

CUET · POLITICAL SCIENCE · CLASS XII · CODE 323

Security in the Contemporary World

CUET unit: Contemporary World Politics — Security in the Contemporary World

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Snapshot

- Defines security as freedom from threats to "core values" so severe that the values would be damaged beyond repair if not addressed (NCERT pp. 64–65).
- Distinguishes **Traditional** (military, external + internal, balance of power, alliances, deterrence/defence) from **Non-Traditional** (human security, global security) conceptions.
- Lays out cooperative tools — **disarmament** (BWC 1972, CWC 1997), **arms control** (ABM 1972, SALT II, START, NPT 1968), and **confidence building**.
- Maps new sources of threat — terrorism, human rights violations, global poverty, migration/refugees, and health epidemics (HIV-AIDS, SARS, bird flu).
- Sets out India's four-component security strategy: military capability (1974 & 1998 nuclear tests), strengthening international norms/institutions, managing internal challenges democratically, and economic development.

Detailed Notes

2.1 Core concepts

- **Basic meaning of security.** Security implies freedom from threats; but only threats to core values that are **so severe** the values would be damaged beyond repair count as security threats — otherwise the concept loses coherence and the world would be "saturated with security issues" (NCERT §What is Security?, pp. 64–65). NCERT warns that if every threat to existence — a person being robbed in the street, or any minor disagreement between countries — were treated as a security threat, we would be paralysed: "everywhere we looked, the world would be full of dangers".
- **Whose core values?** NCERT raises a deliberate ambiguity: are the core values to be protected those of the country as a **whole**, or those of **ordinary women and men in the street**? Governments may not always share the citizen's notion of what is core (NCERT p. 64). This question opens the door to the later distinction between state security and human security.
- **Two broad conceptions.** Notions of security are grouped into **traditional** and **non-traditional**; they vary with context and across societies of the world's nearly 200 countries (NCERT p. 65). It would be "amazing" if six hundred and fifty crore people, organised in nearly 200 countries, had the same conception of security — context matters.

- **Traditional — External.** In the traditional view, the gravest threat is **military** action from another country that endangers sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity (NCERT §Traditional Notions: External, p. 65). Military action does not only target soldiers — "ordinary men and women are made targets of war, either to break their support for the war" or as collateral.
- **Three basic choices before a government** facing war: (i) **surrender**, (ii) **deterrence** — prevent attack by raising costs to an unacceptable level, (iii) **defence** — limit or end war once it begins (NCERT p. 65). Governments may quietly choose to surrender but will not advertise this as policy; therefore declared security policy revolves around deterrence and defence.
- **Balance of Power.** A third component of traditional security — governments stay sensitive to relative power of neighbours/rivals and build military, economic and technological power to maintain a favourable balance, especially with neighbours, rivals, or those with whom they have had past conflicts (NCERT pp. 65–66). Economic and technological power matter because they are the basis of military power.
- **Alliance building.** A coalition of states that coordinate actions to deter or defend against military attack; usually formalised in treaties; based on **national interests** and can change when those interests change. **Example:** the US backed Islamic militants in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s but attacked them after the 9/11 strikes by Al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden (NCERT p. 66).
- **No central authority in world politics.** Unlike inside a country, there is no acknowledged central authority above states. The international system is "a rather brutal arena". The UN exists only to the extent its members allow — "the UN is a creature of its members and has authority only to the extent that the membership allows it to have authority and obeys it" — hence each country is responsible for its own security (NCERT p. 66).
- **Traditional — Internal.** After WWII the US, USSR and powerful Western European countries felt internally secure and focused on external threats; some European powers continued to worry about violence in their colonies (French in Vietnam in the 1950s, British in Kenya in the 1950s/early 1960s). The colonial/post-colonial states of Asia and Africa however faced **both** external threats from neighbours and **internal** threats from separatist movements (NCERT pp. 67–68). They feared their neighbours even more than they feared the superpowers or the former colonial rulers.
- **Civil wars surge.** Between 1946 and 1991 there was a **twelve-fold rise** in civil wars — the greatest jump in 200 years; **internal wars now make up more than 95 per cent of all armed conflicts** globally (NCERT p. 68). Sometimes external and internal threats merge — a neighbour may instigate an internal separatist movement, generating tensions across borders.

- **Cold War & Third World.** The Cold War between the two superpowers was responsible for approximately **one-third of all wars** in the post-WWII period; most of these were fought in the Third World (NCERT p. 67).
- **Cooperation under traditional security.** Limits on the **ends** (just-war: self-defence, preventing genocide) and **means** (sparing non-combatants, the unarmed and the surrendering, avoiding excessive violence) of war. Force, must in any case be used only after all the alternatives have failed (NCERT p. 68).
- **Disarmament.** All states give up certain weapons. The **1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)** and **1997 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** banned production/possession of those weapons. **More than 155 states acceded to the BWC; 193 states to the CWC;** both conventions included all the great powers. The superpowers, however, did not want to give up the third type of weapons of mass destruction — **nuclear weapons** — so they pursued arms control instead (NCERT p. 69).
- **Arms control.** Regulates acquisition/development. Key treaties: **ABM Treaty 1972** (blocked the US and USSR from using ballistic missiles as a defensive shield to launch a nuclear attack — it allowed both to deploy a very limited number of defensive systems but stopped large-scale production), **SALT II, START**, and the **NPT 1968** — which let countries that had tested/manufactured nukes **before 1967** keep them, while denying the right to others. The NPT did not abolish nuclear weapons; it limited the number of countries that could have them (NCERT p. 69).
- **Confidence building.** Process by which rivals share ideas, military intentions and (to a point) plans, to ensure they do not go to war through misunderstanding or misperception; they also share information about what kind of forces they possess and may share where those forces are deployed (NCERT p. 70).
- **Non-Traditional notions — the referent shifts.** From the **state** to **individuals/communities/all of humankind**; hence the labels **human security** and **global security**. Protecting citizens from foreign attack may be a necessary condition for the security of individuals, but it is certainly not a sufficient one — during the last 100 years, more people have been killed by their own governments than by foreign armies (NCERT p. 70).
- **Narrow vs broad human security.** **Narrow** view (e.g. Kofi Annan) = "the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence." **Broad** view = also hunger, disease and natural disasters, because these kill far more people than war, genocide and terrorism combined. The broadest formulation captures **freedom from want** and **freedom from fear** — what has also been called "economic security" and "threats to human dignity" (NCERT pp. 70–71).
- **Global security.** Emerged in the **1990s** in response to global-scale threats — global warming, international terrorism, AIDS and bird flu — that require international cooperation because no country can resolve them alone, and in some situations one country may have to disproportionately bear the brunt (NCERT p. 71). **Illustration:** a

1.5–2.0 m sea-level rise would flood **20 per cent of Bangladesh**, inundate most of the **Maldives** and threaten nearly **half of Thailand's population**.

- **Terrorism.** Political violence that **targets civilians deliberately and indiscriminately**; international terrorism involves citizens or territory of more than one country. Terrorist groups seek to change a political context or condition that they do not like by force or threat of force; civilian targets are chosen to terrorise the public and use the public's unhappiness as a weapon (NCERT p. 71). Classic cases include hijacking planes and planting bombs in trains, cafes, markets and crowded places. Most pre-9/11 attacks were in the **Middle East, Europe, Latin America and South Asia**; attention spiked after the **11 September 2001** attacks on the World Trade Centre.
- **Human rights — three types:** (i) political rights such as freedom of speech and assembly; (ii) economic and social rights; (iii) rights of colonised peoples or ethnic and indigenous minorities. While there is broad agreement on this classification, there is no agreement on which set should be considered universal, nor on what the international community should do when rights are violated. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the **Rwandan genocide** (1994) and the Indonesian military's killing of people in **East Timor** sharpened the debate over whether the UN should intervene (NCERT pp. 72–73).
- **Global poverty.** World population — then about **760 crore** — projected to reach **nearly 1000 crore** by the middle of the 21st century; **half the population growth occurs in six countries — India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia**. Poor countries' populations may **triple in 50 years** while rich-country populations shrink, deepening the North–South gap. Within the South, disparities have sharpened — a few countries have slowed population growth and raised incomes while others have failed (NCERT p. 73).
- **Migrants vs refugees.** Migrants leave voluntarily; refugees flee war, natural disaster or political persecution. States are supposed to accept refugees but not migrants. **Internally displaced people** stay within national borders — example: Kashmiri Pandits who fled the Kashmir Valley in the early 1990s (NCERT p. 74). The world refugee map tallies almost perfectly with the world conflicts map: from **1990 to 1995, 70 states were involved in 93 wars which killed about 55 lakh people**; in the 1990s all but three of the 60 refugee flows coincided with an internal armed conflict.
- **Health epidemics.** HIV-AIDS, bird flu and SARS spread rapidly via migration, business, tourism and military operations. By **2003** an estimated **4 crore people** were infected with HIV-AIDS — two-thirds in Africa, half the rest in South Asia. New drug therapies dramatically lowered the death rate in industrialised countries in the late 1990s but were too expensive for poor regions. New diseases (Corona, Ebola, hantavirus, hepatitis C) have emerged; old diseases (tuberculosis, malaria, dengue, cholera) have mutated into drug-resistant forms. Britain lost billions during the **mad-**

cow disease outbreak; **bird flu** shut down poultry exports from several Asian countries (NCERT pp. 74–75).

- **Limits of the concept.** To qualify as a security problem an issue must threaten the very existence of the referent — else "everything could become a security issue" and the concept loses coherence. **Illustration:** the Maldives feels threatened by global warming because much of its territory may be submerged; in Southern Africa **one in six adults** has HIV-AIDS (one in three in **Botswana**, the worst case); in **1994 the Tutsi tribe in Rwanda** faced a threat to its existence as nearly **five lakh** of its people were killed by the rival Hutu tribe in weeks (NCERT p. 75).
- **Cooperative security.** Most non-traditional threats need cooperation, not military confrontation. Cooperation can be bilateral, regional, continental or global, and may involve international organisations (UN, WHO, World Bank, IMF), NGOs (Amnesty International, Red Cross), MNCs and great personalities (Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela). Force is a **last resort** — best when sanctioned and applied collectively by the international community rather than by an individual country acting on its own (NCERT p. 76).
- **India's security strategy — four components** (NCERT §India's Security Strategy, pp. 76–77): 1. **Strengthening military capability** — India fought Pakistan (1947–48, 1965, 1971, 1999) and China (1962); first nuclear device tested in **1974**; nuclear tests in **1998** justified on national-security grounds because India is surrounded by nuclear-armed countries in the South Asian region. 2. **Strengthening international norms and institutions** — Nehru backed Asian solidarity, decolonisation, disarmament, and the UN as a forum where international conflicts could be settled; India sought a universal, non-discriminatory non-proliferation regime, argued for the **New International Economic Order (NIEO)**, used **non-alignment** to carve an area of peace outside bloc politics, joined the **160 countries that signed and ratified the 1997 Kyoto Protocol**, and has contributed troops to UN peacekeeping. 3. **Meeting internal challenges democratically** — militant movements in Nagaland, Mizoram, Punjab and Kashmir have sought secession; India responds via a democratic political system that lets groups voice grievances and share power. 4. **Economic development** — lifting citizens out of poverty and limiting inequality; democratic politics allows space for the voice of the poor, putting pressure on elected governments to combine growth with human development. Democracy itself is thus a way to provide greater security.

2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Security	Freedom from threats to core values so severe that the values would be damaged beyond repair if unaddressed	pp. 64–65
Core values	The values (sovereignty, life, dignity, way of life) whose damage qualifies a threat as a security threat	p. 64

Term	Definition	Page
Referent of security	The entity being secured — state (traditional) vs individual/humankind (non-traditional)	p. 70
Traditional (National) Security	Conception in which the state is referent and the main threat is military attack from another country	p. 65
Deterrence	Preventing the other side from attacking by promising to raise the costs of war to an unacceptable level	p. 65
Defence	Limiting or ending war once it has broken out	p. 65
Balance of Power	Maintaining a favourable distribution of military, economic and technological power vis-à-vis other states	pp. 65–66
Alliance	A coalition of states that coordinate their actions to deter or defend against military attack, usually formalised in treaties	p. 66
Disarmament	All states give up certain kinds of weapons (e.g. BWC 1972, CWC 1997)	p. 69
Arms Control	Regulates the acquisition or development of weapons (e.g. ABM 1972, SALT II, START, NPT 1968)	p. 69
BWC	1972 Biological Weapons Convention — banned production and possession of biological weapons (>155 states)	p. 69
CWC	1997 Chemical Weapons Convention — banned production and possession of chemical weapons (193 states)	p. 69
ABM Treaty	1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between US and USSR — stopped large-scale production of ballistic-missile defensive shields	p. 69
NPT	1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — pre-1967 nuclear powers keep weapons; others give up the right	p. 69
Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)	Process in which rivals share information on military intentions and plans to avoid war by misunderstanding	p. 70
Non-Traditional Security	Conception that expands the referent beyond the state and the threat agenda beyond military force	p. 70
Human Security	Protection of people more than the protection of states; narrow (internal violence) vs broad (also hunger, disease, disasters)	pp. 70–71
Global Security	Cooperative response to threats whose scale is global — global warming, international terrorism, AIDS, bird flu	p. 71
Terrorism	Political violence that targets civilians deliberately and indiscriminately to alter a political condition	p. 71
Migrant	A person who voluntarily leaves their home country	p. 74
Refugee		p. 74

Term	Definition	Page
	A person who flees war, natural disaster or political persecution	
Internally Displaced People	People who flee their homes but remain within national borders (e.g. Kashmiri Pandits, early 1990s)	p. 74
Cooperative Security	Bilateral / regional / continental / global cooperation involving states, IGOs, NGOs, MNCs and individuals	p. 76
NIEO	New International Economic Order — equitable global economic regime that India argued for	p. 77
Kyoto Protocol (1997)	Roadmap for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions; India is among the 160 ratifying countries	p. 77

2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- **Three basic choices** before a government facing war — surrender / deterrence / defence — plus the four traditional-security components (deterrence, defence, balance of power, alliances) (NCERT pp. 65–66). Remember that security policy openly admits only the last three; surrender is never declared policy.
- **World Refugees in 2017 pie chart** — Africa **30%**, Middle East & North Africa **26%**, Europe **17%**, Americas **16%**, Asia & Pacific **11%** (NCERT p. 74).
- **Life Expectancy / Infant Mortality poster** — Sub-Saharan countries 40 years; Sweden 3/1000 infant deaths, Indian subcontinent 1/7, parts of Africa 1/5; 50% of all deaths in the developing world are children under 5 (vs 5% in the developed world) (NCERT p. 73).
- **The cooperative-security ladder** — bilateral → regional → continental → global; with state, IGO (UN, WHO, World Bank, IMF), NGO (Amnesty, Red Cross), MNC and individual actors (NCERT p. 76).
- **India's four-component security strategy** — military capability + international norms + internal democratic management + economic development (NCERT pp. 76–77).
- **Sea-level rise illustration** — 1.5–2.0 m rise would flood 20% of Bangladesh, most of the Maldives, half of Thailand's population (NCERT p. 71).

2.5 Key Articles / Treaties / Events

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT), 1963	Banned nuclear tests in atmosphere, underwater, outer space	leps105 (arms-control list)
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 1968	Limited nuclear-weapon states to those that had tested before 1967	leps105 §security
		leps105 §security

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), 1972	Limited US/USSR missile defence systems	
Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I and II), 1972 / 1979	Limited strategic nuclear arsenals	leps105 §security
Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), 1991	Reduced US/USSR strategic warheads	leps105 §security
Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), 1972	Bans biological weapons — example of disarmament	leps105 §security
Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), 1992	Bans chemical weapons — example of disarmament	leps105 §security
Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), 1996	Bans all nuclear tests; India has not signed	leps105 §security
Geneva Conventions, 1949 / Hague Conventions	Laws of war	leps105 §cooperative security
Kashmiri Pandit displacement, early 1990s	Internally Displaced Persons example	leps105 §human security
1.5–2.0 m sea-level rise scenario	20% of Bangladesh, most of Maldives, half of Thailand's population at risk	leps105 p. 71
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948	Basis for human-rights component of human security	leps105 §human security

2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- **Deterrence vs Defence:** Deterrence = prevent attack (raise costs); Defence = limit/end war after it has begun. NTA loves to swap these.
- **Disarmament vs Arms Control:** Disarmament = give up weapons (BWC, CWC); Arms Control = regulate acquisition/development (ABM, NPT, SALT, START). NPT is **arms control**, not disarmament — it does not abolish nuclear weapons; it only limits the number of countries that can have them.
- **NPT cut-off year:** Countries that tested/manufactured nukes **before 1967** keep them; all others give up the right (not 1968 — that is the year of the treaty).
- **Migrant vs Refugee vs IDP:** Voluntary leave (migrant), flee across border (refugee), flee within border (internally displaced). Kashmiri Pandits = IDP, not refugee.
- **Cold War's share of post-WWII wars:** approximately **one-third** of all post-WWII wars (not half).
- **Civil-war jump: twelve-fold rise** in civil wars between 1946 and 1991; internal wars are **>95%** of all armed conflicts.

- **BWC/CWC accession counts: >155** states for BWC, **193** for CWC. NTA often swaps these.
- **India's first nuclear device: 1974** (not 1998 — that was the second series of tests, weapons-capacity).
- **Narrow vs broad human security:** Narrow = internal violence (Kofi Annan formulation). Broad = also hunger, disease, disasters; broadest = "freedom from want" + "freedom from fear".
- **Global security year:** emerged in the **1990s**, not the 1970s (Cold War era).
- **Rwanda example:** the Tutsi tribe lost about **5 lakh** people to the Hutu in 1994 — used to illustrate that non-traditional threats can target group existence.
- **HIV in Africa:** by 2003, **two-thirds** of the 4 crore infected were in Africa; **one in three adults** in Botswana — Botswana is the worst case, not the African average.

Practice MCQs

PYQ Alignment

This chapter is one of the high-yield topics in CUET Political Science — typically generating around 8–10 MCQs across past CUET papers, with NTA favouring definition-matching questions (deterrence vs defence, disarmament vs arms control, migrant vs refugee), treaty-year identification (BWC 1972, CWC 1997, NPT 1968, ABM 1972, Kyoto 1997), and statement-based questions on India's four-pillar security strategy and the narrow/broad formulations of human security.

CUET 2023 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.34 (CUET 2023) The concept “deterrence” refers to:

- A) Surrender B) Prevent war C) Defend when war actually breaks D) Defeat the attacking forces **Tests:** Security in the contemporary world **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.35 (CUET 2023) Match List I with List II (Treaty – Full form) A. START B. BWC C. CWC D. ABM I. Biological Weapons Convention II. Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty III. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty IV. Chemical Weapons Convention Options:

- A) A-III, B-I, C-IV, D-II B) A-I, B-III, C-II, D-IV C) A-IV, B-II, C-I, D-III D) A-II, B-IV, C-III, D-I **Tests:** Security in the contemporary world **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2024 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.33 (CUET 2024) What is the full form of START?

- A) Strategic Arms Reduction Toll B) Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty C) Strategic Arms Reduction Tactics D) Strategic Arms Reduction Tax **Tests:** Security in the contemporary world **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.34 (CUET 2024) Which of the following is a threat to Global security?

- A) Human Rights B) Arms Control C) Terrorism D) Disarmament **Tests:** Security in the contemporary world **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.35 (CUET 2024) Match List-I with List-II. List-I | List-II A. Mapuche | I. East of Panama Canal B. Kuna Tribe | II. Bangladesh C. Indigenous people of Cordillera Region | III. Chile D. Tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts | IV. Philippines Options:

- A) A-I, B-II, C-III, D-IV B) A-III, B-I, C-IV, D-II C) A-I, B-II, C-IV, D-III D) A-III, B-IV, C-I, D-II **Tests:** Security in the contemporary world **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2025 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.35 (CUET 2025) Match the treaties: Treaty Y Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty 1 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty 1 Chemical Weapons Convention 1 India's nuclear test 1 Options:

- A) A-II, B-I, C-III, D-IV B) A-III, B-I, C-IV, D-II C) A-II, B-IV, C-III, D-I D) A-III, B-II, C-I, D-IV **Tests:** Security in the contemporary world **Answer:** Not in extracted key

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