

Can us foreign policy orientation?realism is a

Business, Decision Making



Can different types of realism explain the US foreign policy orientation?

Realism is a theory essentially about Power, security and national interests.

States relentlessly seek power and security because they exist in self-help system and States build up military to survive, which may lead to a security dilemma. Realism has been the dominant theory of world politics since the beginning of International Relations. There are four types of realism:

Classical Realism, Modern Realism, Neo Realism, and Neoclassical realism.

Classical realism focus on power politics with “ Human behavior” while Neo

Realism focus on power politics as anarchical International System. Under

Neo Realism, there are two sub-types of realism: Offensive realism which

focuses on maximization of power, and Defensive realism which mainly

focuses on maximization of security. To counter Neo realism, Neo-classical

realism is the important new approach to international relations focusing on

the interaction of the international system and the internal dynamics of

states such as individual, domestic and international politics, state-society

relations and state identity. In short, classical realism as ‘ individual level’

and structural realism as ‘ system level’ approaches, neoclassical realism is

a ‘ multilevel approach’, These different types of realism play a dominant

role in every country’s foreign policy decision makings.

Thus, United States, the super power country, also exercises these different

types of realism in approaching their foreign policy. During World War II,

American exercised isolationism and improving its welfare and just sell

weapons to the countries who were participating the war. And also, President

Franklin D. Roosevelt insisted that America’s sons were not going to be sent

into any foreign wars. But when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor of US , the

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foreign policy of isolationism changed its trend and US bomb nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a counter attack. By analyzing, US practiced foreign policy with defensive realism in this case. Because, at this time, US built his power not because of the intension of invasion but because of protection (counter attack). The Bush Doctrine is prominent case which reveals the concept of classical realism and neo realism.

Under Bush administration, there were in response to terrorism attack that occurred on September 11, 2001. US forces invaded Iraq without the consent of United Nations by accusing that Iraq support terrorist in 9/11 attack. So, most powerful countries tried to persuade US not to invade Iraq. But Bush pointed that it is for the protection of world's security. However, according to offensive realism, powerful nations want to influence over all nations and want to get more power (unlimited power) to control world. This means that the US will always seeks powers to influence on other states.

Neorealist theory can explain the Iraq war in 2003 by saying that the US saw invading Iraq as an opportunity to expand their power and to show US hegemonic power. Another possibility is that when the world could not stop Iraq aggression, US had no other choice than to invade Iraq, according to offensive realism. This is because the structure of international politics forces states to be aggressive in order to survive including protecting from terrorism.

On other hand, by classical point of view, US views Sudden Hussein as an aggressor. So, as a human behavior, he will expand his power in any way such as WMD, invasion to other countries. Bush also a realist who wants to

influence the world with strong power and focus on national interests. So, this invasion is caused not because of system but because of their aggressive nature. Bilateral relations between the United States and China can be defined with neo classical realism approach because their relationship is in the scope of “ threat-interest” situations. There are a lot of external threats which is rooted form anarchic international structure such as North-Korea.

If US share a common external threat with China, they will start military cooperation because of balance of power. Besides, both US and China compete power status in international system but they still keep their relations because of economic interests. By seeing that, although China is its main power balancer, US still keep relations for its domestic interests and external threats. The realistic tactic of befriending and supporting dictatorships for purposes of “ national interest” is the US government’s ongoing friendship with and support of Saudi Arabia.

This theocracy embraces the Koran as its constitution and is ruled entirely by Sharia Law which violates general human rights. Even so, US provides the Saudi government with high-tech weaponry to purchase oil form its sheiks and regularly sends US representatives to wine and dine with its leaders which all are toward securing US national interest. By analyzing that, this case is suit with the neo classical realism approach. Even state behavior is not US type, US knows what its domestic need is and tries to expand its power scope over Saudi. In conclusion, realism emphasizes on self-interest, especially national interest and power. Although Obama is democratic who

emphasize on democracy and human rights, he can violate US values if there is national interest. Now, President Donald Trump is republican and can be called a realist because he only emphasize on American interests obviously. In my opinion, most of the US foreign policy decision making processes play with realist approach.

That is why different type of realism can explain the US foreign policy orientation. Reference: Presidential doctrines (www.wikipedia.com)Iraq war in 2003 (<https://www.britannica.com/event/Iraq-War>), China-US (threat-interest)AmericanIsolationism (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/american-isolationism>)