

— Question # 8 —

In the Post World War-II period, what were the important patterns of the balance of power?

I. Introduction:

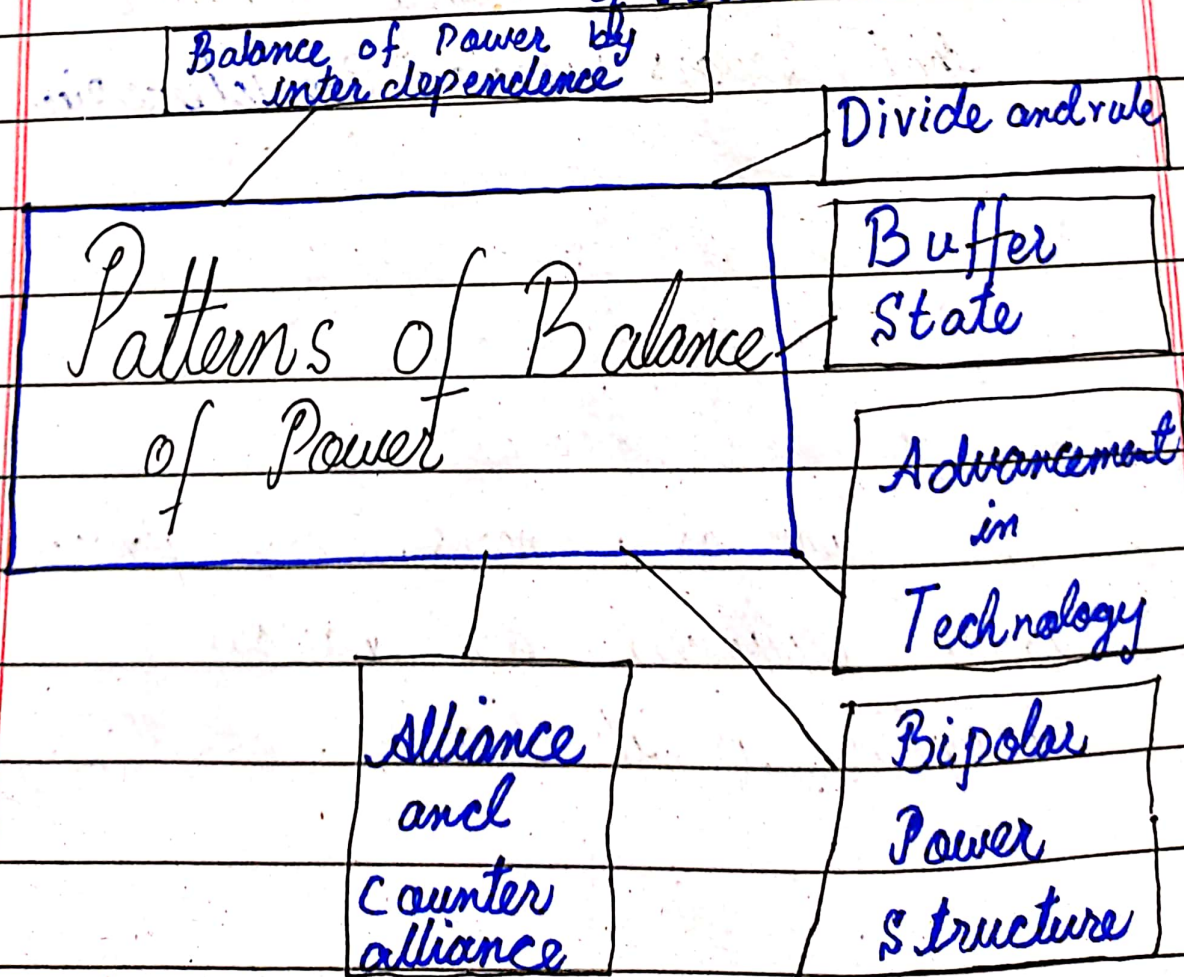
"The U.S has since the end of world war II had an answer we stand for free peoples and free markets, we are willing to support and defend them. We will sustain a balance of power that favors freedom." **Condoleezza Rice**

The end of world war II marked the end of Euro-centric international system. It worked on the principle that war as a means, secret diplomacy as an instrument and narrow nationalism as its objective. On the

Contrary to the post WWII period was characterized by increasing interdependence among nations, the birth of nuclear age, development of technology etc. In that period, balance of terror replaced the balance of power. Despite criticism, balance of power is still a valid concept in the international politics.

II. Patterns of Balance

of Power in Post WWII:



III. Alliance and Counter alliance

Formation of alliances and counter alliances was the most important patterns used as a balance of power. According to this, states join alliances to protect themselves from states or coalitions whose superior resources could pose a threat and by making alliances the balance the power, with other powerful states. For example:

NATO, SEATO, CENTO,
WARSAW Pact.

As in contemporary era, Pakistan is threatened by India on Kashmir issue, to make itself stronger economically and military. Pakistan made alliance with China and Russia.

As a result India allied with USA

IV Compensation and Partition

Under this pattern of balance of power, partition, division or annexation of territories take place by large powers at the expense of small ones.

For Example

- i) Partition of Germany
- ii) Division of Vietnam and Korea

Even before world war, power was balanced by this pattern. Many states try to acquire new territories, thus power tilts. So, rival nations immediately take steps for

Example Partition of Poland in 1792, 1793, and 1795

among Russia, Prussia and Austria.

V. Creation of Buffer State

"Buffers are the areas which are weak, who possess considerable strategic importance over two or more stronger powers. Each of stronger power may bring buffer within its sphere. The major function of a buffer is to keep two powerful nations apart" V.V Dyke.

This is the method of balance of power in which states may be placed between powerful states to keep rival powers out of direct contact with each other.

For instance

Nepal and Bhutan serve as buffer state between India and China. Similarly, Afghanistan act as

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buffer state between US and
Russia.

VI Armament and Disarmament

In the postwar period USA decided to use its superior economic and military position for filling the power vacuum in Europe. As a result, US increased its military power by armament, and to balance the power USSR adopted the policy of challenging the US policies. So, US and USSR started to stockpiling arms during cold war in the name of security.

Nuclear weapons changed the nature of war from a simple war to complex war.

These weapons made war totally

destructive. Hence, states agree to limit arms to end arm race.

For Example

Signing treaties like NPT, CTBT.

VII Bi-polar power structure

To balance the power, two competing and rival camps i.e US and USSR were established.

The USA floated the large number of bilateral and multilateral alliances like NATO etc on.

The other hand USSR countered the move by organizing the communist countries into Warsaw

pact. This situation came to be characterized as bipolarity in world politics. After USSR,

now China and USA divided the world into two competing

and even hostile blocs.

VIII. Interdependence among nations:

Interdependence among nation is also a way to balance power.

Interdependence has become very important for balance of power. Interdependence results in peaceful co-existence and create a sense of co-operation

IX. Conclusion

In a nutshell, balance of power has always been very important for the existence of weak state. Weak states align themselves with stronger one to avoid the threat of war from stronger nation. Thus, balance of power is essential for the survival of weaker state.