

THE CONCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OF SECURITY INTERESTS

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Abstract

In the contemporary context, Armenia's national interests can be understood as a balanced integration of the interests of the Republic of Armenia's citizens, Armenians residing in the homeland, and the wider Armenian diaspora. It is through the consolidation of these interests within the emerging competitive environment that the realisation of national objectives and the safeguarding of values—redefined as conscious societal imperatives—are effectively pursued.

The main guarantee of an effective policy in the realisation of national interests is maintaining a balance between one's own capabilities, ambitions, and objective realities, which may not fully satisfy a particular interest, serving only its vital and realistic part. The core of guaranteed satisfaction of vital national interests is a realistic assessment of the collective potential of state power and setting 'realistic goals' for it.

When assessing national interests at the strategic level, particular emphasis is placed on security policy objectives, which must stem from a clear and precise articulation of interests. Methodologically, the formulation of a national security strategy involves distinguishing between two categories of desired outcomes: general (strategic and political) objectives and specific (concrete) objectives. The first category is of particular significance, as it reflects the priorities defined by the state's political leadership and establishes the overarching direction of the strategy. Accordingly, strategic objectives must be both logically interconnected and realistically attainable, since the national security strategy serves as the primary framework through which the existing security environment is assessed and the national security policy system is aligned.

Keywords: Nation, state, security, interest, goal, priority, concept, strategy, policy, doctrine.

ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳԱՅԻՆ ՇԱՀԵՐԻ ՀԱՅԵՑԱԿԱՐԳԱՅԻՆ ԳՆԱՀԱՏՈՒՄԸ ԵՎ ՓԱՍՏԱԹՂԹԱՎՈՐՈՒՄԸ

ԲԱԳՐԱՏ ԲԱԳՐԱՏՅԱՆ

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ փիլիսոփայության, սոցիոլոգիայի և
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Համառոտագիր

Ժամանակակից աշխարհում Հայաստանի ազգային շահերը ՀՀ քաղաքացիների, հայրենաբնակ հայության և հայկական համայնքների շահերի հավասարակշռված հանրագումարն է, որի ձևավորման միջոցով մրցակցային նոր միջավայրում լուծվում են գիտակցված պահանջմունքների վերածված ազգային նպատակների հետապնդման և արժեքների պաշտպանության խնդիրները:

Ազգային շահի իրացման ժամանակ արդյունավետ քաղաքականության հիմնական գրավականն է սեփական ներուժի, հավակնությունների, օբյեկտիվ իրողությունների միջև հավասարակշռության պահպանումը, որը կարող է և լիովին չբավարարել կոնկրետ շահը՝ սպասարկելով միայն շահի կենսական և իրատեսական մասնաբաժինը: Իսկ ազգային շահի կենսական տեսակների երաշխավորված բավարարման առանցքը պետության հզորության հավաքական ներուժի իրատեսական գնահատականն է և նրա առջև «իրական նպատակների» առաջադրումը:

Ռազմավարական մակարդակում ազգային շահերի գնահատման գործընթացում հատուկ ուշադրության են արժանի նաև շահերի հստակ ու ճշգրիտ որոշման արդյունքում ակնկալվող անվտանգային քաղաքականության նպատակները: Տեսամեթոդական առումով ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարության մշակման ընթացքում որպես վերջնանպատակներ (desired ends) կարևորվում են երկու խմբեր՝ ընդհանուր (ռազմավարական, քաղաքական) նպատակներ և հատուկ (կոնկրետացված) նպատակներ: Այս համատեքստում հատկապես կարևորվում են առաջին խումբ նպատակները, քանզի դրանք այն ակնկալվող արդյունքներն են, որոնք սահմանում է պետության քաղաքական վերնախավը և որոնց ձեռքբերմանն է միտված տվյալ ռազմավարությունը: Հետևապես, ռազմավարական նպատակները պետք է լինեն տրամաբանորեն հստակ կերպով շաղկապված և իրատեսական, քանի որ ազգային անվտանգության

ռազմավարությունն այն հիմնական մակարդակն է, որում համադասում է առկա իրավիճակը և ազգային անվտանգության քաղաքականության համակարգը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ ազգ, պետություն, անվտանգություն, շահ, նպատակ, առաջնահերթություն, հայեցակարգ, ռազմավարություն, քաղաքականություն, դոկտրին:

Introduction

Every national community interacts with universal human interests and goals. In the context of modern globalisation, market economy, and democracy, civilised humanity can develop along an upward trajectory if the diversity of national interests is preserved and a stable system of international guarantees is established for this purpose. This applies to national interests, the significance of which is undeniable and the importance of which is growing.

According to Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), everyone has the right to social and international living conditions in which the rights and freedoms outlined in the Declaration and other fundamental international documents can be fully realised (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Art. 28). These living conditions are, on the one hand, an expression of human and social security and, on the other hand, a system of specific measures and events (infrastructure) that will ensure the safety of human life (Genrikh, 2017). In this regard, security, being a priority for the survival of the state and the individual in the natural and social environment, is one of the fundamental values and national interests.

Each state and society, despite their commonalities, has its fundamental national interests, the challenges to which resistance and their possible neutralisation constitute the core of the general concept of state security. The national security policy is implemented uniformly in response to various threats to national interests.

Theoretical and Methodological Bases

The author of the national interest interpretation, H. Morgenthau, who is widely read in professional literature, considers the national interest solely as an objective requirement of the state (ensuring the territory, physical security of the population, minimum conditions for economic development), which, regardless of the nature of the State and political regime, are common to all States. Morgenthau essentially equates national interests with the vital interests of each state's survival and notes that the concept of national interest, defined

through power, is an objective criterion by which the goals of a state cannot go beyond its resource capabilities, since the resources to achieve «national goals» are limited. Therefore, a «good statesman» should make decisions that, while preserving and developing the power of the state, do not endanger its security (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 5).

The reasons for disagreement over the professional definition of national interest are mainly related to the diversity of political views on national fundamental values. A number of researchers use national interest as a synonym for public interest, seeing it as the sum of private interests within society. K. Beard, in his work «The idea of national interest», published in 1930, commenting on the national interest, distinguishes it from public interest. The latter, in his opinion, refers to «internal politics of nations» (Beard, 1934, p. 135).

We believe that in the context of assessing interests in political processes, acts of political bargaining and trading political decisions, which are differentially manifested in democratic and non-democratic countries, are of paramount importance. In practice, part of the national interest is defined as a result of competition between political actors. It is clarified by separating the needs of the nation concerned from those of the state.

The elaboration of norms and ‘rules of the game’ that regulate the activities of interest groups is crucial in conditions of free political competition. This view is shared by V. Lipman, who believes that ‘an important prerequisite for the functioning of private interests is the existence of appropriate regulatory norms’ (Lipmann, 1922, p. 104–106), which depends on the balance of political forces in the state and the principles of governance within the political system.

The development and competitiveness of civilisations and individual states are primarily determined by the ideological principles that guide them. Comparative analysis shows that in today’s world, the most effective ideological concepts are those in which liberal, socialist and nationalist approaches are harmoniously combined and complement each other. Moreover, while the first two are considered universal and of universal significance, the nationalist component is a unique category: it expresses the security and military-political capabilities of a given nation, its socio-economic capabilities and the collective intellectual and spiritual-cultural potential underlying them.

National interest as a fundamental issue of political science has been the focus of attention for centuries. However, a theoretically justified national interest was obtained in the works of representatives of the American school of

political realism: C. Beard, E. Carra, G. Morgenthau, A. Walla Fursi, K. Thomson, S. Hoffman, J. Kenna, R. Strauss-Huppé, and later – G. Kissinger, Z. Brzezinsky and «founder» of modern neo-realism K. Waltz, whose theoretical conclusions include ideological approaches of antiquity, the Middle Ages and New Times.

It is also important to note that, in the era of modern, multi-layered development, conflicts of a civilizational nature, as well as the universalisation and globalisation of problems, contain elements of spiritual and cultural confrontation and expansion. In such processes, those nations and countries that act more actively and systematically benefit, while the security and normal development of those that take a passive position are seriously challenged. It follows that resources with spiritual, cultural and other civilisational characteristics are of strategic importance and form part of such a fundamental value as national security.

At the same time, the use of civilisational resources in the service of national interests presupposes particular prerequisites. The priority is the nature and level of civilisation of such resources. Of course, every nation has its own, sometimes unique, cultural heritage, but in the context of modern global processes, it is not always a competitive advantage. Another necessary condition is the ability to transform and utilise theoretically competitive civilizational potential into an effective strategic resource in the political and social spheres, which is primarily reflected in the country's basic security policy documents (strategies, concepts, doctrines, sectoral development programmes, etc.).

The leading actors of national security policy, in forming and developing a set of national interests and making relevant domestic and foreign policy decisions based on them, also take into account geographical, economic, political, cultural and other objective factors (domestic political interests, political platforms of various parties, movements, groups, organisations, etc.). At the same time, the possible reaction of the public and experts to decisions taken by heads of state and the government system is constantly taken into account.

State policy based on national interests carries the global task of ensuring the security and development of the state and society in a more precise manner. At this level, it is essential not only to assess these interests reasonably and clearly, but also to have and accumulate sufficient resources to enable the realisation of national interests.

The state, as the main subject of national interest, is characterised by a set of structural elements and characteristics, the structure and degree of

development of which determine the level of realisation of national interests and the extent to which they are realised. In our opinion, from the perspective of the significance of the potential of national interests, the 'legitimate' interests and 'illegitimate' ambitions of the state are, in essence, nothing more than a question of the balance of power in practical politics.

The actions of state bodies in implementing the concept of national interests at the societal level are objectively assessed by various public circles, which, in turn, lead to certain refinements and increase the effectiveness of their functioning. Consequently, discussing issues related to the assessment of national interests contributes to the implementation of more targeted policies by state decision-makers.

When developing an effective national interest policy, policymakers must answer a number of key questions that influence the specifics of selecting and formulating a particular type of national interest. A similar set of questions can be summarised as follows: how will current internal and external events affect the power of the state; will the opposing forces be able to damage the vital interests of the state; does the state have sufficient authority to protect its vital interests; which interests are essential and which are secondary, how much of its energy potential the state is prepared to use to defend its interests, etc.

In addition, government policy aimed at assessing national interests and the actions arising from them is subject to the constant or variable influence of several objective and subjective factors that determine the effectiveness of government policy oriented towards national interests (Goldstein Martin, 1975, pp. 157–158). These factors include friendly external relations between states, the state's involvement in geopolitical and regional processes, the presence or absence of vital natural resources, the volume of trade in domestic and foreign markets, and imports of vital goods, among others.

Among the factors influencing the realisation of national interests, the criteria of legitimacy and acceptability of the realisation of national interests in the context of international relations are highlighted, which are manifested in three main approaches:

- To what extent do the demands of the state in question stem from its actual national interests, i.e. to what extent could the independence and capacity to act of the state that is the object of these interests be jeopardised if these demands are not met?
- Are the national interests of the state in question such that they do not threaten the interests of independence and sovereignty of other states

or groups of states?

– Do the national interests of the state in question threaten or disrupt the international balance of power? (David, 1988, pp. 64–66).

Thus, national interests form the basis for shaping the foreign and domestic policies of every state. Recognising the key role of national interests in state policy, we note that they are a unique characteristic of state policy and a criterion for evaluation, and that they can change the course of state policy under the influence of various factors. In practice, there are several alternative concepts of national interests in any state, but the idea adopted by the ruling power always prevails.

Formation of the national psyche is a rather complex process, influenced by different spheres of life of the nation and historical events that determine the degree of expression of one or another value characteristic. According to ethnopsychologist A. Nalchadjyan, throughout a nation's historical development, events such as revolutions, wars, and large-scale reforms occur, which subsequently acquire special significance, determining the nature and course of political and socio-economic processes (Nalchadjyan, A. 2001). At the intra-societal level, the process of defining national interests is often accompanied by conflict and sharp clashes of positions, as the adoption of any concept of national interests directly affects the state's international role and authority.

We should also emphasise that the existence of different concepts of national interest is because national interest in this context is viewed as a system of the most favourable conditions for the development of the nation, and therefore cannot be unequivocally understood and accepted by all segments of the population. It is also necessary to take into account that international conditions often predetermine the nature and criteria for the effectiveness of the accepted concept of national interest. Therefore, the inconsistency of ideas about national interest with the requirements of political reality inevitably makes state policy unpromising.

The above-mentioned is of particular importance for countries such as Armenia, which face the challenge of developing state policies based on security and national interests. The first stage of Armenian perception of national interests dates back to medieval religious and ecclesiastical approaches, according to which, in the absence of an independent Armenian state, national interests were represented as the interests of the religious community headed by the Armenian Church, including a range of national-ecclesiastical formulations. The notions of national interests became more pronounced in

the 18th century, when Armenian political thought embraced the ideas of Israil Oru, Hovsep Emin, Movses Bagramyan, and Shaamir Shaamiryan, who shaped the next stage of understanding national interests. During this period, the Armenian understanding of national interests essentially focused on liberating the Armenian nation from Turkish–Persian rule and gaining autonomy, as well as on the goal of building a sovereign state, which “in the case of I. Oru and G. Emin were linked to the implementation of political and diplomatic programmes; in the case of M. Bagramyan, it was associated with the revival of the Armenian nation’s potential, and in the case of Sh. Shahamiryan, it was associated with the Armenian–Russian alliance and the existence of a constitution” (Manucharyan, 2002).

The establishment of the First Armenian Republic marked a pivotal period in Armenia’s approach to national interests. In the new independent republic, the perception of national interest in the context of war, economic crisis and social catastrophe was equated with ensuring statehood and the vital interests of the nation. Following the Sovietization of Armenia, the perception of national interests underwent significant changes, particularly in relation to the specific role and legal and practical status of the Armenian SSR within the Soviet Union. Deprived of the basic characteristics of a sovereign state and the ability to pursue an independent state policy, the Soviet regime regarded a number of provisions arising from the political consciousness of the Armenian nation and conditioned by the Armenian perception of national interests as false, declaring them illegal and ‘nationalist’.

With the attainment of independence in 1991, Armenia set the objective of establishing itself as a democratic and liberal state. However, a distinctive feature of the formation of the Armenian political system is that three centres of interest shaped it: the local needs of Armenian society, the philosophy of the Karabakh conflict, and the factor of the Armenian diaspora. These were the factors that determined the principles of development of the Armenian political system. In fact, all structurally marked elements were interrelated links of the national integration political system. However, from a formal point of view, the exclusive right to determine the national interests of the RA belongs to the citizens of the RA and the state authorities expressing their sovereign political will. Nevertheless, the interrelationships between the individual links in the national political system predetermined the general nature of the system’s development, conditioning the current and future proportionate or disproportionate interaction of all three directions.

The presented developments make it possible to assess the current

situation in the Republic of Armenia, bearing in mind that the concepts of national interest acquire a unique meaning here due to a number of characteristics of the Armenian state: the geographical location of the Republic of Armenia, the significant influence of ethnic unity and intra-ethnic ties on state policy, the impact of powerful national political forces outside the Republic of Armenia, and the enduring historical perceptions of national interest formed in the diaspora in the Armenian ethnic consciousness, the existence of political problems of regional communication, etc. Experts rightly point out that the current National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia (2020) uses the term ‘fundamental’ in defining national interests, which calls into question the approaches to classification accepted in theory (in particular, national interests are classified as vital, important and less important). As for interests, the strategy does not specify the level of interest to which the values presented can be attributed. In addition, fundamental interests are often presented as universal human values and simple truths, such as human rights, peace, and democracy (Kocharyan & Grigoryan, 2021).

Results

It was noted that the bearers of the national interests of the Republic of Armenia are the Republic of Armenia, its citizens, the Armenians living in their homeland, and the Armenian communities of the diaspora. They balance their interests based on a legal, political and value scale derived from their own obligations to the Armenian state, which includes the spatial and value dimensions of national interest. The spatial dimension ensures the primacy of national security, i.e. the survival of the state, the Armenians living in their homeland, and the diaspora communities. In contrast, the value dimension represents a broad perspective on the value perception of national interests, through which national security priorities are allocated among specific areas of national interest.

The analysis of practice documents the fact that in the provisions of the strategic level of national security policy (in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia, and later also in sectoral security concepts), national interests are presented with minimal assessments, and therefore, the goals and programme developments for their implementation are not fully expressed. In particular, in Section 3 of the 2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia, the security interests of the Republic of Armenia are presented in only four sub-clauses, without the development of regulatory acts of the next level (National Security Strategy of Armenia). This approach gives these interests a somewhat declarative character, which consequently has a negative

impact on the overall national and sectoral feasibility of interests. In this regard, the 2007 Security Strategy examined national interests in greater detail, but as such, they were not put forward and were not divided into the consolidation of national interests. In other words, the entire first section of the strategy (divided in sufficient detail into equal subsections) assesses the fundamental values of Armenia's national security, the factors and actions that ensure security, and the threats to it (Decree of the President of Armenia on approving the national security strategy, 2007).

Conclusion

Summarising the presented evaluations of strategic issues of the national security policy of the Republic of Armenia, it is essential to emphasise that the role of national interests in shaping national security policy and strategic security documents is an area of value differences, which contributes to the prediction and disclosure of the essence of security as a multifaceted social phenomenon with systemic, normative, structural and functional properties. As the primary bearer of national interests, the state has the right to use both diplomatic and forceful means to serve these interests, which will allow it to meet the minimum requirements of the state's concept of national interests. However, it is also evident that the use of both diplomatic and forceful means in the pursuit of national interests directly stems from the potential possessed by the state, which is the subject of national interests.

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