International Relations · GS - II

Examine the implications of unilateral cross-border surveillance operations for state sovereignty and international relations.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 24/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Sovereign equality, territorial integrity, airspace sovereignty, non-intervention, counterterrorism cooperation, bilateral trust

Model Answer

Introduction

Technological advancements have expanded the ability of states to conduct surveillance beyond their borders. However, unilateral cross-border surveillance operations can create tensions between national security objectives and the sovereignty of other states.

Implications for International Relations

1. **Violation of territorial sovereignty:** Under Article 1 of the Chicago Convention, states exercise complete and exclusive sovereignty over their airspace. Unauthorised foreign aerial surveillance may raise serious sovereignty concerns.

2. **Non-intervention principle:** Unilateral security operations can raise questions under the principle of non-intervention, particularly when they involve coercive interference in another state's domestic affairs.

3. **Diplomatic tensions:** Operations conducted without adequate communication or consent can weaken bilateral trust and create disputes between neighbouring countries.

4. **Counterterrorism and organised crime:** Cross-border surveillance can provide intelligence against drug trafficking, terrorism and transnational criminal networks. However, security objectives do not automatically justify violating another state's sovereignty.

5. **Precedent for unilateral action:** Normalising unauthorised operations may encourage other states to undertake similar activities, weakening international legal norms.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen intelligence-sharing arrangements and joint security mechanisms.
2. Establish clear protocols for cross-border surveillance and operational consent.
3. Use bilateral agreements and multilateral cooperation to address transnational criminal threats.
4. Ensure that security operations comply with international law and respect territorial sovereignty.

Conclusion

Transnational security threats require coordinated responses, but unilateral action cannot replace international cooperation. Respect for sovereignty and established legal frameworks is essential for sustainable security and diplomatic stability.

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