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Q8

**Technology as the silent factor in international relations.**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

**Core demand of the question**

- **Stake:** technology shapes IR without always appearing in the communicate
- **One stand:** chips, cables, data, vaccines, and platforms are quiet power - until a cut is loud
- Move through history, economy, security, norms. Keep one honest counter
- Close on a republic that can make and govern tech, not only buy it

**Revision summary**

Not a full essay - a map.

- **Open with a cut cable and a blinking exchange. Stand:** quiet infrastructure of power.
- **Headings:** telegraph-to-bomb, sanctions/stock, cyber-space, standards, then one counter.

Earn one historical peg. Name DPI or a patent debate.

Close on making plus governing.

**Note**

This is a map, not the full 1,000-1,200 word essay.

**Anecdote**

A submarine cable is cut and a stock exchange blinks. No shot was fired. A meeting still issues a paragraph on 'shared values'. The values travelled on that cable. Technology is the silent factor - silent until it is not.

**One stand**

- **IR textbooks list armies and treaties. Under them:** standards, patents, a payment rail, a satellite, a vaccine recipe. Write the silence, then the moment it speaks.

**Heading map****What the line is asking**

- **Silent:** not on the first page; works as infrastructure of power.
- **Factor:** it changes who can coerce, who can see, who can eat.
- **Not techno-utopia:** a factor among others (oil still spills).

**History**

- Steam, the telegraph, the bomb. Silence that ended an age.
- Non-alignment also had a radio.

**Economy**

- Supply chains, rare earths, a payment system shut-off as a sanction.
- **Peg:** digital public infrastructure as a diplomatic export; also a dependency if the stack is foreign.

## Security

- Cyber, space, a dual-use drone. A 'civilian' app as a map.
- **Nuclear:** the loudest silent factor.

## Norms

- Who writes the standard (a 5G argument, a data localisation fight).
- **WHO, a patent waiver debate:** tech as ethics in IR.

## The counter

A cable does not abolish a border or a hunger. Diplomacy, a navy, a grain still decide. Tech-determinism is another silence - the kind that forgets the last person. And 'silent' can be a cover for an undeclared war. Name it.

## Last paragraph

- **Close:** hear the cable in the communique. Build enough to not only be a customer. Expand - this is only the map.

## Facts & figures

### McLuhan cousin

The medium as message - one nod, then the cable, not a media-studies paper.

### Kautilya

Power as more than the army - treasure, counsel, the silent means.

### DPI / UPI

A stack that can travel as diplomacy - and still needs data governance.

### Sanctions / SWIFT-like cuts

A payment rail as a weapon that never says 'war' in the first line.

### Space / cyber

Silent theatres - until a satellite or a hospital blinks.

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