Defence & Security · GS - III

Insider threats pose a complex challenge to national security because individuals with legitimate access can compromise even sophisticated defence networks. Examine the institutional, technological and human dimensions of preventing insider-enabled espionage in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Insider threats, counter-intelligence, personnel screening, Official Secrets Act, cybersecurity, zero-trust architecture, access control, behavioural monitoring, security awareness, accountability, inter-agency coordination.

Model Answer

Introduction

Insider-enabled espionage occurs when individuals with authorised access misuse their position to disclose sensitive information. It presents a serious challenge because conventional external cybersecurity measures may not detect deliberate internal misconduct.

Major Dimensions of the Threat

- **Human vulnerability:** Financial inducements, coercion, ideological influence and social engineering can compromise personnel.

- **Information access:** Excessive privileges and weak compartmentalisation increase the risk of sensitive data exposure.
- **Technological exploitation:** Malware, compromised devices and insecure communication channels facilitate information theft.
- **Institutional weaknesses:** Inadequate audits and delayed threat reporting can allow breaches to continue.

Preventive Measures

India should strengthen background verification, periodic security reviews and need-to-know access controls. Zero-trust architecture, multi-factor authentication, endpoint monitoring and regular cybersecurity audits can reduce vulnerabilities. Counter-intelligence agencies must improve threat assessment and coordination.

Security awareness, confidential reporting mechanisms and strict accountability are equally important.

Conclusion

National security requires combining technological safeguards with personnel integrity, institutional vigilance and effective counter-intelligence. A layered security framework is essential to protect sensitive defence information.

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