

Topic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

North Korea Crisis

1) Introduction

- Tensions over North Korea's weapons programme have risen in recent months.
- The risk of such weapons being used was "greater today than during the Cold War".

2) Hwasong-15 missile

- North Korea's new Hwasong-15 missile puts the United States, its principal adversary, within striking distance.
- It is nuclear capable intercontinental ballistic missile, with range of Thirteen thousand kilometres. This covers all of earth's continents except South America and Antarctica.
- It is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and reaching the whole of continental United States.
- It indicates the progress made by North Korea in developing Weapons of Mass Destruction.

3) Strategy of North Korea

- North Korea has gone to a point of no return.
- Lessons from the tragic end of Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qadhafi would disincentivise North Korean Supreme leader Kim Jong-un to give up his weapons.
- His policy is premised on the classical military strategy of escalating to de-escalate
- That means to initially escalate tensions to unacceptable levels and later ask for several concessions
- Being recognised as a nuclear weapon capable state would be the foremost objective
- Survival of his regime and an eventual removal of sanctions would be the natural consequences of such recognition.

4) China's Stance

- China is worried about a lethal nuclear fallout in its neighbourhood and the potential rush of North Korean refugees into its territory
- China does not want a reunified Korea, which will undercut its rising regional predominance.
- China does not want a regime collapse, because of strategic reasons.
- China is not happy with the US decision to accelerate deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system.

5) Worry for Japan and South Korea

- Japan and South Korea are the real victims in this game of great power
- These two countries are seen as arch-rivals by Pyongyang, and they are located in the world's most dangerous neighbourhood
- What is complicating even more is the shaking of extended deterrence commitments of U.S. President Donald Trump's "America First" policy.

6) Systemic crisis

- The crisis in the Korean peninsula reflects worrying disorder in the contemporary international system.
- It is the failure of international diplomacy.

- It is a clear message that isolating states that misbehave does not solve the conflicts rather it can further complicate existing crises.
- The ability of the great powers to compromise and reach a workable consensus to deal with global crises seems to have considerably reduced especially with the arrival of Mr. Trump
- The current crisis is further intensified by the deal-breaking tendencies of Mr. Trump like in Iran nuclear deal.
- No progress in the disarmament commitments of nuclear weapon states has eroded the faith of the nuclear have-nots in the global nuclear order.
- Such erosion of global order has contributed to the North Korean crisis.

7) India's Role

- India has had diplomatic relations with North Korea since the seventies
- India is also not under any form of threat from the regime.
- India should not directly involve in the negotiations.
- It could play the role of a pathfinder, seeking common ground and enhancing trust and understanding between opposing parties.
- Such an action would enhance India's reputation within the comity of nations, especially as India seeks a permanent membership of the UNSC.

8) Way Forward

- International sanctions and the use of force against North Korea will not yield the desired results.
- A comprehensive, sustained and diplomatic solution will work
- According de facto "recognition" to North Korea's nuclear weapons.
- Involving the regional powers including China and South Korea to reach out to Kim
- Multilateral engagement would also prevent anyone from engaging in underhand dealings with Pyongyang.
- Reviving the dormant Six Party Talks at the earliest.
- US must provide assurance relating to regime acceptance and gradual normalisation of relations.
- The regime needs to be assured by the west that it would not seek a regime change and provide economic support.