Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

“The will to power exists, but it can be tamed and be guided by rationality and principles of moral duty.” Examine this statement in the context of international relations.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2020	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

National interest, power politics, rational diplomacy, international law, moral responsibility, peaceful cooperation, collective security, humanitarian intervention, ethical leadership

Model Answer

Introduction

The pursuit of power is a persistent feature of international relations. However, rationality, ethical principles and moral duties can restrain its destructive tendencies and align national interest with global stability.

The will to power in international relations

- States seek military strength, economic influence, strategic resources and regional dominance to protect their interests.
- Unrestrained power politics can produce arms races, coercion, proxy wars and violations of sovereignty.

How rationality and moral duty can tame power

- **Diplomacy and dialogue:** Negotiations and confidence-building measures can resolve disputes without war.

- **International law:** The UN Charter and international treaties establish norms governing the use of force and state conduct.
- **Collective security:** Multilateral institutions enable states to address threats through cooperation rather than unilateral domination.
- **Humanitarian responsibility:** Protection of civilians and respect for human rights place moral limits on strategic calculations.
- **Economic interdependence:** Trade and cooperation increase the costs of conflict and encourage peaceful engagement.

Examples

India's advocacy of peaceful coexistence, participation in UN peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance during crises illustrate attempts to combine national interests with wider responsibilities. However, geopolitical rivalries and selective adherence to international norms reveal continuing limitations.

Conclusion

Power remains necessary for national security, but its legitimate exercise requires restraint. Rational diplomacy, international law and moral responsibility can transform power from an instrument of domination into a means of peace and collective progress.

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