

# **The Three Points of a Circle: Understanding Foreign Policy and Ideology Through Discourse**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines foreign policy through the lens of ideology and discourse. It conceptualises a framework for the analysis of state behaviour based on the triptych of ‘foreign policy - ideology - discourse’ and claims that the above elements cannot and should not be studied in isolation. Rather, it promotes the view that ideology sustains foreign policy, through the provision of the foundational support that it requires and by creating an overarching narrative that not only explains, but also justifies the choices of foreign policy. In this context, the concepts of identity and interests are raised as two fundamental elements of state identity, which are narratively procured via ideology and define the aims of foreign policy. The paper makes clear that the ideological underpinnings of foreign policy, as well as foreign policy itself, require the crucial contribution of discourse as an intervening variable that allows for the narrative performance of identity and the pursuit of the foreign policy goals that it dictates. Through language, political leaders conceptualise and exemplify security, rendering it an indispensable element, not only of foreign policy, but also of state survival.

**Keywords:** State, ideology, discourse, foreign policy, security, leadership, speech, narratives