Chapter-Ⅱ

FOREIGN POLICY DECISION MAKING: A THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

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In the modern world, no state can remain isolated from the global community. With the rise of globalization, the concept of statecraft has been reshaped and the interdependency between and among the nations has grown to a new height. The network is so visible that, an action and decision of one state is bound to affect the fate of another state. Even the domestic matters or instability of a particular state poses far reaching consequences for the entire region or even the whole world. Indeed, globalization and other forces of modernization, notably trans-boundary and global environmental changes, mean that more of what was once purely national is now the subject of Foreign Policy. Hence, each and every state should have an effective and vibrant Foreign Policy to manage the highly complex issues of modern statecraft.

Foreign Policy refers to the comprehensive and effective design of a state to deal with matter that is outstretched beyond its territorial borders. It is a complete plan to materialize the national objectives and multiply the national gain. Making this comprehensive plan or the policy is a complex process and usually, prepared by the top political leadership with the help of senior bureaucrats. The procedure of decision making as well as the policy outcome generally depends upon the working style of leadership, the structure of decision making unit as well as the nature of other internal and external factors. In an autocratic system, the decision making is generally a one act play where the supreme leader plays the decisive role, whereas in the democratic setup, the decision making is the sum of overall consensus. Hence, the decision outcome is apparently different from autocratic to democratic Foreign Policy. Hence it is essential to know how the Foreign Policy is formulated and what are the factors responsible for the successful and effective Foreign Policy?

In this regard, the present chapter attempts to answer the above questions by giving a comprehensive picture of the nature and structure of the Foreign Policy decision making process. The chapter is divided into two broad sections. The first part of the first section attempts to define the terms ‘Foreign Policy’ and ‘Foreign Policy decision making’. The second part of the first section analyses the composition and function of the decision making units in detail. The second section discusses various models and stages of Foreign Policy
decision making along with its merits and demerits in detail. It also explains various factors that eventually determine the Foreign Policy decision making and its limitations. Hence, this chapter gives a theoretical foundation which is essential for the better understanding of the successive chapters on India’s Foreign Policy decision making.

**Conceptualizing Foreign Policy Decision Making**

Cosmopolitanization of international relations has put a huge challenge in defining Foreign Policy as well as Foreign Policy decision making. Analyzing in general, Foreign Policy includes a range of activities and strategies under which a sovereign state interacts with other international players. But, the recent trend shows that Foreign Policy does not limit itself with state to state interaction but also deals with the non-state actors and international organizations. Therefore, it is essential to know what Foreign Policy is and what Foreign Policy Decision Making means. A careful study reveals that the meaning of the concepts varies from scholar to scholar. Here is an account of a brief discussion of the two debatable terms.

**What is Foreign Policy?**

Going by literal meaning, the word Foreign Policy can be divided into two different words- Foreign and Policy. The term ‘Foreign’ refers to things that exist beyond the territorial boundaries and ‘policy’ can be referred to as the guidelines and approaches to achieve the objectives. Therefore, Foreign Policy can be defined as the principles and guidelines to achieve the objectives existing outside the territorial border. But, the meaning of Foreign Policy in the modern time is not restricted to this simple definition and the concept is changing rapidly along with the world political environment. Thus, the modern concept of ‘Foreign’ is associated with deep and multidisciplinary approaches relatively different from scholar to scholar. Hence, the simple meaning of Foreign Policy can be summarized as the sum of a state’s strategy to strengthen its national capacity, the approach to attain the national goal and the tools to deal with the other elements of the world. It is the desired state craft to avoid any conflict without compromising the national goal. In a narrow sense, ‘Foreign Policy’ is the official relationship between two states. Traditionally, Foreign Policy referred to the course of action taken by the government, more precisely by the Foreign Ministry to deal with foreign countries. But the rise of globalization has down played
this argument where dealing with the outer world became more complex. The internalization of life took this issue beyond the matter of diplomat to diplomat interaction. As the fair answer to the question “What is Foreign Policy?” seems beyond the reasonable conclusion, a brief account of scholarly definitions might march ahead towards conceptualizing the term.

Defining Foreign Policy

The first step in any investigation on ‘Indian Foreign Policy’ is to define the term Foreign Policy. But interestingly, being the centre of International Studies and the flash point of scholarly discussion for centuries, the term ‘Foreign Policy’ hardly has any unanimous definition. While one school of scholars blame for its wider scope and multidimensional characteristic, others are not ready to take the narrow approach to define it. According to Roy Jones “an attempt at an acceptable, and an accepted brief, definition of foreign policy would be to invite ridicule. The nature of foreign policy is not agreed, and one is tempted to believe that in political societies it never will be agreed”. Surprisingly, most of the literature on Foreign Policy didn’t even attempt to define it, before debating on the issues of Foreign Policy. Perhaps due to this systematic ignorance, Charles Hermann called Foreign Policy as the “neglected concept”. Going further, he asserts that, “This neglect has been the most serious obstacle to provide more adequate and comprehensive explanations of Foreign Policy.” According to Hermann, the reason for this neglect is that “most people dealing with the subject have felt confident that they know what Foreign Policy was”, hence, feel unnecessary to define it. He believes that most of the people argued that, “we know it when we see it”. However, unlike other concepts of International Relations, Foreign Policy does not confine to one meaning but comprises of range of terms and activities. Based on individual perceptions, it sounds different to different people. Perhaps this is why many, if not most, Foreign Policy studies don’t even attempt to define the term. However, a careful search will reveal that there are dozens of different definitions available, out of which some of the definitions have been critically discussed below.

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15 Ibid.
Foreign Policy is a multidimensional concept that lies into the various corners of the state craft and bears different meaning for different people. For some it is the official and state to state relation, both between and among the nations, while others focus on the role of non-state actors and non-human factors too in defining Foreign Policy. Similarly, one school defines Foreign Policy as the product of internal discourse, other takes as the result of international environment.

Literally, the word Foreign Policy is comprised of two individual words, foreign and policy. The word ‘Foreign’ came from the Latin word “foris” and “foras” meaning “outside”\(^{16}\) and the word ‘Policy’ originated from the Old French word “policie” meaning ‘civil administration’\(^{17}\). Therefore, the literal meaning of the phrase ‘Foreign Policy’ is the administration of the outside activities or strategy to manage the issues that exist beyond territorial boundaries of a state. According to the Oxford Dictionary, Foreign Policy is “a government’s strategy in dealing with other nations.”\(^ {18}\) Putting it more comprehensive, Encyclopaedia of Britannica defines Foreign Policy, as the “General objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states.” It further explains that “The development of Foreign Policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behaviour of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs”\(^ {19}\).

In their path breaking classical work, “American Policy: Pattern and Process” Kegley and Wittkopf defined Foreign Policy as “the goals that the nation’s officials seek to attain abroad, the values that give rise to those objectives, and the means or instruments through which they are pursued.”\(^ {20}\) The definition while giving the comprehensive definition of defining Foreign Policy in terms of three concepts – the goals, values, and instruments, it limits Foreign Policy behaviour only to the activities of the state. Stretching the definition


\(^{19}\)Encyclopaedia of Britannica, at http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/213380/foreign-policy

longer Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen observes that “Foreign Policy involves goals, strategies, measures, methods, guidelines, directives, understandings, agreements and so on, by which national governments conduct international relations with each other and with international organizations and non-governmental actors.”\(^{21}\) In the “Changing Politics of Foreign Policy”, Christopher Hill has given a comprehensive account of Foreign Policy. By putting it short, he wrote “a brief definition of Foreign Policy can be given as follows: the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations.”\(^{22}\) Similarly, for Thompson and Macridis “Foreign Policy refers to the way in which policy-making institutions and official actors “define their positions and that of their states vis-à-vis outside … world over a period of time.”\(^{23}\) According to Joyce P. Kaufman “Foreign Policy refers to those decisions made within a country that are affected by and that in turn affect entities outside the country.”\(^{24}\)

Summarizing the above definitions it is clear that most of the scholars limited the definition of Foreign Policy to the official relation between the states and recognize the state as the only actor in the Foreign Policy decision making. But in the 21\(^{st}\) century, non-state actors such as MNCs, INGOs as well as other international and ultra-national organizations are also playing active role in shaping foreign policies of the states and influence their international politics in many ways. For example, the 9/11 terrorist attack or the rise of LTTE has definitely been the major factor in reshaping the behaviour of the statecraft of America and Sri Lanka respectively. Similarly, the secessionist movements of Kashmir, North-eastern states as well as the Punjab have been the prime factors in determining the Foreign Policy of India for years. Even disproving the standing definitions, the United States has started negotiating with the non-state actors, the Taliban leaders for the settlement of Afghanistan issue. Besides non-state actors, and non-human factors such as earthquake, Tsunami or prolonged famine also are considered as the major determinants of Foreign Policy of a nation. Amnesty International for example, has been constantly perusing, directing and

\(^{22}\) Christopher Hill, Changing Politics of Foreign Policy(Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 3
\(^{24}\) Joyce P. Kaufman, A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman& Littlefield, 2010) 8
criticizing the nation states over any human rights violation by the respective states. Similarly, during the outbreak of Tsunami in the South and Southeast Asian nations in 2004, the whole world came forward in reconstruction process. Addressing these conceptual gaps, George Modelski defines “Foreign Policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment.” Here the activities are not limited to the state, but address the whole community including various organizations or groups. James N. Rosenau views Foreign Policy as an adaptive behaviour and is contended that it “consists of all the attitudes and activities through which organized national societies seek to cope with and benefit from their international environment.” According to Walter Carlsnaes “Foreign policies consist of those actions which, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments and/or directives, and pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed towards objects, conditions and actors–both governmental and non-governmental – which they want to affect which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy.” Similarly, Hill limits the Foreign Policy to the official relation between the states. As the modern life has become more internationalized where relations cannot be limited to the state, Foreign Policy definitely goes beyond the diplomat to diplomat interaction. Non-official relations also play a vital role in shaping the state behaviour with others.

While national goal largely has been the focal point in defining Foreign Policy, scholars like Gibson, Padelford and Lincoln mostly stress upon the approaches to attain these goal. Highlighting the means Hugh Gibson defines Foreign Policy as “a well-rounded, comprehensive plan, based on knowledge and experience, for conducting the business of government with the rest of the world. It is aimed at promoting and protecting the interests of the nations. This calls for a clear understanding of what those interests are and how far we can hope to grow the means at our disposal. Anything less than this falls short of being a national Foreign Policy.” Similarly, according to Padelford and Lincoln” “Foreign Policy

28 Hugh Gibson, The Road To Foreign Policy(New York: Doubleday,1944) 9
is the key element in the process by which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into concrete courses of action and to attain these objects and preserve its interests.” In other words, Foreign Policy involves both a formulation as well as the approach to achieve the objectives. Cecil V. Crabb offers a simple yet very effective definition of Foreign Policy. For him, “reduced to its most fundamental ingredients, Foreign Policy consists of two elements: national objectives to be achieved, and means for achieving them.”

Though the scholars differ in the goal and the means, both are integral parts of Foreign Policy and carry equal importance.

The main objective of the Foreign Policy is to maximize the national interest, to maintain the state sovereignty and defend its border by enhancing its capacity. Highlighting the importance of national capacity, Hazel Smith defines Foreign Policy “as the capacity to make and implement policies abroad which promote the domestic values, interests and policies of the actor in question”. For F.S. Northedge Foreign Policy is the “use of political influences in order to induce other states to exercise their law making power in a manner desired by the state concerned; it is an interaction between forces originating outside the country’s borders and those working within them.” In a different language, Norman Hill defines Foreign Policy, “as the substance of nation’s efforts to promote its interests vis-à-vis other nations.” To put it in a sentence the ultimate aim of Foreign Policy is to promote national interest and influence other’s decision outcomes according to the desire of the state. However, Harmann’s definition stresses upon the state’s action when he defines Foreign Policy as “the discreet purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals ….. (it is) the observable artefact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision.”

Although, managing external relations is the salient feature in defining Foreign Policy, some of the present studies highlight that domestic environment also plays a significant role in determining the Foreign Policy of a state. Hence, the significance of the internal and external factors has been the centre of debate for years. While one section

29 Cecil V. Crab jr., American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) 1
31 FS Northedgeed, The Foreign Policy of The Powers (London: Faberand Faber,1968) 9,150
32 Hermann (1978) 34
stresses upon internal structure such as internal leadership, domestic political setups and nature of decision making environment, others highlight the importance of international environment and world political order. For James D. Fearon on the Foreign Policy is “just the domestic politics of foreign countries, or the product of their domestic politics”. Similarly, Fearon describes Foreign Policy as an outcome of domestic politics and states that “some non-unitary states are choosing suboptimal foreign policies due to domestic-political interactions.” Carlsnaes in his earlier definition also highlights the importance of inputs of Foreign Policy and not outcomes and believes that, Foreign Policy is the product of internal political discourse. However, some balanced views have been emerged in recent times putting equal emphasis on both domestic factors and external environment. Howard Lenthal for instance, believes that “Foreign Policy lies at the intersection of the domestic and international aspects of a country’s life”. Similarly, according to Joseph Frankel “decisions taken on Foreign Policy differ from those in other fields in that they are subject to a unique interplay between domestic and foreign environments. The persons involved usually occupy certain official positions of trust and importance empowering them to act on behalf of their society in its external relations.” Therefore it can be stated that, for an effective Foreign Policy both internal setups and external environment play equal role in the decision making process. The decision maker has to consider the internal limitations and external compulsions while making policies.

As observed by Christopher Hill, “defining political activities are notoriously difficult and Foreign Policy has no exception”. The rise of globalization and the internationalization of society push the globe into a boundary less phenomena where an attempt for segregation of a concept such as Foreign Policy is considered as a matter of joke. Putting it orderly, Roy Jones’s writes “An attempt at an acceptable, and an acceptably brief, definition of Foreign Policy would be to invite ridicule. The nature of Foreign Policy is not agreed, and one is

34 Howard H. Lanther, Foreign Policy Analysis (Columbus: Merrill Publishing, 1974) 3
36 Christopher Hill, Changing Politics of Foreign Policy (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 3
tempted to believe that in political societies it never will be agreed.”

Again, diverting the traditional single window concept of Foreign Policy where Ministry of External Affairs was the only active branch of government, the subject of external relation is now taken care by the various ministries. In other words the monopoly of the MEA is no more visible. This present development pushes that problem of defining Foreign Policy onto another level.

**What is Foreign Policy Decision Making?**

In the highly hostile international environment, it is the behaviour of a certain country which determines its fate. A single wrong move may cost heavily even to the survival of a country. Hence, an appropriate decision during the time of crisis is highly needed to guide the course of action of a state for the attainment of national interests and to deal with important international entities. Though the Foreign Policy outcomes channelize the relation of a country with other powers, it is the decision making structure which identifies the problems, explores the alternatives and takes the final call to defuse the outstanding issues. Therefore Foreign Policy Decision Making is the key to avoid the consequences and realize national interests. But interestingly, it is only in the 1970s a systematic study on the structure and function of decision making process has emerged as a new discipline, though the issues related to Foreign Policy have been the focal point of discussion for years. As a result very limited works have been attempted to define Foreign Policy decision making systematically and the concept remains far from the overall understanding of the mass. Therefore, a brief discussion to define Foreign Policy Decision Making will be appropriate, before going to discuss the issues on Foreign Policy decision making.

Foreign Policy decision making is the process by which government analyzes the existing problems, evaluate the policy alternatives and take appropriate actions to overcome the outstanding issues as well as for the maximization of the national gain. Putting it simple, FPDM explains why the government takes such an action, how the decision is going to work out and what could be the possible alternatives and its consequences. Hence, it largely attempts to investigate the structure, approach and process of decision making rather than the policy outcomes. In decision making the ultimate aim of the actors is to minimize the loss.

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multiply the benefits and resolve the problems. FPDM is an investigation to find out the alternative way to cope with international system, to avoid the conflict, to promote the national influence and to live peacefully. It is a complex process to find out the best alternatives, by various means and approaches.

**Defining Foreign Policy Decision Making**

Before we go on to examine the problems in detail, it is essential to define Foreign Policy decision making for the better understanding of the discipline. The word “decision “comes from the Latin root “de”, meaning “from”, and “caedere” meaning “to cut”. Hence, Decision in its root “caedere”, meaning “to cut from” and making decision means to come to a conclusion or cutting yourself off from any other possibilities.\(^\text{38}\) In simple term, decision making refers to the process to identify the problems, explore possible alternatives and to select the appropriate strategy to resolve those issues. Often ‘decision making’ is described as the synonym of ‘making choices’. But for MacKenzie “the word does not quite coincide in modern use”. He argues that the decision is a ‘real choice’ to meet the end as well as the approaches to attain the end. To put it simple, decision consists of the cumulative sequence of stages of choices rather than one choice to arrive into a conclusion.\(^\text{39}\) Koontz and O’Donnel, the well-known scholars of management, the principal branch of decision making define decision making as “the actual selection from among alternatives of a course of action”\(^\text{40}\) Whereas for George R. Terry, “decision-making is the selection based on some criteria from two or more possible alternatives.” Similarly, Louis A. Allen, states that “decision making is the work which a manager performs to arrive at a conclusion and judgment.”\(^\text{41}\) According to Baumann and Deber “decision making can be defined as the situation in which a choice is made among a number of possible alternatives often involving a trade off among the values given to different outcomes.”\(^\text{42}\) The father of Political Science Aristotle in his classic work ‘Nicomachean Ethics’ defines the decision making process as a

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\(^\text{38}\) See Online Latin Dictionary site *Latdict*, at http://www.latin-dictionary.net


Deliberate Appetition, “which is a logical and psychological sequence that starts with desire, continues with violation and concludes with the act of choice.”43 Defining decision making, Mauro Maldonato writes that “Making a decision ...... means deciding which course of action to follow, among those that are possible...to maximize the expected value that is to choose the alternatives associated with the highest expected values”. Further he added “The decision making process carries out a complex calculation which would include the collection of a large amount of information and of an enormous quantity of formulations for its processing.”44 In the words of Roth and Mullen “decision making is a technique that is designed to help arrive at the best possible choice that satisfies that higher order values and goals that have been selected”.45 Seckler-Hudson, believes that “Decision making in a government is a plural activity. One individual may pronounce the decision, but may contribute to the process of reaching the decision. It is part of the political system.”46 Summarizing the above definitions one can agree that, decision making is a process to choose the best out of the rest by analyzing the cost and consequences. In the decision making process decision makers enter into a complex process to find out some constructive conclusion. Decision making is not a onetime business. It is a continuous affair to defend the previous decisions and to take supplement decisions based on the feedbacks.

From the earlier discussions on defining Foreign Policy and the subsequent analysis on decision making one can synthesize what Foreign Policy decision making is? To put it simple, Foreign Policy decision making is the amalgamation of two different concepts ‘Foreign Policy’ meaning the external behaviour of a country; and ‘decision making’ meaning choosing the right options. Therefore, Foreign Policy decision making can be referred to as the sum total of a governmental decision to guide its national interests. In other words Foreign Policy decision making is the process to reach a conclusive approach to address the outstanding Foreign Policy complexity. In the words of Mintz and DeRouen “Foreign Policy Decision Making (FPDM) refers to the choices individuals, groups and

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43 As stated in Mauro Maldonato, Decision Making: Towards an Evolutionary Theory of Human Action, (Sussex: Academic Press, 2010) 8
45 Byron M. Roth, John D. Mullen, Decision Making: Its Logic and Practice, (Savage, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) 22
coalitions make that affect a nation’s actions on the international stage”. Further he added that it is the study to understand what goes into decision that presages the activities and events. Similarly, Goldstein and John Pevehouse define “(Foreign Policy) Decision making is a steering process in which adjustments are made as per the feedback from the outside world. Decisions are carried out by actions taken to change the world, and then information from the world is mentioned to evaluate the effects of these actions.” According to Janice Gross Stein “the Foreign Policy process is a process of decision making. States take actions because people in governments—decision makers—choose those actions”. Policy-making has been defined as the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver ‘outcomes’ – desired change in the real world.

According to B. Raman “Decision-making in Foreign Policy involves the analysis and assessment of past and current data, in the light of our past experience and that of others, who had dealt with similar situations, in order to identify the need and available options for action in the future and the likely implications of each of those options for the protection and promotion of our national interests.” From the above definitions, it can be analyzed that Foreign Policy decision making is the process of searching the best alternative costs and consequences and choosing the best course of action to take.

Though there are multiple agencies involved in the decision making process, it is the leadership who takes the ultimate decision by examining the cost of available alternatives. As the leadership is the backbone of the policy decision, their course of action and behaviour should be close to reality. The crises management experience, capacity to study the phenomena, indefatigable attitude during difficult times, and more importantly the cognitive potentiality of the principal players of the decision making body largely shape the Foreign Policy outcomes of a country and rearrange the global political settings at large. The decision

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47 Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr., *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making*, (New York: Cambridge, 2010) 3
makers must have the ability to deal with and manage any uncertain development. The decision maker is constantly facing uncertainty of deciding on a course of action, knowing that the consequences associated with the selection of any given act depend up on future conditions and events, the outcomes of which are unknown at the time the decision is taken.

MODELS OF FOREIGN POLICY DECISION MAKING

Decision making is a complex and ever changing process. The nature of decision outcome mostly depends upon varieties of internal and external factors, such as the leadership, the structure of decision making unit, the decision making environment etc. Interestingly, one cannot predict the similar decision out of the same decision making bodies as the surrounding environment changes time to time. In order to understand the complexity, Allision has divided the decision making style into three different models, based on the structure and function of decision making unit. These are The Rational Actor Model (RAM), Organizational Process Model (OPM) and Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM).

The Rational Actor Model (RAM)

Rational Actor refers to the leader who takes decision the way it should have been taken without any bias or influence. Rationality has been considered as the best way to solve the outstanding issues. It is the behavioural attitude having its very purpose. In defining rationality, Allison Graham writes “Rationality refers to consistent value-maximizing choice within special fiend constraints”. Hence, rational actor model of decision making is the process to choose the right options to achieve ‘national goal’ by analyzing all possible alternatives and its consequences. Rational decision making is the ability to relate means to ends. The leadership under this model is open to receive new inputs. After a thorough analysis of the input information, the decision maker chooses the option that gives the highest payoff. In the words of Janice Gross Stein “Rational decision-making refers to the

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53 W. Raymond Duncan, Barbara Jancar-Webster, Bob Switky, World Politics in the 21st Century (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2009) 130-158
process that people should use to choose. In a rational decision-making process, people should be logical and orderly”.

Rationality is a complex phenomenon to define. There is no such standard procedure called as the rational decision making, rather it is different from person to person, situation to situation and organization to organization. The process of calculating the cost and choosing the appropriate decision is a complex task. Based on the cognitive capacity and access to information, the decision outcome might differ person to person. Therefore rational decision for one leader will not be considered rational for the other. The decision making should be logical and unbiased, without any fear or favour.

**Element of Decision Making in RAM**

As the maximization of national goal is the ultimate aim of the decision makers, the process of decision making involves various stages and elements. Graham Allison in his classical work “Essence of Decision” has discussed various stages of decision making of the rational actor model. These are as follows.

1. Defining the problem
2. Analyzing the problem
3. Prioritizing the Goal
4. Developing alternatives
5. Evaluating each alternatives
6. Selecting the best options
7. Execution of decision

The Rational Actor Model is a kind of ideal approach of decision making whereas in many cases decision making has been seen as a highly politicized affair. Highly influenced by the discipline of Micro Economics, the actor under this model behaves in a mechanized way for the value maximization. The Rational Actor Model, like a chess board game always aims to acquire the optimum benefit with minimum cost. Once the assignment is stimulated into the model, the leader carefully studies the problem besides evaluating the options and related consequences. After the complex calculation of gain and involved cost, the decision maker selects the most reliable options having maximum benefit.

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Features of Rational Actor Decision Making Model

The Rational Actor Model is the most logical form of decision making which aims to achieve the optimum benefits by choosing the alternative policies. Apart from the logical preferences, the Rational Actor Model of decision making has various other features, which are discussed below.

Open for New Information and Evidence

Under the Rational Actor Model state is the only player, hence there is hardly any room for the non-state actors or interest groups. Therefore, under this single window mechanism, the Decision Maker is heavily provided with flow of information, be it from advisors or any other reliable sources. Under the model, the leader is not bound to go along with advises or input of information. The Decision maker under the RAM enjoys full freedom to go with his own cognitive interpretations ensuring maximum benefit for the
nation. For good effective decision the information that has been collected should be taken from reliable sources and if possible tested before relayed to ensure bias free.

**Open for Discussion and Believe in Transparency**

Rational actor model allows the participants to discuss the causes and consequences of the each available option in the decision making process. The decision maker also tries to acquire more and detail information by initiating discussion. Except the dictatorial regimes, most of the policy making mechanisms are practicing greater debate before coming to a conclusion, though the decision of the leader is considered supreme and absolute.

**Logical and Based on Circumventive Evidence**

As the RAM believes in rationality and selection of options purely based on merit and probability, it is believed to be the fairest mechanism. Hence, the decision making under this model mostly depends on circumventive evidence and reliable information.

**State is the only Actor and Ignores Non-state Actors**

In the rational actor model of decision making, state is the supreme and perhaps the only actor in the decision making process. The decision making also follows the standard structural model of resolving the policy obstacle. There is no place for emotions and self-assumptions in this process. Similarly, there is no place for non-state actors like NGOs, IGOs, Pressure or Interest Groups, terror organisations or other such organisations, as it goes against the very spirit of the rationality by creating space for influencing the policy decision.

**No Place for Values and Notions**

The first and foremost feature of Rational Actor Model is that it is purely based on the rational choice of available alternatives without any presumptions or emotion. In this model the decision maker takes decision opting for maximum benefit and the decision is purely based on merit. The decision making according to this model should be free from values, notions, emotions for the proper decision.

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Believes in Maximization of Goal

The Rational Actor Model is based on the decision structure, where the appropriate decisions are taken over other alternatives according to its merit. Under this model, the decision maker chooses the best alternative option to maximize the national gain at the cost of minimum loss. As the decision maker under the RAM is free from all kinds of values and emotions, he often seems aggressive while making a decision. Similarly, to promote its only motto “the maximization of state interest” it does not believe in the give and take approach, rather aims for optimum benefit.

Believes in Interstate Business

As we have discussed, the rational decision making model does not take into account the concerns of the pressure groups or other likely organizations but recognizes state as the only player in the decision making process and, its engagement always limits to the state level institutions only. But in the modern world it seems to be far from reality. The American Administration for example, is now talking to the Al-Qaeda to resolve the Afghanistan blunder.

Free From Serious Blinkers

Always the decision making process under the RAM follows some standard and structural procedure and seems quite similar in its decision making process. This model heavily depends upon the prescribed seven step process, to come to the conclusion. Therefore there is no scope of unexpected turn as seen in the other models of decision making to satisfy the pressure groups or sympathize over the public opinion.

The Limitations of Rational Actor Decision Making Model

1. This model ignores the importance of the individuals involved in decision making as individuals are grownup with their own beliefs, values, emotions, perceptions, ideologies and host of other traits which might affect their decisions. 56

2. As the information is the key to decision outcomes, there is a possibility that the leader may not evaluate the situation correctly and may be misinformed and may

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choose the inappropriate policy which may hinder the national goal. Further, the leader or the advisor may tend to block out information that does not agree with what they have already believed to be accurate. President Bush, for example gave misinformation about the possible development of WMD by Iraq, which proved false after the war. Here the US government gained nothing rather than losing thousands of forces in war and made Muslim World as its enemy.\(^{57}\)

3. Sometimes emotion plays an important role in making the country great. After the First World War Germany grew to a height with the help of the national emotion or in other words patronizing “nationalism”. The RAM sprightly ignores the emotion and takes decision which is highly logical, which may lose the plot to radicalize the national gain.\(^{58}\)

4. Often the state faces multiple problems and in the globalized world the decision making bodies are often pushed to deal with multiple and highly complicated issues at the same time. As a result the decision maker may not found enough time to study the problem and after all to calculate the available options to select for. Therefore the pressure of the overloaded issues often limits him to choose the right option because of inadequate analysis of alternatives.

5. In Rational decision making model the leader often takes decision based on the well laid principles and the decision usually seems rigid, stable and satisfactory rather than optimized one. In this model, the decision maker does not take risk to multiply the gain and does not stimulate his enthuse for the greater benefit of the nation. Therefore the pace of development remains comparatively slow.

6. Foreign Policy decision making is a two level game. Along with the international environment, the domestic politics is also considered as an important factor while making policies on external relation. But, in Rational Actor Model this domestic aspect is widely neglected.

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The rational Actor Model is one of the most effective decision making models of Allison crisis management theory. Due to its logical policy preference, it opts for the appropriate policy to deal with any issue. There are some other theories, such as the Game theory, the Prospect theory and the Poliheuristic theory, which also advocate the rationality in decision making, the basic ethos of the Rational Actor Model. However, some rational actor literatures state that, decision makers including the central decision makers do not have complete freedom of action and they are not in full control of their rationality.\(^{59}\) While making decision, the decision makers need to consider the other hindering factors and modify their choices accordingly. In due process, they are often forced to abandon the preferred and most effective alternative and end up with their least preferred outcome even though they choose rationally at every step along the way.

**The Organization Process Model (OPM)**

Decision making in the modern globalized world is not as simple as it was in the past. The emerging issues are so complex that the political leadership on its own can hardly do justice while making polices to address these issues. In this regard, there is a need of an efficient and multidimensional organization to take appropriate decisions. To overcome this problem, Graham Allison offered two more different models of decision making, such as the Organizational Process Model and the Bureaucratic Politics Model, where multiple actors and agencies work together in making policies.

According to Allison’s Organizational Process Model, the policy decisions are not the result of rationality but the outcome of a large organizational discourse, which is continuously involved in formulating policies within a ‘standard operating procedure’. The government, according to Greg Cashman, is a “conglomerate of large autonomous semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations”.\(^ {60}\) Hence, the decision making in government involves large number of inter-branch organizations that are linked with each other and function under a well laid procedure of operandi. The Organizational Process Model, according to Holis and


Smith is a top-down approach where the agencies usually function as per the demand of the government or the top leadership and vice versa.61

Decision Making Under the OPM

Allison’s second model of the organizational process model has been drawn from the organizational theories. Under this model, the whole structure of decision making has been divided into several sub-agencies that are eventually arranged as the top down approach and the leader dismantles the whole problem and assigns the sub part among the small specialized agencies. The concerned authority of that particular section has to resolve the given task within the stipulated time frame. Considering the limitations of time and resource during the time of crisis, leaders often settle on the first alternative to address the issue, rather than exploring the best. Due to the sequential goal preference, the problem of control and coordination of various stakeholders and the fixed ground rules (standard operating procedure) of the decision making units, the outcome often seems “satisfying”62 rather than rational. The Organizational Process approach is highly beneficial during the time of war or war like crisis where the leader has to take decisions quickly with limited information. The organizational process model is based on the shared responsibility and shared organizational goals and procedure. The Leaders usually gravitate towards the solutions that limit short-term uncertainty.

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Table 2. Organizational Process Model of Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Premises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared Responsibility for organizational goal</td>
<td>Generated based on professional efficiency and interest of percipients</td>
<td>Group Consensus</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual Respect</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ample Time</td>
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<td>Component</td>
<td>Key Players</td>
<td>Professionals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>Shared Governance</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Organizational, support through shared responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Diverse, Specialized</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Lengthy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>Support General Welfare</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>By Effected Individuals with Wide Spread Commitment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>Smooth Organizational Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Through Participant Observation and Priorities</td>
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**Features of OPM**

Greg Cashman has given in brief the features of Organizational Process Model, as follows:

- Under this model, the decision outcome mostly remains Satisfying, rather than optimal.
- The Organizational Process Model always believes in incrementalism. Hence, it is a positive and gradual process.
- This model of decision making is very rigid and lacks flexibility in decision making.
- Decision making under this model is carried out by qualified and experienced professionals and specialized organizations, rather than a small group of top level leadership.
- Organizational process model undertakes sequential search of alternatives and often settles on the first options, rather than choosing the best.⁶³

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⁶³Cashman, *What Causes War?: An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict* (Lanham, Maryland: 2013) 80-82
Limits of OPM

Allison’s Organizational Process Model has revolutionized the theory of decision making in many ways. Influenced by the management theory, Allison advocated the Organizational Process Model which consists of multiple agencies and institutions, rather than a single unit. Despite the ground breaking contribution to the decision making approach the organizational process model also is not far from criticism like any other model and has some of its own limitations. Some of the limitations of organizational process model have been discussed below:

1. The decision outcome in the OPM is shaped by perception and interest of the participants and therefore the policy is far from reasonable and effective.
2. As the ability of the individual of the decision making process is regulated, controlled and managed by the standard operating procedure, there is hardly any scope for flexibility, hence the outcomes are often satisfying rather than maximizing the benefits.
3. Each subunit or the department of the organization bears different rank of objectives and provides different value of means to achieve those objectives compared to other subunits. Therefore their setup of the objectives as per the organizational objective to solve the problem may not be same. 64
4. The Foreign Policy problem is distributed among the various departments of the organization and subsequently the departments divide the task among further micro units working under the department. As the different units deal with different tasks and different objectivities the coordination is the key for worthy outcome. If the coordination and communication fail, the outcome will definitely suffer. Similarly, the leaders and employers do not take time to examine all the linkages between their functional units and others in the organization.
5. Throughout the process the behaviour of the organization is monitored, controlled and managed by ground laws, i.e. standard operating procedure, and the activities of the individual are accountable to the higher authority as well as to the organization.

Therefore the individuals play a safe game rather than taking risk for greater benefit. Hence the decision remains satisfied.

6. The organization has its own style of operation and bears its organizational ideology. Hence, the leadership by default is often hijacked by the organizational ideology and constrained by the limitation of the organization.65

**Figure 2.1** Functions of the Organizational Process Model


**Bureaucratic Politics Model**

The Bureaucratic Politics Model, which is also known as the Governmental Politics Model (GPM) or the Governmental Barging Model (GBP) is the third decision making model of Allison. According to this model, the decision outcome is a product of bureaucratic interactions and elite politics, rather than the result of rational thinking or organizational discourse. As highlighted in the “*The Essence of Decision*”, the BPM believes that policy decision in general is the product of political bargaining of bureaucrats and government officials. The actors in this model are the bureaucrats and other elite leadership of the government, who selfishly engage in bargaining with the government to maximize their

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organizational interest using various bureaucratic channels. Under the BPM, the decisions are taken by “pulling and hauling” rather than rational choice.

**Bureaucracy in Decision Making**

The term bureaucracy is derived from the French word “Bureau” meaning “desk”. Therefore, the literal meaning of bureaucracy may be put as “rule by desks or offices” or “desk government” as termed by Finer. 66 Looking at the size and complexity, the administration in a modern state has to be assisted by large paraphernalia of officers and subordinates. One cannot think of a modern state without adequate bureaucrats, who lead various departments of the Government and assist the Government to achieve the national goals. They also support the political leadership in making polices for the optimization of departmental objectives.

According to Alison’s third model the government is not a single calculating unit, it is a blend of various organizations and individuals such as the administrators, bureaucrats and subordinates. Bureaucrats, being the important part of government are not only assisting the government, but also advising the government in policy formulation. But in popular political discourse bureaucracy and bureaucratic polices have been perceived as negative acts. 67 This argument seems more convincing when it comes to Foreign Policy decision making. Bureaucrats, who hold various significant positions, are competing with each other to present their own interest and to optimize their organizational or departmental goal. They are the key advisors to the political boss in the formulation of external policies, hence got strong source to influence the policy that suit their departmental objectives. In India for example, there are 43 Ministries and dozens of departments and divisions, which are headed by thousands of bureaucrats. Out of which, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Finance as well as National Security Council plays a significant role in India’s Foreign Policy decision making mechanism. Each of the ministries has its own defined interests, goals, approaches and objectivities. All the departments of the government want to achieve “more missions, greater autonomy from outside interference,

greater influence within the government, greater capabilities, resources, and personnel and after all a larger budget allocation”.

The ultimate aim of all such departments and ministries is to dominate and maintain supremacy in the administrative setups. The individuals representing various ministries and departments are having different responsibilities, resources, and sources of information and grown up with different perceptions, follow different code of operation, see one particular issue from different angles and have different stakes in policy outcome; hence their attitudes and objectives are different from each other. Similarly, being involved in the respective departments the bureaucrats inherit the organizational ideology into their own and assume most of the matters through organizational perspective. Therefore bureaucratic agencies seem parochial in terms of objectives, attitudes and approaches. Every administrative unit tries to secure its own interest (some time their own personal interest and not necessarily organizational interest) and calculate the organizational affects (lose or gain) vis-à-vis central decision outcomes.

In BPM, association of bureaucrats in decision making process is much larger than assisting and advising the supreme political boss. The bureaucrats often try to influence the decision for the sake of their departmental benefit or even for their own personal gain. As the resources are limited, each organization wants to win over the other. As a result they compete, quarrel and fight with each other to multiply their stake and to maintain supremacy over others at the time of decision making. According to Greg Cashman, the reasons for the parochialism are mostly related to their organizational sociological behaviour. Cashman believes that, all the leaders of a particular organization pose similar set of mindset, values, ideologies, objectives and approaches because they choose the organization which suits their personality or the organization selects the suitable person who can complement the departmental ideologies. If at all one’s personality does not match the organizational ideologies, he or she is automatically moulded in due course of time in accordance with the

68 Greg Cashman, What Causes War?, 90
69 Ibid, 89-95
organizational desire by the process of “Institutional Socialization”. Therefore proliferation of organizational interest automatically becomes the ultimate aim of the individual.\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{Core Propositions of BPM}

The Bureaucratic Politics Model as projected in Graham Allison’s “Essence of Decision”, Morton Helperin’s “Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy”\textsuperscript{71} and their collaborative work the "Bureaucratic Politics"\textsuperscript{72} is a complex set of organizational decision process making where all the stake holders (Mainly office bearers and bureaucrats) fight among themselves to prevail their organizational interests. While Allison proposed eight different models for the Bureaucratic Politics Model\textsuperscript{73}, Professor Rosati highlighted only four Propositions.\textsuperscript{74} However, some of the scholars of this area\textsuperscript{75} have only outlined three core models, namely ‘stand-sit proposition’ which focuses on Policy preferences for decision, ‘Bargaining Proposition’ which discusses actors’ behaviour during the decision-making processes and the ‘Resultant Proposition’ which refers to Decisions that are eventually adopted. Each of the propositions has been discussed in greater length below:

\textbf{Stand-sit Proposition and the Miles’ Law}

Mostly influenced by the old adage “where you stand depends on where you sit” the first proposition of Bureaucratic Politics Model assumes that the behaviour of the decision maker also can be influenced by the organization he works. As discussed elsewhere, the institutional socialization has moulded the personal choices of bureaucrats and his policy preference. As a result, the primary objective of the bureaucrats is to pursue and realize the interests of their organization. On their own words Allison and Zelikow summarize “Where one stands is influenced, most often influenced strongly, by where one sits. Knowledge of the organizational seat at the table yields significant clues about a likely stand”.\textsuperscript{76} The bureaucrats

\textsuperscript{70}Greg Cashman, \textit{What Causes War?}, 132-33
\textsuperscript{72}Graham T Allison., and Morton H. “Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications”, \textit{World Politics} 24, (Supplement 1972) 40-79
\textsuperscript{73}See Allison & Zelikow, \textit{Essence of Decision}, 182-83
\textsuperscript{74}For detail see Jerel A. Rosati, Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective, \textit{World Politics} 33, no. 3 (1981): 234-52,
\textsuperscript{75}For instance see Klaus Brummer (2009), Richard Stillman (1990), Thomas Preston (1999), Paul ’t Hart (2012), David R. Berman (1985) et.al
\textsuperscript{76}Allison & Zelikow, \textit{Essence of Decision}, 307
are not the only actors who influence decision making, there are other such actors also seen involved in the competition. They come, as Allison and Zelikow writes “with baggage in tow. The bags include sensitivities to certain issues, commitments to various projects, and personal standing with and debts to groups in society… Peculiarities of human beings remain an irreducible part of the mix”. 77 The stand-sit proposition highlights the ideological rigidity of the decision making actors where he cannot see beyond the selfish organizational interest. Therefore the old aphorism can be modified and put as “where you stand depends on what you see from where you sit”. 78

**Bargaining Proposition**

The second and most important proposition of the BPM is the Bargaining Proposition. It is the centre of the bureaucratic influences on decision making mechanism. By the name itself one can assume that it represents the politics of bargaining in the governmental decision making bodies to protest and promote its organizational interest. The bureaucrats and other stake holders compete and fight among themselves to defend the organizational goal, objective and position. They seek to maintain and even escalate their influences to ‘realize the organization’s mission, and to safeguard the organization’s capabilities to pursue its mission’. 79 Due to the limited resources, the politics of bargaining has often intensified to grab the maximum share of the benefit. More than the resources hunting, the stake holders often engage in ‘pulling and hauling’ 80 for the power and position for their personal and organization gain. 81

According to the Bargaining Proposition, the bureaucrats not just try to influence the policy making process, they also keep a close watch at the implementation level and make sure that, it complements their departmental objectives. However, the extensive use of bargaining politics often endangers the national interest. As everyone engages in bargaining, no concrete decision is possible due to their selfish bargain. Hence, they often go for mutual compromise and the policy decision often ends with mutual consensus, rather than rational.

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77 Ibid, 298
79 Halperin (1974) 24-62
80 Allison & Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 255
81 Ibid., 300
Resultant Proposition

The third and last proposition of bureaucratic politics model is the resultant proposition. This proposition mostly attempts to study ‘how the decision is adopted and under what circumstances’. According to the proposition, the policy decisions are the product of unintended compromise, though all the stake holders of the decision making engage in apprehensive competition to influence the policy outcome into their favour. Based on their official position and power structure the bureaucrats eventually settle into mutually acceptable policies. Hence, for Allison and Zelikow, the policy outcome is not the product of rational choices, rather the result of ‘compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence’. However it is a matter of notice that, the result of the long bureaucratic fights eventually ends with nothing more than mutual consensus and compromise.

Limits of BPM

Allison’s third model, the Bureaucratic Politics Model has been a new and interesting approach to investigate the Decision Making Analysis. Being a part of organizational theory, this model emphasizes the political ‘Pull and haul’ and its effects on decision making. Though organizational and bureaucratic support is badly needed for the effective policy and its implementation, the bureaucratic politics behind the screen ultimately achieves nothing. There is no doubt that bureaucratic politics helps the organization to find out its drawbacks and the areas for improvement, and as Max Weber assumed, it enhances the ‘efficiency and rationality’. Along the side of significance, the critics have put some limitations of the BPM.

The bureaucratic actors are often seen busy in the great game of maximization of self or organizational interest rather than national interest. Therefore, there is hardly any room for national goal. Secondly, there have been seen a greater fraction among the bureaucrats because of the selfish mentality and unusual efforts to win the decision making battle. As a result it is hard to unite them when there is any national crisis. Thirdly, a large amount of resources of the nation is going wasted because various organizations demand unrequited budget and staff just to poses their superiority. Fourthly, it has been seen that there is a

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82 Allison & Zelikow, Essence of Decision, 295
83 Charles W Kegley, Jr., and Shannon Lindsey Blanton, World Politics: Trend and Transformation (Boston: Wodsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011) 203
constant inclination of professionalism among the bureaucrats while they have been socialized with the organizational approaches and ideologies. As a result they often choose to stick to the practices of ‘business as usual’. Following the traditional organizational values and goals, bureaucratic actors hardly think about the innovative approach to optimize the organizational mission. Therefore, the policy outcomes are often centred on conventionalism rather than creative.

The Bureaucratic Politics Model defiantly has multiplied the policy alternatives because of its multiple advocacies, but it is hardly practicable during the time of crisis. As Allison argues the political bargaining will minimize the chance of rational action and at the end the compromise on the policy outcome will hamper the national interest. However, during the time of normalcy this model will be highly effective and if properly implemented will give maximum benefit.

**Process of Foreign Policy Decision Making**

Decision making is a complex process involving greater risk where every single step counts. It may escalate the institution into new heights or can be the cause of its decay. Decision making has been the very part of human behaviour since history, though it involves risk. Starting from the very personal level to the organizational, national and international level the development is attached to the ability of taking right decision. In our personal life we take decision almost every day. Similarly at the national level the policymakers take decisions to carry out the growth of both domestic and Foreign Policy.

The Foreign Policy, being the most important agenda for a nation to deal with the external entities and related crisis, has been formulated with immense care. It has been prepared with such design that it will realize the national aspirations. The nation looks it as a weapon to achieve the national goal. As a result, the decision making in Foreign Policy is usually prone to complexity. Decision making in Foreign Policy passes through various steps and involves all sorts of resources including cognitive and financial. The process is so complex that, almost all the governmental agencies involve in the panning and formulation of foreign policy in some way or other. Starting from the problem identification to policy outcome, the process passes through various stages, which have been discussed below:
Stages of Decision Making Process

The decision making is not the product of instantaneous work but developed through various stages assisted by various stakeholders. Be it the rational choice or organizational or governmental process the leaders make decisions phase by phase with the available resources. Each layer filters the odds and errors and contributes new developments into the process. Decision making is not a one-time task. It is a continuous process to address the outstanding problems. It is like a chess board game where every move needs a brilliant counter move and the responded move is countered with a further countermove. Therefore, the process of decision in Foreign Policy is considered as a continuous practice. It is like a policy cycle as it extracts the options for the existing problem and takes decision to resolve it and again examines it and rectifies the errors and takes another decision to improve it. International environment is an ever-changing phenomenon. Nations need to be engaged themselves constantly to formulate and improve their Foreign Policy to cope with the world system and optimize their national interest. Foreign Policy decision making involves several stages. These are:

Stage 1: Analyzing the Internal and External Environment

A close analysis of the domestic and international environment is essential for Foreign Policy making. It provides vital information to the decision maker and helps to construct policy options which are close to reality. A good decision maker is he who has adequate knowledge about the present situation of the internal as well as external world. As the Foreign Policy of a nation guides its behaviour in the international forum, the study of international environment provides an opportunity to readjust its position in the ever-changing global order with effective policy measures. Similarly, a close look on the domestic settings helps the decision makers to realize the internal constrains as well as domestic needs.\(^4\)

Stage 2: Recognition, Classification and Defining the Problem or Opportunity

With due study of environment, the first step towards practical decision making for the standing issue is the recognition of the problem. The leaders have to identify the problem in case of crisis or opportunity with the help of the assistants. The earlier the problem is identified, the earlier it can be solved and minimize the enduring consequences. Similarly, the early breakthrough of existing opportunity will help to contribute maximum gain for the nation.

Once the problem has been identified it should be classified including related costs or benefits. The classification of problems or opportunities will make the task easier to understand it thoroughly along with its roots and affects. Based on the classification the decision makers have to define the issues. Defining of the problem includes investigating the nature of problem, depth of issues and related causalities, its causes and its effects on national interests etc. It is the most important part of decision making. If the problem is recognized appropriately the suitable measures can be taken to prevent it. If the system fails to do so it may endanger the national security and future aspiration.

Stage 3: Setting of the Goal and Criteria

The modern state has multiple Foreign Policy goals. The leaders have to set the goal and its criteria to solve the issues based on its requirement and adaptability. Along with political environment, available resources and constraints of a nation have to be taken into account while setting the goals. The goals and its approaches need to complement with each other for good decision. The short term goals to resolve the standing issues should not be contrary to the ultimate national goal. The leader can set the goal and criteria on his own or with due consultants or advisors according to the structure of decision making. The decision making should be limited to the boundary or reliable resources and should not be depended on unrealistic asserts.

Stage 4: Development of Alternative Course of Actions

After setting the goal and criteria, the state has to find out the alternative policy options to resolve the situation. The leader may take the help of advisors and subordinates to generate as much alternatives as it can. The task may be distributed among the experts and
specialists who belong to different departments so that it can produce effective alternatives in minimum time. Time and resource are the main constraints of generating alternatives. If a nation is in crisis the leaders get less time to generate more policy options, hence they trial the first option until the effective one.

**Stage 5: Evaluation of the Alternatives**

The next step after the identification of policy alternatives is to evaluate the alternatives. Each of the policy options has to be evaluated thoroughly in terms of its merits and demerits, costs and benefits along with its contribution to achieve national goals. Sometimes some options may be beneficial for short term but may be harmful for future and vice-versa. The related future consequences have to be taken into account while considering any selection. A balanced track has to be maintained for optimum benefit. However, the state should be in a position to implement the alternative actions and the impractical options should be avoided.

**Stage 6: Selection of the Best Option**

The leaders have to select the best available policy option after they complete scrutiny of the alternatives. This is the crucial stage of decision making process. If the policy selection is biased or wrong the very purpose of goal optimization will suffer. The leader should remain out of the corrupt means, including presumption and emotional and try to follow maximum degree of rationality during decision making. However choosing the best is not easy, as different individuals have different approaches to look at. But the best policy alternatives should have some basic characteristics. Being complement to the very objectives of purpose and support to optimization of national goals should be the prime nature of the best alternatives. The total decision making system often engages itself to find out the best Foreign Policy options, especially during crisis. They often classify the available alternatives and prepare their rank according to their values and choose the best (often the top ranked) option for implementation.85

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Stage 7: Implementation of Chosen Policy Option

The policy decision is only a cognitive phenomenon and worthless unless it is put into action. The policy options need to be implemented in order to solve the outstanding issues once they have been chosen. A good decision may be tarnished by bad implementation and a weak decision may be supported by good implementation. Therefore the implementation part should be equally important alike the decision making. The leader usually distributes the decisions among the associated departments and agencies for its practical implementation. The policy decision should reach all these stake holders thoroughly and they should be well informed. The communication gap should be minimized and the implementers should be equipped enough for its operationalisation. Therefore if required some structural modifications of the associated organizations should be considered to reform it so that it can meet the expectations.

Stage 8: Conduct Follow-up Evaluations

Finding of policy alternative is not the end of homework. Periodical evaluation is immensely needed to get the feedback so that it can be readjusted with the requirement. The practical reach and limitations may vary from place to place and situation to situation. Therefore the timely follow-ups will help to achieve the Foreign Policy goals of a nation. The mechanism should be arranged to readjust its policy in the time of need. The feedbacks may be sent to the central decision making unit to correct themselves for future policies. If the policy decision fails to achieve the expectations it can be taken away and replaced with more effective policies if required.

Decision making process, as we have discussed, is a lengthy and complicated process. There are several stages in the decision making units. These stages are arranged in a vertical order where each stage complements to the next. Starting from the environmental realization to the policy follow-up, in each stage the concept is purified and the policy is delivered at last. But the Foreign Policy making process is different in different governmental settings and different environment. While in dictatorial system it seems like a one man show that tightly controls the units and often lionizes his wish, it is more participatory in democratic

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settings. However, the availability of resources and its rightful use mostly make the difference in Foreign Policy. Again, the decision making process is determined by the degree of reach and the desire of the nation. Major Player like United States for example, defiantly requires different level policies to dominate the world compared to marginal actors. Therefore, we can conclude that the Foreign Policy decision making process varies according to the need though the structure is the same.

**Figure 1**

Stages and Routines of Decision Making

![Diagram of Stages and Routines of Decision Making]


**FACTORS INFLUENCING FPDM**

The prime intention of a country’s Foreign Policy is to protect its sovereignty and optimize the national interests. The reach of one’s Foreign Policy depends up on its requirement and engagement with the world communities, so as the Foreign Policy decision making. It depends upon the desire of a country and varies from country to country. But it is not the divine made instrument, nor a creation of natural process. It is formulated by the state with the help of various political settings. Therefore Foreign Policy of a nation is the product of various forces that are engaged in guiding the behaviour of the state with other world community.

Just like the human behaviour, the behaviour of a country’s Foreign Policy is ever changing so as the decision making process. In fact Foreign Policy decision making of a country is highly guided, influenced, determined and channelized by various invisible
factors, though we believe that it is the product of the ultimate wish of the nation or its political Leadership. There are a number of factors both internal and external at different levels: individual, state and international levels that influence the behaviour of the state. The decision making process counts these factors and its significance before taking any decision.

As Foreign Policy decision making is a complex and multidimensional process, there are many actors, agents and institutions involved in this process. Besides the actors’ role, there are a few other factors that affect the decision making process and the outcomes. James Rosenau believes that, there are five major factors that ultimately influence the Foreign Policy decision making of a state. These are external or global environment, societal environment, the governmental setting, the roles occupied by policy-makers and the individual characteristics of the policy-making elites. According to Vernon McKay these factors can be divided into three broad categories, i.e. geographical, historical, and biographical issues (personality). For the present research we have divided these factors into two broad categories, internal factors and external factors.

**Internal Factors**

Internal and external factors are two different factors that affect Foreign Policy decision making. Though Foreign Policy is meant for the external engagement of a country, it is designed, processed and formulated within the political settings well inside the country. As a result it is bound to be influenced by the domestic factors. In fact, in most of the cases the Foreign Policy is adopted just to satisfy the domestic stake holders and restricted to domestic interests. The political affiliation of the official positions of the various decision making actors also put the domestic factors at the forefront while making foreign policies. Therefore domestic politics and foreign politics are inseparable entities and equally significant as external factors. The domestic environment consists of various equally potential factors that shape the Foreign Policy decision making. For this analysis internal factors are divided into six broad categories.

**Political Factors**


Among all domestic factors that influence Foreign Policy decision making, political factors are the most significant ones. It is not only the decision maker who is chosen out of extensive political calculation but also the decision making settings that are grown out of political will. The head of the government, who takes decision on the external behaviour of a country, is elected politically. Hence, he is bound to be influenced by the domestic political environment of the country. In other words, the political system of a state will decide the scope and limit of the Foreign Policy choices.

**Electoral Cycle**

The prime motto of any political leader including the head of the government is to remain in power as long as he can. Except dictatorship regimes all remaining political settings participate in election to get authority to rule the state. Each and every initiative of them remains accountable on the eyes of the public. The public and the civil societies analyse, discuss and scrutinize the policies and decisions that are taken by the government during its tenure of rule. Addition to this, the opposite political parties try to expose the loopholes to demoralize the government. Consequently, the ruling government and the allied organizations always take the policy which favours the domestic forces. The same argument can be extended to Foreign Policy decision making process. As the leaders have to stand before the public for vote, their view will go according to the need of the domestic environment.

Secondly, during the internal crisis and challenges the government takes some significant steps to divert the internal attention. They go for war or attacking the rivalries to satisfy the home public to save the image of the government. Israeli government for example, decided to launch ‘Operation Pillar of Defence’ in a massive way and directed the Israeli Air Force (IAF) for massive bombing on the Palestinian establishment on Gaza strip before the general election of 2013. This single incident helped the government to win the election, despite the visible differences among the coalitions on several domestic issues, including the

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much hyped ‘Tal Law’ controversy. As a result, the government gained the support from most of the parties, including various opposition parties and won the election ultimately. However, there is a belief that the operation was actually an "Election War" intended to put domestic lacunas aside and divert the public attention towards the national security.

**Political Settings**

Political system of a country represents the formal legal institutions that govern the state. It includes its political pattern, administrative system, political leadership, people’s participation, separation of power, nature of bureaucracy, freedom of press and the legal systems. Foreign Policy decisions have to come across these elements before finalized. The political pattern, the basic system of a state influences the Foreign Policy outcomes in many ways. As we have witnessed, the Foreign Policy decision of a democratic state is different from that of an authoritative or an aristocratic state. While in democracy the rule of law, public percipient, the opposition and the role of lobby group make the process so complex, that the decision makers hardly choose the ‘unexpected best’. But in the undemocratic states, leaders enjoy unlimited power and hardly care for the public opinion, hence can go to any level to optimize the national goal, even to wage a war. Similarly in a democratic state the separation of power and provision of check and balances restrict the leader to misuse the power and make them accountable before the public.

**Social and Cultural Factors**

Social and cultural factors include the national identity, its social pattern, its religious and ideological distinctions and most importantly the non-governmental activities and actors. The leaders and the public mass grow up in a certain social environment where they inherit certain ideologies, values and beliefs that influence the policy decisions. The influence of these factors remains in the very gene of the people and leader in special. Thus, social and

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cultural factor is one of the significant factors in Foreign Policy decision making. Further, the pressure group, media and civil society at large carefully analyze Foreign Policy behaviour of the government and raise their concerns if things are not going along the line of their assumption.

However, social and cultural dynamics are over ruled by political factors and remain out of focal point of discussion in the Foreign Policy decision matrix. Indeed, it is the social base that motivates the decision making elites the most to make certain decisions. Major value orientations, degree of national unity, the extent to which it was industrialized are some of the variables to name among the large societal sources. Some of these are briefly discussed here:

**Social and Cultural Pattern**

Social customs and practices have been the drive force of the human’s behaviour and eventually mechanize the behaviour of the state. The people live with a particular system and think and behave according to the system, so that they protect and promote that pattern of society and culture. This argument does not limit into the domestic settings. If a state is socialized with these social forces it will act on the prescribed lines. Similarly, the degree of national identity also influences the external policy of the state. The state believes in one identity and stands together and eventually behaves differently as the state has multiple identities. These identities may be shaped on the basis of religion, geographic region, sects or clans, or social belief. Leaders cannot ignore one section of mass by taking hard decision. They will try to maintain balanced policy to satisfy all sections.

**Religious Factor**

Religion is one of the most significant variables in external policy of a country. It is so influential that the religious system governs the state in many parts of the world. Some states are created on the basis of religion and treat religion as the supreme force of the state craft. Each and every policy including, policies on external affairs goes along the line of religion in these states. Social, economic and even political settings take shapes in accordance with the religious believes. The religion is so strong that all the other factors that

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seem important are considered secondary. One cannot think of going against the religious belief not even the state itself. Therefore, ultimately the religion guides the Foreign Policy decision making in these kinds of states. Though the picture is apparently different in secular states, one cannot deny its influence. As religion is connected with the belief system, it is not possible to separate religion and the society. According to Pascal Boyer, this built-in religious argue is universal, possessed by all human beings, and not restricted only to the believers. The government in non-secular states often mix-up the religion and policies together. In addition, the vote bank politics is also restricting the political parties from going against certain feelings of the people while formulating policies.

Role of Civil Societies and Social Actors

Social actors are those individuals and organizations who mobilize the society against or in favour of certain actions, provisions or policies of government. It can be pressure and lobby groups or media houses or individual social actors. These actors practice different strategies to pressurize the government to accept or drop the concerned provision. They organize the peoples support to peruse their goals. It can be business lobby groups or anti-nuclear activists that pressurize and try to influence the Foreign Policy option of the country. The Kudankulam anti-nuclear movement, for example tries to prevent the government to plant a Russian sponsored nuclear plant in Tamil Nadu. Similarly, media houses are also largely involved in creating social pressure against the government by highlighting the pros and cons of different policy decisions of the government.

Economic Factors

Economy is the prime force in state craft. In other words it is the economy that runs the state. Otherwise the government alone will not be able to deliver the best to the mass. Every governmental initiative needs the backing of finance to sustain. Therefore undoubtedly a sound economic environment is the ultimate aim of the policy maker. This argument is also applicable to Foreign Policy decision making. The Foreign Policy has been formulated in such a way that it secures its economic interest and attracts more funds to the state.

States search various options both soft and hard, to acquire, exploit and obtain the recourses of other country for their own purpose. They are even ready to take hard alternatives of war by citing some invalid reasons of either human rights abuses or undemocratic authoritative harassments. The golf war of 1991 was initiated by the US to protect its economic security vis-à-vis uninterrupted oil supply. The Bush administration openly admitted it before the public announcing this war as ‘about job, about oil, and about economic security’.  

Even scholars believe that the motive behind the Iraq war of 2003 was to restore America’s energy security.

**Trade and Commerce**

In the 21st century, trade and commerce plays a vital role in shaping the Foreign Policy of a state. Indeed, it has been prioritized compared to any other preferred variables of Foreign Policy agenda. With the liberalization of economy and market in India and elsewhere, it has been given great importance. More trades have taken place between the countries and so as the foreign relation. Various Multi-National Companies (MNCs) have taken their business across the border. Consequently, they try to influence the governmental institutions in making favourable policies, including foreign economic policies. Again, the government often consults the business houses and trade unions before signing up any foreign agreement. As a result, gradually trade and commerce become the most influential variables in Foreign Economic Policy Decision Making (FEPDM). The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) the apex trade unions in India in various ways try to influence the decision outcomes and pressurize the government to make policies that suit their interests. In fact some of the business icons have been selected and elected into the legislative bodies and play an active role in decision making.

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94 Mintz & Derouen Jr. *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making*, 130
Military Factor

Military remains one of the variables that influence the Foreign Policy behaviour of a country. After the world wars and subsequent security threats posed by state and non-state actors, national security has been considered as the topmost priority in every corner of the state policy. It is considered as one of the main pillars of state craft to enhance the national security environment by escalating the defence budget and importing armaments and technologies from the world communities.

Military Procurement

The huge demand of weaponry to deal with the anticipated and ongoing threats is the order of the day. Therefore countries, especially developing countries opt for the weapon procurement and technology imports from friendly states. India for instance, purchased 10 percent of the world’s total arms imports during 2007-2011. 96 It affects two things. One is the change of Foreign Policy towards the donor countries and the economic impact of this deals on the domestic and international environments. While it affects the economic growth and development it cut shorts the social expenditure at domestic level, on the other hand the state has to mould its Foreign Policy as the donor centric even in the future for the weaponry maintainances. One cannot ignore this factor in Foreign Policy decision making.

Military Nationalism and Dictatorship Supremacy

In many countries the military dictators have taken the government into their hand and are administrating the state for quite a long time. They are considered as the supreme authorities in policy making, including foreign policies. They declare themselves as true patriotic forces and often choose war as the best option to resolve disputes. As a result, through history these types of countries are engaged in various conflicts. Hence, military is one of the factors which direct the Foreign Policy behaviour of a country.

Psychological Factor

Decision making is a cognitive process, whether at personal level decisions, organizational level decisions, national level decisions or even international level decisions.

The leaders make policy decisions based on their psychological understanding and narratives. It is impossible to ignore their overwhelming values, beliefs, and ideologies in making any policy decision, be it at domestic or international level. The attitude of the leaders regarding foreign events matters and eventually shapes Foreign Policy of a country. Thus one can hardly ignore the psychological factor and its influence on Foreign Policy decisions.

Psychological factor that influences the Foreign Policy decision is multidimensional in nature and is not limited to any definite belief or activity. In fact the psychology of a person is inspired by various sources. The political leader, who makes foreign policies, could be influenced by the party ideology, religious ideology, own beliefs and perceptions, nationalism and national identity and political environment. Along with the political ideology, social and economic ideologies also shape the cognitive perception of a person.

Foreign Policy in India has influenced immensely the national ideologies like Ahimsa, Swaraj, non-interventionalism, anti-colonial, and universal brotherhood. The directive principles of state policies prescribed under part IV in the Constitution of India equally guides the policies including foreign affairs. Classified into different categories of Gandhian, economic and socialistic, political and administrative, justice and legal, environmental, protection of monuments and peace and security, it directs the policy behaviour of the country. Similarly, the ideology of Jawaharlal Nehru, the chief architect of India’s Foreign Policy is still visible in the conduct of India’s Foreign Policy.

National Ideology

Defining ideology, especially national ideology is a difficult task. Gone are those days when national ideology was widely concentrated around some broad concepts: Nazism and anti-Nazism during world wars and communism and capitalism during cold war. It

98 Geoffrey Layman, Thomas Carsey, John Green and Richard Herrera, Party Polarization and “Conflict Extension” in American Politics: The Case of Party Activists, article presented at the American Politics Workshop, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, October 7, 2005
99 Krishan D. Mathur and P.M. Kamath, Conduct of India’s Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1996) 126
101 The researcher attempted to generalize the concept of national ideology. For comprehensive debate on this topic refer Bayless Manning, Goals, Ideology and Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, January 1976
became more complex with the rise of globalization. Attempting to explain, Quinn writes “Ideology is the intellectual simplification leaders use to explain and justify the national courses they advocate, both to others and to themselves” \(^{102}\)

National ideology is the blend of social, economic and political ideology of a nation. It is a silent force which controls the policy behaviour, internal and external. For example, the Soviet Union’s external relations during the cold war were leaning towards the communist forces and it offered almost everything to these states. But its attitude towards the non-communist forces had been marked as troublesome. The national ideology controls the attitude of leaders, agencies, and institutions involved in Foreign Policy decision making. In some countries, national ideologies have been clearly defied and the administration runs according to these lines. Religion has been the very psyche of the policy makers and is often considered as state ideology. It has been the ward steak of Foreign Policy for many states, especially non-secular states. Therefore it guides the national ideologies during policy formulations.

**Perception and Emotion**

Decision making in Foreign Policy being supposed to be logical, rational and calculative, is often driven by emotion and perception. The decision makers and the institutions take unexpected steps because of ego, emotion and presumption. Whether it is Falkland crisis or other terror and liberation movements, one thing is clear that the denial of reorganization, yearlong suppression and attempt to revenge excel the emotional level that is often transformed into war and conflict.\(^{103}\) Renshon and Lerner divided Emotion into two broad categories - *Integral Emotion*, which is posed by the decision maker at the time of decision making and the *Accidental Emotions* that take place accidentally as reaction to certain issues.\(^{104}\) Both types of elements influence Foreign Policy behaviour of a state. It affects all systems in its way if it is evoked and destroys the other working functions and

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Action taken by emotion is never considered as logical and remains biased and ultimately faces severe consequences.

**Nationalism and National Identity**

Both National identity and Nationalism are complement to each other. It addresses the core point of unconditional love for your nation that everything is justifiable to protect and uphold its sovereignty. Though it sounds good in theory, but in practice it is the drive force for the major confrontations between the nations. Nationalism up to an accepted amount is good for the development of a nation. But excesses nationalism or ultranationalism teaches to hate other nations and encourages war. Since the recorded history nationalism has been the driving force of the external behaviours of a nation. Similarly, the world wars have witnessed how the ultranationalist ideas have destroyed the world. Like the nationalism, national identity also determines the Foreign Policy of country. Terror organizations are apparently created in the name of nationalism and often fight to uphold their national identity.

**Individual Factors**

Decision making is a human centric process and needs the human involvement at every step of decision making. The decision making unit consists of political leadership, bureaucrats, intellectuals and multiple individuals, who eventually take the decisions. Hence, their personnel and other individual factors are bound to influence the very process of decision making and the policy outcomes. In this regard, a brief discussion on these factors has been given below:

**Leadership**

In every aspect of decision making, the leader plays an important role. Decision making has to be taken by the leaders, although other mechanisms assist and influence them during the process. For Lloyd Jensen, it is the ‘human agencies’ and ultimately an individual

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that takes decision and not the state. It is the central and pivotal part of decision making and the nature and quality of decision is dependent on the characteristics, cognitive skill, social background, motives, beliefs and assumptions. Therefore the decision outcome is bound to be influenced by personal factor of leadership.

Decision making and the technique of decision making differ from person to person and the leaders make certain decisions out of their human cognitive, socialization, values, ideologies and perversions. The administrative pattern and types of leadership are furthermore contributing significantly to the decision outcomes. Decision making under an autocratic leadership is different from that of a democratic leader where he has to face more pressure to satisfy every section. Similarly, the type and nature of decision making units equally affect the decision outcomes. The nature of policy outcome is essentially different in the authoritative style of decision making, to the democratic decision making setups. While in the autocratic system the leader is a supreme authority of decision making unit and remains at top of decision making hierarchy, in the democratic setups, the leader remains at the centre of decision making system and poses equal status among the group. Therefore, leadership plays a significant role in decision making process and its activities impact the decision outcome in Foreign Policy mechanism.

Advisors and Assistants to Leadership

No doubt the leader takes the decision on behalf of the state, but in it are the advisors who help the leader to take certain decisions. In fact, most of the decisions are taken in accordance with the advice of the leadership. If the advisers are far from reality the leader automatically makes blunder. Describing about the importance of advisors to leadership David Mitchell stresses upon the various models of advisory systems and its pros and cons. He has given three different models and emphasizes how each model impacts the decision making process. Whether it is rational or bureaucratic or organizational, the leader has to depend on the assistants to collect, filter and analyze the information that proceeds for decision making. The pre decision making essentials and the post decision making outcomes

109 Ibid., 1-31
have to be carried out by adjunct assistants, hence naturally prone to influence the decision making process.

**Geographical Factor**

Geographical factor influencing Foreign Policy behaviour of a state includes the weather, atmosphere, location of a country, natural resources, population, and physical terrain of a state etc. and it is the most permanent factor that determines the Foreign Policy decisions. The United States for example, has never come under the colonial rule fully because of its geographical location being surrounded by sea and absence of strong rivalries at the borders. But in the case of India the location being surrounded by sea in the south and Himalayas in the north, it has failed to secure its borders because of the presence of strong neighbours like Pakistan in the west and China in the north and east. Similarly presence of resources enables the country to play a larger role in international politics while resource-less countries are lagging behind by depending over others and spending huge money to meet its requirements. Therefore, one can ignore or change all the other factors, but geographical factor cannot be replaced and poses wider influence in one’s foreign policies.

**Physical Terrain and Geostrategic Location**

Physical terrain and location remains the most important and permanent factor that influences the Foreign Policy decision making of a country. As scholars rightly observed that “political geography plays a huge role in who gets what, when, and how in the game of world politics”\(^{110}\). Geography is always linked with strategic interest and economic developments and the very sustain of the country at large. The location of a state, its borders and terrain determine its development, and the national power that ultimately influences the policy decisions. If a state is engaged with border disputes and locked in a hostile strategic landscape, then it continues to spend more on security and hence, always depends on the arm supplier powers and lacks the developmental activities. The isolation of US from the rest of the world encouraged it to follow the isolated Foreign Policy Monroe doctrine. The location of Germany at the heart of Europe and surrounded by great powers during the world wars for example, pushed German politics to be linked with external environments. Separation of

Britain as an island in Europe also determined its decision to remain separate from the European Union for quite a long time.

Foreign Policy decision making is also influenced by the demography along with geographic locations. Apart from the work force that mechanizes the developmental activities, the language and ethnicity and the belief system based on geographical location influence the decision that they take during their political and non-political participation. Jared Diamond, a Pulitzer Prize winner and Psychology Professor of University of California argues that, ‘since the beginning of human history geography shapes each human society’s culture and competitive position’.  

Based on this theory one can agree that, interest groups like ethnic groups, NGOs, IGOs mobilize the public opinion that influence the national decision making process on foreign affairs. Hence, Glassner rightly stated “the geographical consequences of political decisions and actions, the geographical factors that were considered during the making of any decisions, and the role of geographical factors influence the outcome of political actions.”

**Natural Recourses**

Geography of a nation not only represents the sum total of the location, size and atmosphere, it also consists of natural resources. Often it is considered as the most important factor in influencing Foreign Policy decisions, as it is the heart of most of the conflicts of modern world. Most of the wars of the Middle East were fought with the prime intention to control the oil resources. Not only oil or mineral, the disputes over water emerged as the prime factor of conflict around the globe.

Lack of resources limits the state to play a larger role in the international arena, while the mineral and oil rich countries are able to influence the global policies. One cannot disagree that, the large natural resource base is a major element of national power that drives the international relation of a country. Development of nations is badly affected because of shortage of resources and it makes the country depend on other countries. Additionally, a large share of money is spent on the import of resources that undermine the economic

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conditions of a state. India for example, imports over ninety percent of its petroleum fuel from various countries that make the country dependent on oil rich countries heavily. It courses the drain of huge amount of foreign exchanges that put pressure on the devaluation of rupee. Again, the resources can be used for various other developmental activities. Therefore, India has to maintain friendly relation with the oil rich countries and need to approach a very balanced policy toward these nations. Therefore, one cannot ignore the geographical factor in the Foreign Policy decision making process. As scholars rightly observed, “Geography frequently influences political making, just as political power influences geographical space”.

**External Factors**

Along with domestic factors, the international settings are equally influencing Foreign Policy Decision Making of a state. In other words, internal and external factors like a two track approach go hand in hand in Foreign Policy decision making. Behaviour of various states and non-state actors in global settings affects the decision making process of not just the concerning states but also other peripheral actors. India, Egypt and all the other third world countries although not involved in cold war politics, repeatedly affected the great game politics of super powers. Any change in the international sphere will affect all states. Like a wave in the pond it spreads at all directions touching all aspects of global politics, including domestic environment of states. The attack of 9/11 affected more or less all states whether strategically, economically or socially.

States are influenced more with the changes in the regional environments, especially activities of neighbours as they are closely interlinked. The actions of the neighbour or any other player that proximate to it will essentially disturb the strategic behaviour of the other states. Additionally, states are carefully watching the activities of their states especially friends and enemies and take counter actions accordingly. It is like a chess board game that you observe each and every step of your opponent and take your own decision. Similarly, your action will be prevented by counter action and so on. There are several factors that influence the Foreign Policy decision of the concerned countries.

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113 Duncan, Webster and Switky, *World Politics in the 21st Century*, 235
International Treaties and Agreements

With the rise of globalization, interdependence between and among the states have raised to the next level. As a result, number of international agreements and treaties has been signed between the states to protect and promote their national interests. According to the international law "treaty is any international agreement concluded between states or other entities with international personality (such as public international organizations), if the agreement is intended to have international legal effect".¹¹⁴ Therefore while making the treaties the respective states have to go along the line of international laws.

Treaties and agreements are highly influencing the external relation of a state in recent globalized world. Treaties and agreements are regarded as the safeguard of national interests during the time of crisis. The decision makers have to respect the outstanding treaties related to the ongoing issues during the time of Foreign Policy making. In some cases they try to facilitate the other states to come to the table of negotiation for an agreement that will be beneficial for both. Moreover, international treaties always prevent the international community to opt for endangering the world security and pursue for benevolent approaches for mutual benefit. The CTBT and NPT for example, have forced the countries not to proliferate nuclear weapons in some extent. Hence the importance of treaties in guiding Foreign Policy behaviour cannot be disregarded.

Strategic Deterrence

Defining deterrence is not an easy task, as there is no limit to the term adequate security and can be extended up to any stage that eventually leads to arms race.¹¹⁵ But it can be termed as the ability to protect the borders and sovereignty from possible foreign interventionists. The theory of deterrence influences the Foreign Policy behaviour of a country while the whole world is betting for power according to realism. In the world of anarchists as realists believe the countries should be prepared for any possible strikes.¹¹⁶ Therefore one has to be strong enough to deal with these threats either single handed or by making coalition. The deterrence theory believes that everything is justifiable to protect the

¹¹⁵ Scholars are also acknowledged on the uneasiness in defining 'deterrence theory'. For instance see Patrick M. Morgan, Deterrence Now, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 1
¹¹⁶ Mintz, Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making, 122
national sovereignty and all the resources and policies should be directed to prevent and promote the national interest.

There are several views on how to deter the threats. While most of the scholars agree on strong national power including military, others back on the soft power to dissolve threats. After the world wars most of the countries especially super powers believed to acquire mighty military artillery like nuclear weapon to strengthen their deference.\(^{117}\) However Bruce Russett believes that the strong deterrence can be achieved when there will be close economic, political, social and cultural ties that lead to interdependence between the aggressor and the target countries.\(^{118}\) Therefore Russett’s approach for deterrence is a soft power rather than military mightiness. Irrespective of its approaches, strategic deterrence theory has been influencing the Foreign Policy decision making for centuries. In the name of deterrence the nation states have spent huge national income and diverted a large number of human forces towards national security. Therefore, it is bound to remain as one of the factors that influence the Foreign Policy of the country.

**Alliance and Counter Alliance**

“Alliances are formal associations of states for the use (or non use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their membership”.\(^{119}\) Though, alliance is usually formed with formal agreements, there are cases of non-formal alliance or cloud alliance to deter the aggressive powers. Counting the informal linkages, Walt defines alliance as a “formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states” having “some level of commitment and an exchange of benefits for both parties.”\(^{120}\)

Out of the two definitions it is clear that alliance is a tool to maintain the balance of power at the international arena with little adjustment in the domestic institutions. While security remains the top most priority for countries around the world, they often go for alliances making to secure its sovereignty. Therefore, the states mould its Foreign Policy accordingly to maintain goodwill with alliance partners. They usually offer various defence and economic assistance to their alliance partners and exchange technologies and ideas for mutual benefit.

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\(^{117}\) Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 1-8


\(^{119}\) Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007) 4

Additionally, alliances periodically call for certain modification of their external behaviour to cope with the international scenario.

While alliance countries group together for greater cooperation against outside threats, they are indirectly threatening others with their combined power. As a result, opposite states are forced to form a counter-alliance to face the opposite alliance. It had been seen during the Cold-War when the world was divided into two different blocks and engaged to attract as many as other countries into their respective alliance. Hence, the remaining non-aligned third world countries aligned themselves to remain neutral. The Foreign Policy was remaining hoarse towards the opposite alliance partners while favourable towards its own partner countries. Therefore, it is clear that most of the Foreign Policy decisions were taken with the line of alliance and counter-alliance politics.

**Regional and Global Informants**

Irrespective of various models, decision making in Foreign Policy primarily relies on information. Leaders take decision after thorough analysis of various collected information. Therefore, the role of informants is crucial for any Foreign Policy decision. They provide the much needed real-time information to the decision making units. Informants can be divided into two broad different categories- official and non-official.

**Official Informants**

Official informants are those individuals and agencies who are officially appointed by the concerned states for collection of information from various sources. Assigned with specific task they are sent to various places to collect information and report on the mission to the concerned government. Ambassadors, consulates, trade promoters, spies and intelligence agencies to name some of them, have sent periodical reports to the government to peruse the policies according to the prescribed situations. Sometime special operations are carried out to investigate the reality so that it can be addressed affectively.

**Non-official Informants**

Apart from the official agencies, the government also relies on other sources of information. Agencies like News Media, Think-tanks and Research Institutes, Independent intelligence and Research Agents also help the government to collect required information.
These sources, especially the independent think-tanks provide more impartial and neutral information that construct more non-biased policies. Therefore, most of the governments consider both official and non-official reports before taking critical decisions.

As information is critical in policy formation, the part of informants automatically plays a significant role in Foreign Policy decision making mechanism. They are the centre of policy formulation and their views cannot be ignored by the policy makers. The success and failure of a policy mostly depend on the ground report collected by informants. Not only that, they also follow the feedbacks and suggest for further initiatives.

**Relation with Major and Regional Powers**

At global stages major powers drive the course of the world order. There are no clear cut criteria to be qualified as Major Powers. While economy is the principal ward stick to call someone super power, others depend on strategic mightiness. But for a long run the great powers should possess the economic adage and strategic superiority. However there is no permanency of great power status, in fact, the tag has been attached to different countries at different times. For Professor Robert B. Louden, the permanent five of the Security Council are called as global powers in the 21st Century.\(^{121}\) These great powers bear the power to persuade and dictate the international activities directly or indecently. The potential regional players termed as ‘regional powers’\(^{122}\) also influence the policy decision of the surrounding countries. International politics is mostly influenced and guided by the actions of these power houses. Therefore, a modern nation can hardly ignore such players to achieve its national goals.

Countries always try to have better relation and avoid any possible collision with these powers. Extra efforts have been taken to get closer to these countries by adopting various means. Engaging with conflict may endanger the national aspirations as well as national security that lead to undermine the growth of the nation. However, maintaining good relations will facilitate more opportunity to the nation. With the rise of the new eastern giants, the centre of power has been shifted into Asia, while the countries were trying to cope


with the western power houses during nineteenth and twentieth century. It poses new challenges to the decision makers to modify their Foreign Policy accordingly to have better coordination with these emerging powers. Therefore one cannot ignore the major power factor in Foreign Policy decision making.

**Conclusion**

A modern state needs a comprehensive and proactive Foreign Policy to attain its national objectives, to manage its external affairs for the peaceful coexistence with other states, and for the all-round development of the nation. Similarly, a successful and effective Foreign Policy requires vibrant and well laid Foreign Policy decision making machinery. Thus, success of external management depends on the effectiveness of the Foreign Policy making decision units. The Foreign Policy making units is a complex structure which consists of different actors, agencies and institutions. It takes various information and necessary inputs from multiple resources and analyses the received data to make appropriate decision. The effectiveness of the decision is often vested upon the structure and function of the decision making units. Generally, the fate of the policy outcome is influenced by the quality of leadership, which is the centre of the policy making units.

To simplify this, Prof. Graham Allison categorised the style of decision making into three broad categories – the Rational Actor Model, the Organizational Process Model and the Bureaucratic Politics Model. According to the Rational Actor model, the decision outcomes are always the product of rational choice and logical conclusion. This model is free from bias and personal influences. The decision is comparatively affective and quick and useful for the crisis like situations. Allison’s second model of decision making is the Organizational Process Model. According to this model of decision making, the structure of the machinery functions like that of a large organization, where the whole assignment is divided into several sub-assignments and distributed among several specialist sub-organizations. These small units give inputs and formulate the way out formula for their share of assignment. At last all such individual assessments are merged together to take the final decision. The BPM is a lengthy and complicated process and beneficial to deal with the long term issues. The third and the last model of Allison is the Bureaucratic Politics model. Unlike, these two models, the BPM tends to consensus making rather than logical assessment. Under this model of
decision making, the decision making units consist of several actors, agencies and institutions which often compete among themselves to show their supremacy and grab the maximum benefit while dealing with an issue. As a result, no concrete decision has been taken during discussion and often settles to the middle path or policy concessions. In this type of model, there is very little scope to achieve optimum benefit and the policy is well below the optimum level.

In all these three models, the process of Foreign Policy decision making is multi-level and multi-dimensional in character. The complex procedure of decision making in Foreign Policy passes through several stages – from identifying the issues to the reaching to a find the alternative options and finally reaching to constructive decision. In each stage the inputs are analysed and the inferior alternatives are filtered out before reaching the final decision. However, this process is not purely out of influences and eventually affected by a number of factors such as leadership, political system, social and cultural affection, economic and military strength, geographical and international environment etc. Decision making is bound to be influenced by these factors and often forced to take unpreferred decision in Foreign Policy matters. A successful decision should have the quality to reduce these influences.