

II. ЗАМОНАВИЙ МЕТОДОЛОГИК ЁНДАШУВЛАР
Современные методологические подходы
Modern Methodologic Approaches

**SECURITY STUDIES IN PRISM OF
NATIONAL INTEREST CONCEPT**
(Historic Traditions)

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Abstract: *The context of security studies has long been prevalent in international politics. The history of contemporary international relations started with the emergence of independent states in Europe, which were motivated by security issues. Historically, American foreign policy practice has drawn two separate lines in terms of knowledge and attitude toward security interests, as well as two different approaches to basic international policy challenges. The bulk of serious studies on foreign policy by American professionals begin with an examination of these two approaches.*

Keywords: *Security Studies, International Relations History, Cold War, World Politics, National Interest, US Foreign Policy, National Security. Regional and Global Peace, Balance of Power.*

Introduction

The concept of international security has existed in international politics for a long time. The beginning of the history of modern international relations can be considered the formation of national states in Europe, the driving force of which was security interest. Around the same period, the term “national security” itself appeared.

Starting from this period, the concepts of “strength,” “might,” and “interest” became common in the vocabulary of foreign policymakers, and the traditional policy of the balance of power in Europe in the XVII-th --XVIII-th centuries was also based on nothing more than the national interests of states.

The end of the XX-th and early XXI century brought with it a sharp increase in attention to the problem of interest in foreign policy, which was directly related to the ongoing regrouping of forces in the world, and one of

the first to talk about the concept of “national security” in international relations were American thinkers Reynold Niebuhr and Charles Beard.

After the Second World War, the problem of national security became a kind of focus of foreign policy issues among leading US political scientists. The classic of American political thought, Hans Morgenthau, called the debate around this concept “the new great debate,”¹ where leading American scholars such as G. Kennan, W. Lippman, K. Waltz, E. Furniss, R. Snyder, K. Thompson, J. Rosenau, and others actively participated.

Scholarly Debates

Historically, long before the start of the discussion on this issue in scientific circles, American foreign policy practice had already clearly drawn two lines in understanding and attitude towards national security, two lines in understanding and attitude towards national interests, and two different approaches to foreign policy problems in general. The majority of serious studies by American specialists devoted to foreign policy begin with an analysis of these two approaches. It is appropriate to present it here, at least briefly.

The first “realist” in the field of foreign policy, using the modern classification, was, according to many researchers, Alexander Hamilton. According to Morgenthau², the name Hamilton is associated with the classical period in the history of US foreign policy, when all foreign policy activities were built on national security and were fully consistent with it. The foreign policy concept of the Federalists was based on three main principles:

- the foreign policy of the United States, as a new state entity, should be fundamentally different from the old European policy;
- the basis of US foreign policy should be isolationism, which, however, is ensured by the active behavior of the state in the international arena;

¹ Hans Morgenthau. Another Great Debate: The National Interest of the United States. // American Political Science Review. N 46, December 1952, (republished 2023) p. 18.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Another-“Great-Debate”%3A-The-National-Interest-of-Morgenthau/507e24b37497117daee197ad323f8718aca7ffa1>

² Morgenthau H. What is the National Interest of the United States // The National Interest - Alone or with the Others? The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Philadelphia, 1952, pp.6-7 (reprinted in 2021)

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/What-Is-the-National-Interest-of-the-United-States-Morgenthau/7ecd530f33b4713d408bec72a2b1969a813a20f2>

- US foreign policy should be based on a balance of power

Accordingly, the Federalist definition of US national security follows from the third point above. In the Western Hemisphere, the country's security is its unconditional leadership, which requires constant development and strengthening of foreign policy means. Based on this, the intervention of European countries in the affairs of any state in the Western Hemisphere is considered a threat to the national interests of the United States defined as a security basis (this idea will later find expression in the Monroe Doctrine).³

The national security of the United States in Europe requires maintaining a balance of power between European states, to bind their foreign policy activities within the borders of Europe, without giving access to the outside. To maintain such a balance of power, the United States must pursue an active foreign policy.

By the end of the 20th century, these two 'regional' definitions of national security would add to the need to maintain a balance of power in Asia. A striking example of the implementation by federalists of their concept of foreign policy was the debate on the issue of US neutrality during the wars of European monarchs against revolutionary France at the end of the 18th century. and deciding to declare neutrality.

The American and French revolutions were linked by common ideas of liberalism and the desire to free themselves from the shackles of old social systems. The broad masses of Americans enthusiastically welcomed the revolution in France as the advent of a new era in Europe. Evidence of support for the revolution was the emergence of so-called 'democratic-republican societies', modeled on the French Jacobin Club. It is not surprising, therefore, that it began in 1792-1793. The wars of the European powers against revolutionary France gave impetus to a powerful movement in support of the latter. Besides, the United States was bound to France by a Treaty of Alliance in 1778, obliging the USA to come to aid France in any war threat or attack⁴.

³ Ibidem

⁴ Morgenthau H. The Primacy of the National Interest // The American Scholar, v. 18, n.2, 1949, p. 208. (republished in 2022)

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Primacy-of-the-National-Interest-Morgenthau/bed7c9b39f6948027af0c5e85333edb457412b39>

Support was dictated by moral principles stemming from the idea of the American Revolution. However, if the United States came out in support of France, there was a direct threat of the opening of hostilities in the Western Hemisphere. In this regard, the American government was faced with a difficult choice: either to deepen cooperation with France, opposing itself to England, or to settle relations with the “Mistress of the Seas” at the expense of the franchise.

According to Morgenthau, "...against moral principles, Hamilton advanced the national interest of the United States."⁵ The Secretary of the Treasury pointed out that if neutrality were declared, the United States would have the opportunity to trade with both conflicting parties at once. On the other hand, Hamilton noted, it is unlikely that “the assistance that we could provide by taking part in the conflict would compensate for the benefits it brought to the cause (of the revolution - *author*) for the negative consequences that most likely await our country as a result our intervention”? Having weighed the possible consequences of both options (intervention and neutrality), Hamilton concluded that the imbalance between them could serve as a serious basis for the non-fulfillment of US guarantees under the treaty of 1778.⁶ The declaration of neutrality on April 22, 1783, was the first and, one might say, a classic example of acceptance of foreign policy decisions in conditions when the national security of the United States came into sharp conflict with its moral principles and obligations. Washington acted in this case based solely on US national interests.

In opposition to the course of the Federalists was the Secretary of State of the Washington administration, Thomas Jefferson, who resigned in 1793. He showed himself to be a supporter of a “pro-French” orientation. The Secretary of State's pro-French sympathies were explained by many reasons, in particular, his concern about the state of US trade and diplomatic relations with Great Britain. Jefferson proceeded from the belief that England still treated the United States as a dependent country, evidence of which he saw in the failure of the British cabinet to comply with several articles of the Treaty of Paris of 1783, in the refusal to conclude a trade agreement with the United

⁵ Cornelia Navari Hans Morgenthau and the National Interest Ethics & International Affairs 30(01):47-54 March 2016 DOI:10.1017/S089267941500060X
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297753634_Hans_Morgenthau_and_the_National_Interest

⁶ Morgenthau H. In Defense of National Interest. NY, 1952, p. 17. (republished in 2021)
<https://archive.org/details/indefenseofnatio0000hans>

States, etc. France was an ally of the United States during the difficult years of their struggle with the metropolis and, most importantly, provided the young republic with the most favored nation treatment in trade. It was by maintaining a friendship with France, Jefferson concluded, that the United States would be able to overcome its centuries-long dependence on England.⁷ The position of the Secretary of State was dictated not only by considerations of diplomacy or economic gain but also by a corresponding assessment of the significance of the French Revolution, on the victory or defeat of which, according to him, the cause of freedom throughout the world depended.

The justification for a pro-French orientation was built primarily based on broader moral values rather than US national security. Morgenthau later called this approach to problems of foreign policy. It is characterized by the fact that when making decisions, politicians proceed not from political, but from moral principles.⁸ In any case, however, according to realists, national interest cannot be completely ignored. Even the moral values of a moralist politician in one way or another coincide with the national interest: latently it influences the decision made here too. In the event of a sharp contradiction between national security and moral principles, the politician is forced to compromise. Here is how Morgenthau characterizes Jefferson's line from this particular point of view: "Yet even Jefferson, whose devotion to abstract morality was very strong, and, conversely, whose realistic grip in foreign affairs was weak, moral claims were quite often conceded, especially in private conversations, the influence of national interest on common sense."⁹ Jefferson himself during the Napoleonic wars, not wanting the excessive strengthening of France, leaned towards England, and in 1815 he came to the conclusion about the need for a balance of power in Europe: "For my part, I wish that all nations could restore their economies and to preserve independence; so that those who have become excessively strong cannot overstep the safe boundaries of power so that a beneficial balance can be

⁷ Bowers C. G. Jefferson and Hamilton. The Struggle for Democracy in America. Boston - New York, 1925 (reprinted in 2023) , p. 210. https://archive.org/details/jeffersonhamilton00bowe_2

⁸ Morgenthau H. In Defense of the National Interest, NY, 1952, p. 19. (reprinted in 2021) <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/In-Defense-of-the-National-Interest-Morgenthau-Nasasue/545a1273711b52af6243677a6c3476d371a5fa59>

⁹ Ibidem

constantly maintained between nations, and so that everyone desires peace with us, seeks our friendship and trade."¹⁰

Binary Approach

As noted by the famous American researcher Charles Beard in his work "The Idea of National Interest: An Analytical Study of American Foreign Policy" (New York, 1934), "two concepts of national interests inherited (from the Founding Fathers - author) have been found ever since in a constant process of convergence and divergence."¹¹

Indeed, the influence of these two approaches to the problem of ensuring national security can be traced throughout two centuries of US history. Supporters of the realistic (Hamiltonian) concept were John Adams, John Quincy Adams, J. Monroe, and A. Mahan. Realists consider the overwhelming majority of political figures of the 19th and 20th centuries to be supporters of the Jeffersonian concept." Among them, they especially highlight Woodrow Wilson. With this, however, division of politicians into supporters of one and another concept, it is necessary to strictly distinguish between their theoretical views, ideas, beliefs, and the actual policies pursued by them.

History shows that politicians who are outwardly committed to a moral approach to international relations, albeit gradually, still act in strict accordance with national security issues, continuing to justify their decisions exclusively from the point of view of universal moral principles. Morgenthau called this situation "...a seemingly happy coincidence of national interest and moral principles."¹² By acting in this way, politicians prefer not to talk about national security defined as vital interests, as if completely replacing them with ideological guidelines.

¹⁰Ibidem

¹¹Beard, Charles Austin. The idea of national interest: an analytical study in American foreign policy.

<https://archive.org/details/ideaofnationalin0000bear>

See also: Robert J. McMahon. Diplomatic History and Policy History: Finding Common Ground / Cambridge Core / Published online by Cambridge University Press: 27 April 2009

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-policy-history/article/abs/diplomatic-history-and-policy-history-finding-common-ground/C1202648C257165564190E34BC368E31>

¹² Morgenthau H. What is the National Interest of the United States // The National Interest - Alone or with the Others? The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Philadelphia, 1952, pp.15-17 (reprinted in 2023)

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/What-Is-the-National-Interest-of-the-United-States-Morgenthau/7ecd530f33b4713d408bec72a2b1969a813a20f2>

In its purest form, moralism in foreign policy was embodied in the activities of President Woodrow Wilson. In a speech in Mobile on October 27, 1913, Wilson for the first time openly contrasted policies based on national interest with policies based on moral principles. In his opinion, "...it is a very dangerous thing to define a nation's foreign policy in terms of material interest."¹³ Wilson recognized the objective existence of national security but considered it immoral to act on its basis. After World War I, he believed in a "...brave new world, where the national interests of the United States, as well as all other nations, would dissolve in the common interests of a united humanity."¹⁴ But, as you know, Wilson also did not avoid compromises, shocking his supporters. Morgenthau notes on this matter: "Be that as it may, in his political activities, especially in the conditions of World War I, Wilson could not completely ignore the national interests of the United States, just like Jefferson before him."¹⁵

America entered the 20th century with two different approaches to the problem of national interest. While these were approaches only in the sphere of direct foreign policy practice, theoretical debates on this issue were still to come. Analyzing two different approaches to the problem of foreign policy interest in the monograph "The Idea of National Interest," Ch. Beard¹⁶ concludes that a new strong politician is needed, capable of putting forward a new concept of national interest that would synthesize the two "inherited ones." Although, Beard notes, "...it is possible that even Hamilton and Jefferson would have difficulty formulating a 'new concept' of the national interest in these difficult times."¹⁷

Niebuhr's Legacy

An attempt to create such a new concept was made in the 30s of the 20th century. one of the most prominent American theorists of Protestantism and political thought, Reinhold Niebuhr, whom J. Kennan called "...the father

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶ Beard, Charles Austin. The idea of national interest: an analytical study in American foreign policy.

<https://archive.org/details/ideaofnationalin0000bear>

See also: Robert J. McMahon. Diplomatic History and Policy History: Finding Common Ground / Cambridge Core / Published online by Cambridge University Press: 27 April 2009

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-policy-history/article/abs/diplomatic-history-and-policy-history-finding-common-ground/C1202648C257165564190E34BC368E31>

¹⁷Ibid.

of political realism.”¹⁸ Niebuhr's political philosophy is based on his understanding of the essence of man. In man himself, according to Niebuhr, there is an inevitable contradiction between good and evil, nature and spirit: “The paradox of human existence comes from the fact that he is doomed to oscillate between freedom and necessity, between spirit and nature.”¹⁹ From this follows the inevitability of conflicts, struggles, and contradictions both within the individual and in society. The main problem of man, according to Niebuhr, is the problem of “*security of power*.” A person simultaneously strives not to fall under the power of another and to dominate another. Thus, the instinct of self-preservation is realized in the thirst for power: “Every social group, like every individual, has expansionist claims rooted in the instinct of self-preservation and often going beyond the requirements of the latter.”²⁰ With this contradiction, Niebuhr explained the existence of national interest: “The very concept of national interest follows, on the one hand, from the essence of the political situation and, on the other hand, from the essence of man”.²¹

Niebuhr recognized the objective existence of national interest and viewed it as a problem of political ethics. He believed that an individual who implements the high moral principles of philanthropy and selflessness can sacrifice his interests, but the nation, the state, being a supra-individual community, must act based on its national interests. At the same time, Niebuhr warns against underestimating the importance of the national interest: “In both cases, concern for oneself (or, in the case of a nation, concern exclusively for the national interest) is much stronger than the individual or the nation is inclined to admit. Even universal love and Christian ideals will not be refuted by interests, Niebuhr believed. Based on this, he considered the national interest as the core and key to understanding all international politics, and as a problem of political ethics. Since politics, according to Niebuhr, is

¹⁸Kenneth W. Thompson Beyond National Interest: A Critical Evaluation of Reinhold Niebuhr's Theory of International Politics / The Review of Politics / Published online by Cambridge University Press: 05 August 2009

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-politics/article/abs/beyond-national-interest-a-critical-evaluation-of-reinhold-niebuhrs-theory-of-international-politics/6A8763F55D9368807F33C387BDA2663A>

¹⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr. Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics.

<https://archive.org/details/moralmanimmorals00nieb>

²⁰Ibid.

²¹R. Good The National Interest and Political Realism: Niebuhr's "Debate" with Morgenthau and Kennan / Published in Journal of Politics 1 November 1960 DOI:10.2307/2126924 Corpus ID: 153687032

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-National-Interest-and-Political-Realism%3A-with-Good/c511aaaaed86535350a76c508ed238c22ee0d3ad>

immanently immoral, since its core is the national interest, then a counterbalance is needed that does not allow relations between states to turn into a “*war of all against all*” This counterbalance is universal moral principles, a supranational value system, and religion: “People and states cannot protect their interests without constantly declaring that they do this by submitting to some common value system”²². So, there is an obvious contradiction between Niebuhr's two normative judgments: 1) the behavior of states should be based on the national interest and 2) foreign policy should take into account universal moral principles. But such a sharp dialectic between interest and moral norm is present in all of Niebuhr's works. Noting that “...all successful statesmen of modern times have made the national interest the highest and final criterion of their policies,”²³ Niebuhr believed that “...people, turning to values that go beyond the boundaries of the nation, thereby prevent the expression of national interest in too narrow a sense.”²⁴ The same dialectic formed the basis of his idea of what kind of theory is necessary for international relations: “...it is required ... an idealism that takes us beyond the limits of national interest, and a realism that reveals the hypocrisy of every attempt to rise above the national interest.”²⁵

The question of national interest, identified by R. Niebuhr in the interwar period, became a problem of paramount importance for researchers belonging to the school of political realism after the Second World War. The Second World War destroyed faith in the international organization and system that existed before the war. Realists tended to look for the reasons for the outbreak of war in the fact that European states did not follow their national interests. Under such conditions, national interest began to be seen almost as a panacea for all mistakes in foreign policy.

National Interests as Universal Phenomena

The holistic concept of national interest was developed by Hans Morgenthau in his monograph “In Defense of the National Interest” (New York, 1952). Morgenthau takes national interest as the basis for periodizing

²²Reinhold Niebuhr. The structure of nations and empires: a study of the recurring patterns and problems of the political order in relation to the unique problems of the nuclear age.

<https://archive.org/details/structureofnatio0000nieb>

²³Ibidem

²⁴Ibidem

²⁵Ibidem

the history of US foreign policy. He identifies three periods of American foreign policy: realistic (the first decade of the existence of the United States), ideological / 1800-1898), and utopian (1898 - present).

Morgenthau considers the period when the Federalists were in power to be the “*golden age*” of American foreign policy. During this period, political thought and political action were subordinated to the universal standard of national interest.

The second period is characterized, according to Morgenthau, by the fact that “...the paths of political thought and political activity diverged, but remained parallel.”²⁶ In political rhetoric, the concept of “*moral law*” dominated, but political activity, thanks to the “...seemingly happy coincidence of the requirements of the moral law with the requirements of national interest,”²⁷ continued to develop in line with the national interest. In other words, the politicians of the ideological period were moralists in thought and words and realists indeed. A classic example of such a politician is, according to Morgenthau, John Quincy Adams.

Morgenthau considers the beginning of the third period to be the Spanish-American War, when, in his words, “McKinley led the United States as a great world power beyond the Western Hemisphere, without thinking about how this Step relates to American interests, and guided by moral principles completely divorced from national interest.”²⁸ This period was characterized by the opposition of moral principles and national interest. Identifying three forms of utopianism: Wilsonianism, isolationism, and internationalism, Morgenthau characterizes this period as follows: “...radical isolationism, on the one hand, and radical interventionism, on the other, as two different manifestations ... of a foreign policy philosophy that replaces the US national interest with a certain concept of human well-being and abstract principles of universal morality.”²⁹

²⁶Morgenthau H. In Defense of the National Interest, NY, 1952, p. 25.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/In-Defense-of-the-National-Interest-Morgenthau-Nasasue/545a1273711b52af6243677a6c3476d371a5fa59>

²⁷Ibidem

²⁸Morgenthau H. What is the National Interest of the United States // The National Interest - Alone or with the Others? The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Philadelphia, 1952, pp.23-25 (republished in 2021)

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/What-Is-the-National-Interest-of-the-United-States-Morgenthau/7ecd530f33b4713d408bec72a2b1969a813a20f2>

²⁹Ibidem

Morgenthau names Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State in the F.D. Roosevelt Administration Cordell Hull as exponents of the political philosophy of the utopian period. Sharply criticizing modern US foreign policy as based on utopian moral principles, Morgenthau comes to the following conclusion: "It can be said with confidence that a foreign policy guided by universal moral principles and throwing the national interest into the background is, in the conditions of modern politics and military affairs, the policy of national suicide - actual or potential."³⁰ This policy constantly fluctuates, according to Morgenthau, between the Scylla of national suicide and the Charybdis of the crusades for the implantation of new ideals by fire and sword.

Morgenthau believes that the only alternative to such a policy is strict adherence to national interests at all stages of developing a foreign policy decision. Only this is a guarantee of a "*high quality*" policy. From this follows the conclusion that there is a need for serious study and determination of US interests. Morgenthau himself uses the principle of the balance of power as the basis for constructing the structure of American interests. In contrast to the traditional geopolitical alignment of interests (predominance in the Western Hemisphere, balance of power in Europe, balance of power in Asia), he builds a new "*balance*" based on the existence of a nuclear confrontation: "The power of the USA and their main rival compared with the power of their current or future allies has become so overwhelming that they, with the help of their weight, determine the balance of power among themselves".³¹ This balance in former system was unable to have a decisive influence on changes in the allegiances of one or another of their allies. The balance of power has been transformed from multipolar to bipolar balance and was seen by realists as a means of preserving peace.

Morgenthau proposed a two-step approach to making foreign policy decisions based on the national interest. The first "step" is to establish a "hierarchical order, the order of priorities among all possible goals of the nation's foreign policy," the second is "an analysis of the available resources

³⁰Morgenthau H. In Defense of the National Interest, NY, 1952, p. 25. (Republished in 2020)
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/In-Defense-of-the-National-Interest-Morgenthau-Nasasue/545a1273711b52af6243677a6c3476d371a5fa59>

³¹Ibid.

to achieve each of the designated goals in the light of their importance to the national interest of the United States.”³²

In the hierarchy of national interests, Morgenthau identified the “*core*” or “*vital*” interests of the United States, which must be achieved at any cost. This “solid core” includes “...preservation of the physical, political and cultural integrity of the United States.”³³

Morgenthau compares politicians who do not share a commitment to the principle of national interest in foreign policy to “...natural scientists who do not believe in the law of gravity.”³⁴

Morgenthau responded to critics' accusations that the concept of national interest is immoral by asserting that “...the national interest itself has a moral content because the national community is the only source of order and the only defender of minimal moral values in a world suffering from a lack of order and moral consensus beyond the borders of the nation-state.”³⁵ It naturally follows from this that only policies that strictly follow the requirements of national interest are moral.

Morgenthau's views were most characteristic of representatives of the school of “*political realism*,” who view politics from the point of view of power relations. Recognition of national interest as the basis of foreign policy is the fundamental line that separates “*realists*” from supporters of the so-called legalistic-moralistic approach or “*idealists*.” On this occasion, the American researcher Robert Good notes: “It is interesting that the analysis of the national interest unites those who call themselves realists in a united front against the “*illusions*” of idealists, and at the same time divides them among themselves.”³⁶ What separates supporters of “*Realpolitik*” is their attitude to

³²Ibid.

³³Morgenthau H. What is the National Interest of the United States // The National Interest - Alone or with the Others? The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Philadelphia, 1952, pp.23-25 (reprinted in 2021)

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/What-Is-the-National-Interest-of-the-United-States-Morgenthau/7ecd530f33b4713d408bec72a2b1969a813a20f2>

³⁴Hans Joachim Morgenthau Scientific Man vs. Power Politics.

<https://archive.org/details/scientificmanvsp00morgrich>

³⁵Morgenthau H. In Defense of the National Interest, NY, 1952, p. 25. (reprinted in 2022)

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/In-Defense-of-the-National-Interest-Morgenthau-Nasasue/545a1273711b52af6243677a6c3476d371a5fa59>

³⁶R. Good The National Interest and Political Realism: Niebuhr's "Debate" with Morgenthau and Kennan / Published in Journal of Politics 1 November 1960 DOI:10.2307/2126924 Corpus ID: 153687032

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-National-Interest-and-Political-Realism%3A-with-Good/c511aaaaed86535350a76c508ed238c22ee0d3ad>

the specific definition of what they understand “by national interest” and some nuances in assessing its role in foreign policy.

So, let us turn out that if Morgenthau considered universal moral principles as if hovering in the clouds above earthly realpolitik, then Kennan generally denied the existence of any general moral principles, and therefore the possibility of mutual understanding between states based on morality. According to Kennan, the moral principles of different regimes could be opposite, and therefore unacceptable to each other. Based on the complete relativity of the moral criterion, Kennan concluded that the only criterion based on which the existence of the international system and relations of states was national interest.

The well-known researcher of international relations N. Spykman linked national interest with the geographical factor: “Distinguished by the greatest constancy, geography is the most fundamental factor in the foreign policy of states”³⁷. A. George paid great attention to the concept of national interest and its use in the process of making foreign policy decisions by the US President. He concludes that the adoption of a “*high-quality*”, “*true*” decision is directly dependent on taking into account national interests. A. George also proposed to consider national interests in a strict hierarchy according to their relative importance for the country. When concluding the acceptability of a particular foreign policy action, it was necessary, according to George, not only to take into account the national interest affected but also the “cost,” sometimes also called the “internal price,”³⁸ of this action, including the forces and means necessary for its implementation, as well as the reaction to it of the world community and public opinion within the country.

Defending National Interest over Cold War Game

The concept of “vital national interests,” according to George, included the following fundamental values: “1) physical survival, 2) freedom, 3) economic sufficiency.” Vital interests must be protected and achieved at any

³⁷Helen R. Nicholl, N. Spykman The Geography of Peace / Published in American Journal of International Law / October 1944 (preprinted in 2023) / DOI:10.2307/2192825 Corpus ID: 146975171

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Geography-of-Peace.-Nicholl-Spykman/a6975043d344cdc4e40f7c38c9534fd5760a3257>

³⁸A. George Presidential Decision-making In Foreign Policy: The Effective Use Of Information And Advice Political Science Published 1980 DOI:10.2307/2149374 Corpus ID: 154289543

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Presidential-Decisionmaking-In-Foreign-Policy%3A-The-George/69c016d6eb66433c67ee5c8433b44f67af72f0df>

cost. Currently, A. George indicated two threats to the vital interests of the United States: the spread of global critical situations, the threat of which he proposed to fight by all means³⁹. Opponents of the school of political realism on the issue of national interest were supporters of the legalistic-moralistic approach to the problems of international relations.

They recognized the existence of objective national interests among states but considered it completely unacceptable to base foreign policy on what was, from their point of view, an immoral national interest. Representatives of this trend believe that foreign policy should be much broader than simply protecting national interests and that when making a decision, a politician should be guided primarily by internationally recognized moral norms and norms of international law.

They do not accept the view of the world community as an arena of power struggle. Idealists propose their scheme of the international community as a kind of legal supranational state, where there would be collective bodies with broad powers in the image and likeness of the UN. This vision of the world is typical of a very large circle of American international relations scholars and political figures of the post-war period.

One of the leading researchers of the idealistic trend, Abraham Feller, in a speech at a conference of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, specially dedicated to the problems of national interest in foreign policy, subjected criticism of Morgenthau's concept as not corresponding to the realities of the modern world: "A foreign policy devoted to the diligent regulation of power interests by professional diplomats may justify itself for a limited time in a limited area, but it will never receive the support of the popular masses striving for a better world."⁴⁰ Hopes for "improvement peace" Feller places the primary responsibility on the United Nations and similar collective bodies, as well as on policies based on legal and moral principles: "I must state my deep conviction that in the long run, this "legalistic-moralistic approach" However clumsy this phrase may seem, applied disinterestedly and with a realistic regard for its short-term limitations, whether we like it or not,

³⁹Ibidem

⁴⁰Cornelia Navari Hans Morgenthau and the National Interest *Ethics & International Affairs* 30(01):47-54
March 2016 DOI:10.1017/S089267941500060X
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297753634_Hans_Morgenthau_and_the_National_Interest

will remain the only acceptable direction of an honest and effective foreign policy."⁴¹

Idealists also tend to view policies based on national interests as policies that do not take into account the public opinion of the country's population. P. Corbett believes that by participating in public opinion polls, a person expresses his moral attitudes, general values, in particular, and his views on certain foreign policy problems. And since moral values, according to realists, should not influence foreign policy, Corbett concludes that politics based on national interest is isolated from the sentiments and opinions of the citizens of the state. In his opinion, politics based on national interest is outdated, as The classical principle of the balance of power is also outdated. Strong supranational structures are what is required to strengthen the international situation, Corbett believes. "The public's demand for strong international organizations stems in large part from the fact that traditional diplomacy, with its reliance on non-institutional balances of power, has been unable to prevent war"⁴². Hence the conclusion about the need to create a strong international organization on the principle of a national government.

In addition to the idealistic direction of the concept of national interest, one can also distinguish the so-called "subjectivists," as James Rosenau calls them. Unlike idealists, they deny the existence of any objective interest in the state. Subjectivists view society as an infinite number of individual and group interests, none of which can objectively prevail over the other.⁴³ Therefore, the definition of national interest is always purely subjective and expresses the interests of the social group to which this or that political figure belongs. According to subjectivists, the concept of national interest is needed only to explain and policy analysis.

This position is most clearly expressed in the monograph by E. Furniss and R. Snyder, "Introduction to American Foreign Policy." The authors, in particular, write: "... it is clear that national interests are subjective in nature. Thus, there is no such thing as a "real national" interest that can be identified

⁴¹Ibidem

⁴²P. E. Corbett National Interest, International Organization, and American Foreign Policy / Published online by Cambridge University Press / World Politics Journal / 18 July 2011
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/abs/national-interest-international-organization-and-american-foreign-policy/37B25A1876A658EAFE8C78BAB66C2753>

⁴³ James N. Rosenau The scientific study of foreign policy. <https://archive.org/details/scientificstudy0000rose>

by an objective observer. National interest is what the nation, that is, the politician making the decision, decides to call it such.”⁴⁴

Despite, however, the perception of national interest as purely subjective, representatives of this trend, as Rosenau notes, still recognize the need to analyze foreign policy and international relations in terms of national interest. Debates on this issue relate mainly to the post-war period. But, as J. Rosenau rightly noted, “...national interest has a much longer history as an instrument of action than as a means of analysis.”⁴⁵

The entire history of the United States before the Second World War shows that, although not yet a means of analysis, national interest was present in the formation of foreign policy and specific actions. Let us very briefly consider from this point of view the use of the concept of “national interest” in the post-war history of the United States.

This is how G. Morgenthau assesses the participation of the United States in the First and Second World Wars: “Our entry into World Wars I and II, whatever its moral and idealistic justifications, had its solid basis in national interest, in the need to maintain the balance of power in Europe, and in case of its violation, the need to restore it.”⁴⁶

Realists had a negative attitude towards the idea of unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan, because they considered war to the bitter end, until the enemy was destroyed, to be a purely idealistic approach. In addition, the excessive weakening of Germany and Japan and the strengthening of the main rival by that time upset the balance of power in Europe. W. Churchill, whom realists value very highly, warned against such a course of events. It is known that soon after the end of the war, the United States and its NATO partners began to pursue a course for the speedy restoration of West Germany and its revival as a world power. In this light, J. Harsh’s report at a conference in Philadelphia on US national interests entitled

⁴⁴E. S. Furniss, R. Snyder *An introduction to American foreign policy* Published in *Political Science* (1955, reprinted in 2023) Corpus ID: 152993985 <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-introduction-to-American-foreign-policy-Furniss-Snyder/2eb16eeel1aed2d8a4fe824c561b551cb4f7a719>

⁴⁵James N. Rosenau *The scientific study of foreign policy*. <https://archive.org/details/scientificstudy0000rose>

⁴⁶Morgenthau H. *What is the National Interest of the United States // The National Interest - Alone or with the Others?* *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Philadelphia, 1952, pp.26-27 (reprinted in 2020) <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/What-Is-the-National-Interest-of-the-United-States-Morgenthau/7ecd530f33b4713d408bec72a2b1969a813a20f2>

“Can Germany Reliably Contain Russia?”⁴⁷ sounds very characteristic, where Germany is assigned the role of a deterrent.

Most of the US foreign policy actions in Europe after the war were aimed at preventing the strengthening of the bipolar rival. The most striking example of such a policy is the Marshall Plan. Post-war history also shows that despite the very high degree of ideologization of foreign policy rhetoric and international relations themselves, the United States sought, where possible, to adhere to the “golden rule” of the balance of power policy and to achieve its goals through the hands of other states.

From the point of view of the concept of national interest, US policy in China deserves special attention. China has traditionally been considered the key to the strategic balance of power in Asia. After WWII, the US government devoted all its efforts to supporting Chiang Kai-shek to maintain China's pro-American orientation. But, faced with the inevitability of the collapse of the Chiang Kai-shek regime, the United States began negotiations with the Soviets, for which it was subjected to serious criticism from the right in the country. The US's ambivalent position did not bring success in the negotiations, and China was "lost" to the US. G. Truman's remark on this matter is typical: “Only a 2-million-strong American army could have saved Chiang Kai-shek, and this would have meant the beginning of the Third World War.”⁴⁸ However, in attempts to restore favor

for themselves, the balance of power in Asia was not terminated. Shortly after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, on December 30, 1949, Presidential Directive NSC 48-2 was signed, which set the following goal: “The United States must use all appropriate political, psychological and economic measures to exploit any discrepancy between the Chinese Government and their allies.”⁴⁹ All post-war US administrations adhered to this policy towards China, one or another shade. The conclusion reached by the participants in a conference on US national interests, held by the Wilson Center for International Studies in 1980-1981, after discussing the problems of

⁴⁷S.Burchill The National Interest in International Relations Theory Political Science Published 2005

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-National-Interest-in-International-Relations-Burchill/b6849a827cbf4e3bf54baddcff3e01d70cb6dfbd>

⁴⁸The National Interests of the United States in foreign policy / Seven Discussions at the Wilson Center / National Interests of the United States in Foreign Policy / December 1980 - February 1981 (reprinted in 2017) https://openlibrary.org/books/OL3864171M/The_National_interests_of_the_United_States_in_foreign_policy

⁴⁹Ibid.

the East Asian region, is typical. In the conference materials we read: "The speakers insistently called attention to the fundamental US interest in preventing any one power from dominating Asia; they proposed a policy of "anti-hegemony" against any coalition of forces. which could push the US out of the Asian sphere."⁵⁰

With the emergence of new political thinking in the international arena, the idea of a certain revision of the foundations of international politics appeared, replacing the "*balance of power*" with a "*balance of interests*," which is very reminiscent of Wilson's already mentioned idea of "the dissolution of the interests of individual states in the general interest of a uniting humanity" in post-war conditions. But here are the conclusions that H. Kissinger made in May 1989 in the article "In Search of a New Balance of Power in Asia": "In this new world, the United States and China had a mutual interest in preventing the dominance of the main rival or any other country over the Eurasian mainland," and further, "...regardless of the development of the internal situation, the geopolitical aspect of Chinese-American relations remains unshakable."⁵¹

Another striking example of the use of the concept of national interest in foreign policy is the US policy in Vietnam. Realists have traditionally classified Vietnam as a secondary and even secondary US interest. Therefore, from the beginning of American aggression in Vietnam, representatives of the school of political realism sharply criticized government policies as inconsistent with the national interests of the United States.

National Interest vs. Balance of Power

According to Morgenthau, the war against the spread of communism in Vietnam is not a vital US interest but leads to a huge depletion of the country's resources. Morgenthau considered this war a classic example of a "crusade" against world communism." 58 To the policy of intervention in regional conflicts, the "realists" put forward an alternative to reducing US involvement in other regions of the world. Kissinger expressed this glue this way: "Regional groupings supported by the United States must assume primary

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Kissinger, Henry. On China / N.Y. 2012 Penguin Publishers / https://archive.org/details/onchina0000kiss_m8r0

See also: Martin Indyk. Order Before Peace / Kissinger's Middle East Diplomacy and Its Lessons for Today / November/December 2021Published on October 13, 2021 / <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2021-10-13/henry-kissinger-middle-east-peace>

responsibility for their immediate areas, while the United States focuses on the overall objectives of preserving world order rather than on regional activities."⁵²

It was this approach that formed the basis of the Nixon Doctrine. Its essence, he told Congress on February 18, 1970, "...is that the United States will participate in the defense and development of our allies and friends, but America cannot and will not develop all the plans, all the programs, carry out all the decisions and assume full responsibility for the defense of the free countries of the world. We will assist in cases where there is a real need for it and when it is in our interests... Our interests should determine our obligations, and not vice versa."⁵³

The Nixon administration generally attached great importance to the principle of the balance of power in interstate relations. The "realists" position about the limited importance of force in the nuclear age was used as the basis for the formation of its foreign policy course. There was an important conclusion that "...the existing balance of nuclear power dictates the need to place the main emphasis on negotiations, and not on confrontation."⁵⁴ Nixon's reliance on politicians such as G. Kissinger, W. Rogers, and other representatives of the school of political realism made it possible to pursue a policy of détente and revise many of the provisions of the general foreign policy strategy pursued by previous administrations.

The Ford administration also declared its commitment to the course of detente, relying on the balance of power in the international arena. Ford's "Pacific Doctrine" stated that "the balance of power in the Pacific is essential to the United States and other countries in the region" and that "American power is fundamental to any stable balance of power in the Pacific."⁵⁵

The policy of the Carter administration is characterized by the fact that, although the rhetoric constantly contained calls for the protection of national interests, the foreign policy course was formed rather on a moralistic-idealistic basis. The thesis of protecting Human Rights was placed at the forefront of

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³ US Foreign Policy for the 1970's. A New Strategy for Peace. A Report of President Nixon to the Congress. February 18, 1970, p. 99. (reprinted in 2020)
<https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/e5/54804.htm>

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵ President Ford Pacific Doctrine. The Department of State News Release. December 7, 1975 (reprinted in 2021), p. 2. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v38p1/d65>

foreign policy, and the situation with human rights in a particular country often served as a criterion for pursuing friendly or unfriendly policies. This policy was happily accepted and brought certain results in Latin America and other third-world countries. But in the United States itself, the Carter administration was subject to fierce criticism from conservative groups in Congress. N. Podhoretz, a political scientist known for his right-wing convictions, calls Carter's foreign policy "capitulation."⁵⁶

He accuses Carter of failing to maintain US military superiority over the former rival, of "losing" Iran, Nicaragua, Panama, and other regions important to the US, and of reducing US influence in the area of developing countries.

Ronald Reagan's first presidency was very ideological, foreign policy was charged with the spirit of a crusade against world communism. But thanks to the serious changes that took place in Eurasia and the ability of the Republican administration to revise its ideological positions, the foreign policy of the second Reagan administration was more in line with the realities of the world situation in the second half of the 1980s.

In recent years, some politicians have put forward the concept of a "balance of interests" instead of a "balance of power." It has not yet received a thorough scientific substantiation, but it seems that maintaining a balance of interests that is not based on a balance of power is not very realistic. Recognizing and highly appreciating the achievements of new political thinking in changing the situation in the world in a favorable direction, leading American political scientists and politicians do not, however, abandon the traditional understanding of the essence of international relations in the spirit of political realism. Such recognized authorities as Z. Brzezinski, H. Kissinger, R. McNamara, and others constantly pay attention to this. R. McNamara 1990-th published his work "Blundering into Disaster: Surviving the First Century of the Nuclear Age,"⁵⁷ where he tried to give an analysis of the entire post-war US policy towards its former rival and concludes the goals of American foreign policy: "We need a policy that would protect our vital interests, would advocate consistency in action and provide an opportunity to positively influence policy."⁵⁸ The basis of international relations, according to

⁵⁶Podhoretz N. The Present Danger. Do We Have the Will to Reverse the Decline of American Power NY, 1980 (reprinted in 2020), pp. 89-91 <https://archive.org/details/presentdangerdo00podh/page/n5/mode/2up>

⁵⁷ Robert S. McNamara Blundering into Disaster: Surviving the First Century of the Nuclear Age / N.Y. 1986 (reprinted in 2017) / <https://archive.org/details/blunderingintodi0000mcna>

⁵⁸Ibid.

McNamara, "...should be a stable balance of power at the lowest possible level."⁵⁹

In fact, in the policies of all post-war US administrations, both Republican and Democratic, the theme of national interest is heard. Politics does not move away from its traditional basis. But at the same time, in US political science circles there is a constant discussion about the advisability of using the concept of national interest in foreign policy.

Main Aspects of the Concept's Criticism

In the article "National Interest", written for the "Encyclopedia of Social Sciences", American scholar James Rosenau argued that "...despite statements made in defense of the concept and its certain usefulness, the concept of national interest has not lived up to the high hopes placed on it as a means of analysis."⁶⁰ The main difficulty in applying the concept to the analysis of international relations and foreign policy, according to Rosenau, is that the national interest is "rooted in values." Recognizing the objective nature of national interest, Rosenau and many other researchers note a large amount of subjectivity in determining the direct national interest of the United States by one or another political figure in a given situation. Rosenau writes in this regard: "The definition of national interest can never be anything other than a system of inferences emanating from the analytical and value base of the politician."⁶¹ Moreover, the author concludes that the concept of national interest as a tool of analysis has already ceased to exist, because "...existing global trends (toward interdependence of states - author) are increasingly reducing the fruitfulness of attempts to explain international behavior in terms of national interest."⁶²

The criticism of the concept of national interest, especially from quantitative behavioral scientists, is that national interest is not measurable and that it is impossible to compare two policy options in terms of their relevance to the national interest. The concept of national interest, as representing a simplified picture of international relations, is also criticized by adherents of a multifactor approach to political problems. F. Pearson and J,

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰James N. Rosenau The scientific study of foreign policy / National Interest / <https://archive.org/details/scientificstudy00000rose>

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

Rochester highlight the following shortcomings of the concept: 1) a simplified understanding of the essence of international relations, reducing all their diversity and complexity to the narrowly understood interests of states; 2) the uncertainty of the term itself; 3) the lack of identical criteria for defense sufficiency in different states; 4) the possibility of the existence of a situation where the main and secondary interests of the state may turn out to be incompatible; 5) “the national interest, as defined by the government, may benefit the nation as a whole, but may benefit only privileged segments of the nation”; 6) some states may include such concepts as “power” and “prestige” in their national interest. The authors conclude that, given these problems, “...the concept of national interest raises as many new questions as it solves.”⁶³

Another foreign policy researcher, Cornelia Navari, does not see anything other than certain values in the concept of national interest. “It should now be clear that when we talk about national interest, we are talking about values; values shared by several, many, perhaps even all members of a given society.”⁶⁴ Therefore, Navari believes, there may be completely different definitions of national interest. Thus, she gives the example of Osgood's definition of national interest through the concepts of “self-sufficiency, prestige, increase.”⁶⁵

Some critics suggest that shared moral values must be included in the formulation or development of a decision so that the national interest is not defined too narrowly. Criticism of the concept of national interest was born along with the concept itself. Throughout the post-war period, certain provisions of the concept were questioned and criticized. However, it should be noted that all critics of the national interest do not deny the advisability of using this concept when making foreign policy decisions.

Thus, there has been a renewed emphasis in academic circles on the conceptual perception of national interest. New articles and studies appear, and scientific conferences are held by the Wilson Center for International

⁶³ Pearson F., Rochester J. *International Relations. The Global Condition in the Late 20th Century*. NY, 1988 (reprinted in 2015), pp. 149-151.

https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7456568M/International_Relations_Global_Condition_in_the_Late_20th_CE

⁶⁴ Cornelia Navari *Hans Morgenthau and the National Interest Ethics & International Affairs* 30(01):47-54 March 2016 DOI:10.1017/S089267941500060X

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297753634_Hans_Morgenthau_and_the_National_Interest

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Studies on the practical application of the concept of national interest. Prominent experts from six major regions of the world were invited: Central Asia, East Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The purpose of the discussion was to determine the immediate interests of the United States in each region. The course of discussions showed that the concepts of national interest and balance of power remain decisive for the analysis of international relations.

In recent years, the Miller Center for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia held a series of workshops and conferences on the theory and practice of national interest policy, where most of the speakers considered the national interest in the spirit of the traditional realist approach as the basis of foreign policy. The participants concluded that a continuous study of US national interests is necessary, taking into account the new international situation, and further development of the application of the criterion of national interest c. the process of forming a foreign policy course.

In a contemporary and yet extremely discrepant situation in international relations, the US has been trying to defend its vital national interests and influence in the Middle East. However, establishing strategic partnerships with Saudi Arabian and Gulf rivals may be challenging. Last year, during the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in the kingdom, President Joe Biden insisted that the United States would not create a gap that might be filled by China, Russia, or Iran. The US administration has downplayed the importance of the recent Saudi-Iranian deal to reestablish diplomatic ties via Chinese mediation.⁶⁶ It seems to be worried about China's increasing influence in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area and across the Middle East. The United States remains committed to developing a strong presence in the area to prevent its main global rival China from obtaining access to vital energy resources during war and to protect its allies.

Such approaches in the national security measures once again confirm the special role of national interests in understanding the importance of key principles of United States policy in the modern world.

⁶⁶ Abdullah Baabood The Future of the Gulf Cooperation Council Amid Saudi-Emirati Rivalry / October 30, 2023 / <https://carnegie-mec.org/2023/10/30/future-of-gulf-cooperation-council-amid-saudi-emirati-rivalry-pub-90867>

Conclusion

An analysis of American scientific literature devoted to foreign policy issues, works, and speeches of prominent political figures shows that the concept of 'national interest' has firmly entered the political lexicon. Even though it is sometimes used to justify 'this or that foreign policy action, its main function is considered by researchers and politicians see it as “leading” a politician to a “high-quality” foreign policy decision, in the possible use of the criterion of national interest in a situation of choosing from several possible policy options, in the broader sense of using national interest as a foreign policy concept that makes it possible to make the international system more stable, and international relations are more predictable.”⁶⁷

In a situation where international relations are losing their former ideologization, more opportunities to explore and analysis for the objective national interests of states as the basis for a realistic and balanced foreign policy of all members of the world community.

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