**Introduction to International Relations**

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Territorial conquests or cooperation

1. **What can states do to each other with their economic and military capabilities?**

Coercion (Hard power) or Attraction (soft power)

**Definition**

Scholarly study of interstate relation, evaluation and expansion of states system which signifies a complex classification of government types

**Sovereignty**

* Attribute of a state which makes it autonomous both internally and externally

**Introduction**

* The study of International Relations enables to explain why international events occur in the manner in which they do and gives a greater understanding of the world
* International relations is a broad and complex topic both for countries engaged in relationships with other nations, and for observers trying to understand those interactions.
* As an academic discipline, international relations encompasses a wide range of academic fields, ranging from history to environmental studies, and there are a number of areas of specific specialty for academics who are interested in them
* International Relations as a field of study covers the factors and processes that affect the interactions among states and non-state actors across national boundaries
* The concept of international relations on some level is probably quite old, given that humans have been establishing governments and communicating with each other for thousands of years.

**Meaning/Nature/Scope of International Relations**

1. **Isolation is not a usual option**

* States are independent of each other, at least legally; they have sovereignty.
* But that does not mean they are isolated or insulated from each other.
* On the contrary, they adjoin each other and affect each other and must therefore somehow find ways to coexist and to deal with each other.
* Furthermore, states are usually embedded in international markets that affect the policies of their governments and the wealth and welfare of their citizens.
* That requires that they enter into relations with each other.
* Complete isolation is usually not an option.
* When states are isolated and cut off from the state system, either by their own government or by foreign powers, the people usually suffer as a result.
* That has been the situation at various times recently with regard to Burma (officially, the Union of Myanmar), Libya, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.
* Therefore, like most other social systems, the state system can have both advantages and disadvantages for the states involved and their people.
* Hence it can be stated that International Relations is the study of the ‘nature’ and ‘consequences’ of these international relations

1. **Inescapable influence of Global Events**

* Traditionally national governments have been ultimately responsible for maintaining the security and economic welfare of their citizens, as well as the protection of human rights and the environment within their borders.
* With global ecological changes, an ever more integrated global economy, and other global trends, political activity increasingly takes place at the global level.
* Under globalization, politics can take place above the state through political integration schemes such as the European Union and through intergovernmental organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.
* Political activity can also transcend national borders through global movements and NGOs.
* Civil society organizations act globally by forming alliances with organizations in other countries, using global communications systems, and lobbying international organizations and other actors directly, instead of working through their national governments.
* The world has become increasingly interconnected and enmeshed
* A major event in part of the world inescapably influence the states on other part of the world.

**Example:**

9/11 attack on USA, Global Economic Recession

**Global Integrative and Disintegrative Trends**

Disintegrative trends are splintering the political landscape at the very time that integrative trends are shrinking the planet

The countries of the world are drawing closer together in communication and trade, producing a globalized market.

Yet at the same time, disintegrative trends paint a less promising picture. Weapons proliferation, non-state actors, and terrorism and the irredentism claims all portend a restructuring fraught with disorder

**Integrative Trends**

**European Union**

*“We must build a kind of United States of Europe. In this way only, will hundreds of millions of toilers be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which make life worth living”*

Winston Churchill

* At the end of World War II, the continental political climate favoured unity in democratic European countries, seen by many as an escape from the extreme forms of nationalism which had devastated the continent
* A process of integration started wholly or partially in Europe that encompassed the aspects of industrial, political, legal, economic, social and cultural integration of states
* Since long, the European Union (EU) has been the most developed model of regional integration

**Globalization**

* Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.
* This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world.
* Globalization engenders a significant shift in the spatial reach of networks and systems of social relations to transcontinental or interregional patterns of human organization, activity and the exercise of power
* It has generated flows and connections, not simply across nation-states and national territorial boundaries, but between global regions, continents and civilizations.

**Disintegrative Trends**

**Proliferation**

* Proliferation of weapons especially weapons of mass destruction has threatened world peace and security.
* Rapid increase of weapons has generated tensions among states especially the states that were already at odds with each other.
* India-Pakistan border, currently, serves as the most threatening potential nuclear flash point in the world

**Terrorism**

Intensity in terrorists hold activities is weakening the state structure.

The regions which are marred by terrorism are characterized by fragility and tentativeness

Without arranging themselves across the national lines, peoples are divided across narrow versions of religions and racial boundaries.

**Non-State Actors**

* Non-state actors (NSA) are entities or organizations with sufficient power to influence and cause a change even though they do not belong to any established institution of a state.
* Non state actors are posing a great threat to international state system
* The proliferation of non-state actors in the post–Cold War era has caused an erosion of power and sovereignty in the traditional Westphalian nation-state system.

**Irredentism:**

* Irredentism is any political or popular movement intended to reclaim and reoccupy a lost homeland or territory.
* **Irredentist**: One who advocates the recovery of territory culturally or historically related to one’s nation but now subject to a foreign government.
* As such irredentism tries to justify its territorial claims on the basis of (real or imagined) historic and/or ethnic affiliations.
* Some states formalize their irredentist claims by including them in their constitutional documents, or through other means of legal enshrinement.

**Examples:**

* Afghanistan claim over Pakistan’s territory including Pashtun belt,
* Argentina claim over Falkland Island
* Cyprus issue between Turkey and Greece.

**Addressing Some Questions**

In a complex world perplexed with political and economic issues, there are certain relevant questions that demand attention;

1. **What are the System basic units?**

**States vs Supranational Actors**

**States**

**The Realist View of the State**

* Realists hold a ‘state-centric’ view: the state is an autonomous actor constrained only by the structural anarchy of the international system.
* As a sovereign entity, the state has a consistent set of goals—that is, a national interest—defined in terms of power. Once the state acts, it does so as an autonomous, unitary actor.

**The Liberal View of the State**

* The state enjoys sovereignty but is not an autonomous actor. The state is a pluralist arena whose function is to maintain the basic rules of the game.
* There is no explicit or consistent national interest; there are many. These interests often change and compete against each other within a pluralistic framework.

**The Radical View of the State**

* In Radicals views there is no ‘national interest or real sovereignty’, as the state is continually reacting to external capitalist pressures.
* The instrumental Marxist view sees the state as the ‘executing agent’ of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie reacts to direct societal pressures, especially to pressures from the capitalist class.
* The structural Marxist view sees the state as operating within the structure of the capitalist system. Within that system, the state is driven to expand, because of the imperatives of the capitalist system.

**The Constructivist View of the State**

National interests are neither material nor given. They are ideational and continually changing and evolving, both in response to domestic factors and in response to international norms and ideas.

States have multiple identities, including a shared understanding of national identity, which also changes, altering state preferences and hence state behaviour.

**Supranational Actors**

* Transnational actors e.g. Inter Governmental Organizations (IGOs) have now become forces that are limiting the state sovereignty.
* In the current international state system, these organizations are continuously challenging a state’s internal as well as external policies and decisions
* However, it is not to say that they are posing existential threat to a state as they develop around progressive goals like environment, human rights, development, peaceful mutual coexistent etc.

**Example:**

UNO, IMF, Greenpeace,

1. **Underlining foreign policy goals**

**Confrontation vs Cooperation?**

* Interests may invite both conflict and cooperation among states
* It is upon the states whether they forward their policy goals through conflict and cooperation
* The world we live in always seems to contain wars and conflicts.
* Just by looking back over 100 years, history is filled with major wars like the two World Wars, the constant scare of escalation of threat during the Cold War and more recently The Afghan and Iraq War
* Instead of confrontation modern ethos and discourses speak about interdependence of actors involved in a given situation
* In the prevailing modern state system, cooperation offers a win-win situation

1. **Employing Relative Capabilities**

**Coercion (Hard Power) vs Attraction (Soft Power)**

**Coercion**

* Coercion is a threat or use of punitive measures against states, groups, or individuals in order to force them to undertake or desist from specified actions.
* In addition to the threat of or limited use of force (or both), coercion may entail economic sanctions, psychological pressures, and social ostracism.

**Attraction:**

* The action or power of evoking interests in or liking for someone or something. It is an essential component of ‘soft power’.
* Soft Power is a concept that describes the ability of a state to attract and co-opt rather than coerce.
* Policy makers are coming to realization that national goals can be achieved better through attraction rather than coercion.
* The intangible power resources such as the attractiveness of a country’s people ideals and seductiveness of their culture possess the ability to get others to embrace their values and to see their objectives as legitimate.

**Conclusion**

Beginning with the study of law and diplomatic history, the scope of international relations has steadily expanded

In a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world, IR, today, encompasses much more than relations among nation-states and international organizations and groups

Although the underlying factors of international relations have not changed, the state system, however, has changed and is still changing