International Relations · GS - II

Examine how domestic public opinion and electoral outcomes can influence the foreign policy of major powers. Discuss the implications for international security and diplomatic relations.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 04/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Democratic accountability; public opinion; electoral mandates; legislative oversight; foreign policy continuity; military intervention; strategic interests; international security; diplomacy.

Model Answer

Introduction

Foreign policy reflects strategic interests, but in democratic countries it is also influenced by public opinion, electoral outcomes and institutional checks. Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf interpreted the November 2026 US midterm results as public opposition to war.

Influence of Domestic Politics

Electoral Accountability: Voters concerned about military casualties, economic costs and fuel prices may penalise governing parties, encouraging changes in policy priorities.

Institutional Constraints: Changes in congressional composition can affect defence spending, foreign assistance, sanctions and legislative oversight, although presidential powers remain significant.

Policy Signalling: Electoral outcomes may signal domestic dissatisfaction to allies and adversaries, influencing diplomatic calculations and negotiation strategies.

Implications for International Security

Domestic pressure can encourage de-escalation and diplomatic engagement. However, leaders may also adopt tougher positions to demonstrate resolve, creating uncertainty for allies and increasing the risk of miscalculation. Electoral outcomes do not automatically establish a public mandate on every foreign policy issue.

Way Forward

Governments should strengthen legislative scrutiny, communicate strategic objectives transparently and prioritise diplomatic channels. International agreements and crisis-management mechanisms can help maintain stability during political transitions.

Conclusion

Domestic politics can significantly shape foreign policy, but electoral results must be interpreted cautiously. Sustainable international security requires democratic accountability alongside strategic consistency and diplomacy.

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