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International relations: Foreign policy

Is that president’s foreign policy more consistent with realism or liberalism? Why?

Introduction

President Trump’s foreign policy is based on the ideology of fundamental realism. The first foreign policy of Trump’s administration reflects its connection with conservative realism the National Security strategy addressed the major shifts in the geopolitical order that also involved resurgence of great power competition. Realism involves burden sharing with allies and open-ended interventions that are sensitive to costs. Trump is seen as a non-liberalist because he is not intended on treating this order and in only concerned about raising questions regarding institutions that have been working for over sixty years (Wivel, 2017). His central argument for adopting realist foreign policy is that the institutions are not complying with the interests or values of America. The business background of the president has also influenced his decisions because he believes in the benefits that a country can derive.

Theory

Realists interpret the foreign policy in accordance with political power. They don’t define the amount of power and claims that it depends on the situational need. The state’s access to resources and its size influence the decisions regarding foreign policy. The policy also changes according to the security challenges faced by the country. The nature of the strategic environment also affects the weight of domestic influences. The theory states that powerful countries are more likely to enjoy large external action compared to the weak states. Realism relies on an anarchic structure on an international system that reflects the absence of legitimate monopoly of power. It states, “the absence of a central authority that could protect states against each other leads every state to focus primarily on its own security and survival, and, in particular, how it might best protect itself from the attack of other states” (Wivel, 2017). It stresses on the absence of powerful authority that provides protection to the states. The foreign policy emphasizes on human decisions at the state level. It means that decisions are taken that provide the best response to the external challenges.

Relists are crucial for the enhancement of the country's national security. An ineffective policy will have adverse impacts on the country if it neglects the national agenda. the decision maker has a right to address the challenges and make decisions that are in the best interest of the country and state. Realism is against the philosophy of attaining a greater good. This means every state is responsible for taking actions that ensure its own security and benefit. The theory rejects the ideology of greater good because such actions can have adverse impacts on the national stability of the country (Wivel, 2017). The central idea of the theory is that it is built on the philosophy of realism. The decisions rely on the assessment of benefits and risks. The leaders following realism will be concerned about choosing the policy framework that maximizes the national benefit.

Realism is established on the ideology of collective selfishness and politics of necessity. It states, “a concern with power politics and how it influences decisions on war and peace, a writing style attempting to unpack the factual development of events, and a focus on foreign policy decision makers” (Wivel, 2017). This indicates that the policy is formulated by considering the facts and examining possibilities of development. As each state is concerned about its own security and power, it reflects the concept of collective selfishness. Realism promotes the decision-makers to take actions or devise a policy that acts in favor of the country. The politicians don't care about its implications on the rest of the world. Political necessity indicates that any decision can be justified according to the need of the situation. This reflects the application of catalyzing change.

The theory states that the leader must be able to provide logical reasoning behind policy intervention. According to realism “policymaker is the anti-idealist attempting to view the world as it is in order to rationally and cool-headedly employ the means necessary to preserve the political community he is the leader of” (Wivel, 2017). The decisions or the changes must be justified with rational logic. The leader if convinces policymakers about his views, it represents the realistic issues. It will be appropriate to adopt such measures because they offer to reason.

Historical cases

The decision of the United Nations to support NATO during the cold was based on the theory of realism. Trump's actions on foreign policy depict that he appeals to non-interventionists who reflects engagement with multilateralism (AMADEO, 2019). Trump claims that “China stop stealing America’s intellectual property the United States loses about $600 billion a year to intellectual property theft, with China accounting for the majority of cases” (Schadlow, 2018). The claims were raised in Trump's speech of 2018 that criticized the role of powerful countries and identified it as a threat to the American economy and the position of superpower. The president has used realism for interpreting the adverse impacts of competition. The reason for making such claims is to highlight the foreign policy weaknesses that are having negative implications on the security of America. Trump states that countries that are enjoying high power due to their strong political and economic standings must be considered as rivals.

Trump in 2019 declared to close the southern border of Mexico. He claimed that security is more critical than trade. The decision of Trump in 2018 resulted in rectification of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This act has great significance in American history because it was established for promoting trade between Mexico and America. Major policy changes reflect, “Trump imposed a 25 percent tariff on steel and a 10 percent tariff on aluminium on Canada, Mexico, and the [European Union](https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-european-union-how-it-works-and-history-3306356). In retaliation, Canada imposed tariffs on $12.6 billion of U.S. imports” (AMADEO, 2019). This reflects changes in policy for integrating changes that maximize the interest of America. It indicates a strategy for revising trade negotiations that removes the imbalance of trade.

Trump’s policy on controlling drug trafficking relied on minimizing the cross border movement between Mexico and America. He adopted a realistic approach by claiming the Mexican trucks are supplying most of the drugs in America. The cocaine production cartels shifted to America in the 1990s that required the state's crackdown (Schadlow, 2018). Since that time the majority of the traffickers moved to Mexico and are still operating from there. The decision of Trump to close the Mexican border reflects selfishness because he has focused on the national security of America only. This is also against the history of NAFTA that was approved for promoting free border movement between Mexico and America.

Analysis

The National Security of Trump’s administration indicates realism because of the role of central power. It states, “the American way of life cannot be imposed on others, nor it is the inevitable culmination of progress” (Schadlow, 2018). This idea reveals that Trump is following a realistic philosophy because of his actions or decisions regarding foreign policy don't impose an American way of life on immigrants or minority populations. This is because everyone has a right to choose the way they want to live. The president has thus focused on adopting democratic means that don’t undermine personal choice.

The foreign policy is focused on advancing American principles that stress on peace and prosperity. The first principle of sovereignty that includes "the preservation of American freedom of action and the unwillingness to cede control of decisions to multilateral organizations or other collective bodies” (Schadlow, 2018). This view has deep connectivity with the theory of realism. President’s claims that the ideology of the United Nations is associated with diminishing democracy undermines the sovereignty of member states. he believes that the EU is not fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. The president is concerned more about American interests and values that convinces him to give up power to prominent undemocratic bodies like the UN. He is only willing to collaborate with organizations that ensure that produced actions support American interests and values.

The second principle of the National Security has an association with the competition. Trump's National Security Strategy reflects that it is put on the competition front. He witnesses the world and globalization as a competition that reflects realistic viewpoints. He talked about the competitors like China who are powerful in economic, political and military aspects. The nature of order has always supported other powers to rise according to Trump. He witnesses these powers as a threat to the United States. his policy consider the developed countries who are superior in power as a threat to America. The states that gained excessive power due to success in the economic, military and political means are more likely to cause adversaries for America (AMADEO, 2019). Trump’s policy has thus stressed on great power competition. he has also criticized the role of globalization due to increased competition and power shifts taking place across the world. Competition states that the world is not safe due to the emergence of a global economy because business firms from all over the world are working for maximizing benefits. This according to the president poses challenges for the local businessman who has to compete with the organizations engaged in the global community. The policy considerations of Trump depicts that America needs to address globalization in a way that it will address American benefit. This reflects that America must compete with powerful countries by building a foreign strategy that strengths the country's position.

Trump has considered America’s engagement with Russia, China and Iraq as power exploitation of the country. He suggests cutting defiance budgets and working on the policy of peace. Trump’s police states, “defence budget cuts under sequestration, and developing a national defence strategy to reestablish the balance of power in key regions" (Schadlow, 2018). This reflects that the president has taken the role of a realist who rejects to depend on the arc of American history but believes in reconsidering security problems. Trump has also rejected the view that new power equilibria like that of China's rise will not pose any threats to American security. He claims that international rules and domestic regimen will ultimately affect political harmony and convergence. The realistic philosophy followed by Trump depicts that he has criticized the idealism of conservative internationalists. His argument also denies the benefits of liberal democratic values.

The third principle stresses of Trump’s foreign policy is focused on catalyzing change. the presider is concerned about the costs involved in the ambitious policies. He claims that America should not bear undue or unnecessary burdens by confronting issues of the world. Such a mindset indicates that Trump is relying on realistic philosophy for retaining its position as a superpower. This is the only way by which American National policy will contribute to the long-term stability of the country. The incentives of Trump also indicates that foreign policy must be capable of taking all necessary measures that will promote national security (Wivel, 2017). Realism used by Trump states the need for catalyzing change and taking actions that are in the best interest of America.

Realism is also apparent in Trump's views regarding sharing a burden or sharing responsibility. He claims that the Muslim-Majority countries need to take actions for fighting against radical Islamists. This is because the engagement of America in supporting anti-terrorism has increased financial burden on the country. This according to the president's views is uneven and unjustified. The argument of Trump states that it is the collective responsibility of the Islamic countries, not America. The analysis of Trump's views indicates that he has relied on the ideology of realism by taking actions that result in the best interest of America (AMADEO, 2019). Here his central focus is on minimizing the cost burdens by disengaging from unnecessary foreign activities.

Trump has demanded reciprocity and actively seek corporation for security and trade. He involved modern defence alliances for spreading security and peace-related obligations. He has also criticized the trade imbalances that have affected the American economy negatively. He highlights many real issues related to trade such as tariff and non-tariff barriers and the manipulations of currency. Realistic views are also apparent in the president’s response to immigrants (Schadlow, 2018). He identifies the threats faced by America due to the increase in European and Asian immigrants. The suggestions for adopting strict immigrant policy indicate the adoption of realism.

The immigration policy according to Trump has played a negative role by encouraging immigrants to settle in America. The rise in immigration has shrunk employment opportunities for local people. He also claims that the entry of foreign investors has increased the competition for the local firms. This indicates the realistic views are used by Trump for defending his views. He considers such policy as ineffective and flawed. The president has thus relied on realism for justifying his claims about immigrants. The consistent rise in immigrants has created problems of employment and joblessness for the American nationals. The realistic philosophy of Trump depicts that the policy must act in favor of the local citizens. This reflects that the solution for overcoming unemployment is by reducing the number of immigrants. By adopting strict immigrant policy the foreign policy will contribute towards the development of the local people (Wivel, 2017). This will create more jobs for local Americans and increase the chances of their growth.

Trump has used realism for justifying his strong views against NAFTA. He claims that the foreign policy must close the border with Mexico irrespective of its economic implications. This is because the increase in drug trafficking is due to open trade between the two countries. Closing the southern border according to him will affect the economy but is crucial for maintaining national security. The response of Trump to the border trade between Mexico and America depicts that he has used realism that suggests adopting change according to the situation. It is appropriate to change the policies depending on the situational needs.

The overall analysis of Trump’s decisions regarding foreign policy depicts that he has relied on collective selfishness and political necessity. The ideology of collective selfishness indicates that the states are justified in taking measures that represent national agenda only irrespective of its impacts on the world or neighbor countries. Trump has taken a selfish stand by proposing changes in the trade agreements. This is due to the fact that increased immigration has worsened the conditions of employment. The local Americans have to struggle for jobs due to the availability of high workforce. This has also undermined opportunities for employment and minimized wages. The companies hire foreign labor at cheap wages that affect the employment opportunities for first-class citizens.

Realism states that the leader is free to take action that reflects political necessity. Trump’s decision of considering changes in the NAFTA act is also justified on the basis of political necessity. The necessity of the situation requires the president to take action that would minimize the threats of drug trafficking. Drug trafficking is linked to Mexican cartels it is appropriate to adopt a defensive strategy like closing borders (Wivel, 2017). Similarly, Trump's decision of deporting undocumented immigrants also reflects realism. This is also linked to political necessity because it suggests the welfare of local Americans. Realism is linked to peace and stability that means taking actions that are essential for national security. This is justified even if neglects shared burden or shared responsibility. Trump manages to provide adequate reasoning behind policy changes that make him realise.

Conclusion

The foreign policy of Trump on represents the fundamental realism because it stresses on peace and stability. The decision maker has a right to address the challenges and make decisions that are in the best interest of the country and state. Realism is against the philosophy of attaining a greater good. The analysis of Trump's views indicates that he has relied on the ideology of realism by taking actions that result in the best interest of America. By adopting strict immigrant policy the foreign policy will contribute towards the development of the local people. The leaders following realism will be concerned about choosing the policy framework that maximizes the national benefit. The ideology of collective selfishness indicates that the states are justified in taking measures that represent the national agenda. The decisions of Trump are justified on the basis of realism.

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