International Relations · GS - II

How can diplomacy and military deterrence operate simultaneously in international relations? Discuss their significance and limitations in managing tensions between the United States and Iran.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 04/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Indirect negotiations; military preparedness; deterrence; strategic signalling; regional stability; nuclear concerns; escalation risks; confidence-building; multilateral diplomacy

Model Answer

Introduction

The reported US position of avoiding an immediate strike against Iran while retaining military readiness illustrates the complex relationship between diplomacy and deterrence in international relations.

Diplomacy and Deterrence

Indirect negotiations enable adversaries to exchange proposals through intermediaries, reducing political and security barriers to dialogue. Simultaneously, military preparedness can discourage hostile actions by demonstrating the capacity to respond. This combination may strengthen bargaining leverage and preserve options during a crisis.

Significance and Limitations

Diplomacy can reduce misunderstandings, address nuclear concerns and prevent conflict-related economic disruptions. Deterrence may discourage escalation. However, excessive military signalling can provoke

countermeasures, intensify mistrust and create the risk of miscalculation. Domestic political pressures and disagreements over verification and security guarantees can also obstruct negotiations.

Way Forward

The United States and Iran should prioritise sustained dialogue, verifiable commitments, crisis communication channels and confidence-building measures. Regional stakeholders and appropriate multilateral mechanisms can support de-escalation and improve transparency.

Conclusion

A combination of credible deterrence and sustained diplomacy can help manage strategic rivalry. Lasting stability, however, requires addressing underlying disputes through verifiable agreements rather than relying exclusively on military pressure.

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