

## NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA AND ITS COHERENT IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL INTERESTS

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**Abstract:** National security is a segment that is considered from the perspective of an integral part of the theory of regional security complex. The focus of this paper is to determine the relevance of the state national interests, with special reference to giving appropriate proposals in the part of better management of them in the future and its more adequate complementarity during the renewal of strategies. The necessity of rebuilding the national interests is necessary in order to monitor the fight against modern threats. The need to specify long-term national interests is of vital importance for every modern state, so our state needs to build a solid foundation for the analogous functioning of all segments of the state system by specifically defining strategic national interests based on the existing ones. Analogous to what was written, certain theoretical proposals were given that would be useful in terms of the survival of national interests as the core of a state and a guide for further strategic challenges.

**Keywords:** security, nation, interest

### Introduction

The purpose of this article is to create an overview of the national interests on which our country is focused on creating a system effective on fighting with modern threats. It gives a short examination on the complementarity of our national interests and review of how our state has chosen on which basic should be created national interests

The paper presents a brief overview of how the definition of the national interest and its redefinition in accordance with contemporary security conditions is represented. The following section will provide comments and criticisms of what needs to be done in order to find a way to preserve the national interests on which the existence of the modern Macedonian state is based.

In the second part of the article, we give a critical opinion about the current view on national interest, by which we suggest some indicators on which the redefined ones should be the future state focus. In the end we conclude that by creating a strong firm national interest, our state can compete with dealing against modern threats.

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## **Perception of national interest**

National interest as a concept is mainly associated with political, economic, military, cultural, social and other interests in a state. It also arises from the fact that the lack of a precise definition of the concept of national interest, which in itself creates space for correlating the concept with other interests in a state and society. Through an analysis of the literature related to national interest, we realized that a certain group of authors, among whom Morgenthau is the most prominent, places national interest in the so-called interspace between supranational interests and subnational interests, which in itself indicates the segmentation of national interest as a term in state policy. According to Morgenthau, supranational interest is based on religion and the influence of international organizations. Morgenthau viewed religious influence through the prism of the centuries-old historical correlation of the state and the church in achieving their state goals. On the other hand, the influence of international organizations, given on the basis of criticality, is perceived through the formal and informal influence of international organizations on the creation, shaping and conceptualization of national interests, predominantly of smaller states, which, as members of various international organizations, often (and sometimes based on occasional leaders of the same states) accept the guidelines of international organizations for the creation or direction of national interests, while sacrificing their basic principles in the formation of national interests and state goals.

## **Difference between state and national interest**

In this section, it is necessary to determine the basic difference between national and state interest, that is, what distinguishes their basic starting points on the basis of which they are used in everyday life. In the literature, there are several authors who characterize the previously mentioned concepts in different ways. According to certain authors, the nation and the state are coherent through two types of perception, namely: a nation that is equated with the state and a nation that is equated with the entire population. Analogous to the previously stated, when equating the state with a nation, we are talking about state, not national interest, all because we start from the assumption that the nature of the nation is the state. In addition to the previously stated, a significant characteristic of the state interest are decision makers, who as the bearers of the state are the creators of current and future state policies and interests. On the other hand, if the state is perceived as a broader concept, that is, it is perceived as a combination of the three basic elements - population, territory, and sovereign authority, then when collectively perceived, it is a matter of national interest, mostly due to the fact that the state is most often perceived as a form or shape of a community if it has sovereign authority.

## **Who defines national interest**

Some political scientists, such as Hans Morgenthau, believe that national interests are permanent features of the international system. No matter what government is in power, the interests of the nation-state remain fixed components of the policy-making process. They are "unaffected by the circumstances of time and place." Some interpret this to mean that nation-states possess permanent, unchanging core interests. Morgenthau suggested that the

core concept of interest should not be defined “in the sense of being fixed once and for all.” He believed that the generic concept of interest was unchanging in terms of its significance for the international system. However, this did not mean that individual interests could not be adapted or newly created in order to take into account changes in the international system (Stolberg, 2012:15).

Who says what is national interest? In political theory, there is unanimity that the state interest is usually defined by the government. Let’s say, “successful conduct of accession negotiations with the European Union”, which the current government has set as a strategic priority in its program, is a state interest. It is necessary and justified to debate in public what “successful conduct of accession negotiations” is, but, at the end of the process, it is the government that takes all the necessary steps for “successful negotiations”. If, for example, the government manages to secure inter-party agreement to include the Bulgarian minority in the Constitution or at least a two-thirds majority in the Assembly, as required by the constitutional procedure, it can say that it has conducted successful accession negotiations. There is no question that the strategic priorities of the governments of democratic states go through a long political process of harmonizing different interests and that, in the end, they are approved by the representative body. But the specific policy of steps, how to get from here to there, is the government’s business. When it comes to policies that are of exceptional importance for a country, the government will make sure to build a broad cross-party and civil coalition, primarily in the area of foreign policy. Then the state interest, as “national”, becomes a strong tool for supporting that government. Why, first of all, in foreign policy? Because the international system is anarchic; there is no world government, president, police or judiciary, so that states, like billiard balls of different sizes, dangerously bump into each other. Each state defends its national interest, which in such a context is identified with national security – which is peace and the functioning of state institutions. Many who refer to international law and who understand the equality of states very literally, and who perceive international pressure on a state to solve a problem as a personal insult, will probably not agree with this realistic approach. Yes, in principle, states are equal, but in reality, some are more equal than others, Orwell would say, especially in security-threatening situations. Then, solutions are imposed by those who are interested and at the same time have the political, economic or military power to do so. It is a fortunate circumstance that since the beginning of independence, the political leadership of the country consciously opted for a democratic world, where the rule of law is considered a fundamental value, and political solutions are balanced. From the first government to the present, membership in NATO and the EU have been and remain a priority for all governments. Every party that has claimed and claims to come and stay in power invokes the strategic goal that has not yet been achieved, membership in the EU, in order to secure support from the citizens. The problem with the long wait at the doors of this organization is due to the fact that not every government is prepared to take unpopular steps that would cost it the loss of power (Maleska, 2024).

To determine which types of resources to allocate in what amounts to achieve an interest, the national interest maker must understand the categorization and determination of the intensity of interest. This part of the formulation process is necessary to address key policy questions such as: What issues are most important? Why should people care? How much are the population willing to pay to address the identified threats or exploit the recognized opportunities? Prioritization—usually expressed in terms of the intensity

of interest—is crucial because, from the policymaker’s perspective, interests may very well conflict with one another. This conflict could be over the resources that the actor would require to pursue the interests, including the time and attention of key decision-makers. Such resources are likely to be limited in some way for any decision-making body, requiring prioritization before the interest-creation process is complete. The most difficult problem in this part of the process is usually determining the intensity or stake that the actor has in a particular issue. The leadership of the actor creating the interest must relate to its desire to influence issues and events, both external and internal, its willingness to use any or all elements of national power to defend or advance certain interests over others, and potentially its willingness to do so at the expense of other actors. More specific criteria for assessing intensity may include: the intrinsic value or importance of the interest (benefit/cost), the extent to which the interest could be achieved, whether the interest is a prerequisite for pursuing other interests or is dependent on other interests, the time available to achieve the interest, and the level of danger to the interest or the opportunity for its advancement (Stolberg, 2012:18).

### **Approaches to defining the term-nation**

According to Smith Anthony, the theory of the nation is dominated by three basic questions: the first, which is considered ethical or philosophical, concerns the role of nations in relations between people, that is, whether the nation should be considered an absolute value, incomparable with other values, or whether the nation and national identity should be seen as a means to achieve other values and goals. The second question, which is considered anthropological or political, concerns the social definition of the term nation, whether it is fundamentally ethnocultural in character, whether its members are related by blood, whether they have a common history and language, or whether the nation is a social and political community based on a common territory, the right to citizenship and common laws. The third question is considered historical and sociological and concerns the question of whether a nation should be considered as a community that has developed over time, rooted in a long historical relationship and culture, or should it be considered as a recent social construction. Smith defined a nation as: “a named population of people with a common historical territory, common myths and historical memories, a common culture, a common economy, and common legal rights and duties of all members” (Smith, 1998:30).

According to Gellner Ernest, a nation is defined on the basis of two key factors – culture and will. According to him, man creates the nation, nations are artifacts of human beliefs, affections and solidarity (Gellner, 1998:27).

In the works on the origin of the nation, it is generally known that there are two basic understandings of the origin and content of the concept of nation: subjective and objective understanding, civic and ethnic approach, Western and Eastern model, or German and French model. Both types of models have the same goal of creating a democratic nation based on civil society. The French model of nation emerged in the process of radical disintegration of the old regime, focused on the institutional and territorial structure of the state, with a strong emphasis on the political unity of citizens, with a focus on political representation, laws and institutions. According to Smith, this model represents a territorial understanding united by a community of laws and institutions with a single political will, legal equality, a

common culture and civic ideology, sentimentality and ideas, which connect the population with their homeland (Smith, 1998:23-25). If this model is analyzed, it will be perceived that it perceives the nation as a changing political entity, which through dynamic development has shaped cultural and historical memories.

The German model of the nation according to Smith is classified as a “non-Western” model, primarily because of its emphasis on birth into a community and the culture of birth. In this model, the myths, history and linguistic traditions of the community play a major role (Smith, 1998:26-27).

Although the previously mentioned models differ when analyzed in detail, the most indicative distinction can be pointed out as the distinction between nations as political communities and nations as ethnocultural communities. Smith suggests the need to examine the origin of the “modern” nation with an ethnic core based on three reasons. The first reason is that historical nations were formed over a period of time on the basis of pre-modern ethnic foundations. Second, the ethnic model of the nation was socially productive and corresponded to the pre-modern type of community. Third, there was a need for mythology and symbolism of a historical and cultural community as a condition for national survival and unity (Smith, 1998:70-71).

### **Complementarity of current national interest of the Republic of North Macedonia**

If we take into account the events of the last few years that are on a daily political basis, there are serious complications in our country regarding what the price of our national interests is. We are witnessing a period that is the second half of the two-decade disagreement with our southern neighbor, which resulted in the acceptance of certain political moves aimed at the progress of the country. In the past few years, we have witnessed biased obstructions regarding what our national interests should be and what they should be. The primary and fundamental national interest of our country is development and progress in accordance with European standards with the ultimate result of full membership in the European Union. However, the path to this is obviously long and uncharacteristic for maintaining in reality those national values on the basis of which the Macedonian exists as an individual in the world. The decision-making of an individual who will be in the role of a decision-maker for a certain period of time should not be a constant on the basis of which the opinion of the population in the country will be translated. A collectivity within the country is needed when it comes to maintaining national interests and their preservation. The inconsistency of individuals should not be an assessment of the entire population, but should be highlighted and such improper adoption of long-term state goals should be prevented in the future. The question of whether our national interests are complementary to today’s contemporary security threats should be the focus of the state leadership in the decision-making processes. The foundation of our state, as we previously mentioned, is held by centuries-old national interests that need to be a prerequisite for the creation or rebranding of national interests in accordance with contemporary security challenges.

The complementarity of national interests should be perceived in accordance with the threats in the regional complex where our state is located and based on the same, a set of national interests should be created that will be the guiding principle of the state leadership. It is necessary as a state to abstain from changing national interests when changing political

leadership. Witnessing the transition period from a state that was part of a federation to an independent state and the long-standing attempt to create a self-sustaining state that will function approximately to the level of independence is a challenge that we as a society cannot overcome.

### **Propositions for rebranded national interest**

After comprehensively and in detail reviewing the current usage of the term national interest, in this part of the paper we will give appropriate, in our opinion, specific parts, in which more effective engagement of the relevant state segments is needed and improvement of the level of realization thereof.

Taking into account the prevalence of the term national interest today, and on the territory of our country, a comprehensive promotion of the series of national interests on which today's state is based is necessary. We appreciate that by promoting the ideas of what the Macedonian national interest is, how long it has been maintained, through what periods it has gone through and what is the price of its sustainability, we will receive a dose of increased support from the population, which, according to what has been observed in the past period of time, is between the thresholds of accepting everything and rejecting the proposals and leaving the state. In order for the modern Macedonian state to survive, it is necessary that the part of history on which it is based be an incentive for future planning of the paths along which the state will be managed by the political leadership.

The sensitivity of the topic causes abstention from negative criticism from the authors' perspective, who silently observe the creators of the state's policies as they often ineptly deviate from the basic national interests on which the modern Macedonian state is based. It is necessary to take into account the expert opinions put on the table before an adequate audience, whose work will ultimately be used and implemented in the final state decisions of any future political leadership.

The complementarity of the state segments responsible for maintaining national security, and thus fulfilling national interests, should be constantly observed. If any segment, whether based on an individual decision or a decision of political ignorance, shows an intention to violate any national interest, it is necessary to prevent the same actions through an appropriate state body that will be synonymous with the survival of the cruciality of national interests. The fact that the modern multicultural and multinational society was created with the aim of preventing violations of fundamental human rights should be a guideline for creating a policy for the preservation of both fundamental state rights and the right to preserve the national interests of the modern state.

### **Conclusion**

According to what is highlighted in the paper and based on our proposals, we appreciate that the current way of perceiving the national interest should be changed and the interests of the state should be taken into account more comprehensively in its political management by all further political structures.

The complementarity of the state system from the aspect of maintaining national interests, primarily led by the security sector, should be sustainable and compatible in the fight against modern security threats, and on the basis of previously specified national

interests, or on the basis of rebranded and redefined national interests that should represent the basis for proper political management of the state.

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