International Relations · GS - II

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has exposed the limitations of the post-Cold War European security architecture. Critically examine the competing security concerns of Russia, Ukraine and NATO, and their implications for a sustainable peace settlement.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

European security architecture, NATO expansion debate, Russian security demands, Ukrainian sovereignty, territorial integrity, Article 5, UN Charter, Budapest Memorandum, ceasefire negotiations, strategic stability, inclusive diplomacy.

Model Answer

Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has highlighted the tensions between state sovereignty, collective security and competing geopolitical interests. Recent negotiations have also raised concerns about whether European security arrangements can be discussed without the participation of affected European states.

Competing Security Concerns

1. **Russia's perspective:** Moscow seeks restrictions on NATO's military presence and influence near its borders, arguing that its security concerns have been inadequately addressed.

2. **Ukraine's perspective:** Kyiv regards territorial integrity, political independence and freedom to choose its security partnerships as fundamental sovereign rights.
3. **NATO's perspective:** The alliance emphasises collective defence under Article 5 and the right of sovereign states to determine their security arrangements.

Implications for European Security

- **Erosion of trust:** The conflict has weakened confidence in existing arms-control and security mechanisms.
- **Alliance cohesion:** Unilateral negotiations may create divisions among NATO members and European partners.
- **International law:** Territorial claims cannot override the principles of sovereignty and non-aggression under the UN Charter.
- **Global consequences:** Prolonged instability affects energy markets, food security and international strategic stability.

Way Forward

A sustainable settlement requires a verifiable ceasefire, meaningful participation of Ukraine and European stakeholders, respect for international law, credible security assurances and renewed arms-control dialogue.

Conclusion

European security cannot be achieved through imposed spheres of influence or exclusionary negotiations. A durable peace must reconcile legitimate security concerns with sovereignty, territorial integrity and an inclusive regional security framework.

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