

Foreign Interference in Elections: Sanctions and Regulations

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Is there any importance in a free and fair election? In many democracies, people wonder why they are required to vote. The truth is that there is power in political processes and, more significantly, voting. The voting process is pivotal to any country's quality of governance. The manner through which an election is carried out extensively impacts the advancement or setting of democratic development. The foreign policy priorities are also gauged through such events. Since the process is essential, there have been several cases where the outcome of elections has been influenced. The foreign electoral interventions attempt a different country's government to overtly or covertly influence the other country's election process. The essay paper will address the various regulations and sanctions that have been set up in addressing the issue of foreign interference in elections.

On several occasions, electoral interventions commonly occur when there is a motive or an opportunity. When a greater power perceives that a particular candidate's victory will endanger its interests, they tend to look at ways to manipulate that other country's election outcomes. It is then followed by identifying a domestic actor who will consent and corporate willingly to issue information that will direct on the best ways to intervene. The electoral intervention by the intervener then drives the chances of a particular candidate winning. Typically, a candidate with the probability of winning against the candidate that they are against will be targeted. An intervention does not automatically result in the success of that beneficiary. However, the partisan electoral intervening practically does benefit the aided party or that preferred candidate.

The United States or Russia has been directly involved in foreign interference in several elections (Shane, 2018). As part of the US congressional and policy interest, several polls

directly influence the Middle East. The Obama regime was particularly interested in the Lebanon parliamentary elections of 2009. The interest was also in the elections of Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq. The interest in the elections of these countries was to shape the regional dynamics of the Middle East. They were meant to have a significant impact on the future course and success of US policies. In Lebanon, the interest was to see a parliament's success that can legislate conducive election laws and help it in its democracies' growth. The economic and military aid that the country benefitted was on its focus on strengthening the country's democratic institutions. The promotion of government control, the military forces, and police in controlling Lebanon's republic was their motive.

In 2016, Russia also had interference with the democratic running of the United States voting process. The aim was to create a social and political discord in the United States of America. As per reports by the national intelligence, there are plans still to interfere with the smooth operation of the 2020 elections (Shane, 2018). In the 2016 case, a group of Russians probed into the databases that had the voter registry. They went ahead to hack the Clinton campaign, the national committee of Democrats, and Democrat's Congressional committee that spearheaded the Hillary Clinton campaign. The interference also came in handy through the politically damaging info that was released on the internet. They were successful in spreading propaganda through social sites like Facebook, Instagram ad YouTube. Through the Russian staging several events in the Trump campaign, they eventually successfully manipulated the election outcomes that saw Trump defeat Clinton (Fidler, 2016).

In response to the foreign interferences to elections, some various regulations and sanctions have been put in place to ensure less manipulation from foreign governments. Sanctions are those penalties or other enforcement means provided to ensure that the law has

adhered. On the other hand, regulations are orders or rules that the authority prescribes to ensure that conduct is followed. Hence, the paper addresses the laws and penalties that have been enacted to ensure that foreign manipulation is controlled.

Several countries have responded differently to ensure that the jurisdictions are not the victim of these interference circumstances. Some countries like Australia have enacted laws that limit the amount that parties and candidates can receive from foreign donations. The policies guide o how political actors are prohibited from using foreign donations in their internal political expenditures. Schemes such as Foreign Influence Transparency do require disclosure on people undertaking political events for any foreigner. It is a criminal offence to interfere intentionally with the election process in Australia. The act subjects this violation of the imprisonment of up to twenty years in prison. It includes any activity for deceptive or covert behavior for any foreigner that will intend to influence a governmental or political process.

Some countries have had stricter regulations on money that is obtained from foreign sources. Through Elections Modernization Act, Canada requires that its citizens or permanent residents contribute to parties or the vying candidates (Pal, 2019). In the electoral campaign, such contributions are also key in countries like France. It has been a necessity to monitor the sources that fund political campaigns in various countries. The donations are prohibited in the number of countries. Any form of support that has monetary value is classified under the prohibitions that include services rendered. Some nations require a public acknowledgment of any foreign funds that are channeled to political blocs or parties.

The regulations include penalties like cancellations of parties that do not follow the stated laws. The financing and expenditures capping is there to reduce the cats of propaganda being spread. Furthermore, there are educational efforts raised in preventing any interference from

foreign countries. There are regulations of cybersecurity that have been put in place. The regulations also require the media to be accountable for any misleading information in mainstream or social media. Any event that will undermine the democratic process is dealt with, leading to a fair and democratic election. The United States has imposed sanctions in any event that there is a foreign interference of its electoral process. The executive order 13848 that was issued in 2018 gives the provisions of handling such matters. They include economic sanctions to such international countries and other trade restrictions like export quotas (McKay, 2019).

Foreign electoral intervention affects the decisions of voters in several ways. As per the findings, foreign interventions signify a threat to a country's democracies like the United States. The foreign power can intervene to boost the chances of the candidate that they prefer. In some states, there have been reportedly accusations of such foreign interventions. As measures to maintain the faith that citizenry has towards its democratic institutions (Levin, 2016), there is a need to curb such international interventions. The regulations and sanctions that have been developed all aim at reducing the effects of such foreign interference. Thus, the paper has addressed such sanctions and regulations that aim to reduce the impact that a foreign nation can have in its electoral process.

References

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