CHAPTER I

THEORISING INTERVENTION
The practice of intervention through various ways and means, makes the theory of intervention complex and vague. Earlier methods of direct wars have been largely replaced by overt or covert interventions in order to achieve the desired results. Increasing cases of interference in these days, have lit up the sparks of importance of this topic and has made intervention an essential and perennial issue in international relations.

In the process of fast growing integration, interaction, and involvement at various levels among the nations of the world, the theory of intervention has gradually assumed historical importance. It is becoming more and more dynamic, rendering any attempt at its theorisation a difficult task. Although a recurring phenomenon in the past too, since the second World War, it has acquired newer dimensions. Among various changes, the advent of nuclear age, polarisation of the world in power blocs and emancipation of a large number of countries which have had the bitter experiences of colonial subjugation, more oftenly known as the 'Third World', dragged the practice of intervention from a rare to the common use. In spite of the fact that there is a formal freedom of policy decisions in the 'Third World', unavoidable pressures of the super power's policies have invariably been experienced. Inherent weaknesses of factional politics, political instability,
economic backwardness and social disparity in the 'Third world' have been exploited by major powers in order to enhance their areas of influence.

Attempts have been made by various scholars to comprehend and conceptualize the phenomenon of interference and intervention. Leaving minor variations, two basic schools of thought have prominently figured out in this respect. The first one which has tried to be too specific, opines that direct physical intervention or threat of it should be taken "intervention" as such. The essence of intervention, according to this view, is force or threat of it. It implies dictatorial interference by a state in the internal affairs of another state with the purpose of maintaining or altering the prevailing conditions. Oppenheim, Lawerence, Stowell and Kelson have preferred to define intervention as a phenomenon accompanied by brute force or threat of it.1

This classical view\(^2\) of intervention does not serve the purpose these days. Whatever may be the theory, the conception that only force or its threat constitutes intervention, has really circumscribed the wider dimensions of the interventionary phenomenon in contemporary international relations. At the same time, this view has overlooked several types of interference that have often occurred or occur particularly in modern times.

The evolution of the international system has transformed intervention from an incident to a structural aspect of international relations. The traditional interstate pattern of relations has today been transformed into a global conception. "The conceptional universe of the early nation-state system has become too narrow to encompass the phenomenon of interference which are a structural characteristic of contemporary international system".\(^3\)

The second school of thought found newer ways and levels to operate upon and concretise itself. Various other ways like, negotiations, mediation, economic aid, the role of multi-national corporations, etc. which are seemingly non-interventionist in appearance, but are the effective sources

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2. Classical view of intervention is the one which holds that intervention is a 'dictatorial interference'.

of intervention in actuality, have been well taken care of by the modern school of thought. For example Calvo-de-Droit says:

"Certain publicists give the name of intervention only to armed intervention, objecting that if the interposition, or good offices on the part of one state in the affairs of another is not violent but peaceful, limited purely to advice, it resolves itself into an amicable interposition, or good offices, or even in mediation, which is not intervention. This is according to my view, to take the result for the act itself. The form under which intervention takes place does not alter its character. Intervention which is produced by the employment of diplomatic process is no less intervention; it is intervention more or less direct, more or less dissimulated which is very often merely the prelude of armed intervention".  

Intervention in this sense may be forcible or non-forcible. It may be direct or indirect. It may be open or


5. As when it takes the form of economic coercion.

6. As when the major power uses minor power as its agent or proxy.
The outside party may be a state or a group of states, but at the same time it may also be an international organisation, a business corporation, or a political party. "Interferences by a nation in the territorial jurisdiction of other nation in its rights to determine its internal affairs or to conduct its external relations is termed as intervention".

By flexing the muscle of economic power exhibiting political threats by aiding and fomenting uprisings against the running government and host of other things like it have succeeded in strengthening and proliferating its indirect tentacles interfering substantially. Thus the actions taken by one state to impose its will upon another - against the latter's right to organise its government as it sees fit, should come under the category of intervention, whether backed by force or a mere threat of it.

In the sphere of economy, for example, the motive of intervention can be realized in the negative sense through various trade and credit sanctions, boycotts, embargoes, etc. and in positive through subsidies and aid to revolutionary groups or to opponents of a regime that one wants to unseat.

7. As when the instruments being employed are under the control of secret intelligence agencies.

This practice is much prevalent in modern times in the form of aid to unstable governments, designed to make them less unstable and more favourable to one's own point of view.

Types of Intervention

After analysing different opinions on intervention let us now deliberate over the forms of intervention.

1. Military Intervention

It is the most drastic as well as legally most vulnerable form of intervention.

It takes place when troops are despatched to maintain order or support a revolution, in a foreign state. Such kind of assistance is either made available to the government of a state which is internally insecure or in conflict with a neighbour or to the opponent of a government within the state. Military intervention has been prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations. It can be classified under the following heads:

(a) Arms sales or grants.
(b) Making available military training at home and abroad.
(c) Making available military advisers to troops engaged in military operations.
(d) Making planes and crew available for air observation.
(e) Providing transportation assistance to troops engaged in military operations.
Limited support for military operations by artillery, air and navy.

Participation in military operations through combat units which can either be proxy or regular one.

Owing to this diverse variety of means through which intervention can be effected, different authors have defined this phenomenon in various ways.

Military intervention, termed as 'aggression' has been defined as "a resort to armed force by a state when such resort has been duly determined by a means which that state is bound to accept, to constitute a violation of an obligation". 9

"An act of aggression", says Quincy Wright, "is the use of armed force across an internationally recognised frontier, for which a government de facto or de jure, is responsible because of act or negligence, unless justified by a necessity for individual or collective self-defence, by the authority of the United Nations to resort international peace and security, or by consent of the state within whose territory armed forces is being used". 10


Military intervention also affects the balance of domestic forces. It improves the ability of regimes to check extreme form of domestic opposition. At the same time this ability - to deal with such opposition may make the regime overlook the legitimate and reasonable domestic grievances. These grievances if ignored for a longer time may lead to the organisation of a revolutionary insurgent political movements aimed at overthrowing the government through forcible means or even secession from the State.

"Paradoxically a less secure domestic power base would have imposed a more timely political response to what might have been at the outset, politically manageable resentment".11

But sometimes military assistance of specific types do have a stabilizing effect on the relations between the donor and the recipient. It can also be contended that military assistance provides substantial opportunity for the donor to intervene in the domestic affairs of the recipient country. Military aid in several cases ensures the condition for the survival of the political regime in power.

2. Political Intervention

Arnold Wolfers puts different methods of intervention under this type, which are used basically to pressurise the political system of a country. These activities have been variously put under the categories called propaganda, espionage, counter-intervention, indirect aggression, subversion, influence, diplomatic intervention and ideological intervention.

Propaganda intervention is one of the commonly used types of intervention. This type of intervention began from 1926 when the United States was enforcing its policies on Latin America. Then Germany came to the frontline. In pursuit of its aims the German government set up an organisation of propaganda in foreign countries to a degree hitherto unknown. This type of intervention has become very common in present times.

Diplomatic intervention, which is an another type of political intervention takes place when a state exerts pressure on the political system of another country diplomatically. To call back diplomats or to break


diplomatic relations are some of the methods of diplomatic intervention. It is an important instrument in the hands of a state to pursue its proposed design. It possesses total freedom in this respect to establish or break off diplomatic relations with another country. But when that weapon is used in a collective form such as by the United Nations, then one aims at not so much a collective recognition policy but rather a collective non-recognition policy.

Ideological intervention is also another type of intervention. Today superpowers' intervention in the Third World comprises mainly on ideological grounds. After 1945 it got an impetus in international politics. However, it has a history of its own. Morgenthau refers to the history of ideological intervention from 1820 in the following way:

"...Russia tried to intervene in Spain in 1820, and actually intervened in Hungary in 1948, in order to oppose liberal revolutions. Great Britain opposed these interventions because it was opposed to the expansion of Russian power. Yet it intervened on behalf of nationalism of Greece and on behalf of the conservative status quo in Portugal because its interests seemed to require it... What Great Britain

and Russia were doing in the 19th century, the United States and the Soviet Union seem to be doing today". 15

Stating the present phenomenon of superpowers' intervention in Third World, Morganthau says, "Instead of confronting each other openly and directly, the United States and the Soviet Union, have chosen to oppose and compete with each other surreptitiously through the intermediatory of third parties. The internal weakness of the most of the new and emerging nations, requiring foreign support and the revolutionary situation in many of them give the great powers the opportunity of doing so. Thus, besides competing for influence upon a particular government in the traditional ways, the United States and the Soviet Union have interjected their power into the domestic conflicts of weak nations, supporting the government or the opposition as the case may be". 16

The Soviets and the United States used to operate and intervene at the global level to maximize their own respective gains under the cover of ideology.

Political intervention also includes activities such as inducing or assisting civil strifes, sedition and guerrilla


16. ibid., p.428.
activities and assistance rendered to wars of liberation, to self-determination of people, or to help foreign governments in the garb of maintaining civil order. In a way, these are also widespread because the political system of many states is rather weak making them vulnerable to external influences. 17

The unilateral or mutual interference of states in each others' internal or external affairs has become a constitutive part of certain structure of international politics. Such types of interventions have become frequent in contemporary international relations.

3. Bloc Intervention

Bloc intervention is the most drastic form of intervention. It is also called collective intervention. It is different from unilateral intervention - intervention by one state in the affairs of another.

Unilateral intervention has generally been seen by the countries other than those which are intervening as an undesirable activity. It is manifestly self-centered, undertaken in the interests of the power which intervenes. Whereas collective (bloc) intervention, as the definition

implies is intervention that has been authorised by some international body enjoying widespread legitimacy. Intervention by such an organisation, duly authorised, is widely seen as proper. Collective intervention is undertaken for collective purposes.

The two most striking cases in the history of bloc intervention, have been Hungary and Lebanon. In case of Hungary, Russian troops were used against the legal government when it attempted to adopt a neutralist position. In Lebanon, American troops entered at the request of the legal government and presided over a political compromise between the warring factions that placed Lebanon in the neutral position - although not with the advantageous fervour manifested by the United Arab Republic. Intervention within one's own bloc clearly is less inhibited than intervention in the opposing bloc or in an uncommitted nation. 18

4. Economic Intervention

Most of the cases of intervention are guided by economic interests. Earlier, economic intervention used to be in the form of direct colonization which has taken today the form of neo-colonialism. American intervention in Latin

America was and is decisively influenced by economic interests. Intervention in Cuba by the United States in 1906-09, 1911, 1917-18, 1921-23 and later on, was also guided by economic factor. Although later on economic factor was overtaken by ideological one.  

Economic intervention is made through various methods. Capital investment and economic influence in the internal affairs of another country are the ways of this type of intervention. This phenomenon, which now-a-days is known as neo-colonialism, is closely associated with contemporary idea of intervention in the non-military sense.

Imposition of economic sanctions, exploitation of natural resources from the seabed (falling out of one nation's natural boundary), investment in other countries, multinational corporations, sanction of loans on high interest rates, import/export of uneven goods (especially when great powers export finished products and import raw material), etc. are the forms coming under the economic intervention.  


20. In fact these are the acts of economic exploitation and called neo-colonialism. But neo-colonialism is labelled now as the economic intervention - an intervention in indirect way.
5. **Humanitarian Intervention**

There is a general agreement that by virtue of its personal and territorial supremacy, a state can treat its own nationals according to its discretion. Under the Charter of the United Nations it is the responsibility of the world body to preserve and protect human rights.

"With the view to the creation of conditions of stability and well being are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people, the United Nations shall promote: Universal respect for and observances of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion". Art.55(c) of the Charter of United Nations.

There is a substantial body of opinion and practice in support of the view that there are limits on the part of states regarding their discretion to treat their own nationals and that when a state renders itself guilty of cruelties against its nationals in such a way as to deny their fundamental human rights their very discretion becomes questionable. Intervention in the interest of humanity is legally permissible. The Charter of the United Nations, which recognises the promotion and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, as one of the principal objectives of
the Organisation, takes a step further in the direction of elevating the principle of humanitarian intervention to a basic role of organised international society.

The question which should be raised at the international level is whether any state has a right to intervene in the affairs of another state, if it feels that human rights in other state are being violated. The consensus which emerges out from the discussion is that it is the responsibility of every member state to protect the rights of the people and thus discharge its obligations as a member the world body. But intervention on this ground too is not justified on the grounds that this will provide a handle to big power to create a situation in a small state whereby it appears that human rights are being violated. Moreover, the political instability, fractional politics, social disparity and economic backwardness provide easy pretexts of intervention.

J.G. Starke enumerates the following principle in exceptional cases in which a state has under international law a legitimate right to intervene:

a) Collective intervention, in persuasion to the Character of the United Nations, viz., enforcement of action under the authority of the United Nations Security Council;
b) to protect the rights and interests and the personal safety of its citizens abroad;

c) self-defence, if intervention is necessary to meet a danger of armed attack;

d) in the affairs of a protectorate under its domination;

e) if the state subject of the intervention has been guilty of a gross breach of international law in regard to the intervening state, for example, if it has itself unlawfully intervened. 21

Under the pretext of these rights many intervening nations try to justify their acts on humanitarian grounds. As Michael Akhurst says, "During the present century, and especially since the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945, International law has developed a body of rules on human rights, which forbid states to ill-treat individuals, including their own nationals, but at the same time it has developed a body of rules restricting the (previously almost unlimited) right of states to use force". 22

The doctrine of non-intervention has been taken as an impediment in the way of human rights. The scholars like


Miachel Walzer offer a powerful defense of the principle of non-intervention with only a few exceptions. Among these the most important is humanitarian intervention i.e. coercive intervention to put an end to the abuses of human rights. On the other hand, there are scholars who criticise this view and have offered views to intervene for the protection of the human rights at the cost of the principle/doctrine of non-intervention. There needs to create a balance between the principle of non-intervention and a concern for human rights.

THE PROBLEM OF THEORISING INTERVENTION

The problem of theorising intervention stems from the controversy between the theory and praxis in this realm. The inconsistency between the importance attached to the problem of intervention and the bases on which solutions are reached is so glaring that one questions the credibility of the literature. In an age where solution of problems requires comprehension of their sources, scholarly writings on the problem of intervention are devoid of efforts to develop systematic knowledge on the conditions under which interventionary behaviour is initiated, sustained, and abandoned. The factors that foster, channelise and constrain

intervention have not been scientifically explored, leading
to the lack of any established generalisations. The major
developments in the area of theoretical formulations do not
rigorously stand to empirical test. The major thrust of the
analysis is three dimensional i.e. moral, legal and
strategic. They lack the empirical comparability and
theoretical explicitness necessary for a scientific
explanation of the dynamics of intervention. A proper
arrangement of factors, variables and the processing of case
materials (whereby the findings derived from one case can be
applied and tested by other cases) seems to be lacking.

Moreover, the normative, legal and strategic studies
suffer from a double standard problem, definitional and the
problem of operationalizing the national interest
respectively.

The division of the phenomenon of intervention into
different sections; political, economic, humanitarian,
diplomatic etc. further adds to complications. Under what
circumstances and on what grounds a particular act on the
part of superpowers can be termed as political or any other
type of intervention and how it can be distinguished and
separated from the rest of the types?

Given the multiplicity in the types of interventions
and varying opinions of jurists over the interpretation of
interventionary acts it is difficult to evolve a theory
which would be able to encompass the dynamics of the reality in totality.

Now we shall make a systematic inquiry into the three dimensions of the problem i.e. moral, legal and strategic.

**The Moral Dimension: The Double Standard**

Intervention in international relations has taken a subjective orientation whereby its meaning and purpose vary from person to person and case to case. No standard measure can be put forward to determine its scientific standard. It may be good or bad in moral terms. Its goodness or badness does not come from the very existence of the term 'intervention' but rather from the value attached to this phenomenon. To intervene in a peaceful country may be unwarranted but to intervene in a stormy and politically problem-ridden country may be justifiable. This subjective notion of the problem under study has baffled the policy makers. An astute observer says "There is no obvious synthesis between morality and intervention". 24 Given the number of solutions probably the best one is to greet the doctrine of non-intervention as an absolute one in so far as national actors are concerned. On the other hand, the interventionary behaviour in the international arena should

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be adjudged on the basis of collective morality rather than an individual one. 25

However, this explanation does not leave much scope for scientific interpretation. Because, the latter demands an objectivity and viability for empirical verification. Contrary to it, moral explanations always stand on value alternatives.

The confusion that has arisen over the concept of intervention is largely a result of the dual usage of the term. As James, N. Rosenau says, "Intervention" is used both as an analytical concept by political scientists and as an operational concept by diplomats and strategists. The political scientists seek to be precise in their description of intervention, excluding some relationships and including others. The operationalist, on the other hand, use the term in descriptive rather than an analytical manner, and tends to define every example of influence or involvement as intervention. 26


The Problem of Definition

Notwithstanding the voluminous literature on intervention, there appears to be no agreement whatsoever on the phenomenon designated by the term 'intervention'. Even in international law, where the definitional problem is recurrent preoccupation, uniformity of usage has yet to develop.\(^27\) On the contrary, both in law and in general "intervention has a perplexing vagueness of meaning".\(^28\) Some observers point it as a certain form of behaviour; others conceive it to involve certain intentions underlying behaviour; still others think it in terms of certain consequences stemming from behaviour; and a fourth approach

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27. Indeed, the absence of definitional uniformity has recently generated a heated controversy among Jurists of international law.


is to equate it with certain standards to which the behaviour gets conform. 29

A major result of so many definitional options is that a number of observers end up by defining intervention as any action whereby one state has an impact upon the affairs of another. Thus the literature is pervaded with discussions of military intervention, 30 propaganda intervention, 31 economic intervention, 32 diplomatic intervention, 33 ideological intervention, 34 and customary intervention. 35 On the other


iii) Thomas & Thomas, no.4, pp.400-14.


hand, to avoid confusion and vagueness, certain analysts have tried to follow a near route of taking the concrete and specific act and behaviour as constituting intervention. Thus, for them interventionary behaviour is limited to dictatorial interference by one state in the affairs of another.\(^{36}\) Appreciating the clarity involved with specific and precise identification and interpretation, we should at the same time endeavour to conceptualize the complexity in relative totality.

The given argument that compulsion and constraint, which may or may not be based on the coercive use of force as the key to both a precise and useful definition of intervention; that whether an act of interference is undertaken through physical force, economic pressure or some other form of compulsion, it is the compulsion and not its form that constitutes intervention, seems convincing in this respect.\(^{37}\) The trouble with this broader formulation, of course, is that it reintroduces a vagueness about the line that divides interventionary behaviour from other types of international action.

Thus, a scientific approach to intervention would go a long way towards resolving these definitional problems.

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36. ibid., pp.68-69.
37. Thomas & Thomas, n.4, p.72.
Science deals exclusively with observable phenomenon that can be measured, either practically or theoretically - and thus those who engage in scientific inquiry must operationalise their definition before they proceed to make empirical observations.  

Scientists may construct models with conventional concepts, but ultimately - i.e., when they move to test their models - they must either employ operational definitions or abandon the models. Bridgman's original formulation of operationalism makes this point most succinctly: "In general, we mean by any concept nothing more than a set of operations; the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations".  

Operational definitions, in short, avoid ambiguity. The resulting concepts may or may not be incisive and relevant, but they should not be vague. Operational definitions cannot be either right or wrong, but only more or less useful. The scientific literature on a subject, therefore, perpetuate precision rather than vagueness.

**Strategic Analysis and the Problem of Theorising Intervention**

Under what conditions intervention can successfully achieve its goals? What risks have to be run and what likely consequences have to be endured if success is to be achieved?

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38. ibid., p.284.

What will be the consequences of non-intervention? What consequences can be expected in case intervention results in utter failure? Such questions, of course, can not be answered by moral principles in normative terms and judicial standards in legal terms. In fact, the lack of scientific approach to explicate intervention, in terms of clear, precise and coherent ways led to the dominance of unsystematic and value-laden judgement while analysing the implications and strategic issues of intervention.

Nations conceive their national interests in terms of power. This view-point is predominant among the protagonists of realist school led by Morgenthau and Spykman. Taking clue from this perspective to assess the phenomenon of intervention in international relations, one should not judge this phenomenon from moral, ethical and other normative angles, rather from the hard priorities available to the nation which is intervening and the nations which are the victims of such intervention.

Success or failure of an intervention depends upon numerous factors, thus varies from situation to situation. It can not be said that given the conditions the intervention would be successful or otherwise. Intervention can not be a guiding principle of diplomacy. To examine a sample of intervention and conclude that such behaviour occurs because nations are "guided in their decisions to intervene and their
choice of the means of intervention by what they regard as their respective national interest" is not to offer a meaningful explanation. 40 The national interest is merely a label that may denote the entire spectrum of human wants and needs.

Thus, national interest may be interpreted depending upon the circumstances that are likely to lead a nation to define its wants and needs as requiring interventionary behaviour. 41

These are some major problems in theorising intervention. An interventionary act can be interpreted in various ways. This is, what the two superpowers have done, especially after the Second World War. They have intervened in the third world countries, on the basis of different pretexts suitable to their modus operandi and thus have tried to justify their acts of intervention.

40. Morgenthau, n.15, p.430.
41. Rosenau, n.18, p.239-249.