

NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ENSURING NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract: In the article, the essence and content of national interests are revealed, its classification is presented, and information is given about the factors influencing the formation of national interests. At the same time, an analysis of the category of national interests, the influence of national values on its understanding, and concepts such as public and national interests were considered. It analyzes the genesis of Azerbaijan's national interests, the stages of its development, the effectiveness of the country's leadership's policy in the sphere of its protection. Along with that, the reasons and consequences of incorrect identification of the national interests of Armenia are shown.

Keywords: national interests; asymmetry of interests; ensuring national security; nation state; national values

Introduction

The notion of “nation” is the biggest social organization that is formed by the unity of people contains language, religion, ethnicity, territory, etc. Statehood is a political structure which emerges to ensure the security of nations. National interests of nation states emerged in line with establishment of Westfall system on the world (1648). Namely, existence of a strong nation state is an important condition to ensure national interests. Security guarantee of either state is related

with its national interests, and their formation links with multiple factors particularly with national values. Shaping process of national interest forms based on economic, social, ethno-psychological and so forth factors.

Though emergence of the national interests of Azerbaijan happened between 1918 – 1920 is related with Azerbaijan Republic of People, but its formation took place after the restoration of our independence in 1991. The national interests of Azerbaijan developed in line with its geopolitical parameters, economic and military power and opportunities given by the resources, and its ensurance is very pivotal for Baku which is located on a strategic location of clash of super powers and regional actors. Azerbaijan from the very first day of founding its independence in 1991 has been considering realisation of organizing security of the society and the state, integration into global securiy domain, and so forth steps as its important mission (Məmmədzaadə & İskəndərov 2020, p. 7). The Armenian Republic failed to Baku and is isolated as a result of formation of its territorial claim against Azerbaijan without taking its geopolitical parameters, economic and military power as well as its resources into account. Even Armenian prime minister Nikol Pashinyan got admitted their dependency on Russia in state security affairs as a strategic mistake (Navya 2023). Thus, the recent cases proved that fall of Armenia into cataclysm in domestic and foreign policy that it is a cause of big ambitions with limited resources as well as misformation of the national interests in line with the state potentials.

National interests slightly differs from public interest in content. As public interests is related with the systems of laws which defines domestic policy of a state and is regulated with it. But national interests are mainly related with the foreign policy of a state and makes the foundation of its official behaviour in conjunction with the world. But in spite of this difference, the public and national interests of every country are in correlation (Həsənov 2016, p. 89). Public and national interests of states sometimes contradict to each-other. It is mainly observed in states of multinational and multy ethnic composition, and this paradoxal case could cause to serious security issues for a country. And due to it, to lay down an appropriate condition for the correlation of interests of individuals with the society and the state is a key matter in ensurance of national security level. The content of national interests is defined by a state on itself and no limitation there. National interest are also related with the factor of strength. So that, limitation of national interests by other states usually happens due to power which they posses (Həsənalıyev 2016, p.45).

Factors affecting on formation of national interests

The strength of a state is a factor implicitly affect the formation of national interests. So that the national interests of a powerful country is broader and rather comprehensive in comparison to a small country's. Great powers that are taking advantage from the ensurance of the global security are more interested than small ones. Influencial opportunities of great powers in the spectrum of their interest is represented too. Having a look through priority interests of the USA two of them could be characterized as international like. One of them is to create favorable international circumstance (from the point of global security), and the second is to assist emergence of values such as democracy and human rights through the world. Whereas, these two interests could not be priority in the national interests of small countries, as they do not have instruments of influence on international political process (Qasimov 2018, pp. 73 – 76).

While searching answer for question such as what national interests are, how they are formed and what factors influence them, by summarizing the researches across the world we can articulate that national interest is subjective expression of objective needs of a society, and it is made from national values. Values as a system is on the basis of formation of interests of individuals as well as societies. Every nation has its particular system of values and they could be contradictory with the values of other states.

Prominent prime minister of the British Empire Lord Palmerstown evaluates national benefits in 1848 as follows: “We do not have an everlasting ally. We do not have everlasting enemies either. Our benefits are everlasting and eternal. Our duty is to protect these benefits” (Bernard 2015, p. 93).

To find out components of forming national interests, of course is related to its further perception. General overview is that national interests emerge under the influence of objective factors and based on the needs of individuals, societies and states. As well, two group of geopolitical factors influence on this process:

1. Objective geopolitical factors – territory of a country, geographic location, natural reserves, population, economic growth, level of political stability, military power, culture which is formed through history, level of science and technology, international conditions;

2. Subjective geopolitical factors – political regime, political leadership, managerial experience of the leadership, social consciousness, level of development of legal and political mentality. Sever role of objective geopolitical factors is undeniable in the formation and development of national interests. So any factors have to pass through the mentality of individuals to form national benefits, in an

other world it should turn into social perception act (Qasimov 2018, pp. 73 – 76).

There are national perception and consciousness on the basis of national interests. Protection of national interests and their defence could be reliable as much as firmness of the national character. To organize the effective protection of the national interest depends on its objective priorities and evaluation.

Critical and changeable national interests

Regardless the national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan are mentioned in “National Security of the Republic of Azerbaijan”¹, emerging realities forces to have a look through it again.

The national interests of the Azerbaijan Republic could be divided into three stages.

1. 1991 – 1993 years.
2. 1994 – 2003 years.
3. the period after 2004.

National interests of either country could be eternal and replaceable in terms of its duration, and main and volatile in terms of its significance (Həsənov 2016, p.92).

Critically important interests are national strategic interests (primary). Ensurance of national security of a country at global and regional level, and protection of territory, socio-economy so forth are included here. And diplomatic, economic and cultural relations are utilized, even military power in case of necessity. These interests cannot be subject to compromise or bargaining. Changes could happen in these interests if there are essential changes occur on the international arena or in the country.

Changeable interests possess secondary level importance in comparison to critically important interests. These interests could be compromised to ensure critically important interests. This is why such interests are called changeable interests. An evidence on compromise of changeable interests to implementation to critically important projects while global projects realized could be seen in the experience of Azerbaijan as well as across the world (Qasimov & Nağıyev 2015, pp. 44 – 45). Referring to the Memorandum of Understanding between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan on 70 percent of joint exploitation of Kepez (Sardar in turkmen) which was disputable between the two countries since 1990 we could see facts of compromise of changeable interests to critically important interests². It is worth to mention that, presently Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan bilaterally and multilaterally have been executing megaprojects.

With regards to critically important interests (first priority), perceiving the occupation of its territory for a long time and reconciliation of international powers with realities, in spite of pressure for compromise, understanding the exhausting diplomatic means, in 2020 restored its territorial integrity by applying military power. The fact of ensurance of border inviolability proved that the official Baku shall not compromise in national strategic affairs.

The Zangazur corridor is a strategic project for Azerbaijan and is one of the critically important interests. Realization of the project for the state is pivotal. Studies show that there are asymmetry of interests between Baku and Yerevan in the implementation of this project. It could be characterized as existential for Azerbaijan while it contains only economic importance (secondary priority) and it is in the changeable interests of Armenia. International practice show that, in the clash of interests with asymmetric characteristics between regional countries, the country with changeable interests compromise to the country having critically important interests. For ex, dispute of fishing between Britain and Island for a long time ended up with London's compromise to Reykjavik. The reason for the solution of this problem in this context is related 80-90 percent of the export revenue of Island to fishing while it forms only 1 percent of the British GDP (Kevin 2023).

Ensurance of the national security is not the act diverted to ensurance of the national interests, but also every individual's the whole nation's interests.

National security policy is diverted by a state leadership to defining interests, and ways and means of their implementation in the sphere of protection of national interests. The state and its leader is indeed the guarantor of security in every country (Məmmədşadə & İskəndərov 2020, p. 7).

On may 28, 2018, İlham Aliyev stated in his speech during the 100th anniversary of the People Republic of Azerbaijan that, "We implement fully independent policy. Our policy is build on national interests. The interests of the people of Azerbaijan is the basis and source of our policy. Probability of external influence on our policy is equal to zero. The recent history proved it. I can say that there are no suh attempts. This why, we are following principal policy. This policy is appreciated and supported by the people of Azerbaijan. People-Government unity is the core of our success"³.

Thus, İlham Aliyev with the skill of correlation of social and national interets upon People-Government unity and with his long vision foreign policy based on thoughtgul and national interests made Azerbaijan the leading country of the South Caucasus.

Conclusions

In the end of our study, we come up with a conclusion that national interests of every country forms the basis of foreign and domestic policy and is closely related with self-awareness of nations. If social and national interests do not form unity, the national security policy of a country would fail in protection for national interests. The national interest should be correlated with the existence potential (resources) of a state and must be exactly emphasized in the state's doctrinal documents.

NOTES

1. National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2007. [online]. Available on: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154917/Azerbaijan2007.pdf>.
2. "Azərbaycan Respublikası Hökuməti ilə Türkmənistan Hökuməti arasında Xəzər dənizində "Dostluq" yatağının karbohidrogen resurslarının birgə kəşfiyyatı, işlənməsi və mənimsənilməsi haqqında" Anlaşma Memorandumunun təsdiq edilməsi barədə, 2021. [online]. Available on: <https://e-qanun.az/framework/46913>.
3. İlham Əliyev Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin 100 illik yubileyi münasibətilə təşkil olunan rəsmi qəbulda iştirak edib., 2018. [online]. Available on: <http://president.az/az/articles/view/28794>.

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