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At UNGA, India Calls for Early Adoption of CCIT

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External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj reiterated India's demand for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the 73rd session of UN General Assembly.

About CCIT

- In 1996, with the objective of providing a comprehensible legal framework to counter terrorism, India proposed to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) the adoption of the "Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism" (CCIT).
- India, which has been a victim of cross-border terrorism, took cognizance of the threat it poses to international peace and security long before the major world powers.
- CCIT included the following major objectives:
 - To have a universal definition of terrorism that all 193-members of the UNGA will adopt into their own criminal law.
 - To ban all terror groups and shut down terror camps.
 - To prosecute all terrorists under special laws.
 - To make cross-border terrorism an extraditable offense worldwide.
- Definition of terrorism:
 - According to this convention, Any person who commits an offense, with the purpose of the conduct is to intimidate a population or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act, which causes:
 - - Death or serious bodily injury to any person; or
 - Serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment; or
 - Damage to property, places, facilities, or systems resulting in or likely to result in a major economic loss,

Issues surrounding CCIT

- The conclusion and ratification of the CCIT remains deadlocked due to opposition from three main blocs –

- **The US**
 - The US wanted the draft to exclude acts committed by military forces of states during peacetime.
 - The U.S. has been worried about the application of the CCIT to its own military forces especially with regard to interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- **The Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC)**
 - OIC wants exclusion of national liberation movements, especially in the context of Israel-Palestinian conflict.
 - It was argued that there is a need to distinguish acts of terrorism from movements for self-determination so that legitimate movements are not labeled as criminal acts of terrorism.
- **The Latin American countries.**
 - Latin American countries wanted the draft to cover “state terrorism” and also the violation of International Human Rights laws by states.
- Currently, the negotiations of the Comprehensive Terrorism Convention are deadlocked because of differences over the definition of terrorism.
- This definition itself is not controversial. The deadlock is because of issue that whether such definition would be **applicable to the armed forces of a state** and to **Self-determination movements**.

Conclusion

To create an effective mechanism to counter terrorism it is necessary that countries should agree upon a definition of terrorism. Countries should not look from the prism of their self-interest rather look into the issue through a broader perspective of solving the problem of global terrorism.