

International Relationship

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Abstract – No nation is an island. Because domestic policies are constantly affected by developments outside, nations are compelled to (rather than sit on the fence or out-rightly isolate themselves) enter into dialogue with target or initiating entities or form alliance(s) for the purpose of enhancing their status quo, or increasing their power or prestige and survival in' the international system.

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INTRODUCTION

Because international relations is in transition following emerging realities in the international system, it has become complex and even more difficult arriving at a more universally acceptable definition of the subject. But this is not peculiar to international relations as there are more intense agreements over the definition of political sciences itself. Nevertheless scholars have persisted in their attempt to define international relations.

Trevor Taylor (1979) defines International Relations as

"A discipline, which tries to explain political activities across state boundaries".

According to Ola, Joseph (1999),

"International relations are the study of all forms of interactions that exist between members of separate entities or nations within the international system".

Seymon Brown (1988) thus defines international relations as:

"The investigating and study of patterns of action and "reactions among sovereign states as represented by their governing elites."

Some scholars see power as the key to International politics. Thus, they define International relations as the subject that deals with those relations among nations, which involve power status.

As Stanley Hoffman writes

"the discipline of international relations is concerned with the factors and the activities which affect the external policies and power of the basic units into which the world is divided."

Thus, international relations is concerned with all the exchange transactions, contacts, flow of information and the resulting behavioral responses between and among separate organized societies. International relations could encompass many different activities social, economic, religious and so forth in so far as they have implications for international political relations.

In the words of Karl Wolfgang Deutsch (1968),

"An introduction to the study of international relations in our time is an introduction to the art and science of the survival of mankind. If civilization is killed in the nearest future, it will not be killed by famine or plague, but by foreign policy and international relations."

The point expressed here is that we can cope with hunger and pestilence, but we cannot deal with the power of our own weapons and our own behavior as nation states.

It is important to note that since the end of World War 1, nation states have possessed unprecedented instruments for national action in the form of ideologies and weapons, and they have become even more dangerous vehicles of international conflict, carrying the potential for its escalation to mutual destruction and ultimate annihilation. The nation state holds the power to control most events within its borders, but few events beyond them.

It is thus decisively important for the student of international relations to understand that the world of today is marked by two factors. One fact has to do with the nature of power in the age of the atom; the other concerns the interdependence of mankind in an age of the individual.

NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

International Relations, like the world community itself are in transition. In a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world, it encompasses much more than relations among nation states and international organization and groups. It includes a variety of transitional relationships at various levels, above and below the level of the nation states. International relations are a multidisciplinary field gathering together the international aspects of politics, economics, geography, history, law, sociology, psychology, philosophy and cultural studies. It is a meta-discipline.

SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

It is known by now that international relations encompass a myriad of discipline. Attempts to structure and intellectualize it have often been thematically and analytically confined to boundaries determined by data.

The core concepts of international relations are International Organization, International Law, Foreign Policy, International Conflict, International Economic Relations and Military Thought and Strategy. International/Regional Security, Strategic Studies, International Political Economy, Conflict/War and Peace Studies, Globalization, International Regimes.

Moreover it covers, state sovereignty, ecological sustainability, nuclear proliferation, nationalism, economic development, terrorism, organized crime, human security, foreign interventionism and human rights.

These have been grounded in various schools of thought (or traditions) notably Realism and Idealism.

Example:

International relations are thus concerned with every form of interaction between and amongst nations. Such interactions can also occur between corporation and social groups. Examples are interactions between member states of the OPEC or the International Human Rights Commissions. The moment such interactions cross a state boundary it is of interest to the study of International Relations. International relations recognize and respond to the fact that the foreign policy goals that nations pursue can be a matter of permanent consequences to some or all of the others.

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