



## WEST ASIA CONFLICT - GS II MAINS

Q. The conflicts in West Asia have deep historical roots and involve multiple stakeholders with divergent objectives. Discuss (10 marks, 150 words)

**News:** *Decoding the widening conflict in West Asia / In Focus podcast*

### What's in the news?

- According to the report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, West Asia stands out as one of the most heavily militarized regions worldwide, with four of the top 10 arms importers situated in this area.

### Historical Backdrop of West Asian Conflict:

#### 1. Ottoman Empire's Influence:

- Western Asia was predominantly under the control of the Ottoman Empire from the 14th century AD until the early 20th century, managing a diverse population through an efficient administrative system.

#### 2. Post-World War I Developments:

- Following World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the victorious Allied powers, primarily Britain and France, divided the region, disregarding local sentiments and promises made during the war.

#### 3. Sykes-Picot Agreement:

- The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement divided Ottoman territories into British and French spheres of influence, disregarding local aspirations and contributing to regional tensions.

#### 4. Balfour Declaration:

- Issued by the British government in 1917, the Balfour Declaration expressed support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, igniting long-lasting conflicts in the region.

#### 5. Creation of Israel:

- In 1948, Israel declared independence, leading to a war with neighboring Arab states and significant territorial changes.

#### 6. 1979 Revolution:

- The establishment of a religious state in Iran after the Islamic Revolution shifted Iran's stance towards Israel, labeling it as an occupier of Palestinian land.

#### 7. Shadow War after 1979:

- Tensions between Israel and Iran escalated, leading to indirect confrontations and proxy conflicts, including cyberattacks and support for militant groups.



## Key Players and their Objectives:

### 1. Israel:

- Aims to ensure its security, dismantle threats, and neutralize militant groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

### 2. Hamas:

- Seeks to challenge Israeli policies and actions in Gaza and the West Bank, advocating for Palestinian rights.

### 3. Iran:

- Supports anti-Israel groups and aims to extend its influence in the region while opposing U.S. and Israeli interests.

### 4. Hezbollah and Other Militias:

- Backed by Iran, these groups engage in conflicts against Israel and support Palestinian causes.

### 5. United States:

- Supports Israel and seeks to maintain regional stability, protect its interests, and uphold the U.S.-led order.

### 6. Other Regional Actors:

- Countries like Pakistan have strategic interests influenced by religious, political, and regional dynamics.

## Geopolitical Impact of Conflicts:

### 1. Humanitarian Crisis:

- Continued conflicts risk civilian casualties and worsen humanitarian conditions, especially in Gaza.

### 2. Regional Instability:

- Prolonged conflicts destabilize West Asia, affecting neighboring countries and prompting further violence.

### 3. Global Economic Impact:

- Disruptions in shipping routes and oil supply chains have global economic repercussions.

### 4. Spread of Extremism:

- Conflict fuels radicalization and extremism, exacerbating regional instability.

### 5. International Relations:

- Diplomatic tensions strain relations among global powers and hinder efforts for peace.



## Proposed Approaches to Address the Conflict:

### 1. Negotiations and Two-State Solution:

- Advocacy for a negotiated two-state solution to establish peace between Israel and Palestine.

### 2. Ceasefire and Humanitarian Assistance:

- Immediate ceasefires and aid provision to alleviate suffering and create a conducive environment for diplomacy.

### 3. International Mediation:

- Involvement of neutral international actors to facilitate peace talks and negotiations.

### 4. Addressing Core Issues:

- Resolution of root causes such as land disputes and refugee rights to foster long-term stability.

### 5. People-to-People Initiatives:

- Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians at grassroots levels.

### 6. Human Rights and International Law:

- Ensuring respect for humanitarian law and holding violators accountable for their actions.

### 7. Regional Cooperation:

- Involving neighboring countries and regional actors in peace efforts for a more stable environment.

### 8. Economic Development:

- Supporting economic growth to improve living conditions and create opportunities for both sides.

### 9. Security Measures:

- Implementing measures to ensure security for both Israelis and Palestinians, possibly involving international peacekeeping forces.

### 10. Educational Initiatives:

- Promoting education and awareness to foster understanding and tolerance between the two sides.

The conflicts in West Asia have deep historical roots and involve multiple stakeholders with divergent objectives. Addressing these conflicts requires a comprehensive approach involving diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and efforts to resolve underlying issues.