Glossary of Terms

Aid
Refers to the provision of assistance, predominantly monetary, to global actors with the intention of influencing their decisions and actions in order to achieve a specific objective.

Cultural power
Refers to a ‘desirable’ and transportable culture that states can use to achieve ends that might not be achieved through military and political means.

Cosmopolitanism
Refers to the ideology that humanity is one single community, regardless of state, culture or levels of economic development. All humans are equal and should be treated equally and global actors should act with this motivation.

Crisis diplomacy
Refers to negotiations between actors in the global political arena in response to the crisis; most commonly concerning conflicts and natural disasters, but also economic and health crises.

Diplomatic power
Refers to the power accrued to states through their relationships with others in the form of alliances or alignments. Essentially, it is the ability of a state to influence other global actors by way of discussion and negotiation.

Economic power
A state’s economic power is often determined by figures such as the gross domestic product (GDP), which indicate the wealth of a state and its economic activity. Economic power can also be assessed by the state’s reliance on imports of raw produce. Crucially, economic power refers to a state’s ability to influence the actions of another state through monetary means.

Environment security
Refers to a soft form of security that includes ensuring a state’s environment is protected, i.e. development does not come at the cost of the environment. Achievement of this form of security is closely linked to a state’s economic prosperity and concepts such as sustainability.

Ethics
This seeks to address questions of morality and extends to global politics, as global actors have underlying ethics to their actions, such as realism or cosmopolitanism.
Global governance

Refers to institutions, rules, norms and legal arrangements that seek to facilitate cooperation, and manage relations, between states. Governance is carried out by both governmental organisations such as the United Nations and non-governmental organisations such as the International Criminal Court.

Globalisation

Refers to acceleration and intensification of exchanges of goods, services, labour and capital, which promote global interdependence. These have been facilitated by rapid changes in communication and technology.

Hard power

Refers to power exercised through coercion, or threatened acts of coercion, to influence the actions of other global actors. Most commonly exercised through military forms.

Human security

Refers to a soft form of security for a state that includes the protection of its own citizens as well as seeking to protect and uphold the human rights of others. Achievement of this form of security is closely linked to a state’s international standing.

Idealism

Refers to a school of thought in which foreign policy is influenced above all else by moral principle, as opposed to practical and pragmatic considerations.

International cooperation

Refers to occasions when global actors work together to achieve common ideals and goals.

Justice

Refers to the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, law, fairness and equity that, importantly, also seeks punishment when said ethics are breached. Extends to global politics through international systems of justice, such as the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice, which seek to uphold international law and deter future violations.

Military power

Military power comes from the military capacity that a state has, as well as its ability to use this power to achieve national interest objectives. The capacity will depend on the amount of money spent on the military, the type and caliber of weapons available, the number of servicemen and women in the armed forces, their commitment, morale, training and the relationship between the military and the state.

Multilateralism

Refers to a system of coordinating relations between three or more states, usually in pursuit of objectives in particular areas.
Nation

Refers to groups of people claiming common bonds based on culture, language and history. Some nations have their own state, such as the Japanese, while others want their own state such as the Tibetans and Kurds.

Nation-state

Political or social grouping in which people within territorial boundaries, with recognised sovereignty, have common bonds based on culture, language and history. For example, Japan.

National interests

Used as an all-embracing concept to justify policy preferences and actions, and includes the goals or objectives of foreign policy. Essentially, it gives the government the ability to justify any foreign policy action.

National security

Traditionally this term refers to the protection of a state’s borders from intruders and the maintenance of sovereignty; it has evolved to include other softer forms of security.

Political power

Refers to the use of a state’s internal political machinery to exert influence over the actions of others. For example, white papers, legislation, speeches.

Power

Refers to the ability of one global actor to influence the actions of another global actor. Power can be exercised in a range of types and forms.

Pragmatism

A school of thought in which foreign policy is influenced above all else by practical considerations, as opposed to moral principles.

Public opinion

A sentiment shared by a group of people that can influence the foreign policy of states.

Unilateralism

Refers to the policy of a state acting alone, with little regard for the views or interests of other global actors, in pursuit of foreign policy objectives.

Resource security

A soft form of security that includes ensuring a state’s access to key resources, e.g. water and oil. Achievement of this form of security is closely linked to a state’s economic prosperity.
Realism

Realism is the ideology that the global political arena is made up of individual states and every state acts in its own national interests to ensure its sovereignty. Any cooperation made by states with other global actors is only to further their own national interests.

Security

Traditionally this term refers to the protection of a state’s borders from intruders and the maintenance of sovereignty, most commonly achieved through the use of military power. It has now evolved to include softer forms of security, such as access to resources and the protection of the environment.

State

Traditionally this term refers to the central actor in global politics. States possess a permanent population, defined territory and recognised sovereignty. States are not necessarily culturally homogenous, for example Australia.

Soft power

Refers to the ability to shape the actions of other global actors through un-coercive means, for example diplomacy, culture, policies and history. A term first coined by Joseph Nye.

Sovereignty

Legitimate or widely recognised ability to exercise effective control of a territory within recognised borders. This is the primary organising principle of global politics, providing states with the authority to represent their territorial entity within the international community. State sovereignty can be challenged internally (for example, secessionist groups) or externally (for example, one state invades another).

Third-agenda issues

Refers to issues that can only be successfully resolved through the joint action of the international community. These issues affect a number of states at any one time and thus cannot be solved by one state alone, for example global warming or terrorism.

Trade

Refers to the manipulation of the exchange of goods, services, labour and capital to influence the actions of another state.

Transnational Corporations (TNCs)

Refers to a company whose operations and investments extend beyond the boundaries of the state in which it is registered, and can also be referred to as a Multinational.