

In order to answer the question stated above, a definition of internationalism has to be given in order to analyse whether it reflects state leaders behaviour or not. As a political movement, internationalism advocates economical and political cooperation between nations, aimed at the benefit of all. Thus, mutual global long-term interests dominate state leaders behaviour, not their nation's individual short-term needs. Nationalism is a feature of internationalism though, as each country is recognized and respected as formally equal. Do all state leaders follow this scheme?

At least for the contemporary state of the world, the answer seems to be a somewhat reluctant "yes". As state leaders are faced with the task to manoeuvre their nation-units in an anarchical world, where politics take place in the absence of government, even though a growing number of international organizations exist, their behaviour gets shaped by the global structure their unit is anchored in. This does not imply that policy-making is without exception structure-oriented, as neo-realists would love it to be, but to act contradictory to world structure would be irrational. Therefore, at least rationally thinking state leaders are internationalists, while at least partly irrationally driven state leaders such as Kim Jong-il of North Korea only incorporate a very limited internationalism into their politics, which do not aim at the maximisation of the nation's wealth and prosperity, but at a political cult surrounding the leading class, grounded in Juche. Taken the odd exception into account, it would be safe to state that most democratically elected state leaders apply internationalism to their politics.

Internationalism can be separated into an economical and a political movement. Liberal internationalism, understood as liberal democracy, as a political movement, has been adopted as the system of choice in developed, western nations. It is sometimes described as a final form of human government, as no improvement over liberal democracy is ever achievable. An international sphere of liberal democracies, a pacific federation, is interpreted as a roadmap to global peace, even though conflicts with authoritarian states are well accepted within the system, if they intend to spread peace and democracy by force. Not the whole world is seeking to imitate the West's route towards political modernisation though, but at least the concept of limited power, a core feature of liberal democracies, seems to spread even where a political order, strictly in the sense of western, liberal democracies, is unwanted.

Politics and the economy are extremely interwoven though, as the acquisition of territory by force is no longer a principal mean towards the generation of more wealth. Instead, the "trading state" has replaced the "military state" in internationalism, as the age of self-sufficiency in state-leading has come to an end. As state leaders are forced to become a part of the global economy, the globally applied concept of neo-liberalism in the economic sphere turns their decision-making unfree. Also, many nations rightfully complain that neo-liberalistic thought throws a veil over the true ambitions of those nations powerful enough to dictate the rules for common free trade.

Greater economic and political cooperation are the cornerstones of internationalism. The concept of each state surrendering part of his power for the benefit of all, whether economically or politically, lies at the root of this concept. As state leaders have to work within a global structure consisting of organisations such as the WTO, their behaviour becomes internationalist or questionable. Typical features of supranational organisations such as the WTO, the most favoured nation clause for example, are clear examples of contemporary features of world politics no rational state-leader can circumnavigate in his decision-making.

To conclude, it is possible to state that all rationally acting state leaders are internationalists, even though to varying degrees. As nations are part of a global structure made up out of nations, no state-leader can ignore the structure he has to operate within. Internationalism is wider spread in the economical sphere than in the political sphere, as every nation has to make a living. Autarkic policies deliver less wealth than a belief in comparative advantages, but not every nation is willing to sacrifice more of its sovereignty than absolutely necessary, while others, such as the members of the European Union, interpret just this as an beneficial end in itself towards a common enlargement of further wealth.