PREFACE

Apparently unchangeable political realities became historical lessons in the early 1990s. What had intended to be an explanation of current events consequently became an interpretation of archival records. At some quarters apprehension reigned regarding the validity and relevance of a work which was concerned about the quest for military balance of two alliances when one antagonistic party had ceased to exist. It was observed that many of the analyses would now become obsolete or redundant if not downright faulty, let alone helpful. Contrary to popular belief, however, these changes provided us with a wider canvas and clearer picture and thereby made our task easier to reach certain broad-based conclusions in understanding the history of past forty-five years. The profound changes, in the early 1990s, were the effect of a combination of certain factors in which the quest for military balance played the role of catalyst. Since there is a causal relationship between the theme of our study and the change that took place throughout Europe, we felt obliged to include a postscript devoted to the series of recent developments.

The politics of military alliances does not operate on the principles of mutual trust and peaceful competition to achieve durable peace and security, but rather on the imperialist Roman idea of *si vis pacem, para bellum*, i.e. if you want peace, prepare for war. The essential task then is to try to delay the ultimate catastrophe and for that purpose establishing and maintaining an
effective deterrence is necessary. Here, in this context, the study of military balance between alliances becomes meaningful. This is more so in case of the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, where the two superpowers with their overkill capacity were involved. Thus, the quest for the Atlantic Alliance vis-a-vis the Warsaw Pact military balance during the years 1955-1990 gains prominence in the field of academic discourse and research. In the process, evaluation of the impact of these systemic endeavours and consequent policy-formulations, and assessment as to how far military balance could be regarded as an effective instrument of peace mechanism assumes significance.

Many studies on threat perception and consequent tactical shifts placed in the specific context of a quest for a military balance between the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact appeared to be predominantly one-sided. Either the Soviet threat was unduly exaggerated by some Westerners or special care was taken by some Soviet scholars to reveal the danger of Pentagon and NATO strategies and the plus points of 'peaceful' foreign policy pursued by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. This is, however, not to say that impartial understanding is not to be found in the crowd of eminent scholars. This work too seeks to strike a balance (leaving out the mutually exclusivist ideological streaks) and presents an effort to achieve an impartial and empirical study. Now is the time to look back and analyse what actually determined our destiny (or, more specifically, the density of Europe) during the forty-five years of our study and find out whether we can learn
any new lesson from past developments.

In a response to my query, Director of Studies, John Chipman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, wrote to me: "Frankly, I do not think much has emerged on this that changes earlier assessments". We felt, however, that a re-evaluation was needed and this work was taken up to facilitate just that. We had a few questions in mind:

What were the political purposes of the alliances and what were the military means to achieve them? How did they figure in the broad balance-perspective? What was the role of technology in the qualitative and quantitative progress of arms? How these phenomena were accommodated with altered mechanisms? What were the consequent tactical shifts? What were the points of divergence in interests that led to crisis within the alliances? Over and above, how military balance was sought to be achieved, how along with development of military means, arms control negotiations and measures were used to strike a military balance? Whether true balance was ever achieved and if so, how far it could be regarded as instrument of peace mechanism? And finally, whether such instances should be followed in future too, if situations so arise, with a greater degree of confidence?

In answering these questions, the present study seeks to explicitly analyse the theory-policy interactions causing systematic impacts and a descriptive-analytical method has been followed. Special care has been taken to make a survey which is interdisciplinary in approach and non-dogmatic in focus.

Thus, this study not only initiates with threat perception (as a concomitant of military balance) and consequent strategy formulation in the context of a quest for military balance (considering the questions of parity/superiority,
conventional/nuclear) but also seeks to analyse military balance and arms control in a broad perspective. All these variables taken as intermingling propositions have been examined in the light of explorations into alliance politics. The first chapter introduces the subject as it seeks to analyse the concepts of alliances and balance from a theoretical angle and provides a backgrounder to the study. The next two chapters deal with the quest for balance in nuclear and conventional fields respectively. The fourth chapter is devoted to ascertain the role of arms control in the quest for military balance and finally, I have ventured to note down some of my observations which might evoke academic interest.

Since the work covers a longsome period of almost 45 years, in certain cases, it is sketchy. Perhaps, this weakness could be avoided in a voluminous work, but we purposefully refrained from doing so, as we felt that there was no dearth of books and articles describing the post-war political and military history in detail and we have referred to those in the text (and in the bibliography) for the benefit of the inquisitive and diligent reader. One may even find the chapters somewhat overlapping. Given the nature of the work this tendency could not be totally stamped out.

Once again, I am greatly indebted to Dr. Matin Zuberi, my supervisor; working under his guidance has been a pleasant and rewarding experience. His active involvement went beyond mere help, advice and suggestions and I am especially thankful to him for presenting me with all those valued books from his enviable
collection, which made my task quite easier. His technical and conceptual knowledge added clarity and correctness to this effort which is humbly acknowledged.

I would as well wish to thank Air Commodore N.B. Singh (Rtd.), Deputy Director, United Service Institution, for allowing me to use the library facilities of the USI and contributing to my thinking on the issues involved in the study. I am also thankful to Mr. K.N. Malik (School of Oriental and African Studies, London) and Dr. S.P. Gupta (Director, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations) for their encouragement and support.

In writing this thesis, I drew on the time and patience of many people. One of them is Saroj Kapoor, our family friend, who in addition, quite generously lent a practiced eye as a teacher of English language and literature to some portions of this work. Special word of thanks goes to her.

This work could have been sloppier, but for the help I received from my friends - Sharad and Rashmi Soni, Sanjay Singh, S.K. Bansal, Balaram Pani, PriyRanjan Sinha and many others. I would also appreciate the contribution made by Uddalak, Kishore, Annu, Bitto and Jitender in their unique ways. Thank you all pals! for invaluable help, generously given.

Shri Gulshan Batra undertook the charge of word-processing work and performed a superb job. Taking my tendency to make whimsical changes into consideration, this was no small achievement. For inadvertent mistakes, if any, I alone am
responsible.

Also, financial assistance in form of a research fellowship provided by the University Grants Commission is acknowledged.

My father has presented me with his latest book on legal procedure. I could not go beyond the first few pages of his work because of its subject-specific nature. But I hope he would read mine. At any rate, since this work could not have been completed without my parents' blessings, I dedicate this work to them with love.

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October 1994.