

# **Paper-VI. International Politics**

## **Degree Part-III, (Political Science (Hons.))**

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### **Unit-I. Meaning, nature and scope of International Politics**

#### **Meaning**

The subject has vicariously been termed as International Relations. Thinkers are of the opinion that International relation is more apt than International Politics as it provided a wider canvass, comprehensive coverage to the issues and subject matters than International Politics. International politics is narrow in its aspects as it analyzes the actual working of the nation and their dealings with other nations.

The study of modern international Politics rests on the acceptance of the nation-state as the basic political unit in the world today. While international Relation is distinctively separate from International Law as it focuses attention on international institutions, inter-state developments, foreign policy making processes etc. Some of the pertinent questions relevant for the purpose of it are as to why do nation states behave as they do? How can we explain this behavior and use those explanations to anticipate likely future behaviors? What are the contemporary characteristics of international system, and how do they affect the actors in the system? What are the ongoing trends (political, military, technological and economical) in the international system? What are the implications thereof? In order to answer them it is imperative that students must be familiar with some basic concepts and tools of analysis.

#### **Nature and Scope of International Politics**

##### **Nature**

International Relations variously known as International politics, World politics etc. The terms 'international politics' and 'international relations' are very often used interchangeably both by laymen and scholars. Some scholars, however, object to such a usage of the terms, as 'politics' and 'relations' have distinct connotations in social science. International politics deals, as Palmer and Perkins points out, mainly with the 'official' actions of the government, therefore much narrower in its scope. It is used primarily to describe official political relations between governments acting on behalf of their states. International relations, on the other hands, study various influences on the principal policy makers and analyses governmental and personality

factors. International politics no doubt is the core of international relations, but many things that take place in the periphery are important for understanding such problems in depth.

### **Scope of International Politics**

1. ***States as Actors***: International relations studies relations between two or more states, which are very often complex and influenced by a variety of factors, such as, geopolitical, historical, religious, ideological, strategic and leadership etc. Not all nations assume similar importance to every other national state. Some are important because of their neighborhood, some because of their military or economic power, whereas some others because of the racial or cultural links. Pakistan may be a small country, but the successive governments in New Delhi felt concerned about it because of its geopolitical and historical factors.
2. ***Power***: It is the business of statesmanship to weigh the internal and external components of power of one's own state carefully and compare them with those of the adversary state judiciously before opting for such a course of action as war. The leading proponent of International Relations, Hans J Morgenthau, contend that international politics is nothing else but 'power politics' and can be realistically understood only if viewed as 'the concept of interest defined in terms of power'.
3. ***International Institutions and Organizations***: Relations between states are not merely bilateral but are also multilateral, which in many cases are organized as international institutions and organizations. These forums/groupings/organizations are formed with a view to foster economic, military, technological or cultural cooperation among member states, for e.g. NATO, SEATO, UNO, WTO etc.
4. ***War and peace activity***: International Politics is a struggle for supremacy among nations, which are very often leads to warfare between two or more nations or their groups. War is as old a phenomenon as the state itself and is inevitably followed by some sort of peace settlement.
5. ***Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution***: Nation conflict with each other require altogether a new approach and it had found a veritable place in the study of International Politics.
6. ***Arms Control and Disarmament***: The world has witnessed the growth of massive arms and ammunition industries to fulfill their primary need to protect their own people from others. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries in International Politics is the Politics of arms conflict and nations went on the spree of piling it up to the extent that it had made possible the war as reality and so much and so forth that they can devastate the world within minutes and hours. This threat or possibility of humanity getting engulfed has moved nations to rethink their strategies and they started thinking in terms of disarming themselves and others. This has allowed the Arms Control and Disarmament to be investigated and studies as comprehensive scope of International Politics.

7. ***Foreign Policy making:*** Every nation now-a-days make their policy vis-à-vis other nations keeping in mind the perpetuation of their national interest. How the foreign policies are made or changed has now become a paramount concern in International Politics.
8. ***International Political Groupings and Military Alliances:*** There are many grouping formed to serve both bilateral as well as multilateral interests and it could be of many types. There are many military groups or alliances created to foster the peace and it becomes an important part of international politics.
9. ***Foreign Trade and International Economic Organizations:*** Last but the most important, is the economic relations among nations and it is true that no nation is self-sufficient and they have to cooperate with each other Now-a-days the foreign trade among nation have taken an important role in the study of International Politice.As we can see the post globalization the world has increasingly becoming borderless and going for full economic alliances and cooperation.

## Unit 2. Approaches to the study of International Politics

Approaches are basically the way to understand a phenomenon and consequently to evolve the strategy to overcome the weaknesses. There are many approaches which hinge around the two important approaches of International Politics. We are discussing them individually.

### Major approaches: Realism and Idealism

**Realism:** Defines international relations in terms of 'power' as Hans J Morgenthau aptly remarked it as 'a struggle of power'. The fundamental premise, on which the Realist theory rests, is that at the international level power is decentralized. Each state is practically a law unto itself. Because of this conflict is inevitable. During conflict each state is left to its own resources to defend itself. In his famous book, *Politics among Nations*, Morgenthau propounded a theory of International politics called as 'realist theory', which is based on, he asserts, empirical facts and helps us to understand the political actions of all times. He has developed his theory in the form of 'six principles of political realism,

- 1) Politics is governed by objective laws which have their roots in human nature. It takes into account the story of human history as it has unfolded itself and tries to present it in a coherent and rational manner. The theory is, however, subjected 'to the dual test of reason and experience'. It presents a rational account of a statesman's actions. It assumes that in given circumstances, the statesman would behave in a manner that is essential to safeguard his country's interests. The essential feature of Morgenthau's political theory, therefore, is the assumption of rationality in the behavior of those who govern the affairs of states.
- 2) Political action is distinct from other kinds of actions by virtue of the fact that it is designed to protect the interests of the state which are conceived in terms of 'power'. International politics, therefore, is 'the concept of interest defined in terms of power. In other words, the principal function of statesmen is to protect national interest 'in terms of power. Prof. Morgenthau guards against two popular fallacies in this respect; the concern with motives and concern with ideological 'preferences'.
- 3) Interest and power are no doubt the key concepts in this theory but meaning attached to them is not static and fixed once and for all. The state's interests are fluid and change with the ever changing situation in the world at large. Not only are interests fluid in the dynamic international situation, but the power position of most countries also undergoes changes.
- 4) Morgenthau's theory is not devoid of moral content or concern, since political action is very often guided by moral principles and the extent to which they influence the actions of statesmen, political realism is guided by such morality. Politics is not ethics and ruler is not a moralist who is prepared to sacrifice the interest of the state. His primary function is to protect the national interest for which he has to be prudent.

- 5) As political realism does not identify national interests with universal morality and defeats its own purpose, it does not treat what is right and justifiable for a certain nation as good for all countries. It refuses to identify the moral assumption of a particular nation with moral laws that govern the universe.
- 6) The difference between political realism and other schools of thought is 'real and profound.' Spheres of the economist, lawyer and moralist are distinct and different. The economist is concerned with the economic activity of mankind; the lawyer functions to see how far human action is in conformity with legal norms; the statesman, on the other hand, thinks in terms of enhancing the power of the state. The question of the political realist is: 'how does this policy affect the power of the nation? This does not mean that the political realist is not aware of other standards of human behavior. Political realism is based upon a pluralistic conception of human society which consists of 'economic man'.

**Neo realism:** Kenneth Waltz, who propounded this theory to bring into light the infirmities associated with the earlier realism.

**Idealism:** Peace, gradualness is the way through which international conflicts can be mediated. An approach where an idealists start his discussion with a goal, an ideal or an objective. The discussion tends to be how international relations should be ordered or conducted so that the goal or an ideal may be attained.

### **Other Major Theories**

**System Theory:** Easton and Almond developed this theory in the field of national politics and Morton Kaplan in the field of international politics. David Easton analyses the political scene in terms of equilibrium and stability-that system is more stable which strikes a perfect equilibrium among different forces that influence the policy. Once such equilibrium is lost among contributing forces, stability of the political system is endangered. According to this theory, actors on international scene belong to two categories-national actors and supra-national actors. National actors are the nation states like USA, India, UK, etc.The supra national actors are such international actors as the NATO, UNO, etc.

International system, according to Kaplan, could be divided into six models on the basis of function and stability. They are:

- I. The balance of power system
- II. The loose bipolar system: In a situation where too many actors influence international relations, it becomes difficult to strike a perfect balance of power position a loose bipolar system develops
- III. The Universal actor system:
- IV. The universal international system: It grows when the Universal actor, like the UNO, usurp many of the functions of powerful units in a loose bipolar system. In such a system the Universal actors becomes powerful enough to prevent war among nations, but national actors retain their individuality.

- V. The hierarchical international system
- VI. The unit veto system: The unit veto system develops as a result of weapons development. When too many national states develop a highly destructive capacity, they create a system of one level actor, each of whom possesses a sort of veto power by virtue of his destructive capacity.

**Decision-Making Theory** This theory has been developed by Richard C. Snyder and others after the Second World War. It basically focuses on the persons who shape international events rather on the international situation as such. The makers of policies are subjected to detailed scrutiny and national policies and international situations are viewed from this angle. Analysing the factors that operate on decision-makers, Snyder divides them into three main set of stimuli-the internal setting, the external setting and the decision making process. He studies the personality factor of then decision maker and the various agencies and processes involved in decision making. The theory takes the study of international politics to the real actor from the abstract and collective situations.

**Game Theory:** The Game Theory was originally propagated to deal with economic problems by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in their work, *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, which expounded ‘the mathematics of probability and of decisional sequences’ under ‘condition of complete information’. It has been applied to international politics by Morton Kaplan and Thomas Schelling. The theory has been defined as a ‘body of thought dealing with rational decision strategies in situations of conflict and competition, when each participant or player seeks to maximize gain and minimize losses. It is a mathematical model in which the player is placed in a certain fixed situation and tries to make maximum gains from his opponents. The situations visualized are of four kinds:

- I. Zero-sum two persons game : The gain of one is equal to the loss of another
- II. Non-zero sum two persons game
- III. Zero sum n persons game: In this and above one the outcome is shared and the losses of one are not necessarily equal to the gains of another.
- IV. Non zero sum n persons game :The gains and losses are shared by both sides to some extent

There are certain assumptions and rules in the game. The assumption is that the players are guided by rational behavior and choose the best course of action that brings them maximum gains. The rules are that the equation between the players is straight and the losses of one are the gains of another. The theory is built up with the help of five important conceptions: strategy, opponent, pay-off, rules and information. Players are engaged in choosing alternatives.

**Communication Theory:** It has been developed mainly by Karl W. Deutsch for understanding the national scene and has been applied to international politics by Charles A. McClelland and others. Deutsch’s concern was to ‘reduce the importance’ of the notion of power in politics and highlight the importance of the flow of information in governmental decisions. The Communication theory treats the government as decision-making system based on various information flows. Revolutions in the field of communication have profound implications. It has

changed the way nations interact with each other. Communication has indeed transformed human relations as well as relations between states to much greater extent than any other development. The communication system has undoubtedly increased interdependence of international community and has made functioning of an international agency like the UNO much easier. As Charles A. McClelland notes, 'three areas of international relations susceptible to these changes are: cross-cultural relations, public opinion and attitudes and decision making processes in the area of statecraft

**Equilibrium Theory:** This theory has been propounded by M.Liska in his work, International Equilibrium. Liska emphasizes the importance of the concept of power in international politics but unlike Morgenthau he uses power as 'an analytical tool and not as an explanation'. The states seek to secure the best attainable position of equilibrium, which safeguards peace. Since peace is secured in this manner, search for equilibrium is a desirable value. There are three important points highlighted by Liska.

**First**, there is a linkage between individual states and collective actors, who in turn are guided under the unified will of an international organization.

**Second**, policies of the states are examined and evaluated in relation to the need for greater international integration.

**Third**, the states seek to improve their social and material environment by unilateral actions and thus enhance their influence in the international equilibrium system.

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