

FOREIGN POLICY: AN ANALYSIS

Jagdeep Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

Khalsa College, Garhdiwala (Hoshiarpur), Punjab

Abstract: *This paper intends to give general idea about foreign policy that various nations practice. The paper looks into some of the factors that affects foreign policy. Broadly foreign policy is affected by factors that can be categorized into external and internal but it would be mistake for being limited to such categorization because there are many emerging developments in global scenario. Foreign policy is a method adopted by countries to engage with other countries through discussion and negotiation. It helps countries to engage politically, socially, economically and militarily with each other.*

Keywords: Foreign Policy, NATO, Internal, External, International Relations, System

Introduction

Current international dynamics have been greatly influenced by the emergence of middlepowers, or emerging powers, whose main goal both domestically and internationally has been to promote their development and to increase their projection. However, little has been written on how these countries' foreign policy can help their development goals, as most works on this relation, for instance Hyman (2010) and Maxwell (2007), focus on the instruments that center countries have created to help promote the periphery's development. Nonetheless, this pattern of analysis undermines dependent countries' capabilities of self-help, maintaining asymmetries. The creation of an interaction between nation states. In addition, the establishment of United Nations and the process of decolonization that has liberated many states into sovereign entities have further provided the impetus to interrelationships among states. Such has resulted into the formation of 'foreign policies'. With the aim of determining and identifying the decisions, strategies, and ends of interaction of a state with another. Furthermore, the modern world of "globalization"; the "widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness" has increased this interrelationships or interactions among states. Hence, there is unanimity among scholars on the necessity of a "foreign policy" for each state, since no state will like to function in complete isolation. The term foreign policy has been defined in various ways by scholars; however, they are certain that it is concerned with behavior of a state towards other states. Hermann for instance, defined foreign policy as "the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals. It is the observable artifact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision." By this, it can be seen that Hermann defines foreign policy as the behavior of states.

The idea behind this paper is to give general perspective of foreign policy and its brief journey over the period of time. The discipline of international relations offers two different takes on "foreign policy." First, it sees foreign policy as carrying a self-evident meaning: as an abstract expression of relations between political entities. Some views foreign policy as an analytic concept that transcends particular historical periods or kinds of political communities. It is always distinct, and essentially different, from other forms of policy. Second, critics of this account suggest that foreign policy provides one of the key ways in which the political Self is differentiated from the other. In this understanding, foreign policy emerged sometime during the seventeenth century. It was producer, and the product, of the modern state and state system. Despite their differences, these two approaches both treat foreign policy as an analytic concept: as a label for a broad object of analysis. In contrast, I proceed by historicizing foreign policy as a practice concept. Humans approach the world

through concepts, which structure both thought and possible action. Many of the concepts employed by social scientists, such as “globalization” and “habitus,” are analytical. Scholars craft them to apply beyond the lifeworld of the actors that they study, with the specific aim of establishing a critical analytical distance between themselves and their objects of research. Other concepts are practical, employed in everyday activity. In the words of Padelford and Lincoln, “A State’s Foreign Policy is totality of its dealings with the external environment. Foreign Policy is the overall result of the process by which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into specific courses of action in order to achieve its objectives and preserve its interests”. Two functions of foreign policy can be extracted from Padelford and Lincoln’s definition; first, foreign policy is to attain its conceived goals and second, to pressurize its national interests.

Methodology

The present study mainly use secondary sources of data and information. The scope of this paper is to give general introductory idea about foreign policy and factors impacting foreign policy.

The Foreign Policy of Each Nation Contains:

1. A set of principles, policies and decisions adopted and followed by the nation in international relations.
2. Objectives, goals or aims of national interest which are to be secured.
3. Means to be used for achieving the goals of national interest.
4. Broad policy principles and decisions for conducting international relations.
5. Assessment of the gains and failures of the nation in respect of its goals of national interest
6. Policies, decisions and action-programs for maintaining continuity or change or both in international relations. In simple words, it can be observed that Foreign Policy is a set of principles and decisions, a plan of action and a thought out course of action adopted and used by a nation for conducting relations with other nations and all international actors with a view to secure the preferred and defined goals of her national interest.

Determinants of Foreign Policy Decision-Making

In Hill’s insight, “foreign policy is the hinge of domestic and international politics” There is also consensus among scholars that foreign policy serves as an intersection point of domestic and international politics. Thus, from here we can say that, the foreign policy of every state is influenced by mainly two determinants; international or external and domestic or internal. These are considered as factors which help in shaping and molding foreign policy. However, the linkage between international and domestic determinants has long been a widely debated topic in the field of international relations and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) in particular. While others argue that domestic politics and foreign policy are two ‘independent’ arenas of issue, others are of the view that foreign policy and domestic politics are ‘interdependent’ and could spill over into each other. the level of influence between domestic and international determinants of foreign policies varies from state and the political environment in which these states exist. In some cases, international factors play a major role, whereas in other cases, domestic determinants are more important.

External Determinants of Foreign Policy

The international environment plays an important role in shaping the foreign policy of every state. Since foreign policy in general is about the interaction of a state with another, this interaction only takes place at the international level and as such, cannot be ignored in analyzing the foreign policy of any state. As scholars in this school acknowledge the importance of both international and domestic factors, however, they argue that international factors play a more important role in determining country’s foreign policy. The

main external factors that determine the foreign policy of a state are but not limited to: the international system or power structure, international law, international organizations, alliances, and military strength or arm race.

The International system

A prevalent framework of world politics plays decisive role in deciding the foreign policy of a country. As such foreign policies of states thus changes with shifts in the international power structure. In the traditional multi-polar system, it was easier for states to switch sides and gain maximum interests from both sides. During the 1980s, the international system was characterized with a bi-polar system as witnessed during the Cold War, and now a unipolar with the US as the only hegemonic power. These events have restructured the power system and have a significant effect on the foreign policies of states.

International law

International Law has a binding function in foreign policy because it offers a legal framework through which states should interact. The international law is generally defined as a set of rules that regulate relations between states. Cali defined it as “a system of rules created deliberately and explicitly by states. Where states have expressly willed to be bound by the rules. According to the Positivist view, international law is a set of rules that regulates and constraints state behaviour. States are constrained to respect international norms if they do not want to face sanctions and avoid ‘naming and shaming’ by international activists (i.e., human rights activists). The Constructivist approach of international law in foreign policy can illustrate the fact that it regulates and gives a roadmap to state’s behaviour, enable them to enter in relationship with each other (thereby limiting their actions); because they are legally bind by customary law and they decide to have legally binding obligation through treaties. To sum up, international law defines the status, the rights, the responsibilities, and obligations of the nations in foreign policy. Hus, it is the responsibility of every state to observe the norms and laws, failure to which there are consequences.

International organizations

International Organizations (IOs) play huge role in the current international system. It is hard to imagine how world would operate without international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) and its affiliates, international financial institutions, such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). A state’s foreign policies is thus, affected by its membership of international, regional and sub-regional organizations, since they surrender partially their sovereignty to these organizations. As their operations will be guided by the constitution of the organization; the policies of member states will undoubtedly be affected by the nature of the particular institution.

Alliances

Alliances or belonging to certain blocks of countries play very important role in shaping of foreign policy of a country. Alliances can be strategic, economic or military in senses. NATO member countries are impacted by happenings in one of the member countries of this group. In case of the member country of NATO faces threat or bad relations with other countries, all member countries have to modify their foreign policy accordingly. Economic or trade alliances such as EU have vast impact on its member countries. Similarly other alliances such as ASEAN, BRICS, NAFTA and many others play very important role in foreign policy decisions. Alliances like international law do shape the foreign policies of states, because the member parties to the alliances have to respond to the requests and demands of their allies and refrain from formulating policies or taking actions which are offensive to the alliance partners.

Internal Determinants of Foreign Policy

The political environment of a country includes all laws, government agencies, and lobbying groups that influence or restrict individuals or organizations in the society. When talking about the head of government and his decisions the most important factor is the political environment he is operating in. Even international decisions taken by the head of government depends on domestic politics. The political system will determine the heads scope and power in foreign policy decision making. Political system can be defined as a set of formal legal institutions that constitute a government or a nation-state. It can also be defined over a broad range of categories. For example, a country with no ruler can be called one with Anarchical system and one with a single ruler, Feudalism. However, this is a very simplified view of a much more complex system of categories involving views such as who should have authority, how religious questions should be handled, and what the government's influence on citizens should be.

Political system

The political system of country determines which way its foreign policy will go. Under authoritarian or totalitarian forms of government, easier and faster foreign decisions are possible because the decision-making power rests with an individual assisted by his clique. He\ are the sole decision makers and as their decisions are made without any constraints or consultations, their foreign policy decisions can be conflictual. It is also observed that decision making under such closed systems have often, if not always, lead to a country's isolation in international politics as happened with the regimes in North Korea and Myanmar. In a state with democratic system, foreign policy implementation tends to be difficult and slow as compared to that of an authoritarian structure. Citizens in this system can freely express and voice their opinion on the domestic as well as foreign policies of their country, making an impact on the policies their government is pursuing. Democratic leaders tend to respond to these public demands and formulate a foreign policy within it. A parliamentary system of government based on cooperation between the Legislature and the Executive body, the cordial relation between these two wings, have an impact on a country's foreign policy. On the other hand, under presidential system of government based on the principles of separation of powers, the relation between the two wings are non-cordial and likely to be strained, which affect the ambiguity or the continuity of foreign policy. Similarly, different foreign policy is likely to emerge under biparty and multi-party systems. Under bi-party system the government is likely to have a clear-cut majority and conduct itself in a more decisive manner regarding the conduct of foreign relations.

Economic development

The economic development of country determines how much a country can wiggle through tough decisions regarding its foreign policy. Developed countries with more resources and reputation under its command can even force some countries to change its foreign policy according to their interests. We have example of U.S.A which is huge economic power forces many countries to realign their foreign policies according to its wishes by promising them economic aid and other kinds of economic help. A country which is highly developed can mostly take independent decisions and shape its foreign policy as it suits itself. Moreover, in recent years, we have seen that Germany is playing leading role in Europe's politics despite not being permanent member of UNSC, and being a non-nuclear state. It can rightly be argued that Germany's increased leadership is entirely attributed to its economic development. Also, the emergence of China and India on world stage is based on their economic resurgence in recent years. On the contrary, in post-cold war period, Russia's influence decreased to a considerable extent as its economic power has diminished after the disintegration of USSR.

Conclusion

Since foreign policy in general is about the interaction of a state with another, this interaction only takes place at the 'international' level and as such, cannot be ignored in analyzing the foreign policy of any state. Hence, the international system or power structure, international law, international organizations, alliances, and military strength or arm race, all influence foreign policy implementation.

References

1. Amer R (2009) An Introduction to Foreign Policy: Definition, Nature & Determinants.
2. Dinesh (2016) Foreign Policy: 16 Elements of Foreign Policy.
3. Ebaye SEN (2010) Utility of Military Strategy as an Instrument of Foreign Policy. African Research Review 4.
4. Feliks G (1994) Foreign Policy Analysis. New York, philosophical library.
5. Held D, McGrew AG, Goldblatt D, Perraton J (1999) Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture. Cambridge: Polity Press pp: 14.
6. Jacobs LR, Page BI (2005) Who influences U.S. Foreign Policy? American Political Science Review 99: 107-123.
7. Frankel J (1963) The Making of Foreign Policy. Oxford University Press pp: 231.
8. Sanford JE (1992) International Organizations as an Instrument of Foreign Policy
9. Yitan L (2008) Domestic vs. International determinants of foreign policy: An empirical investigation of the case of China-Taiwan, 1991-2000