

QUESTION-2

Asymmetric warfare refers to conflict between actors with unequal military capabilities, where the weaker actor adopts unconventional strategies such as guerilla tactics, terrorism, cyber attacks, or proxy warfare, to off-set the conventional superiority of the stronger side.

From an international relations perspective, Realism is particularly useful in analysing asymmetric warfare. It says that,

- ⇒ The international system is anarchic; there is no central authority to enforce rules.
- ⇒ States are the primary actors, motivated by survival and security
- ⇒ Power is the main currency in international politics; weaker states will employ strategies to balance against stronger states.
- ⇒ Military capabilities and deterrence shape state behaviour, including engagement in asymmetric strategies.

Applying realism to Pakistan-India relationship

As per this perspective, Pakistan's use of asymmetric tactics can be understood as a rational response to India's conventional superiority, aimed at ensuring national survival and strategic leverage.

Framework of asymmetric warfare

Definition and characteristics

- ⇒ Disparity in military powers between actors.
- ⇒ Reliance on unconventional tactics.
- ⇒ Focusing on achieving political or psychological objectives rather than outright military victory.

Realist Lens

- ⇒ Weaker states like Pakistan face structural insecurity due to India's larger conventional forces.
- ⇒ Asymmetric strategies allow a weaker state to counterbalance power asymmetries without risking direct annihilation.
- ⇒ Realism interprets such tactics as rational, survival driven, and power-oriented actions.

Application in Pakistan-India context

Kashmir and Proxy warfare

- ✱ Pakistan's support for insurgency in Kashmir represents classic asymmetric warfare. From a Realist perspective, this is a strategic attempt to offset India's ~~attempt~~ conventional advantage and prevent coercion through indirect means. Such tactics increase India's security expenditure, divert attention, and create strategic deterrence without full-scale war.

Nuclear deterrence as asymmetry

India possesses a larger army and air force; Pakistan relies on nuclear weapons for asymmetric deterrence.

Realism explains this as a rational response. Smaller

states use nuclear capabilities to secure survival against stronger adversaries, ensuring that conventional imbalance does not translate into political coercion.

Cyber and technological dimensions

Cyber attacks, intelligence operations, and strategic misinformation serve as low-cost asymmetric tools.

They fit the realist notion of maximizing relative power while minimizing direct confrontation.

Impact on strategic calculations in South Asia

Military doctrine

Pakistan emphasizes flexible, unconventional, and deterrence-based strategies. India focuses on counter-insurgency, rapid mobilization, and conventional superiority, reflecting a realist response to asymmetric threats.

Escalation and risk management

Asymmetric engagements increase the risk of miscalculations, particularly with nuclear-armed adversaries. Both states maintain dual-capable forces to address conventional and irregular threats simultaneously.

Diplomacy and international relations

Asymmetric tactics allow Pakistan to gain international attention on political grievances. India responds through diplomatic isolation strategies, reflecting a power-maximizing approach consistent with Realist theory.

Conclusion

Asymmetric warfare in Pakistan-India context exemplifies Realist principles - states act to ensure survival, balance

power, and maximize security. Pakistan employs unconventional tactics to compensate for conventional inferiority, while India adjusts doctrine to counter these threats. In South Asia, asymmetric warfare reshapes military strategy, escalates regional tensions, and influences strategic calculations, demonstrating that in an anarchic system, power disparities drive state behaviour and innovation in conflict.

Question 3

Foreign policy is shaped by the complex interaction of domestic, international, and economic factors. Realist theory provides a useful framework for understanding these determinants, emphasizing that states are national actors, operating in an anarchic international system, seeking to maximize security and power.

Theory: Realism

Realism posits that states exist in an anarchic international system where survival is the primary goal.

Key assumptions

- 1) States are unitary, rational actors.
- 2) National interest, primarily security and power, drives foreign policy.
- 3) Domestic politics influence policy only to the extent that they affect national survival.

Application

Realism helps analyze how the US adjusts its foreign policy in response to threats, alliances, and opportunities for power projection.

Determinants of foreign policy

1) Political leadership and ideology

Presidential priorities and party ideology shape foreign engagements. For example, Reagan's anti-communist stance led to aggressive cold-war policies, while Obama emphasized multilateralism and diplomacy.

2) Public opinion and media

Domestic consensus or dissent constrains policy options. Vietnam war protests, and post 9/11 support for military actions illustrate this.

3) Interest groups and bureaucracy

Defense contractors, think tanks, and Congress influence decisions. Realism interprets this as states navigating internal constraints while pursuing strategic interests.

International Factors.

1) Power distribution

Changes in global power dynamics influence US foreign policy. The post cold-war unipolarity allowed the US to pursue interventions in the Middle East with greater freedom.

2) Threat perception

Rival states, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation shape strategic choices. For example, containment of the USSR and later counter-terrorism post 9/11 reflect realist threat assessments.

3) Alliances and international norms

NATO and UN memberships affect how the US balances its interests and projects power. Realists see alliances as instruments for security maximization rather than moral obligations.

Economic Factors.

1) Trade and energy security

Access to markets and resources influences foreign commitments. US policies in the middle east and China relations highlight the economic dimension.

2) Globalization and economic interdependence

While liberals emphasize cooperation, realism stresses that economic ties are leveraged for strategic advantage. e.g., sanctions on Iran and Russia.

3) Military-Industrial complex

Economic considerations often align with security interests, shaping decisions on arms, sales and defense spendings.

Application: USA's Evolving Foreign Policy

1) Cold war era

Policy dominated by containment of communism, balancing international threats with domestic mobilization of resources.

2) Post cold war era

US adopted unipolar strategies, intervening selectively where global leadership served national interest.

3) Post 9/11 era

Counter terrorism operations reflected the domestic security concerns, international threats, and economic calculations (energy, security, reconstruction costs).

4) Contemporary US Policy

Strategic competition with China combines domestic (industrial policy, public opinion), international (alliances, Indo-Pacific strategy), and economic (trade, technology) determinants, consistent with realist logic of power maximization and survival.

Conclusion

US foreign policy demonstrates that domestic politics, international dynamics, and economic factors, collectively, shape state behaviour. Through a realist lens, these determinants are interpreted as tools for security, power projection, and national interest, illustrating how states navigate complex environments to maintain strategic advantage.