International Relations · GS - IV

Carl von Clausewitz once said, "War is a diplomacy by other means." Critically analyse the above statement in the present context of contemporary geo-political conflict.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

War and diplomacy, political objectives, coercive diplomacy, Ukraine conflict, West Asia, deterrence, economic interdependence, nuclear weapons, international institutions, peaceful resolution

Model Answer

Introduction

Clausewitz viewed war as an extension of political objectives through organised violence. The statement remains relevant, but contemporary conflicts reveal that diplomacy and war operate through a much broader spectrum of coercion and cooperation.

Contemporary Relevance

1. Political objectives: States may employ military force to secure territorial, security or strategic objectives when negotiations fail.
2. Coercive diplomacy: Military mobilisation, sanctions and deterrence can strengthen a state's negotiating position without necessarily leading to total war.
3. Hybrid warfare: Cyber operations, information warfare, economic sanctions and proxy conflicts blur the boundary between war and diplomacy.

4. Nuclear deterrence: Nuclear weapons have made escalation extremely costly, increasing the importance of diplomatic communication.
5. Limits of force: Military victory does not necessarily produce political legitimacy or durable peace. Sustainable outcomes require negotiations and institution-building.
6. Multilateral diplomacy: The UN, regional organisations and third-party mediation remain essential for conflict prevention and humanitarian protection.

Conclusion

Thus, contemporary geopolitics demonstrates that war can serve political objectives, but it cannot substitute for diplomacy indefinitely. The ethical imperative is to employ dialogue, negotiation and multilateralism wherever possible and treat force as a constrained last resort.

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