

# National Interest and International Interest Part 1

- National Interest means:
- What is best for a particular nation;
- Anything that is good or beneficial for a nation or that gives it an advantage;
- A nation's most vital needs or goals;
- A country's national interest changes over time
- Each country has its own national interest, but all countries have common Security, Economic, and Ideological interests
- A country's leaders are ultimately responsible for defining the national interests although every segment of the state contributes one way or another in determining a state's national interest.
- A country's national interest determine its Foreign Policy

- **Representative Definitions of National Interest:**

- (1) National Interest means: “The general, long term and continuing purpose which the state, the nation, and the government all see themselves as serving.” —Charles Lerche and Abdul
- (2) National Interest is: “What a nation feels to be necessary to its security and well being ... National interest reflects the general and continuing ends for which a nation acts.” —Brookings Institution
- (3) “National Interest is, that which states seek to protect or achieve in relation to each other. It means desires on the part of sovereign states.” —Vernon Von Dyke
- (4) “The meaning of national interest is survival—the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nation-states”. — Morgenthau

- (5) National Interest means: “The values, desires and interests which states seek to protect or achieve in relation to each other” “desires on the part of sovereign states”. — V.V. Dyke
- National Interests can as defined as the claims, objectives, goals, demands and interests which a nation always tries to preserve, protect, defend and secure in relations with other nations.
- National interests commonly include:
  - *Self preservation (primary duty of any government)*
  - *Independence (Sovereignty)*
  - *Economic well-being*
  - *Military security*

- **Criteria for Defining National Interest**
- ***Ideological criteria:*** if one country's ideology is liberal-democratic, it will make policies supporting democratic governments and movements and oppose totalitarian ones.
- ***Moral and legal criteria:*** the imperative to act honestly and make decisions in accordance with international laws.
- ***Pragmatic criteria:*** unemotional, calculated decisions to deal with on ground realities.
- ***Bureaucratic criteria:*** each organization tends to exaggerate its specific funding request and to argue in the name of the national interest rather than its own interest.
- ***Partisan criteria:*** to equate the success of one's own political party with an entire nation's success.
- ***Racial criteria:*** national interest defined in terms of interest of an ethnic or racial minority or majority
- ***Class-status criteria:*** a particular class will defend its interests while defining national interest.
- ***Foreign-dependency criteria:*** protector states define policy obligations of their dependencies

- **Classification of National Interest**
- There are several classification of National Interest.
- For eg., Thomas W. Robinson has broadly classified the national interests into six categories:
- **Primary Interests.** These include the preservation of physical, political, and cultural identity of the state.
- **Secondary Interests.** These are less important than the primary interests though quite vital to the existence of the state.
- **Permanent Interests.** These refer to the relatively constant and long-term interest of the state and a change therein is rather slow. Nigeria's afrocentric interest is an example of its permanent interest.

- **Variable Interests.** These refer to the interests of a nation, which are considered vital for national good in a given set of circumstances. Changed situations or circumstances may make such interest redundant being no-more-required. For instance, the US interest to contain the influence of USSR ceased to exist after the demise of Cold War.
- **General Interests.** These refer to those positive conditions which apply to a large number of nations or in a several specified fields such as economics, trade, diplomatic intercourse etc. For instance it is in general interest of Pakistan to maintain strategic military balance in South Asia.
- **Specific Interests.** Through the logical outgrowth of the general interest, specific interests are defined in terms of time or space. For instance, it was in Pakistan's interest to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestation or it was in the US interest to support other nations in combating communist insurgencies during the Cold War.

- Robinson also refers to three other interests which he calls “international interests.” These include *identical interests, complementary interests and conflicting interest*.
- **Joseph Frankel's Classification.**
- Joseph Frankel proposed a classification of the uses of the term 'national interest' into 'aspirational', 'operational', 'explanatory' and 'polemical'.
- • **Aspirational Interests.** On the aspirational level, national interest refers to some ideal set of goals, which the states would like to realize. These are often fuelled by ideological leaning, cultural makeup, public aspirations and historical memories. Pakistan-China all-weather and time tested friendship, which is deemed “higher than mountains, deeper than the ocean, stronger than steel and sweeter than honey” by the two nations has aspirational linkage that stems from pleasant memories of support to each other on domestic and international levels through decades.



- **Operational Interests.** At the operational level, national interest is the sum total of interest and policies actually pursued.
- **Explanatory-Polemical.** At the explanatory-polemical level, in political argument, the concept of national interest is used to explain, evaluate, rationalize or criticize foreign policy.
- **Categorization by the Commission on America's National Interests.**
- The Commission on America's National Interests, in its July 2000 report on America's National Interests identified a hierarchy of US national interests:
  - i) “vital interests,”
  - ii) “extremely important interests,”
  - iii) “important interests,” and
  - iv) “less important or secondary interests.”

- The commission defined the US national interests as follows:•
- **Vital National Interests.** Vital national interests are conditions that are strictly necessary to safeguard and enhance Americans' survival and well-being in a free and secure nation.
- **Extremely Important National Interests.** Extremely important national interests are conditions that, if compromised, would severely prejudice but not strictly imperil the ability of the US government to secure nation.
- • **Important National Interests.** Important national interests are conditions that, if compromised, would have major negative consequences for the ability of the US government to safeguard and enhance the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation.
- • **Less Important or Secondary National Interests.** Less important or secondary national interests are not unimportant. They are desirable conditions.

- Another classification is the one that identifies national interest in terms of:
  - i) vital
  - ii) important
  - iii) peripheral
- Vital
  - Assure a state its security, its freedom and independence, protection of its institutions, and enshrinement of its values
  - A nation is willing to expend blood and treasure, in short to do whatever it takes, to defend its vital interests
  - If unfulfilled will have immediate consequence for critical national interests.

- Important
  - Do not affect national survival, but they do affect importantly the national well-being and the character of the world in which nation exists
  - If unfulfilled, will result in damage that will eventually affect critical national interests
  - However, the use of force is not automatically deemed necessary to protect an important interest
- Peripheral
  - If unfulfilled, will result in damage that is unlikely to affect critical national interests
  - Does not really pose a threat to the nation as a whole (although it may affect some private interests)
  - The nation may or may not seek to defend a peripheral interest depending on the relative cost of the endeavor and the importance of the interest

- A more comprehensive classification of national interest is as follows:
- 1) Based on ***Content***, national interests can be classified into:
  - ✓ political interests,
  - ✓ security interests,
  - ✓ economic interests, and
  - ✓ cultural interests
- Under each of these general categories interests can be subdivided into even more concrete interests.
- Political interests can be divided into political independence, state sovereignty, and international status, etc. A nation's political interests are the concentrated expression of all national interests, with the core being state sovereignty.

- Security interests can be divided into military superiority, territorial security, maritime interests and so on. Security interests are the foundation of the national interest. Only when security interests are met to a certain degree can other national interests be realized.
- Economic interests can be divided into the export/import trade, the attraction of international financing, overseas investment, import/export of technology, etc. Economic interests are the most constant national interests. When a country's survival is reasonably secured, its foreign policy pursues economic interest as the most important interest. Therefore, economic interests may also be called a fundamental interest or ultimate interest.
- Cultural interests may include national culture propagation, protection from foreign decadent ideas, etc. Cultural interests are the spiritual aspect of the national interest, one that is relatively difficult to realize.

## • Components of National Interest based on content

Security Interests include such things as:	Economic Interests include such things as:	Ideological Interests Include such things as:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting national borders</li> <li>• ensuring the safety of citizens from harm by foreign enemies</li> <li>• protecting allies</li> <li>• protecting areas of military importance (military supply routes, allies that host military bases, etc.)</li> <li>• protecting bases and sources of national power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting and/or promoting an adequate standard of living for domestic citizens</li> <li>• protecting and/or promoting adequate levels of domestic employment</li> <li>• ensuring economic development and growth</li> <li>• establishing trade relations with other nations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting and/or promoting a just/moral way of life</li> <li>• protecting and/or promoting a just/moral system of politics, law, and government</li> <li>• protecting and/or promoting a just/moral economic system</li> </ul>

<b>Security Interests</b> <b>include such things as:</b>	<b>Economic Interests</b> <b>include such things as:</b>	<b>Ideological Interests</b> <b>Include such things as:</b>
<p>preventing foreign intrusions into your national territorial regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintaining military power and capacity to project power where and as needed to protect national sovereignty and security interests</li> <li>• maintaining knowledge regarding potential threats to national security</li> </ul>	<p>protecting economic investment abroad and at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting the means and routes of trade</li> <li>• protecting the competitiveness of key domestic industries</li> <li>• maintaining economic power to ensure economic self-determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting and/or promoting the cultural and/or religious values of a nation or a people</li> <li>• advancing and protecting a universal conception of freedom, justice, progress and/or human dignity</li> </ul>



- 2) Based on the *time span* for attaining an interest, national interests can be divided into:
  - ✓ constant interests, which are perpetual and most stable;
  - ✓ variable interests, which can further be divided into long-term, middle-term and short-term interests.
- Constant interests will not disappear until the nation state itself disappears. If a nation state wants to exist, it cannot give up this kind of interest. Examples include territorial integrity, national independence, state sovereignty, and the ability to pursue economic development.
- Under variable interests, long-term interests are relatively stable national interests. They are pursued by a state over a long period of time and include interests like the ecological balance, military nuclear force and industrial modernization.
- These interests arise when human society develops to a certain level. Among these interests, some may end with the demise of states.

- But most interests will disappear before the disappearance of the nation state as an entity, depending on the progress of science and technology. During WWI and WWII, copper was the only material used in shells and therefore was an important strategic material.
- With the development of the plastics industry and the invention of new materials, the strategic use of copper was drastically decreased. Since the second half of the 1960s, the price of copper has dropped dramatically. Today, the need for copper is no longer an important national economic interest for most countries.
- Mid-term interests are national interests over a fixed period of time. They usually last a few years or several decades. Examples include importing certain types of advanced military or scientific technology, striving for a certain kind of economic aid and so on.
- Short-term interests are the most unstable of all interests. They change with almost any other change in the international environment. They are temporal interests that most countries pursue. Examples include striving for commercial loans, adjusting tariffs and lobbying for a price change in a particular commodity.

- 3) Based on *importance*, national interests can be divided into:
  - ✓ vital interests,
  - ✓ extremely important interests,
  - ✓ just important interests and
  - ✓ less important interests
- *Vital interests* are related to people's life and security as well as to the long-term stability of a country's political system and economic life, territorial integrity, political independence, economic independence and the continuation of the political system.
- *Extremely important interests* include a favorable international strategic balance, the maintenance of national prestige, the ability to choose one's model for development, and the guarantee of important economic interests, etc.

- *Just important interests* are interests pursued when there is not an obvious threat, such as expansion of the export market, maintenance of technological superiority, attracting international investment, maintaining international political stability, improving friendly bilateral relations and so on.
- *Less important interests* are interests that do not seriously affect national security or strategic economic interests. Examples would be a company or an individual's security and economic interest overseas.
- 4) Based on the ***scope of interest***, national interests can be divided into:
  - ✓ universal interests,
  - ✓ partial interests and
  - ✓ individual interests.

- *Universal interests* are those interests pursued by every sovereign state, such as state sovereignty, international status, the security of the population and so on.
- *Partial interests* are those pursued only by some countries. They would include the international order and leadership position pursued by superpowers; dominating roles in regional affairs and regional cooperation pursued by countries in a defined area, mutual security and alliances pursued by militarily allied countries and so forth.
- *Individual interests* include those of a single country that are different from the interests of other countries. For example, after the Cold War, China accelerated its economic development and pursued modernization to catch up with developed countries; Russia is striving for political stability, seeking to avoid further national splintering; and the US wants to maintain American dominance, establishing a new world order under its leadership.

- 5) National interests can also be classified into ***common versus conflicting interests***, according to the nature of the interest;
- ***unified or supplemental interests***, based on the relationship between interests;
- ***general and special interests***, as determined by the function of the interest;
- ***physical and spiritual interests***, based on the attributes of the interest;
- ***developed countries' and developing countries' interests***, as determined by the level of development; and, finally,
- ***socialist countries' versus capitalist countries' interests***, based on the political systems involved.
- The classification of national interests then depends on the problems in international relations that we deal with.
- In order to clarify the nature and content of various problems we must classify national interests scientifically and reasonably.

- **Methods for Promoting and Securing National Interest**

- There are at least five popular methods by which states normally adopt to promote and secure their national interests in international relations. These include:
  - i) Diplomatic negotiations
  - ii) Alliances and Treaties
  - iii) Coercive measures
  - iv) Propaganda
  - v) Economic means

- **i) Diplomatic Negotiations**

- Diplomacy is a universally accepted means for securing national interests.
- It is through diplomacy that the foreign policy of a state is conducted. It seeks to secure the goals of national interests.
- Diplomatic negotiations are used to reconcile the divergent national interests of states through the process of “mutual give and take”.
- Diplomats establish contacts with the decision-makers and diplomats of other nations and conduct negotiations for achieving the desired goals and objectives of national interests of their states.
- Diplomats use persuasion and threats, rewards and threats of denial of rewards as means for exercising power and securing goals of national interest as defined by foreign policy of their states



- These prove fruitful only if the interests of concerned states are complementary or compatible.
- In such cases, an agreement can be reached through mutual bargaining.
- In the case of incompatible or conflicting interests, negotiations are virtually impossible.
- **ii) Alliances and Treaties**
- Alliances and Treaties are concluded by two or more states for securing their common interests.
- They mostly used for securing identical and complementary interests.
- However, even conflictual interests may lead to alliances and treaties with like-minded states against the common rivals or opponents.
- Alliances and treaties make it a legal obligation for the members of the alliances or signatories of the treaties to work for the promotion of agreed common interests.

- The nature of an alliance depends upon the nature of interest which is sought to be secured.
- Accordingly, the alliances are either military or economic in nature.
- The need for securing the security of capitalist democratic states against the expanding 'communist menace' led to the creation of military alliances like NATO, SEATO, CENTO, ANZUS etc.
  - The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also called the North Atlantic Alliance, made up of 28 countries, is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. **NATO's** essential purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means
  - The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (**SEATO**) was an international organization for collective defense in Southeast Asia created by the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, or Manila Pact, signed in September 1954 in Manila, Philippines.
  - The Central Treaty Organization (**CENTO**), originally known as the Baghdad Pact or the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO) was formed in 1955 by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. It was dissolved in 1979.
  - The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (**ANZUS** or **ANZUS** Treaty) is the 1951 collective security agreement which binds Australia and New Zealand and, separately, Australia and the United States, to co-operate on military matters in the Pacific Ocean region, although today the treaty is taken to relate to conflicts worldwide

- Likewise, the need to meet the threat to socialism led to the conclusion of Warsaw Pact among the communist countries.
- The need for the economic reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War led to the establishment of European Common Market (Now European Union) and several other economic agencies.
- The needs of Indian national interests in 1971 led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the (erstwhile) Soviet Union.
- Alliances and Treaties are thus popular means for securing national interests.

- **iii) Coercive measures**

- The role of power in international relations is a recognized fact. It is an unwritten law of international intercourse that nations can use force for securing their national interests.
- International Law also recognizes coercive means short of war as the methods that can be used by states for fulfilling their desired goals and objectives.
- Intervention, non-intercourse, embargoes, boycotts, reprisals, retaliation, and severance of diplomatic relations are the popular coercive means which states use to force others to accept a particular course of behaviour or to refrain from a course which is considered harmful by the state using coercive means.
- War and Aggression have been declared illegal means, yet these continue to be used by the states in actual course of international relations.
- Today, nations fully realize the importance of peaceful means of conflict resolution like negotiations and diplomacy but use coercive means, whenever they find it expedient and necessary.

- Military power is still regarded as a major part of national power and is often used by a nation for securing its desired goals and objectives.
- The use of military power against international terrorism now stands universally accepted as a natural and just means for fighting the menace.
- Today world public opinion accepts the use of war and other forcible means for the elimination of international terrorism. All these means are used by all the nations for securing their national interests.
- Nations have the right and duty to secure their national interests and they have the freedom to choose the requisite means for this purpose. They can use peaceful or coercive means as and when they may desire or deem essential.
- However, in the interest of international peace, security and prosperity, nations are expected to refrain from using coercive means particularly war and aggression. These are expected to depend upon peaceful means for the settlement of disputes and for securing their interests.

- While formulating the goals and objectives of national interest, all nations must make honest attempts to make these compatible with the international interests of Peace, Security, environmental protection, protection of human rights and Sustainable Development.
- Peaceful coexistence, peaceful conflict-resolution and purposeful mutual cooperation for development are the common and shared interests of all the nations. As such, along with the promotion of their national interests, nations must try to protect and promote common interests in the larger interest of the whole international community.
- All this makes it essential for every nation to formulate its foreign policy and to conduct its relations with other nations on the basis of its national interests, as interpreted and defined in harmony with the common interests of the humankind.
- The aim of foreign policy is to secure the defined goals of national interest by the use of the national power.

- **iv) Propaganda**

- Propaganda is the art of salesmanship. It is the art of convincing others about the justness of the goals and objectives or ends which are desired to be secured. It consists of the attempt to impress upon nations the necessity of securing the goals which a nation wishes to achieve.
- “Propaganda is a systematic attempt to affect the minds, emotions and actions of a given group for a specific public purpose.” —Frankel
- It is directly addressed to the people of other states and its aim is always to secure the self-interests—interests which are governed exclusively by the national interests of the propagandist.
- The revolutionary development of the means of communications (Internet) in the recent times has increased the scope of propaganda as a means for securing support for goals of national interest.

- **v) Economic means**

- The rich and developed nations use economic aid and loans as the means for securing their interests in international relations. The existence of a very wide gap between the rich and poor countries provides a big opportunity to the rich nations for promoting their interests vis-a-vis the poor nations.
- The dependence of the poor and lowly- developed nations upon the rich and developed nations for the import of industrial goods, technological know-how, foreign aid, armaments and for selling raw materials, has been responsible for strengthening the role of economic instruments of foreign policy. In this era of Globalisation conduct of international economic relation has emerged as a key means of national interests.



- **Theoretical Perspectives on National Interests**
- Asobie (1991:37-39; 2001:3-11) identifies the three major contending paradigms, which colour the picture of national interest, and compartmentalizes them as:
  - i) the realist paradigm;
  - ii) the behavioural paradigm; and,
  - iii) the Marxist political economy approach.
- i) Each of these paradigms conceptualizes national interest differently. While the **realist paradigm** defines national interest in terms of national security and insists that national security must be defined as integrity of the national territory and its institutions.
- There are at least two traditions within the school: the power theory school of Hans Morgenthau and the Eclectic school of George Kennan

- ii) the **behavioural paradigm** while repudiating the notion that national interest constitutes a single objective reality or truth sees it as “what the nation, that is, the decision-maker decides it is” (Asobie 1991:38).
- iii) The **Marxist political economy** views national interest as the interest of the dominant class.
- This approach suggests that whenever national interest is mentioned, it should be understood as referring to the class interest of the state.
- Notwithstanding the neat compartmentalization of the divergent meanings of the concept of national interest as advanced by Asobie (1991), Nigerian foreign policy reflects these contending paradigms in the conception of its national interest.

- **National Interests and International Interests**
- In a broad sense, *international interests* refer to the common interests of countries or the common interest of mankind.
- They may include the common interests of ***all*** countries or only ***those of certain*** countries.
- The latter can be called *collective international interests*.
- In the 1950s, the Soviet Union described international interests as limited to those common interests within the socialist block.
- The American view of world interests included only the common interests of western capitalist countries.
- Both the Soviet Union and the U.S. pursued collective international interests rather than global international interests.
- However, since the end of the Cold War, political and military confrontation between the Eastern and the Western blocks has ended completely.

- Now, the importance of global international interests is increasing day by day and is reflected in such diverse challenges faced by mankind across national boundaries like economic relations, trading, technological development, environmental protection, population control, fighting natural disasters, the elimination of hard drugs, protection from criminals, nuclear non-proliferation and the fight against AIDS, human rights violation, immigration crises and so on.
- However, collective international interests are still paramount for the governments of some countries.
- Emphasis on regionalism after the cold war has increased the importance of regional international interests for every country.
- *National interests* and *international interests* are conflicting political categories.
- However the two interests are not diametrically opposed in all circumstances. Like the relationship between collective interests and individual interests, they can be considered as a unity of opposites in some instances.

- **First**, international interests are part of national interests.
- When we discuss international interests from the viewpoint of the *common welfare of all mankind*, these global international interests benefit people all around the world.
- Examples are world peace, a good ecological environment, a stable international financial order, equal international political systems, etc.
- When global international interests are realized, all countries can be beneficiaries.
- In other words, every country's national interest can be satisfied to a certain level.
- Therefore global international interests coincide with some national interests in every country.
- If we observe international interests from the viewpoint of the *collective welfare of certain countries* we can see that, although it is not necessarily in the national interest of all, they still coincide with national interests of some.
- To certain countries, their collective international interests are their collective national interests.

- ***Second***, some reasonable national interests can be opposed to collective international interests but still coincide with global international interests.
- For instance, after the Cold War establishing a stable world order was one of the most important international interests.
- A peaceful environment is helpful for every country's economic development as it promotes further merging of the world economy.
- But the American path to a new world order is an international order with America as the core, and led by the western countries.
- The establishment of this type of new order will not benefit the interests of developing countries.
- The western vision of a new world order is only in the international interest of western countries, it is not truly a global international interest.

- **Third**, a country's national interest may be diametrically opposed to international interests.
- If a country's national interest is opposite to the common interest of all mankind, then it must be unreasonable.
- For example, Iraq annexed Kuwait with military force in 1989. In order to maintain the principle of respect for sovereign territorial integrity, which is generally accepted in the international community, the international community imposed military sanctions against Iraq.
- Iraq believed its national interest was severely damaged, so international interests were in direct conflict with Iraq's national interest.
- However, on August 2 and 6, 1990, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed resolution 660 which required Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait without condition; and resolution 661 on comprehensive sanctions against Iraq.

- These two resolutions protected international interests that were supported by people throughout the world. This means that Iraq's territorial demands on Kuwait were illegitimate and not acceptable to the international community.
- **Fourth**, conflicts between national interests and international interests are usually representative of contradictions among a country's national interests.
- National interests vary. The realization of one type of interest may hinder another or even occur at the expense of another.
- For example, Sino-U.S. relations deteriorated after the Cold War. America placed pressure on China in the economic and military fields. Economically, America threatened to cancel the MFN status of China; militarily, several years after the establishment of Sino-U.S. diplomatic relations, the U.S. violated the promise it made in the August 17, 1982 China-U.S. joint communiqué by selling weapons to Taiwan that in function and quantity exceeded the promised capability levels.
- The U.S. sold 150 F-16 fighters to Taiwan in 1992. In order to effectively stop America's arms sales to Taiwan, China must take strong countermeasures to protect its security interests. If China wants to persuade America not to make trouble concerning the MFN issue, it has to improve overall bilateral relations to protect its trade interests. When these two kinds of interests conflicted with each other, China chose the latter.



- ***Fifth***, neither national interests nor international interests are absolutely superior.
- Realist theorists of international relations believe that the national interest is the highest priority interest of the country.
- If international interests and national interests conflict a country must protect its national interest by sacrificing international interests.
- However, the idealist school of thought believes that international interests are the common interest of all mankind.
- They believe the foreign policy of any government should not violate international interests.
- Should the two become incompatible, international interest takes precedence over national interest, according to this school.

- The key point of this debate is which interest a country should consider as the priority in foreign policy.
- It is not which interest is objectively more important.
- When national and international interests are compatible it would be difficult to judge which interest is considered more important by a country.
- But when a concrete national interest conflicts with an international interest, we can see that a country cannot use the single national interest as the standard to determine priorities in its foreign policy.
- Instead, what is regarded as more important depends on particular circumstances.
- For instance, industrial development is a national interest. Environmental protection is an international interest. In most countries these two interests often conflict.

- Historically, countries protected their industrial development at the cost of environmental pollution.
- However, by the late 20th Century the world environment worsened to an extremely dangerous degree, so every government has begun to review the relationship between the two contradictory interests. In order to reduce grave harm to people and to prolong longevity, many governments decided to reallocate certain amounts of industrial capital to environmental protection projects.
- From June 3 to 14, 1992, the representatives of more than 170 countries and regions participated in a global environmental conference in Brazil's capital Rio de Janeiro. Among them were top government leaders from 118 countries. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was reached during the conference and the developed countries agreed to increase environmental aid to developing countries.

- National interests may turn into international interests under certain conditions.
- There are three ways this can happen.
- *First*, non-conflicting national interests directly become common international interests. The interest relationships between different countries are not necessarily zero sum relations. Asking for respect for a national flag, another national symbol or for diplomatic immunity are examples.
- *Second*, national interests between different countries are often complementary and common international interests emerge from them. An illustration is the establishment of a common economic community to promote economic cooperation.
- *Third*, common international interests result from attempts to avoid conflict between national interests. Agreeing on a nuclear non-proliferation treaty or efforts to prevent nuclear war are examples.