

India Assumes Wassenaar Arrangement Chairmanship

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Topic- International Organisations [GS Paper-2]

Context- India assumed Chairmanship of Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) Plenary starting from January 1, 2023 and India will hold the Chairmanship for one year.

Key Highlights

- Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) is a voluntary export control regime formally established in July 1996.
- Such a name comes from Wassenaar, a suburb of The Hague, where the agreement to start such a multilateral cooperation was reached in 1995.
- WA is an elite club of countries that subscribe to arms export controls, similar to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Australia Group (AG) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Objective:

- The Wassenaar Arrangement monitors transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies through regular exchanges of information among its members.

Aim:

- Its aim is to promote “greater responsibility” among its members in exports of

weapons and dual-use goods and to prevent “destabilizing accumulations.”

Two Control Lists:

- In order to promote transparency, Wassenaar calls on states to make a series of voluntary information exchanges and notifications on their export activities related to weapons and items appearing on the arrangement’s two control lists; i.e.
 - The Munitions List (Conventional Weapons)
 - The Dual-Use Goods and Technologies List

Structure:

- Its secretariat is located in Austria’s capital Vienna.
- The plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement is the main decision-making body which operates on consensus.

Membership:

- The Arrangement has 42-members in total including France, Germany, Japan, Russia, the UK and the USA.
- The European Union and NATO are also its member states.
- India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017 as the 42nd participating state of it.

Significance of the Wassenaar Arrangement

- The Wassenaar Arrangement contributes to regional and international security and stability.
- It promotes transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies
- It also complements and reinforces the export control regimes for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems.
- The WA is not particularly directed against any state or group of states.
- It mainly uses export controls as a means to combat terrorism.

Significance of India’s Chairmanship of WA

- **Democratising Access to Processes & Technologies:**
 - India is expected to play a significant role in democratising access to processes and technologies which are likely to play a critical role for the emerging space and defence manufacturers in the country.
- **Benefits for India’s Defence Sector:**
 - Membership of the Arrangement has bolstered India’s efforts to gain access to sensitive goods and technologies from leading players in the West.
 - Now, Chairmanship is of significance for India as the recent spurt in activity and investments in defence and space sector.
- **Impetus to India’s Global Credibility:**
 - It will help establish India as a responsible stakeholder in the global non-

proliferation architecture.

Slavkov Format

- The format is also known as “North-Trilateral”, “Austerlitz format”, or “Slavkov trilateral”
- It is cooperation between three Central European Nations i.e. Czech Republic, Austria and Slovakia.

Dual-use

- This refers to the ability of a good or technology to be used for multiple purposes – usually peaceful and military.

Way Ahead

- India should work in close cooperation with other members in order to further the Wassenaar Arrangement goal of contributing to regional and international security and stability.
- India’s focus also needs to be on discussing and resolving global and regional issues.