PREFACE

This study seeks to analyse and assess the role of regional international organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Since the establishment of the United Nations, international organizations, both regional and universal, have become a significant part of the study of International Politics. As the United Nations Charter permits regional organizations to play a useful complementary role in ensuring peace and security, it will be interesting to inquire whether regional organizations as instruments of international security reinforce or undermine the role of the United Nations. The unprecedented growth of regional organizations particularly after 1945 has raised a number of problems of a fundamental nature relating to the proper role of regional organizations and their relationship with the United Nations.

Most of the scholarly writings on regionalism, though useful in several ways, have not given due importance to the role of regional organizations and their relationship with the United Nations. Perhaps only the United Nations Institute For Training And Research (UNITAR) is the only organization so far to have ventured to undertake such a research project in order to examine the areas of co-operation and competition and also to determine the extent of the jurisdictional conflict between the United Nations and the regional inter-Governmental organizations.

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The present study is developed more or less on the lines of the UNITAR project, with which I had the privilege of being associated during my field-trip to the Headquarters of the United Nations, New York, in 1972. However, the present study is very limited in scope.

It is not the purpose of this study to make a thorough examination of the different regional organizations that exist today, or even all the aspects of selected organizations. What is attempted here is a comparative evaluation of the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international security. The focus is on enforcement action by regional organizations whether based on Article 51 or Article 53 of the Charter of the United Nations. The term "enforcement action" is used here to mean sanctions -- diplomatic, economic, and military. It is on this aspect that there has been maximum disharmony between the United Nations and the regional organizations.

The case studies in this work relate to three important regional organizations. An attempt has been made to compare and analyse the roles of these organisations in certain specific crises: (i) The Cuban Missile crisis of 1962 and the Dominican Republic crisis of 1965 involving the Organization of American States (OAS); (ii) The Lebanese crisis of 1963 and the Kuwait crisis of 1961 involving the League of Arab States (LAS); and (iii) the Hungarian crisis of 1956 and the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968 involving the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO).
These three regional organizations represent the three main geographic and political segments of the world, namely, the Western Hemisphere, the Third World, and the Communist Bloc. While the Arab League is essentially a regional organization of small nations, the other two are Super Power dominated vertical regional organizations.

The methodology of the study is descriptive-cum-analytical. An attempt has been made to examine the relevant UN Charter provisions and the interaction between the United Nations and the regional organizations in conflict resolution. The idea is to ascertain the relevance of these organizations in the contemporary international politics. Has the fabric of international security been strengthened by regional organizations under the United Nations Charter? Or have regional international organizations become the handiwork of major Powers to manipulate crisis situations to tighten their dominant hold in the respective areas and to reduce the smaller nations into client states and satellites? Have their activities hindered or helped the United Nations as an instrument of international security? What should be the proper relationship between the regional organizations and the United Nations? What are the particular aspects of contemporary international politics that have influenced the evolution of regional-universal relationships? What are the prospects of a mutually reinforcing reintegration of regional-universal forces? An attempt has been made in this study to seek answers to these questions.