes and conferring legitimacy — and are sometimes seen by China, Russia and India as agents of Western governments; aid agencies bypass governments.
- Roles → social change, education for marginalised groups, gender equality and women's empowerment (SEWA, Sathin, Eklavya, Disha); humanitarian work (Doctors Without Borders, Amnesty International).

32 The Crisis of the Nation-State

- Nation-states are squeezed by subnational, transnational and supranational forces.
- **Internal** → militancy, secession, non-recognition of identity, regional discrimination — the breakup of Yugoslavia.
- **External** → globalisation and regionalisation make issues multinational; MNCs (**Joseph Nye**) and NGOs (**P.J. Simmons**) apply pressure; states are forced to collaborate to re-regulate climate, terrorism and finance. Terrorist groups create a security dilemma and distort domestic policy — attacks deter FDI.
- **Hyperglobalists** question the state's relevance altogether.
- Counterpoint → **Barry Buzan**: despite a reduced economic role, the state remains the principal security provider — the only organisation with both the capacity to act and the authority to define a security threat. The realist rejoinder → the state is still the only true apparatus against terrorism and violence.
- Verdict → the modern state is transformed and constrained, reshaped rather than dissolved.

UPSC 2016 · 10m A combination of internal pressures (ethnic and regional forces) and external threats (EU, UN, TNC, global market, etc.) has produced what is commonly referred to as a 'crisis of the nation-state'. Elaborate.

UPSC 2017 · 15m Discuss the changing nature of the modern state with reference to transnational actors.

33 Views of the Schools

School	Reading of the transnational actor
Realists	No significant role → even MNCs and terrorist groups are state-sponsored.
Liberals	Agents of development, modernisation, peace and stability. John Burton , Keohane and Nye built them into the cobweb and complex-interdependence models.
Feminists	MNC policies adversely affect women.

Noam Chomsky criticised the USA as promoting terrorist organisations. **John Lewis Gaddis** likened the end of the Cold War to "killing a python and giving rise to many poisonous snakes."

34 Collective Security — Meaning, Elements, Origins

The principle

A system in which the security of one is the concern of all → “security of one is security of all”; “one for all and all for one.” Aggression is checked by **overwhelming force**, not by mere equilibrium — cooperative, not competitive.

- Three elements → an agreed decision-making procedure (a treaty); explicit renunciation of war except in self-defence; a pledge to support any victim of attack.
- An “institutionalised form of balance of power” → for liberals, better than the balance of power.
- Definitions → **Morgenthau** (“one for all and all for one is the watchword”); **Georg Schwarzenberger** (“a machinery for joint action... against any attack against an established international order”); **F.H. Hartmann** (“a mutual insurance plan against aggression anywhere and everywhere”); **Palmer and Perkins**.
- Origins → **Cardinal Richelieu**’s 1629 scheme; **Immanuel Kant**’s *Perpetual Peace* (1795) — a league of nations to control conflict; the Concert of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars; the first Geneva (1864) and Hague (1899, 1907) Conventions; Article 10 of the League Covenant.

35 The League, and the United Nations

- **League of Nations** → the first experiment; only vaguely institutionalised, because the victors disagreed. Failures → Japan’s invasion of Manchuria (1931–32) and Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia (1935–36). Causes → idealistic assumptions; the absence of the USA; the inexperience of Britain and France, who preferred the balance of power; appeasement of the fascist powers.
- **United Nations** → the Charter mentions “international peace and security” 32 times; Article 1 makes it the UN’s primary purpose.

Provision	Content
Chapter VII	“Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression.”
Article 39	The Security Council determines a threat, breach or act of aggression.
Article 41 · 42	Measures short of force (sanctions) · military measures.
Article 51	The right of individual or collective self-defence.

Unlike the League, where each member judged aggression for itself, the Charter vests that authority in the Security Council. Korea stands as a partial success; the 1991 Gulf War and the *Uniting for Peace* route show what great-power rivalry does to the model.

UPSC 2022 · ISm Discuss the conceptual dimensions of collective security.

36 Collective Defence — Alliance, Not Universe

Two ways of organising security — and the argument between them

COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Universal · institutional · inclusive — against any aggressor (League, UN Chapter VII)

Reinforcing view — collective defence operationalises collective security and is consistent with the Charter’s self-defence right; the US position treats alliances as a tool, not a rival.

COLLECTIVE DEFENCE

Alliance-based · regional · realist — against a *defined* enemy (NATO, Article 5)

Undermining view — alliances pre-define the enemy and narrow the field to members, breeding bloc politics and “alliance mentality” (the NATO-expansion debate).

Net assessment → alliances reinforce when nested within UN purposes; they undermine when bloc politics crowds out rules-based action.

- Theoretical contrast → realist alliances (**Morgenthau** on managing power; **Stephen Walt** on balancing threats) against liberal universal cooperation. The universal model’s own weakness → great-power rivalry blocks consensus.
- **India** → opposes military blocs and pacts but supports collective security and a strengthened UN — consistent with non-alignment. **USA** → built military alliances and treats collective defence as the practical route to collective security, stressing the right of self-defence.

37 Collective Security and the Balance of Power

- **Similarities** → both are defensive; both manipulate power to deter or defeat aggression; both assume sovereign states coordinating against aggression; both are threatened by an extreme concentration of power.

<i>Balance of power</i>	<i>Collective security</i>
Assumes competitive, hostile camps.	Assumes universal cooperation.
Alliances target a specific enemy.	Targets any aggressor, whoever it turns out to be.
Permits neutrality and localised war.	Precludes neutrality.
Simpler to maintain.	Needs elaborate rules and institutions.

38 Responsibility to Protect

- Articulated in the **2005 World Summit Outcome** → states must protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity — the **atrocities crimes**.
- Three pillars → (1) the protection responsibilities of the state; (2) international assistance and capacity-building; (3) timely and decisive collective response through the UN.
- Against collective security → **scope** — collective security is state-to-state, R2P pierces sovereignty to protect individuals. **Method** — collective security relies on overwhelming force against an aggressor; R2P prioritises peaceful means, with coercion as a last resort.
- Shared limit → both depend on Security Council consensus and falter under the veto (Syria). The two are complementary but distinct.

UPSC 2025 - ISm Collective security and Responsibility to Protect (R2P) are similar but different in scope, goals and methods. Explain.

39 Criticism, and the Contemporary Record

- A “relative utopia” (**Karl Mannheim**) → realistic in aim but retaining elements of fantasy.
- **Sovereignty is indivisible** → states will not give unconditional, ironclad commitments to a future war; the larger powers always keep an escape hatch and refuse a standing international army.
- **The aggressor is hard to identify** → aggressors plead self-defence; defining aggression failed for decades in both the League and the UN.
- **It freezes the status quo** → guaranteeing existing, often unjust, frontiers condemns a dynamic world to immobility. The redundancy argument → where enough unity exists to agree on aggression, the system is hardly needed. **Morgenthau** → freezing a particular status quo is doomed where politics is a struggle for power.
- The basic dilemma → waging war to prevent war.

<i>Case</i>	<i>What it shows</i>
Russia–Ukraine (2022–)	The Russian veto paralyses the Security Council; the West aids Ukraine while bypassing the UN → great-power politics over multilateralism.
Syria	Russian support for the regime blocks settlement; regionalisation into proxy war.
Yemen	Saudi coalition against Houthi / Iran proxies; the UN unable to enforce a ceasefire.
Iran / JCPOA	The 2018 US withdrawal and selective sanctions show the limits of collective action where great powers diverge.

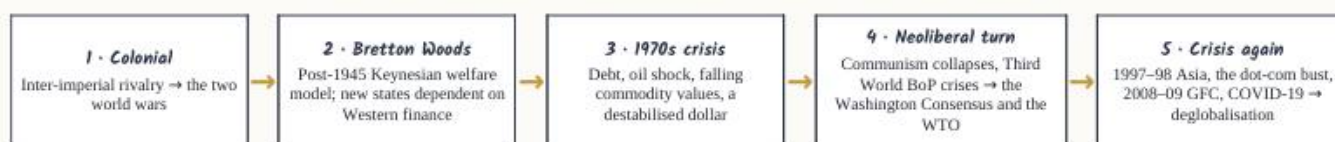
40 Is the Liberal International Order ‘Security-Friendly’?

- The **Liberal International Order** → post-1945 cooperation through institutions (the UN, the WTO), rule of law, human rights and free markets, championed by the USA.
- For → **Joseph Nye**: interdependence and peaceful dispute resolution reduce the need for drastic security measures. **Francis Fukuyama**: democratic accountability lowers the risk of inter-state war. Institutions stabilise the system — the UN through dialogue, peacekeeping and norm-setting; the WTO through trade liberalisation and dispute settlement.
- Evolution → Cold War deterrence of the USSR gave way to the post-Cold War promotion of democracy and markets. Then 9/11 → a return to traditional national security — the Patriot Act, “enemy combatant” detentions, profiling — and the liberty-versus-security tension.
- Against → **Immanuel Wallerstein** (core-periphery exploitation); **John Mearsheimer** (cooperation is naive); the order struggles with cyber, pandemics and climate. Contemporary strain → China’s rise, an assertive Russia, Western economic decline.
- Verdict → security-friendly in principle — but only if it addresses the concerns of weaker and non-Western actors.

41 The World Capitalist Economy — Phases

- Capitalism is expansionist by nature (profit is its engine) and has been globalising from the start of colonisation.

From colonial capitalism to deglobalisation — the arc of the world economy



"Casino capitalism" → speculative finance and derivatives breed instability; uneven development and ethical and ecological costs follow.

- After 2008–09 → neoliberalism loses credibility; states tighten regulation and use stimulus — often to rescue corporates with public money. COVID-19 accelerated deglobalisation without producing a clear alternative.

42 Dependency, World-Systems, and the Global South

- **Immanuel Wallerstein** → a core-periphery world-system in which powerful states exploit weaker ones — "either socialism or barbarism."
- **Andre Gunder Frank** → the "development of underdevelopment." **Gunnar Myrdal** → the "backwash effect." **Samir Amin** → the Global South is structurally disadvantaged in trade — cheap raw materials out, expensive goods in.
- Backdrop → market fundamentalism, privatisation and globalisation; **Fukuyama's** "end of history" universalising neoliberalism; **Noam Chomsky** on wealth and power concentrated in the North.

Challenge	Working content
Unequal trade	Inequality and exploitation through structurally unequal terms of trade.
Debt and SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes (IMF, World Bank) eroding the welfare state.
Climate injustice	The South suffers most despite lower historical emissions; Sunita Narain defends Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).
Diluted sovereignty	WTO rules — TRIPS, the Agreement on Agriculture — favouring Western firms and undermining health and food sovereignty.

43 India as a Leader of the Global South

- **Reformed multilateralism** → **S. Jaishankar** (*The India Way*) on reforming the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and the UN to address the "democratic deficit" (**Joseph Stiglitz**).
- **Climate justice** → CBDR; the International Solar Alliance.
- **South–South cooperation** → the G20 presidency and the inclusion of the African Union.
- **Alternative institutions** → BRICS as an option beyond Western-led bodies.
- **Global public goods** → Digital Public Infrastructure — UPI shared with African states.
- The line to take → a neoliberal order marginalises the South; India consolidates leadership through equitable representation, climate justice and South–South cooperation.

44 The Major Debates in IR Theory

Debate	The contest
First	Utopian / idealist liberalism against realism → E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau on selfish human nature and a permanent security dilemma, set against the liberal "harmony of interests."
Second	Traditionalism (history, philosophy, law) against behaviouralism (David Easton , rigorous data-driven method) → resolved into post-behaviouralism, which restored a degree of normativity.
Third (inter-paradigm)	Neoliberalism (complex interdependence, integration) against neorealism (Kenneth Waltz , structure-driven balancing); the English School places politics between a "system" and a "society" of states (<i>Machtstaat</i> and <i>Rechtsstaat</i>); IPE and neo-Marxism (Andre Gunder Frank's dependency, Wallerstein's world-systems) explain Northern prosperity and Southern poverty.
Fourth	Rationalism against reflectivism (constructivism, feminism, critical and postmodern approaches) — on substance and on method.

- Why no winner → the constant churn of events; theories shaped by their historical context are challenged when they cannot explain new developments (terrorism, non-state actors). All paradigms remain in active use, because contemporary politics is pluralist and needs more than one theory. Scholars' own values shape their theoretical preference, continually feeding the debates.
- The endlessness reflects the genuine complexity of global politics, not a failure of theory.

Writing this unit in the exam

These concepts are tools, not verdicts — each is read differently across paradigms, and the contest is itself analytically productive. National interest, power and security remain the realist core; interdependence, institutions and collective security supply the liberal correction; constructivism shows that interests, threats and anarchy are made, not given; Marxism and the critical approaches expose whose interest the system serves. So: take the concept, set the major scholars and definitions, weigh realist, liberal, constructivist and critical readings against contemporary events — US–China rivalry, Russia–Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, the Global South — and close with a reasoned, evidence-grounded judgement rather than a settled answer.

PART 6 Revision Kit

45 Power Quotes

“International politics is a struggle for power.” — **Hans Morgenthau**

“The main signpost that helps political realism find its way is the concept of interest defined in terms of power.” — **Hans Morgenthau**

“National interest is what the nation decides it is.” — **Furniss and Snyder**

“A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.” — **Robert Dahl**

“Anarchy is what states make of it.” — **Alexander Wendt**

The notion of balance of power is “notoriously full of confusion.” — **Martin Wight**

“As nature abhors a vacuum, so international politics abhors unbalanced power.” — **Kenneth Waltz**

A credible nuclear deterrent “must be always at the ready, yet never used.” — **Bernard Brodie**

“Nuclear weapons do not produce perfect nuclear organisations; they only make their inevitable mistakes more deadly.” — **Scott Sagan**

Collective security: “one for all and all for one is the watchword.” — **Hans Morgenthau**

“We cannot even start theorizing about the contemporary world system without taking their influence into account.” — **Thomas Risse**

46 Scholar Index

Achin Vanaik · Alexander Wendt · Amitav Acharya · Andre Gunder Frank · Andrew Linklater · Ann Tickner · Anthony Giddens · Arjun Appadurai · Barry Buzan · Bernard Brodie · Booth & Wheeler · Brian Job · Cardinal Richelieu · Carole Weaver · Caroline Thomas · Charles Beard · Charles Lerche · Christopher Walker · Cynthia Enloe · David Easton · David Hume · David Mitrany · Dhruv Jaishankar · Duncan Snidal · E.H. Carr · Edward Said · Emanuel Adler · Ernst Haas · F.H. Hartmann · Francine Frankel · Francis Fukuyama · Frank Zagare · Furniss & Snyder · Georg Schwarzenberger · Georg Sorensen · George Modelski · George Shultz · Giambattista Vico · Gunnar Myrdal · Hans Morgenthau · Henry Kissinger · Herman Kahn · Hobbes · Homer-Dixon · Immanuel Kant · Immanuel Wallerstein · Inis Claude · J.A. Scholte · Jaap de Wilde · Jagdish Bhagwati · James Wirtz · John Burton · John Chipman · John Herz · John Lewis Gaddis · John Mearsheimer · Joseph Frankel · Joseph Grieco · Joseph Nye · Joseph Stiglitz · K.J. Holsti · Karl Deutsch · Karl Mannheim · Kautilya · Kenneth Waltz · Kofi Annan · Machiavelli · Manoj Joshi · Markus Thiel · Martin Wight · Michael Barnett · Michael Doyle · Michel Fortmann · Milton Friedman · Mohammed Ayoob · Monteiro · Nehru · Nicholas Onuf · Nina Tannenwald · Noam Chomsky · Ole Wæver · P.J. Simmons · Palmer & Perkins · Paul Kennedy · Randall Schweller · Raymond Aron · Richard Rosecrance · Robert Axelrod · Robert Cooper · Robert Dahl · Robert Gilpin · Robert J. Guttman · Robert Jervis · Robert Keohane · S. Jaishankar · Sam Nunn · Samir Amin · Scott Burchill · Scott Sagan · Sidney B. Fay · Stephen Krasner · Stephen Walt · Sunita Narain · Suzanne Nossel · T.D. Truong · T.V. Paul · Thomas Friedman · Thomas Piketty · Thomas Risse · Thomas Schelling · Thomas W. Robinson · Thucydides · Vernon Van Dyke · William Perry · William Wohlforth · Woodrow Wilson

47 How UPSC Asks It

National interest

UPSC 2016 · 20m Explain the instruments and methods devised for the promotion of national interest.

UPSC 2022 · 10m National Interest is an essentially contested concept. Comment.

Power and soft power

UPSC 2018 · 10m What, according to Joseph Nye, are the major sources of a country's soft power? Discuss its relevance in contemporary world politics.

Balance of power

UPSC 2016 · 15m "The notion of balance of power is notoriously full of confusion." In the light of this quotation, do you think that the concept of balance of power is relevant?

UPSC 2020 · 20m Explain the concept of balance of power. What are the various techniques of maintaining balance of power?

Deterrence

UPSC 2019 · 10m Discuss the utility of Nuclear Deterrence Theory in the context of the recent standoff between India and Pakistan.

Security and human security

UPSC 2016 · 20m Why does global human security need to be emphasized along with economic security? Explain with examples.

Transnational actors, MNCs and the crisis of the nation-state

UPSC 2016 · 10m A combination of internal pressures (ethnic and regional forces) and external threats (EU, UN, TNC, global market, etc.) has produced what is commonly referred to as a 'crisis of the nation-state'. Elaborate.

UPSC 2017 · 15m Discuss the changing nature of the modern state with reference to transnational actors.

UPSC 2018 · 15m Some feel Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are a vital new road to economic growth, whereas others feel they perpetuate underdevelopment. Discuss.

UPSC 2021 · 15m What is 'complex interdependence'? Discuss the role of transnational actors in the international system.

UPSC 2025 · 15m Transnational actors have qualitatively transformed the world by the way of their fresh insights and actions. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

Collective security

UPSC 2022 · 15m Discuss the conceptual dimensions of collective security.

UPSC 2025 · 15m Collective security and Responsibility to Protect (R2P) are similar but different in scope, goals and methods. Explain.

48 Today's Practice — write before the evening

1. Explain the concept of balance of power. What are the various techniques of maintaining balance of power? (UPSC 2020, 20m)
2. Collective security and Responsibility to Protect (R2P) are similar but different in scope, goals and methods. Explain. (UPSC 2025, 15m)
3. National Interest is an essentially contested concept. Comment. (UPSC 2022, 10m)

Model answers drop tonight on the Telegram channel — @psirbyamitpratap. Every concept above is developed at full length in your **Foundation & OGP** class notes and handouts — revise it, then write. **Don't break the chain.**

See you tomorrow with Day 33 — Changing International Political Order.