Chapter I:

FIXING THE SCALES
'Now Europe's balanc'd; neither Side prevails, 
For nothing's left in either of the Scales.'

When Alexander Pope wrote these lines, he forcefully exposed the irony of the insensible reasoning in buying peace by paying the heavy price of devastation and elimination of portions of human civilization, or the inherent contradictions of what an unqualified, uncontrolled, misguided quest for balance might lead to. 'Balance' as such is elusive. To certain extent, we all might agree on this point. But in no way this suggests that a rough balance is impossible to achieve. Probably we, oblivious to the fact that we may burn our fingers playing with fire, because of our sheer obstinacy of never to admit that we are endangering our lives through our acts of misperceived bravado, throw our senses to the winds. Even if 'balance' is achieved, there would be many to argue that 'enough' did not necessarily mean 'enough', and under certain circumstances, it might actually mean 'less'.

The quest for balance has its root in deep-seated fear for the uncertain future which in turn stems from a lack of understanding and insensitivity toward the needs of the so-called adversary. At any rate, over the years, this quest has resulted in a political environment in which it is realised that our common home - the earth - has become too fragile to withstand new designs of wargames employing weapons of mass destruction; and if we have not understood this yet, we are doomed.

From the standpoint of international politics, we would seek to analyse the phenomenon of 'the quest for military balance' with
the help of theories developed in this field (from the subjective angle) and the actions indulged in by the two alliances, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact (from the objective angle). Perception of threats, norms of alliances, balance politics and the work of the alliance systems in a bipolar world - are the theme of this chapter. For the proper development of perspectives, let us start with a backgrounder - with Europe after the Great War of 1939-45.

1.1 Threat Perception after the Second World War
With the fall of the Axis powers, the very reason for the existence of the anti-fascist alliance of 1941-45 became untenable. The Wartime alliance was never expected to be permanent and it was at best an ad hoc arrangement based mainly on an understanding of common interests and convenience. Foremost was the elimination of the German threat. With the end of the Second World War this goal was achieved and though the alliance-partners outwardly continued to harp on the need of close cooperation among the allies even after the War, in reality, mutual distrust and misinterpretation of intentions made political process indefinite, unstable and ambiguous. Enmity ensued fast between the two principal victors of the war, the United States and the Soviet Union, and soon it became clear that not even an entente was a remote possibility, let alone an alliance.

It is difficult to single out events as the cause or the effect of a particular phenomenon, as most often they intermingle
with each other and influence one another in turn. The communist ideology backed by a regimented State like the USSR, as it was under Stalin's dictatorship, was diametrically opposed to the Western liberal democratic traditions and was despised and feared. The West was eager to prevent the spread of communism through any kind of arrangement. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 1945), intended to have a durable impact upon Soviet thinking regarding the policy of Communist expansion, drastically altered the power equations. It was rather a frustrating situation for Stalin. Consequently he sought to pose a permanent threat to Western Europe in order to compel the United States to act in restraint (i.e. to deter America from attacking the USSR) and so he never withdrew his forces from areas of Eastern Europe occupied by the Red Army in the last phase of the War. This made matters worse for the actors involved. American opinion was certain that it could not let Europe fall to the Soviets by default and henceforth securing democratic Europe's territorial integrity also became an American responsibility.

Establishing a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe was a logical necessity derived 'from the Soviet's view of their own history'. "How could any Russian ignore the historic role of Poland as a route for invasion of the Soviet Union?" asks Kuniholm and he further adds that "lacking resources and the technical know-how to compete successfully, the Soviets were prepared to use force to secure an area they believed should come under Soviet jurisdiction - especially when the Soviet system was threatened by
capitalist inroads into these spheres". Consequently, Soviet Union followed a policy of coercion and tight control and was successful in establishing regimes suitable to its preferences in the East European states and thus created a plethora of satellite countries. However, though American support to the anti-communists in these states fell far short of delivering positive results, it was made clear by the West that no further expansion would be allowed.

The USSR suffered greatly in the war, but the economic disintegration in Europe was more acute. In February 1947, Great Britain conveyed to Washington its inability to provide military and economic assistance to Greece and Turkey and the fate of Western Eurasia seemed to be in trouble. In March, the United States came forward to shoulder this responsibility and three months later, Marshal Plan was announced to halt an imminent European economic collapse. Economic aid was offered to restore the economy of the Europe including the communist bloc but the Soviet Union declined the offer.

On behalf of the United States, Baruch Plan was presented in the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (1946) which visualised the establishment of an international Atomic Development Authority that would have effective control over potential nuclear weapons programmes and the right to inspect all atomic activities. On realisation of such international control, the United States would

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abjure its existing nuclear stocks and refrain from making more atomic weapons. The USSR refused to accept this and Andrey Gromyko made a counter-proposal to ban the use of nuclear weapons altogether and destruction of existing stocks, and allowed limited inspection rights to an international control commission subordinate to the United Nations Security Council subject to veto. This was unacceptable to the Americans and in the end the debate was adjourned indefinitely in 1948.

It is interesting to note that in Poland representatives from nine European communist parties including delegates from France and Italy established a Communist Information Bureau. The Cominform declaration stressed continued faith in the Soviet leadership of world communist movements and the delegates resolved to defeat the purpose of the Marshal Plan and oppose the imperialist policies of the capitalist camp. "Within a few weeks of the Cominform declaration communist parties in Western Europe moved into militant opposition to their national governments, and in France and Italy there were Communist-led general strikes, deploying millions of workers and openly revolutionary in aim. The entire European scene became charged with suspense and fear."²

No wonder, under the circumstances, the leader of the so-called 'free-world', the United States, through Truman Doctrine (1947) should come forward to pledge its support to the 'free peoples' who were fighting against the communist subversive

elements and outside pressure in their homelands. Soon after, George Kennan (as Mr. X) in his famous article 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct' advocated the principle 'of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies', and containment soon became the goal of US state policy. However, "the author of containment doctrine never viewed the Soviet Union as a military threat to the West, except during the Berlin blockade; he looked upon Stalinist Russia as a political threat to be dealt with in a prolonged and tortuous political struggle. Containment, however, was given a military cast which eventually resulted in the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact."³

"The steps taken by the Western occupiers in 1947-48 to establish a West German state threatened the Russian ambition to keep Germany whole and turn it communist" argues Calvocoressi, "they also foreshadowed the revival of an independent German power in world politics, armed and hostile to the USSR."⁴ What followed was a trial of strength between the Soviet Union on the one hand and the Western powers on the other centering around the siege of Berlin, but the Russian purpose was defeated in the long run when in May 1949, they decided to abandon the blockade.

Thus by the beginning of the later half of this century, it became quite clear to all that the USSR and the United States were


not allies anymore but they had begun viewing each other as the adversary involved in world-wide conspiracy to cause harm and create obstacles in the way of pursuance of respective national interest. What followed was known in the recent history as the age of cold war.\textsuperscript{5}

To many scholars, cold war was the single most important phenomenon which divided the world between two power blocs, and was responsible for the creation of antagonistic alliance-systems. In this bipolar world though a third force was constituted by the non-aligned nations, they do not come under the realm of our study.

Cold war has been analysed mostly in two different ways. The traditional way is to see cold war as a consequence of Soviet expansionism (most of the Western scholars subscribe to this view) and the revisionist approach which fixes the American economic imperialism as the cause of conflict. To the 'hard' revisionists, "whatever personal differences existed among individuals, all American policy-makers were dedicated to creating an American-dominated world order" to permit the American system in need for continuous economic expansion abroad to operate without hindrance. "When Russia refused to acquiesce in American world hegemony, particularly in Eastern Europe, she perforce came to be defined as

\textsuperscript{5} Some scholars traced the origin of cold war in the 1917 Bolshevik revolution itself. However, the term was first used by Bernard Baruch in Columbia, South Carolina, on 16 April 1947, in a speech in which he said, "Let us not be deceived - today we are in the midst of a cold war". The phrase was popularised by Walter Lippmann and became a metaphor to describe the situation that had arisen by the Spring of 1947. But the real age of cold war in its true sense with various dimensions certainly began in the 1950s.
the enemy".\textsuperscript{6} Whatever be the reasons of the cold war the end result was the formation of blocs, in which cold war was instrumental in drawing the line between the adversaries.\textsuperscript{7}

From the above discussion, we infer the series of threat perception by the actors after the end of the War as under: In 1945, the United States with its nuclear capability emerged as the most powerful state. On the other hand, the war was a great economic disaster for Russia. The Russians were apprehensive of a world order dominated by capitalist America to which, they feared, the Soviet Union would have to acquiesce in the long run.

To secure its borders from any potential threat from any European power (especially, Germany) in future and partly motivated by expansionist ideals, the Soviet Union sought to install 'friendly' governments ('hostile' to the US at the same time) in Eastern and Central Europe. Such activities were greatly resented by the Western powers and America. The US feared that the whole of Europe might fall to the communist designs.

Russia preferred to hold Western Europe as hostage to its large army, with the hope of preventing the US from launching a direct nuclear attack on its territory. On the other side, such a threat had full credibility for the war-weary Western Europe which accepted Russian invasion as an imminent possibility. For America the threat was more economic and political in nature (Russia then


\textsuperscript{7} For a detailed history of this period, see Loth, Wilfred. The Division of the World: 1941-1955 (London: Routledge, 1988).
had no strategic air force to deliver a direct attack on the United States).

Thus, a vague uncertainty over American nuclear threat led the Soviet Union to threaten Western Europe with its large land forces, and soon it was realized that the defence of Western Europe had become largely dependent on the American nuclear weapons. In this largely imbalanced order, the quest for military balance logically became the primary concern.

However, before we begin exploring the actual quest for military balance, we should analyse how the military alliances, in general, come into being, how they function in the international political system, how alliance formation becomes a precondition for balance and whether in reality a true balance can ever be achieved.

1.2 Alliance Norm and Choice

Alliances are smaller international communities within the great world community of nations. They constitute an indispensable part of international politics - a common feature to attract the attention of academicians, statesmen, politicians and strategists alike. Throughout the ages, historians have been recording the alliance-commitments of sovereign nations and the process continues, as alliances repeatedly prove themselves to be vital to the national survival of many states depending upon exigencies of time and political situation.

Nations in the international system seem to augment their military effectiveness through forming alliances with other nations
which share a bond of common interest when they feel that they can no longer rely upon themselves to cope with the challenges and threats (potential or actual) posed by a powerful adversary or a group of enemy states. Such an alliance presupposes setting up a formal arrangement where the constituent states are required to act in concert with one another for mutual benefit in managing national security of all the members.

Like many other elusive concepts of international politics, the term alliance too has been defined in many different ways by scholars like Liska, Rothstein, Fedder, Stephen Walt and many other men of academic repute. But perhaps, Osgood says it all when he writes that

an alliance is defined as a formal agreement that pledges states to cooperate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force, or to consider (unilaterally or in consultation with the allies) the use of force in specified circumstances.\(^8\)

Osgood further observes that an alliance

reflects a latent war community, based on general cooperation that goes beyond formal provisions and that the signatories must continually cultivate in order to preserve mutual confidence in each other's fidelity to specified obligations.\(^9\)

Like George Liska who made the pioneering effort of combining conflicting and cooperative perspectives of alliance, Osgood too stresses "both formal treaty commitments and informal attentions by

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\(^9\) Ibid. p. 19.
alliance partners" and so, opines Beer, "within the framework of this definition an alliance may be more an ongoing process than a stable condition."\textsuperscript{10} However, Liska maintains, that "cooperation in alliances is in large part the consequence of conflicts with adversaries and may submerge only temporarily the conflicts among allies."\textsuperscript{11}

Many writers regard alliance as a process, some view it as a type of international organization, even to the extent of being an international federation. Some regard alliances as nothing but "instruments of statecraft" and "as such they are morally neutral".\textsuperscript{12} Moreover, the policy of alliance is less a matter of principle than that of expediency.\textsuperscript{13} Along with these views, goes the generally accepted one: "an alliance is a formal agreement between two or more nations to collaborate on national security issues."\textsuperscript{14} At any rate, it appears that an alliance has two basic distinguishing features: "(1) the formality of the relationship (marked by an open or a secret treaty) and (2) the military focus

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Rothstein, Robert L. \textit{Alliances and Small Powers} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 47.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Morgenthau, Hans J. \textit{Politics Among Nations} [Indian Reprint] (New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers, 1985), p. 201.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Holsti, Ole R. et. al. \textit{Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances} (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), p. 4.
\end{itemize}
of the mutual effort." Jerome Slater, author of a monograph on "A Revaluation of Collective Security" (1965) however argues, that "the distinguishing character of alliance is the identification of an external threatening nation and the limited jurisdiction of alliance". It is obvious that the geographical area covered by alliance-treaty can never be world-wide and again the alliance norms can never be all-pervasive regarding mutual relations of the constituent states.

Thus, an alliance, is a limited set of nations, who face a common external threat, member-states having formally pledged explicit military commitments for each other's national survival upon the principle of 'all for one; one for all'. Such alliances are essentially defensive which seek to strike a balance of military effectiveness in the prevailing system. To confront the adversary, the member-states cooperate with each other. This cooperative aspect too is limited by conflicts and clash of interests among the allies themselves. Fedder maintains that "the


17 Alignment can be effected among nations with imperialist ambitions. Such an alignment disturbs the existing equilibrium to the detriment of international stability until a defensive counter-alliance is formed to create a new balance. For our purpose, by alliance we mean the latter type of phenomenon, i.e. an alliance comes into being only as a response to a threat. It is better perhaps to describe the instance of the first kind as 'threat-accumulation' which, however, should not be confused with the 'bandwagoning behaviour' (ally with the state that poses the major threat) of nations.
fact of entering into an alliance does not transform national actors into coalition actors. The discrete members of the alliance retain all of their individuality, all of their separateness despite assumptions to the contrary. This is, however, true in varying degrees in various alliances. The scope of independent action is not the same in every alliance-formation. Accordingly, the benefits of joining an alliance are reaped in varying degrees by various members.

There is also a marked difference in alliance-flexibility in a multipolar system and in a bipolar system. A multipolar system is characterised by more or less equal distribution of power among several major states and it is this "relatively equal distribution of power (which) brings about flexibility in alliance partner choice" in multipolar systems. On the other hand, in a bipolar system "the super powers are solidly committed by their own interest to defend their allies, hence their realignment is

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18 Fedder. No.16, p. 81.
19 An interesting analysis of alliance-formation and consequent benefits in the context of game-theory, has been provided by Nicholson. He has ascertained three basic models. One is zero sum: where a fixed amount of benefit is distributed among allies. One is non-zero sum: where formation of an alliance creates new benefits for members. And also a third kind of alliance, which not only creates benefits for its members but also for other actors who are unwilling or unable to join the alliance. These alliances are termed respectively as distributive, productive and alliance with externalities. For a detailed discussion, see Nicholson, Michael. Formal Theories in International Relations (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 116-146.
irrational. Re-alignment with each other is logically impossible, simply because there is no other state powerful enough to provide the motive".21 This, however, secures structural stability of alliances.

General Gallois was of the opinion that nuclear weapons had made alliances obsolete. Facing the risk of complete destruction, no nation would seek to jeopardize its own survival for others. Therefore all the countries must have their own nuclear arsenals to defend themselves from direct attack.22 Criticizing the Gallois formula, Kissinger observed that it marked the end of collective security and could lead to international chaos. He argued that "Gallois theory would.... transform a degree of uncertainty into a guarantee that the United States would not come to the assistance of its allies" (when the possibility of nuclear exchange was involved) "thus greatly simplifying an aggressor's calculations".23 However, Kissinger concedes that "nuclear war requires tight command of all weapons which is to some degree inconsistent with a coalition of sovereign states. Moreover, the enormous risks of nuclear warfare affect the credibility of traditional pledges of mutual assistance".24 In a review-article Modelski too envisages


24 Ibid. p. 12.
a hypothetical international system in which, because of the threat of nuclear devastation, the incidence of international wars is falling towards zero. In such a system, the necessity for alliances (because their essential feature is the expectation of war) would gradually disappear too. We might be getting a relatively alliance-free world, not because of the advocates of 'nonalignment' but merely because we are also getting a relatively war-free world - a possibility that is apt to be missed by studies stressing the contemporary and continuous features of alliances, and that weakens even more the assumption of the dominance of military problems in political associations.\(^{25}\)

However, the history of the post World War II period has shown that though nuclear weapons may cause certain adverse impact upon the internal cohesion of an alliance, they cannot provide sufficient grounds for alliance-disintegration.

Regarding the functions of an alliance, Osgood suggests four principal tasks, which are 'not necessarily mutually exclusive'. Most common and basic among them is accretion of power (to increase the strength of allies against another state or states). Secondly, an alliance functions as a contributor to the internal security of a weak state where the government faces internal opposition covertly supported from outside. Another prominent function of an alliance is "to restrain and control allies, particularly in order to safeguard one ally against actions of another that might endanger its security or otherwise jeopardize its interests." Finally, an alliance may seek to establish a stable pattern of international order which in its ultimate form becomes collective

According to Fedder, traditionally, the alliances have been performing one or more of the following functions:

1) Augmentative: A allies with B in order to add B's power to its own in relation to a given outside enemy. \( A + B > C \).

2) Pre-emptive: A allies with B in order to prevent B's power being added to that of A's enemy. \( A > C - B \).

3) Strategic: A enters into an alliance with B 'simply' for the purpose of obtaining the use of B's territory for A's strategic purposes.\(^{27}\)

In the light of the above discussion, we may conclude that an alliance which comes into existence as a response to threats and seeks to augment its military effectiveness to deter the enemy from launching the first strike by compelling the enemy to act in restraint is, of necessity, a product of the quest for military balance and stability of international order. The first and foremost purpose of alliances seems to be striking a balance between two (or more) rival camps. But then, what balance signifies in reality? Within the spectrum of conflicting views, let us discover common grounds of agreement.

\(^{26}\) Osgood. No. 8. pp.21-22.

1.3 Balance Politics and Alliances

Balance of power is an age old concept which seeks to establish a rough equilibrium in the distribution of power among international actors or groups of nations. Perfect equilibrium is a myth, nevertheless nation-states have shown a tendency to group and regroup into select clubs so that apparent vulnerability and weakness of a nation do not provide temptations to an aggressor. Such arrangements fall short of perfection on most occasions and accordingly alliances were formed and dissolved at regular intervals. However, as long as the nation-states remain the basic units of international political process, their pattern of behaviour would be influenced by balance in one form or the other and though the systems of alliances and balance of power should not be assumed to be one and the same, "alliances are a necessary function of balance of power operating within a multiple state system." 28

When we use terms like equilibrium or 'even distribution of power', one would do well to remember that we use those in a loose and broad sense. The concept of balance is itself confusing. Sceptically termed as ambiguous, the very use of balance concept has led to serious disagreements and heated debates. Consider the criticism of the Grotian conception of balance as an even distribution of power among nations, by the Machiavellian School.

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28 For an impressive analysis on this point, see Naidu, M.V. Alliances and Balance of Power (Delhi: Macmillan, 1974), pp.177-223.

29 Morgenthau. No.13, p.201.
They argue that practically there is no way of measuring relative power to find whether it is evenly distributed. Moreover, measurement is at best an estimate or a guess and by nature subjective. And finally, though there could be an approximation to even distribution sometimes, "all distribution of power is temporary, unstable and inconstant."\(^{30}\) The Machiavellian criticism is well-taken. Still, one should consider the fact that even in an unequal distribution of power among two alliances, if the basic necessity and requirements of security of the relatively less powerful combine are fulfilled then the extra power of the relatively strong group may fail to radically alter the existing power-equation and in effect a balance may come into existence, which at least superficially gives the impression of an 'almost-even' distribution of power. In the nuclear age, this phenomenon has been exemplified by 'minimum deterrence' posture and to many "it is a political and not a military balance that strategy of deterrence has achieved."\(^{31}\) We, however, accept it as the political ramification of military effectiveness.

For argument's sake, let us assume that Alliance X and Alliance Y are in pursuit of balance (see Fig.1.1). At Point E, their capabilities are absolutely evenly matched and at this equilibrium point a perfect balance exists. Any point within the circle area of X denotes Alliance X's combat-effectiveness capable


of causing irreparable damage in various degrees while any point within the circle-area of Y denotes such capability of Alliance Y. Balance at Point E (and for that matter, at any other point within the circles) is unstable as the result of a combined effect of technological changes, policy shifts, economic constraints and the like. Thus equilibrium point is inconstant and in continuous motion. Point $E_1$ signifies that Alliance X is slightly more powerful than Alliance Y, but Y retains the capability to inflict irreparable damage and destruction upon X (thereby minimizing X’s gains of victory to almost zero which would prevent X from attacking Y). In a veiled form, therefore, balance exists at this point too. Point $E_2$ signifies the same but here X and Y change roles. At Point $XY$, however, there is no longer a balance and X wins a clear gainful victory. So does Y at the $YX$ Point. In other words, as long as equilibrium point remains within the circles, balance exists. It is true that balance is unstable (considering moving points within the circles) but rough balance can be achieved for a considerable period of time between/among alliances (by placing the circles as opposed to each other/one another in a series) till one of them breaks down because of inherent weaknesses which surface in course of time and a faster pace of progress pursued by the enemy-alliance which takes it far ahead in the race for accumulation of strength.
In the twentieth-century, balance of power, however, is said to be replaced by, in Winston Churchill's words, the balance of terror. This balance of terror draws its strength from the assumption that if the adversaries (read: The Soviet Union and the United States) can maintain sufficient 'invulnerable' nuclear weapons ready to be delivered within a short span of time to cause 'unacceptable damage to either side regardless of who strikes first, then the rational way of doing things would be to avoid use of nuclear weapons because that would result in 'mutually assured destructions'. This is also the essence of Deterrence Theory. The fear of 'unacceptable damage' as the consequence of a nuclear exchange deters any of the adversaries from launching the pre-emptive first strike. Nuclear weapons, however, could also be used as a response to conventional superiority of the enemy.

32 For a comprehensive treatment of deterrence, see Kolkowicz, Roman (ed). The Logic of Nuclear Terror (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987).
Deterrence at any rate depends on balance in general and particularly on the balance (or a parity) of strategic nuclear weapons. But once the overkill capacity is achieved, do the extra missiles serve any effective purpose? Some say, they do. Because no weapon is only militarily useful, it has its political and psychological usefulness too. However, "over-reliance on the deterrent power of nuclear weapons builds a psychological resistance towards planning for other forms of war. This was the attitude of the United States during the earlier fifties, and European NATO largely clings to it." Strategic deterrence, is not the magic solution of all the problems. Because nuclear weapons are, all said and done, weapons of last resort and "in fact, from the de-escalation perspective, it is the very stability of mutual deterrence at the top that encourages freedom of action at lower levels." Deterrence, say Blake and Pole, rests on three expectations:

That the enemy will behave rationally, that the threat which daunts him now will continue to be the most daunting he could face, and that he will not find technical means by which he could counter-deter that threat.

To maintain the credibility of the threat technological progress becomes absolutely necessary. This, however, makes balance a fragile phenomenon again.

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33 Palit. No.31. pp.204-5.  
34 Ibid. p.205.  
"[The] concept of balance and imbalance is relevant to the use of armed force not only as a means of military aggression but also as an instrument of political pressure."36 But at the same time, it has been argued, that "the aim of military strategy, however destructive its methods, is unequivocal and positive - that is, to win the war, and in nuclear age this means seeking nuclear victory".37 No wonder Gray and Payne insisted that the US should possess the ability to win a nuclear war and argued that "judicious targeting and weapon procurement policies might be able to deny the USSR the assurance of political survival."38 In such a case, strategists would search for more and more sophisticated technology and weapons-systems in which growth of science and military-industrial complex had their own share of contribution. A rough equilibrium of 50:50, or symmetry, or numerical balance is dismissed for the quest of a safe margin, i.e. a 'favourable balance'.


In 1986, Gray proceeded to argue: "Theoretically, arms races, crises, and even wars can be won in the nuclear age. Moreover, painful though a nuclear victory would certainly be, there is no good reason to suppose that such a victory must be virtually indistinguishable from defeat or that such a victory would not be worth attaining, given the alternatives....escalation dominance is not an 'optional extra' or a fanciful notion forwarded by irresponsible theorists, instead it is pre-requisite for survival. Gray, Colin S. Nuclear Strategy and National Style (London: Hamilton Press, 1986), pp.259-60.
In the American argument advocating for a margin of safety as against the margin of superiority enjoyed by the Soviet Union, there certainly was an implicit understanding that the US margin of safety—claimed as necessary to deter Soviet nuclear blackmail—would be enough to enable the country to venture a little bit of blackmailing of its own. Such a policy by its very nature, invited similar reaction from the Soviet Union. But the American approach was based on two assumptions: 1) the Soviet Union, in the long run, would not be able to compete with the United States in a sophisticated arms race and 2) negotiations on arms control from a position of strength would eventually pay off. And it sure did.

From the above discussion it follows that alliances are formed to strike a balance in response of a threat but they do not stop there, they keep on adding to their strength and that is the reason the equilibrium point of balance is always in motion (the diligent reader may see Fig.1.1 once again). When equilibrium point goes out of the field of balance, it signifies the breakdown of an alliance, which has lost in the competition of continuous augmentation of power. However, because of actions-reactions and rectifying measures to maintain a credible balance adopted by the respective alliances, it takes time for the equilibrium point to go out of the field of balance, and till that period balance exists. In other words, "the degree of asymmetry must be limited in that neither party may be permitted a preponderance sufficient to eliminate the effective capability of the other to inflict
unacceptable damage, while still retaining his own."39

So we may accept balance as a dynamic and feedback relationship; though it is temporary, it is effective, it is not static but accommodative; it is not simple numerical balance but a match of combat capability (in terms of total impact) and finally, it is not impossible but a reality, howsoever unstable that reality might be.

One related question that arises is: how to measure a balance? Though thoroughly dealt in the next chapters, it will probably suffice to say here that numerical counts (the easiest way to measure military balance) lead us to a false sense of security/vulnerability. Aspects of 'quality' too are no less important. Moreover, geographical necessities, special disadvantages and relative vulnerabilities are factors which cannot be neglected. Each nation has its own obsessive perceptions of vulnerability (which may seem inconsequential to others) and accordingly it is difficult for them to agree on a simple parity. Again, factors like cohesiveness of alliance partners, capability of rapid mobilization etc. have their roles to play. In other words, along with the technical assessment of military balance by simple counts of weapons, weapon-systems, forces (and their characteristics); assessing figures of merit which are calculations from the simple counts intended to measure more adequately a government's capabilities to accomplish general missions using the available arsenal of weapons; and the final outcome and effect

39 Hockaday. No.36. p.75.
possibility measurement\textsuperscript{40} - the politics of military balance also assumes substantial importance, keeping in view the parts played by specific doctrines, tactics and strategies.

Even this 'bean count' is difficult to achieve, because of 'sometimes misleading, sometimes incomparable' data provided by sources cited as the most 'authoritative' like 'The Military Balance' published annually by the independent London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. In an interesting article Cordesman showed major differences in various counts taken up by various organizations on NATO - Warsaw Pact balance. He further argued that "The IISS Military Balance will never properly support any analysis of the NATO and the Warsaw Pact balance until it provides" among other things "the comparative capability of the US and USSR to deploy reinforcements over time."\textsuperscript{41} But "The Military Balance is a quantitative assessment of the personnel strengths and equipment holdings of the world's armed forces. It is in no way an assessment of their capabilities."\textsuperscript{42} Keeping in mind the difficulties which arise in this context, we should go for a rough assessment of balance between the NATO and the Warsaw Pact; as we do not accept balance as a match for weapon by weapon, force by force but in terms of total impact, a 'reliable comparison'

\textsuperscript{40} For further elaboration on these points see relevant portions of Baugh, William H. \textit{The Politics of Nuclear Balance} (New York: Longman, 1984).

\textsuperscript{41} Cordesman, Anthony H. "Fatal Flaws in Presenting the NATO/Warsaw Pact Balance", \textit{Armed Forces Journal International}, July 1988, p.68.

\textsuperscript{42} IISS. \textit{The Military balance 1991-92}, p.10.
would be more rewarding than an 'unreliable net assessment'.

I have preferred to discuss the quest for military balance under two separate headings: conventional and nuclear. While for assessing conventional balance, I have taken into consideration factors like numerical, technical, moral balance (in operational skill and combat spirit) including men, weapons, operational style, weapon qualities, troop spirit and troop determination, defence/offence war principles and strategic framework of operations; for nuclear balance I have given importance not so much to deliverable Warheads, Equivalent Megatonnage, Bomber Payload, Missile Throw-weight and readiness, reliability, command and control, and counter military potential (CMP) or lethality but to evolving strategies and consequent force-projection and balance-postures.43

These factors, however, cannot be analysed in a vacuum. Along the way, explorations into various other relevant themes like the alliance-behaviour of the members, internal cohesion, the question of burden - sharing and the problem of 'free-riders' etc., may prove helpful. Inferences can only be acquired through a comparative analysis of essential characteristics of the Atlantic

1.4 Threat Response: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

On April 4, 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came into being as a result of the pact signed in Washington by the representatives of twelve nations of the Atlantic Community. The treaty was signed by the Foreign Ministers of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. Later Greece and Turkey were invited to join and they formally acceded to the Alliance on February 18, 1952. West Germany was admitted to NATO in the spring of 1955 (now Germany, after the unification is a full-fledged member of the Organization) and the 16th member, Spain was to join in as late as 1982.

Though in Walter Lippmann's view, the common interest and the spirit of common existence among the members of the Atlantic Community which had existed de facto was recognized de jure by this pact (address delivered in Philadelphia, May 6, 1949), NATO was in effect 'a defensive gesture by the principal Western powers based on fears of Russian aggression, revulsion against the fact and nature of Russian domination in Eastern Europe, frustration turning to hostility in German affairs, the exposure of Western Europe as a result of war damage and demobilization and the failure to
internationalize the control of atomic energy." It was overwhelmingly realized that 'some long term commitment by the U.S. Government to the security of Western Europe... alone could restore the balance of power in Europe, which had been shattered by the eclipse of Germany, the emergence of a strong Russia and post-war weakness of Western Europe.' Thus, NATO was a response to threats; it was a product of the West European quest for a stable military balance with the Soviet Union.

Talks to form a military alliance though had already begun in 1948, the United States was still unwilling to formally join a permanent security arrangement. "Simply to pose the suggestion to almost anybody anywhere in the country would have produced an automatic response that 'entangling alliances' were out of the question for America - unnecessary, unthinkable, impossible". But when Berlin became the target of a complete communist takeover, the United States thought it prudent to make a formal alliance with Western Europe but it was still undecided about what kind of a treaty it would be, or more specifically, about the 'commitment clause', which would be the heart of the treaty. After much negotiation Article 5 of the Treaty was drafted and agreed upon which read as under:

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The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.\textsuperscript{47}

Once the text of the treaty was agreed upon, it was made public on March 18 in every capital. The formal signing ceremony was scheduled on April 4, 1949. It is interesting, however, to note that, "one week after the NATO treaty was unveiled, the State Department received from Moscow the first direct word from Stalin that he was ready to discuss calling off the Berlin blockade."\textsuperscript{48}

Despite Stalin's threat of dire consequences and offensive diplomatic propaganda against the formation of a unified military command, NATO gradually evolved into an elaborate military arrangement with the establishment of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and further developments in its military command structure. Under the political authority of the North Atlantic Council, the highest military authority is the NATO Military Committee responsible for recommending those measures considered necessary for the common defence of the NATO area. The area is divided among three major NATO commands (European, Atlantic and Channel) and a Regional Planning group for Canada and the

\textsuperscript{47} For the text of the Treaty, see Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{48} Cook, Dan. No.46. p.221.

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United States. All member countries assign forces to the integrated military command structure except France, Spain and Iceland.\textsuperscript{49} The International Military Staff have various divisions on the basis of tasks performed, viz. intelligence, plans and policy, operations, logistics and resources, communications and information systems, armaments and standardization. A number of military agencies were set up to function under the Military Committee such as the Advisory Group for Aerospace Research and Development (AGARD), the Military Agency for Standardization (MAS), the NATO Electronic Warfare Advisory Committee (NEWAC), the EURO/NATO Training Group (ENTG) along with nine specialized multinational communications and information systems committees, working groups or agencies, the SHAPE Air-Defence Technical Centre, Anti-Submarine Warfare Research Centre (at La Spezia, Italy) and the NATO Defense College (established in 1951 in France, but later shifted to Rome in the autumn of 1966 on the request of the French Government).

The impressive stabilized hierarchy of military command, however, failed to resolve the problems of internal cohesion within the alliance. There had been various issues upon which the alliance-partners showed unwillingness to form a consensus. The main challenge was posed by the national aspirations of the member-nations which caused frictions within the Alliance, so much so that

\textsuperscript{49} In 1966, the French Government announced that it intended to withdraw from NATO Integrated Military Command Structure and requested the transfer from French territory of the international headquarters and of alliance units, installations and bases not falling under French control. The 1986 referendum obliged Spain to be a member of the Alliance without participating in the Integrated Military Command Structure. Iceland had no military forces.
some writers like Timothy M. Stanley were "depressingly (sic.) more bitter about France and General de Gaulle than about any communist leader." Footnote 50 There had been occasions when 'national pressure in favour of national military products' became a contentious issue among members who manufactured military goods. This led Wayland Young to argue in 1963 that "it is unlikely that an alliance which has been unable to submerge national interests in such relatively painless matters will be able to agree upon 'guidelines' to the submersion of national existence in a common death". Footnote 51 Many other disputative issues arose over the years, to name a few, the differences over the deployment of the Euromissiles, disagreement between the US and Western Europe over the meaning and implications of Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA) Plan, differences over President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative and the continuation of US-West European disputes over industrial defence cooperation. Footnote 52

Two other important fields of internal friction involve questions of burden-sharing and NATO's Out-of-Area operations. "It has always been difficult to calculate" says Diehl, "who would pay and how much' for a benefit enjoyed by all... For NATO, the


Footnote 52 For further elaboration on this point, see, Langer, Peter H. Transatlantic Discord and NATO's Crisis of Cohesion (Washington: Pergamon - Brassey's, 1986).

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established standard has been based on the 'ability to pay'.\textsuperscript{53} Apparently, nations have defaulted in their dues and to quote Diehl:

In NATO, defence and deterrence against Soviet aggression can be thought of as a public good... This 'public good' interpretation lends credence to U.S. claims that the Europeans have exploited the situation. While this may be true to some degree, the explanation is not that simple. The U.S. pays heavily for the cost of Europe's defence partly because the 'free-riders' abuse the situation but also because of America's leadership ambitions and the strategy that NATO provides political and economic benefits to U.S. interests.\textsuperscript{54}

Coupled with the question of Out-of-Area operations (based on the assumption that deterring Soviet threats to Europe depends on deterring the projection of Soviet military power elsewhere) burden-sharing became a cumbersome process. The approaches of the U.S. and the European powers often differ.\textsuperscript{55} No wonder, Western European nations are sceptical about acquiring responsibilities beyond the Treaty area to further America's interests at the cost of European contributions.

Policy-differences too had a malefic effect on the internal cohesion of the Organization. In the decade, starting in the mid-1970s, the "Europeans believed that détente in Europe should be


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. p.32.

insulated from Soviet-American confrontations elsewhere." Whereas the "American policy was based on a sharply different view—both of the Soviets and of Western Europe's proper role in the audience. The Carter and Reagan administration believed that because NATO was America's major military investment and the Europeans were America's major allies, Europe should not be a safe zone for détente (as the European's seemed to wish), but a pressure point where the Soviets could be punished for bad behaviour elsewhere."\(^5\)

This American view was a logical concomitant of the fact that "the security managers of the United States are global thinkers who see the entire world as a single strategic stage, its separate theatres linked with each other."\(^6\) However, the result was, at many European quarters the very survival of NATO was thought to be in jeopardy.

Still, despite the fact that there have been serious disagreements over a number of issues in the Organization (which sometimes even took the form of a duel among the 'Europeanists' and the 'Atlanticists') and differences in the perception of the Soviet intention and capabilities, the Soviet threat till very recently has been menacing enough to bind all the members of the Organization together. As we have mentioned earlier, cooperation


\(^6\) Zuberi, M. "The Global Electronic Battlefield" in Satish Kumar (ed.) *Yearbook on India’s Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1985). For Young "it is geography which dictates that what is tactical to Washington and Moscow is strategic to London, Bonn and Warsaw." Young. No. 50, p. 38.
among allies is the result of conflict with the adversary. Peacetime disagreements among alliance-partners are not the best indicators of differences at the time of war with the enemy; in other words, it is difficult for an adversary to effectively exploit the differences among the alliance-partners of the opposite camp at the time of war, in a manner suitable to its preferences. In as late as 1989, the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels (29-30 May) announced:

For the foreseeable future, there is no alternative to the Alliance Strategy for the prevention of war. This is a strategy of deterrence based upon an appropriate mix of adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces which will continue to be kept up-to-date where necessary...

The presence of North American conventional and nuclear weapons in Europe remains vital to the security of Europe just as Europe’s security is vital to that of North America. Maintenance of this relationship requires that the allies fulfil their essential commitments in support of the common defence. Each of our countries will accordingly assume its fair share of the risks, roles and responsibilities of the Alliance partnership.

A sceptical mind may find grains of doubt hidden in this declaration, which the concinnity of the text fails to cover effectively. The problem of internal cohesion certainly affects the degree of war preparedness at peacetime, as disputes over burden-sharing may lead to unwanted cuts in the budget and default in paying dues which adversely influence the course of the quest for military balance in turn.

Over the years, the NATO strategies for war and peace, its tactics and doctrines and consequent quantitative and qualitative development of weapons and forces, and arms control followed the
waves of the cold war, détente, the neo-cold war and finally the changes following the demise of the 'threat' altogether. These aspects, which have direct bearings upon the balance-assessment will be discussed in the next chapters.

In its life, NATO has seen the rise (and also the demise) of a counter-alliance - the Warsaw Pact. The Pact, which accentuated the Soviet threat, was instrumental in providing rationale for the existence and continuance of NATO. On the other hand, its demise made it possible to give credence to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and enabled NATO's Secretary-General Manfred Wörner to declare in Moscow, "we intend to steer change in Europe so that there are no loosers, only winners." With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Soviet threat vanished. "Military capabilities per se do not constitute a military threat" argues Lübremeier, "a state is a potential aggressor depending on its leadership and whether it is perceived as much by another state, when its military capabilities are seen as threatening because of suspicions about its political intentions." 1990 was the year of change: Eastern Europe changed beyond recognition. Two German states hitherto divided into two rival camps had been unified. Soviet policies changed in a fundamental way. The Warsaw Pact crumbled. However, NATO survived and outlived 'the threat'. The very fact that it has survived, makes it redundant. Without a


perceptible military threat, a security alliance loses its raison
d\'etre and in effect becomes largely a political organization in
its function, even if all its outward features of the military
appearance persist.

At the London Summit in July 1990, NATO leaders proudly
announced that the North Atlantic Alliance was 'the most successful
defensive alliance in history'. The case of the Warsaw Pact reveals
a different story and requires a look into its own process of
threat perception and internal cohesion.

1.5 The Rise (and the demise) of the Warsaw Pact
The Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO; popularly the Warsaw Pact) was
established on May 14, 1955 at Warsaw, with Albania (which,
however, formally withdrew from the Alliance in 1968), Bulgaria,
Czechoslovakia (Czech and Slovakia are two separate independent
nations today), East Germany (GDR), Hungary, Poland, Rumania and
Soviet Union as its members. The Pact was formed, as the communists
argued, to protect 'socialism' from the threat of West German
'revanchism' and American 'imperialism'; NATO's decision to build
up military forces in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and to
integrate them into the NATO structure being the apparent reason
for the establishment of the Pact.

Describing NATO as the tool of the American imperialism, Sashi
Bhushan argued that "it was the formation of NATO and the inclusion
of the FRG in it that faced the European socialist States with the
necessity of improving their joint defence and setting up their own
military-political organization. The Warsaw Treaty Organization was created in reply to NATO". But NATO in itself was not a threat, as the Soviet Union and its allies did not feel it necessary to form their own alliance for full six years even after the formation of the Atlantic alliance. The threat of the revival of German militarism was, however, of substantial importance.

Development of Western-backed alliances outside Europe also as 'relevant considerations' has been referred to by authors who follow the Soviet line. It was to counter global bloc politics of 'anti-communism' that the Warsaw Pact was established. If this explanation is valid, "this suggests that the WTO was seen as serving a global political/diplomatic purpose of demonstrating the USSR's ability to form its own alliance, but that is amounted to an indirect admission of weakness since the USSR was unable to call on an alliance system as geographically widespread as the USA's." In May 1955, the Khrushchev-Bulganin leadership was keen to avoid the Stalinist tactics of force and sought good relations with Europe in general. In Robin Remington’s analysis, "the key note of Soviet East-West Policy was one of peace, disarmament, détente

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which had been reflected in the language of the Warsaw Treaty."\textsuperscript{63}

The emphasis was not so much on military but rather on the political aspect of the organization and the Pact was primarily designed to be a 'prop for Soviet strategy' following Khrushchev's drive towards a détente with the West. "The Soviet leaders needed a political organization through which they could continue to transmit directives to their East European allies, and organize East European support for Soviet policies", says Mackintosh, "this organization should have at least the appearance of being a forum in which East European views could be taken into account by the Russians, and thus help to reduce the visible signs of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe."\textsuperscript{64} In other words, the Warsaw Pact provided an example of a great power entering a formal unequal alliance (public pronouncements notwithstanding) to discipline and control its allies more effectively and at the same time to disguise the exercise of power over a lesser ally's actions from world view.

Though one might argue, that the Pact was forced upon the lesser allies by the Soviet Union, the fear of threat from West Germany and the United States was no less a motivating factor for the countries of Eastern Europe to enter into an alliance. Soviet support was regarded as necessary to deter threats of every kind from the West and an alliance was thought of as a guarantee of the


rule of communist regimes in these states, which were threatened by the American programme of 'liberation' during the 1950s. All these states were relatively small countries to decide about the national security matters with great powers playing their own power-games around them. An alliance with a superpower, sharing a common ideology, meant securing the national frontiers and prevention of covert capitalist penetration. For instance, East Berlin's communist leadership sought from the USSR a permanent guarantee—the guarantee of GDR's existence.65 The Pact was apparently beneficial for the interest of all the partners as a whole, and the agreement was called 'The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.'

In the Treaty, the parties agreed to 'refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force' (Article 1); declared their readiness to promote international security through a general reduction of armaments (Article 2); called for immediate consultation among members to ensure joint defence in case of threat of an attack (Article 3) and in the event of an armed attack, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, assistance in taking 'necessary joint measures' (Article 4). While Article 5 established a 'joint command' for the armed forces, a Political Consultative Committee was set up by Article 6. Members were not allowed to join any other alliance or coalition which had purposes not conforming to the Warsaw Treaty

(Article 7), but cooperation among the members for strengthening of economic and cultural relations was emphasised (Article 8). Further, the treaty was also open to other nations who shared its aims 'irrespective of their social and state system' (Article 9). The treaty was initially to stay in force for twenty years and if the parties had not denounced it before the expiration of its term, it was to remain effective for another ten years. But it could have been dissolved had a General European Treaty of Collective Security come in force in the meantime.

The Pact's military command structure is not clearly specified in the Soviet sources. The Political Consultative Committee (PCC), which was the supreme body of the Organization, was also entrusted with the task of working out decisions on 'the most important problems connected with the strengthening of the defence

66 On 26 April 1985, the Treaty was renewed for another 'twenty plus ten' years. However, because of various reasons it ceased to be effective in 1990.

67 One interesting point can be found in Roy Chowdhury's analysis. He argues: While the Western Pact does not in terms refer to any specific threat of communist aggression as furnishing the raison detre of their creation, the Warsaw Pact expressly claims its origin as a necessary step against the situation arising out of the ratification of Paris agreements, 'which provide for the constitution of a new military group in the form of a "West European Union", with the participation of a remilitarized West Germany and its inclusion in the North Atlantic bloc, thereby increasing the danger of a new war and creating a threat to the national security of peace-loving states'. In so far as the Warsaw Pact has pre-determined the existence of a threat to the international peace and security, by the unilateral decision of its members, it has purported to usurp the power of the Security Council under Article 39 of the Charter. See Roy Chowdhury, Subrata. Military Alliances and Neutrality in War and Peace (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1966), p.61. For the Text of the Warsaw Treaty, see Appendix B.
capability' and at sessions of the PCC the degree of fulfillment of
the states partly to the Treaty to collective defence (was)
examined. Like the PCC, the Joint Command (JC) too was
established under the Treaty and the Joint Armed Forces (JAFs) were
set up to function under the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) with a
multinational staff. The PCC appointed the C-in-C and since 1955,
only Soviet officers had been selected for the post. There had been
a reorganization in March 1969, in which a Committee of Defence
Ministers (CDM) was established. Study of Soviet documents also
suggest that a Military Council (MC) and probably a Technological
Committee (TC) and a Military and Science and Technology Council
(MSTC) had also been formed. The MC was concerned with the
procurement of arms and military equipment with added
responsibility for logistics and air-defence and the JC was
entrusted with the charge of the integration of forces into the
JAFs. The CDM received advice from the MC and supervised the Joint
command's work. The multinational JAFs staff was concerned with
issues regarding 'the activity and preparedness of the WTO's troops
and fleets and to work with the allied staffs in preparing
manoeuvres, meeting and training, and...carrying out the
recommendations of the CDM and the Military Council.' This
reorganization, while on the one hand, provided new bodies for
consultation among the allies, but at the same time, signified an
attempt to tighten up Soviet military control over the joint

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68 Holden. No. 62, p. 4.
69 Ibid. p. 42 ff.

42
command.

There was prevalent this traditional assumption that the East European political and military system represented a monolithic bloc. "In the West, it has been gradually accepted that apart from a further standardization of weapons, the Warsaw Treaty Organization simply continued as an extension of the Soviet early warning and air-defence system."70 The military command structure of the Warsaw Pact, in comparison with that of the USSR itself, appeared to be not such an elaborate arrangement. The reason was, perhaps, the Soviet intention of monopolizing the crucial areas of the military which led its allies to criticize what they called the Soviet domination of the WTO. This gave birth to internal frictions.

As allies, the Eastern European nations were relatively unreliable. It had been suggested that there was a basic 'fault-line' - not unlike a seismological fault - running between the Soviet Union and its allies, which, if subjected to great stress, could rupture with serious ramifications for the Soviet fortunes.71 Moscow's relations with its allies were never smooth and easy. Faith in a common ideology could not assuage the national feeling of antagonism towards Soviet insistence on control of domestic political processes in East European countries. Anti-Sovietism found open expression in Poland and Hungary (in which Soviet troops

70 Remington. No. 63, p. 21.

were used to quell the rebellions), political unrest rocked Rumania, resentment grew in East Germany and in 1968 there was a full-fledged allied socialist invasion against Czechoslovakia. Albania could resist Soviet pressure tactics with help from the Chinese and was excluded from WTO councils for all practical purposes, though not on paper, from 1962. It formally withdrew from the Organization after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. However, in such cases, it was found that the local forces of the lesser allies were not willing to follow Soviet orders in maintaining internal order and serious doubts had been raised regarding the reliability of the East European forces in an actual war with the West.

On this reliability issue, Nelson concluded that there was a 'high probability that the mobilization potential of Soviet allies would face serious impediments were hostilities to occur.' The Warsaw Pact, according to Nelson, was 'a symbol of Soviet weakness than of Soviet strength.' And in 1986, he proceeded to argue that 'without cohesion, however, the USSR will have very little choice other than to witness the continuing evolution of an alliance they created but no longer entirely command.' Still, the Pact afforded some advantage to the East European states - for instance, the protection of Soviet 'nuclear umbrella' and it did provide 'some hedge against overweening Soviet military pressure' though in the


73 Ibid. pp. 266-267.

ultimate analysis, waging the war remained Soviet prerogative and power within the WTO tied with the USSR.\textsuperscript{75}

It was logical that with more and more reliance on nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union would desire that its allies would spend more to raise an effective conventional army, thereby, relieving the USSR from spending a substantial amount on conventional weapons and forces. With the passage of time, the USSR, despite its policy of détente and reconciliation with Europe, was obliged to make Warsaw Pact a viable military alliance for which it had to give due respect to the national aspirations of the local forces of its lesser allies.

With the gradual erosion of the Soviet Union's superpower status, the coming of the era of the glasnost and perestroika and Mikhail Gorbachev's insistence that the task of ensuring security was a political problem, to be resolved only by political means,\textsuperscript{76} Eastern Europe slowly went out of Soviet control and by 1990 it was clear that the Warsaw Pact would not exist for long. East European nations discarded the conservative communist ideology and jumped into an era of troubled transition. Consequently, the Warsaw Pact died a natural death. We have mentioned earlier, competition among alliances might lead one to victory over another even without entering into direct conflict and the Warsaw Pact, in this case,


\textsuperscript{76} Gorbachev, Mikhail. Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress (Moscow; Novosti Press, 1986), p. 81.
could not remain a viable counter-balance of the NATO in the competition for augmentation of military strength which led President George Bush to observe that "The United States is the leader of the West, that has become the leader of the world". In other words, it was a blunt admission of the fact that a long-lasting balance had broken down.

Summary

An alliance is the product of the quest for a military balance and is essentially a threat response. While the socialist imperialism of the Soviet Union could be cited as the root cause of emergence of the NATO, the threat of German revanchism backed by NATO was the apparent reason for the establishment of the Warsaw Pact. The primary function of an alliance is to establish and maintain balance, which is inconstant and unstable, but still is a realistic goal. Therefore, while for NATO, it was a chase for an apparently elusive balance through continuous augmentation of military power, the Warsaw Pact, on the other hand, reacted in a similar fashion, with the obsession that any actions on NATO's part to augment its existing military power constituted a blow to the prevailing balance and had to be rectified by augmentation of military strength on the part of the Pact. Once the two alliances were trapped into this cycle of action-reaction, it became increasingly difficult for them to agree on some kind of parity. The quest for balance, in effect, became a quest for superiority.

77 State of the Union Address, January 28, 1992.
None of the alliances were free from internal tensions and this lack of cohesion had an adverse effect upon their peacetime preparedness for war. However, willingness to participate in hostilities and reliability of the forces of the lesser allies have never been expected to be total. In these respects, the Pact was obviously a weaker alliance than the NATO.

In the context of both the blocs’ military doctrines and strategy, we would seek to analyse and examine the combat capability of the Warsaw Pact and the Atlantic Alliance in the next Chapter, in respect of nuclear weapons and forces, and see whether a balance was achieved between them in this field.