

The biggest influence on the foreign policy politics essay



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According to Joshua S Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, foreign policies are the strategies government apply to direct their actions in the global arena. Foreign policies spell out the objectives state have to come to a decision to pursue in a specified association or situation, that is; Foreign policies are the general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states.

As stated by Wikipedia, Foreign Policy is defined as the exact set of aims which summarizes how a nation will interact economically, militarily, socially and politically in the international arena.

Foreign policy process can be defined as the organizational structures and practical relationships that help establish and carry out foreign policies.

Foreign policy process is defined by Encarta, as the governmental arrangement and functional affairs that aid create and perform foreign policies. Foreign policy process is basically a process of decision making.

In international relations according to Joshua S Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, scholars are more interested in foreign policy process than the specific policies. This is due to the fact that foreign policy process deals with the procedures and structure that states use to arrive at foreign policy decision to implement them. Foreign policies are reached as a result of multiple forces at various levels of analysis; therefore there are different factors that responsible for the result of foreign policies.

The basic factors that influence foreign policy are the individual and domestic influences. The outcome depends on the individual decision

markers, on the type of society and government they are working with.

These influences operate from the individual and domestic levels of analysis.

In foreign policy process decision making is very important, decisions are carried out by action taken to change the world and as a result, international relation scholars have come up with different processes, evaluations and models of analysing decisions such as rational model which involves setting goals and evaluating their relative importance and choosing the one with the highest benefit, another process is the organizational process model this involves relying for most decisions on standard operating procedures, while the last model is the government bargaining model which this involves Bargaining among different government agencies.(it is worthy to note that decision processes may consist of any of the following)

Relating to the issue stated above, the individual influence that is solely responsible for the results of foreign policies processes is basically the individual decision makers. The individual decision makers are the only true actors in international relation; these are individuals that make important decisions affecting foreign policy in international relations and take responsibility for the consequences. According to Joshua S Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse whether intended or unintended every international event is as a result of decisions made by individuals. For example the decision to invade Iraq by United States in 2003 march 20, after claims by Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction and Iraq's alleged links with Al-Qaeda.

According to the individual analysis the decision was made by the president George Bush. Bush chose to invade Iraq, according to bob Woodward; author of bush at war and plan of attack, Woodward assert in a comment about the <https://assignbuster.com/the-biggest-influence-on-the-foreign-policy-politics-essay/>

Iraq invasion “ it’s his war, (president bush) it was his decision he went through a very long process considered lots of things”. Thus this proves the fact that decisions are made by individual decision makers who are responsible for their actions.

In individual decision making, rationality to a large extent plays an important part. Rationality is a circumstance where there is a cost benefit analysis that is calculating the cost acquired by a possible action and the benefit it is likely to bring. Acting rationally has to do with selecting the right action which has the maximum benefits and also the minimum expenses. The question asked in foreign policy process, is what extent are national leaders able to make rational decisions. For example, how rational was former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to participate in the invasion of Iraq?

Thus the question of rationality of individual is the extent, to which individuals are able to make rational decisions in the interest of the nation; the answer for rationalism is solved using the rational model decision making process as earlier examined.

According to realists, both states and leaders are rational actors, so that one actor can easily be substituted for another. The influence of individual foreign policy process is to a large extent very critical and important. The reality is that individual decisions are based on personal values and beliefs of decision making.

Individuals have different goals, different ways of pursuing the goals, different backgrounds, diverse personal experiences, dissimilar intellectual capabilities. For example Bill Clinton & George H. W. Bush were different in <https://assignbuster.com/the-biggest-influence-on-the-foreign-policy-politics-essay/>

their peculiarity; one grew up in Greenwich, where his father was a U. S. Senator the other from Hope Ark, where his father was a rambler. These factors influences affect the decisions of national rational individuals in foreign policy process.

The domestic influences function at the domestic level of analysis. The domestic influences essentially attempt to examine the way structures surrounded by a state affect the outcomes of their foreign policy. The domestic influences are rather copious unlike the individual decision makers.

One of the domestic influences on foreign policy process is the action of interest groups. Interest group is a union of people who share a common significance in the result of some political issues, they organise themselves to try to influence the outcome. Foreign Policy makers must operate in the context of political debates in the society according to Joshua S Goldstein. In democratic system interest groups are more significant than in an autocratic system. Thus interest group is only influential in a democratic system, these is one of the limitation of pressure group.

These interest groups accomplish their motives by Lobbying. According to Dr. Ezekiel Nukuro " a lobby is a group of people trying to convince an organization or government that something should be done; for example the anti-nuclear lobby is a recognized example in the Pacific and currently is the anti-abortion lobby between America and Europe.

Lobbying can be understood as a calculated communication or method of influencing or convincing key advocacy targeted audiences for example

associates of Parliament, Government or Church priest, to do something
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(generally to adjust a law, Policy or the distribution of budgets) about an issue". To achieve their goals lobbyist must Gain hearing, present cogent argument and have ability to trade favours.

Basically, foreign Policy process is influenced by Interest groups who are ready to wrestle the government to accomplish their aims and the pressure from these groups cannot be ignored making them a big influence on foreign policy process. However, these groups are less effective in a dictatorial system.

Public opinion which is another form of domestic influence, to a large extent is also very influential in influencing foreign policy process. According to Wikipedia public opinion is defined as the multifaceted compilation of opinions of various different people and the totting up of all their views. Government needs the support of people because it is the people that carry out the policies. Public opinion can be influenced by public associations and the political media. Furthermore, mass media make the most of a wide variety of advertising methods to get their message out and change the mentality of people. A constantly used technique is propaganda.

To a large extent public opinion is important in a democratic government because it relate the people's feelings, thus can influence the foreign policy process of a government, however just like interest group, public opinion is not an effective influence in a autocratic system, more so because the government can also manipulate public opinion through the use of a continuously used technique called propaganda.

Another domestic influence that affects foreign policy process outcomes is the tensions between agencies. According to Joshua S Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, certain agencies traditionally clash, and an endless tug of war influences the foreign policies that emerge. For example during the cold war between the soviet union and united states, in the united states the defence ministry was usually more hawkish or aggressive; they favoured the use of military strength, while the state department were more dovish cause they favoured diplomacy thus the president had to create a balance.

However representatives of bureaucratic agencies mostly influence foreign policy process to promote interest of their own bureaucracies.

Nevertheless the problem of tension between agencies can be solved through government bargaining model, this model entails the bargaining of various government agencies.

Another domestic influence on foreign policy process is the Military industrial complex. According to Jon C. Pevehouse a military industrial complex refers to an association of government agencies, industrialized corporations, and institutes of research functioning or running collectively to provide military forces. According to Wikipedia " it is a coalition consisting of the military and manufacturers who profit by producing arms and trade them to the government".

This military industrial network was formed as a result of the growing importance of nuclear weapons, logistics and others during the cold war. According to pevehouse because of the domestic political power of these

actors, the complex was a dominant influence on foreign policy in both the Soviet Union and United States all through the cold war.

By 1961 according to Goldstein, President Dwight E also confirmed to the influence of the military industrial complex on foreign policy process and warned the government that the military industrial complex was gaining unwanted influence in the in the society. Thus this proves the influence of military complex in foreign policy process.

In democracies, military industries also influence public through advertising that ties their product to patriotic themes. However at the conclusion of the cold war this military industrial complex experienced some restraint.

Lastly another domestic influence to foreign policy process is the legislature, in some government such as the United States, in their democratic system, legislators plays a direct role in making foreign policies by passing budgets, regulating bureaucratic rules, creating trade union and even controlling immigration procedures.

however international relations researchers disagree on the fact that legislature who are also referred to as executives, do not really have an influence in foreign policy process unlike interest groups and military industrial complexes since they hardly go in opposition to the decision made by the executive, however according to pevehouse; in practice they do.

To support this assertion an example is the September 11, 2001 incident.

According to Goldstein and Pevehouse; three days following the September

11 attack, the U. S congress deliberated and approved George W Bush complete power to start the war in Afghanistan.

Also, in the year 2002, the congress also approved a declaration allowing the employment of force in Iraq (Goldstein 2006).

This proves that legislature has a indisputable influence in manipulating the foreign policy process of a country. Legislature is applicable both in democratic and dictatorial systems.

In conclusion, one cannot deny the domestic and individuals affect or influences foreign policy process. After close consideration on the principal influence on foreign policy process, without doubt one can easily state that the individual influence has a very large influence on foreign policy. This is because the performance of a state in the international arena result from human choices also all the dialogue connecting the domestic influences is still linked to that single action of the individual decision maker. However whether in crises situations or normal routines individuals decision makers do not act alone; their assessments or decisions are shaped by the government and society which they deal with.