

Pain or Gain: Understanding the Concept of Balance of Power and Its Relevance to Contemporary Democratic Governance.

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Abstract

The thrust of this paper is to examine the concept "Balance of Power". Historically, Balance of Power is seen as one of the most important generalities of transnational politics and the academic discipline of international relations. According to Brooks and Wolforth, "No other single proposition about transnational politics, has attracted more scholarly trouble than the Balance of Power. Balance of power in transnational relations is the posture and policy of a nation or group of nations guarding itself against another nation or group of nations by matching its power against the power of the other side. Balance of power also refers to a state of transnational order where power is balanced in such a way that nations avoid aggression out of fear of forceful retribution. In the post-war period, the USA decided to use its superior profitable and military position for filling the power vacuum in Europe and to this end decided to win over the popular European nations through its Marshall Plan. The Paper concluded among others that there's still a presence in transnational relations, further particularly, in the sphere of indigenous relations among countries.

Keywords: Relations, Power, Democratic, Governance

Introduction

It's maybe as central in moment's thinking as it has been at any time since the Enlightenment (Brooks and Eohlforth, 2008). Sheehan labels it " one of the most important generalities in history "(Sheehan, 1996). Wright still said the notion of the Balance of power

is notoriously full of confusion³. Although the concept of Balance of Power has been used throughout history by politicians and diplomats in different circumstances and for numerous reasons, the conception is also a proposition of transnational politics used by scholars to explain the marvels in the world moment. Balance of power has been defined by so numerous pens. Claude Jnr said that the trouble with the Balance of Power isn't that it has no meaning, but that it has too numerous meanings⁴. Some pens define it in terms of equilibrium whereas others define it in terms of transcendence or disequilibrium. Some define it as a principle of action while others define it as a policy or system. According to the late American political scientist Hans Morgenthau, the word 'equilibrium' is synonymous with 'balance' and signifies stability in a system composed of several independent corridors. The conception of equilibrium is grounded on the supposition that the independent corridor which is to be balanced is entitled to live and that without a state of equilibrium, one of the independent corridors will rise, worm upon the others, and eventually destroy them as independent realities (Hans and Kenneth, 1985). George Schwarzenberger defines the Balance of Power as an equilibrium or a certain quantum of stability in power relations that under favorable conditions is produced by an alliance of countries or by other biases (Schwarzenberger, 1951). Fey an American annalist defined the Balance of Power as a just equilibrium of power among the members of the family of nations as will help any one of them from getting sufficiently strong to apply its will upon others (Fay, 1937)

In a balance-of-authority system, notes Schweller (2016), the authority held and exercised by countries within the system is chorded and leveled by the authority of others. When a country amasses authority relative to others, its rival country accumulates its authority in reaction, similar to that none of the contending countries can establish ascendance in the indigenous and/ or global context. He further stated that as a nation's authority grows to the point that it menaces another important country, a counterbalancing coalition emerges to check the rising authority, similar to that any shot for world ascendance will be tone-defeating. therefore, tallying with the notion of the balance of authority proposition, the relative authority gap is the only source of trouble for countries.

The purpose of the Balance of authority isn't to conserve transnational peace and stability as numerous of the proposition's detractors have incorrectly laid down. preferably, it's to save the veracity of the thematic-state system by precluding any ambitious country from swallowing up its neighbor. The suspicion behind this is that countries cannot be commissioned with devilish dominions which hang ingredients of the transnational system. Henry Kissinger notes that a balance of authority works best if countries feel free to align themselves with any other country, or where the cohesion of alliance is fairly low

so that on any given away conclusion, there can be negotiations or changes in alignment or where there are fixed compacts, but a balancer sees to it that none of the being factions come dominant (Kissinger.1994).

Balance of Power (A Historical Discourse)

The Balance of Power conception is substantially encountered in realist propositions of transnational relations. The realists claim that when it comes to the abecedarian principles of International Politics, the world is the same now as it was thousands of times ago. therefore, certain effects remain constant, one of which is a balance of power(Andersen, 2016). Hence we should find the balance of power expressed throughout the importance of recorded history.

The conception of the balance of power can be set up in some form or the other in ancient times, especially among India, China, and the Greek, and Roman countries. It's one of the oldest terms in the transnational relations proposition. In his *Essays and Discourses on Several Subjects*, David Hume maintained the Greek politics game as a distinct expression of the notion of the balance of power(Hume, 1987).

The Roman period saw a decline in the notion and functional aspects of the balance of power as Rome nearly demonstrated monopolistic power over the world. also, it didn't flourish during the entire range of the middle periods. still, the development of the doctrine of the balance of power and its large-scale practice came doable from the fifteenth century onwards. Bernardo Rucellai and Machiavelli made the theoretical donation to the expression and diction of the doctrine. In the words of Morgenthau, the alliances Francis concluded with Henry VIII and the Turks to help Charles V of Hapsburg from stabilizing and expanding his conglomerate is the first ultramodern illustration on a grand scale of the balance of power(Hans, 1967).

The sixteenth century eased an identifiable process of balance of power. In this very century, England held the balance between France and the Holy Roman Empire.

The seventeenth century during the Thirty Years War(1618- 1648) provides, among other points of analysis, a distinguishable logical point about the balance of power. With the Treaty of Westphalia(1648) and the nation-state system's establishment, the conception came more practicable than ever ahead. The period between 1648(the Peace of Westphalia) and 1789(the French Revolution) is regarded as the first golden age of the classical balance of power both in proposition and practice.

The eighteenth century is considered the “golden age” of the balance of power. Indeed if constantly used also in the late 1600s, numerous authors of transnational politics and history consider the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 the induction of this golden age. The Treaty of Utrecht established peace after the War of the Spanish Race and included the balance of power as a core principle in the convention textbook. The reason was a fear that either Spain or France would come too important – a despotism that would dominate Europe and all of its countries (Monticone, 2008). Britain has used the balance-of-power conception the most in its tactfulness for the once 300 times. Queen Elizabeth, I was regarded as the holder of the balance among Christian monarchs. The idea in Britain was that the country played the part of a “balancer ” in the system of European countries. To establish a balance, one should prop the weak, and Britain saw itself as the country that could cock the scales in any one direction, as they saw fit. It should be noted that it was easy for Britain to play the part of “ balancer ” because they had no territorial ambition in Europe. Britain was an ocean power with territorial intentions in other mainlands. The part of the balancer, numerous argued, gave Britain an unknown power – not only as a Great Power in Europe but also as the decisive weight on the scale. It was Britain’s duty to make certain that no one could come to a “ universal monarch, ” ruling the entire mainland, by abetting the weak part as the power constellations on the mainland changed(Monticone, 2008). Britain defended Europe, and thereby defended itself, exercising the balance of power.

The nineteenth century (1815- 1914) can be considered the alternate golden age of the classical balance of power. Napoleon Bonaparte brazened Britain and the other European nations during this century. After consecutive wars spread over the times, Britain and her abettors eventually restored the balance of power. The Congress of Vienna(1815) sought to establish a new balance of power resting on the principle of legality and conceivably conserving the status quo. latterly, as before noted, Britain acted as a balancer in Europe’s politics through her pioneering leadership arising out of the artificial revolution and her overall leadership grounded on her advanced cortege and world trade. The balance of power averted seven wars between 1871 and 1914. It maintained peace for a long time in this century (Monticone, 2008).

In the twentieth century, Europe was divided into two camps, with the Triple Entente (1902) completed in opposition to the Triple Alliance(1882). When the delicate balance in the Balkans was disturbed, it led to the First World War. numerous considered the balance of power incompletely responsible for the outbreak of the First World War, justifying wars and nation-state colliding. The balance of power has come lower in managing a European community and further raw power politics between isolated nations. In the interwar

period, the doctrine was still followed, however, in a proposition, it was inharmonious with the conception of collaborative security. But eventually, it proved stronger than the collaborative security embodied in the League of Nations. As a result, it provoked a series of alliances and counteralliances, thereby leading to the Second World War.

It also espoused the policy of fighting the spread of communism. 'Containment of Communism' came the primary end of US Foreign Policy. Such an American attempt was completely opposed by the USSR and it also decided to extend its influence in Europe (Monticone, 2008). The success that it achieved in exporting communism to most of the East European countries inspired it. The emergence of China as a communist power in 1949 gave further strength to the Soviet-led communist movement (Nixon, 2009). The USSR espoused the policy of challenging the US programs. In the process, there developed a cold war a war of jitters full of pressures and strains in world politics, which made transnational peace a parlous and unstable peace.

Conceptualizing the assumptions of balance of power

Quincy Wright has given five major hypotheticals of the balance of power, which also operate as conditions affecting the balance's stability. They're as follows

.Countries are committed to guarding their vital interests by all possible means, including war, though it's over to each state to decide for itself as to which of its rights and interests are vital and which system it should borrow to cover them.

.The vital interests of countries are or may be threatened. However, also there should be no need for a state to cover them If the vital interests don't hover.

.The balance of power helps cover the vital interests either by hanging other countries with committing aggression or by enabling the victim to achieve palm in case aggression occurs. This supposition means that countries aren't generally likely to commit aggression unless they've superiority of power.

.The Relative power position of colorful countries can be measured to a great degree of delicacy. This dimension can be employed in balancing the world forces in one's favor. Politicians make their foreign policy opinions grounded on an intelligent understanding of power considerations (Wright, 1964).

Major Methods of Balance of Power:

Balance of Power is not automatic; it has to be secured by the states following this policy. There are several methods by which states try to secure and maintain a balance of power. Compensation

A state enhances its power by acquiring new homes and therefore tilts the balance in its favor. When such a thing happens, the other side also takes an immediate way to increase its power in compensation to save the balance (Malhotra, 2018). When some important nation occupies small nations' homes, the important rival nations cannot tolerate this act. They place a condition either to partake their prey with them or to allow them to compensate themselves away under similar conditions. For illustration, the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795 were grounded on the principle of compensation. Austria, Prussia, and Russia agreed to divide Polish homes in such a way that the distribution of power among them would be roughly the same (Malhotra, 2018).

Alliances and Counter-Alliances

The balance of power has frequently been maintained by the system of alliances and counteralliances. Alliances have been the most accessible institutional device to increase one 's inadequate power. Nations have always tried to make, abandon, and remake alliances depending on their interests. Several security pacts are designed to ameliorate the military power position. Alliances can be obnoxious as well as protective. Offensive alliances, still, must be condemned as they breed counter-coalitions, and the outgrowth is generally war.

Intervention and Non-Intervention

Intervention is another generally used device for keeping balance. The abettors may shift their fidelity from one side to another. Under similar circumstances, it's relatively usual for a big nation to recapture a lost supporter by intermediating in domestic affairs and establishing a friendly government there.

Non-intervention suggests impartiality or guarantee of impartiality for certain countries or sweats to localize war or cover the rights of neutrals in war times. At times impartiality also plays a part in keeping the balance of power. Before the end of World War II, Britain interposed in Greece to see that it didn't fall into the hands of original socialists.

Buffer States or Zones

Another system of balance of power is to set up a buffer state between two rivals or opponents. Buffers observe V.V. Dyke, "are weak areas, which retain considerable strategic significance to two or further strong powers, Buffer is a small state created or maintained as a separating state i.e. as a buffer state for keeping two contending countries physically separate each stronger power also tries to bring the buffer within its sphere of influence but regards it as important, if not vital, that no other strong power be permitted

to do so. There have been colorful cases of buffer countries in history. Afghanistan had been a traditional buffer state between Imperial Russia and British India.

Armaments and Demilitarization

All nations, particularly veritably important nations, place great emphasis on armaments as the means for maintaining or securing a favorable position in power relations in the world. It's also used as a means to keep down a possible raider or adversary.

still, an ordnance race between two challengers or opponents can lead to a largely dangerous situation that barrels accidentally beget a war. In this way, the ordnance race can act as a peril to world peace and security. Accordingly, currently, Demilitarization and Arms Control are regarded as better options for maintaining and strengthening world peace and security. A comprehensive demilitarization plan/ exercise involving nuclear demilitarization can go a long way in strengthening the balance (peace) that exists in transnational relations (Vattel, 1916).

Domestic styles

Still, it'll also come more important, If a state feels that the balance has been listed in favor of the rival. It can do so only by perfecting rudiments of power domestically. The state concerned would try not simply to acquire more important munitions but also to develop affiliated diligence and other aspects of wisdom and frugality whose total effect would strengthen the balance. Domestic measures demanded this purpose may also number the preface of mandatory military training and the allotment of further plutocrats in the defense budget. It may also include developing the indigenous capability to manufacture sophisticated munitions and affiliated military tackle, including ICBMs (Inis, 1962).

Arguments for the Balance Of Power

The Advocates of the balance of power believe in its mileage and give the following arguments in favor of it. Balance of power is the only guarantee of peace in the absence of the universal acceptance of the principles of collaborative security. When security continues to be a public obligation, it can no way be assured except by a balance of power. The prerequisite of security and order among autonomous countries is that force is checked by correction within a balance of power. It has always served the cause of peace and order in history. However, there will neither be aggression nor war and thus, peace would automatically be achieved, If the balance is saved.

The balance of power prevents or discourages the resort to war. As a state cannot hope to win a war, it'll not initiate one if its power is in equilibrium with an implicit victim. Utmost

of the wars of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were due to Homeric battles. In discrepancy, the balances were maintained in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which contained struggles between European powers. Whenever peace reigned in Europe, it owed its actuality to the balance of power. Balance of power makes it delicate for any power to come so important as to overwhelm the rest. Indeed, the absence of a stable equilibrium creates an occasion for the emergence of Powers of lower quality to dominant positions. therefore, the balance of power helps in containing ascendance and universal imperialism.

In the absence of a supreme transnational authority able of administering justice, the balance of power enables transnational law to command respect. Vattel mentioned this mutuality between the balance of power and the rule of law in transnational society in 1758 (Vattel, 1916). The balance of power acts as interference with grandiose ambition and therefore meets the cause of justice. The balance of power is essential to the conservation of transnational law. For illustration, Oppenheim supports this argument by observing the Balance of power is a necessary condition for the very actuality of transnational law. He further says that a law of nations can live only if there's equilibrium, a balance of power between the families of nations (Oppenheim, 1926). Several other authors of transnational law also agree with this argument.

The balance of power has also proved useful in conserving the independence of small countries. It prevents the destruction of any particular state because, in their interests, other countries won't allow this to be. The balance of power is designed to save each state's independence by precluding any state from adding its power to hang others.

Arguments against the Balance Of Power

Morgenthau has blamed the balance of power on three counts its query, vision, and inadequacy (Oppenheim, 1926). Its other blights and faults can be explained as follows Balance of Power doesn't inescapably bring peace. Indeed during its golden days, it failed to help the domination of small countries by the big countries. It wasn't successful in conserving the security of small countries. In fact, in history, wars have been fought in the name of the preservation of the Balance of Power.

The three ages of stability — one starting from 1648, the alternate from 1815, and the third from the Treaty of Versailles (1918), were anteceded by nonstop warfare and by the noncommercial elimination of small countries starting with the destruction of Poland, and followed by a large number of insulated acts of an analogous nature. The tragedy is that

all these acts were fulfilled in the name of balance of power. Balance of Power cannot secure peace and freedom of the nations.

Each state always tries to secure further and further public power. It doesn't belong to any balance of power system. Another point that must be raised about the balance of power is that nations aren't stationary units. They increase their power through military onslaughts, seizure of homes, and alliances. They can change their power from within by perfecting social association, industrializing, and marshaling internal coffers. So the traditional medium of the balance of power isn't the only cause responsible for an increase in power. A transcendence of power in the hands of one state or group of countries doesn't inescapably hang world peace or the independence of any nation. The unipolar performance from the collapse of one superpower (USSR) and the continued presence of the other superpower(USA) has not in any way disturbed transnational peace and security or power balance. In contemporary times the transcendence of one state is a reality and yet there's peace and peaceful concurrence.

The conception of Balance of Power is grounded upon a narrow view of transnational relations. It regards power relations as the total of transnational relations. It gives near total significance to the preservation of tone and public interest as the motives of all state conduct. It fails to give proper weightage to other ends — social, profitable, artistic, and moral, that gives strong motives for transnational relations.

Balance of Power incorrectly takes a mechanistic view of world peace as a situation of balance or equilibrium in power relations. Peace doesn't depend upon the balance in power relations. It depends upon transnational knowledge and morality.

The proposition of the balance of power can also be blamed on the ground that it incorrectly assumes that nations are free to make or break alliances as and when they may ask the main consideration of balance of power.

Since the evaluation of the public power of a nation is always uncertain, no nation can go depend upon the balance of power. Each nation always keeps a secret about its power. Since all nations keep safe perimeters, the balance of power at a particular time is always fantastic.

Eventually, the critics argue that Balance of Power isn't an applicable principle of transnational relations. The big changes in the transnational system as well as in the

balance of power system have made it a nearly obsolete system. Grounded on the below arguments, the critics of Balance of Power endorse its total rejection.

Factors Limiting the Roles and Relevance of Balance of Power in International Relations

In contemporary times, the Balance of Power has lost much of its mileage due to several changes in transnational relations. The following changes in transnational relations as well as in the traditional balance of power system have negatively affected the part and applicability of Balance of Power as a device of power operation in International politics. With the end of the Second World War and the Cold War, the balance of power passed several abecedarian changes which bloodied how it operated since the morning of the ultramodern state in 1648. The most egregious structural change was the numerical reduction of the players of the power-politics game. For its operation, Balance of Power needs the presence of several major power actors. After the First World War, there were five major world powers(Great Britain, France, Italy, the United States, and Japan). At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union replied to the species of world powers making it seven. At the end of the Second World War, the world powers were reduced to two(the United States and USSR). The reduction in the number of nations that were suitable to play the part of powers in transnational politics led to a decline in the operation of balance of power. The more the number of powers, the more flexible the balance will be. But with the reduction in the number of powers, it came inflexible(Schroeder, 1989).

The bipolarity(presence of two superpowers and their blocs) that surfaced in the cold war period reduced the inflexibility of the transnational system. It reduced the chances of a balance of power whose working requires the actuality of inflexibility in power relations, alliances, and covenants. Presently unipolarity characterizes the transnational system(Rice, 2002).

The alternate major change in the balance of power passed during the cold war was that Great Britain's part as the " balancer " of power faded. As late as World War II, the impartiality of Great Britain or its decision to join Germany, Japan, and Italy rather than the United States and the Soviet Union might have made the difference between palm and defeat. But during the Cold War, the impartiality of Great Britain in a war between the United States and the Soviet Union would not have affected the outgrowth of such a war(Rice, 2002).

The structure of transnational politics has experienced a radical change from the classical period. From a narrow European- dominated transnational system it has come to be a truly

global system in which Asian, African, and Latin American countries enjoy new and added significance. moment Europe is no longer the center of world politics. European politics constitutes only one small member of transnational politics. This change has vastly reduced the operational capability of the balance of power.

The Way Forward.

Preliminarily, tactfulness and war used to be the principal means of conducting foreign programs. The decline of tactfulness, the rise of new tactfulness, and the new fear of war as a means have brought into operation two new biases Propaganda and Political warfare, as the instruments of public policy. These have in turn reduced the fissionability and part of the balance of power principle in transnational relations.

Another big change in the structure of the balance of power has been the exposure of imperialism and colonialism It has limited the compass for the exercise of power by the European powers, who once always worked as crucial players in the principle of Balance of Power.

The emergence of nuclear munitions and other revolutionary developments in war technology has produced a big change in war. The relief of war with Total War has made war the most dreaded situation in transnational relations. This has forced nations to reject war as an instrument of balance of power which rests upon the supposition that nations can indeed go to war for conserving or restoring the balance.

Eventually, the rise of the United Nations and several other transnational and indigenous actors in transnational relations has given a new look to the transnational relations of our times. The presence of the UN has made a big change in the structure and functioning of the transnational system. With a provision for the collaborative security of transnational peace and security, the United Nations constitutes a better source of peace. Due to all these changes in transnational relations, the Balance of Power has come to suffer a big decline. It has lost much of its applicability.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the Balance of Power has desisted to be a completely applicable and believable principle of transnational relations in contemporary times. The post-war trends reveal that the balance of power has desisted to perform the traditional part that it played in the Euro- eccentric world order in both its theoretical and practical aspects. Still, it retains a presence in transnational relations, further particularly, in the sphere of indigenous relations among countries.

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