THE ‘NATIONAL INTEREST’ TRADITION AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ALBANIA

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

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Foreign policies are not built upon abstractions. They are the result of practical conceptions of national interest arising from some immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective.

- Charles A. Beard, 
_The Idea of National Interest_, 1934

Introduction

With the demise of communism, Albanian foreign policy was punctuated by an era of fundamental change qualitatively separated from the past. That era is being marked by Albania’s efforts to build a democratic society that, if successful, would enable Albania gradually to prosper and enjoy closer ties with neighbours and the Western world as well as with their political, economic and security organisations. Today there is a widespread agreement that Albania’s political philosophy and institutional environment are changing significantly along with moral principles and interests with which it feels identified.

This turning point in the nation’s history has resulted in growing pressure on Albanian leaders to ‘reinvent’ the foreign policy of Albania. Calls have been issued for the formulation of new strategies and policies that would create conditions that promote Albania’s stability, security and prosperity, and would prepare the nation to deal with realities of nationalisms in Southeastern Europe as well as the prospects of regional co-operation and European integration.¹

Clearly, Albanian leaders will need some guidelines for the formulation and analysis of foreign policy as well as for deciding in a systematic fashion, what activities to oppose and where to let events run their course. Traditionally, at least in the Western world, the concept of national interest has served as this standard. A commonly accepted definition of ‘national interest’ – at least in the Western world – refers to it as “the general and continuing ends for which a nation acts.” However, if the concept of national interest is to be of greater utility, it must be more precisely
defined so as to provide a greater measure of policy guidance to decision-makers.²

For several reasons, defining the new Albania’s national interests is particularly
difficult. First, this process necessarily takes place in the domestic context, and
reflects the character of the internal political system and the relative fortunes of
political leaders, parties, factions, and schools of thought. The severe political
instability that prevails in Albania produces substantial uncertainty about how it will
come to define and defend its national interests.

Second, by virtue of its geo-political position and location and the identity of its
neighbours, Albania must confront security threats, inescapable diplomatic
relationships, worrying scenarios, and neighbouring trouble spots. Establishing
priorities among these issues will, at times, be difficult.

Third, Albania, as a former-communist society with a legacy of chronic isolation,
absent socio-economic modernisation and a daunting democratic deficit, could not
immediately put in place a coherent and widely accepted conception of its national
interests and requirements – it could not even conduct a well developed national
debate. In view of these considerations, it is not surprising that Albania has yet to
determine its identity, its national interests, or its place in the world. In other words,
Albania faces the task of developing its national purpose as a political ideology and of
articulating a vision of the national interest, which refers to something of substance
and weight in the life of nations.³

That is the aim of this work, to provide an account of the concept of the national
interest and to examine the choices that confront Albania as it seeks to define its
national interests. The argument here is that, if Albanian foreign policy needs to
mature and emerge successful from the trials of the new era, it should follow “one
guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: the national interest.”⁴
Accordingly, part one of this work delves into the literature on the national interest in a search for definition and better understanding of the concept of national interest. Part two outlines a model for making foreign policy decisions based on the concept of national interest. Part three, which is the final part, puts on ground Albania’s national interests and views them through the development of its foreign policy goals.

I. The Concept of National Interest

Princes rule peoples, and interests dominate the princes.


The Origin and Development of the Concept

The history of ‘interest’ as a guide to diplomatic conduct goes back to the earliest stages of the evolution of modern state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, first in Italy and then in England. Nicolo Machiavelli was one of the earliest of the modern theorists. Ever since Machiavelli published *The Prince*, his ‘realistic’ views have shocked ‘idealistic’ thinkers. *The Prince* foreshadowed the emergence of interest as an organising principle for thought on international relations, in two important ways. First, the prince was to know when not to use the power, as well as when to use it.

For the manner in which men now live is so different from the manner in which they ought to live, that he who deviates from the common course of practice, and endeavours to act as duty dictates, necessarily ensures his own destruction. Thus, a good man, and one who wishes to prove himself so in all respects, must be undone in a contest with so many who are evilly disposed. A prince who wishes to maintain his power ought therefore to learn that he should not be always good, and must use that knowledge as circumstances and the exigencies of his own affairs may seem to require.5

Second, prudence was to be an instrumental means precisely geared to the attainment of specific limited political objectives and confined to the minimum wrong required
for success. Nevertheless, the authority of natural law as a guide to the conduct of
state affairs was undermined by the more morally neutral concept of interest.
Moreover, Machiavelli was primarily concerned with securing power against internal
enemies but not with the sense of responsibility to other states. Thus, the term
‘interest’ in the late sixteenth century had come into common “to denote those
aspirations of individuals that were prompted by rational calculation and pursued with
prudence.”

It was Duke Henri de Rohan’s contribution that took the term ‘interest’ and
applied it to the goals and actions of states. “Les princes commandent aux peuples, et
l’interest commande aux princes,” read the preamble of Rohan’s powerful treatise
“De l’Interest des Princes et Estats de la Chrestienté,” published in 1638. There was
the conviction that it would be impractical to try to construct a foreign policy from
ethical principles alone, but also it would be self-defeating to rely on pure egoism.
Reason was to direct the state’s competition with other states and to restrain it from
overreaching itself.

The eighteenth century witnessed the flowering of a mature realisation of state
interest. This age of Enlightenment gave rise to a belief in an equally orderly political
system in which statesmen acted to balance nicely diplomatic interests allowing states
to move along predictable paths. Europe, as Edmund Burke observed, was viewed as
a “federative society – or, in other words, … [a] diplomatic republic.” By the
standards of this society, the interest of the state had to be the conclusion of a
reasoned argument that could convince and could be accommodated by the state
system. When states asserted excessive interests, the other members of the system
would form alliances and counterbalances to restrict or defeat them. This system was
called “balance of power.”
Yet the balance of power system was not always effective in holding back excessive conquests – the system was characterised by continual conflicts; rules for judging asserted claims were fairly loose; and war remained a legal and acceptable instrument. Nevertheless, the politics of national (more accurately, state) interest opened a via media between selfless idealism and unrestrained egoism. At a minimum, it lead to moderation in policy, and self-limitation on the part of major players that was necessary in order to perpetuate the system for exercising co-operation (for example, the Concert of Europe). As David Clinton wrote, “[n]ational interest in this way comprised a system of restraint on states’ actions as effective as the rules of international law or the traditions of diplomatic practice.”

One fundamental test of both the limits and the possibilities of interest can be found in the creation of the American Republic. Its creators rationally chose to start history afresh by ridding themselves from the traditional power-political quarrels of Europe to give their nation a novel purpose which was (and is), “the establishment of freedom conceived as equality of opportunity and minimization of political control.” But the Americans did not discard the concept of interest itself and they accepted the existence of an international society above the state, which was to review the reasonableness of its aims. In the draft of the Farewell Address, Washington showed a shrewd appreciation of national interest:

> Whatever may be their professions, be assured fellow Citizens and the event will (as it always has) invariably prove, that Nations as well as individuals, act for their own benefit, and not for the benefit of others, unless both interests happen to be assimilated.”

In addition, to Americans the state appeared as a “cold monster.” In their resistance to the British government, Americans acquired a habit of using terms like ‘the people,’ and the ‘nation.’ Thus, since the establishment of American Constitution, ‘state interest’ would be relabelled ‘national interest’ and national interest would
become the head of foreign policy and the rhetoric of American statesmen who employed the term extensively.\textsuperscript{11}

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the concept of interest was severely battered by the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon set out to achieve objectives that were the antithesis of moderation and limitation. To this end, ideology of nationalism, which he used skilfully against traditional monarchies, was set in opposition to the eighteenth-century view of interest. Following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, the peace imposed on France was, however, consistent with equilibrium of power. Considering the destruction that the European system went through, the "loose" but still effective Concert of Europe succeeded in recreating the system to a surprising degree.\textsuperscript{12} Prince Metternich portrayed the European state-system and the conception of state interest as follows:

\begin{quote}
Politics is the science of the vital interests of States in the widest meaning. Since, however, an isolated state no longer exists, and is found only in the annals of the heathen world \ldots{} we must always view the society of states as the essential condition of the modern world. \ldots{} The great axioms of political science proceed from the knowledge of the true political interests of all states; it is upon these general interests that rests the guarantee of their existence.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

For a better part of the nineteenth century the United States was not interested in particular advantages definable in terms of power politics or of territorial games. Its national interest was exhausted by the preservation of its predominance in the Western Hemisphere and the balance of power in Europe and Asia. Thus, as Napoleonic wars passed from the scene, Americans paid less attention to international affairs.\textsuperscript{14}

Given this self-chosen isolation, Americans in their domestic politics inculcated a doctrine similar to that of the ‘state interest’ portrayed by Metternich. This doctrine labelled “self-interest rightly understood” by Alexis de Tocqueville, in \textit{Democracy in America}, “saw the individual citizen pursuing his private interests within the
framework of a larger system that allowed all citizens to do the same.” The preservation of the system depended on the recognition of two things: first, that diverting some of private resources to maintaining the system was in the long-run in the interest of citizens; and second, that demands of private interests had to be moderated by the claims of others. This established polity would wield its sovereign government with the authority to use force against those who pressed their interests. Here, the common interest was noticeably more tangible than in the operation of the balance of power.15

Many decades elapsed, however, before the national interest attracted attention as a tool of analysis. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the denunciation of national interest. Indignation at the moral deficiencies of the very balance of power drove President Woodrow Wilson toward the general postulate of a New World “safe for democracy” where the national interest would disappear. But the events of the two world wars impressed a number of analysts with the thought that the global conflict might have been avoided. They turned to the national interest as a concept which could be used to “describe, explain and access the foreign policies of nations.”16

In 1930 Charles Beard wrote *The Idea of National Interest*. This text was one of the first to develop the purpose of the national interest concept and to distinguish it from the ‘public interest’ that refers to domestic policies of nations. The great increased attention to national interest, however, came after the World War II, with the ‘realist’ school led by the truly powerful mind of Realism, Hans J. Morgenthau. His works advanced “a realist theory of international politics” founded on the concept of national interest. Morgenthau recognised that the interest of a nation, “the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the
political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated.” He envisioned accounting for these contextual factors by defining interest in terms of power. For Morgenthau “[i]nterest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid,” and, as such, power serves to determine what true interest is and should be.17

His opponents and critics, the “subjectivists,” found the national interest attractive as a tool of explaining “why nations do what they do when they engage in international action,” but they denied the existence of an objective reality that is discoverable through systematic inquiry. They reasoned that nations “do what they do” to satisfy their needs and wants. Nevertheless, both the objectivists and the subjectivist accepted the appropriateness of analysing foreign policy and international politics in terms of the national interest. Their views will be further shown in the following sections.18

Theories of National Interest

Charges Against the Concept

At first, the concept of ‘national interest’ seems clear objective rooted in values in order to determine what is good for the nation as a whole in international affairs. (What is good for the nation as a whole in domestic affairs is the public interest.) ‘National interest’ claims to provide objective standards of conduct in international affairs and guide to the formulation of a national strategy. Upon reflection, however, one realises that it may sometimes be difficult to determine the national interest. It requires substantive definition and clarity of political processes and of political leadership and decisions that are filtered through concrete circumstances.19

There are two main charges against the concept of national interest. First, the term ‘national interest’ is ambiguous – it is difficult to define clearly and it is
uncertain with regard to the relationship between particular interests and the 'national interest.' Second, the concept does not provide a clear guide to the formulation of foreign policy – it may not reflect voices of a pluralistic society, and it may encourage an attitude of narrow nationalism.20

One of the greatest obstacles to a commonly acceptable definition of national interest is the fundamental disagreement between those who conceive the national interest broadly, and hence rather vaguely, and those others who try to pin it down to a number of concrete components or single interests. As Philip W. Quigg’s observed:

People often speak of the national interest as though it were a sort of Rosetta Stone, providing answers to all the most perplexing questions of foreign policy. For some critics it is enough to assert that a particular policy is not in our national interest to establish that the policy is bad.21

Yet, many doubts concerning the value of the concept of national interest can be traced to uncertainties over the meaning of the terms ‘interest,’ and ‘national interest.’

The Meaning of ‘Interest’

The term has been used in a number of different ways. First, an interest may be a group with a common goal or characteristic. In this sense, ‘interest’ is defined as an objective and the term can join phrases as “interest group,” “special interest,” even “selfish interest.” Second, an interest may be defined as a pattern of conduct of an individual or group of individuals to reach a goal. Third, ‘interest’ may be solely defined by preferences as something desired or sought for. In this sense ‘interest’ is purely subjective. Fourth, ‘interest’ may be the object of a reasoned claim. For example, as Virgina Held explains, “X is in the interest of Ii” may mean “a claim by or in behalf of Ii for X is asserted and justifiable.” In this sense, ‘interest’ is a mixture of wants and moral or legal justification. Finally, ‘interest’ may rest on certain regulatory standards that can be beneficial for one, regardless of one’s wishes or
wants. As Clark E. Cochran asserts, “[a] child may want to drink from a bottle of cleaning fluid, but it would be strange indeed to say that it was in his interest to do so.” In this sense interest may well be a restraint. Clearly, this diversity of meanings in various contexts can lead to uncertainty and confusion, which in turn forms the first count in charge of ambiguity against national interest.22

The Meaning of ‘National Interest’

Like the term ‘interest,’ the term ‘national interest’ has been given a variety of meanings, which often cannot be reconciled. Hence, there is no agreement about its ultimate meaning. In addition, the existing literature suggests no clear-cut classification of its various uses. Also fundamental is the terminological ambiguity stemming from the fact that the adjective ‘national’ refers both to the nation as a social group and to the state as a political organisation. In most cases reference is made to the state and usually it is clear from the context in which it is used. Yet, ambiguities of great importance can occur when a nation extends beyond the boundaries of its national state, as in the case of the contemporary Albanians.23

The term ‘national interest’ is often assumed to be synonymous with public interest and is seen as the sum of all the particular interests within a society. Beard thought of ‘national interest’ as “an aggregation of particularities assembled like eggs in a basket.” In this view, Beard’s particularities were part of the common good. National interest, however, cannot be a sum of individual interests – by the very reason of their divergences they cannot be added or averaged. It can be at most a synthesis of interplay of forces, in which individual interests are an inherent part. That is, the national interests remains subsequent, rather than prior, to the individual interests.24
Subjectivists are adherents to a pluralist doctrine. They argue that the national interest is a reflection of the preferences of the many groups in a nation rather than of objective reality. But they avoid the complex, seemingly insurmountable problem of calculating particular interest, for they offer no objective standard by which to measure it. Instead, they rely on the political process of the society. That is, a decision-making process in which the foreign-policy goals result from bargaining among the needs and wants of the various groups regardless of whether democratic or authoritarian procedures are employed. Operationally, the substantive content of the national interest becomes whatever policy-making officials decide it to be. Furthermore, it changes “whenever the requirements and aspirations of the nation’s change.” As such, this “undiluted pluralism” deprives national interest of its yardstick function. That is to say, the national interest becomes incapable of serving as a standard of judgement for the formulation and implementation of policy.\(^{25}\)

A second meaning attached to the national interest lies in the public’s interest in maintaining an arena open to the free and fair political competition of all interest groups. Here, the nation is not concerned with the results of the contest but with the maintenance of the rules while it is being played. In Walter Lippmann’s words, “[f]or there is only one common interest: that all special interests shall act according to settled rule.” The national interest under this definition lacks a starting point where the rules originate. Hence, it remains dependent on the balance of forces in the country and the governing rules of its political system. It can thus serve as a standard of judgement of the methods utilised by participants in the political struggle, but it can not serve for the comparisons of foreign policies across national boundaries and time.\(^{26}\)

Stephen Krasner has adopted a third usage of the national interest as “the
preferences of central decision-makers.” His approach has no normative component. Instead national interest is a subjective variable, as policy-makers are replaced from time to time and the national interest alters according to their new own ideas on the ends of policy. Similarly, Donald Nuechterlein has defined the national interest as “the perceived needs and desires of some sovereign state comprising its external environment.” It seems that no unvarying yardstick exists by which the validity of foreign policies may be tested.27

A fourth meaning of ‘national interest’ provides such a yardstick, although not a universal one. Here, national interest depends on the type of the regime. Different regimes have different ends and, therefore, they require different foreign policies to promote those ends. Raymond Aron, a writer closely associated with this definition, saw “the political idea of the state” as one of the primary determinants of state action in international affairs and, as such, as an instrument to measure success or failure of its action.28

Hans Morgenthau and his followers stood in opposition to these views. Instead they favoured a fifth definition of ‘national interest,’ one that is objectively definable and common to all states regardless of their “values.” Morgenthau supposed that he had an objective standard by which to judge foreign policies: “the concept of interest defined in terms of power.” That is, foreign policy goals must not range beyond the power available, for resources to obtain national desires are strictly limited. Further, for the statesman to be successful, he must make decisions that would preserve and improve the state’s power and not misuse it in such a way that ultimately would weaken the state. The statesman asks, “[w]ill this step improve or weaken my power?” Were his action to preserve the state and its power, then his policy is rational.29
James Rosenau, a severe critic of the national interest, found the reasoning of the objectivists “essentially erroneous.” He recalled that the national interest is rooted in values and that different states do in fact pursue different ends. The objectivists’ assumption that “statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power,” is thus an imposition of their own values to one’s own course of action. He further argued that Morgenthau’s formulation lacked a method for determining what a nation’s relative power is. Furthermore, he noted, the task of calculating the ‘power of a nation’ inevitably necessitates the introduction of values; that is, accessing of the relative importance of each power component. As such, analysts will not necessarily arrive at similar results of what a nation’s power dictates its national interest to be. In short, there may be an “objective reality,” Rosenau concluded, but “neither predictively nor retrospectively can its contents be clearly demonstrated.”

‘National interest’ is often used on a polemical basis, yet the concept has remained attractive. That is the first problem of the national interest: reputedly intelligent, well-informed analysts have been unable to agree on what ‘national interest’ means. Who can the statesman trust then?

The Undesirable ‘National Interest’

If national interest is subject of so many disputes, then the concept is incapable to serve the nation well, so critics argue. With the national interest as a “high-minded” slogan, certain policies may be defined as national interest on grounds of ‘special interests’ rather than of the common good: that is, policies arrived at in undemocratic, unrepresentative ways. Economic elites, for instance, may define their holdings abroad as national interest. Educational elites may promote views that do not interest the public at large. Bureaucratic-political elites may employ the national interest in their struggle of persuading peers and superiors. The charge thus is: the rhetoric of
the national interest may endanger the common good due to questioned motives of political players.31

Critics argue that the national interest is complex and beyond man’s grasp to achieve full rationality. However, with power as a yardstick Morgenthau could define national interest at any time and under any circumstances. He also could read the mind of statesmen, with no trouble. “Did Morgenthau have this ability because he applied some formula of national interest or because he was tremendously intelligent?” Lesser minds have tried to define polices as national interest but they misunderstood it and committed blatant errors – a policy of expansionism or an irrational crusade, for example, may appear to enhance state power, but it may also drain state power. What good is the concept then?32

The national interest is obsolescent and exclusivist, some critics argue. The nation-state is becoming a thing of the past and its ‘interests’ illusory. The national interest has become "parochial" and "passé"; a policy constructed in terms of national interest would inevitably repel other states instead of attracting their sympathy and co-operation. It gives superficially justification to national egotism and aggressive foreign policy. It must be superseded by ‘international interest’ or ‘world order’ approaches, which go beyond the inherent selfishness of national interest. The ever-greater interdependence is bound to diminish reliance on the national interest.33

Defining the National Interest

America’s pursuit of the national interest will create conditions that promote freedom, markets, and peace.

- Condoleezza Rice

Campaign 2000 – Promoting the National Interest

The National Interest and the Common Good

The definition proposed by David Clinton rejects the view that society is simply a
framework for the interaction of smaller interest groups. It is, instead, also a large group with common standards of political ethics and a common good to benefit all those within the group. That is, the society is a “community” with common norms and common sense of shared history and destiny of individuals that share common citizenship. Because the common good is the interest of a society, although immediate interests of individuals may clash, their ultimate long-term good coincide with the society’s common good. Therefore, individuals are interested in the preservation and perfection of this common enterprise, and as such, the society forms their highest interest.34

In view of these considerations, national interest lies in the obligation to protect and promote the good of the society. In this definition the yardstick function of national interest is very clear. That is, the common good is above and prior to any policy decision and policy-makers have a responsibility to bring their actions into conformity with this higher, shared interest. Yet, who can say where the common good or common interest lies?

Both the domestic political setting and the international realm are the most important locations to comprehend and further the common good. In the domestic realm, the common good can neither be determined by the interaction of interest groups nor the answers given by a majority to public-opinion polls. In Joseph Nye’s words, “It is opinion after public discussion and deliberation. That is why is it is so important that our leaders do a better job of discussing a broad formulation of our national interest.”35 As such, the common good can be defined by rational consideration, by an assessment of what leads to the best possible benefit of the society. This exercise begins from defining principles of the regime and works toward public policies that will most effectively advance those principles. Here, two
key assumptions are fundamental: first, some values are inherently more worthy than others; and second, society is not value-neutral, precluding an “autonomous public good.” Nevertheless, recognition of the common good does not rule out or make subject to state control the diversity within the society.36

In international realm, a nation’s interest lies in its ability to safeguard the common good of the society and continue its search for the public interest unhindered by outside threats.37 To this end, a foreign policy guided by the national interest would ward off foreign dangers and it would seek to advance its common good by recognising opportunities that foreign affairs may open. As George Kennan, in reference to the national interest of the United States, wrote:

The fundamental interest of our Government in international affairs is… to assure that we should be permitted, as a people, to continue this Pilgrim’s Progress toward a better America under the most favourable possible conditions, with a minimum of foreign interference, and also with a minimum of inconvenience or provocation to the interests of other nations.38

‘The National Interest’ and ‘National Interests’

The anarchical international realm set limits on the ‘national interests’ claimed by each state: that is, ‘interests’ or claims that each society makes on the outside world. Not only are there more than one state with its interest at stake, but also each state presses many different ‘interests’ or claims on the international society. Therefore, because of this diversity of asserted claims and the lack of infinite resources to satisfy them some ordering principle of selecting among potential interests must be at work.39

Two external constrains may help statesmen to determine which claims are prudent to make and likely to be satisfied, Clinton suggests. One constraint is the state’s geopolitical position: that is, a country, waterway, or resource may have a special impact on the national interest. For instance, some states are safer than others and can devote more sources to the promotion of their ideals. Contrariwise, other
states, in a less secure setting, may have to devote more attention to their material interests alone.

A second constrain is the international standard of the “anarchical society” against which national interests are judged. Individual states put forward claims and present reasoned explanations supporting these claims to other members of the system. In absence of an international sovereign, members of the system decide whether to oppose, acquiesce in, or support claims put forward by one member. They can assess the justifications of their claims on three grounds. First, they assess whether a claim is in the national interest of the asserting state; that is, whether that claim can reasonably be connected to its continued independence and its ability to carry on its organised political activity directed toward the common good. Second, they assess whether a national interest of other states is undermined by such a claim; that is, their independence and quest for unhindered development of their regimes. And third, they assess whether such a claim threatens the international distribution of power. These are the terms of arguments to be made by the statesmen in justification of their claims.40

However, whereas advancing of state interests is the statesman’s prime responsibility, this role must also remind him that, as E.H. Carr warned, “[t]o make the harmonisation of interests the goal of political action is not the same thing as to postulate that a natural harmony of interests exists.” Rather, international society is, “an association of independent and diverse political communities, each devoted to its own ends and its own conceptions of the good, often related to one another by nothing more than the fragile ties of a common tradition of diplomacy.”41

Thus, the two meanings of national interest work to balance each other in a “world of power.” Interplay between the domestic debate over the requirements of the
national interest, on one hand, and the international debate over any state’s asserted national interests, on the other hand, influence the national interest thinking. If the state is to assert ‘moderate’ claims in the international realm or to restrain those excessive claims made by other states, then restraints may also be placed on personal or other private interests. For instance, the state increases taxes or imposes “wartime censorship of speech and the press or other controls on individual liberties.” Likewise, world opinion on a particular state’s interests and duties becomes a source of authority for participants in the internal debate who seek to move their state’s national interest in the same direction. Also, international actors may at times undertake to influence the internal debate in other states. On the other hand, the internal political debate may influence the external: the international consensus on a state’s proper national interests may be altered when the outside world ‘overhears’ that state’s internal debate and becomes aware of its justifiable claims.\(^4^2\)

**Definition of the National Interest**

Whether national interest is an objective or a subjective concept the proper answer would suggest that it is “Both.” (Traditionalists distinguished between a foreign policy based on values and a foreign policy based on interests.) In Joseph Nye’s view “in a democracy, the national interest is simply what citizens, say it is. It is broader than vital strategic interests, though they are a crucial part.” In view of these considerations, the public interest is the object of policy-makers’ discussions, the goal they ought to keep in mind as they deliberate, and a normative standard for choosing one policy over another. This is precisely the first function national interest can perform: it can guide the political debate and provide decision-makers with a framework of the terms of that debate.\(^4^3\)
The utility of the national interest is not any formula that can provide answers to all complex issues of foreign policy however. Instead it is an “objective reality” to be discovered that prompts the decision-maker to ask a variety of questions, such as, among others, those suggested by Michael Roskin:

How are current developments affecting my nation’s power? Are hostile forces able to harm my vital interests? Do I have enough power to protect my vital interests? Which of my interests are secondary? How much of my power am I willing to use to defend them? What kind of deals can I get in compromises over secondary interests?44

But decision-makers may not necessarily arrive at the same answer to these questions. Subjective in this sense their answers are claims or interests put forward at decision-maker’s discretion. These claims or interests can potentially be justified with reference to the national interest and due respect to the interests of others in the global system. As such, national interest provides a justification for leadership and sets bounds on what states may do for one another – these are two other major functions of the national interest as a tool in the formulation and analysis of policy. Indeed, as Morgenthau observed, “the world would be a much better place if all statesmen would consistently ask such questions, for that would induce a sense of limits and caution into their strategies that might otherwise be lacking.”45

Defence of the National Interest

National interest stands of what holds a community together. Sure, at any given time, as Roskin writes, "the national interest may be difficult to define due to the warping effects of ideology, the global system, public and elite convictions, the mass media, and policy inertia."46 Yet, the concept of national interest, with a common good as a reference point, forms the safeguard of a free regime against disintegration and collapse.
The rational conception of national interest is a continuous process testing the statesman’s ability to perceive the reality accurately to the ongoing needs of the society. The argument of "defining rationality as the ability to identify all possible options, to foresee all their direct and indirect consequences, and to compare every set of consequences with every other – all before making a decision and taking any action" rests on extreme. It is in fact an impossible and implausible demand that would preclude all action of the decision-maker drawn into an endless chain of remote effects.47

Turning to the present multi-state international system, Rosenau observed that although it is not assumed to last forever, the process of decline is “many decades – perhaps even centuries away from an end.” Additionally, the continuing force of nationalist sentiment during the contemporary period has been driving the trend of decentralisation and secession, not that of consolidation and merger. Or more accurately, as Rosenau suggests “the more time is broadened, the clearer it will become that in the interaction between globalising and localising dynamics it is the former that tends to drive the latter.”48 Thus, political actors will without doubt continue to make extensive use of the concept of national interest. When Condoleezza Rice wrote during the 2000 campaign that the United States should “proceed from the firm ground of the national interest and not from the interest of an illusory international community,” she precisely took cognisance of the importance and utility of the national interest in thinking about foreign policy and contemporary world politics.49

And yet, as Rosenau observes, “the dynamics of both globalisation and localisation … interact and shape each other.” Failure to discover mutually beneficial aspects in the international realm and to devise policies that benefit other nations as
well as one’s own will eventually hurt what is good for the nation in domestic and international affairs. To this end, broader interests can be incorporated into a “farsighted” concept of the national interest. It can include different goals shared by other states as well and values such as human rights and democracy. As Nye suggests “a better-informed political debate is the only way for our people to determine how broadly or narrowly to define our interests.” In sum, given the contemporary structure of world politics, in which “[t]he moral aspirations of a particular nation…” are not “moral laws that govern the universe,” the national interest leads to the good of national communities and their efforts for a broad conception of justice. As such, it paves the way for recognising “at least a fragmentary” society outside the national community.50

II. National Interest: From Abstraction to Strategy

They speak of aims, objectives, interests, positions, judgements, decisions, but seldom of policies.

- Ernest R. May

*The Nature of Foreign Policy: The Calculated Versus the Axiomatic*, 1962

Types of National Interest

Morgenthau saw two levels of national interest, the primary (the vital) and the secondary. To preserve the first, which concerns the nation’s physical, political and cultural identity and survival or security of the nation, there can be no compromise or hesitation about going to war. All nations must defend them at any price. Secondary interests, those over which one may seek to negotiate or compromise, are harder to define. Typically, they fall outside of the first category and represent not threat to sovereignty. Potentially, however, they can grow in the minds of statesmen until they seem to be vital. If an interest is secondary, mutually advantageous deals can be negotiated. However, if the other party engaged in expansionism, compromises on
secondary interests will not calm matters. They may even be read as appeasement.\textsuperscript{51}

In addition to the primary and the secondary, Morgenthau distinguished between temporary and permanent interests, and specific and general interests. Permanent interests are relatively constant over a long period of time. Variable or temporary interests are what a national chooses to regard as its national interest at any particular time. General interests are those that a country applies in a positive manner to a large geographic area, to a large number of nations, or in several specific fields. Specific interests are closely defined in time or space and often are the logical outgrowth of general interests.\textsuperscript{52}

Three adjectives are needed to describe a national interest. An interest can be described as primary, permanent, and specific, or secondary, temporary and general. Defence of human rights in distant land, for example, might be secondary, permanent, and general. That means a long-term commitment to human rights but without any quarrel with a specific country. Likewise, Albanians’ support of America in the Iraq war is a secondary, temporary and specific interest, one of gratitude towards the American assistance to Albania’s struggle to rejoin the world and in particular for the U.S. role in the Kosovo war. Meanwhile, Albania’s support of America in the ongoing war on terrorism is a secondary, temporary and general interest, one that concerns universal peace and stability.

Morgenthau distinguished three “international” interests - identical interests, complementary interests and conflicting interests. Identical interests are those national interests which two countries or allies may hold in common. Complementary interests between countries are those which, although not identical, are capable of forming the basis of agreement on specific issues.

The United States and Albania, for instance, may have a common interest in opposing Serbian “ethnic cleansing,” but the U.S. interest is a general, temporary,
and secondary one concerning human rights and regional stability. The Albanian interest is a specific, permanent, and possibly vital one of forming a Greater Albania that would include Serbian-held Kosovo with its Albanian majority. Our interests may run parallel for a time, but we must never mistake Albanian interests for U.S. interests.⁵³

And often countries have some interests that are complementary and others that are conflicting because countries see things through different eyes. Even it is sometimes hard to anticipate how another country will define its national interest. Following a traditionally strong military relationship, Turkey and the United States in the 1990s had become important to one another and had declared themselves “strategic partners.” But on an issue of paramount importance to the United States, Turkish Parliament said “No” and thus rejected the U.S. request to open a northern front from Turkish soil on Iraq. An American looking at this refusal suffers a bitter defeat: didn’t Turkey leave its “strategic partner in the lurch?” Rather, the Turks saw vital and may be permanent interests at stake. They dread military, strategic and economic repercussions that the invasion of Iraq might bring, and many Turks did not trust the intentions or assurances of its “strategic partner.” As a Turkish Foreign Ministry official warned: “[a]nd make no mistake: if Washington and Ankara cannot come to an agreement on the military and strategic modalities, … Turkey will indeed decline to participate.”⁵⁴

It is, in fact, the diplomat’s work to find and develop complementary interests so that countries can work together. But when their interests totally conflict there can be no co-operation. Here, again, it is the diplomat’s duty to find ways to minimise the damage. The envoy cannot despair in this situation however, as through diplomacy or the passage of time, national interests can shift and today’s conflicting interests can be transformed tomorrow into complementary interests. There is no question, for example, that an effort toward a new U.S.–Turkish agenda "must" and "will" be
made. Types of National Interest

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<td>Secondary</td>
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<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Friendly Relations with Neighbours</td>
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<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Support for America in the Iraq War</td>
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<td>Specificity</td>
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<td>Consolidation of Democracy in South-Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>Specific</td>
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<td>Technically Valid Law of War against Albania</td>
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Table 1.

Evidently, true national interest thinking is tightly focused to the nation: "[w]e can’t know what is good for the whole world or for the country X; we can only know what is good for us," Morgenthau argued. Here, his philosophical argument for "how states ought to behave," stands in:

[I]f states pursue only their rational self-interests, without defining them too grandly, they will collide with other states only minimally. In most cases, their collisions will be compromisable; that is the function of diplomacy. It is when states refuse to limit themselves to protection of their rational self-interests that they become dangerous.56

However, statesmen can constantly be tempted or may wish to expand their national interest thinking to include many nations’ interests, but “please do not call it ‘the national interest,’” Roskin suggests.57 In reality, the great utility of national interest thinking is that prompts the statesman to ask: “[i]s this proposed effort for the
good of your country or to carry out an idealistic abstraction?” Such “a foreign policy guided by moral abstractions, without consideration of the national interest, is bound to fail; for it accepts a standard of action alien to the nature of the action itself,” wrote Morgenthau. And thinking in terms of national interest is "morally necessary," he further argued, for the state has no moral right to risk sacrifice of the nation for the sake of certain moral abstractions.  

It is therefore necessary to distinguish desirable goals from essential goals. It is the list of those essential goals that Morgenthau called “the total national interest.” Once this is done, it remains to establish a hierarchical order of them, which is “the first step in framing a rational foreign policy.” Then, the second step is to allocate the available power resources to the foreign policy objectives chosen accordingly and specify the actions required in order to reach them. Because national security is the first objective necessary before any other policy objectives as prosperity, national honour, cultural enrichment, and so on, the following evaluates a foreign policy matter in terms of its importance to national security.

National Interest: An Operational Definition

National security … is best defined as the capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity, and well-being.

- Charles S. Maier

Peace and Security Studies for the 1990s, 1990

A nation-state needs a rational, systematic basis for deciding where to make commitments abroad. Selecting from among many national objectives the overriding one of national security, Martin Goldstein posited a scheme of nine criteria designed to enable a decision-makers to look at a development abroad and determine the importance of its outcome to his own country’s national interest. These criteria of
national interest are “proximity; strategic location; possession of scarce and vital natural resources; the market for the country’s goods; the supplier of scarce and vital finished goods; the repository of the country’s private investment; population; large-scale industry; and military power.” If a country scores high on all the criteria that country would be deemed vital to the security of the decision-maker’s nation. Contrariwise, should the country score low on every criterion, it would be of little importance to the security of the decision-maker’s nation.60

Proximity: “An important reason for Albania’s assertion of independence from Moscow, as compared with the docility of East European states bordering on the Soviet Union, no doubt may be traced to the distance separating Tirana from Kremlin.”61 While it remains easier for a nation to foment discord in a contiguous state rather than in a distant one, it is in a state’s national interest to have friendly or at least non-hostile governments on its periphery. Thus, for purposes of determining the national interest every government shows a strong interest in the political affairs of neighbouring countries. For example, the Greeks displayed perhaps more than considerable concern with the events of 1997 in Albania and supported to bring to power a “friendlier” Albanian government as to their own interests. This is “one of the reasons why Greeks from all walks of life despise” the then Albanian President “who had in a few occasions, alluded to the existence of an Albanian minority in Greece,” Panayote Dimitras wrote.62

Strategic Location: Throughout history, nations have deemed vital to their nation’s security the strategic significance of certain external lands or waterways. For instance, “one immediately thinks of the Panama Canal” as a strategic location for the U.S., because it “permits American ships to pass from the Atlantic to the Pacific without traversing the southern tip of South America.”63 Likewise, one may think of
Albania’s Adriatic position as a port of reference for a broader area, but also may consider it as “a gate into Europe” for illegal migrants and “narcotraficantes.”

Technological progress has diminished the importance of strategic location; nevertheless, in some cases it remains a relevant consideration in determining an object-country’s importance to the decision-country’s national interest.64

Possession of Scarce and Vital Natural Resources: Lenin wrote, “competition for raw materials and markets would lead to wars among capitalist countries,” thus recognising the importance of natural resources to a nation’s security.65 Yet, a certain country is not important simply because it possesses a certain natural resource, for it can be readily obtained elsewhere or alternative sources of supply may exist. A source of raw materials becomes crucial to the decision-country’s national interest only if the natural resource itself is vital to the country’s security and is scarce. “American access to South African uranium is important because that mineral – a vital element in the construction of nuclear weapons – is in such short supply.”66

The Market for the Decision-Country’s Goods: Economic security relates to national security in two ways: first, “a strong economy heightens a nation’s capacity to protect its security;” second, “a favourable balance of trade strengthens a nation’s economy.” Thus, the object-country’s purchases may have an actual effect on the decision-country’s capacity to preserve its security, that is to say, its national interest.

The Supplier of Scarce and Vital Finished Goods: A decision-nation must inquire whether the finished product in question is vital to its security and whether the commodity can be obtained elsewhere at a reasonable cost. In general, an industrialised decision-nation may have scant need for foreign finished goods, but it may well require substantial inputs of external raw materials. On the contrary, a resource-reach nation with low level of industrialisation will have a greater need for
finished products than raw materials. The most fortunate nations will experience relatively low level of need for both external raw materials as well as finished products: “However, no nation – not even the U.S. – is so self-sufficient that it has no need for any foreign materials or finished products.”

The Repository of the Country’s Private Investment: Private firms of the decision-nation have investments in other countries. The decision-country’s economy may suffer substantially if certain sectors were affected by an abrupt curtailment of private investments in the object-country. Obviously, investments in central industries have a larger bearing on the national interest than do investments in peripheral industries.

Population: “If a country is well endowed with population, military power, and large-scale industry, it is likely to exert a large amount of influence, and its behaviour will be significant for the national interest of many other countries.” In seeking to draw conclusions regarding the population’s contribution to national influence, the decision-maker combines the number of people in the population with their characteristics.

We would need to determine the number of men and women, a breakdown by age, the level of literacy and education, the distribution of skills throughout the population, the health or vigour of the people, their willingness to sacrifice and their dedication to the national welfare, attitudes toward economic achievement and technological progress, and the number of persons able to work and fight.

Large Scale Industry: The level of nation’s industrialisation has a bearing on that nation’s importance to the security of other states. A highly industrialised country may exert influence on the behaviour of several other countries, whose policies may be of concern to the decision-country. This is to say, although the nation in question may not directly be vital to the decision-country, it may well be vital to other states, whose behaviour affects the national interest of the decision-state. “Japan … exerts considerable influence in the western Pacific, continental Asia, and the U.S. – all
areas of substantial interest to Great Britain. Consequently, Great Britain has good reason to concern itself with the fate of Japan, even though Japan may not affect Britain’s national interest in a direct sense.\textsuperscript{69}

Military Power: States that possess significant military power are likely to be feared by others and thus have a weighty impact on calculations of national interest. A decision-state will wish to deprive its foes of an object-country’s military might and to gain the object country’s promise of support in case of hostilities. Therefore a decision-state is likely to regard defence of a militarily powerful object-state as vital to its own security. It follows that “the more militarily powerful the object-state, the more vital its defence is likely to be to the security of the decision-state – i.e., to its national interest.”\textsuperscript{70}

The Formulation of the National Interest

For the successful pursuit of foreign affairs … three qualities, above all others, are required of the framers of American policy: one intellectual, one moral, one political. The framers of American foreign policy must possess a deep understanding of both our national interest and our national strength. They must be imbued with the moral determination to defend to the last what they know the national interests requires, and they must be prepared to face political defeat at home rather than gamble away the interests and perhaps the very existence of the nation for a fleeting triumph in the next elections.

- Hans J. Morgenthau

\textit{In Defence of the National Interest, 1951}

The formulation of the national interest falls squarely under the function of the setting of goals of the foreign policy. The process is interplay of three distinct elements: the decision-makers and their international and domestic environments. A behaviourally oriented analysis includes also the concept of ‘the image’ held by decision-makers on their environment. It is, anyway, an essentially political process, in which political argument with its appeals to reason and emotions can, as heretofore indicated, be subjected to a rational analysis.\textsuperscript{71}
The basic decision-making scheme is fundamentally identical: all chains of decisions must start with an assessment of both the value component as well as the environmental circumstances. That is, it starts with an assessment of “what is desirable” and “what is essential” for the nation’s common good as well as an assessment of domestic and international environmental circumstances in as much detail as is deemed relevant. These components are confronted and a decision on “what is possible” is reached on the basis of a calculation of power available and necessary for the attainment of certain ends against their cost, hierarchical status and probability of success. To reiterate here, primary goals ranking at the top of the hierarchical order are to be pursued at all costs; that was the focus of Morgenthau’s statement of political realism. The second analytical step, as earlier mentioned, is the making of implementing decisions followed by evaluations. In real life, however, the process is more complex; the interplay between the decision-maker and his environment is continuous and can allow the decision-maker for countless permutations or compel him to rely on his wisdom and judgement rather than on conscious rational order. Nevertheless, schematisation and simplification can impose a logical order necessary for comprehending the complexity of real life.72

By and large, the formulation of national interest is identical with the making of foreign policy and involves the very top decision-makers. Within every government the two main persons involved are the head of government and the Foreign Minister. The legislature power, too, is considerable.

Actual decisions are often taken by the government or the cabinet as a whole or by some other leading members in concert but the relationship between the head and his Foreign Minister constitutes an important variable. …Fundamentally the head of the government is the more important decision-maker. He generally chooses the Foreign Minister to his liking although he is at times hampered by party priorities … or coalition requirements. …As a rule, legislatures confirm rather than initiate foreign policy and the main legal form employed is the power of ratification of international treaties.73
The top decision-makers theoretically are capable of determining the nation’s goals and of thinking the “whole aggregate of national interest” at operational level, and they have the authority to issue public addresses and make official statements as well. However, while the centralisation serves the important purpose of preserving the unity of foreign policy and of safeguarding fundamental values, the attainment of specific objectives occurs at lower levels. Therefore, there is a perennial tension between centralisation and decentralisation. “Neither extreme is feasible and every system finds its equation between the two.”

Two major variables can affect the degree of centralisation: first the power status of the state, and second, the nature of regime. In small states with a narrower scope of national interest than in great powers, the national interest can be formulated and a coherent foreign policy can be prescribed at the very top level. In greater powers, with a broader scope of national interest and greater range of problems, such a process is more difficult and a degree a decentralisation persists.

In autocratic states or in new states where political participation is limited, the process of formulation of national interest is highly centralised. Under a democratic regime, national discussions frequently take place and all agencies involved in the political process can be relevant in the formulation of national interest. In the United States, for example, public opinion also serves as an arbiter of foreign policy debate.

Presidential and Congressional policies are always fashioned in anticipation of what the voter seems likely to approve. The President in particular, as the most exalted mouthpiece of the national will and the initiator of foreign policies, tests the state of public opinion by submitting to it new policies in the tentative form of public addresses and messages to Congress. These new policies are then openly or surreptitiously pursued or else shelved according to the reaction of public opinion. And ultimately, the degree to which the President is willing to execute the foreign policies his advisers suggest depends upon his estimate of the public support his policies will command.

Yet, at times, the public support will command foreign policies that “are hardly
worth supporting.” As Rosenau observed, for most citizens “foreign policy deals with remote and obscure matters,” that seem “too distant from the daily needs and wants” at home. Hence, to be successful in foreign affairs, decision-makers must pursue a foreign policy between these extremes. That is why the personality of the framers of foreign policy is an important variable. “Public opinion and foreign policy must meet at a point compatible with the requirements of domestic and of foreign policies,” Morgenthau suggested. In addition, decision-makers must encourage a better-informed political debate at home. As Morgenthau observed, “[t]he great presidents of the United States have been the leaders and educators of the American people.”

Another important variable in the formulation of national interest is the role of the opposition. “An institutionalised opposition is unthinkable in states insufficiently integrated… or when the political culture is very low.” In pluralist democratic societies consensus on foreign policy has been elevated to a principle of national unity. Yet, opposition generally fails in performing its theoretical role of “providing an instrumentality for constant rethinking, for innovation, for considering alternatives and for weighing options.” That is for a couple of reasons. First, the opposition lacks independent sources of information as compared to the government; and second, the opposition in order to secure the support of the majority of electorate is tempted to throw overboard the more controversial formulations of national interest. As Frankel observed, “[a]ll it can achieve is to prod the government to be somewhat more articulate in its definitions and to amend them marginally rather than fundamentally.”

And in addition to all other governmental organs and subsidiary services as military forces, economic agencies, intelligence services, and propaganda services, there are others who play a role. Media, which is often called the "fourth branch of
government,” pressure groups, non-governmental organisations, the academic world, and the world of research in the universities all have an influence and participate in the process, both formally and informally. The degree of their interaction and participation it varies though from country to country and depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated.81

Ends and Means of Foreign Policy

Arnold Wolfers, one of the key scholars of Realism, analysed and classified into three representative categories the various ends toward which state action may be directed: that are, “goals of national self-extension,” “goals of national self-preservation,” and “goals of national self-abnegation.” The term “self-extension” means all policy objectives toward a demand for “values not already enjoyed,” thus, a demand for a “change of the status quo.” Their aim may be “more power as an end in itself” or territorial expansion, but also a quest for the return of lost territory or emancipation from foreign control.82

The term “self-preservation” means policy objectives toward the maintenance and protection of the “existing distribution of values” called the status quo. The term “self” may include only “national independence and territorial integrity of the homeland;” however, it may also include “a whole catalogue of ‘vital interests’ from safety belts, and influence zones to investments and nationals abroad.” To preserve these possessions, status quo powers point beyond mere defensive goals; they demand reducing external threats to the point of giving them “a reasonable sense of security.” In quest for “absolute security,” a transformation from self-preservation into self-extension may occur. Yet, Kenneth Waltz, the representative of Neorealism, imagined a world in which states are willing to live with only a modest amount of security as versus to “absolute security.” Therefore, sensible statesmen seek only an
“appropriate” amount of power, given their security needs. The term “self-abnegation” includes “idealistic” goals of those that transcend or sacrifice the national interest (national security and self-preservation) for higher values on ends such as “international solidarity, lawfulness, rectitude or peace.” For instance, “the United States was powerful enough in 1918 to permit Woodrow Wilson to indulge in self-abnegation goals without much harm to American interests....” Former-communist countries also were ready to sacrifice all but the appearance of national sovereignty and independence for the sake of the transnational cause of world communism. Whether a nation will profit or suffer from pursuing self-abnegation goals depends on the circumstances of the case.

Wolfers supposed that a government relied on the accumulation or use of power as the chief means of reaching its goals, therefore that government would rationally seek to preserve or acquire “adequate” power to assure the success of its policy. In other words, the estimation of “adequate power” as a subjective matter concerns the relationship between policy goals and the quest for power. In view of this consideration, “self-extension almost invariably calls for additional power.” Therefore, countries that fall into this category tend to be initiators of power competition and resort to violence. However, as Waltz declares “states can seldom afford to make maximum power their goal. International politics is too serious a business for that.” That is to say that after a state has balanced against a dangerous opponent there is no further need for power accumulation.

In countries that seek self-preservation, “if policy is rationally decided, the quest for power … increases and decreases in proportion to … external threats.” Hence, their attitudes toward power vary from indifference to power at one extreme to enhancement of power at the other. If all actors in a group are concerned with
nothing but self-preservation and there are no danger of potentially strong countries outside the group, policy-makers would be inclined toward keeping the costs of power at a minimum. On the other hand, threats to the established order would force those who seek self-preservation to muster power of resistance in order to assure the national existence and welfare. “In this sense, one can say that their quest for power is the result of external ‘compulsion.’”

Turning to the goals of self-abnegation, accumulation or use of national power is likely to defeat rather than to promote such ends. Countries that fall in this category tend to reduce their own national power. However, statesmen and peoples with strong beliefs in universal causes, not always have minimised reliance on national power. On the contrary, on a “crusade” for some universal cause they are found to reveal the most ambitious goals of self-extension. In this case, national power is looked upon as instrument with which to bring “salvation to mankind.”

This “theory of ends” suggests that power is not an end in itself. In addition, the degree to which power is available or attainable affects the choice of ends. Like Morgenthau, Wolfers concluded, “[p]rudent policy-makers will keep their ends and aspirations safely within the power which their country possesses or is ready and willing to muster.”

Propositions About the National Interest

Morgenthau and his followers made use of national interest analysis in many different contexts; among others, those are war and the use of force, alliances and diplomatic negotiations.

War and Use of Force: “War and peace form a continuum of means by which nations pursue their interests. Whether a nation protects those interests by peaceful or violent means, however, is not only its own choice but is also a function of certain
objective conditions over which it has no control.” The shock of September 11, 2001, Mearsheimer observed, showed the inevitability of conflict and war in an anarchic system. Also, the balance-of-power process is not particularly conducive to peace, he argues. Therefore war is likely when a power-maximising state collides with the balancing process. Still, war can sometimes be avoided through diplomacy and merely by the passage of time.

Balancing and Passing the Buck: According to Mearsheimer, realist states adopting a defensive role have a choice between two strategies: “balancing and buck-passing.” Balancing means acting to preserve an existing distribution of power. Buck-passing is to hold back and take no action, with the intent of shifting the burden of resistance onto an ally or some other state. Mearsheimer argues that in a balance-of-power system, buck-passing is preferred for three reasons: first, it is cheap; second, the aggressor and the buck-catcher may get involved in war that leaves the buck-passer stronger; third, a state may face several adversaries by employing buck-passing sequentially. In an unbalanced system in which protagonists are neighbours on land, balancing will be favoured because otherwise the aggressor might easily overrun the defender. Minor powers may have no other choice, but find support in “bandwagoning.” Bandwagoning, according to Mearsheimer, entails shifting the distribution of power in the stronger ally’s favour, that is to say, the ally will maximise its relative power. For great powers, therefore, bandwagoning is a rare occurrence whereas, as Waltz wrote, “balancing, not bandwagoning, is the behaviour induced by the system.” But today, Richard Haass suggests, “[w]e can move and in fact are moving from a defensive balance of power to a pooling of power to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the new century.” In Condoleezza Rice's
words, that is to say "[t]he burden of maintaining a balance of powers that favors freedom should be shouldered by all nations that favor freedom."96

Alliances and Coalitions: Morgenthau explained that the purpose of an alliance is to explicate an existing community of interests among two or more nations and to transform them into legal obligations. If there is no such community of either common or complementary interests the alliance will fail; “naked power” does not provide a firm foundation for any alliance. An alliance is a function of a variety of interests that are, primary, permanent, variable, and so on. Every statesman must make an estimation of the national interests of his own nation when he considers whether or not to engage in alliance ties. The advantage of engaging in alliances lies in “the translation of inchoate, common, or complementary interests into common policy and in bringing the nation’s power directly to bear on questions of national interest.”97

The nature of alliances changes in a nuclear age; they tend to lose their efficacy as instruments for the pursuit of the national interest. With the advent of nuclear weapons, all nations are no longer able to guarantee the security of national territory and safeguarding of the lives and values of the citizens. Nuclear war means not only possible defeat in the traditional sense but also certain destruction of domestic society and of political regimes and their civilisations as well. Hence, all nations must redefine their national interests in terms of the interests of others for the addition of the overriding interest to avoid nuclear war. Nuclear weapons do not thus modify the range of national interests pursued by nations, but they modify the means for pursuing national interests. For the most part, those means must be peaceful and therefore diplomatic in character.98

Alliances remain viable only so long as the reason for their founding endures. In
contrast, the war on terrorism and dealings with regional political conflicts and humanitarian crises, are examples of “coalitions of the willing.” While there are similarities between alliances and coalitions, politically and structurally they are markedly different. “Coalitions are transitory, emerging in response to specific threats and dissolving once goals have been met. Politically fragile in nature, they develop out of necessity, sometimes uniting nations without a history of harmonious relations.” The need for coalition partners is shaping strategies of modern wars.  

Diplomatic Negotiations and Peaceful Settlement: Diplomacy became a general rule in the 18th century, when balance-of-power system required constant vigilance and mutual interaction. Morgenthau defined diplomacy as the technique for accommodating conflicts of interests. By defining differences and emphasising common and complementary interests, diplomacy attempts to make “the best of a bad situation” by attempting to reconcile national interests of one side with those of the other side. At the same time diplomacy attempts to manipulate conditions so as to minimise the danger stemming from conflicting interests.

“Negotiations are an attempt to reconcile divergent interests through a process of give-and-take in which either or both sides concede minor points while leaving the substance of their interests…” That is, “[a] negotiated settlement involves nothing but the recognition of the limits of the mutual interests and power.” As a general rule, only agreements that express the common or complementary interests of contracting parties can be long lasting. Therefore the supreme task of diplomacy is to “assess correctly the chances for peaceful settlement by ascertaining the vital interests of the opposing nations and their relations to each other.”

There exist three possible outcomes of diplomatic negotiations according to the type and degree of compatibility of interests between contracting parties. They are
either:

primary and incompatible (i.e. conflicting) interests, in which case negotiations are impossible; primary and compatible (i.e. either common or complementary) interests, in which case negotiations redefine seemingly incompatible interests; secondary (compatible or incompatible) interests, in which case a compromise is arrived at through trading of interest for interest.104

Compromises may or may not be mutually advantageous. A misleading negotiated settlement occurs when a nation pursuing a policy of appeasement “misjudges the interests and power involved.” The result of such appeasement is that the nation “surrenders one of its vital interests without obtaining anything worth while in return.”105

National Interest and International Organisation: An international organisation such as the United Nation, as Morgenthau saw it, and as one can see it today, becomes an arena both for the pursuit of national interests and the rationalisation thereof. That is, national interests channelled through the United Nations, “must be presented in such a way as to gain the approval of other nations having different national interests and policies.” However, the United Nations sometimes has the effect of “blunting of the sharp edges of a national policy” and “reformulation” and “adaptation” of policies made in consonance with the national interest. This subtle effect of the United Nations on interests of states, does not however, preclude continued pursuit of the national interest outside this international organisation. The United Nations also “provides opportunities for the development of new techniques of diplomacy which … can contribute much to the mitigation and the peaceful settlement of international politics.” In a like manner, the existence of certain constraints upon member states of international institutions as World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund or even the European Union do not overbalance the national interests of member states.106
III. Focusing Albanian Foreign Policy around the National Interest

Keep your eyes fixed firmly on your country’s interest and its aspiration to join the great European family of nations.

- Romano Prodi

*Speech in the Croatian Parliament, July 2003*

Creation of the Albanian State

The Albanian state is a creation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries “great powers” diplomacy prompted by the increasing efforts of the Albanian patriotic intellectuals to establish a national state, and the disintegration of the Turkish Empire that could disturb the balance-of-power in Central Europe and Mediterranean. As a matter of fact, Albania was the last Balkan nation to achieve independence from the Turkish Empire at the close of 1912. Located at the very centre of what became known as the “Eastern Question,” the political and historical evolution of the Albanian-inhabited regions of the Balkan Peninsula was shaped or affected by the five hundred years of Turkish domination, external threats to their lands, and great power rivalry and interference.107

“Probably few states have been born into the world family so poorly endowed for responsible statehood,” the historian Edwin Jacques wrote.108 Indeed, despite being the oldest inhabitants in the Balkan Peninsula claiming descendancy from the prehistoric Pelasgians, and from their descendants the more recent Illyrians, for over two thousands years the Albanian people have been under one type of foreign domination or another. To mention a few, history accounts the colonisation of the Illyrian coast from the Greek merchants; the conquest of Illyria by the Romans; the numerous invasions from the Huns, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths; the dispersal of the Slavs in the Southern Balkans; and the more recent arrival of the Ottomans. Following the split of the Roman Empire, one part of Illyria was attached to Rome, another part to Constantinople, and the heartland between the two. As a result, all
these invaders, conquerors, rivalling philosophies, religions, unfriendly neighbours and the impact of the pronounced landscape contributed to the cultural, religious and regional fragmentation of Albania which, in turn, encouraged disunity and socio-economic backwardness.\textsuperscript{109}

The defeat of the “anti-Ottoman coalition of Hungarians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Poles, Serbs and Albanians headed by the Serbian prince Lazar,” in the battle of Kosovo of 1389, opened the way for deeper penetration of Albanian territory under the Turks. Then, the Republic of Venice seemed to be Albania’s hope of withstanding the invading Turks. But “Venice, uncertain of its ability to grapple militarily with the Turkish colossus, chose instead to sign accords, agreeing to pay annual tribute in exchange for the safekeeping of its trading centres.”\textsuperscript{110} In despair, some Albanian princes submitted to the Turks, but other princes were determined to continue their one-sided battle. True, when Venice, Naples, Hungary, Greece and Constantinople “were gone” and the Bulgarians and Slavs had “largely faded into history,” Albania quite alone headed European resistance to the terrible Turk for a quarter century. It was the last to be subjugated by the Turkish Empire, yet sixty years of incessant warfare against the Turks left Albania with immeasurable losses of human and material resources. The four centuries to come would condemn Albanians to “the deepest political, economic, social and cultural deprivation.”\textsuperscript{111}

All the Balkan nationalities except the Albanians enjoyed a distinct religious homogeneity. In contrast, given the social fragmentation and the unique religious disunity of Albanian feudal communities and the relaxed attitude of the Albanians toward religion in general, the Turkish administration deliberately and systematically split the Albanians on the principle “divide and rule.” This policy led to the conversion of about two thirds of the population to “a formal profession of Islam” and
impeded the development of either the local Albanian leadership or the institutions necessary for self-government. Furthermore, the Turkish Government, hoping to denationalise Albania, kept it intellectually sterile and isolated from Europe and the West. In this way, the Turkish rule delayed the rise of an Albanian national consciousness and a subsequent national movement. Indeed, when the Albanian national question was first manifested at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bismarck had declared impatiently, “[t]here is no Albanian nationality!” "Strictly speaking," as Jacques wrote, “1878 marked the dawn of Albania’s national renaissance.”

The European powers convinced of the strategic importance of Turkey in blocking Russian expansion southward, by the treaty of Paris 1856, recognised Turkey as a European power. In the 1870s the Slavic populations of the Balkans erupted in uncoordinated revolutions for independence. Turkey speedily crushed them but Russia moved to intervene. Austria-Hungary regarded the survival of the Turkish Empire as a vital interest and decided to oppose the formation of a Great Slavic State. Hence, Austria-Hungary encouraged development of some form of Albanian national consciousness as a counterpoise to Slavism. Also, Italy established Italian-language schools in Albania in order to counter Austrian influence. By now a series of local uprisings opposing the Turkish government occurred in Albania, soon to become national and demand full independence rather than autonomy.

In April 1877 Russia, with Serbia and Montenegro, declared war on Turkey. Following the defeat of Turkey, Russia dictated on Turkey the severe terms of the Treaty of San Stefano on 3 March 1878. The treaty aimed to curb Austro-Hungarian influence in the Balkans, to satisfy Panslavists' wishes for the liberation of all Slavs, and to strengthen the Russian position in the area. But the “Turkish territory” awarded to the victorious combatants was predominantly Albanian in character, that is
to say the treaty “ceded substantial territories inhabited by Albanians to Serbia, Montenegro and a greatly enlarged Bulgaria.”115 Alarmed of the prospect of an extension of Russia in the Balkans, the Western Powers summoned the Congress of Berlin for 13 June 1878. At the same time, on 10 June 1878 Albanian patriotic intellectuals of Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox religions formed the Albanian League for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian Nationality (the League of Prizren). The aim of the League was to defend Albanian inhabited-territories of the four vilayets of Shkodra, Kosovo, Monastir, and Yanina recognised as ethnically Albanian by the Turkish government, and to fight for autonomous self-government within the Turkish Empire and the official use of the Albanian language. The Turkish government was naturally opposed the treaty of San Stefano, however it continued to refuse “that Albanians were not Turks but a separate people with a distinct identity of their own.” This policy was “one of the greatest obstacle to the cultural, national and political advancement of the Albanians.”116

The Congress of Berlin concentrated on the reduction of Russian influence and on finding an acceptable solution to the ‘Eastern Question.’ It pushed back the frontiers of Bulgaria. "It declared Serbia, Montenegro and Romania to be independent states. Austria-Hungary took Slavic Bosnia and Herzegovina." The recognition of Albania was objected and it was heard repeatedly, “[t]here is no such thing as a nation without a written language.” Thus, Albania was treated as "merely a geographical, rather than a national entity." On this basis, "the congress approved the assignment of Albanian territories to Serbia, Montenegro and Greece." In dismay, the representatives of the Albanian League returned from Berlin determined to resist the cession of Albanian territory to neighbouring states, to develop the Albanian language and justify Albania’s claim for statehood.117
The motivation force behind Albanian nationalist movement was self-preservation rather than disturbance of the status quo. By 1886, alarmed at this freedom movement that might challenge the Turkish government and create conditions for intervention from foreigners, the Turkish government crushed the Albanian League and dissolved the Albanian society for the defence and development of the Albanian language. However, the ideas and objectives of the Albanian League continued to fuel the drive that culminated later in national independence. When the Young Turks, who seized power in Istanbul in 1908, ignored their commitment to Albanians to institute democratic reforms and to grant autonomy, Albanians embarked on an armed struggle that forced the Turkish government to agree at their demands. Alarmed at the prospect of Albania's autonomy, Albania's Balkan neighbours who had form an alliance agreeing to partition the European Turkish possessions between themselves, in October 1912, declared war on Turkey – the First Balkan War – and Greek, Serbian and Montenegrin armies advanced into Albanian territories. At this seemed the worst of times the Albanians realised that time had come to bid for independence before the Balkan allies took complete control of the Albanian territory. With the diplomatic support of Vienna, which saw the creation of an independent Albania to secure the Habsburg interests in the area, on 28 November 1912 the 83 Albanian delegates gathered at Vlora constituted themselves a national convention. They proclaimed the independence and neutrality of Albania and elected Ismail Qemal Bey of Vlora as its provisional head. "But neutrality would not spare them the horrors of war."\(^{118}\)

In 20 December 1912 the six great powers recognised the principles of Albanian independence and neutrality. As Jacques outlines,

Turkey and the Balkan Alliance states paid no attention to this claim of independence, the latter considering her partition among them a foregone conclusion. The two rivals, Austria and Italy, agreed that neither the other not any third state should dominate Albania and its Adriatic ports, so both sided with
Albania. Russia sided with other Slavic states. Germany opposed this Pan-
Slavism of Russia. France sided with Russia, her natural ally against Germany.
To avert an impending world war, England intervened, convening the so-called
Conference of Ambassadors in London on 17 December 1912. In May 1913 the Conference of Ambassadors decided to recognise an autonomous
Albania under continued Turkish government. This solution was abandoned when it
became obvious that the Turkish Empire would lose Macedonia in the Second Balkan
War and, consequently, the connection with Albania. Then, on 29 July 1913 the
Conference endorsed an independent and neutral Albanian state to be governed by a
European prince. The Albanian neutrality would be jointly guaranteed by the six
great powers through an International Commission of Control for Albania, for a ten-
year period. This international sponsorship was seen as Albania's best assurance of
survival.

However, the Conference of Ambassadors did not recognise the natural
boundaries of Albania, as simple justice should have been. Instead, the basic
objective of agreement on boundaries was to satisfy the great powers and, hence, the
Conference sought by appeasement and expediency to satisfy the exaggerated
territorial claims of Albania's neighbours. In Miranda Vickers' explanation, "The
powers not wanting to anger Russia, who supported the Serb and Greek claims, did
not feel it prudent to adopt the Albanian claim. Instead, they compromised with
delimitation halfway between the Austrian proposal and that of the Balkan allies." 

"Neither economic nor cultural not ethnographic arguments determined the fate of
Albania." On the contrary, the Conference of Ambassadors awarded the Balkan
allies large areas predominantly inhabited by Albanians, through an irrational
settlement in March 1913, the treaty of Bucharest on 11 August 1913 and the Protocol
of Firence on 17 December 1913. A major part of northern and eastern Albania
notably including the whole vilayet of Kosovo populated by one million Albanians
and few Slavs was given to Serbia and Montenegro. Greece received much of southern Albania, including the region of Chameria populated mostly by Albanian Muslims and including even Yanina, the traditional capital of southern Albania. Thus the Albanian State was reduced to the central regions together with the town of Shkoder and its surrounding territory. Unfortunately, about one-half of Albanian lands and one-half of its population were left outside the borders of the new Albanian state. On the other hand, a community of some 35,000 ethnic Greeks was included within Albania's borders. (However, Greece, which counted all Albanians of the Orthodox faith – 20% of the population – as Greeks, claimed that the number of ethnic Greeks was considerably larger.) As a result, the artificial boundaries determined by the Conference of Ambassadors gave the Albanian State an area of 28,000 square kilometres of territory. They continue unchanged to this day.122

However, these were the Albania's frontiers fixed in theory but not in practice. The outbreak of the World War I gave the neighbouring countries an opportunity to seize what land they could from Albania. Although the great powers had appointed a Prussian Prince, Wilhelm zu Wied, as ruler of Albania who arrived in Albania in March 1914, six months later he departed from Albania being so unfamiliar with it and complications arising from the outbreak of the World War I. The war plunged the country into a new crisis, as the armies of Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia invaded and occupied it. "Left without any political leadership or authority, the country was in chaos, and its very fate hung in the balance."123

Thus great powers failed to take necessary measures to protect the Albanian State, and looked on passively as Serb, Montenegrin and Greek troops infringed Albania's frontiers. Even, on 26 April 1915, in the secret Pact of London, Britain, France, and
Italy recognised a plan to partition Albania among Italy, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, leaving a small autonomous state in the central regions. The new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which was proclaimed at the Declaration of Corfu in July 1917 "regarded Albania as an unnecessary entity that deprived her of territory, and also felt threatened by Italy, which it was assumed was creating a buffer state in Albania." ("Forged by Western powers to serve as a bulwark against Germany and Austria, Yugoslavia was a Serb-dominated, multinational empire that abrogated the national aspirations of its subject peoples - Slovenes, Croats, Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims, Albanians and Montenegrins.") Another secret treaty, the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement between Italy and Greece in 1919, would almost complete the dismemberment. Even at the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) debate continued on whether to recognise a tiny autonomous Albanian state or to partition it among her Balkan neighbours. Albanians now had to fight for their survival as a nation.\(^{124}\)

Several articulate spokesmen and neutral writers came to defence of Albania at Versailles. Yet, the extinction of Albania was averted largely through the efforts of the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson who promoted the principle of self-determination and vetoed the secret treaty of London in particular and "secret diplomacy" in general. "Bishop Fan Noli, who was in the very center of the storm raging at Versailles, assured his countrymen that "President Wilson did more than any other man for the independence of Albania.\(^{125}\) "The peace conference recognised Albania as a legitimate self-governing nation within the boundaries stipulated in 1913, and it ordered neighbor nations to withdraw to those boundaries.\(^{126}\) A national congress, held in Lushnje on 21 January 1920, laid the foundations of a new government and thus reasserted Albanian independence. In December 1920 Albania, with the help of
the U.S. and Britain, gained admission to the League of Nations, thereby winning for
the first time international recognition as a sovereign nation and state.\textsuperscript{127}

With the collapse of the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires after World War
I, it was agreed that Italy was to be endowed with the "protection" of Albania within
the League of Nations. This was in recognition from the powers that "any threat to
the Adriatic coastline constituted a threat to the security of Italy."\textsuperscript{128} While looking to
Italy for protection against predators, trade and mutual defence treaties with Italy
became increasingly close and binding and invited Italy's gradual penetration into the
economic and political life of Albania. This excessive dependence upon Italian aid
gradually compromised Albania's sovereignty and led to its invasion by Italy on 7
April 1939. After Germany defeated Greece and Yugoslavia in 1941, the regions of
Kosovo and Chameria were joined to Albania, thus creating a united Albanian state.
The new state lasted until November 1944 when German troops withdrew from
Albania. With Yugoslav assistance as instrumental in creating the Albanian
Communist Party in November 1941 and the assistance in war materiel from the
Anglo-American command in Italy, the communist-led National Liberation Front
gained control of the country on 29 November 1944. Albania was thus liberated from
the Axis invaders without the aid of direct Soviet assistance. Now, however, it fell
under the dictatorship of the Albanian Communist Party led by Enver Hoxha: "the
Stalinist dictator who turned Albania into a barbaric satrapy."\textsuperscript{129}

To summarise, through centuries of foreign invasion, occupation, oppression and
attempted assimilation a meaningful pattern runs throughout: the single-minded
passion of Albanians for their land, language and liberty. Being in imminent danger
of annexation from its more powerful neighbours – Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and
Italy – the national interest of Albanian people has been national self-preservation,
that is to say, an unrelenting struggle for their own land, their own language and their own government. In this struggle ideology has not been a driving force in determining Albania's relations with the outside world. On the contrary, religious divisiveness and political disunity were among the most influential factors that handicapped the Albanian people in their effort to survive the long Turkish occupation and invited the intervention from its neighbours who claiming to be fighting the Turks refused to recognise the Albanian state. However, it should be noted that it was the "incomparable Skanderbeg" who almost alone shielded Rome and Vienna from invading Turkish armies for a quarter of century.\footnote{130}

The expansionist goals of its neighbours, at times, placed the Albanians in difficult diplomatic situations. To join the Turkish defence of Albanian areas would mean merely "siding with the devil you know," and signal to the great powers they were worthy of the loss of land through warfare. To join in on the offences and try to oppress the Turkish forces out of the vilayets would leave the Albanians open to total absorption by their temporary "allies" once the battle was won. The Albanians chose to declare neutrality, but as the adage goes: "In the Balkan there exists no diplomacy other than that of the rifle," hence, neutrality would not spare them of horrors of war and the loss of their own land.\footnote{131} Likewise, to enter unequal alliances for economic and security benefits – for instance, the alliance with Italy after World War I proved – would mean pursuing a policy of appeasement that would bring Albania under heavy constraints and inevitable surrender of its very existence. It is this concern with the existence of Albania as a state that despite ideological connotations has dominated the long-term post-war Albanian foreign policy.

The European great power diplomacy was decisive in the creation of the Albanian State. However, the loss of Albanian-inhabited lands and Albanian population was
the high prize for its recognition from the great powers and their responsibility in protecting the new state from expansionist neighbours. But interests of great powers are broader and the values of great powers matter: "they have the ability to influence the lives of millions and change history." As Vickers wrote, "[n]o equivalent tradition existed in relation to Albania comparable to the Philhellenism of the political élites of Europe that provided constant support for Greek nationalism, or the pan-Slavist movement in Russia that did the same for Serbian aspirations." Indeed, the European great powers would regard the dominance of the Greek-Serbian alliance as the key for peace in the Balkan and the creation of Yugoslavia as a bulwark to the future expansion of Russian bolshevism. This is illustrative of how great powers have traditionally settled in direct negotiations their disputes over the regions where their interests, power and responsibility are paramount. Arguing that it would have been hard to see any other way to carry their business, Morgenthau asked the emphatic question:

Or is anybody bold enough to suggest that it would have been easier for England and Russia to settle their differences in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, enabling Disraeli to bring home "peace with honor," if aside from the great powers the Bosnians, Herzegovinians, the inhabitants of Novi Bazar, the Montenegrins, Serbians, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Greeks, Albanians, Macedonians, Cypriots, Tunisians, Armenians, had participated in the deliberations and decisions?"133

Albanian Foreign Policy (1944-1991)

Albania has been shielded by a curtain more impenetrable than those which hid the Soviet Bloc and China from the world's view.

- Edwin E. Jacques
The Albanians, 1995

The emergence of the new power relations on the post-war international realm created a series of problems for the integration of Albania in the international system. Already, the uncertain intentions of the members of the Allies during the World War II had created a rift within Albanian resistance. As Giovanni Armillotta wrote,
On one hand, the presumed British intentions to accommodate the expansionist and chauvinist elements of Greek resistance that could be used as a bulwark to a future expansion of Communism were viewed with suspicion by Hoxha and Communists. On the other hand, the Soviet attempts to reward Tito and Yugoslavia - aimed towards the creation of a Soviet dominated sphere of influence in Balkans leaving Albania to Yugoslavia, ... – were viewed with similar suspicion by Albanian nationalists.

The faction that prevailed was clearly pro-Soviet and pro-Yugoslav. But the very complex situation of the time forced Albanian communists to fight to secure the diplomatic and the international recognition of Albania and to preserve its integrity, although these goals could run against their Marxist and internationalist ideological beliefs. As a result, the preoccupation with the preservation of the integrity of Albania became the fundamental characteristic of Albanian foreign policy.

This future foreign policy was charged with ideological overtones and it begun to crystallise with the annulment of all international treaties to which previous Albanian governments had adhered to in the past. At this time Albanian foreign policy would be influenced by the Yugoslav model aimed towards a further isolation of Albania, apparently in order to annex it more easily. However, Hoxha feared the threat of "external enemies" and even used such a threat to justify his repressive internal policy, as well as he used the interpretation of the Marxist dogma to protect himself and stay in power. Thus, Albania was the only state of a "small to a middle size" that was not directly used by communism. Albania shifted from a close alliance with Yugoslavia (1944-1948) to another with Soviet Union (1948-1961) and later with China. In late 1970's it embarked on a policy of rigid-self reliance. This shift from a period of intense "proletarian" internationalism to an almost "xenophobic" policy after later 1970's was another fundamental aspect of Albanian foreign policy.

In 1955 after ten years of efforts, Albania was admitted to the United Nations. In reality, the consolidation of the new Albanian State during 1944-1955 happened while
the country was in the orbit of the Soviet Union. Allied to Yugoslavia (1944-1948) and later to Soviet Union (1948-1961), Albania in 1949 became a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) and in 1955 became a member of Warsaw Pact. In 1948, Tito's break with Stalin allowed Albania to condemn Yugoslav plans aimed at the merger of the two countries. But after the rapprochement between Titoist Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, Albania's need to strengthen and use its geopolitical position became acute. In this situation, Albania moved out of the Soviet orbit and allied itself with China, an alliance that lasted until 1978. It was an unequal alliance, but they shared a common bond of alienation from the Soviet Union and maintained very close domestic and foreign ties. Albanian policy makers used the alliance to solve security, military and economical problems in their advantage. In return, the Albanian diplomacy fought successfully the eight-year battle in New York for the admission of People's Republic of China in UN. Yet, Albania would not change its political stance and continued to denounce the superpowers even after PR of China had dropped that policy line in 1972.136

Albania safeguarded its independence so zealously that it did not even adhere to conventions and agreements that link it to other states' interests and in particular with organisations used by the superpowers. It saw the dismantling of military alliances as a "fundamental pre-condition for the preservation of the peace and the relaxation of the tensions in all over the world." As a matter of fact, Albania did not belong to any of the military blocks or alliances that directly or indirectly might influence it become hostile to a third party. Albania officially withdrew from the Warsaw Pact after the occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, but de facto since its rupture with Soviet Union in 1961. In 1976 Albania constitutionally forbade the construction of the foreign military bases in the country and there were no facilities provided to
foreign military forces.

After 1961, Albania established diplomatic relations with most countries, except Moscow, London and Washington. However, it did not make "concessions to foreign companies and multinationals, be they joint ventures or financial and economical foreign institutions. Even the Constitution of the 1976 sanctioned that that Albania does not make business "with monopolies and the capitalist states – be they bourgeoisie or revisionist state, and it does not take any kind of debt of financial credits from them."137

Albania buttressed with a distinct interpretation of Marxist dogma its obsession with the independence. It chose to vocally denounce the superpowers arguing that they sought to monopolise and control the international system. At the same time, Albania supported countries that opposed "the aggressive and bellicose politics, racism, neo-colonialism, hegemonism, and everything of that kind."138 In particular, Albania opposed strongly the concept of "special responsibility" that the Soviet Union used to justify its interventions and influence on the third world countries. In this Cold War context Albania played a unique role in the international stage. As Armillotta concludes, "Albania was an important element of stability in the region and a trusted member of international community which acted freely and without constraints imposed by unequal alliances that dominated the Cold War period."139 However, this absolutely isolationist foreign policy did not serve the common good of Albanian people but the primary goal of Albanian Communist to stay in power. As Nicholas Pano wrote, Hoxha "had come to view himself as the last of the true Marxist-Leninist leaders and resolutely opposed any change that would cause Albania to deviate from the course he had charted."140 Albania thus became the "strictest Marxist-Leninist regime on earth - with possible exception of North Korea - linked to
a living medieval past of extreme backwardness.\textsuperscript{141}

Promoting the National Interest

Striking the proper balance requires making just the right empirical guess as to how history will unfold - a daunting task for policy-makers in any country.\footnote{\textsuperscript{141}}

- Michael Glennon

\textit{The UN's Irrelevant Relevance, 2003}

At the end of the Cold War with the transformation of the international relations system, came the unconditional surrender of Albanian Communists, the last to fall. During the last decade Albania has become a member of numerous international organisations and the reintegration of Albania in the structures of the international system has created new problems and has required the formulation of new policies. Meanwhile, the "tortuous advance towards democracy," has tarnished Albania's reputation and has had notable consequences on the prestige and the conduct of the Albanian foreign policy. Yet, at this turning point in the nation's history, Albanian foreign policy can still explore new ways to pursue its national interest; ways that will create conditions that promote freedom, market economy, and peace.

The process of outlining a new foreign policy must begin by recognising that Albania is in a remarkable position. Trends in the Southeastern Europe are moving toward economic openness and democracy and individual liberty. Now, Albania matters much more to the international community than it did before. As the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defence, Joseph Nye, told a press conference in Tirana in 1995, "[t]he Pentagon believed Albania to be a pillar of stability in the Balkans."\textsuperscript{142} The 1999 ‘Balkan war’ has changed the European Union's responsibility for, and is actively engaging in "the restoration of security and stability in Southeastern Europe." There still exist ethnic and national enmities, weak states and reform deficits. Yet the enormity of the moment is obvious and Albania must seize it and foot on the right
In such an environment, Albanian policies must help further these favourable trends by formulating and maintaining a disciplined and consistent foreign policy that separates the primary, permanent, and specific from the secondary, temporary and general. So far, the Albanian foreign policy-makers have failed to formulate or even to specify in general terms a hierarchy of reasonably formulated Albania's national interests and priorities abroad that moved beyond utopian slogans and could serve as a guide for decision makers. Instead, every issue has been taken on its own terms – issue by issue, day by day – not on a rational, systematic basis to determine the importance of its outcome to Albania's national interest. But in the absence of an articulated ‘national interest,’ abstract definitions such as "Albania will … implement a foreign policy that really serves the realisation of the European interests of Albania and the Albanians wherever they are," either produce a fertile ground for a moralistic foreign policy or create a vacuum to be filled by irrational diplomacy and transitory pressures. As Michael Glennon wrote in reference to the American foreign policy, "Sensible American policy-makers will therefore realize that the correct question is not whether a given initiative is unilateral or multilateral, but whether it advances American interests. This judgement should be made pragmatically, not ideologically."145

Albanian foreign policy should refocus Albania on the national interest and the pursuit of key priorities. These tasks are:

To preserve Albania's independence and territorial integrity within its constituted borders, project stability, and fight in defence of its interests against perceived external threats;
To focus Albania's diplomatic efforts for a free and independent Kosovo and a Macedonia and Montenegro where Albanians are not treated as second class citizens but within the guidelines of international law;

To promote economic growth, enhanced security and political openness by committing to free trade, regional development policies and longer processes of integration for membership of the European Union and NATO;

To commit strongly to eradicating the transnational crime of trafficking, reducing corruption and enhancing transparencies which are believed to be central to national and regional security and prosperity.

To renew healthy relationships with neighbours, maintain strong relations with the European Union, and cherish strong and intimate relationship with the United States thanks to its values, its interests, and its special contribution to the Albanian people.

The Reality of the National Purpose

Anon from the castle wall the crescent banner falls,  
And the crowd beholds instead, like a portent in the sky,  
Iskander's banner fly, the Black Eagle with double head…  
And the loud exultant cry that echoes wide and far is:  
"Long Live Skenderbeg!"

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  

We have a dream and a hope that this People has reached a deep maturity from every viewpoint so that we may see true religious tolerance together with freedom of conscience.

- Reverend Arthur Liolin  
*Liria*, December 1989

We are saying farewell to communism once and for all. It will never return. The long night of communism has ended. Albania celebrates the greatest day in its history!

- Sali Berisha  
*Albanian Telegraphic Agency*, 22 March 1992
The present crisis of Albanian foreign policy mirrors the crisis of Albanian politics, which is essentially a crisis of the national purpose. The nation is living the period between the world of the past, which largely precluded the Albanian people of realisation of its human potentialities and the beginning of a new era that belongs to individual liberty, rule of law and prosperity. And "transitions, which are by definition, periods of pronounced indeterminacy and uncertainty, are the grounds par excellence where the freedom of human action can be greatly expanded." It is exactly because the political, economic and cultural identity of the Albanian people is being redefined, that Albania must inquire into its purpose. A clearly defined national purpose will make the nation's mind aware of the dangers that threaten it, of the restraints that limit its choice, and of the opportunities that await its action. For this reason, the national purpose must be "the purpose which the nation can understand, with which it can identify itself, and upon which it can therefore act with conscious determination." But to this date the novel task of redefining the national purpose with good measure of clarity has not been carried out.

As Morgenthau suggested, the reality of the national purpose "resides in the political and social history of the nation" and, hence, it is "not necessary to listen to the ideologies of nationalism," but to "consult the evidence of history as our minds reflect it." Throughout history, the national purpose of Albania has been understood in self-preserving, libertarian terms – for a "free, united and progressive Albania." But, in reality, this conception of national purpose seemingly unaccomplished has been blurred and divorced from political action.

Three main peculiarities stand out of the Albanian experience: first, the internal political disunity and the permanent threat of political domination from without the country; second, the actual disregard of Albanian national integrity from its
neighbours and the European great powers – Albania is unusual in that the number of Albanians left beyond its borders is greater than the three million living in the country; and third, the permanent threat of political domination from within the country – there were, and there arguably continue to be today, permanent rulers and permanent subjects in Albania. And there are exactly these objective truths that present Albania with the task of addressing and reconciling them with the new facts. In this process, as Morgenthau suggests, "a nation must continuously re-examine and reformulate the ideas of the past in the light of the experiences of the present and the anticipated demands of the future, always risking failure."  

Albania's national purpose lies in the organic relationship of two fundamental qualities: freedom at home and non-hindrance from abroad. Such is the example that western democracy maintains for other nations to emulate. Thus, this purpose is twofold:

To establish and maintain freedom from permanent political domination within Albania which is tantamount to the opportunity for all to compete in equality for political power and wealth;

To create the most favourable possible conditions that will give Albania sufficient stability and strength which has as its corollary the opportunity to rule without permanent threat or hindrance from abroad, but also with a minimum of inconvenience to the interests of other nations.

The Problematic Transition

While the end result is highly desirable, the process of democratisation can be highly destabilising -- especially when states introduce "winner-take-all" electoral systems without adequate provision for human rights.

- Kofi Annan

_Peace and Development -- One Struggle, Two Fronts_, October 1999
The picture of Albania is complicated by a "torturous" internal transition – one that places Albania into the category of "electoral regimes" and approximates it with the "most problematic" of the Southeast European democracies. That is, Albania has acquired some characteristics of a formal democracy, but in practice it falls short of the minimum criteria for democratic regimes – suggesting, therefore, an unclear outcome to transition.151 Thus, fundamental questions remain: Is Albania a governable entity? Does it have a viable plan on the road to democracy? Is it determined to complete the transition? Will it fall back into authoritarianism? Or, is it merely making naïve efforts to extract a certificate of good democratic behaviour from credulous international entities but in reality maintaining a low equilibrium democracy prone of paralysis and instability?

It was the dramatic collapse of Ceaușescu's regime in Romania that prompted the early erosion of the Albanian totalitarian system, which then sought to discourage growing mass discontent through "cautious reform." When this failed, the shift to democratisation occurred. But Albania inherited a substantial democratic deficit and was deeply infected by the legacy of communist mendacity. In retrospect, their impact on the functioning of Albania's shaky democracy was huge. A "would-be democratic" Albania needed a solid dose of re-education, de-communisation and democratic institution-building. But in reality, the old communist elite remained virtually intact and obstacle to progress; the leaders of the democratic government continued the habits and mentality of this elite; and democratic fragments were not institutionalised – the balance of political power was in favour of the president that often ruled by decree.153

Although not apparent at the time, the real crisis in the Albanian transition began with the rejection of a constitutional proposal put to popular vote in a referendum in
November 1994. The Albanian people saw the proposal as legitimising authoritarian aspects of the Berisha government while the opposition protested that the proposal would transform Albania from a parliamentary republic into a presidential republic. In addition, the influential Greek minority objected to the provision that "the heads of large religious communities must be native-born Albanians who had resided in the country for twenty years." ("This provision would have called into question the status of the Greek-born Archbishop Anastasios Yanullatos, who had been appointed interim primate of the Autocephalous Albanian Orthodox Church in 1992."154) But until the general elections of the 1996, Albania appeared to be "developing and favouring democracy," although this image did not accord with the realities and independent evidence to the contrary. In retrospect, the Albanian society and the international community did little towards ameliorating the "dark progress away from democracy" of political and economic institutions of the Berisha government and his authoritarian attitudes.155

The crisis revolved around "serious voting irregularities" of the 1996 parliamentary and local elections and the financial crisis triggered by the collapse of the pyramid investment schemes in January 1997. The outbreak of widespread violence that culminated in the "ex-communists'" coup d'état of the spring of 1997 brought the downfall of the Berisha government and the collapse of state institutions. Under conditions creating public access to gun stores on one hand and the slogan "tolerance, understanding, transparency" on the other hand, the socialists returned to power. Then, to prevent "a complete meltdown of society" the UN mandated an international peacekeeping force led by Italy. Finally, a new constitution delineating more clearly the separation of powers and the rights of citizens and non-government entities was narrowly passed in a referendum in November 1998. But Albania
seemed as far away as ever from renouncing the politics of partisanship, thus showing its "inability to break out a situation where the past patterns dominate the present and allow limited scope for a democratic future."\(^{156}\)

In January 2003 the European Union launched the negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Albania. The overall long-term objective is to bring Albania closer to EU standards and principles, and to prepare the country for gradual integration into EU structures. However, "at the current pace of reform implementation, negotiations risk being long and drawn out."\(^{157}\) Some estimate that "if all goes well, Albania will have its EU membership in 20 years."\(^{158}\) But Albania has no viable plan on how to achieve that goal. Its economy remains paralysed, corrupt, insecure and unattractive for foreign investors – the country is an economic basket case. And widespread corruption and organised crime remain serious threats to its stability and progress also. In the political life there are signs of life but they may vanish rapidly.

Frustrated expectations and Albanian fatigue are direct consequences of the "bitter political feuding" of the two main political rivals – the Chairman of the Democratic Party, Mr. Berisha, and the Chairman of the Socialist Party, Mr. Nano. They have wasted twelve valuable years in talking big, while doing little, or worse, destroying much and thinking less. The compromise they have reached at times with one another could forestall the emergence of new and less divisive political leaders in Albania. This a disheartening reality of a people ignobly led. The Albanian leadership is both the author and the protagonist of this reality, and they must read this appeal: the age of big words and destruction must end and what should have been done long ago must be done now. That is why, now Albania's future lies in the hands of the Albanian voters. In the final analysis, an all-out national effort is required in order to make the
structural reforms and build democratic institutions ultimately needed if Albania is to make meaningful progress for any real democratisation.159

National Power and Priority Interests

[N]o agency is able to promote and protect the interests of individual nations and to guard their existence – and that is emphatically true of the great powers – but the individual nations themselves. To ask, then, a nation to embark upon altruistic policies oblivious of the national interest is really to ask something immoral.

- Hans J. Morgenthau

*In Defence of the National Interest*, 1951

In this case, the basic principle of democracy is self-determination. And self-determination can best be expressed through a referendum, but only after the local Kosovo authorities, with the help of the international community, fulfil the United Nations benchmarks.

- Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

*Remarks*, May 2003

The misnomer “Western Balkans” contradicts all European objectives and expectations for Southeastern Europe.

- The Club of Three

*The Club of Three and the Balkans*, June 2000

Many in Albania are, and always have been, unaware and uncomfortable with the notions of power politics and power balances. Historically, but also nowadays, this discomfort has lead Albania to sacrifice its national interest for the sake of such notions as world communism (in the recent past), norms of international behaviour, and the belief that the support of many states is essential to Albania's solutions. In an extreme form, the ‘national interest’ of Albania is replaced by the “European interests” or interests of the “international community.” But while looking only at the international scene for its solutions or political ideology rather than at its internal sources of power and determination as a first-order effect, Albania tends to forget that “other nations are much less likely” to subordinate their “perennial” national interests as Albania does. Both history and today’s reality testify to this pattern.160

Certainly, Albania needs international political and financial support, both for its
continued integrity and for its integration into the Western structures. Accordingly, it makes sense for Albania to commit itself to international institutions, rules, regimes and integrative processes in the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. This approach, however, does not mandate that Albania's interests be sacrificed for the sake of its relations with the West – a view that implies some disharmony since not all of Albania's perceived interests will be congenial to the West. Rather, the question is how Albania can most effectively govern itself and calibrate its foreign policy to protect the national interest in a system with “no centralised authority” and to bridge the gap between tomorrow's possibilities and today's realities. As a matter of common sense and common interest, this is a question the West wants to see Albania succeed.

To assure success in the protection of the national interest Albania must ask those "simple, yet fundamental questions to which all the intricate and minute details of foreign policy are but fragmentary answers:" What are the objectives to pursue "at all costs" because they are vital to the national interest? What are the objectives to promote under certain circumstances because, while they are desirable, they are not vital? What is the "power available and necessary" to attain these objectives? What are the policies Albania must pursue in view of its vital interests and of the "power available and necessary" to safeguard them?

A national purpose redefined to the improvement and enjoyment of the status quo presented Albania's foreign policy with its key priorities. Three primary objectives – two vital objectives to be pursued, and one objective to be promoted – stand out of the framework of these key priorities: the economic, political, and democratic restoration of Albania; the peaceful restoration of the balance of power in Southeastern Europe; the economic, political, and military integration of Albania to the EU and NATO.
Accordingly, the policies and power considerations in the pursuit of these objectives can be viewed in three interrelated contexts: home affairs, external relations, and geo-strategic considerations.

Albania's most urgent near-term vital interest is its survival as a state within its constituted borders and the making of a successful democratic transition. The immediate threat to Albania's survival is largely internal in character. This appears to be a matter of domestic politics and internal organisation, but viewed through the lenses of the national power and national security, this vital interest can have significant implications for the conduct of Albania's foreign policy and its place in the international realm, as "diplomacy without strength is futile," posited Morgenthau. The Albanian State is both greatly weakened and fundamentally corrupt. Its economic and political problems are acute. The word of the government is no longer believed, whether it scares or promises. In its leaders’ weakness – political, intellectual, moral and diplomatic – lies a serious threat to Albania's stability and its prospects for democracy. Altogether, the survival of the current Albanian state cannot be taken for granted.164

Today four tasks are of particular importance to the creation of those political, economic, and security conditions that favour the increase of the internal resources of the Albanian state and minimise the dangers to its vital interests: Albania must transform the current pseudo-democratic state into a functioning democracy; it must transform its "wedded to statism" economy into a market one with flexible and transparent regulations; it must fortify the respect for law in all segments of society and promote social solidarity; it must redefine its foreign policy tightly focused on the national interest. This paradigm of progress, founded on political and economic liberty along with Albania's desire to see it succeed, will create conditions for greater
opportunities abroad. Tomorrow Albania must have strength and diplomacy to transform the country to a more ordinary member of the "European family of nations" – "[t]he strong can lead at home and compromise abroad," wrote Morgenthau.165

In Southeastern Europe the vital interest of Albania is the establishment of a viable distribution of power by means short of war. In other words, the object of Albania's diplomatic efforts is to ward off dangers arising from those post-war (the 1999 ‘Balkan war’) political settlements that do not indicate a major improvement of the prospects for stability and democracy in the region. There persist today so many inflamed points of contact in Southeastern Europe that only "an optimism uninformed by the past and oblivious to the present" could anticipate that a chain of destabilising events might not start at any such point and pass out of the control of all concerned. There should be no doubt that the four million ethnic Albanians, who live outside of, nonetheless contiguous to, the borders of Albania, as well as the economic, political, and security considerations in the region must figure prominently in the calculations of Albanian foreign policy. But by not making aware its own people at home and its friends and enemies abroad about dangers, its interests, and intentions, Albania has risked a confrontation between its process of democratisation and the balance of power concerns.166

This is a time for the lasting political solution to the entire “Albanian National Question” and, thus, for the dispassionate and realistic examination of the national interests of Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia, "the mutual relations of these interests, their conflicts and their coincidence, and the power available to support them." Four factors – one condition to be maintained, three conditions to be created – will bring equilibrium and stability in Southeastern Europe: the status quo and the democratisation of the Albanian state within its constituted borders; the necessary
conditions for holding a referendum on the future status of Kosovo by the people of Kosovo; the necessary conditions in Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece to ensure that ethnic Albanians are equal members of the respective states; and the economic, political, and military integration of Southeastern Europe into the EU.  

Conversely, a distribution of power in Southeastern Europe that does not create the conditions in which the Albanians can choose for themselves "the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty," conjures up three dangers: the destabilisation of Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia; the failure of the processes of democratisation and integration of Southeastern Europe into the EU; the spectre of war. Here lies the great importance of Kosovo as "the key to the success or failure of all the Balkans, but especially of Albania," – hereupon the preservation of peace and stability largely depends.  

But the temptation is acute for Serbia and its ‘traditional friends’ to seek what seems to be the easy way out: an unnecessary delay in the resolution of Kosovo's final status expecting conditions for negotiations to materialise which they could command, and return Kosovo under Serbia. In the past, a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia abrogated the national aspirations of "Slovenes, Croats, Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims, Albanians and Montenegrins." To this date, following the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia, all these peoples, except Kosovo, have achieved "their long-sought dreams of independence, representing a significant victory for the forces of democracy and national self-determination." And today, all know what will happen at any moment – reflecting the needs and aspirations of its entire population, Kosovo is determined to achieve independence, or else there will be war. Hence, without that supreme effort of intellect and will which is required for diplomatic negotiations, and without the genuine support of the international community for the right of the people of Kosovo to determine their political future,
efforts to prevent another war may well contribute toward futility.

Introduction of the term “Southeastern Europe” rather than “Western Balkans” implies a political paradigm shift, a move from the world of Balkan geopolitics and power rivalry to the world of European image and influence. In response to the need to enlarge the scope of their self-created order so as to enhance ideas and conditions available for their well-being, ideals and defence, integration of Albania and other peoples of Southeastern Europe into the institutions of the EU and NATO serves a combination of purposes: "high moral purpose, domestic agreement and the national interest." Full integration, however, is a long-term complex process that will last "two or three generations, not one or two or three years." Furthermore, the model of 'integration' offered to the countries of Southeastern Europe resembles that of "the subject for study" – unlike the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe that can enter the European Union on an individual basis, the countries of Southeastern Europe "can only enter the EU" as a "functional coalition of the willing," although "not" all members" will have to join the EU at the same time." In other words, this longer process of integration organised along two lines – "functionality" (regional dimension) and "conditionality" (European dimension) – puts forward two conditional instruments: the creation of a regional economic union characterised by close "inter-border" co-operation and "strengthened" political links in the area of "Common Foreign and Security Policy;" and the principle of differentiation – "whereby each country must be assessed in terms of its own capacity to meet the criteria set for membership." 

Here lies one fundamental test of both the limits and the possibilities of interest: a regional block resembling the creation of a greater "Yugoslavia, minus Slovenia plus Albania" as stated by Jeffrey Kuhner. In Zagreb, President of the European
Commission Romano Prodi reminded, "[j]ust for the record: no one – repeat no one – is suggesting recreating the former Yugoslavia."\(^{176}\) But questions still stand: Is this a liberal and politically viable project? Does this project have mass political support in the region? Is the Western diplomacy bringing the Western Balkans under the dominance of the traditional Slavo-Greek alliance? Greece has already a “privileged” role in the Balkans as it is the first Balkan country integrated in the European Union. In Porto Carras, Greece, Mr. Prodi said: "Whatever its ultimate status, Kosovo must be bound securely into the Balkans. And the Balkans must be bound into Europe."\(^{177}\) Does that mean that Brussels is planning to "end the Balkan’s short experiment in national independence and self-rule?" Does this excuse the Albanian leadership to shy away from the pursuit of its rational national interest in the restoration of the regional balance of power and, consequently, suspend diplomacy altogether rather than face political realities with courage and determination? There is an appealing message and profound truth in Mr. Prodi’s remark to the “Western Balkan” countries: "[k]eep your eyes fixed firmly on your country's interest and its aspiration to join the great European family of nations."\(^{178}\)

In this state of affairs, to save the position of Albania before it is too late, it is imperative to ask those simple, fundamental questions yet again: Within this regional block, what are the most favourable economic, political, and security conditions that would advance the national interest of Albania with the minimum of inconvenience or provocation to the interests of other countries? What is the weight of the Albanian factor in the coalition’s power politics? How are regional developments affecting Albania’s position of power? What are the risks, threats, and uncertainties facing its rational national interests? What are those inchoate, common, or complementary interests to explicate from the coalition’s partners, if there is any? What are the costs
and advantages of uniting to the ‘Western Balkan’s coalition? What are the policies Albania must pursue in view of its national interests and its power to bear questions of national interest?

In the final analysis, integration of Albania to the EU and NATO is not only a political necessity, but also a moral duty that follows from the whole aggregate of Albania’s national interest. Who can doubt that democracy, free trade areas, drug and crime control, and greater openness and transparency will enable the Albanian people enjoy more peace and security, a life of freedom and dignity of man, a better life for all? But what is still more important, the political philosophy and moral principles of integration to the EU and NATO are capable of guiding political action only to the extent that they have been given concrete content and have been related to political situations at home. This is to remember that “it is a political necessity for the individual members of the international society to take care of their own national interests, and that there can be no moral duty to neglect them.” This is precisely the message to draw from Mr. Prodi’s interview on 2 April 2004 that said: “Albania should help itself for integration.” In other words, in the absence of an integrated international society, self-preservation is predicated upon the existence of a nation capable of preserving order and realising moral values within the limits of its power. This is a precondition to integration in the European family of nations. Albania must ensure that that day is not unnecessarily delayed.

The Failures of Albanian Foreign Policy

The equation of political moralising with morality and of political realism with immorality is itself untenable. The choice is not between moral principles and the national interest, devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of moral principles divorced from political reality, and another set of moral principles derived from political reality.

- Hans J. Morgenthau

*In Defence of the National Interest, 1951*
The main handicaps of Albanian foreign policy lie in certain deeply ingrained habits of thought and pre-conceptions as to the nature of foreign policy, as well as to the weakness of political leadership to live up to the requirements of Albania’s national interest. Three such intellectual and political errors stand out: political moralising divorced from political reality; habitual misrepresentation of the conditions of Albanian existence; and failure of will to face up political realities. Three outstanding examples serve to illustrate the point: the intellectual, moral, and political failure of the framers of Albanian policy to defeat narrower political interests on the face of the interests of the nation; the failure of Albanian foreign policy to inform the international community on the actual political conditions and interests of Albanians across Southeastern Europe; the over-all diplomatic failure to support Kosovo’s efforts for independence.

The fundamental error that has thwarted Albanian foreign policy in thought and action is Albanian political leadership’s negative relation to the national interest. They assert that the Albanian national interest is not somewhere in particular, but everywhere, being identical with the interests of Europe and “the international community” in Southeastern Europe. “European interests of our citizens,” “creation of a democratic Balkan area,” “regional peace and stability,” “Europeanising and integrating processes in Kosovo,” “greater engagement dealing with international agenda” – these are some of the moral principles and values that one time or other have been invoked as the ultimate objectives and motivations of Albanian foreign policy.181

But whatever the intrinsic nobility of this moralistic approach, underlying the utopian as well as ideological thinking on foreign policy serves neither the purposes of morality nor those of politics. By substituting moral abstractions for the national
interest derived of the actual conditions of Albanian existence, Albanian foreign policy jeopardizes its political objectives. As such, it can only end up emptying the political action from the considerations of the national interest. In an extreme form, it can substitute political immorality for the political reality.

Thus, the Albanian people continue living in a political desert whose political leadership is not relieving its intellectual barrenness and aridity. The Albanian people still look in vain at the very top for understanding, prudence and determination. But the framers of the Albanian policy do not appear to possess the combination of these qualities. The cliché-ridden rhetoric and the lack of moral determination to defend to the last what they know the national interest requires, have ultimately corrupted the political process and Albanian foreign policy altogether. As Morgenthau’s voice cried out in address to the framers of American foreign policy, “they must be prepared to face political defeat at home rather than gamble away the interests and perhaps the very existence of the national for a fleeting triumph in the next election.” But to this date this noble requirement has not been satisfied. This observation of the European Commission in the Stabilization and Association Report 2004 can provide a picture of the matters as they stand in Albania: “[t]he medium-term interest of the country is often sacrificed to shorter-term, narrower political interests.”182 Or should the Albanian people take the perpetuation of demagogy and utopian slogans for understanding and guidance, passivity or inertia of the foreign policy for prudence, domestic power, political manipulation and dissipation of will for moral determination?

What surprises the close observer of the Tirana scene is that the question central to the national interest of Albania, that of the balance of power in Southeastern Europe, is hardly ever faced squarely, and when it is faced, it is dismissed on
moralising grounds. Indeed, far from furthering the purposes of the foreign policy, the framers of Albanian foreign policy have consistently failed to clearly define Albania’s national interests in Southeastern Europe – if they seriously examined at all the questions of Albanians. In consequence, neither have Albania’s policies expressed unequivocally vital interests of Albanians in the region; nor have they commanded support at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{183} And whenever Albanian foreign policy in the region has operated, political thought has been subjected to moralistic generalities that have been divorced from political realities and requirements of the national interest.\textsuperscript{184}

This is to say that the framers of Albanian foreign policy have refused to concern themselves with the concrete issues upon which the national interest of Albanians in Southeastern Europe must be asserted. The Political Program of the Albanian Government for the period 2002-2005 illustrates this attitude of Albanian foreign policy: “[t]he Government of Albania estimates that the interests of the compatriots living in the neighbouring countries are not different from the European interests of our citizens.”\textsuperscript{185} But it is here that Albanian leadership has the foremost task to assess correctly the objective reality and the concrete interests of Albanians in Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Greece. Beneath the thin layer of the existing order many inflamed points are brewing, fed by undetermined future status of Kosovo, oppression and disregard of human rights for Albanians, social dislocation, economic discontent, and organised crime. Here again, the great opportunity for the Albanian foreign policy may well lie in the chance not to wait for international solutions to come, but to be part of them, by discovering the reality as it is, and by pressing on and putting forward reasoned explanations in support of claims for greater rights of Albanians outside of Albania. As E.H. Carr warned, “[t]o make the
harmonisation of interests the goal of political action is not the same thing as to postulate that a natural harmony of interests exists.”186

As a result, the aversion of the Albanian political leadership to seeing problems of Albanians as they are, and the inclination to view them in non-political, moralising terms, have rendered the foreign policy of Albania politically impotent. Not only has the intrusion of moral abstractions into political considerations failed to influence the international community’s debate on Albanians’ problems, interests and their justified claims, but also it has created an ideological vacuum filled with irrational diplomacy, transitional pressures, and exaggerated fears of “pan-Albanianism” as a “big threat to Balkan stability” as marshalled by the neighbouring countries.187

Not only is this assumption unrealistic and inconsistent with the nature and the reality of contemporary regional geopolitics, but also it is divorced from the national interest of Albania. The truth of the matter is that this confusion is nourished – and here lies its greatest danger for the political well-being of Albanians – by the neighbouring countries’ imagined fear of the revolution, which in fact, is a fear of change. What these forces, which raise the spectre of the actually non-existent ‘Albanian revolution’ of creating “Greater Albania” as a “serious threat to Balkan stability”, are afraid of, is Albanians’ endeavour to strengthen their position of power in Southeastern Europe. In embarking upon a crusade to extirpate ‘the evil of Albanianism’ these forces, in actuality have bent on a campaign to outlaw morally and legally all Albanian movements aiming to make the status quo pregnable to reform or change. Precisely, here is what the objective reality and, consequently, the national interest dictates Albanians across Southeastern Europe: to free themselves from oppression and any form of discrimination and interference imposed on them; to avoid isolation and minimise the likelihood and extent of regional hostile coalitions;
to create the political conditions in which they can choose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty, and the moral and social conditions receptive to the ideals of democracy. But such is the failure of an unarticulated and faint-hearted foreign policy – it leads to misperceptions of the Albanian factor; it increases the threat of instability; it suspends the processes of diplomacy while the Western world is engaged in a process of redressing the past and bringing Southeastern Europe closer to the Euro-Atlantic organisations and their philosophy.  

Building a Consensus for the National Interest

Where a knowing, prudent, and determined government would endeavour to raise the people to the level of its own understanding and purpose, an ignorant, improvident, and weak government will follow its own propaganda to that low level where uninformed passion dwells. You will become, in spite of your own better self, the voice not of what is noble, wise, and strong in the nation, but of what is vulgar, blind, and weak.

- Hans J. Morgenthau

*In Defence of the National Interest*, 1951

It is hardly a novelty to say that the road to the triumph of these values is a hard one. Even in America, they say, "[d]emocracy … is a work in progress - not a finished masterpiece." The demands on the Albanian people are thus very great. The problems Albania is dealing with are complex and difficult. They are not problems that can be disposed off once and for all. Therefore, to move ahead toward achieving the promise of the Albanian society, it is “easier” when the balance of power “favours” them – it is thus here that the Albanian foreign policy must emerge successfully.

To be sure, how well Albania will situate itself with respect to other countries in the light of the new balance-of-power-game in Southeastern Europe will depend on great measure on the understanding of its national interests and power. Toward reaching new standards and incentives, an ever-fuller awareness of the national
interest will permit the Albanian people to progress towards a better Albania under the most favourable possible conditions and to respect the power and interests of others.

The three basic conditions for success remain:

First, the progress of democracy at home – the ability to reform the economy and the political system; the vitality of its free institutions, its individual and community life; the ability to encourage the individual’s opportunities and strengthen the foundations of justice and freedom – so shall Albania demonstrate that democracy is a vital, a progressive, and a hopeful way of life.

Secondly, a free and democratic Kosovo as the only condition that will sustain peace in the region, promote “inter-border” cooperation, strengthen the negotiating position of Albanians, and, consequently, prevent the differences with neighbours from being settled by default – the contribution of Albanians to the region and the world would be of greater value.

Finally, Albania’s progress on its path towards the EU and NATO, which will take determination, self-discipline, and, above all, the greatest possible speed in carrying out reforms to reach the EU standards – the outward strength of its democracy can be no greater than its inward strength – so shall Albania be able to determine the influence it can exert abroad in support of freedom and peace.

Albania is blessed with an extraordinary opportunity. It has had no tradition of state-driven expansionism. For nearly a century, its national interest had been defined instead in self-preservation terms – an unrelenting struggle for national freedom, self-
governance, and stability. Today, trends in Southeastern Europe are encouraging a paradigm of progress, founded on political and economic liberty. Albania’s national interest has been defined by a desire to strengthen the Albanian position in the southern Balkans and in a spirit of active participation to foster democracy, prosperity, and peace. Both, the will of the people and the demands of political philosophy and modern economy, accord with this vision of the future. But these advantages offer no guarantee of success. It is up to Albania’s political leadership and policy to lead Albania on the steady course compatible with the national interest, today’s realities and tomorrow’s possibilities.191

The framers of Albanian foreign policy must speak to the Albanian people about national priorities and interests and work with the Parliament to focus foreign policy around the national interest. The problem today is not an absence of support in the Parliament or the Albanian people’s indifference. It is the existence of a vacuum being filled by moralistic disguise, improvidence, parochial interests, and transitory pressures. Still it is worthy of note that underneath this political wilderness, there exists an almost instinctive awareness of the permanent interests of Albania. This is especially true with regard to “the Albanian National Question,” for Albanians tend to see their political agenda as a collective effort to strengthen the Albanian position as a key player in Southeastern Europe.

Foreign policy of Albania will certainly promote integration across national borders; integration to the West would be the long-lasting political and economic solution for Albanians. But to ensure that that day is not unnecessarily delayed, Albania will have to proceed from the firm ground of the national interest, not from illusory rhetoric. As Morgenthau’s voice cried out in address to the American leadership:
And, above all, remember always that it is not only a political necessity but also a moral duty for a nation to follow in its dealings with other nations but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: THE NATIONAL INTEREST.192

Today, the Albanian people must take their destiny into their own hands. By their strength and wisdom they can awaken the strength and the wisdom of the Albanian leaders. The greatness of the Albanian people and the Albanian leaders shall sustain Albania through the trials of the new era.

Appendix I

"Political Program of the Albanian Government for the Period 2002-2005: Foreign Policy and European Integration"

Albania will continue, through its modern foreign policy to contribute substantially to strengthening regional peace and stability through the acceleration of integrating processes. The government, in co-operation with other state institutions, will continue to implement a foreign policy that really serves the realisation of the European interests of Albania and the Albanians wherever they are. Partnership in international relations on the well-established principles of reciprocity, equivalence and asymmetry of good will remain our fundamental orientation in foreign policy. To the Government, Albania’s European integration goes through a parallel process of regional integration. We shall continue with bringing closer the pace of development and integration among the region’s countries. The result of that is the expansion of the area of the prevalence of democratic Euro-Atlantic standards and institutions as well as the chances for conventional borders in face of the need to guarantee the freest possible movement of citizens, goods, capitals, ideas, cultures, etc. The creation of a democratic Balkan area with a free society and a barrier-free market will remain the major orientation of foreign policy in the region. Only the intertwining of national or state interests will converge with the ultimate installation of peace and stability in the Balkans.

The initiation of the process of signing and implementation of Free Trade agreements with some countries of the region is creating the chances for creating an increasingly open space in the face of values produced by democratic standards and the free market economy, therefore the Government is determined in intensifying and expanding these agreements.

A very important aspect of regional co-operation is the indispensability of the uncompromising fight against trafficking and organised crime. The Government of Albania will insist on a further increase of inter-state co-ordination and co-operation in facing these global activities of crime.

Albania’s European integration represents a primary national priority. As such, it requires that relations with the European union be raised to the level of partnership.

Our foreign policy toward the rapport with the EU and the member countries will aim at ensuring the necessary political and economic support that accelerates the transforming reforms and bring us even closer to the community’s standards. The partnership with the EU and the member countries will be further improved also due
to the boost in our programming and realising capacities, which will ensure: a more realistic presentation and absorption of our progressive reality; broader, more qualified, faster and more effective help in the areas most needed and in which mutual interest is guaranteed; a more substantial assessment of the role and policy of Albania in the region, etc.

The Government of Albania estimates that the interests of the compatriots living in the neighbouring countries are not different from the European interests of our citizens. On this basis, we shall encourage every initiative that sees the integrating processes inseparable from the need for strengthening democratic standards and institutions according to the Euro-Atlantic model, in the countries where they live.

We assess that the national interests of Albanians anywhere they are, jointly with their legitimate representatives, converge in the acceleration of standard development and European integration reforms.

The partnership with the US is a constant priority of our foreign policy. Cooperation with American institutions, American representatives in international institutions or organisations, the expansion of space for absorbing American capital in the Albanian market and the close co-operation with the specialised American agencies in development and in the fight against terrorism, organised crime or illegal trafficking will be further deepened.

As a conclusion, the foreign policy shall be better placed at the service of realising the national interests for development and integration.

The diplomatic service will improve the rules that guarantee transparent recruitment and a career according to the measurable criteria of merit.

Endnotes

1 Despite the use of the word ‘nation’ throughout this paper, I underscore the centrality of the State because the assumption is that the state is necessary to the preservation of the nation. In Joseph Frankel’s words, “The clarity of the concept of ‘national interest’ is closely connected with that of political boundaries and hence the generally perceived crisis of the national state inevitably leads to a crisis of national interest.” Joseph Frankel, National Interest, (Praeger Publishers, 1970), 21; Joseph Frankel, International Politics: Conflict and Harmony, (London, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969), 39-42.


6 Machiavelli, HFP, 409-416, 421, 432, 442, 452 -3; Clinton, TFNI, 5-7.

7 Clinton, TFNI, 7-9; Beard, INI, 22-3

8 Morgenthau, PAP, 30-31.


Beard, INI, 24-5; Clinton, TFNI, 14.


Ibid.

Morgenthau, DNI, 13-22.


Morgenthau, DNI, 16; Rosenau, SSFP, 284.


Rosenau, SSFP, 286.


Clinton, TFNI, 21-2; Frankel, NI, 42-3; Morgenthau, DNI, 6.


Frankel, NI, 15-6; Clinton, TFNI, 25-6.


Rosenau, SSFP, 286, 289-292.


Raymond Aron, Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations, trans. Richard Howard Fox and Annette Baker Fox (Abridged version; Garden City, N.Y., 1973), 83; Keneth N. Waltz, Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis (New York, 19159), 80-158.

A policy of ‘improving’ the state’s power is not to be confused with territorial expansion.

Morgenthau, DP, 66; Morgenthau, PAN, 5, 8, 553.


Michael G. Roskin, National Interest: From Abstraction to Strategy (U.S. Army, Strategic Studies Institute, 1994), 12; Clinton, TFNI, 35-8.

Roskin, NIAS, 4, 13.

Clinton, TFNI, 41-9; Rosenau, SSFP, 292-3.

Clinton, NIRLP, 41-2.


Clinton, TFNI, 51-2.

Donald Nuechterlein suggests that “the way in which a government deals with the internal environment of the state is usually referred to as the public interest, but the way it deals with the external environment is the national interest.” The public interest forms the highest good in a society. The national interest serves the highest good in any one society and it may be a narrower concept than the public interest. In the international level the national interest is one of a number of contending goods. For most states the national interest sets the broad guidelines that would allow the domestic debate continue without inappropriate outside interference. Donald E. Nuechterlein, National Interests and Presidential Leadership: The Setting of Priorities (Boulder, 1978), 4; Clinton, TFNI, 54-5.


Clinton, NIRLP, 43-4.

Clinton, TFNI, 57-9.


Clinton, TFNI, 64-6.

Nye, PAP, 139

Roskin, NIAS, 13-4.

Cited in Roskin, NIAS, 14.
47 Clinton, TFNI, 71-4.
48 Rosenau, Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 95; Rosenau, SSFP, 293.
50 Rosenau, ADF, 98; Nye, PAP, 137-9; Morgenthau, DNI, 35; Clinton, TFNI, 88-98.
52 Morgenthau, DP, 66 (cited in Thomas W. Robinson, IPFP, 184.)
53 Roskin, NIFAS, 5-6.
55 Morgenthau, DNI, 146; Parris, SOUSTRPIWE.
56 Morgenthau cited in Roskin, NIFAS, 3.
57 Roskin, NIFAS, 8.
58 Morgenthau, DNI, 33-5.
60 Goldstein, RNIIR, 157-8.
61 Ibid, 158.
63 Goldstein, RNIIR, 159.
64 Ibid.
65 Quoted in Goldstein, RNIIR, 159.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid, 161.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Frankel, NI, 97-9.
72 Ibid, 99; Morgenthau, DNI, 114, 119.
74 Frankel, NI, 100; Frankel, MFP, 17.
75 Morgenthau, DNI, 229.
76 Morgenthau, DNI, 230.
77 Rosenau, SSFP, 475; Morgenthau, DNI, 230.
78 Frankel, NI, 103-4.
79 Ibid, 105-7.
80 Ibid, 108.
82 Nicholas J. Spykman, America’s Strategy in World Politics (New York, 1942) 469 (cited in Arnold Wolfers, IPFP; 177.)
84 Wolfers, IPFP, 178.
85 Wolfers used the term “power” in the sense of “power politics” or “struggle for power.”
86 Waltz, OPMW, 40.
87 Wolfers, IPFP, 178.
89 Ibid, 176.
90 Morgenthau, IAFP, 186 (cited in Robinson, IPFP, 186); Morgenthau, RAP, 202 (cited in Robinson, IPFP, 186-7).

The terms “balanced” and “unbalanced” power refer to the distribution of power between great powers in a system.


Robinson, *IPFP*, 189.


Ibid, 149.


Morgenthau, *DNI*, 137.

Ibid, 103-4.


Jacques, *AEHPTP*, 144.

Ibid, 36.


Ibid, 192-3, 229.


The six great powers referred throughout this section are England, France, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Italy and Russia.


Ibid, 73.


Ibid, 367, 368.


Michael, *ABW*.
133 Vickers, Pettifer, *AFABI*; 1; Morgenthau, *DNI*, 146.
136 Ibid.
138 Armillotta, *AUN*.
150 Morgenthau, *PAP*, 3-4.
160 Morgenthau, *DNI*, 36-8; Rice, *PNI*.
161 European Union [hereinafter, EU]; North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [hereinafter, NATO].
162 Glennon, *UNIR*.
163 Morgenthau, *DNI*, 160.
164 Ibid, 199.
165 Ibid, 199; Romano Prodi, *Croatia's Journey Toward EU Membership* (Speech by Romano Prodi in the Croatian Parliament, Zagreb, 10 July 2003).


175 Kuhner, *ABU*?; Abdi Baleta, "Why Diplomacy is So ‘Incapable’ to Learn from History?" *Revival* (July 9, 2003; Translated from Albanian by Rozeta Shembiku).


177 Prodi, *EUBSTH*.

178 Prodi, *CJTEUM*.

179 Morgenthau, *DNI*, 34.


185 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, *FPI*.

186 Carr, *TYC*, 51.


189 Rice, *Remarks* (Republican National Convention, August 1, 2000).
