Defence & Security · GS - III

Critically analyse how the convergence of ballistic missile capabilities and nuclear proliferation concerns can destabilise regional security in West Asia.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 27/11/2026	GS - III	Defence & Security

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Ballistic missiles, nuclear proliferation, deterrence, arms race, strategic stability, missile defence, regional security, arms control

Model Answer

The combination of expanding missile capabilities and nuclear proliferation concerns creates a complex security challenge in West Asia. Even without confirmed nuclear weapon deployment, advances in delivery systems can intensify threat perceptions and strategic competition.

How strategic instability emerges

1. **Extended strike capability:** Longer-range ballistic missiles expand the geographical reach of a state's military capabilities, potentially exposing distant adversaries and increasing their security concerns.
2. **Nuclear delivery concerns:** Improvements in missile range, payload capacity and accuracy can increase apprehensions about the potential delivery of weapons of mass destruction.
3. **Arms race dynamics:** Rival states may respond through missile development, air defence acquisitions and military partnerships, generating a security dilemma in which defensive measures are perceived as offensive threats.

4. **Crisis escalation:** Shorter warning times and fears of pre-emptive attacks can encourage rapid military responses, increasing the possibility of miscalculation.

Why deterrence alone is insufficient

Deterrence may discourage direct aggression, but it cannot eliminate accidental escalation, intelligence failures or proxy conflicts. Missile interception systems also have operational limitations and cannot guarantee complete protection.

Implications for India

India has significant energy, trade and diaspora interests in West Asia. Regional escalation could disrupt maritime routes, increase energy prices, threaten Indian nationals and complicate diplomatic relations with competing regional powers.

Strategic approach

India should support diplomatic engagement, nuclear non-proliferation, confidence-building measures, regional dialogue and restraint in missile development. The International Atomic Energy Agency's verification role remains important in addressing nuclear-related concerns.

Ultimately, sustainable regional security requires credible deterrence combined with arms control, verification and diplomatic mechanisms that reduce mutual threat perceptions.

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