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Course - 204

INDIAN FOREIGN
POLICIES AND THE
CONTEMPORARY
WORLD
UNIT - I

Define foreign policy. What are the different approaches to the study of foreign policy? 6+14

DEFINITION OF FOREIGN POLICY

A foreign policy is a set of pre-established strategies designed and implemented systematically to manage a country's relationships with other nations. They are structured guidelines that regulate international political dealings.

Hermann defines foreign policy as the behaviour of states. George Modelski, defines it as "the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. It is important to point out that Modelski, noted only those aspects of policy that aim at the change in the existing behaviour of states, as the primary objectives of foreign policy. According to Joseph Frankel, "foreign policy consists

of decisions and actions, which involves to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others”. By this, foreign policy involves set of actions that are made within state’s borders, intended towards forces existing outside the country’s borders. It comprises the formulation and implementation of a set of ideas that govern the behaviour of states while interacting with other states to defend and enhance their national interests. In the words of Padelford and Lincoln, “A State’s Foreign Policy is totality of its dealings with the external environment. Therefore, 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”.

MODELS/APPROACHES OF FOREIGN POLICY

There are five main models in foreign policy analysis. They are the rational actor model, the bureaucratic politics model and the organizational process model—all three of which were developed by foreign policy analyst and scholar, Graham Allison, and outlined in his book, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*—as well as the inter-branch politics model and the political process model. In order for international relations professional to effectively analyze foreign policy as a whole, it is necessary to determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of each model therein and understand the ways in which each approach has the potential to remedy the inadequacies of the others. There are several approaches/models for the study of foreign policy. The following are the models/approaches.

1. RATIONAL ACTOR MODEL

The most widely cited foreign policy analysis approach is the rational actor model. This approach assumes that the main actor in foreign policy is a rational individual who can be relied on to make informed, calculated decisions that maximize value and perceived benefits to the state. The rational actor model relies on individual state-level interactions between nations and government behavior as units of analysis; it assumes the availability of complete information to policymakers for optimized decision making, and that actions taken throughout time are both consistent and coherent. There are four main steps in the rational actor's decision-making process: identify the problem, define desired outcomes, evaluate the consequences of potential policy choices and finally, make the most rational decision to maximize beneficial outcomes. The rational actor theoretical approach can be useful to understanding the goals and intentions behind a foreign policy action. However, critics of this model believe it does not account for instances when complete information may not be available, as well as the relatively subjective concept of rationality or factors that might inhibit rational decision making.

2. BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS MODEL

Unlike the rational actor model, which looks at the state as a unitary actor, the bureaucratic politics model analyzes decisions on the premise that actions are taken by a number of independent, competing entities within a particular state. Each of these separate entities brings values to the decision-making process, as well as its own view of what's best for personal, organizational and national interests. Each party attempts to satisfy its goals, meaning any collective action is contingent upon successful negotiations and the arrival at an ultimate consensus between all entities. A number of factors can influence each party's decision making and how

it achieves its goals, such as the relative power and degree of influence of each other actor in the group. Each party has opposing viewpoints and desired outcomes related to an array of issues, and success in achieving certain goals may require other parties to make certain concessions, resulting in decisions that are often seen as more beneficial to one side than the others. Additional factors that impact decision making include the degrees of importance of certain goals and the political values each party represents. The increasingly partisan nature of U.S. politics provides an excellent example of this model in action. The bureaucratic politics approach is often touted as an explanation as to why states sometimes act irrationally. However, some argue the model doesn't account enough for highly concentrated power held by certain entities, such as the executive branch in U.S. governance. It is also seen as very U.S.-centric and difficult to apply in the context of other styles of government.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS MODEL

In contrast to the two aforementioned approaches, the organizational process model views government as a mix of powerful organizations working in concert rather than an individual or a group of partisan entities. This model examines foreign policy decisions as made within the rigid strictures of bureaucracy, where actions may only be taken with proper authorization and adherence to the chain of command, respecting established processes and standard operating procedures, or SOP. Here, government leaders don't tackle the broader scope of a crisis but instead delegate smaller facets of the issue to committees, departments and other bureaucratic entities supporting the government.

Critics often bemoan the fact that this model limits individuals' ability to act, which results in reduced insight and a lack of alternative perspectives. The

organizational process model can also decrease the overall flexibility of an organization. However, applying this model has the potential to streamline decision making with the establishment of standard protocol for certain circumstances with predictable, measurable outcomes. In other words, the organizational process model anticipates the measured pace of bureaucratic practices and seeks to create protocol that can be readily applied in the event of a crisis.

4. INTER-BRANCH POLITICS MODEL

The inter-branch politics model is similar to the organizational and bureaucratic process models in that it involves separately defined groups or entities. However, rather than focusing on singular goals and outcomes, the inter-branch politics model evaluates actions and their outcomes based on the combined efforts and cohesiveness of different groups and their progress toward achieving collective goals. According to Tan Qingshan, a political science professor and Director of Asian Studies at Cleveland State University who first introduced the model, the bureaucratic and organizational entities within and outside states do not operate in complete independence, but rather interact and influence each other.

5. POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

The political process model of foreign policy analysis was developed by Roger Hilsman in his book, *The Politics of Policymaking in Defense and Foreign Affairs*. According to Hilsman, there are a large number of actors involved in the foreign policy decision-making process, mainly concentrated in the office of the President and Congress, but across all levels of government as well. Similar to the bureaucratic politics model, the political process model emphasizes bargaining and

the presence of various power centers seeking to achieve their respective goals—these goals can either be in conflict or consensus with those of others. However, this model differs from the bureaucratic politics model as it focuses more on the individual participants and their personal goals and mindsets about international politics rather than organizations and groups as a whole. According to Hilsman, the individual ideology of each political actor is one of the most important factors in determining and explaining decision-making. Critics of the model, however, maintain that it is too similar to the bureaucratic politics to make a substantive contribution to the field of foreign policy analysis.

Foreign policy analysis is necessary to improve our overall understanding of the government and the political decision-making processes that play out on the world stage. Each approach to diplomacy offers a unique set of potential drawbacks and benefits, and emphasizes the importance of the political actors and structures involved and how they work to attain their foreign policy goals.