Defence & Security · GS - III

‘Terrorism is emerging as a competitive industry over the last few decades.” Analyse the above statement.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - III	Defence & Security

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
12.5	~200 words

Answer Hint

Terrorist organisations; recruitment; financing; propaganda; technological adaptation; competition for influence; transnational networks; counterterrorism

Model Answer

Introduction

Terrorism has increasingly acquired characteristics associated with organised networks: competition for recruits, funding, territory, publicity and influence. The comparison with an industry is analytical rather than literal.

Why Terrorism Can Resemble a Competitive Industry

- **Competition for recruits:** Organisations use ideology, grievances, coercion and financial incentives to attract members.
- **Funding networks:** Donations, extortion, illicit trade, kidnapping for ransom and other criminal activities can sustain operations.
- **Technological adaptation:** Encrypted communications, online propaganda and digital tools help networks recruit and coordinate.
- **Branding and publicity:** Groups use attacks and media coverage to gain visibility, spread fear and compete for influence.
- **Territorial and ideological rivalry:** Organisations may compete for control, legitimacy, resources and supporters.

- **Transnational links:** Networks can share expertise, propaganda, logistics and financing across borders.
- **Low-cost tactics:** Some attacks require limited resources but can create disproportionate psychological and economic effects.

Limitations of the Analogy

Terrorist organisations differ widely in ideology, structure and objectives. Some rely on state support, while others operate through decentralised cells or individual actors. Their behaviour cannot be explained by commercial competition alone.

Countermeasures

- Disrupt terrorist financing and money laundering.
- Strengthen international intelligence-sharing and law-enforcement cooperation.
- Counter online recruitment and extremist propaganda through lawful means.
- Improve community engagement and address conditions that facilitate radicalisation.
- Protect critical infrastructure and strengthen emergency response.
- Ensure that counterterrorism measures respect human rights and the rule of law.

Conclusion

The analogy highlights the organisational, financial and technological adaptability of terrorist networks. Effective responses must therefore combine security operations with financial disruption, international cooperation and prevention of radicalisation.

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