

FOREIGN POLICY

INTRODUCTION

One of the important aspects of the study of International Relations and International Politics is foreign policy. It is the basis of all international relations. It is not possible to understand inter-state relations without understanding their foreign policies. Every nation has the right and responsibility to secure the aims, objectives and aspirations of its national interests in international relations. As no nation is completely self-sufficient and self-reliant, no nation can live without maintaining inter-state relations. Interdependence has been an indispensable fact of international relations. It is a fact that the behaviour of each nation has an effect on the behaviour of other nations. Every nation, keeping in view of its national interest, makes an effort to take utmost advantage of the actions of other nations. Therefore, every nation has to formulate and adopt a foreign policy to secure and serve the interest of its people and also to achieve the goals of her national interest in international relations and international politics. In this unit we shall discuss various dimensions associated with foreign policy in general.

MEANING OF FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy is one of the important aspects in the field of international relations. In this globalised world it is not possible for any state to live in isolation and without

maintaining inter-state relations. Therefore, to maintain such relations with other states of the world, a state has to formulate a foreign policy. In fact, inter-state relations can be understood by understanding their foreign policies. A nation's power also gets enhanced by foreign policy in the international community. In simple words, foreign policy is a course of action and inputs that a nation makes in order to influence behaviour of other states and to pursue its goals of national interest. It is a set of principles, decisions and means which a nation adopts to secure its goals in international relations. According to C. C. Rodee, Anderson and Christol, foreign policy implies "formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behaviour pattern of a state while negotiating with other states to protect or further its own interests".

Foreign policy gives a kind of direction to a state and also suggests adequate means to adopt for the easy journey of the direction. Padelford and Lincoln pointed out that foreign policy is the way through which a state decides "what course of actions it will generally pursue in world affairs within its limits of strength and realities of international environment". Foreign policy consists of two words 'foreign' which implies territorially sovereign units which exist beyond the legal boundaries of a particular state and 'policy' means guide to an action or a set of actions intended for the realisation the goals of an organisation. Foreign policy involves the strategies and tactics and commitments too which are taken for the fulfilment of a state's goals and interests. On the basis of

various definitions put forward by eminent scholars, it could be stated that foreign policy is a strategy devised by government to its actions in the international field. It involves the process of creating, making and implementing decisions and it is relational. Relational because foreign policy has the intention to influence the behaviour of other states in the international system. The foreign policy of nation includes– (i) a set of principle, policies and decisions adopted and followed by a nation globally, (ii) objectives and goals of national interest which are to be achieved, (iii) for conducting international relations broad principles and decisions, (iv) assessment of achievements and losses of the nation in terms of its goals of national interest, (v) means or nature of action to be taken to achieve the goals or objectives of national interest and (vi) policies, decisions and action- programmes for maintaining continuity or change in international relations.

DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

A particular nation's foreign policy is influenced by various factors.

Foreign policy is the product of number of factors. But according to circumstances the determinants vary in terms of its importance. Therefore, to lay down any general rule regarding the relative importance of each factor or determinant or a scale of priorities which the policy-makers take into account during the time of policy formulation is very difficult or it is impossible.

In general, the basic determinants of foreign policy can be broadly classified into three categories: (i) Internal factors, (ii) External factors and (iii) policy making factors. All these factors and its sub-divided factors are discussed in detail below:

Internal Determinants: The significant internal or domestic determinants of foreign policy are discussed below:

Geography: It is considered to be the most stable determinant which influences foreign policy of a nation. Geography includes the location, size, topography, state boundaries, climate, hydrography, population, natural resources, etc. of a nation. Geography has very significant contribution while formulating foreign policy. Size is the total landmass that a state has. It influences the psychological and operational environment within which policy makers and the public respond. Again large size of a state cannot be considered independent determinant, as state's power is increased by large area if it has the capacity to accommodate a large population and contains varied supply of natural resources. Then geostrategic location of the state i.e. position of a state in relation to other land bodies, and to other states is more important than the size of the state during foreign policy formulation. Climatic conditions of a state is another geographical feature that plays a crucial role in the determination of the state's foreign policy. Topography includes wind, rainfall, temperature, soil, mountains, rivers, valleys, etc. which also influences foreign policy decisions. Natural resources of a state also greatly affects foreign policy decisions. Possession of natural resources increases

bargaining capacity of a state internationally and helps in foreign policy choices. But it must be stated that effect of geography is of intricate nature and has lost much of its importance due to the recent development of science and technology.

History and Culture: History of a nation also has its influence on foreign policy making. In fact, political tradition of a nation is rooted in its history and culture. The basic foreign policy objectives is guided considerably by the historical and cultural traditions of the state. In the realm of external relations, a nation follows a course of action which is greatly influenced by the style and culture which the nation adopts from history. For example, many developing countries including India have strongly taken stance for anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-racism due to the bitter experiences of colonialism, imperialism and racialism. Then based on Buddhist past, India adopted the non-alignment policy and the principles of Panchsheel.

National Capacity: This is another strong determinant of foreign policy of a nation. It includes military strength, economic development and technological progress of the nation. The economic position of a nation in terms of GNP which enables a nation to understand its ability to utilise its natural and human resources, also helps a nation in foreign policy choices in turn. The highly developed countries in terms of economy and technology and military have the advantage in gaining desired objectives in their relations with economically and technologically weaker countries.

Developing countries due to their dependence on the developed countries for capital, technology and military research and development loses the power to formulate an independent foreign policy.

For example, economic power of USA has brought positive leverage while economic decline has brought negative factor in case former Soviet Union. Moreover, it is necessary for a foreign policy to compromise with its national capacity in order to succeed.

Public Opinion: It is another important internal factor which is not possible for the government of a state to ignore or go against it for long.

In a democratic state specially, the government cannot dare to ignore the importance of public opinion in both domestic and foreign policies.

Due to the great achievements like information technology, mass media, internet, telecommunications, public opinion has gained more importance in the world at present. Public opinion in case of foreign policy sets limitations on choices of policies and constraints in policy executions too. For example, American government was compelled to withdraw from Vietnam after 1968 under the pressure of public opinion. But in totalitarian or authoritarian states, public opinion hardly plays a role in policy making.

Ideology: Ideology means a set of beliefs or interrelated ideas of a group of people about power distribution in the society,

history, proper functioning of government, economies and particular way of life. While conducting foreign policy of states, ideology often plays a crucial role. To achieve national interest and justification of policies, many times ideological principles are used by states or groups of states. Sometimes ideology plays the role of a source of international conflict too. For example, Cold War between USA and Soviet Union occurred due to ideological difference.

Social and Political Structures: The formulation of foreign policy of a state is influenced to a great extent by the nature of political system and the ruling elite. For example, foreign policy of a democratic state would be different from the foreign policy of a authoritarian state. Again when there is a sudden change in the government of a state, it leads to changes in the course of foreign policy of the state too. For instance, in India with the changes of government from Congress led UPA to BJP led NDA government there have been changes in foreign policy stances.

Like political structure, social factors are equally important factors for the formulation of foreign policy. A peaceful strong society provides for a strong foreign policy than a society with tensions and with unequal distribution of wealth. Cooperation is also essential for a foreign policy of a state.

National interest: It is the key determining factor of foreign policy of any state. It is of supreme importance while formulating foreign policy. Behaviour of states in the

international field is guided by national interest to a great extent.

External Factors: External environment is also very necessary while formulating foreign policy of a state. International laws, treaties, agreements, pacts, international and regional organisations considerably influences and also constraints the making of foreign policies of states. The external factors includes three elements– (a) world organisation, (b) world public opinion, and (c) foreign policies of other states.

a) World organisations like UNO and other international institutions aim at maintaining world peace and order and International Law. UNO's activities and its agencies, IMF, World Bank and also regional organisations like SAARC, ASEAN, APEC, etc. also have profound influence on the foreign policy formulation of states.

b) Like domestic public opinion, world public opinion has a strong influence on foreign policy making. No nation can dare to go against the world public opinion or challenge it. World public opinion has profound impact on various issues such as human rights, environment, war, peace, etc. and this is mainly due to increasing consciousness among people.

c) While formulating a foreign policy, the policy makers must take into consideration the behaviour of other states of the international system and also their foreign policies. Foreign

policy of a state undoubtedly has the main objective of fulfilling its national interest, but it must also give importance to the reaction of other states which matters a lot particularly of friendly states. It should be kept in mind by the policy makers while formulating foreign policy that the foreign policy objectives should not create hostility with other states.

Role of Policy-makers: Another major determining factor of foreign policy is the attitude of the decision and policy makers. Foreign policy is based significantly on the leadership qualities as it determines the strength and direction of foreign policy of a state. Foreign policy is very strongly related to the psychological traits, the personality and predisposition of the leaders. In the formulation of foreign policy, there is a major role played by the ruling elite and the decision makers act in accordance with their perception of reality. The policy makers take due note of the relevant values and relevant sector of the environment, they determine the objectives of the foreign policy. The decision makers interpret the national interest and also perceive the external environment while formulating foreign policy. The impact of the views and personalities of the ruling elites on foreign policy formulation is quite natural. Foreign policy is however not the result of the role played by a few leaders only, it also involves the interplay of other various determinants and pressures of bureaucracy.

Conclusion

Thus, on the basis of the above discussion on the determinants of foreign policy it can be concluded that it is the product of a complex interplay of various factors. All the factors are

interrelated and interdependent which influence the making and implementation of foreign policy.

UNIT 8: FOREIGN POLICY

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 8.1 Learning Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Meaning of Foreign Policy
- 8.4 Objectives of Foreign Policy
- 8.5 Determinants of Foreign Policy
- 8.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.7 Further Reading
- 8.8 Answers To Check Your Progress
- 8.9 Possible Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- explain the meaning of foreign policy
- describe the objectives of foreign policy in general
- examine the determinants of foreign policy.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

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On the basis of various definitions put forward by eminent scholars, it could be stated that foreign policy is a strategy devised by government to

its actions in the international field. It involves the process of creating, making and implementing decisions and it is relational. Relational because foreign policy has the intention to influence the behaviour of other states in the international system. The foreign policy of a nation includes— (i) a set of principle, policies and decisions adopted and followed by a nation globally, (ii) objectives and goals of national interest which are to be achieved, (iii) for conducting international relations broad principles and decisions, (iv) assessment of achievements and losses of the nation in terms of its goals of national interest, (v) means or nature of action to be taken to achieve the goals or objectives of national interest and (vi) policies, decisions and action-programmes for maintaining continuity or change in international relations.

8.4 OBJECTIVES OF FOREIGN POLICY

The most important objective of foreign policy of a nation is 'national interest'. In fact, for the attainment of national interest a nation conducts its foreign relations. Foreign policy objectives are the product of the national interest only. However, it must be stated here that all interests are not objectives, a national interest becomes an objective when it is loved by the political community and for the realisation of those objectives, a nation must be ready to make some sacrifice and also must take some risk. National interest dictates the policy makers during the time of formulation of foreign policy. Padelford and Lincoln identified the following four main objectives of foreign policy of a state— (a) national security, (b) economic advancement, (c) augmentation of national power in relation to other states and (d) international prestige.

Foreign policy, as already cited earlier, is a throughout course of action for the achievement of specific objectives in foreign relations and it is dictated by the ideology of national interest. Objectives of foreign policy can be classified into various categories like— (i) core value objectives, (ii) middle range objectives and (iii) universal long range objectives.

- i) Core value objectives are the most desired kind of goals for the attainment of which people becomes ready for ultimate sacrifices

as those goals are very much related to the existence of the state. These goals are like— (a) self-preservation, defence of vital areas, ethnic, religious and linguistic unity, the protection of cultural and political institutions, (b) economic development. These are the core values which no nation in the world ignores while dealing with other foreign states. Survival of a nation is not possible if these goals are ignored by a state.

- ii) The second category that is middle range objectives implies goals like trade, foreign aid, access to foreign markets and sources of supplies, access to communication facilities, expansion of military capability, distribution of foreign aid and investment, space explorations, creating colonies, launching of satellites, ideological expansion for the promotion of socio-economic and political values abroad.
- iii) Third type of objectives that is universal long range objectives means those plans, dreams and visions which are designed in a very grand way which concern the whole international community. This type of objective aims at restructuring the world order. For example, USA's dream of making the 'world a safe place for democracy', Japan's dream of a greater 'South-East Asia', the Soviet Union's idea of 'World Soviet Federation', George Bush's 'New World Order', 'War on Terror'. These objectives are meant for distant future which do not require immediate pursuit like first and second category.

Again in more simple words, common objectives of foreign policy of all nations can be enumerated as— (i) protection of sovereignty and integrity of the state, (ii) promotion of economic interest and advancement, (iii) national security maintenance, (iv) protection and development of national power and national prestige, (v) maintenance of world order or can be said as international prestige.

A particular nation's foreign policy is influenced by various factors. Foreign policy is the product of number of factors. But according to circumstances the determinants vary in terms of its importance. Therefore,

to lay down any general rule regarding the relative importance of each factor or determinant or a scale of priorities which the policy-makers take into account during the time of policy formulation is very difficult or it is impossible. In general, the basic determinants of foreign policy can be broadly classified into three categories: (i) Internal factors, (ii) External factors and (iii) policy making factors. All these factors and its sub-divided factors are discussed in detail below:

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and culture. The basic foreign policy objectives is guided considerably by the historical and cultural traditions of the state. In the realm of external relations, a nation follows a course of action which is greatly influenced by the style and culture which the nation adopts from history. For example, many developing countries including India have strongly taken stance for anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-racism due to the bitter experiences of colonialism, imperialism and racialism. Then based on Buddhist past, India adopted the non-alignment policy and the principles of Panchsheel.

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from Vietnam after 1968 under the pressure of public opinion. But in totalitarian or authoritarian states, public opinion hardly plays a role in policy making.

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National interest: It is the key determining factor of foreign policy of any state. It is of supreme importance while formulating foreign policy. Behaviour of states in the international field is guided by national interest to a great extent.

- **External Factors:** External environment is also very necessary while formulating foreign policy of a state. International laws, treaties, agreements, pacts, international and regional organisations considerably influence and also constrain the making of foreign policies of states.

The external factors includes three elements– (a) world organisation, (b) world public opinion, and (c) foreign policies of other states.

- a) World organisations like UNO and other international institutions aim at maintaining world peace and order and International Law. UNO's activities and its agencies, IMF, World Bank and also regional organisations like SAARC, ASEAN, APEC, etc. also have profound influence on the foreign policy formulation of states.
- b) Like domestic public opinion, world public opinion has a strong influence on foreign policy making. No nation can dare to go against the world public opinion or challenge it. World public opinion has profound impact on various issues such as human rights, environment, war, peace, etc. and this is mainly due to increasing consciousness among people.
- c) While formulating a foreign policy, the policy makers must take into consideration the behaviour of other states of the international system and also their foreign policies. Foreign policy of a state undoubtedly has the main objective of fulfilling its national interest, but it must also give importance to the reaction of other states which matters a lot particularly of friendly states. It should be kept in mind by the policy makers while formulating foreign policy that the foreign policy objectives should not create hostility with other states.

- **Role of Policy-makers:** Another major determining factor of foreign policy is the attitude of the decision and policy makers. Foreign policy is based significantly on the leadership qualities as it determines the strength and direction of foreign policy of a state. Foreign policy is very strongly related to the psychological traits, the personality and predisposition of the leaders. In the formulation of foreign policy, there is a major role played by the ruling elite and the decision makers act in accordance with their perception of reality. The policy makers take due note of the relevant values and relevant sector of the environment, they determine the objectives of the foreign policy. The decision makers interpret the national interest and also perceive the external environment while formulating foreign policy. The impact of the views and personalities

of the ruling elites on foreign policy formulation is quite natural. Foreign policy is however not the result of the role played by a few leaders only, it also involves the interplay of other various determinants and pressures of bureaucracy.

Thus, on the basis of the above discussion on the determinants of foreign policy it can be concluded that it is the product of a complex interplay of various factors. All the factors are interrelated and interdependent which influence the making and implementation of foreign policy.

—8.6 LET US SUM UP

- Foreign policy is the basis of all international relations. Foreign policy is a course of action and inputs that a nation makes in order to influence behaviour of other states and to pursue its goals of national interest. It is a set of principles, decisions and means which a nation adopts to secure its goals in international relations.
- The most important objective of foreign policy of a nation is the fulfillment of national interest. Common objectives of foreign policy of all nations can be enumerated as— protection of sovereignty and integrity of the state, promotion of economic interest and advancement, national security maintenance, protection and development of national power and national prestige, maintenance of world order or can be said as international prestige.
- Foreign policy of a particular nation's is influenced by various factors. In general, the basic determinants of foreign policy can be broadly classified into three categories: (i) Internal factors, (ii) External factors and (iii) policy making factors.
- Internal determinants of foreign policy include factors like geography, history and culture of the nation, national capacity, public opinion, ideology, social and political structure of the nation etc. External determinants of foreign policy include world organization, world public opinion, behavior of other states etc. Role of policy-makers also influence foreign policy formulation.