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The internal and external determinants of foreign policy

The internal determinants of foreign policy :

1. Geographical determinants
2. Natural resources
3. Human determinants
4. Personal determinants
5. Societal determinants
6. Political determinants
7. Military determinants

The external determinants of foreign policy :

The big question asked in international relations and foreign policy is : why do states behave the way they do in the international system ?

Some people argue that this is a question of international relations theory and others say it is a question of foreign policy theory . For our purposes, we can consider them the same issue. Why do states behave the way they do is the question that theories of international relations and theories of foreign policy are trying to answer. The fact that these are treated as separate bodies of theory says more about political scientists than it does about the nature of state behaviour. Since political science is concerned with theory building, our focus will be on a theory . The search for theory is a search for rules to explain social science phenomenon (in this case foreign policy behaviour determined by external influence). Theories are statements about cause and effect.

Since we are social scientists and since we are dealing with nations, we cannot run experiments, we cannot invade several nations to see what their different reactions to invasion might be . We had to use historical data on the behaviour of a State foreign policy, resulting from the external factors that determine the foreign policy formulation, to test for a theory and then arrived at the System

Level Theory. The System level of analysis examines state behaviour is the effect. Characteristics of the international system cause states to behave the way they do. Change in the international system will cause change in state behaviour. The key variable in the international system is the power of a state within the system. Some states are powerful; others are weak . So for example, the cold war had two powerful states. Therefore the central cause of all state behaviour in the cold war was the fact that the US and USSR were the two powerful states in a bipolar system. Today, there is Uni-polar system – one superpower (or hyper-power) – and that defines the behaviour of all other states in the system. (See neo-realism below). So this level of analysis might explain the US intervention in Iraq as a matter of the US, the one and only powerful state, flexing its muscles to police the world against states that threaten it. The US wants to preserve its dominance and therefore crushes all challengers .