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China Questions India's Agni V Missile Project

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Why in News

Recently, **China has cited a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution to question India's missile programme** amid reports of an upcoming test for the **Agni-V** intercontinental ballistic missile.

UNSC Resolution 1172 was issued after India's 1998 nuclear tests.

Key Points

- **About Agni V Missiles:**

- Agni-V is the **most advanced surface-to-surface indigenously built ballistic missile**.
- It is a **three-stage, solid fuelled, 17-metre tall missile**, and is capable of **carrying a nuclear warhead of about 1.5 tonnes**.
- Agni-V is a **fire and forget missile**, which once fired cannot be stopped, except by an interceptor missile.
- It has been developed under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
 - IGMDP was **conceived by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** to enable India attain self-sufficiency in the field of missile technology. It was approved by the Government of India in 1983 and completed in March 2012.
 - The **5 missiles (P-A-T-N-A)** developed under this program: **Prithvi, Agni, Trishul, Nag, Akash**.
- **Agni Class of Missiles:**
 - They are the **mainstay of India's nuclear launch capability**.
 - **Range:**
 - Agni I: Range of 700-800 km.
 - Agni II: Range more than 2000 km.
 - Agni III: Range of more than 2,500 Km
 - Agni IV: Range is more than 3,500 km and can fire from a road mobile launcher.
 - Agni-V: The longest of the Agni series, an **Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)** with a range of over 5,000 km.
 - **Agni-P (Prime):** It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km. It will **replace the Agni I missile**.
- The missile has been successfully tested five times and is in the process of induction into the Army.
- Very few countries, including the US, China, Russia, France and North Korea, have InterContinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM).

ICBM is a **land-based, nuclear-armed ballistic missile** with a range of more than 5,600 km.

- **About UNSC resolution 1172:**

The resolution, in the aftermath of the **1998 nuclear tests** that calls upon India and Pakistan immediately:

- To stop their nuclear weapon development programmes,
- To refrain from weaponization or from the deployment of nuclear weapons,
- To cease development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons and any further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons,
- To confirm their policies not to export equipment, materials or technology that could contribute to weapons of mass destruction or missiles capable of delivering.

- **Issues in Chinese Claims:**

- Agni V has received wide attention in the Chinese press with focus on the detail that the 5,000 km-range nuclear-capable missile **would bring many cities in China within range.**
- While citing the resolution regarding India's missile programme, China has, in contrast, been **aiding the development of Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes.**
 - China has been providing **enriched uranium and even technology** for nuclear-capable missiles.
- Further, in 2018, **China had sold Pakistan a tracking system** to speed up development of multi-warhead missiles.

Way Forward

- India needs to be far more active in insisting that **a comprehensive nuclear dialogue with China is essential** for strategic stability across Asia.
- **China will be hesitant to enter into such a dialogue**, as it wishes to not formally accord recognition to India's nuclear weapons status, even as it peddles nuclear weapons and ballistic missile designs and materials to Pakistan. These transfers to Pakistan are **in total disregard of China's responsibilities under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.**
- **India has been far too defensive and avoided exposing the Sino-Pakistan nuclear/missile nexus** in important world capitals. Within Asia, Chinese arrogance would need far closer consultations and **dialogue with countries such as Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia.**

Source: TH