A state gives special attention to the careful formulation and successful execution of its foreign policy. A successful foreign policy enhances a nation’s power and prestige in the comity of nations. Foreign policy gains also increase a government’s credibility in the eyes of the public internally and externally. Herein lies the importance of foreign policy. It has become one of the most important core fields of international relations now we discuss Determinants of Foreign Policy.

Foreign policy, according to **Hartmann**,

“is a systematic statement of deliberately selected [national interests](https://www.politicalscienceview.com/national-interest/).”

Foreign policy connotes a greater degree of the rational procedure and planning involved in step-by-step progress to a known and defined goal.

Narrow definitions emphasize the action aspect of foreign policy. In  this sense, according to **Schleicher**,

“it refers to the actions (including words) of government officials to influence human behavior beyond the jurisdiction of their own state.

**Common objectives of the foreign policy of all nations are:**

1. Maintaining the integrity of the state,
2. Promoting economic interest, Trade with other countries …trade balance…imports less n exports are more
3. Providing for national security,
4. Protecting national prestige and developing national power, and
5. Maintaining world order.

Specific objectives can supplement these according to the peculiar problems and conditions of a particular country. Pr-requisites of Foreign Policy Study of foreign policy necessitates that the following factors must be borne in mind.

Components of Foreign Policy:

**According to Lerche and Said, normally foreign policy includes three elements. These are:**

* Formulation of the objective in the most precise terms possible
* The nature of  the action to be undertaken, stated with sufficient clarity to guide and direct the state’s other officials and
* The forms and perhaps the amounts of national power to be applied in pursuit of the objective.

**Mahendra Kumar describes four components:**

* Policymakers,
* Interest and objectives
* Principles of foreign policy, and
* Means of foreign policy.

**According to Jangam, foreign policy is the policy of a nation towards other nations, and generally, it involves four factors:**

* Principles underlying foreign policy.
* Problems faced by the nation.
* The particular way of making policy including the role of foreign policymakers
* The products or results of foreign policy.

**The above description renders the concept of foreign policy more clear**.

Objectives of Foreign Policy:

Interest can be explained as the aims passed on to the policymakers by my community. It may also be defined as the general and continuing ends for attaining which a nation conducts its foreign relations. It includes security against aggression, the development of higher standards of living, and the maintenance of national and international Stability conditions. Foreign policy is inconceivable without national interest. Simultaneously, it must be clarified that national interest does not exclude the significance of international obligation, especially in the present-day world.

On the other hand, objectives are the product of national interest. They are, in the words of **Mahendra Kumar**, interests spelled out and made more precise in the light of the present-day complexity of international relations

4. Internal and External Conditions:

Certain internal and external factors condition the foreign policy of every state. Internal factors include geography, population, economic needs, ideology, history and culture, military capacity, social structure, personalities, public Opinion, etc.

External factors are the global environment, great power structure, alliances, international organizations, world public opinion, other states’ reactions, etc. The degree of influence of these factors on foreign policy may vary from country to country. That is why they are discussed in detail in subsequent headings.

Specific, Subjective, or Internal Determinants:

Every state has its own specific interests that require specific decisions in foreign policymaking. A state may be facing certain problems and difficulties and, therefore, has to consider several internal factors while formulating its foreign policy. These internal factors are known as subjective or special factors and may differ from state to state. These particular or specific factors are under.

1. Geography:

A permanent and stable determinant of foreign policy is geography. It determines the temperature, resources, frontiers, and neighbors. The state’s size, topography, shape, location, and climate are important components of geography.

A size large enough to support a population sufficient to man an adequate military establishment a climate which is uniform and conducive to physical vigor, preferably either temperate or tropical highland, a topography offering boundaries with natural defense barrier such as mountains, forests, swamps, rivers, deserts and oceans and a shape which is compact rather than disintegrated or scattered and thus easier to defend, provide part of the necessary power potential allowing a state to pursue an independent foreign g policy.

Location is one of the crucial elements in molding the foreign policy outlook. The insular location of the United Kingdom has influenced the general character of the British foreign policy as decisively as the isolated geographic position of the United States in the case of the American foreign policy. The location has created a sense of security as the vastness of size has conferred the same sense upon Russia and China.

2.History:

Another guide to foreign policy is the history of the country. From history alone, the nation inherits a style and culture, which in turn influences foreign policymaking. History is the record of the doings of a community, of its failures and successes. The experience, failures, and successes guide policymakers to deal with present problems.

If a specific policy had proved to be rewarding in the past, policy-makers would-like to try the same policy for tackling similar situations in the future. On the contrary, if a particular policy had proved to be a failure to deal with a situation, the policy-makers would try a different policy under an identical situation in the future.

History shapes the current tradition and the self-image of society, and therefore, the specific national style. The British habit of muddling through, the French concern with security, honor, and glory, the German ruthlessness, the Soviet obsession with secrecy, and the American habit to interpret international issues as moral issues, India’s policy of nonalignment and Panchsheel, have definite and specific historical roots. In every case, such a national style and character influenced the making and execution of foreign policy.

3.Population:

it, as a determinant of foreign policy, is relevant both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The political, economic, and military phases of a nation’s foreign policy are also molded by the size, character, and distribution of its population. It is believed that the greater the number of population, the greater will be its power. Workforce determines the standard of living, values, way of life, and even a nation’s expectations.

The significance of China and India rests partly on the large size of their population. Besides the quantity, the quality of the population, as revealed in its educational level, skilled labor, technical know-how, health, and strong national character, is a determinant of foreign policy. The population’s quality also influences the quality of the political system, public administration, leadership, and even execution of foreign policy.

4. Natural Resources:

Food, minerals, metal, coal, crude oil, and water resources constitute an important element of foreign policy’s national power and consequences. The availability of these resources in plenty definitely enhances the importance of a country. For example, petroleum has significantly strengthened the West Asian countries’ position in international relations.

They have used oil as a tool of their foreign policy. If natural resources are not locally available, they have to be procured through international cooperation. The availability of strategic and crucial raw materials will place a v country in an advantageous position in foreign affairs. On the contrary, a country lacking in these resources will follow a weak foreign policy.

5. Economic Factors:

Today, no state in the world can boast of economic self-sufficiency. Even the United States is greatly dependent upon world trade for economic prosperity. This mutual interdependence of the economies also works as a determinant of foreign policy.

Economic interdependence leads to international economic activity expressed in terms of tariffs, import quotas, trade agreements, and other financial arrangements. Sometimes adjustments in an international economic relationship create tension in the world, which further takes political and military action.

States are not equally gifted by nature with natural and economic resources, nor are they capable of utilizing available resources. Therefore, nations make their foreign policies so that the supply of war materials may not run short, and their trade may have a favorable balance. International economic activity also needs facilities and protection of foreign investment. All these economic factors have a bearing on foreign policy.

6. Development:

Usually, a developed nation tends to follow an independent foreign policy, whereas a backward nation is inclined to pursue a dependency policy. Due to its poverty and military weakness, the latter would rely on developed nations for economic development and or for its protection against a powerful enemy. Such compulsions do not normally perturb strong and developed nations.

However, security is a relative term, and even the most powerful nation perhaps does not feel fully secure. Many times developed nations like Britain and France are not able to follow independent foreign policies. They are often required to toe the line of NATO dictated by the United States.

Although Japan is an economic power and threatens to overcome the United States shortly, it is militarily weak. It depends on the US for its security vis-a-vis Russia and China. Japan is compelled to follow the dictates of the US in the realm of foreign policy. Thus, foreign policy co-relationship between development and independence is indefinite and uncertain.

7. National and Military Capacity:

It includes the military preparedness of a state, its technological advancement, and modem means of communication. The economic development and enlightened political institutions are also associated with the national capacity. States with adequate military capacity will have greater initiative and bargaining power in foreign policy matters. Only those states have adopted aggressive postures that feel militarily strong.

8. Ideology:

There has been a great debate on whether ideology persecutes as a determinant of foreign policy. Some scholars say that democratic nations believe in peace while dictation regimes believe in war, But reality falsifies this hypothesis. America and Britain, by no means, are less wan prone than Russia and China.

At times, a leader uses ideology merely to justify his policy or behavior in familiar terms that are acceptable to his countrymen. But on the other occasions, a nation goes to war, not for national security but only to compel others to subscribe to its ideology.

An objective view on this matter is that ideology alone is not a policy goal. This is proved by the fact that nations professing Opposite ideologies live in peace with each other for several years. However, there is another side of the picture.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union cannot be fully explained if one ignores the ideology of communism. World revolution remained one of the chief objectives of the USSR’s foreign policy for many years. Russian expansion after 1945 aimed at establishing communism as much as her political domination.

However, the role of ideology as a determinant of foreign policy should not be overemphasized. Often ideologies are used simply to obscure the real facts of a situation or ambitious rulers’ real motives. Sometimes governments stand for certain ideas only to command popular support at home and preferably abroad also.

9. Public Opinion:

Especially in democratic countries, public opinion cannot be ignored as one of the foreign policy determinants. It is often vague, volatile, amenable to quick changes, and difficult to mobilize. But once on a particular problem, public opinion is mobilized and expressed in clear terms. It becomes difficult for the government to overlook it while deciding on the issue in question. The force of the Public Opinion in the United States politics compelled the government to order the withdrawal of the American forces from South Vietnam.

External Factors:

Certain external factors and situations also influence and shape a nation’s foreign policy. These factors are as follows:

* 1. International Organizations:

These include international law, the U.N.O., and its activities, UNESCO, I.L.O, W.H.O., I.M.F., etc. The nations cannot completely ignore international law, treaties, and contracts so that their violations may not put in danger the policies. Almost all countries are also members of the U. N O.

Its decisions and activities affect the foreign policy of many nations. Communist China, for a long time, ignored international organizations and consequently could not secure its due position in the sphere of international relations. In 1971 she became a member of the U.N.O., and this fact caused several shifts in China’s foreign policy.

2. World Public Opinion:

World public Opinion provides dynamism to the external environment. It is always changing. It is tough to know unless it becomes obvious and organized. Like a flicker of light, it influences foreign policy rarely. The characteristic of consistency is absolutely absent in it.

3. Reaction of other States:

The states cannot always neglect the viewpoint of other states while making their foreign policies. Moreover, every state has some friendly nations or allies. Their reaction about a particular policy has to be given special attention States usually never attempt to pursue those interests that are totally Opposed to another state’s fundamental interests. If the police ignore the reaction of other states, it has little chance to succeed.