

NATIONAL INTEREST AND FOREIGN POLICY: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

"The study of foreign policies is an important key to the rational explanation of international behaviour. It is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of the other states and also for adjusting their own activities to the international relations. It involves both decisions and actions because these decisions and actions involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others".

Keywords: Diplomacy, Political, National Interest, Economic Development, Ideology etc.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is one of the most important aspects of the study of the international relations. We cannot understand interstate relations without understanding foreign policies of states. It involves the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behaviour pattern of a state while negotiating with other state to protect its vital interest ¹

In other words, in international relations all states have to adopt some kind of foreign policy and all states have some kind of relations among themselves, however distant one state may be from another. Therefore, the government have to choose a certain course of action and refrain from certain others. In international relations every government has to behave in a particular manner in relation to governments of other states. So the study of this behaviour is, called the content of foreign policy because the behaviour of one state affects the behaviour of other state. Therefore, every state tries to minimize the favorable effect of the action of other states.²

1. P.Chandra, International Politics (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1985) p.73.

2. Mahendra Kumar, Theoretical Aspects of International Politics (Agra : Shiva Lai Agarwal and Company, 1984), p.321.

foreign policies confer a sense of direction to a state and also provide adequate instruments for the convenient journey to this direction. It creates a sense of as well as a confidence to achieve that purpose. In this way, it acts as an indispensable equipment of every state in world affairs and a state without a w.gn policy will be just like a ship without rudder. It will drift aimlessly without direction by every storm and sweep of events.³

Foreign policy is a strategy used by governments to guide their action in the emotional arena. It is the spell out objectives state leaders have decided to pursue in a given relationship or situations as well as the general means by which they intend to pursue those objectives. However, day to day decisions made by various arms of government are guided by the goal of implementing foreign policies and the study of foreign policy includes understanding the various states substantive policies.⁴

Padelford and Lincoln observed that "Foreign policy is the key element in the process which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into concrete courses of action to attain those objectives and preserve its interests"⁵ **George Modelski** define it, "the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment"⁶ **Charles Burton Marshall** describe it "The foreign policy of a state takes form in the course of action undertaken by authority of the state and intend to affect situations beyond the span of its jurisdiction."⁷

Therefore, foreign policy is the stuff of international relations. It is concerned with the policies that state declare, the decision taken within governmental circles, the actions taken by governments and the consequences of the behaviour of governments and their official

3. Raghubir Chakravarti, International Relations, (Calcutta, The World Press Private Ltd, 1970) p.227-228.

4. Joshau S. Goldstein, International Relations (New Delhi: Pearson Education, 2005), p. 169. Ragubir Chakravati, No: 3, p. 228.

5. Ragubir Chakravanti, No : 3, p. 228.

⁶.Mahendra Kumar, No:2, p. 321.

⁷. L.N. Srivastva, International Relations, (New Delhi: SBD Publishers Distribution, 1994), p. 2.6.

representatives. It is the output of the state into the global system and also the outcome of whatever foreign policy recess exists within that state."⁸

Furthermore, Diplomacy and foreign policy are wheels with which the process of international politics operates. The primary parties of the international relations are the states. All states have to adopts some kind of foreign policy and -Iso diplomacy to execute that policy. All states have some kind of relations among themselves, however distant one state may be from another.⁹

DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy of a state is determined by a number of factors. These factors determine the framework of foreign policy in which policy choices are to be made and operated. These factors are common to all countries in determining their foreign policy. There are some internal and external factors, which influence a country's foreign policy. These factors are of great significance and the foreign policy of a state can never be satisfactorily explained by any simple determinant.

The foreign policy of a country is compounded out of many factors and forces such as its geographic strategic situation, population potential, economic resources, ideological environment, military capacity, public opinion, national interest, situational factors (both external and internal), Image of the decision making elite, and economic development etc.¹⁰

OBJECTIVE OF FOREIGN POLICY

It is very difficult to identify objectives of foreign policy. They are very important in foreign policy process. They are also based on a vague notion of national interest Every state have different and changing foreign policy orientations and role orientations. Along with these go

⁸. Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, World Politics: The Menu for Choice (Bombay: Vakils feffer, and Simon Ltd, 1985) p. 191.

⁹. S.S. Bindra, Determinants of Pakistan's Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1988), p. 7

¹⁰. P. Chandra, No. 1, p. 76.

evolving objectives, there is also debate over how these objectives are pursued. A foreign policy's objective in economic matters and also political matters etc.¹¹

There are three broad categories of objectives, which are following:-

1. Fundamental or Core objectives

These are those objectives, to which Governments commit their very existence and which must be achieved at all times. These are related to survival of the state and are basic principles to be accepted without question because state are seeking to protect their sovereignty, autonomy, territory and the lives and well being of their people. Therefore, it depends on the international environment and the capabilities of the state.¹²

It includes:-

a) Survival

The first of the most important objective of foreign policy is survival. It is composed of two parts. First, protecting the lives of a majority of the population and second is defending the country's sovereignty or political independence. These are the foremost aims of any state government. Every country try to act as 13 to maximize their chance for survival in the world.¹³

b) Territorial integrity

It is often considered a matter of survival, if a state is less its entire territory of course, ceases even to be a state. The policy maker must assume that parties will consider preservation of their home territory to be a core objective and will fight to protect it.¹⁴

c) Security

¹¹. Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, No. 8. p. 197-198.

¹². Ibid,p.198.

¹³. Robert L. Wendzal, International Relations : A Policy-Maker Focus, (New Delhi : John Wilay, 1977) p.44. ibid., p.44-45.

¹⁴. Ibid,p.44-45.

The third objective is security. Every nation try to establish relations with others for protecting their security. The nature of international political system is

Such that in which existence of any state is never certain. Therefore, without this foreign policy can't work successfully.¹⁵

2. Middle-range objectives

The second type of objectives are middle range objectives. These are less important and less immediate to decision makers and require more co-operation from other states. There are many middle range objectives including such broad concerns as economic development and social welfare, which often requires out side aid of some sort.¹⁶

For the policy maker, however it is useful to divide them into political, material and ideological objectives:-

a) Political Objectives

These are those objectives, which would be the acquisition of additional territory or the retention, of that previously conquered. It deals primarily with capability and security relationship.

b) Material Objectives

These are also middle range objectives, includes anything affecting economic growth and development.

c) Ideological Objectives

These are those objectives, which may include the spreading of a particular system of beliefs.¹⁷

¹⁵. Charles O. Lerche and Jr. Abdul A. Said, Concept of International Politics, 2nd edition (New Delhi : Prentice Hall of India Private limited, 1970) p.28.

¹⁶. Bruce Russett and Hamay starr, No. 8 p. 198.

¹⁷. Robert Wendzal, No. 13, p.46-47.

3. Specific Immediate Objectives or long range objectives

These are of least immediacy to decision makers, which include “those plans, dreams and visions concerning the ultimate political or ideological organizations of the international system rules governing relations in that system and the role of specific nation with it”. Therefore, long-range objectives are those plans, dreams and vision concerning the ultimate political or ideological Organization of the international system, rules governing relations in that system rules and the role of specific nation within it.¹⁸

NATIONAL INTEREST AND FOREIGN POLICY:

National interest is an analytic tool to describe, explain or evaluate the sources or the adequacy of a nation’s foreign policy. It is employed to justifying, denouncing or proposing policies. In simple words, it refers to what is best for a national society and also includes what is best for a nation in foreign affairs. Therefore, it enjoys considerable favour as a basis for action and has won a prominent place in the dialogue of public affairs.¹⁹

It is the key concept in foreign policy, and the general and continuing ends for which the nation acts. It is also characterized by its non-specific nature, by a degree of continuity and by its connection with political action. It can describe the aspiration of the state. National interest can be used operationally in application to actual policies and programmes. The recurrent controversies on foreign policy often stem from these ambiguities and not only from the different ideas about what national interest may indicate.²⁰

It is the first step in formulating a foreign policy. Before the concept may actually serve as a guide to action the statesman must grapple with a classical problem like reconciliation of ends and means. The national interest and national goals are postulated a priori. Before

¹⁸. Bruce Russett and Hamay starr, No. 8 p. 198.

¹⁹. James N. Rosenau, *The Scientific Study Foreign Policy: Revised and Enlarged edition* (New York: Nichols Publishing Company, 1980), p.283.

²⁰. Joseph Frankel, *International Relations*, 2nd edition (London : Oxford University Press, 1969), p.36.

making foreign policy, the state man must somehow mesh the facts of his problem including whatever means he has at his disposal, with the conceptual system formed by his set of ends. One of is the most difficult problem, which is faced by policy maker is determination of the most appropriate relationship between abstract ends and concrete means.²¹

*"The Idea of national interest may refer to some ideal set of purposes which nation... should seek to realize in the conduct of its foreign relations. Wanting a better word\ we might call this a normative, civic concept of national interest....A second meaning of equal importance might be called descriptive. In this sense the national interest may be regarded as those purposes which the nation, through its leadership, appears to pursue persistently through time. When we speak of the national interest in this descriptive sense, we move out of the metaphysical into the realms of facts...It might similarly be said that the national interest is what foreign policy makers say it is. A third definition might make the meaning of national interest somewhat clearer. The American national interest has often been an arena for conflict among individuals and groups whose conceptions of it... have differed widely. Disagreement about policy and action may arise even among men who are essentially in agreement about the general aims of their country in the world. But policy disagreements are usually due to differences among policy-makers about conceptions both of what the United states is and what its role in world politics, even its mission should be."*²²

In international relations, there are different views on the nature of national interest. There may be difference of opinion of what the national interest of state is and requires in a particular situation. The concept of national interest and power are central on core values of the society which includes the welfare of the nation, the security of political beliefs, territorial integrity, self-preservation etc. These goals must be sought by specific policies and programmes, which seek to create and preserve a favourable international environment. So, the importance of national interest has been universally accepted. Today

²¹. Charles O. Lerche and Jr. Abdul A. Said, No. 15, p.26.

²². K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Frame Work For Analysis 2nd edition (New Jersey : Prentice hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, 1972) p. 130-131.

foreign ministers, military strategists and scholars discuss the vital interest of countries in way that suggested everyone understand precisely what they mean and will draw the correct conclusion. The study of international politics as well as the art of diplomacy suffers from wide-spread ambiguity about the meaning of national interest.²³

We are to locate some of the basic interests of nation state. These national

They may be describe as under

1. "Defence Interest"

The protection of the nation state and its citizens against the threat of physical violence directed from another state or organization extremely inspired threat to its system of government.

2. Economic Interests

The enhancement of the nation states economic well being in relation with other states.

3. World Order Interest

The maintenance of an international political and economic system in which the nation-state may feel secure and in which its citizen and commerce may operate peacefully outside its borders.

4. Ideological Interests

The protection and furtherance of a set of values that citizen of a nation state share and believe to be universally good"²⁴

INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS FOR THE PROMOTION OF NATIONAL INTEREST

Every nation wants to promotes its national interest through different means and strive to optimize its self-interest. Now we will examine those instruments which promote national interest.

²³. S.S Bindra, U.S Foreing Policy process, (New Delhi : Deep and Deep Publications, 2005)p.4-7

²⁴. Ibid., p.

1 Diplomacy

Diplomacy is essential instrument for promotion of national interest, which are mainly preservation of territorial integrity and sovereignty, economic prosperity and welfare of state.

The basic aim of diplomacy is to protection the interest of state. Morgenthau holds that there are four basic task of diplomacy:

1. "Diplomacy must determine its objective in the light of the power actually and potentially available for the pursuit of these objectives.
2. Diplomacy must assess the objectives of other nations and the power actually and potentially available for the pursuit of these objectives.
3. Diplomacy must determine to what extent these different objectives are compatible with each other.
4. Diplomacy must employ the means suited to the pursuit of its objectives like persuasion, compromise and threat of force. Therefore, the art of diplomacy consist in using the right means at the right time with the right emphasis.²⁵

2. Psychological and Political Warfare

Roland I. Perusse has defined that eighteen terms which have been associated with psychological warfare like cold war, war of ideas, struggle for the minds and wills of men, war for the minds of men, thought war, ideological warfare, nerve warfare, political warfare, international information, overseas information, campaign of truth, propaganda, international propaganda, propaganda warfare, war of words, indirect aggression, agitation and international communication.

Political warfare in general includes the means-short of war-which a state takes to weaken a particular enemy or enemies. "The persuasion of friendly diplomacy is not political warfare, neither is propaganda which does not seek to impair or limit another state's freedom of

²⁵. Dr. K. T. Varkey, Political Theory: A Global Perspective (Delhi : Indian Publishers Distributors, 2003), p.77-78.

action on the other hand, diplomacy or propaganda which has the intent to coerce must be regarded as political warfare. Economic measures must be so characterized when they are aimed at a particular state. Thus a given act may or may not be political warfare”²⁶

3 Economic methods

A state follow certain economic policies designed to promote its domestic welfare and pursuit of their national interest. Economic methods are in constant use in furtherance of national policy. In times of peace all state have objectives which must be pursued whenever possible, like raising the standard of living promoting foreign sales, expanding employment, conserving natural resources and improving health but at the time of war state may wish to conserve certain goods and to stockpile others, or it may seek to impede the war preparations of the threatening state or states. Economic methods on the other hand or non-violent in nature and they represent manipulations of a state’s economic policy in an effort to advance the national interest.²⁷

4 Imperialism and Colonialism

These have long been used as instruments for the promotion of national policy but the critics used quite another vocabulary such words as brutality, exploitation, misery, hatred and degradation. They observed that the struggle for empire led only to the urge to create greater and still greater empires and that the appetite of empire builders knew no limits. The subject is a timely one, for most of the western world and parts of the eastern are weighing the threat of communist imperialism and on the other hand the communist are still inveighing against western imperialism. However, the vast areas of Asia and Africa are charging most of their woes to the colonialism of the once great colonial powers and also called Neo-colonialism.²⁸

²⁶. Narman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins, International Relations: The World Community in Transition, 3rd edition (Calcutta, Scientific Book agency, 1970), p.124-125.

²⁷. Ibid.,p.132-133

²⁸. Ibid.,p.158.

5 War

War is also an instrument of national policy and promoting national interest. Therefore, the study of war differ in form from the study of other instrument of the promotion of national interest and national policy. We have already discuss diplomacy, political and psychological warfare, economic methods, they were concerned with the many techniques and devices available to state that care to use them but we not here concerned with such military considerations as strategy, tactics and logistics. In the extreme form these methods can take the shape of bombardment military operations and military occupation.²⁹

LIMITATIONS OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST:

We can't think about foreign policy without taking about national interest. It is most crucial concept in international relations. In the theory of international relations, we find different view on the nature of national interest but there are several limitations must be said about these basic national interests:

1. The first reason for this failure of concepts as an analytic tool is numerous. It is the ambiguous nature of the nation and difficulty of specifying whose interests it encompasses.
2. The second limitation is the elusiveness of criteria for determining the existence of interests and for tracing the presence in substantive policies.
3. Another factor is the absence of procedures for cumulating the interests once they have been identified. Therefore, this is in turn complicated by uncertainty as to whether the national interest has been fully identified once all the specific interests have been cumulated or whether they are not other, more generalized and values which render the national interest greater than the sum of its parts.³⁰

²⁹. Ibid.,p. 183.

³⁰. James N. Rosenau, No. 19, p.287.

4. National interest in the order in which they appear does not suggest any priority of one over another. Although it may be argued that unless a nation state can defend its territory and citizens even though a strong defence or in alliance with a major power or both none of other three interests are likely to matter much.
5. Lastly, a nation's ideology is also an important part of national interest. It is very important in determining how a nation acts to international issues. For example: The Charge made by critics of the U.S. foreign policy in the past 1945 period that the government supported dictators instead of democratic forces in various allied countries is evidence of one kind of ideological view held by many Americans.³¹

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Foreign Policy of a nation is shaped by its national interests. In today's world, it is not possible to live in isolation. Mutual relations, reciprocity is the core of international relation. For this reciprocity, foreign policies are necessary, so that nation-states can carry on their relation with each other through various means such as diplomacy, aid (to poor countries) etc. The countries like USA are also try to fulfill their national interest by invading other's territories, which can't be justified because of sovereign state system. The US is example of the extreme, where to a state can go for the protection of its national interests.

But other nations should not follow USA. Rather they should try to solve their differences through negotiations to with peaceful means. There are so many problems at international level such as terrorism, climate change, economic crisis (2008) etc, therefore, there is need that all countries leave-their differences & cooperate at international forum to solve these problems so that a better world can be established.

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³¹. S.S. Bindra, No. 23, p.7-8

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