

## ✓ MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICY

(The role of the military is very significant to the implementation of any foreign policy. It is easy for a nation with a strong military to protect its national interest and successfully implement its foreign policy.) History does not provide any example to the contrary. (For nearly 300 years, when the system of 'Balance of Power' was prevalent in international politics, five to six European powers controlled the course of international politics. These European powers were Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Spain, and Portugal. All these nations had great military strength. Their military and economic strength put them ahead of others in the race for the control of world affairs. They were strong in conventional arms than others.) But, after the Second World War, with the introduction of nuclear arms, these European powers were no longer in a position to occupy a key role in world politics.) Their economies were devastated by the war. And, they were not nuclear-weapon states when they fought the war. (Consequently, their three-hundred years of domination of world politics) was compromised and their role as determinants of world politics was reduced to the minimum.)

(Bipolarity became prevalent in international relations after the Second World War. The US and the Soviet Union, the two military superpowers, took the lead as controllers of international politics. Both were nuclear powers. Simultaneously, they maintained big armies and huge reserves of conventional weapons. They used to spend enormous sums for the maintenance of their military and armaments.) After the end of the Cold War, the US has emerged as the only superpower. The US is very strong militarily and economically. As a result, it can control international politics after the Cold War. Therefore, it has been observed in this brief analysis covering a period of four hundred years—from the beginning of the Balance of Power system to the end of the Cold War—that only nations strong in military could always control international politics; not states with weak military power.

(It must be mentioned in this context that economic strength is necessary to establish a nation as a military power, because the maintenance of powerful and a big armed force is highly expensive.) As discussed earlier, the European nations had to depart as leaders of international politics due

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*It assures national security.*

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*huge stocks of conventional weapons and nuclear weapons*

to the devastation of their economies during the Second World War. It became impossible for them to maintain a strong military, and consequently, their power receded. (The Soviet Union had to spend excessive money to maintain its status as a military superpower during the Cold War period. But subsequently, the Soviet economy was unable to afford this huge spending on its military.) According to experts like Peter Calvocoressi and Norman D. Palmer, (this was one of the causes for the disintegration of the Soviet Union.) Therefore a strong military always demands an equally strong economy.

(It is normally believed that the role of the military in foreign policy is limited in a democracy, because democracy ensures civilian rule. But this view is not altogether true. (The role of the military is quite significant in the implementation (and making) of foreign policy in a democracy as well. A former US President declared after the Second World War that the future of America would be ruled by the politician-military-industry combine.) His views were proved correct. In present-day America, the role of this combine is extremely significant not only in domestic politics, but in its foreign policy as well. During the long forty-five years of the Cold War, the US military played a crucial role in America's foreign policy. The military was frequently consulted for the making and the implementation of the American foreign policy during this time. After the Cold War, in recent times, the US military also played an extremely meaningful role in the US foreign policy with regard to Iraq, Afghanistan and other nations of the world. The military is a significant factor in the foreign policy of other democratic countries like Britain and India as well.

The military also plays a very active role in the making and implementation of foreign policy in other forms of government (one-party and totalitarian) as well. In the one-party systems of the former Soviet Union and east European socialist countries, as well as in present-day China, the role of the military in foreign policy has been quite prominent. During the Cold War, the Soviet military, like its American counterpart, was always consulted in foreign policy matters. China also gives importance to its military in the making of foreign policy and its implementation. For instance, the proposal to solve any problem at the China-India border, or any agreement between them on this issue, requires the endorsement of the Chinese (as also Indian) military. Although such an agreement is normally proposed and signed by civilian rulers, they seek the approval of the military before proposing or signing the agreement. This example shows the importance of the military in foreign policy matters in one-party, totalitarian and democratic political systems.

(Needless to say, the military is all-in-all in military dictatorships in case of both domestic and foreign policy matters. The men in uniform in such a system enjoy direct exercise of state power; theirs is the last voice in domestic as well as foreign policy issues.

(The idea that the military is required only at wartime is not true.) The example cited above—a proposal or an agreement between India and China to solve any border-related problem must be endorsed by the military—is not one from the period of any war. Such agreements may be signed during peace as well. If the military of both the countries do not support this proposal or agreement, be it at the time of war or of peace, the proposal would be dropped from the foreign policy agenda. Therefore, the role of the military is very crucial in foreign policy making and implementation during peace time as well. Military support plays an instrumental role in making a foreign policy successful. (During a war, this help can be direct; at the time of peace, it can be either direct or indirect.) In the latter case, people may or may not have any knowledge about it. (In today's world, although any direct manifestation of power is seldom observed, yet every state wants to use its military as a 'backup force' behind its foreign policy. The presence of a strong military helps a state protect its national interests and pursue its foreign policy effectively.)

