BALANCE OF POWER IN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract. Balance of Power is an old concept which keeps the equilibrium among check in International System. It's a perceived methodology adopted by a nation to keep other nations power in check to make sure its own influence in the International System remains unchecked. The methodology and the conceptual effort adopted in the Balance of Power remains the same from the Greek State System until the modern time when the United States remains at time un challenged and challenged by emerging powers when it needs to accommodate them or to form alliance against them. It's understood that the classical period of Balance of Power was the 100 years from the 1815 till the onset of the First World War. The European Balance of Power which had major influence in the International System eventually paved for the Bi Polar system after the end of the Second World War during most part of the Cold War. Though it allowed stability it eventually led into a Uni-Polar system in which United States remained the pre-eminent power. The above model is now challenged by the rise of China and to counter that the United States has reverted to the old model of Balance of Power through strategic alliances and partnership to counter Beijing's eminent rise.

Keywords: *Great Power Rivalry; Nation-State; Balance of Power; Bi-Polar System; Multi-Polar System; US-China Rivalry*

Among the international relations scholars and those who practice diplomacy the concept of the Balance of Power System model has been a subject of interest. The classical period of Balance of Power refers to the system that operated in the 18th and 19th century Europe. It is a popular model in which the power relations among five or six major powers constitute a balance and there is no authoritative international organisation present in the system, Balance of Power is a power-model which will enable peace and security in the International System. To understand the concept of Balance of Power we need to understand the concept of system at first place.

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The Notion of a System

A system is an assemblage of units, objects, or parts united by some form of regular interaction. The concept of system was facilitated in the 1950s, the behavioural revolution in the social sciences and growing acceptance of political realism in international relations led scholars to conceptualize international politics as a system, using the language of systems theory.

Realist Perspective of International Relations

As realism is an important element of International Relations it's understood that the concept of the system has been analysed by realist. All realists characterize the international system as anarchic. No authority exists above the state, which is sovereign. Each state must therefore look out for its own interests above all[1]. System polarity refers to the number of blocs of states that exert power in the international system. There are three types of polarity: Multipolarity – if there are a number of influential actors in the international system, a balance-of-power or multipolar system is formed. In a balance-of-power system, the essential norms of the system are clear to each of the state actors. In classical balance of power, the actors are exclusively states and there should be at least five of them. If an actor does not follow these norms, the balance-of-power system may become unstable. When alliances are formed, they are formed for a specific purpose, have a short duration, and shift according to advantage rather than ideology.

In the bipolar system of the Cold War, each of the blocs (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, and the Warsaw Pact) sought to negotiate rather than fight, to fight minor wars rather than major ones, and to fight major wars rather than fail to eliminate the rival bloc. Alliances tend to be long term, based on relatively permanent, not shifting, interests. In a tight bipolar system, international organizations either do not develop or are ineffective. In a looser system, international organizations may develop primarily to mediate between the two blocs. Hegemony: one state that commands influence in the international system. Immediately after the Gulf War in 1991, many states grew concerned that the international system had become unipolar, with no effective counterweight to the power of the United States. System Management and Stability: Realists do not agree among themselves on how polarity matters. Bipolar systems are very difficult to regulate formally, since neither uncommitted states nor international organizations are able to direct the behaviour of either of the two blocs. Informal regulation may be easier. Kenneth Waltz argues that the bipolar system is the most stable structure in the long run because there is a clear difference in the amount of power held by the two poles as compared to that held by the rest of the state actors[2].

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[1] W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, "Political Realism in International Relations", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer, 2018 Edition.

[2] Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World", in *Daedalus* 93, no. 3 (1964), pp. 881- 909.

John Mearsheimer suggests that the world will miss the stability and predictability that the Cold War forged. He argues that more conflict pairs would develop and hence more possibilities for war[3].

Theoretically, in multipolar systems, the regulation of system stability ought to be easier than in bipolar systems. Under multipolarity, numerous interactions take place among all the various parties, and thus there is less opportunity to dwell on a specific relationship or respond to an arms build-up by just one party in the system.

Advocates of unipolarity, known as hegemonic stability theorists, claim that unipolarity leads to the most stable system. Paul Kennedy argues that it was the hegemony of Britain in the nineteenth century and that of the United States after World War II that led to the greatest stability. When the hegemony loses power and declines, then system stability is jeopardized.

Realists and International System Change

Changes in either the number of major actors or the relative power relationship among the actors may result in a change in the international system. Wars are usually responsible for changes in power relationships.

For instance, after the end of World War II which brought the demise of Great Britain and France, and signalled an end to Germany's and Japan's imperial aspirations. The United States and Soviet Union emerged into dominant positions; the multipolar world had been replaced by a bipolar one.

Robert Gilpin sees another form of change, where states act to preserve their own interests and thereby change the system. Such changes occur because states respond at different rates to political, economic, and technological developments.

Exogenous changes may also lead to a shift in the system. Advances in technology not only have expanded the boundaries of accessible geographic space, but also brought about changes in the boundaries of the international system. With these changes came an explosion of new actors.

Nuclear warfare has had more of an impact of on the international system more than any other technological change. Although these weapons have not been used since 1945, the weapons remain much feared, and efforts by nonnuclear states to develop such weapons, or threat to do so, has met sharp resistance. The nuclear states do not want a change in the status quo and do not want them in the hands of rogue states.

In the view of realists, international systems can change, yet the inherent bias among realist interpretations is for continuity[4].

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[3] John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War", in *International Security*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1990, pp. 55-56.

[4] John J. Tierney, "The use of Systems Theories in International Political Analysis", in *World Affairs*, vol. 134, no. 4, 1972, pp. 306-324.

Liberal View of International System

The international system is not central to the view of liberals. Thus, there are three different conceptions of the international system: Not as a structure but as a process, in which multiple interactions occur among different parties and where various actors learn from the interaction[5].

Actors include, not only states, but also international governmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and sub state actors. Each actor has interactions with all of the other ones. Thus, a great many national interests define the system, including economic and social issues and not just security.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye describe the international system as interdependent. There are multiple channels connecting states, and multiple issues and agendas arise in the interdependent system. An English tradition of international society: in an international society, the various actors communicate and consent to common rules and institutions and recognize common interests.

Actors share a common identity, a sense of "we-ness"; without such an identity, a society cannot exist. This conception has normative implications: the international system is an arena and process for positive interactions.

An anarchic one in which each individual state acts in its self-interest: This is also called neoliberal institutionalism, a view that comes closer to realist thinking. But, unlike many realists, they see the product of the interaction among actors as a potentially positive one, where institutions created out of self-interest serve to moderate state behaviour[6].

Liberals and International System Change

Changes come from several sources:

Changes occur as the result of exogenous technological developments – that is, progress occurring independently. Examples are communication and transportation systems. Change may occur because of changes in the relative importance of different issues areas. In the last decades of the twentieth century, economic issues replaced national security issues. Globalizing issues such as human rights may assume primacy in the twenty-first century.

Change may occur as new actors, including multinational corporations and nongovernmental organizations, augment or replace state actors. In a condition of war, the basic role of diplomacy refers to the ability of a state to win over new allies, preserve the neutrality of others, and of course secure the support of your present coalition in terms of troops, funds and basing/access rights.

This allied contribution can of course be dictated in a Soviet-type alliance, but the true merit of diplomacy is to find common ground so as to cement the determination of a coalition to fight voluntarily for its mutual goal. The longer

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[5] Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 59.

[6] J. Nye, "The Changing Nature of World Power", in *Political Science Quarterly,* 105(2), 1990, pp. 177-192.

the war effort becomes the greater is the need to sustain allied unity, especially in a non-bipolar international environment. The accurate evaluation of the existing balance of power, and the subjective means (national interest) by which each potential player perceives that balance, is therefore vital in order to define the flexibility of allied diplomacy as well as the appropriate means by which to cajole or coerce an ally.

This evaluation is also crucial in shaping the post war security environment so as to minimize the necessity or eventuality of another war. After the demise of the common threat it is primarily the role of diplomacy to create a new post-war consensus in order to reaffirm allied unity and to avert the possibility of a new war between former allies, the most successful example being – thus far – the post-1815 Concert of Europe. After the Athenian destruction in Sicily, Sparta managed to create a grand coalition that helped her to win the war, but her tyrannical post war behaviour in combination with her static economic and political system led to the precipitous demise of its own power and the very destruction of Sparta thirty-five years after her triumph in the Peloponnesian War.

The emergence of Systems Approach to the study of International Politics call be described as one of the most significant developments of our times. Immediately after its birth, it captured the interest of a large number of modern political scientists as a convenient tool for a large scale macro-cosmic analysis of the political phenomena in the world.

Since its introduction in the late 1950's, the Systems Approach has been used by a large number of political scientists for investigating the relations among nations. Robert J. Lieber has rightly observed, "It would be no exaggeration to say that it is systems approaches that have dominated the field of broad gauged international relations theory during the past decade". It has provided a number of significant advances. It has helped us to shift the orientation of the study of international relations away from an earlier emphasis on more anarchic facets of world politics to one that provides greater coherence and broader perspective by viewing international relations in terms of a pattern of global interdependence.

The application of the concept of system to international politics involves an analytical scheme/model which provides a broad framework for the examination of International System. In the words of Wasby, "It provides the theoretical equipment both for looking at political phenomena on a macroscopic level and the setting in which micro-analysis can be carried out by providing an opportunity for political scientist to relate the more specific work he is doing to the larger political world".

Developed under the influence of General Systems Theory, the Systems Approach seeks to analyse international relations as a system of interactions which are interdependent and interrelated. It views international relations as a pattern to behaviour of international actors. Each nation acts and reacts in the international environment. McClleland has observed, "A nation's behaviour is a two-way activity taking from and giving to international environment". A nation's behaviour influences and is influenced by the international environment.

The process of exchange is fairly continuous, regular and patterned and as such can be studied as a system of behaviour. "A system consists of a set of units in interactions and it is possible to conceive of relations among nations as constituting a kind of system". The underlying thesis of systems theory is that a scientific study of politics can develop only if materials of politics are treated in terms of systems of action[7].

In fact, there exists a difference of opinion regarding the nature of a system. There are three major usages of system as followed in the Systems Approach.

The first regards system as an arrangement of the actors of international system in such a way that their interactions are identifiable. It emphasises the use of system for descriptions. James Rosenau uses system for describing the behaviour patterns. He defines system as, "considered to exist in an environment and to be composed of parts whose interactions are in relation to each other".

The second usage emphasises the nature of arrangement, which explains the behaviour of states. It regards system as a tool for explanation. In this form the scholars not only regard the world as a set of sovereign states but also try to emphasise the impact and role of sovereignty in international relations. Waltz, Boulding and McClleland have used it in this sense. Innis Claude has adopted multi-meaning use. In this sense, system is used as a tool and as a method. It refers to particular approaches adopted for bringing about a theoretical order in the vast data of international politics. Motion Kaplon has preferred to use it as an analytical tool for explaining the behaviour of international actors.

Main Features of Systems Approach

The Systems Approach in International Politics is based upon the following main assumptions:

1. International System is not International Political System. When the concept of 'system' is used in the context of International Politics it is, taken to mean International System and not International Political System. It cannot be described as International Political System because it does not allocate authoritative values. International units or actors are sovereign states and as such no international actor or agency can authoritatively implement values over them. Hence, it cannot be described as International Political System.

2. International Actors and National Actors. What are known as international actors are basically the national actors acting in the international environment.

3. National and Supra-National Actors. The international actors can be classified into two main parts – (i) the national actors acting in the international environment, and (ii) the supra-national actors like the UN, regional organizations and other international agencies. The latter can be sub-classified as bloc actors and universal actors.

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[7] K. Deutch, "On the Concepts of Politics and Power", in *Journal of International Affairs*, 21(2), 1967, pp. 232-234.

4. International system is constituted by a set of interactions among the actors or entities (nations and interests).

5. Nations are in continuous contact. There is a continuous process of interactions among actors and entities.

6. The activities of the nations are directed towards the preservation of national interests.

7. There are continuous and regular interactions and relations in the international environment.

8. Participation in international environment gives rise to mutual exchanges.

9. There are certain identifiable and describable regularities in the patterns of interactions among nations.

10. The use of the concept of system for describing or explaining or analysing international politics can greatly enrich our understanding of the phenomena, which can further help us in theory-building in international relations.

11. 'All systems' analysis distinguishes units (or actors), structures, processes, and context (or environment) as major elements in every system. These elements are considered as major factors in terms of which all substantive phenomena are explained.

Systems theory has, in a variety of ways, guided the theorizing and the research of a large number of scholars like Morton Kaplan, Richard Rosecrances, John Burton, Charles McCheland, J. David Singer, Karl Deutsch, K. J. Holsti, George Modelski and many others.

Systems Approach: Views of Morton Kaplan

The International Relations scholar Morton Kaplan has been the chief exponent of the Systems Approach. He advocates that international politics offers the best sphere for the application of the concept of 'system' as a tool for investigating all its phenomena. International System is most inclusive as it is constituted by those interactions which are neither fully cooperative nor totally conflictual. It has its sub-systems and a set of actors both international and supra-national. It is constituted by interactions among the actors.

The internal system of each international actor serves as a parameter of the international system and the latter is the parameter of the former. Thus, there is always an exchange of interactions between the actors and the international environment. The Systems Approach, as developed by Morton Kaplan seeks "to examine both what happens to the international system as changes occur inside the systems of the international actors and how the behaviour of the international actors is modified as the international system undergoes changes". He specifies Five Variables of the system: (1) The essential Rules of System, (2) the Transformation Rules, (3) Actor Classificatory Variables, (4) the Capability Variables, and (5) Information Variables.

Morton Kaplan's Six Models of International System

On the basis of such a conceptual framework, Morton Kaplan has discussed six models of international system. These models deserve primary attention because these form parts of the earliest, most extensive, and most well-known systems framework. All of these are macro models of international system and are described as tools for investigating reality. These six models are:

1. The Balance of Power System the Loose Bi-polar System
2. The Tight Bi-polar System
3. The Universal System
4. The Hierarchical System
5. The Unit Veto System.

The Balance of Power System. This model refers to the balance of power system that operated in the 18th and 19th century Europe. It is a popular model in which the power relations among five or six major powers constitute a balance and there is no authoritative international organization present in the system. The six basic rules of this model are:

1. Each actor seeks to increase its capabilities through negotiations and not through resort to war.

2. Each actor is prepared to fight rather than pass on an opportunity to increase capabilities to protect national interest.

3. No actor is to be eliminated from the system. The actor should terminate war before the opponent is eliminated...

4. An actor or a group of actors acts to Oppose any other group or single actor that tends to assume unduly powerful position and predominance with respect to the rest of the system.

5. Attempts are made to check the actors who try to follow supranational organizing principles.

6. The defeated or constrained essential actors are permitted to re-enter the System. as acceptable role partners. Actors act to bring some previously inessential actor within the essential actor classification and treat all essential actors as acceptable role partners.

These six rules keep intact the 'balance' in relations. The failure to keep up these rules leads to disturbances and finally to an end of the balance. The end of the balance leads to an end of the system. In the early years of the 20th century these rules were not followed and hence the Balance of Power System suffered a breakdown and the First World War broke out in 1914.

The loom Bi-polar Model. The breaking down of the Balance of Power System leads to Bi-polar System. It has two forms of manifestation: The Loose Bi-polar and the Tight Bi-polar System. The Loose Bi-polar System comes into existence when two powerful nations are successful in organizing the other nations into their two respective competing blocs or groups. However, the organization of the blocs is loose and internal differences prevail among the members of each-bloc. There are present several other supra-national and regional actors. In other words, the Loose Bi-polar System is constituted by two major

bloc-actors, non-member bloc-actors (like the group of Non-aligned), and universal actor/actors, like the UN. It is like the post-war Loose Bi-polar cold war model. In its blocs try to increase their relative capabilities as well as to eliminate or weaken their rival blocs. Each bloc strives to use the universal actor for increasing its own power. The non-bloc actors tend to support the universal actor for reducing the dangers of war between rival blocs. Blocs attempt to extend membership but along with it tend to tolerate the status of non-bloc actors.

The Tight Bi-polar System. The Loose Bi-polar System easily gets transformed into a Tight Bi-polar System; it is a Bi-polar System in which the two major powers lead their respective blocs of allied powers. Each bloc is dominated by the major power. The international organizations are very weak and there are no neutral blocs or nations.

The Universal System. The fourth model is the Universal System in which the nations get organised in a federal system. The world gets transformed into a Federal World State based upon the principles of mutual toleration and universal rule of law, and working through a universal actor – an international organisation. The universal actor is powerful enough to check war and preserve peace or a balance in international relations.

The Hierarchical System. Such a model comes into existence when a single powerful super power can bring, either through a conquest or a treaty, all other nations under its control. The states as territorial units are then transformed into functional units. The super-power becomes the universal actor and absorbs all other nations. In case this system comes into existence through conquest, it is a directive system, but if it comes through democratic means, it is a non-directive system.

The Unit Veto System. The sixth model projected by Kaplan is the Unit Veto System. It involves the conception of a situation of multipolarity in which each state is equally powerful. Each possesses such weapons (nuclear weapons) as can be used by it for destroying any other state. It becomes stable when each state can resist and retaliate threats from every other state.

Morton Kaplan's first two 'models are historical and the last four are hypothetical. Later on, in response to his research lessons, Morton Kaplan incorporated some additional 'mixed empirical models' such as Very Loose Bi-polar System, Detente System, Unstable Bloc System and Incomplete Nuclear Diffusion System. He describes his six models as 'theory sketches' rather than theory per se and stresses the fact that they are essentially 'heuristic models'. As such Systems Approach of Kaplan is designed to provide only 'initial' or 'introduction theory'[8].

Systems Approach: Critical Evaluation

The systems' theory in general and Morton Kaplan's six models of international system in particular have been severely criticized by many scholars. The supporters of the classical tradition reject systems theory as a huge mis-step which makes the study unnecessarily complicated in the name of scientific research:

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[8] V. S. Lerner, "Introduction to information systems theory: concepts, formalism and applications", in *International Journal of Systems Science*, 35:7, 2004, pp. 405-424.

(a)   General Limitations of Systems Approach. Robert J. Lieber has summarized the major limitations of the Systems Approach as under:

1. Only Frameworks. The first limitation is that, as Easton and Kaplan have acknowledged, the systems approaches are not yet theories but only conceptual frameworks. As such, these cannot lay down an intellectual policy of international relations.

2. Inadequate. The second major limitation is its methodological inadequacy. The lack of operationalisation of concepts in a way that would make them accessible to empirical testing is a particular difficulty".

3. Gap between Theory and Research. The third major limitation is the gap between theory and research. Systems oriented theorising has not, until very recently, led to great deal of empirical work. In the opinion of J. David Singer, "The unfortunate bifurcation between theory and research has sharply limited the usefulness and value of systems theory".

4. A Limited Approach. Systems Approach is a limited approach because it does not accept the study of political institutions and important domestic variables of international relations. It wrongly ignores the value of historical and ideological factors.

(b)   Limitations of Morton Kaplan Models of International System. Besides these four major limitations of the Systems Approach in general, which naturally apply to Morton Kaplan's approach, there are a number of shortcomings in Kaplan's six models of international systems[9].

1. Morton Kaplan's Models are Limited. Critics refuse to accept Morton Kaplan's view that his models involve a preliminary theory of international politics. All of his six models are limited. The balance of power system is impracticable in post-1945 years. He has been wrong in predicting that the balance of power system leads first to Loose Bi-polar System and then to Tight Bi-polar System. The course of evolution of international relations in the post-1945 period reflects that the opposite of it has come to be true. Tight Bi-polarity emerged first in early 1950s and then it came to be replaced by loose bi-polarity or polycentrism in the 1960s. In 1990s the International System has become virtually unipolar.

2. Impracticability of Four Hypothetical Models of Kaplan. The four hypothetical models appear to be totally impracticable. The type of Tight Bi-polar System as conceived by Kaplan has little chance to get established in international relations. There is no chance for the existing international organisation, the United Nations to become a really powerful and effective universal actor, there has never been, and there can never be a situation involving world domination by a single actor. This model wrongly envisages total and complete imperialism of one nation. The unit veto system can be hypothetically imagined but never considered to be possible and practical. Hence all the six models have serious and big limitations. These models, as Hedley Bull has remarked, "constitute merely an intellectual exercise and no more".

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[9] J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations", in *World Politics*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1961, pp. 77-92.

3. Kaplan ignores Geo-strategic Factors. Kaplan's models ignore the role of economic, technological, personality, geo-political and political factors of international relations.

4. Kaplan ignores the study of National and Sub-national Factors. Ernest Hass in his work "Beyond the Nation State" and Stanley Hoff man in his work "The Long Road to Theory" charge Kaplan of ignoring the national and sub-national causes of actions in international relations.

5. Kaplan's analysis is too general. Morton Kaplan has listed the five major variables for identifying and analysing the models. But he has failed to specify the priority among these variables. McClleland has observed "The formulated at too general a level to be of much use in ordering the facts".

6. Arbitrary Classification. Morton Kaplan's classification of international relations into six systems is arbitrary. One can increase and decrease the number of these models.

7. Kaplan's Models do not enable us to make Predictions. Analysing the weakness of these models Robert J.-Lieber has observed, "While claiming to predict behaviour within a particular kind of international system, they do not extend much beyond the level of definition, in that the distinction between proposition and definition is not clearly drawn".

There are several major limitations of the Systems Approach in general as well as of Morton Kaplan's six models of international system. Evaluating the Systems Approach, Bhuberg Sadousky and E. G. Yudin hold that "The systems movement is at present rather an assemblage of non-trivial problems than a systematized summary of results achieved". Systems Approach seeks to study problems of international politics. It, however, nowhere explains as to how the formulation of problems for the purpose of study has to be undertaken. All this, however does not mean that Systems Approach and Kaplan's models have nothing positive and useful in them.

The Systems Approach can be regarded as a useful approach to the study of International Politics. It can be used for an overall view of the relations among nations because of its several merits. It can be used for macro analysis and also for the study of regional sub-systems which form parts of the international system. The concept of system can be used for achieving the objective of theory-building in international politics. It helps us to focus attention upon national interactions at the level of international system or sub-systems. It can help us to relate events and processes that take place at different levels. The development of Systems Approach and its use can certainly help us to acquire knowledge and to understand the nature of International Politics. It can improve our ability to describe, explain, predict and even control the nature and course of International Politics. Morton Kaplan's six models are limited and inadequate, nevertheless, these have made the Systems Approach popular. These have performed a heuristic function in the application of Systems Approach to the study of International Politics[10].

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[10] Morton A. Kaplan, "Balance of Power, Bipolarity and Other Models of International Systems", in *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, 1957, pp. 684-695.

In the words of James A. Robinson and R. Roger Majak: "Decision and Decision Making currently command increasing attention as objects of study in social sciences". Particularly, it has been very popular in International Politics. Many political scientists have attempted to study relations among nations by analysing the making and implementation of foreign policy decisions of the decision makers of various nations. Snyder, Bruck and Sapin hold that decision-making analysis offers a fruitful method of organizing the study of state behaviour[11]. Besides these other significant exponents, James Bates, Ward Edwards, James March, Thrall, Coombs and Frankel and many others have used decision-making as a tool for analysing interactions among states. The Decision-Making Model suggested by R. C. Snyder has been a very popular model and we shall briefly discuss it.

a. The Focus of Study: The Decision-Making Approach seeks to study the functioning of states in general, and actual decision-makers of the state in particular. This is to be done in three ways:

   i. identification of decision-makers;

  ii. analysis of decision-making process; and

iii. search of appropriate and precise methods for comprehending international politics and its processes.

International politics is Struggle for power, but not an all-out struggle for maximum power, States seek power but at the same time they also seek to preserve peace. For this they use persuasive influence and several devices of management of power in international relations.' 'Unmanaged struggle for power is bound to be a Source of war and other troubles in international relations'. Such a realization stands universally recognized and it has led to the development of certain devices of power management. One such device has been Balance of Power. It has been traditionally the most popular device of power management. "Balance of Power has been the single most popular doctrine that has dominated the minds of statesmen and writers on international relations"[12].

Historical Evolution of Balance of Power

In Kautilya's 'Arthashastra', we find a full-fledged development of the concept of Balance of Power wherein he suggests a particular system – of power distribution between a State and its neighbouring states which can secure a balance and a favourable power position of the state. In our times, till very recently[13], Balance of Power stood recognized by almost all the writers and statesmen as: "a nearly universal law of international relations", "an inevitable part of the inter-state political system", or as "an essential stabilizing factor in the society of sovereign nations". In this chapter, we shall discuss the meaning, characteristics; methods, importance and relevance of Balance of Power in International Relations.

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[11] Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics", in *World Politics*, vol. 36, no. 4, July 1984, pp. 461-495, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183.

[12] *The Balance of Power: Theory and practice*, in *The Adelphi Papers*, 35:295, 1995, pp. 6-9.

[13] G. P. Singh, *Political Thought in Ancient India*, New Delhi: D.K., 1993.

The principle of Balance of Power has been perhaps the single most important factor of the relations among states and many statesmen regard it as the best guide for securing the national interest without getting involved in war. Till the first half of twentieth century, Balance of Power was regarded as being the only known modern. form of international order. Martin Wright described it as' 'a nearly fundamental law of politics as it is possible to find. Palmer and Perkins hold that it has been "a basic principle of international relations". Morgenthau holds that Balance of Power is a manifestation of general social principle in international politics. He writes, "The International Balance of Power is only a particular, manifestation of the general social principle to which all societies composed of a. number of autonomous units owe the autonomy of their component parts. The aspirations for power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, lead to necessity of a configuration that is called Balance of Power and to policies that aim at preserving it".

1. The immense popularity of the concept of Balance of Power has been a source of difficulty in so far as it has given rise to a number of divergent and imprecise perceptions about its nature and content. It has come to be interpreted in several different ways by scholars and students of international politics and hence has come to be a non-precise and not easily measurable concept. Pollard holds that it has been subjected to several thousand possible meanings. Innis L Claude Jr. has observed "The trouble with Balance of Power is not that it has no meaning, but that it has too many meanings". Martin Wright has remarked, "The notion of Balance of Power is notoriously full of confusions." Some of the writers define it in terms of Equilibrium where as others in terms of "preponderance", "disequilibrium", "systems", "policy", "Symbol of Realism" etc. Fay, Castlereagh, and Schwarzenberger define it as equilibrium in power relations. Spykmann Auogts, and Wolfer describe: it as preponderance and disequilibrium; M. Wright, A. J. P. Taylor and Charles Lerch explain it as a symbol of realism, and Thompson and Morgenthau conceptualize it as a policy. Ernst Haas points out that this concept has been utilized in at least eight mutually exclusive versions: "(1) Equilibrium resulting from equal distribution of peace among nation-states; (2) Equilibrium resulting from an unequal distribution of power among nation-states; (3) Equilibrium resulting from the domination of one nation-state; (4) A system providing for relative stability and peace; (5) A system characterized by Instability and war; (6) Another way of saying power politics; (7) A universal law of history; and (8) A guide for policy makers". This situation clearly reflects the difficulty in defining Balance of Power[14].

Sidney B. Fay in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* defines it as "such a just equilibrium' in power among the members of the family of nations as will prevent any one of them from becoming sufficiently strong to enforce its will upon the others". 'Whereas George Schwarzenberger speaks of it as an "equilibrium or a certain amount of stability in power relations that under favourable conditions

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[14] Antero Holmila, *Re-thinking Nicholas J. Spykman: from historical sociology to balance of power*, The International History Review, 2019.

is produced by an alliance of states or by other devices.... Balance of Power is of universal application wherever a number of sovereign and armed states co-exist"[15].

Innis Claude holds that Balance of Power is such "a system in which some nations regulate their power relations without any interference by any big power. As 'such it is a decentralized system in which power and policies remain in the hands of constituting units".

According to Stephen L. Wasby, Balance of Power is "usually, an equilibrium relationship among the capabilities of several states or groups of states interacting with one another. Occasionally, however, the term is used to describe an actual preponderance or "favourable" balance between one state or group of states another".

Lord Castlereagh refers to balance of power as "the maintenance of such a just rim between the members of the family of nations as should prevent any of them from becoming sufficiently strong to impose its will upon the rest"[16].

In his work *Politics Among Nations*, Hans. J. Morgenthau has used the term Balance of Power in four different senses: "(1) as a policy aimed at a certain state, (2) as an actual state of affairs, (3) as an approximately equal distribution of power, and (4) any distribution of power". However, Morgenthau has clarified that, "Whenever the term is used without qualification, it refers to an actual state of affairs in which power is distributed among nations with approximate equality".

All these definitions clearly reflect that Balance of Power has been defined differently by different scholars.

Balance of Power: Nature

The failure to secure a single and uniform conceptualization of Balance of Power forces us to attempt a study of 'the characteristics of Balance of Power. The following have been discussed by Palmer and Perkins as the major characteristics of Balance of Power and these clearly reveal its nature.

1. Some sort of Equilibrium in Power Relations. The term Balance of Power suggests 'equilibrium' which is subject to constant, ceaseless change, to shifting political patterns and power relationships. In short, though it stands for equilibrium, it also involves international disequilibrium.

2. Temporary and Unstable. In practice all balance of power systems have proved to be temporary and unstable. A particular balance of power survives only for a short time.

3. To be Actively Achieved. The balance of power has, to be achieved by the active intervention of men. It is not a gift of God, States cannot afford to Wait until it "happens", if they wish to survive, they must be willing to go to war to preserve a balance against the growing hegemonic power of the period.

4. Favours Status quo. The balance of power has generally tended to favour the status quo. However, in order to be effective, a policy of balance of power must be changing and dynamic.

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[15] Hans J Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 2nd ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

[16] Brendan Simms, "Castlereagh's Catechism: A Statesman's Guide to Building a New Concert of Europe", in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2, 2013, pp. 170-176.

5. The Test of BOP is War. A real balance of power seldom exists. The only real test of a balance is war and when war breaks out-the balance comes to an end and such conditions, which a balance of power policy seeks to prevent, come into existence.

6. Objective and Subjective Views of BOP. Balance of Power Involves both an objective and a subjective approach. The objective view holds balance of power as a situation in which the opposing nations or groups of nations are almost equal in power. Such a view is held by the historians. The subjective view holds balance of power as a situation involving freedom to join one side or the other according to its own interests. Such a view is often held by the statesmen. In the words of Spykman, "The truth of the matter is that states are interested only in a balance of power which-is in their favour. Not an equilibrium, but a generous margin is their objective".

7. Not a Device of Peace. Balance of Power is primarily not a device for preserving peace, it admits war as a means for securing balance. It finally rests upon war.

8. Big Powers as Actors of BOP. In the balance of power system, the great or big powers are the actors or players and the small states are either spectators or the victims of the game.

9. Multiplicity of States as an essential Condition. The Balance of Power system operates only when there are a number of major powers each of which is determined to maintain a particular balance or equilibrium in power relations. Multiplicity of states and the principle of not eliminating any state in war are the two fundamental features of a Balance of Power system.

10. National Interest is its Basis. Balance of Power is a policy that may or may not be adopted by democracies or by dictatorships. The real basis that leads to this policy is national interest in a given environment.

11. The Golden Age of BOP. The period of 1815-1914 was the golden age of Balance of Power. During this period, it was regarded as a nearly fundamental law of international relations. Since, 1914 the structural changes in the international system as well as in the balance of power system have made it a less relevant principle of international relations, particularly of the international relations of our times (post-1945 relations).

The above characteristics highlight the true nature of Balance of Power as a concept in international relations.

Fundamental Postulates & Assumptions of Balance of Power

The concept of Balance of Power rests upon several fundamental assumptions. V. V. Dyke, quoting Quincy Wright, has listed five fundamental assumptions of balance of power[17]:

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17 Quincy Wright, A *Study of War*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942.

I. Five Assumptions

1. Firstly, states are determined to protect their vital rights and interests by all means at their disposal, including war.

2. Secondly, vital interests of the states are or may be threatened. Otherwise, there would be no need for a state to concern itself with the power relationships and to preserve status quo.

3. The third assumption is that relative power position can be measured with a sufficient degree of accuracy, and that these power calculations can be projected into the future.

4. The fourth underlying assumption is that a situation of "balance" will either defer the threatening state from launching an attack or permit the victim to avoid defeat if an attack should occur.

5. The fifth and the final assumption is that statesmen can and will make foreign policy decisions intelligently on the basis of, power. considerations. If this were not possible, the deliberate balancing could not occur.

To these five assumptions, we can add the three fundamental postulates of balance of power as listed by Spykman.

Three Postulates

1. A nation following balance of power should be prepared to eke its alliances or treaties or ideologies if the circumstances may so warrant.

2. When a nation finds that a particular preponderance of power is increasing menacingly, it should be prepared to go to war for maintaining the balance.

3. Balance of Power postulates that no nation is to be totally eliminated in war. War is aimed at the weakening of power of the defaulter and for preserving the balance. The defeated state in war has to be readmitted to the system.

The basic assumption of the doctrine of Balance of Power is that excessive power anywhere in the system is a threat to the existence of other units and that the most effective antidote to power is power. In the words of Palmer and Perkins, "When applied to the world of sovereign states, uncontrolled by super-national agencies, the concept of Balance of Power assumes that through shifting alliances and countervailing pressures, no one power or combination of powers will be allowed to grow so strong as to threaten the security of the rest", HI. Purpose of Balance of Power:

Security and peace are the main purposes of Balance of Power. "Though peace is often stated as the purpose", writes V. V. Dyke, "security is usually the more fundamental concern". Its purpose is to secure such a distribution of power that will deter attack or that which will permit a state to avoid defeat, if not win victory in war. Explaining this view in more general terms, V. V. Dyke writes, "The prime object of the balancing of power is to establish or maintain such a distribution of power among states as will prevent any of them from imposing Its will upon another by the threat or use of violence"[18].

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[18] Vernon Van Dyke, *International Politics*, Bombay, 1966, p. 221.

Ordinarily, peace is also a purpose of the balance of power. To deter attack by maintaining balance is to preserve peace. As such one of the criteria for judging it is its effectiveness as a deterrent. However, peace is not the paramount goal of the balance of Dower because it admits recourse to war for maintaining balance purposes of Balance of Power, it becomes clear that it has been a popular concept in international politics. Nevertheless, its popularity has been a source of big diversities and hence it is a problematic concept.

Historical Narrative of Balance of Power

The concept of the balance of power has been present wherever and whenever multiple state system has existed. It was known and applied in the ancient world- in the city-states of Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, India and China. However, it could become an international system only in the 17th century. The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 firmly established the nation-state system and clearly delineated the general pattern of international relations. As a result, the Balance of Power began to play greater role than before.

Origin and Evolution of Balance of Power

Balance of Power during 1648-1789 period i.e. Between the Treaty of Westphalia and the French Revolution. In the words of Wolfe and Coloumbis, "The period between 1648 (the Peace of Westphalia) and 1789 (the French Revolution) may be considered as the first golden age of classical balance of power. During 1643-1715 period, when the ambitions of Louis XIV of France threatened to destroy the balance, he faced a series of wars against various coalitions of power with England and the Netherlands spearheading the opposition to him. In the Treaty of Utrecht, it was expressly stated that its provisions for the division of Spanish inheritance between Bourbons and Hapsburg were made for "preserving equilibrium in Europe". This was indeed the first formal 'incorporation of the doctrine of Balance of Power in an international agreement.

The period between 1713 (Treaty of Utrecht) and 1772 (the first Partition of Poland) has been acclaimed as the golden age of the Balance of Power, in theory as well as in practice. During this period, most of the literature of the Balance of Power appeared, and the princes of Europe accepted the Balance of Power as the supreme principle for their guidance in the conduct of foreign relations. In this period, a multiple balance of power existed involving England, France, Prussia, Austria and Russia.

However, the French Revolution radically destabilized the classical Balance of Power system. "The citizen armies, the electrifying slogans ("Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"), the fusion of nationalism with popular sovereignty-all were given", write Wolfe and Couloumbis, "a militant, messianic, and adventurist character by Napoleon Bonaparte. His romantic and expansionist military campaigns were directed to the creation of a new order, modelled on France, throughout the new world". These actions were contrary to the central rules of classical balance of power system.

The European nation-states strongly reacted to Napoleon's challenge and British sea power and finances, combined with strong nationalism was successful in defeating Napoleon at Waterloo. The Congress of Vienna (1815) took remedial steps and restored the balance of power system.

History of Balance of Power (1815-1914). The Golden Age of Balance of Power. The nineteenth century (1815-1914) can be called the second golden age of the classical balance of power. France was allowed to remain in the ranks of great powers. The great powers-England, France, Prussia, Austria, Hungary and Russia – returned to the practice of stable and classical system of international relations.

Between 1815 and 1914, the system evolved the Concert of Europe. Britain rejected the Russian proposal for the much further reaching Holy-Alliance, a loose world government to be worked jointly by the great powers, with the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of other states. The Concert was merely a loose consultative institution which refrained from intervention in the domestic affairs of states. It permitted many small wars, but prevented these wars from becoming general and for upsetting the Balance of Power. 19th century Europe neatly balanced conservation and change, and can be credited with many positive achievements.

The behaviour of the Great Powers was, on the whole, moderate as epitomized in the lenient peace concluded by Bismarck, with Austria after her crushing defeat at Sadowa. There was general stability and no state disappeared, but such major political changes as the emancipation of the Balkan people from Ottoman rule and the neutralization of Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg were achieved with little violence; international law developed and towards the end of the century colonial expansion came under internationally agreed regulation. "It must however, be borne in mind", writes Franks, "that these achievements cannot be credited to the balance of power and the concert of Europe alone since they were made possible by exceptionally favourable conditions for the economic and political expansion of the system".

In the later part of the century, conditions began to deteriorate, as did also the attitude of Germany. The process of colonial expansion grounded itself to a halt when there were no further lands available for occupation, and economic expansion degenerated into competition among rival national economies; in contrast to his great lenience towards Austria, Bismarck severed Alsace & Lorraine from France after the 1870-71 war. This led to a continuing French grievance, and deprived the international system of a large proportion of its flexibility; from 1871, France was permanently aligned against Germany. Instead of working through fluctuating alliances, the system broke up into two opposing camps, and slowly but gradually the diplomatic fronts hardened and eventually clashed in August 1914.

The First World War was a traumatic experience for humankind. Having been lulled (by BOP) into a feeling of false insecurity, people found it difficult to adjust themselves, to a long war unparalleled in its scope of destruction, and to contemplate the possibility of its recurrence. An attempt was made to have a new type of international order-a system with an international organization – the

League of Nations which guaranteed the perpetuation of territorial integrity and political independence of states. The acceptance of collective security along with the principles of self-determination was further designed to preserve international peace and order.

However, the inter-war period continued to be a period of disturbances. "Defeated Germany", "Communized Russia", rise of new states, the quest for security, the failure of the USA to join the League, the failure of the collective security system of the League, the rise of Hitler's dictatorship and Nazism in Germany, rise of Fascism in Italy, and the big technological changes – which was not conducive for the operation of balance of power. In fact, the inter-war period witnessed an uneasy and inconclusive struggle between the new idea of collective security and the traditional idea of balance of power. An unsuccessful attempt was made to reconcile balance of power considerations with the system of collective security. The lack of cooperation among the great powers made the collective security system a non-starter and the balance of power system unstable. Nevertheless, in conflict between collective security and balance of power, it was the later that proved stronger as there took place a series of alliances and counter alliances, military preparations and rivalries aimed at preserving peace through balance. However, all these attempts failed to prevent aggressions and wars. The net result was a total failure in the form of the outbreak of the Second World War.

The Second World War inflicted a very severe blow to the international system. The structural changes in the international system – the weakened position of the formerly powerful nations of Europe, the rise of two super-powers, the outbreak of cold war, the highly increased destructive power of the nuclear nations, the establishment of the United Nations and other international agencies, the new faith in collective security and disarmament as ideal devices for securing international peace etc., made the revival of balance of power system a near impossibility.

In the post-war international relations, balance of power came to be quite obsolete, or at least it lost much of its relevance. It was no longer regarded as the director of international relations.

Methods of Balance of Power

Balance of Power is a game – a power game, which is played by a number of actors with the help of several devices. The operation of balance of power in international relations requires conscious efforts and actions on the part of states to maintain balance of power. It involves the need to check the menacingly growing power of any nation which is considered dangerous for the continuance of a balance in power relations. In the words of Palmer and Perkins, "The Balance of Power is an uncertain regulator, for it creates an equilibrium that is at best temporary and improvised. Even under ideal conditions, its operation requires great skill and fineness and possibly a ruthless disregard of moral concepts and human welfare". Like every game, balance of power has several methods or techniques.

The following have been the major methods of Balance of Power:

I. Compensation. It is also known as territorial compensation. It usually entails the annexation or division of the territory of the state whose power is considered dangerous for the balance.

Compensation of a territorial nature was a common device in the 18th and 19th centuries for maintaining a balance of power which got disturbed by the territorial acquisition of any one nation. Examples include: (1) The division of the Spanish possessions in Europe and outside, among Bourbons and Hapsburgs in the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, (2) The three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795 were based upon the principle of compensation. Austria, Prussia and Russia agreed to divide Polish territory in such a way that the distribution of power among themselves would be approximately the same after the partitions as it had been before, (3) In the latter part of the 19 centuries, and after each of the two world wars of the 20th century, territorial compensation was used for weakening the powers of the states whose actions led to a violation of the balance. It was applied in late 19th and early 20th century for the distribution of the colonial territories and the delimitation of colonial or semi-colonial spheres of influence. It was ruthlessly used in Africa. It was used by France, the UK and Italy for the domination of Ethiopia, and by Britain and Russia in 1907 through the Anglo- Russian A teary for dominating Iran.

Thus, compensation has been a popular method of Balance of Power. In the words of Morgenthau, "Even where the principle of compensation is not deliberately applied, it is nowhere absent from political arrangements, territorial or other, made within a balance of power system".

Alliances. Alliances are regarded as a principal method of balance of power. According to Morgenthau, "Alliances are a necessary function of the balance of power operating within multi-state system". Alliance is a device by which a combination of nations creates a favourable balance of power by concluding military or security pacts or treaties aimed at augmenting their own strength vis-a-vis the power of their opponents. However, an alliance among a group of nations, almost always, leads to the establishment of a counter alliance by the opponents. It has been this reason that prompts many scholars to name this device as "Alliances and Counter Alliances".

History is full of examples of alliances and counter alliances in the balance of power systems that operated in different periods of history. History of Europe, in particular, reflects the popularity of this method of balance of power. Whenever one nation threatened the balance in Europe, other states formed alliances against it and were usually able to curb the power of the over-ambitious state. Ad-hoc or temporary alliances of a constantly shifting character have been standard practices in modern European history. After 'the Triple Alliance of 1882, a rival alliance – The Triple Entente, was slowly formed through bilateral agreements over a period of 17 years (1891-1907), first between France and Russia, then between France and England, and finally between England and Russia. In post-1945 period, alliances like NATO, SEATO, Warsaw Pact emerged

as devices of Balance of Power. The first two were established by the USA and the third one was organized by the USSR for strengthening their respective power positions.

The Warsaw Pact ended in 1990. Between 1947-90, besides these multilateral alliances, each of the two super powers entered into a number of bilateral and trilateral defence or "cooperation" alliances with the purpose of strengthening their respective power-positions in world politics. Even after the end of cold war and liquidation of Warsaw Pact, the USA has been maintaining NATO and several other such alliances for keeping the balance of power in its favour[19].

Nations always try to make, abandon, and remake alliances depending upon the needs of their interests. The first pre-requisite of an effective alliance is adequate power, that is, enough power to achieve the purpose for which it is formed. Secondly, the existence of common or similar goals of national interests is another essential pre-requisite for providing the basis for an alliance. Other conditions such as strategy, geography, common ideologies, cultural similarities, complementary economics, common enemies etc., help to make alliances relatively stable, but these are not the pre- requisites of an effective alliance for a temporary purpose.

Alliances are often divided into two kinds: offensive and defensive. An offensive alliance seeks to upset the balance in favour of its members, whereas the defensive alliance seeks to maintain balance which is in favour of its members. There is only a technical difference between these two kinds of alliances. Both are devices of balance of power.

Intervention and Non-intervention. "Intervention is a dictatorial interference into the internal affairs of State/states with a view to change or maintain a particular desired situation". Non-intervention is the opposite of Intervention and it involves deliberate non-action in a particular situation which is considered to be harmful to the other competition opponents. Both of these are the devices of Balance of Power. Mostly it is used by a major power for regaining an old ally or for picking up a new ally or for imposing a desired situation upon its 'dependencies' or 'satellites'. British intervention in Greece, the US interventions in Grenada, Nicaragua, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, and Soviet interventions in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Afghanistan can be quoted as examples of interventions carried out by the big powers. The middle-east has all along been an area of intervention by one great power or another. The United States has been a known interventionist in Latin America.

Divide and Rule. The policy of divide and rule has also been a method of balance of power. It has been a time-honoured policy of weakening the opponents. It has been resorted to by all such nations who try to make or keep their competitors weak by keeping them divided or by dividing them. The French policy towards Germany, the British policy towards the continent and the Soviet policy towards Europe can be cited as the outstanding examples. Britain pursued

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[19] Bruce M. Russett, "An Empirical Typology of International Military Alliances", in *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 15 (2), May 1971, pp. 262-263.

this policy with great success in many of her colonies. The former imperial powers even now do not refrain! from using divide and rule for controlling the policies of their former colonies. The big powers now try to pursue this principle by building two compelling regional powers to remain equally or compete tingly powerfully[20].

Buffer States or Zones. Another method of balance of power is to set up a buffer state between two rivals or opponents. "Buffers", observes V.V. Dyke, "are areas which are weak, which possess considerable strategic importance to two or more stronger powers. Each of the Stronger powers may seek to bring the buffer within its sphere, but regards it as important, if not vital, that no other strong power be permitted to do so. The major function of a buffer is to keep the two powerful nations apart and thus minimise the chances of clash and hence to help the maintenance-of balance". Korea, for example, has served as a buffer between Japan, China and Russia.

But its position has been critical and self-destroying. Today, it stands divided into two parts: North Korea and South Korea. Iran has historically been a buffer between Britain and Russia, and more recently between the East and the West. Nepal is almost a buffer between India and China. Belgium has historically been a buffer between France and Germany. Buffers are used as devices of maintaining balance between two contending states. In the words of Palmer and Perkins, "Buffer states are of great importance, because of their cushioning effect between great powers".

Armaments and Disarmaments. All nations, particularly big powers, place great emphasis on armament as the means for maintaining or securing a favourable position in power relations in the world. It is also used as means to keep away are intending aggressor or enemy. However, in recent times armament race among great powers has led to a highly dangerous situation which can accidently or otherwise cause a total end of international peace. It has come to be developed as the biggest and gravest danger to world peace and security-the balance. Consequently, now-a-days, the opposites of Armaments – Disarmaments and Arms control are regarded as ideal devices for maintaining and strengthening world peace and security. It has been realised that disarmament and arms control involving a reduction in the killing capacities of various nations and not the armament race, which stands for increasing the killing capacity and for securing a balance of terror, can be the effective and more beneficial, device of balance of power in contemporary times. A comprehensive Disarmament Treaty involving nuclear disarmament, and arms control can go a long way in strengthening this balance (peace) that exists in the post-war international relations.

The Holder of the Balance or the Balancer. The system of balance of power may consist of two scales plus a third element the 'holder' of the balance or the balancer. The balancer is a nation or a group of nations, which remains aloof from the policies of the two rivals or opponents and plays the role of, as Carl

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[20] John M. Carroll, "The Canton System: Conflict and Accommodation in the Contact Zone", in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, vol. 50, 2010, pp. 51-66.

Friedrich remarked, "the laughing third party." It poses temptations to both parties to the balance and each contending party tries to win over the support of the laughing third party – the balancer. Normally, the balancer remains away from both the parties but if any party to the balance becomes unduly weak resulting into a threat to the balance, the balancer joins it and helps the restoration of balance[21].

After that it again becomes aloof. Traditionally Britain played the role of a balancer in Europe. "From the days of Henry VIII in the 16th century to the days of the beginning of the Second World War it was believed that England was always to act as the arbiter of Europe[22].

With the decline of the British power in post-1945 years and because of the emergence of the USA and the USSR as the two super powers in world politics, the traditional role of Britain came to an end. In the post-war period, France, under the leadership of General De Gaulle, tried but failed to play the role of a balanced between East and West. Some scholars also opine that India, through her non- alignment, tried to play the role of a balanced between the two super powers but its effort got thwarted-as a result of humiliating performance in 1962 Sino-Indian War, and also because of the subsequent emergence of detente between the two super powers.

The changes in international system of the post-war period as well as the changes in Balance of Power system made it difficult for a nation to assume the role of a balancer. The decreased importance of the device of Balance of Power in international relations has further discouraged the emergence of a balancer. The rise of unipolarity has also now reduced the chances for the emergence of a balancer in international relations.

Conclusion

These are the seven major methods or devices of Balance of Power. These have been used by nations engaged in maintaining a particular balance of power at the regional level or at the global level. In the 19th and early 20th century, all these methods were used by the European nations for maintaining balance i.e. peace and stability in international relations. The two World Wars during a short period, the possibility of a totally destructive nuclear war, the emergence of UNO as an international actor of some significance, the rise of the USA and the USSR as the two super powers and some other similar structural changes considerably reduced the relevance of balance of power and its' methods in international relations[23].

Therefore, it is worth to analyse the utility of Balance of Power in the 21st century as when the International System is changing from the Uni-Polar world to a multi-polar world.

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[21] Ernst B. Haas, "The Balance of Power as a Guide to Policy-Making", in *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1953, pp. 370-398.
[22] Bruce M. Russett, "An Empirical Typology of International Military Alliances", in *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, vol. 15, no. 2, May 1971, pp. 262-289.
[23] Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", in *International Security* 9, no. 4, 1985, pp. 3-43.

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