

Contemporary Global Concerns — II

Human Rights · Terrorism · Nuclear Proliferation

Day 38. The three concerns that recur across Paper II — every scholar, school, treaty and debate from the class, compressed for fast recall. **Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.**

In the paper record for this unit: **3 × 20-markers · 4 × 15-markers** — Human Rights, Terrorism and Nuclear Proliferation are each examined.

PART A Human Rights

nature · generations · schools · the universality debate · institutions · the digital turn

1 What human rights are — nature & evolution

Human rights are the basic entitlements every person holds simply by being human — a modern expression of **natural rights**, centred on equality, dignity and freedom.

Their four defining marks: **universal** (everyone, everywhere) · **fundamental** (essential to a dignified life) · **indivisible** (interconnected, equally weighty) · **absolute** (not denied without legitimate justification).

Defining scholar

Jack Donnelly — human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent; a government is legitimate only when it systematically honours and protects the rights of its citizens.

Line of descent: natural rights — **Thomas Hobbes** and **John Locke** (Locke: life, liberty and property) → the **US Declaration of Independence (1776)** and the **French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)** → modern institutionalisation in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**, with India significant in its drafting.

2 Three generations — and a fourth

From individual freedoms to solidarity, and now the digital



Generation	Focus & content	Instruments · character
First	Life, liberty, property; freedom from discrimination and unjust action; belief and expression	UDHR Arts 3–21; ICCPR. Force after the 17th-c English and 18th-c French/American revolutions; “negative” — best protected when others are stopped from infringing them
Second	Employment, social security, healthcare, education, paid leave	UDHR Arts 22–27; ICESCR. “Positive” — need active state provision; critics: demand resources and will many states lack, and can dull the efficiency of capitalist economies
Third	Self-determination, peace, development, environmental protection	Stockholm Conference (1972); Rio Earth Summit (1992). Critics: group needs can override individual rights and personal identity
Fourth	Rights around technology, ICT and cyberspace	Emerging — still being defined

3 Classification & the key instruments

Classification: **classical rights** (civil/political limits on state power) · **fundamental rights** (held paramount so they are not diluted as rights proliferate) · **collective vs individual** (most are individual; some can be exercised only by groups) · the first/second/third-generation historical development above.

Instrument / body	What it is
UDHR (1948)	30 rights and freedoms; not legally binding but functions as customary international law
International Bill of Human Rights	UDHR + the two 1966 Covenants (ICCPR; ICESCR)
UN Human Rights Council	Inter-governmental body of 47 states elected by the UNGA; runs the Universal Periodic Review of all 193 members; the Office of the High Commissioner is its secretariat
Thematic conventions	Genocide (1948) · Racial Discrimination (1965) · CEDAW (1979) · Rights of the Child (1989) · Persons with Disabilities (2006)

4 Human rights and the schools of thought

School	Core claim	Thinkers & texts
Communitarian	Rights are shaped by the values and traditions of communities, not universal	Michael Sandel (<i>Liberalism and the Limits of Justice</i>) · Charles Taylor (<i>Sources of the Self</i>) · Alasdair MacIntyre (<i>After Virtue</i>)
Postcolonialist	The idea of rights varies with each society's cultural and historical context	Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990) — rights from divine authority; Bangkok Declaration (1993); Edward Said — Western rights reflect European views, neglect the non-West
Postmodernist	Rights are shaped by culture, history and power	Michel Foucault — rights mask power; Jacques Derrida — "humanity" is not a clear universal; Jean-Francois Lyotard — rights as a dominant Western narrative
Multicultural	Rights may differ by culture and those values deserve respect	Will Kymlicka — safeguard both individuals and cultural communities; group rights to maintain traditions
Feminist	Rights must secure equality across genders, with emphasis on women	Simone de Beauvoir (<i>The Second Sex</i> , 1949); Sylvia Walby (<i>Theorizing Patriarchy</i> , 1990) — true equality needs the framework itself transformed

"One is not born, but becomes, a woman." — **Simone de Beauvoir**

5 Universalism vs cultural relativism

The fault line under the whole human-rights debate

UNIVERSALISM

rights inhere in the person — inherent, inalienable

Jack Donnelly · **Raimon Panikkar** (adopt & adapt) · **Amartya Sen**



CULTURAL RELATIVISM

norms are culture-bound; duties may precede rights

Freeman (a "weapon of cultural hegemony") · Confucian / Vedic / African readings

- **Cultural relativism** → Western "universal" norms may not fit elsewhere; in Confucian or Vedic traditions duties precede rights, and in Africa the community nurtures the individual.
- **Freeman** → universal rights risk becoming a **weapon of cultural hegemony**, with Asian values offered as an alternative standard.
- **Jack Donnelly** → Western double standards and "narrow-minded and ham-handed" policies keep the relativist and imperialist arguments alive; yet relativism can itself become a guise for abuse.
- **Raimon Panikkar** → rights are a Western concept, yet necessary for a decent modern life — they must be **adopted and adapted** to different cultures.

6 The Asian Values debate

A cultural-relativist challenge to universality, rooted in the rise of the Asian "tiger" economies and set out in the **Bangkok Declaration (1993)**.

- **Lee Kuan Yew** → collective well-being over individual rights; Western individualism can erode social harmony and economic progress.
- **Mahathir Mohamad** → social order and growth before individual freedoms.
- **Tu Weiming** → Confucianism as an alternative — social responsibility, respect for authority, community well-being.
- **Amartya Sen** → rights apply to everyone and empower people to live lives they value; a monolithic "Asian values" is a constructed narrative used by elites to justify authoritarian rule.
- **Malise Ruthven** → privileging culture over women's rights is a bad bargain, since religious fundamentalism operates through the social control of women.
- **Radhika Coomaraswamy** → an urgent need to reconcile non-Western cultural values with the basic concepts of human rights. *Example* → the "ASEAN Way" rests on these values.

UPSC 2018 · 20m

Critically examine the notion of "Asian Values" in the context of the on-going debates on human rights.

Build the answer on

- **Origins** → 1980s–90s tiger economies; articulated in the Bangkok Declaration (1993).
- **Core claims** → community over individual, respect for authority, social harmony, development first; Confucian/Buddhist roots (**Lee Kuan Yew**, **Mahathir Mohamad**, **Tu Weiming**).
- Not a rejection but a relativist qualification of universality; objection to humanitarian interference in sovereign affairs (**Samuel P. Huntington** → cultural difference yields differing readings of rights).
- **Critique** → **Amartya Sen**: Asian societies are diverse, not monolithic; the label legitimises authoritarianism.
- **Feminist critique** → cultural control can entrench the oppression of women (**Malise Ruthven**).
- **Universalist reply** → **Jack Donnelly**: rights are inherent and inalienable; relativism can be a guise for abuse.
- **Balanced close** → **Radhika Coomaraswamy** and **Raimon Panikkar**: reconcile genuine cultural values with universal rights — adopt and adapt.

7 Critique of human rights by various schools

The universalist assumptions of human rights have been challenged as philosophically unsound and politically damaging.

School	The charge
Marxist	Rights mask capitalist domination. Karl Marx (<i>Capital</i>) calls commodity exchange the “very Eden of the innate rights of man,” only to reveal deeper coercion in production; property becomes the right to appropriate others’ unpaid labour — universal rights legitimise class hierarchy
Postcolonial / postmodern	Global rights talk carries Eurocentric power; Western legal templates sideline indigenous voices and ignore colonial histories (Edward Said)
Communitarian	Rights abstract the atomised individual; a discourse of choice rather than belonging erases obligations rooted in shared practice (MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor)
Cultural relativist / Asian values	Consensus, hierarchy and harmony clash with liberal autonomy and adversarial accountability; universality read as cultural intrusion
Feminist	Rights language can harden punitive politics (“carceral feminism”); the public/private dichotomy leaves the harms women face outside the reach of rights (Susan Moller Okin, Hilary Charlesworth)

UPSC 2025 ‘The universalist assumptions underpinning the concept of human rights have been viewed as philosophically unsound and politically damaging.’ Explicate the critique of human rights by various schools.

Build the answer on

- The five critiques above — class (Marx), culture (Said), community (communitarians), harmony (relativists), gender (Okin, Charlesworth).
- **Political damage** → rights invoked as a pretext for intervention and “cultural imperialism,” subverting sovereignty and, in divided societies, social order.
- **Reply** → these critiques expose blind spots but do not defeat the core value; rights must be adapted, not abandoned (**Panikkar, Coomaraswamy**).
- **Conclusion** → a reflexive, plural conception answers the critique while keeping the emancipatory force of rights.

8 Institutional mechanisms & their shortcomings

- **UDHR** → no treaty status; guides as customary international law without imposing legal duties.
- **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** → set up after the 1993 Vienna World Conference; good at raising awareness, no power to enforce. *Example* → repeated condemnation of Myanmar over the Rohingya crisis without power to compel change.
- **UN Human Rights Council (2006)** → replaced the Human Rights Commission; charged with bias and inconsistency (poor-record states shield one another — China, Russia), disproportionate focus on Israel, structural weakness (only recommendatory), and admitting members with dubious records (e.g. Saudi Arabia despite suppression of speech and severe restrictions on women).
- **Other gaps** → rights sidelined by geopolitical interest — arms trade to abusive governments; selective intervention framed as rights protection (2003 Iraq invasion); the clash of universal rights with sovereignty (China’s non-interference stance on Myanmar).

9 NGOs and the politicisation of rights

- NGOs have shaped the regime → **Amnesty International** and the International Commission of Jurists behind the 1975 Declaration on Torture; NGO pressure drove the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1997 Landmine (Ottawa) Treaty.
- Yet Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International face charges of selective attention → over-focus on Israel relative to Hamas in the Israel–Palestine conflict, and muted criticism where economic and political influence is at stake (Saudi Arabia, the killing of Jamal Khashoggi).

10 Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- The UDHR and the two Covenants form the **International Bill of Human Rights**.
- **UDHR Article 14** → everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution.
- **1951 UN Refugee Convention** (and 1967 Protocol) → defined refugees, set out their rights, provided for regularising status; in practice refugees often lack healthcare, education and physical protection. **UNHCR** implements it — protection, assistance, repatriation.
- Further instruments → 1990 Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers; 2000 Protocols against Trafficking in Persons and against the Smuggling of Migrants.

11 Humanitarian intervention & R2P

Case for intervention	Case against
Hugo Grotius → a moral obligation to intervene when a government mistreats its citizens — the principle of “indivisible humanity”	International law permits intervention only in self-defence, not for humanitarian ends
Prevents larger crises (refugee flows), supports regional stability, improves future governance	Realist view → a cover for powerful states pursuing their own interests
“Responsible sovereignty” → states owe duties to their people and to the global community	Double standards (selective, strategic) and cultural imperialism eroding sovereignty and local values

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

Framework from the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001). Military action is warranted where there is significant or imminent loss of life, or ethnic cleansing. **Kofi Annan** → the focus should be on real action rather than more promises.

12 Human security & economic security

Human security widens the referent of security from the **state** to the **individual** — safety from chronic threats (hunger, disease, repression) and from sudden disruptions to daily life. It must sit alongside economic security because material well-being alone does not guarantee dignity, safety or freedom.

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

Build the answer on

- Human security = protection from chronic threats and sudden disruptions; individual rather than state-centric.
- Economic security is necessary but insufficient → growth can coexist with violence, exclusion and rights violations.
- Non-traditional threats bind the two → climate change, environmental degradation and migration threaten livelihoods and safety together.
- **Examples** → climate-induced displacement and food insecurity (Horn of Africa, Pakistan floods); pandemics disrupting health and economies alike.
- Gendered burden → women and girls disproportionately exposed at the intersection of conflict and climate.
- **Barry Buzan** → environment and human welfare are now core elements of the security agenda; the SDGs frame poverty, inequality, health and environment as interconnected human-security goals.

13 Personal data protection & privacy

Protecting personal data safeguards the **right to privacy** — control over one's information, and a check on surveillance, discrimination and exploitation.

- **Edward Snowden** (2013) → exposed the NSA's mass surveillance programme, hitting the privacy of ordinary citizens, not just suspects. China → heavy monitoring deters online expression.
- Misuse enables discrimination → Facebook targeted ads (2018) that could exclude by race or age; the Equifax breach (2017) exposed millions to fraud.
- Regulation → the EU's **GDPR (2018)** and India's **Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023)** (following the B.N. Srikrishna Committee).
- Indian jurisprudence → **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India** read the right to privacy into Article 21 as a fundamental right.

UPSC 2019 · 15m Discuss the importance of personal data protection in the context of human rights.

Build the answer on

- The UDHR protects privacy — freedom from arbitrary interference in private life and communications.
- In a data-driven world, personal data shapes choices from consumption to elections (Facebook–Cambridge Analytica, 2018).
- **Ronald Dworkin** — “rights are trumps”; data-protection law privileges individual rights over market and profit.
- **Puttaswamy** → privacy is fundamental under Article 21; liberty is not secure if personal information is held hostage.
- Algorithmic profiling risks discrimination; GDPR requires human review of significant automated decisions; developing countries often lack comprehensive law.

14 Human rights in the digital age

- **Surveillance and control** → China's Social Credit System, the NSA revelations (2013), the Pegasus spyware scandal (2021).
- **Disinformation** → 2016 election interference and COVID-19 misinformation manipulate opinion and erode institutional trust.
- **AI and predictive policing** → discriminatory outcomes and **surveillance capitalism** (data monetised by large firms), exemplified by Cambridge Analytica.
- **Digital divide** → billions lack access, mostly in Africa and South Asia; the UN Human Rights Council recognises internet access as important to the exercise of rights.
- **Michelle Bachelet** → AI can be a force for good but catastrophic for rights if deployed without regard to impact; the Council warns against rushed adoption, faulty data and opaque profiling. Way forward → strong cooperation, regulation and ethical AI governance.

15 Contemporary human-rights concerns

- **Current violations** → Ukraine (Russia's invasion as aggression under international law; a major displacement crisis), Afghanistan (targeting of activists, women, minorities), Yemen (attacks on civilians, arbitrary detention, gender-based violence).
- **Corruption** → erodes the state's ability to protect rights; SDG 16 has raised awareness.
- **Human trafficking** → rising since 2010, women and girls the majority of victims; armed groups use it to spread fear.
- **Climate displacement** → record displacement from conflict and climate; the protection framework for climate-displaced people remains insufficient.
- **Nationalism** → rising in the US, Europe, China and Turkey; **Grace Cheng** argues nationalism is inherently contradictory to human rights, since national unity is placed above assembly, speech and self-determination, endangering refugees and the LGBTQ+ community.

16 Women's rights and human rights

“The very treaties and principles upon which the human rights framework was created defend the rights of man and male household heads.” — Susan Moller Okin

- **UDHR Article 12** (privacy, family, home) → for feminists, the classic example of the **public/private dichotomy** that leaves domestic matters — which most concern women — beyond the state's reach.
- **Hilary Charlesworth** → all three generations share the same flaw: “they are built on typically male life experiences and in their current form do not respond to the most pressing risks women face.”
- Reproductive rights → scant provision; **Amnesty International** notes pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality for 15–19-year-old girls worldwide.

Do you endorse that the conventional discourse on human rights has failed to include women's rights? Explain in the context of feminist theories.

17 Human rights — assessment

Human rights remain foundational to a peaceful and equitable world order. **Amartya Sen** → they are instruments of both freedom and development; **Martha Nussbaum**, through the **capabilities approach** → realising rights means enabling people to lead lives they value. Their relevance lies not only in universality but in the capacity to adapt — from third-generation solidarity rights to emerging protections in the digital sphere.

PART B Terrorism

the definitional problem · types · schools · globalisation · conventions · the technology turn

18 What terrorism is — the definitional problem

Terrorism uses violence, or the threat of it, to induce fear and achieve political, religious or ideological ends — a psychological (fear-inducing) and physical (violent) act.

- **Asymmetrical warfare** → smaller groups adopt unconventional tactics against stronger states; terrorism as the **weapon of the weak**.
- Reliance on a **war of attrition** → sustained attacks wear down an opponent's resources and resolve; propaganda is central, amplified by media.
- **Definitions diverge** → the CIA and the UN stress criminal acts intended to provoke terror for political ends across borders; India defines it under laws such as TADA (explosives/lethal weapons to cause death or damage and destabilise governance or social harmony).
- **Subjectivity** → one side's patriot is another's terrorist; the difficulty is akin to the blind men and the elephant — each grasps only a part.

19 Evolution of terrorism

From state terror to a borderless religious form



The term is born of the **Reign of Terror (1793-94)** — the Jacobins under Robespierre using fear and mass executions, an early state-sponsored terror. Communist forms sought to overthrow capitalist order; nationalist forms pressed sovereignty claims; religious forms use faith to justify violence and cross borders, making them hard to combat.

20 Classification & types

Two axes → **from above** (initiated or funded by governments) and **from below** (non-state actors acting independently of the state).

Type	Content & examples
Ethnic	Daniel Byman → deliberate violence by a subnational ethnic group to advance its cause (a separate state or elevation of one group) — Tamil nationalist groups in Sri Lanka; insurgencies in Nagaland and Mizoram
Nationalist	Palestine Liberation Organisation; Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
Ideological — left	Basis in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels , backed by Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong ; capitalist relations seen as exploitative, revolutionary violence as essential (Maoist groups in India and Nepal, the Naxalites)
Ideological — right	Maintains the status quo or seeks a past order, sometimes ethnic or racist (the Nazi Party); violence against migrant communities
Religious	The Khalistan movement in Punjab
State-sponsored	Proxy warfare from the 1960s–70s for foreign-policy ends, under fewer constraints and with greater casualties — Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, North Korea; India has faced it from Pakistan since Independence
Narco-terrorism	Term first used in 1983 by former Peruvian President Belaunde Terry for drug-trafficker campaigns (car bombs, assassinations, kidnapping) against anti-narcotics police in Colombia and Peru
Other forms	Bio-terrorism (post-9/11 anthrax); nuclear terrorism (Al-Qaeda documents on nuclear research); cyber-terrorism (disabling defences, disrupting logistics); gene-terrorism (engineering pathogens more devastating than traditional bioweapons)

21 The changing nature of terrorism

- Older groups sought specific political ends (independence, reform) and were open to negotiation (PLO, ETA); modern terrorism is driven by a sense of **sacred duty** — violence as part of a greater religious mission.
- Older organisations were largely secular; many of today's are rooted in religious or ideological extremism.
- Al-Qaeda was an organised institution; ISIS is a broader ideology, encouraging individuals to act without central coordination → a rise in **lone-wolf attacks** by those radicalised online, harder to predict and prevent.
- The concept of **martyrdom** has shifted — many now view themselves as heroes willing to die; groups are **decentralised**, running on ideology rather than hierarchy, spreading influence and recruitment worldwide.

22 Schools of thought on terrorism

School	Reading of terrorism
Copenhagen	Security is not an objective fact but a concept shaped by language and political discourse (securitisation); how governments describe terrorism, often overstating groups' power, justifies military action or surveillance
Critical	Rejects tying terrorism to religion or culture; looks to political and economic conditions. Noam Chomsky → Middle East terrorism largely a product of US foreign policy; the US a "terrorist state," distinguishing wholesale terrorism (US military/foreign-policy harm) from retail terrorism (smaller groups). Richard Falk → terror is used by state and non-state actors alike
Realist	Hard power — military action, intelligence, strict enforcement. Thomas Hobbes → a strong central authority to keep order; Hans Morgenthau → the primacy of state security
Liberal	John Locke and Immanuel Kant → the dilemma between security and freedom; rights-violating measures can deepen radicalisation; favour cooperation and tackling poverty, inequality and repression
Social constructivist	State-centric intelligence and surveillance, but also the hearts and minds approach (social/economic roots) and the political bargain (dialogue over force)

23 Terrorism & globalisation

James Kiras → global terrorism concentrates on three areas tied to globalisation.

- **Culture** → violence to defend traditions against a "cultural tsunami" of Western products and materialism; **Samuel Huntington** → a fault line between liberal Western civilisation and an Islamic one resentful of Western dominance.
- **Economics** → the World Trade Center attacks of 1993 and 2001 struck an icon of global capitalism, not just US policy; **Immanuel Wallerstein's** world-systems theory → globalisation perpetuates Western imperialism, disrupting the Global South and pushing marginalised youth toward groups like ISIS.
- **Technologies** → better proselytising, coordination and mobility; ISIS's use of Twitter and Telegram; Boko Haram drawing on poverty and neglect in Nigeria.

Anthony Giddens → globalisation is not only Western dominance; it affects the US as much as others (11 September 2001). Terrorism is **not solely** a product of globalisation → the IRA and the Mau Mau arose from local grievances, and Al-Qaeda traces to Cold War support for Islamist groups in the Soviet–Afghan war.

Maha Azzam → 'Islamist/Jihadist terrorism' is best read as a violent response to political conditions in a politico-religious idiom, going global as elements realigned against the "far enemy," the West.

24 Strategies to deal with terrorism

- **War of attrition** → consistent, gradual pressure to weaken organisations over time, avoiding direct confrontation.
- **War of manoeuvre** → adaptability, intelligence and disruption — cutting off resources and winning local support.
- Excessive force is counter-productive → authoritarian tactics erode trust and alienate populations, feeding further violence.

25 Global response & conventions

The response evolved in phases — early instruments (1960s–early 1990s) secured aviation and shipping; later phases addressed bombings, terror financing and nuclear terrorism.

- **1963 Convention on Offences on Board Aircraft** → the first international treaty against terrorism; five more sectoral conventions in the 1970s.
- **FATF** → global standards against terror financing, with grey-listing for heightened monitoring; the SCO's **RATS** for regional counter-terrorism in Central Asia.
- **CCIT** → proposed by India to criminalise all forms of terrorism and deny terrorists, financiers and supporters access to funds, arms and safe havens.
- **UN Security Council** → Resolution 1267 (asset freezes on designated terrorists, with China at times resisting cases such as Hafiz Saeed), 1373 (counter-terrorism measures), 1624 (criminalising incitement).
- Sectoral conventions → 1997 Terrorist Bombings, 1999 Financing of Terrorism, 2005 Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The US's post-9/11 Global War on Terrorism dismantled organisations but brought instability and the rise of ISIS.
- The world still lacks a comprehensive convention → BRICS reject "double standards" and press to finalise the CCIT; India holds that classifying terrorists as "good" or "bad" for convenience must end.

Build the answer on

- 1963 Aircraft Convention as the first treaty; five more sectoral conventions in the 1970s; post-9/11 conventions on bombings, financing and nuclear terrorism — a widening scope.
- **FATF** (grey-listing) and the SCO's RATS as financial and regional instruments; UNSC 1267, 1373, 1624 for asset freezes, measures and incitement.
- **The gaps** → the stalled CCIT (no agreed definition — one state's terrorist is another's freedom fighter); China's resistance (Hafiz Saeed) as selective application and "double standards."
- A persisting scourge → terrorism has engulfed regions as large as nations (Afghanistan, Syria), questioning efficacy.
- **Way forward** → finalise the CCIT, end the "good/bad terrorist" distinction, and pair enforcement with the rule of law (**Kofi Annan**).

26 India's plan & Kofi Annan's 5 D's

India's five-point plan at the UN → intelligence sharing; preventing abuse of communication platforms for propaganda and recruitment; stronger border security; movement control over suspected terrorists; accountability of states that harbour terrorists. In January 2021, at the twentieth anniversary of Resolution 1373, India added an **eight-point action plan** — summoning political will, decrying double standards, objective enlisting and delisting under UN sanctions, and addressing the terrorism–organised-crime link.

Kofi Annan's five-point strategy — the 5 D's

Dissuade — address root causes

Deny means — funds, arms, tech

Deter states — pressure sponsors

Develop capacity — legal & security

Defend human rights

27 Terrorism & the restriction of human rights

- **Thomas Hobbes** (*Leviathan*) → life without a strong authority is chaotic, so in a crisis the state may limit freedoms to ensure safety; surveillance can be justified because the protection of life is paramount.
- **John Locke** (*Second Treatise of Government*) → government exists to safeguard life, liberty and property; any action infringing these rights must be limited and carefully controlled.
- **Jürgen Habermas** → governments must still respect democratic values, since excessive restrictions on rights corrode the moral foundations of a society.

28 Technology & the changing face of terrorism

- **Bruce Hoffman** → terrorism continuously adapts to the political, social and technological setting; the internet has transformed radicalisation, recruitment and coordination.
- Social media → Twitter, Telegram and YouTube exploited by ISIS and Al-Qaeda (the ISIS magazine *Dabiq*); encrypted apps (Telegram, Signal, WhatsApp) evade surveillance (2015 Paris attacks); AI-generated content and deepfakes worsen disinformation.
- **Richard Danzig** → technologies such as **CRISPR** may let non-state actors create pandemic-like biological threats.
- **Audrey Kurth Cronin** (*Power to the People*, 2019) → "the future of terrorism will be shaped by the democratisation of technology," making adaptive counter-terrorism indispensable. **Brahma Chellaney** → concerted information campaigns can help discredit radical ideologies in West and Central Asia.

"It's like an ancient story — you can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them only to bite your neighbours. Eventually those snakes are going to turn on whoever has them in the backyard too." — **Hillary Clinton**

29 Terrorism — assessment

- **Andrew Heywood** → terrorism is an **essentially contested concept**, marked by normative disagreement over its definition, legitimacy and implications for civil liberties and state power.
- **Noam Chomsky** → the line between state and non-state terror stays blurred, so its conceptual foundations need critical analysis.
- **Richard Falk** → the legitimacy of counter-terrorism depends on upholding global justice and due process and avoiding state-sponsored excesses, lest the values of civilisation be eroded in the effort to protect them.

"Terrorism is a global scourge that requires a global response." — **Kofi Annan**

PART C Nuclear Proliferation

the schools · motivations · norms & taboos · South Asia · NPT / CTBT / FMCT / NSG · disarmament

30 Nuclear proliferation — the problem

The use of nuclear weapons in 1945 reshaped global security. Despite a decline in arsenals, the spread of technology and continuing debates over nuclear programmes, energy and WMD terrorism keep proliferation at the centre of world politics.

Joseph Nye — nuclear weapons have reshaped deterrence dynamics, making their spread a key concern for both strategic stability and global governance since the Cold War.

31 Spread of WMD technology

- By 1965 → five states had tested: the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and China.
- 1968 → these five were recognised as nuclear-weapon states under the NPT.
- Early 2020s → nine states possess weapons: the US, Russia, the UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.
- Parallel effort → under the Chemical Weapons Convention (1997), many states chose to destroy their chemical stockpiles.

32 Desirability of nuclear weapons — schools

Scholar	Position
Kenneth Waltz	Nuclear weapons have prevented large-scale war since 1945; their destructive potential is a deterrent that makes states less likely to fight ("more may be better")
John Mearsheimer	Selective proliferation — only politically stable, responsible states should hold nuclear technology; concern about instability in Third World states
John Mueller	Fears, especially of nuclear terrorism, are exaggerated; nuclear war or a group acquiring materials is minimal; rejects nuclear weapons as "extra insurance"
Scott Sagan	"More will be worse" in a world of weak institutions and regional rivalries

33 Motivations to acquire — two models

Model	Logic & thinkers
Security model	In an anarchical system states rely on self-help; they weigh nuclear weapons when facing threats that cannot be met otherwise, using them as a deterrent — Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz (self-preservation)
Norms model	Scott Sagan → non-material factors — status and prestige; states may pursue weapons to assert standing in the international system

34 Why nations relinquish nuclear weapons

- **Realist** → states forgo weapons when they receive **extended deterrence**, the security umbrella of another nuclear power; providing such an umbrella can prevent proliferation.
- **Liberal** → institutions, treaties and regimes prevent proliferation; the near-universal NPT is a major achievement in deterring acquisition.
- **Social constructivist** → **Nina Tannenwald** shows how cultural taboos have evolved since 1945; opinion and new norms explain non-use; treaties may not eliminate weapons but they delegitimise possession and use.

35 Norms, taboos & proliferation

- **Nina Tannenwald** → the **nuclear taboo**; despite its arsenal, the US has not used nuclear weapons since 1945, even in long conflicts, because use is now seen as morally unacceptable. Treaties create a **stigma** that makes keeping or using weapons harder to justify.
- **Scott Sagan** (Norms model) → status and prestige, not only security, drive proliferation.
- **Alexander Wendt** → nuclear weapons are not only military power but a country's identity and status; the world's response to states like North Korea and Iran can reshape how they are viewed.

UPSC 2013 What roles do norms, taboos and epistemic communities play in the context of nuclear proliferation?

Build the answer on

- Constructivist frame → norms and shared beliefs, not only material power, shape nuclear decisions.
- **Nina Tannenwald** → the nuclear taboo explains US non-use since 1945; treaties create a stigma that delegitimises possession and use.
- **Scott Sagan**'s Norms model → weapons pursued for status and prestige; **Alexander Wendt** → weapons express a state's identity and standing.
- Contrast with the Security model → survival under anarchy drives acquisition (**Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz**).
- Normative progress underpins disarmament → changing perceptions are central to global attitudes (**Mohamed ElBaradei**'s call for universal commitment and mutual trust).

36 Nuclear deterrence in South Asia

- **Hans Morgenthau & Kenneth Waltz** → absent a global authority, nuclear weapons are essential for survival.
- **John Mearsheimer** (offensive realism) → states seek not just defence but control and influence; India's programme partly asserts power in South Asia and Pakistan's answers India, so weapons may not prevent war but could raise the likelihood of conflict in a tense region.
- **Thomas Schelling & Bernard Brodie** → the purpose is a credible threat of massive retaliation, not use; hence the South Asian **paradox** — weapons may prevent major wars while heightening the risk of devastating escalation. **Alexander Wendt** → they also carry meaning for identity and status.

37 The possibility of a new arms race

- **Hans Morgenthau & Kenneth Waltz** → rising powers (US, Russia, China) are enhancing capabilities; competitive pursuit will lead to a new race.
- **Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye** → treaties like the NPT and bodies like the UN reduce risk through diplomacy, transparency and trust — but the failure to extend the **INF Treaty** exposes the limits.
- **John Mearsheimer** → renewed great-power competition could reignite a race; **Francis Fukuyama** → evolving global norms might still help avoid one; **Alexander Wendt** → the response to North Korea and Iran could change how weapons are viewed.

The Ukraine war has drawn comparisons to the **1962 Cuban Missile Crisis**. As **George Bunn** wrote, the crisis catalysed arms control by “awakening American and Soviet interest in seeking accommodation,” yet between 1962 and 1968 the US stockpile grew by almost 16 per cent and Soviet warheads nearly tripled. The US has since suspended the Strategic Stability Dialogue — mistrust chilling arms control even as it shows why the threat must be reduced.

38 The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

The **NPT**, signed in June 1968, sought a non-proliferation regime by preventing non-nuclear states from developing or acquiring weapons.

- **Core bargain** → nuclear-weapon states commit not to transfer weapons or technology; non-nuclear states commit not to acquire them; peaceful nuclear technology is permitted under IAEA oversight.
- **Disarmament provision** → calls on nuclear states to reduce arsenals but sets no timeline or enforceable requirement.
- **Haves and have-nots** → the five permanent UNSC members retain weapons while others refrain — seen by many, India included, as unfair.
- **Criticism** → perpetuates a power gap, weak on disarmament, failed to stop programmes in France and China, discriminatory.
- **Indefinite extension (1995)** → a New York conference extended the NPT indefinitely, a diplomatic triumph for the US; NAM challenges were managed by attaching disarmament goals, and the extension prompted the CTBT.

39 India & the NPT

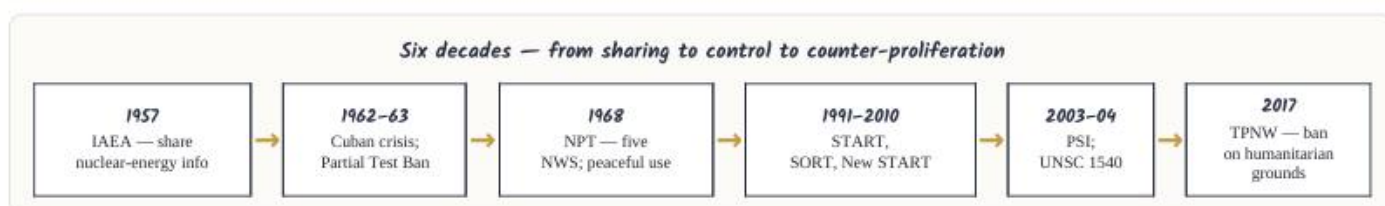
- India has refused to join, viewing the NPT as an unjust system that lets existing nuclear states build arsenals while excluding India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.
- **V. C. Trivedi**, India’s delegate at the eighteen-nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC, from July 1965), likened the treaty to a seventeenth-century emperor who banned drinking while being a drunkard.
- **Resolution 1887** → the UNSC called on outside states to join, but India declared it would not join as a non-nuclear-weapon state, since weapons are integral to its security.
- **Third-world critique** → the regime is “largely the product of interstate diplomacy dominated by Western great powers” (**Barkawi and Laffey**); aligning the five nuclear states with the five permanent UNSC seats legitimises nuclear power for a few while prohibiting it for the rest (**Biswas**); indefinite extension lets nuclear states modernise and pursue vertical proliferation (**Singh**); the exclusive regime perpetuates “logics of colonial violence, oppression, and inequity” (**Biswas and Peterson**).
- **US–India civil nuclear agreement** → lets India access nuclear technology without signing the NPT, meeting energy needs while retaining its capabilities.

40 CTBT · FMCT · NSG

Regime	What it does · India’s position
CTBT Comprehensive Test-Ban	Bans all nuclear explosions (unlike the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which spared underground tests). India, via Arundhati Ghosh → will not join, now or later: no fixed disarmament timeline, a haves/have-nots distinction, and computer-simulated tests that lack the same verification. India has held a self-imposed testing moratorium since 1998, and could sign without ratifying, as the US has done
FMCT Fissile Material Cut-off	Seeks to halt production of fissile materials; the Shannon Mandate → adoption only if all parties agree. Pakistan wants existing stockpiles destroyed; India and the US would cover only future production; the US prefers domestic verification, India broader international oversight
NSG Nuclear Suppliers Group	Controls trade in nuclear materials and technology; membership brings information, validation, coordination and transparency. India is not a member → the NSG set a 1967 cutoff and India tested first in 1974; the group was also tied to the NPT. India’s responsible conduct → no covert activity, a defensive domestic programme, a no-first-use policy, restraint in the 1999 Kargil War

North–South dimension → from the outset the would-be proliferators targeted by NSG export controls (bar Israel and South Africa) lay in “the South,” shaping Third World attitudes and the critique of the group as an exclusive “cartel.”

41 Evolution of non-proliferation efforts



START (1991), SORT (2002) and New START (2010) cut US and Russian warheads and delivery vehicles; the Proliferation Security Initiative (2003) improved cooperation against WMD trafficking; UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004) set legal measures against non-state actors; the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017) had 86 signatories by 2021. Two forms run throughout → **horizontal proliferation** (spread to new countries) and **vertical**

proliferation (expansion of existing arsenals); since 1945 the effort has shifted from disarmament to arms control and counter-proliferation.

42 Trump–Kim Singapore Summit

The denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula sits at the intersection of the security model, deterrence and the norms around nuclear weapons.

UPSC 2018 · ISm Discuss the Trump–Kim Singapore Summit on the prospects of denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Build the answer on

- North Korea is one of the nine nuclear-armed states and remains outside the NPT.
- **Security-model logic** → for a state that sees weapons as integral to survival, complete denuclearisation is hard to secure through summitry alone.
- **Deterrence** → weapons create a credible threat of retaliation (**Thomas Schelling, Bernard Brodie**), reducing the incentive to give them up.
- **Norms and taboo** → sustained pressure and stigma (**Nina Tannenwald**) shift behaviour over time more than one-off deals; identity and status matter (**Alexander Wendt**).
- **Verification is the central obstacle**; the peaceful-use loophole (civilian route to military capability) complicates trust.
- Diplomacy over coercion (**Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye**), but durable denuclearisation needs enforceable, mutual guarantees.

43 India's vision on nuclear disarmament

- India has consistently advocated a world free of nuclear weapons, holding disarmament essential for global stability, and supports a universal ban with binding legal frameworks.
- It presses for the **full dismantling** of weapons — a threat to security, human well-being and the environment — with international oversight to ensure compliance.
- Its posture pairs **no first use** with a self-imposed testing moratorium since 1998, and calls for open dialogue and confidence-building to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons.

44 Nuclear proliferation — assessment

- **Joseph Nye** → nuclear weapons reshaped deterrence, making their spread central to strategic stability and global governance.
- **Scott Sagan** → “More will be worse” where institutions are weak and rivalries persist; prevention needs coercive diplomacy, arms-control regimes and norm entrepreneurship together.
- **Mohamed ElBaradei** → a nuclear-weapons-free world depends not merely on treaties but on universal commitment, mutual trust and equitable enforcement, so that disarmament is truly global rather than selective.

*“The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” — **Albert Einstein***

The principle affirmed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 — that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” — remains the moral bedrock of non-proliferation.

45 Power Quotes — the lines that lift an answer

*“One is not born, but becomes, a woman.” — **Simone de Beauvoir***

*“The very treaties and principles upon which the human rights framework was created defend the rights of man and male household heads.” — **Susan Moller Okin***

*Rights “are built on typically male life experiences and in their current form do not respond to the most pressing risks women face.” — **Hilary Charlesworth***

*“The future of terrorism will be shaped by the democratisation of technology.” — **Audrey Kurth Cronin***

*“Terrorism is a global scourge that requires a global response.” — **Kofi Annan***

*“More will be worse.” — **Scott Sagan***

*“The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” — **Albert Einstein***

*“A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” — **Ronald Reagan & Mikhail Gorbachev, 1985***

46 Scholar Index — self-check your recall

Alasdair MacIntyre · Albert Einstein · Alexander Wendt · Amartya Sen · Andrew Heywood · Anthony Giddens · Arundhati Ghosh · Audrey Kurth Cronin · Barkawi · Barry Buzan · Belaunde Terry · Bernard Brodie · Biswas · Brahma Chellaney · Bruce Hoffman · Charles Taylor · Daniel Byman · Edward Said · Edward Snowden · Francis Fukuyama · Freeman · Friedrich Engels · George Bunn · Grace Cheng · Hans Morgenthau · Hilary Charlesworth · Hillary Clinton · Hugo Grotius · Immanuel Kant · Immanuel Wallerstein · Jack Donnelly · Jacques Derrida · James Kiras · Jean-Francois Lyotard · John Locke · John Mearsheimer · John Mueller · Joseph Nye · Jurgen Habermas · Karl Marx · Kenneth Waltz · Kofi Annan · Laffey · Lee Kuan Yew · Maha Azzam · Mahathir Mohamad · Malise Ruthven · Mao Zedong · Martha Nussbaum · Michael Sandel · Michel Foucault · Michelle Bachelet · Mohamed ElBaradei · Nina Tannenwald · Noam Chomsky · Peterson · Radhika Coomaraswamy · Raimon Panikkar · Richard Danzig · Richard Falk · Robert Keohane · Ronald Dworkin · Samuel Huntington · Scott Sagan · Simone de Beauvoir · Singh · Susan Moller Okin · Sylvia Walby · Thomas Hobbes · Thomas Schelling · Tu Weiming · V. C. Trivedi · Vladimir Lenin · Will Kymlicka

47 How UPSC asks this unit

Year · marks	Question theme	Part
2013	Norms, taboos and epistemic communities in nuclear proliferation	Nuclear
2015 · 20m	Human-rights discourse and the inclusion of women's rights (feminist theories)	Human Rights
2016 · 20m	Global human security alongside economic security	Human Rights
2018 · 20m	"Asian Values" and the debates on human rights	Human Rights
2018 · 15m	Trump–Kim Singapore Summit and Korean denuclearisation	Nuclear
2019 · 15m	Personal data protection and human rights	Human Rights
2022 · 15m	Efficacy of global conventions against international terrorism	Terrorism
2025	Critique of human rights — universalist assumptions as unsound and damaging	Human Rights

48 Today's practice — write before the evening

1. Critically examine the notion of "Asian Values" in the context of the on-going debates on human rights. **UPSC 2018 · 20m**
2. Discuss the efficacy of global conventions to combat international terrorism. **UPSC 2022 · 15m**
3. Discuss the Trump–Kim Singapore Summit on the prospects of denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. **UPSC 2018 · 15m**

Model answers to these follow on [@psirbyamitpratap](#). Don't break the chain.

See you tomorrow with Day 39 — Indian Foreign Policy.