I
Force in International Relations

A Prince should consider peace only as a breathing time, which gives him leisure to contrive, and furnishes an ability to execute, military plans.

Machiavelli, The Prince

The strategic approach to international relations is the one which takes account of the part played by force, or the threat of force, in the international system. The approach is both descriptive and prescriptive in the sense that it analyses the extent to which states have the capacity to use or threaten the use of armed force in their relations, and it also recommends policies which will enable states to operate in an international system which is conducive to such conditions. This approach visualizes the world in terms of possible armed conflict.

Before progressing any farther towards understanding international conflict and the use of force, it is necessary to discuss what the theory of the use of force in international relations consists of and from where it is derived. Contemporary exponents of power politics have actually drawn upon a rich conceptual heritage established by Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes.

Heritage of the Theory of Force:

The Athenian general Thucydides (460-400 B.C.) was a scientific historian also and, within the pages of The Peloponnesian War, he has proceeded systematically to develop a theory of power politics. His basic thesis was that all political action was an attempt by historical
actors to effectuate their self interests through exploitation of the degree of power they possess at the expense of, and also as limited by, the self interests and relative power of other actors; and this clash of interests / power creates a balance of power in which each actor’s physical survival is constantly at stake. For Thucydides, power politics embraced the entire spectrum of political action. He believed that politics among city-states was an effectuation of their own interests based upon consideration of their respective powers. He equated politics with the quintessential zero-sum game, in which any player’s gains are exactly balanced by the losses of others.

While analyzing the causes and results of the Peleponnesian war, Thucydides concludes that military expediency prevailed over justice when the Athenians entered into a defensive alliance with Corcyra. In foreign affairs, justice has no significance of its own but can have a meaning only when two equally powerful city-states seek to avoid a mutually destructive war by resolving their disputes in a peaceful manner. When there is no such equality, only a test of arms determines upon which side “justice” lies. The city state of Corcyra had sent a delegation to Athens to secure an alliance against Corinth, which itself had sent a delegation to prevent such an alliance. The delegation from Corinth had maintained that considerations of justice must be treated as paramount: “Abstinence from all injustice to other first-rate powers is a greater tower of strength than anything that can be gained by a sacrifice of paramount tranquility for an apparent temporary advantage” (3). On the other hand, the envoys from Corcyra invoked Athenian interest as the principal factor that should be weighed in determination of their request for an alliance (4). Thucydides has counterposed the power/interest argument of Corcyra to that of the Corinthians. He draws a dichotomy between justice and politics, which are said to comprise two different worlds where the operational rules are fundamentally different. Justice has any meaning among states if their power is equally distributed. Thus, foreign affairs have to remain unregulated except by considerations of pure power politics. (This theme of Thucydides was developed to its logical conclusion by Machiavelli in The Prince). He treats power politics as a universal and external law of history as it describes the course of interaction among city-states prescribing the type of behaviour which one city-state must exhibit towards all others to ensure continued survival. Foreign affairs is characterized by a state of constant warfare or a truce or an armistice, the main purpose of which is to prepare for renewed warfare. Peace cannot be there but only a set of shifting alliances which constitute
temporary balance of power in which conflict between, subjugation by, and elimination of the respective actors is the main rule of the game. For Thucydides, the only choice for man is between performance or non-performance of those actions which might be essential for survival. It might be possible for man to understand the principles of power politics but not to prevent, escape or control their inexorable operation. If he is foolish enough to try (as Melians did, when instead of accepting the inexorability of the logic of surrender before Athens in view of their superiority of arms, they relied on vagueness of justice, the uncertainties of war, the help from the gods, and their alliance with Sparta) (5) the destiny in foreign affairs is most often fatal, as was for the Melians. For Thucydides, the reason for the hegemony of power-politics in foreign and domestic affairs of a city-state was human nature itself, reflecting “lust for power arising from greed and ambition and acting as the primal force behind the rule of power and interest in politics” (6). Thucydides’ description of power politics involves a degree of personal tragedy because the machinations of power politics finally led to the subjugation of Athens by Sparta, at the end of the war.

On the foundation erected by Thucydides earlier, Machiavelli constructed his own theory of power politics in The Prince. Machiavelli cites the source of his inspiration the teachings of the ancients (7); and specifically mentions Thucydides by name in reference to an incident narrated in the latter’s work in support of his own proposition that men of extraordinary merit are neglected by republics in times of peace (8). The exposition given by Thucydides of the theory of power politics, and his own experience in foreign and domestic politics, convinced Machiavelli of the truth and usefulness of this doctrine. Since The Prince was so much based on the philosophy behind The Peleponnesian War, it was truly revolutionary in philosophical thought in the sense that the Latin word revolvere means “to roll backwards”.

For Machiavelli, power politics was the only guarantee of survival among states and the only reliably cohesive element within a new state as well. The prince has no friends but only present and potential adversaries and enemies, both domestic and foreign. Therefore, there can be no mitigation in the ferocity of application of power politics by the prince, who has to wage physical warfare unremittingly against foreign rivals and periodically (when necessary) against his own subjects and has to be continuously engaged in psychological warfare in all possible ways and upon all appropriate occasions (9). In effect, it was not necessary that the prince have some
good qualities, but only that he appear to have them, for “men are so simple-minded and so dominated by their present needs that one who deceives will always find one who will allow himself to be deceived”(10). Machiavelli sees no limitation on the exercise of power politics but the one that may be self-imposed, and that too merely to achieve and maintain the maximum degree of political aggrandizement and exploitation permissible under the given historical circumstances.

Machiavelli ardently wanted the destruction of the balance of power system in international politics, and wanted to replace it with what contemporary international political scientists call an authoritarian or hierarchical system (11). He wanted the prince to first consolidate his position within his princedom, then to unite Italy by conquering disparate political units and finally to liberate Italy from foreign interventionists and thus to establish a second Roman Empire (12).

Machiavelli believed that the vast majority of men are afraid to assume any political responsibility and are willing to surrender their freedom to the prince who possesses the force of character requisite to make the decisions that power politics demands. The prince has to respond appropriately, utilizing his own beastly character to tame the unruly nature of his subjects; because the political unreliability of the common man is most assuredly cured by the techniques of power-politics (13). The despicable nature of man makes power-politics an historical necessity. Like Thucydides, Machiavelli’s theory of power-politics was based on his cynical conception of the nature of man. Machiavelli believed (14) that the prince is governed by a moral system that is different from that which pertains to the mass of common man, as the prince is subject only to the unique moral code of power-politics. It is only the violation of the law of power-politics that would constitute the sin for a prince; and success or failure is the reward or punishment for the prince for obeying or disobeying the law of power-politics. For Machiavelli, history is written by the conquerors and, if the prince wants to be successful and to be remembered well, he must force his way into their select brotherhood; because there can be no second choice for the prince and, therefore, he must be absolutely certain of the methods he engages on the first attempt (15). The only safe and sure tactics to use in the zero sum game of interaction among the states are those of power-politics.

Machiavelli repudiates the Augustinian doctrine of the “just war “(16) and believes that the only ‘just’ war was that which was
necessary. A war which is necessary has to be fought whether it is just or unjust. Requirement of necessity eliminated the few potential reasons [i.e., religious, ideological] for resorting to war. Since necessity is a condition for the legitimate right of self-defense, contemporary writers on international law have traced the political foundation of international law, in the principles of power-politics, to this Machiavellian doctrine (17). Law is irrelevant in the face of power-politics because the strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must and, as Thucydides had observed, right comes into picture only between equals in power. Therefore, Machiavelli believes that in political affairs law has no significance of its own and is basically a function and product of power relationships, which is ultimately based on coercion and military force (18).

Machiavelli’s contribution to the understanding of war rests in his redefinition of war, peace and the good man. There is no notion of peace as distinct from war; and peace is little more than a period of thought and preparation about war. The prince should not think in terms of peace, for states do not exist for peace. The prince has to make an amoral decision to conduct war when to do so would reduce afflictions within the state, hence serving the public safety and national interest. The key to this decision was to choose the best time for war. A threat could be manufactured even if it did not exist, when to do so would be in the national interest. The call to war has to be at the proper time and in the national interest, and this idea was opposite to the classical notion of war.

It was the study of the Roman history (and by the Roman historians) that helped Machiavelli to understand the international system of his time in which states were steadily growing and expanding, were seeking to extend their power, influence and territories and were fighting, for their existence, those who were trying to subdue them. As Felix Gilbert says, "Machiavelli was one of the first to grasp the competitive nature of the modern state system and to conclude that the existence of a state depends on its capacity for war" (19).

Thomas Hobbes, in Leviathan, imbibed the ideas of both Thucydides and Machiavelli and, on the operational dynamics of power-politics, laid the foundations of the modern civil society.

Like Thucydides and Machiavelli, Hobbes had a profoundly cynical conception of human nature and believed that men are impelled by a biological-psychological imperative to acquire power over others in order to guarantee their own self-preservation and
welfare (20). Since only domination over others would provide the maximum probability of continued existence, it becomes essential for men to dominate, enslave or kill another; and this *animus dominandi* of human nature precipitates a state of war among all men. This state of war is the state of nature where “the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” (21). Hobbes saw three contemporary historical analogies to his state of nature: i- the primitive conditions of the new world ; ii- times of civil war; and, iii-the system of international politics . The states of the world exist in the state of nature tantamount to a state of war, and, therefore, in this system of international relations the lives of states would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”. The state of nature among states is characterized by a distinguishing characteristic. “But because they uphold thereby, the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men” (22). Since that age was one of mercantilism, not interdependence, it could have been concluded that eternal warfare among states would lead eventually to mass impoverishment for the citizens of all states. All the concepts of peace, morality or justice can exist only within civil society, not before it, without it or between civil societies. Thus, in the inter-state war, nothing is unjust and “force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues” (23). Since there is no absolute power above the states which could compel mutual, reciprocal respect for the rights of each other, in international relations, power-politics is natural, amoral and inevitable. Such international relations would be characterized by power-politics and war unless and until the states enter into a multi-lateral social contract, establishing an absolute sovereign, with the power to impose its will for the common good. Since this seems improbable, international relations are destined to remain the state of nature, or a state of war. Each state has to safeguard itself by any means, either alone or in the form of a “open league between commonwealths”. The creation of such an organization, in the form of a confederation, would mean the formation of a balance of power system for international relations.

A modern balance of power system, as envisaged by Morton Kaplan (24) is characterized by the following essential rules:

i- Act to increase capabilities but negotiate rather than fight;
ii- Fight rather than pass up an opportunity to increase capabilities;
iii- Stop fighting rather than eliminate an essential national actor;
iv- Act to oppose any coalition or single actor which tends to assume a position of predominance with respect to the rest of the system;
v- Act to constrain actors who subscribe to supranational organizing principles;
vi- Permit defeated or constrained essential national actors to re-enter the system as acceptable role partners or act to bring some previously inessential actor within the essential actor classification. Treat all essential actors as accountable role partners.

Such a system of balance of power, for Hobbes, would ensure that machinations of any one state, or one prince, for universal hegemony, do not succeed. In the operation of such a system, power-politics would remain the operative dynamic of international relations, and would predominate until one system itself undergoes a fundamental change and becomes a supranational system in which the states create "a common power to keep them all in awe" (25).

This Hobbesian state of war among the states (who are continually threatened by the spectre of cataclysmic death for massive nuclear weapons-systems) is sought to be contained by Article 2 (40) of the Charter of the U.N.O.: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations".

Stanley Hoffmann (26) gives a good analysis of Rousseau's conception of international relations as different from that of Hobbes in which he builds up the points of agreement between Rousseau and modern political realists:

i- the non-existence of a general society of mankind;
ii- the nation state system exacerbates conflict;
iii- international commerce does not breed peace, and interdependence can easily lead to competition;
iv- international law is either ineffective or irrelevant to international hostility;
v- states are and will be unwilling to guarantee the peace through the establishment of international organizations.
Similarly, modern political realists disagree with Rousseau’s assertions on international politics:

i-war is not essentially a social institution because war simply reflects a basic human drive for domination;

iii-it is inevitable for a state to conduct a nationalistic foreign policy;

iv-it is impossible for states to achieve autonomy, isolation and autarky.

All this is so because, according to Rousseau, “the very intercourse of nations breed conflict (27) and, so, the balance of power, the threat or use of force, and power-politics will remain permanent features of international politics.

Theories about Social Order, Force and International Relations

There is an assertion that the type of social order does not matter; and that the decisive thing is the division of the world into separate units. The logic of separateness and competition makes military force an inherent element of the structure of international relations. This view is shared by Thucydides, Rousseau and Raymond Aron. This view holds that any class structure or economic system cannot provide, by itself, the stability and peace to the world because its (whatever) pacific qualities will be negated by the international system. Another related view, shared by Konrad Lorenz, Nietzsche and Spengler, sees modern society as aggravating the factors that lead to war, because society magnifies and exacerbates the aggressive tendencies of human nature, all its frictions and frustrations. Another view, shared by Montesqueu, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte and Benjamin Constant, sees a fundamental opposition between military and feudal societies on the one hand and industrial societies, on the other. It believes that the industrial society, or industrialization of society, will gradually eliminate force, and war will become dysfunctional. Because industrial society is geared to production and commerce, it will tame society with the change of values, replacing the idea of conquest which is detrimental to the acquisition of wealth. Because of the special nature of international relations of industrial
societies, and because of the quest for material development, war has become non-functional. These transnational forces heighten the irrelevance of military force.

This looks more an act of faith, as the course of history has not particularly upheld this view. Max Weber had thought that early 20th Century Germany and Japan were warlike because of the feudal remnants in their societies. One must note that some industrial societies have been quite bellicose: there are hardly any feudal remnants in the U.S.A. Thus, we have to go back to the nature of the international system itself. War does not have its own logic and it is to be seen as an instrument of policy in the conduct of international relations; and the logic of force is that of politics.

National security, as a field of inquiry, represents a continuing effort to place the expanded context of strategy and policy in international affairs within the intellectual framework. The subject matter concentrates on the presence of force as an instrument of policy and expands across a wide range of issues related to planning, building, sustaining, employing, controlling, limiting or reducing such force. The importance of these issues in contemporary international affairs has expanded the scope and substance of inquiry. National security narrows the focus of inquiry in international affairs. The subject matter is exclusive because it deals with force, and tends to address only one component of the international environment and only one of a wide range of approaches to that environment. The presence of force and its use remains an inescapable part of international environment, and power and force endure as instrument of policy. There is no reason why our concern with their study and comprehension should not be there.

Fundamental questions regarding the role of force and military power in international relations can be summed up as:

i-why do states need force and military power?
ii-in what ways can force and military power be used? and
iii-have nuclear weapons altered either the need for it or the manner in which force or military power can be utilized?

We have to start with a premise that, for national security in an anarchic world, and having no accepted and enforceable order, states rely on force and military power as the ultimate recourse in international politics. Robert Art indicates five basic factors that delineate the necessity of force in such a world (28):
i-states must fend for themselves;
ii-states must provide for their physical security;
iii-concern for a state's short term position relative to others must take precedence over long term absolute gain for all;
iv-all states operate in a position of strategic interdependence;
and
v-given those conditions, states find it difficult to be moral.

From these factors, the use of force for purposes of defense, deterrence or compellance may be explored.

Politics among nations is the politics of the ungoverned, because there is no government among states; and this politics takes place in an environment in which no single agency has a legitimate monopoly on the use of force. In the absence of a central authority above the level of states, having the power and authority to resolve the disputes that invariably arise among states, the politics among nations is anarchic. This anarchic realm, within which all states must act, gives rise to the need that every state has for force and military power. A state may set for itself any national goals but, for their attainment, it has to attain the capability and wherewithal. Neither a state can, over the long run, rely on the goodwill of other states nor can it be realistically sure about permanent friends or enemies. Other states cannot be counted to provide for the welfare of a state unless it is in the other's self-interest to do so and, therefore, each must supply the means for the attainment of proclaimed objectives. This anarchy compels the states to be self-reliant. This self-reliance has to be most manifest in matters of national security. Since states vary in their resources and geo-political positions, and also because security is based on the perceptions of individuals determining security, it is rather difficult to determine whether a state is actually secure. Security would mean the degree of protection from attack that a state enjoys and, therefore, security concerns revolve around political-military matters and encompass both short and medium term. This security is the prerequisite for the attainment of the national goals that any state seeks. It is true that most of the states, most of the time, enjoy a degree of security. But not all states, all the time, feel perfectly secure. Thus, they must always be prepared for war. Since some states are prepared for war, others cannot feel secure unless they also prepare for war. The ever-present possibility that any state can always resort to force if it so chooses causes all to prepare for that eventuality; for, a successful diplomacy requires a credible threat to go
to war. Since each state has to provide for its own security, it has to concern itself with how it is doing relative to others, and a competition tantamount to the struggle for the survival of the fittest ensures. Such anarchic conditions of international relations constrain states, and statesmen, to be shortsighted and skeptical because the focus of attention must be on what others can do, not on what they say they intend to do. Emphasis on the capabilities, over the intentions of states, enhances the anarchic nature of international affairs and aggravates the problem for national security.

Inspite of this anarchic nature, there is a position of strategic interdependence. The capability of a state to obtain its national goals is conditioned by similar capability of other states and, in this way, the strategy of each depends upon the strategies of others. In this game of strategies, there are no formal game-rules and no possibility of predicting the outcome; and the avoidance of defeat is the prize of winning. Since the cost of defeat may be the extinction of a state, interaction among states ranges from most-intensive rivalry to tacit collusion; and every state has to play the game merely to survive. In this situation, there can be no enforceable laws, and whatever exists in the form of international law is followed when useful to states and reflect the prevailing consensus among states about their common self-interest. Rights under this system of law would mean the freedom to choose whatever is deemed most effective to attain the national goals, and states would have a 'right' only to what they can achieve by their own efforts and capability. As a consequence, every state can make its own rules of the strategic game and has to be always prepared to do what it deems necessary for its interests, as perceived by itself. Each must be prepared to play according to rules set by the 'dirtiest' player.

In this struggle for survival, in an anarchic international system, fending for itself requires a state to muster force and military power, which is required also for the physical security; and the calculations regarding relative positions make states consider power ratios. This ensures that force and military power must be integral to a state's conduct of its international relations. It is the necessity for all the states to be always prepared for war that characterizes the international politics as a state of war. The genuineness of a state's intentions is basically gauged by the degree of its credible military posture and without it a state's diplomacy, generally, lacks effectiveness. Behind the suave and gentlemanly postures of diplomats lies the brute military muscle that gives any meaning to the former. There is truth to the old
adage that the best way to keep the peace is first to prepare for war. Or, as Hobbes said, reputation for power is power.

The survival and prosperity of states in contemporary international relations is interdependent. Military power may not generate survival and prosperity but is an important ingredient for both. All the international interests of a state are affected by military force, its own and others', The reason why states need force is that they cannot do without it.

The answer to the question why war is endemic in international politics lies in the nature of international system. Specifically, it lies in the conflicts among autonomous and independent political units that are organized for their own protection and are not subordinate to a central political authority. In this anarchical system, the utility of force and armed coercion is much more than that of persuasion, negotiation, or adjudication. In this system, force is the final argument. Wars occur between political groups because there is nothing to stop them and, in international politics, the role of force is accentuated by the ability of states to mobilize mass loyalties and the great magnitude of force they can marshal. Kenneth Waltz here argues that "interdependence that locks national interests so closely together that separation is self-evidently destructive of all good things, may increase the chances of peace. Short of that threshold, the new form of the old argument that war will not occur because it does not pay brings little comfort. If interdependence is growing at a pace that exceeds the development of central control, then interdependence may increase the occasions for war" (29). Even if we take a utopian supposition that all states were purely defense-minded, there would still be need for force, because the very search for defense and security compels reliance upon military self-help, which, in turn, fosters conflict and a competition for military power. Since the tangible and intangible conditions for national security go beyond the territorial boundaries of states, the competition based on military power becomes a certainty (30).

Force is a common currency in international intercourse. "A nation’s reputation for using force to support its vital interests ... is... important to it..... Especially when security depends so much on deterrence, the importance of preserving this reputation against a challenge will usually exceed by far the intrinsic importance of the immediate and tangible point of contention" (31). Force is essential to international politics since there is no other way for states to pursue what they regard as vital interests. The fact that many states with
conflicts of interest do not arm against each other or raise the prospect of war, does not argue against the integral relationship of force to international politics. As Thomas Hobbes had said, “War consisteth not in battle only, or the fact of fighting only, but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known; and, therefore, the notion of time is to be considered in the nature of war, as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together, so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting but in the known depositions thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary” (32)

A realistic analysis of political behaviour cannot assume that individuals have so common interests that obviate conflict of interest among states or the states’ endeavours to support the individual interests through force. The need for force, in fact, emanates from perceptions of compelling functional needs, mostly from the states’ need to rely basically on self-help to ensure the conditions of their survival and security. The argument has no validity that many forms of settling individual disputes, such as duelling and trial by ordeal, have become obsolete and similarly the use of force among states may become, someday, obsolete. This equates the forms of individual behaviour in secondary social relationships with the imperatives that confront men who act on behalf of political communities that are engaged in the competition for power. Duelling, as a method of settling conflict of interest, disappeared because the state assumed this function. But there is no foreseeable institution to replace states in this respect and they have to settle their conflicts of interests in the form of a duelling among themselves.

Diplomacy is bargaining; and, with enough military force, a country may not need to bargain. It can take what it wants to take and keep what it wants to keep. Whereas brute force may succeed when used, the power to hurt is most successful when held in reserve. Violence, at all level and including international relations, is most purposive and most successful when it is threatened and not used. “The rational goal of the threat of violence”, says H.L.Nieberg, “is the accommodation of interests, not the provocation of actual violence. Similarly, the rational goal of actual violence is demonstration of the will and capability of action, establishing a measure of the credibility of future threats, not the exhaustion of that capability in unlimited conflict” (33). There may have been some sense in the view, in the pre-nuclear age, that war was an alternative to diplomacy but in the
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contemporary environment any such distinction is so blurred and overlapping as to be meaningless. Far from bringing about the end of diplomacy, war has become part of diplomacy. Its telling example has been the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, in December 1972, when the Paris peace talks had become deadlocked. Military force was used by the U.S. to convey a message to North Vietnam and to put pressure on the North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris. The success of this tactic was proved when, within a month of this heavy bombing, a cease fire was agreed upon in Paris—the precise objective of earlier U.S. diplomacy. In the contemporary world, military power has been exploited without military force being used. The phenomenon of deterrence supports the view that modern military force tends to be threatened, as a tactic of diplomacy, rather than used in war. This is the difference between taking what one wants and persuading others to give it to the one.

Militant threats—whether explicit or implicit—are made so that they will not have to be carried out. For this to happen, the threatened nation must believe that the threat will be, forthwith, executed if it does not comply. This threatened nation must believe that the adversary has the will and resources, both, to implement the threat; and only then the threat will have credibility and will be effective. If it is effective, the threat will not have to be carried out. The threatening nation generally prefers not to execute the threat and hopes to obtain the desired result without spending valuable military resources. Force is actually used only when threats have been made and have failed to elicit the desired behaviour or without the threats being used because they were thought to be useless. There can be no systematic generalization whether force will be used or threats will be issued because the decision depends on the circumstances of each particular situation. States use force both physically and peacefully. The first refers to its actual employment against the adversary; and the latter to an explicit threat to resort to force or to the implicit threat communicated simply by a state's having force available for use. Whereas the physical use of force means that the nation actually harms, destroys or cripples those possessions which another nation holds valuable, the peaceful use of force is employed explicitly or implicitly for the assistance it renders in the achievement of a goal, without doing any physical destruction to another nation's valued possessions. Thomas Schelling (34) makes a distinction between 'brute force' and 'coercive power'. The former refers to the use of force against the adversary's military forces; the latter against its population. This distinction is made according to the objects against which military
power is used. This distinction is useful in explaining why nuclear weapons have brought a radical change in the use of force by states.

Force can be used (physically and peacefully, both) against pure military targets, such as soldiers and weapon-systems; against social targets, such as population centres; against economic targets, such as industries. Either the pure military targets are first hit or, even if the other types of targets are hit, military targets are simultaneously attacked. Force is not used against the adversary's population or industrial centres unless the disparity in military power between two states is so marked that defence of homeland is no problem for the attacker; as was the case in the U.S. attack on Libya in 1988. Since threats are less dangerous, and cheaper, than attack, and are more equivocal in nature, they can be directed at any and simultaneously at all three types or can be left unspecified and ambiguous. No generalization is possible because there is no clear sequence for the peaceful use of force.

If there is great disparity in strength between two adversary nations, the resort to physical force is less likely, and threats by the stronger against the weaker are more likely. No doubt, the stronger can easily defeat the weaker but has less need to resort to physical force as the threats to resort to force are quite credible and effective. If the disparities in military capabilities between two nations are wide, threats become less credible and less effective. A law of inverse proportions operates here: less the doubt about the relative strength and military capabilities between adversaries, the more effective is the threat. With the decrease of disparity in strength, there is an increase of doubt about the outcome in a test of arms, and, as a consequence, the utility of threats decreases. Small disparities in military capabilities between adversaries reduces the chance of peaceful use of force and enhances the possibilities of the actual use of physical force. The smaller the disparity, the greater the chances of defense by the weaker party; the greater the disparity, the smaller the chances of defense.

The intensity with which a nation pursues an objective cannot be quantitatively measured; but this does not demean its importance. Actually, it further complicates the task of assessing whether and how force will be used. Robert Art has discussed (35) why, in spite of overwhelming superiority over North Vietnam, the U.S. was not able to impose its will on North Vietnam merely by threats to use force: the U.S. had to attack because North Vietnam valued re-unification with South Vietnam more than the U.S. valued their continued separation; and, finally, the U.S. failed to impose its will, not because it lacked the military power, but because it did not deem the goal worthy of its cost.
The effects of the disparity in value placed on the goals by the two nations overrode the effects of the disparity in military strength.

**Purposes for the Use of Force:**

The goals and objects that states pursue range widely and vary considerably, from case to case. Even then four general categories may be attempted to sum up functions for which force is generally used: defense, deterrence, compellence and swaggering.

When force is used for defensive purposes, it deploys military power either to ward off an attack or to minimize damage to oneself if attacked. For its own defense, a state deploys forces in place prior to an attack, uses forces after an attack has occurred to repel it, or strikes first if it believes that an attack upon it is imminent or inevitable. This defensive use of force involves both peaceful and physical employment. In this, even an offensive (first) strike can be defensive if an attack is imminent (and then the counter-measure is a pre-emptive strike) or inevitable (when the counter-measure is a preventive strike). These defensive countermeasures, to attack first, are undertaken if a state believes that others plan to attack it and that a delay in striking offensively would be against its own interests.

Force is used in a **deterrent** way to threaten an adversary with damage unacceptable to him so as to prevent him from doing something, that he might otherwise do, adverse to our own interests. It is thus a threat of retaliation, to prevent something undesirable from happening. It is a peaceful use of force, as the threat is the essence of deterrence; because if the threat to use force had to be carried out and if the force had to be used, it would imply failure of deterrence. A deterrent threat is successful only if it has not to be carried out. But its success depends upon a state’s ability to convince the adversary about its own will, and capability, to carry out the threat. Whereas the defensive use of force dissuades by convincing the adversary that he cannot conquer our military forces, the deterrent use of force dissuades by convincing the adversary that his own desired things / values will suffer damage if he initiates actions undesirable to us.

The **compellent** use of force involves the employment of military power to stop the adversary from doing something he has already initiated or to force him to do something he has not yet done. Compellence, In Thomas Schelling’s words (36) “involves initiating an action that can cease, or become harmless, only if opponent
responds" It can involve either the threat to take action if a state does not change its behaviour or the actual taking of action until the state changes its behaviour. Whereas the success of deterrence is measured by a threat that was not required to be implemented, the success of compellence is measured by how closely the adversary conforms to our stipulated desires. Schelling argues (37) that compellent actions tend to be vaguer in their objectives than deterrent threats and, for that reason, more difficult to attain. To be successful, compellent actions require a state to alter its behaviour in a manner visible to all in response to an equally visible forceful initiative taken by another state.

'Swaggering' is the deployment of military power for purposes other than defense, deterrence or compellence; and force is not aimed directly at dissuading another state from attacking, nor at compelling it to do something specific, or at repelling attacks. It involves the peaceful use of force and is expressed by displaying one's military might at military parades and military exercises and acquiring prestigious weapons. Its aim is to enhance the national pride and to look and feel more powerful and important, so as to be taken more seriously by others. It mixes the rational and irrational but is most comprehensive as it adds to the general image of the state.

There is hardly any reason to believe that the process of creating and preserving states, by the use or threat of force, belongs to an earlier era and is not applicable to the contemporary international system. Israel became a state due to her military victories and Biafra could not become a state equally due to military causes. Bangladesh became an entity as the outcome of a military struggle, and Pakistan's geo-strategic position was vitally altered because of the same military struggle, in 1971.

The uses of military force in the present age may include: deterrence, defense and coercion; as a symbol of national prestige and enhancement of national prestige and the sanction for negotiations, warnings and threats to other states compelling some concessions from them; national development; demonstrations as a threat; blockade; rescue missions and operations short of open warfare; assistance to other states and support of friendly regimes; military interventions against unfriendly regimes; and the UN operations. Some conceivable uses of military force in international relations, during peace time, may also be suggested: Crisis management and deterrence from war; impact on the attitude of other states and loosening of their ties with one's enemies; support for other diplomatic efforts to assert and achieve state's interests, compelling other states to opt for desirable
behaviour; gains in influence through arms supplies and arms assistance; enhancement of national prestige and international authority by a demonstration of military force and capability and reputation of its use. There is a continuous influence on such fundamental factors like the structure of the international system, the cohesiveness of the opposing alliances, the freedom of action for each of such alliances, the developmental tendencies in the Third World, the long range foreign policy and military goals of regional and great powers.

The Myth of the Obsolescence of Military Force in Contemporary International Relations

To say that force is 'obsolete' in contemporary international relations is not necessarily to question its existence or the possibility of war, but to broadly analyze whether force can serve the functions of security, domination, status and influence (which it has done in the past). This aspect has vital implications not only for national policy but also for the nature of international politics. There is too much evidence of the pervasiveness of force and the multifarious functions it has served in international relations: "One simply cannot comprehend the rise, spread, and decline of ancient civilizations and peoples, or the creation, unification, expansion, and protection of modern nation-states, except in relation to force. The boundaries of states, the external holdings and rights, their internal strength or weakness, their influence or status, the harmony or discord of their relations—in short, the very identity of states—have been decisively shared by competition for military power and by the fortunes of war" (38). William McNeill has expounded the proposition that the whole astonishing explosion of modern Western civilization is linked with a distinctive bellicosity in its organized political life (39). Since force is persistent in international politics, we cannot avoid the problems of coping with it, whatever may be our opinions about the incompatibility of modern weapons with the system.

The idea that war system has become obsolete, and an anachronism, believes that war lingers only because it provides some psychic satisfaction to those who perpetuate it. Walter Millis has explicitly presented the thesis that nuclear weapons have made war obsolete (40). Also, James Shotwell believed that rapid changes in military resources and the technology of destruction had made war as "
uncertain in its direction as in its intensity, or its spread. It is no longer a safe instrument for statesmanship under such circumstances; it is too dangerous to employ. It is no longer our *ultima ratio* because it has lost its *raison d’être*. Victor and victim may suffer a common disaster. In short, war which was once a directible instrument of policy has now changed its nature with a nature of modern society and ceases to be controllable in the hands of statesmen” (41). It is believed that nuclear weapons have created a situation that challenges the continuity of the traditional functions of military power in international politics. If the utility of war is greatly diminished, it is equally difficult for the threats of war to indefinitely perform the functions of war itself. This transformation has led some observers to believe that there has occurred a change in the functions of military power and that the whole system of power politics that depends on the prospect of war is obsolete: “A continuation of the present state of international affairs is bound sooner or later to produce a catastrophe in which most civilized values and all of the present warring value systems must perish ..... War can no longer serve its greatest social function—that of *ultima ratio* in human affairs—for, it can no longer decide. It can render the first judgment of Solomon—to slaughter the disputed infant—but cannot render the second, which was to award it alive and whole to one or the other of the claimant “ (42).

Intellectuals are generally tempted by attitudes that appear radical and perceptive. Hence, there is a growing feeling that the utility of force has diminished, is diminishing and should, and will, diminish further. This skeptical view is wholly unjustified and the endeavour, in the following paragraphs, will be to attempt to prove that it is indeed so.

The belief that military force has forfeited its place in international relations is based on the idea that in the modern industrialized society, there is no social acceptability for force; and that low utility diminishes acceptability, and low acceptability reduces utility by increasing its political costs. The basis of this argument is the belief that trade, commerce, investment etc. are activities that lead to success in contemporary international relations, that chief rational goals are economic and that force can hardly attain them because it is expensive, and is distasteful in a democratic society. This declining utility of force is also supposedly the result of changes in the instruments of conflict and, in particular, to the self-defeating nature of the nuclear power. The argument goes that the fear of the process of
escalaion of nuclear power reaches further down to inhibit the use of even lesser force for even lesser ends and goals.

At one time, even Morgenthau believed that, since the true interests of all states—namely, the peaceful enjoyment of material progress and the promotion of unhindered commerce—are identical and complimentary, power politics and war are senseless anachronisms (43). By the time both the superpowers had achieved a mutual deterrence and a capacity for Mutual Assured Destruction, in the early 'Sixties, Millis held: "However difficult it may be to imagine a world without war, this task is now forced upon us. Two propositions are, I think, irrefutable: That a continuation of present state of international affairs is bound sooner or later to produce a catastrophe in which most civilized values and all the present warring value systems must perish; and that no strategic inventions, no new 'national security' policies, no juggling with weapon systems and armaments are likely to alter this prognostication" (44). While arguing about the uselessness of war, some still believed in the continuing efficacy of deterrence, and some excluded from the category of obsolescence revolutionary wars and wars among less developed countries. Thus, Hannah Arendt argued that revolutionary wars, supplemented by the nuclear stalemate and the Cold War, may be about to replace interstate wars, which have become obsolete because they threaten total annihilation; and this imminent development was to take place without a radical transformation of international relations (45).

It is believed that the use or threat of force by states is no longer that important or prevalent (or advisable, or even allowed) in contemporary international relations. The technological revolution in the field of nuclear weaponry is believed to be a cause for this decline because these weapons cannot be used as a means for political goals of the state. Since the arsenals balance each other out, they become irrelevant to the wider political relations between nuclear powers just as they are irrelevant to relations between nuclear and non-nuclear states. Also, supposedly, there has been a change in the nature of issues that are of concern to states in their relations. It is assumed that the issues are now those which cannot be resolved through the use or threat of force. It is argued that pervasive socio-economic changes have diminished the role of force and war because governments can no longer ensure domestic well-being by pursuing autonomous policies as the cooperation of other governments, and even non-governmental organizations, is necessary for this end. If some advantage is to be
gained in this cooperative relationship, use of force or coercive behaviour directed against other governments is not useful and is, in fact, counter productive. This argument is reinforced by the examples of western Europe and Japan, after the world war II, who concentrated their foreign policies on the pursuit of economic reconstruction and emerged as economic giants.

This argument ignores the unique conditions which made this reconstruction and emergence possible. It was possible for western Europe and Japan to ignore security concerns, concentrating their energies on the pursuit of economic goals, largely because their security had become the concern of the U.S.A. If some states have been able to pursue policies concentrating on cooperative behaviour then it has not been because of the ‘advanced’ nature of their domestic structure but due to some geopolitical circumstances, which may not remain the same always.

This, in itself, is debatable whether ‘interdependence’ in international relations has increased. Even if it has, it is no reason to be optimistic that the role of force has been reduced. If international relations are now more concerned with the allocation of vital and scarce resources, it does not mean that allocation and distribution of resources would be universally acceptable and through peaceful means. If states are more vulnerable now to actions of others then occasions for potential conflict have also increased. Support for this argument can be found from the international politics of oil. The region containing the world’s largest concentration of oil—far from remaining an area in which pure economic forces operate—has become an area of strategic concern for the foreign policies of so many states. There may be endless scenarios in which military force might be used in this region. No doubt, for economic interchange, non-coercive cooperative behaviour is needed. Also, vulnerability and recognition of vulnerability also induces non-coercive cooperative behaviour. But such recognition and consciousness of vulnerability also produces a concern to minimise that vulnerability. Ability to minimise vulnerability varies from state to state and according to circumstances. But this urge and the commensurate actions are not very conducive for cooperative behaviour, in the long run. Interdependence in the field of vital natural resources creates situations in which the threat or use of force may be counter-productive. Situations may emerge in which force may appear more preferable than potential situations of deprivation of the resources. Even if it is accepted that the world is now characterized by a greater level of interdependence and that there
has been a shift from political-security issues to socio-economic ones in the degree of priorities in international relations, it does not mean that the role of war has also declined. New occasions for it, and new issues and causes and pretexts for it may well be there.

The 'interdependence theorists' believe that interests intertwined render force unusable, and that economic interests dictate that military power is no longer of use because it is no longer credible. Actually, force has been responsible for uniting many such economic entities. It was the U.S. military power that generated and sustained political conditions required for the intertwining of American, Japanese and west European economies. The west European and Japanese economies could flourish under the nuclear umbrella of the USA, and it would have been odd for the USA not to politically exploit this dependence. When military pre-eminence politically pervades the relations, force does not become irrelevant as a tool of policy. Efficacy of military power should not be confused with the will to use it and the perception of a state about the necessity and proper time to use it. Military power may not be useful for solving an economic problem which may not have a simple or single solution; but it does not mean it cannot be used. The efficacy of force endures.

If war is, indeed, useless then how would international politics be conducted and how would conflicting interests be advanced or resolved? Sure, some conflicts, rooted in military competition, might be eliminated by disarmament. But many other conflicts would remain: conflicts emanating from internal revolutions, competition for political allegiance, local rivalries, disputes over territories or resources and larger and more broad contests for hegemony or more conducive international or regional environment or for ideological supremacy. It is an unwarranted act of faith that states would unconditionally renounce all forms of force in coping with every such conflict of interest.

Henry Kissinger has argued that a certain amount of insecurity is the inevitable corollary of sovereign independence (46). Howsoever the states may interpret the minimum conditions necessary for meeting their security requirements, they all devote enormous resources and time and manpower to promoting those conditions. As John Herz had said, the achievement and maintenance of national security is traditionally the chief external function of the state (47).

The basic structure of international politics has remained fundamentally unchanged. The agenda of international politics may change from time to time; but there is still no centralized procedure for
authoritatively resolving the questions on the agenda of international politics. The anarchic nature of the international system has not changed. Since there is still no guarantee that resolutions of questions will be produced by peaceful methods, or that a resolution of some solution will be universally acceptable, the use of force still remains an implicit option. Since there can be no guarantee that this option will never be exercised by another, it has to remain an option for every state. It is, indeed, difficult to argue that the incidence of war, or the threat of war, as a tool of policy, is on decline. The use of force continues, as ever, to be a relevant factor in international relations. Coercive diplomacy is a viable instrument of national policy, a normal feature and pattern of international relations and, yet, it has not received sufficient academic attention. It amounts to coercing a country by demonstrating the quantity of force and highlighting the capability of, and intention to, use force. It may involve deployment of naval forces, using facilities in neighbouring countries or conducting military exercises in the region to demonstrate long range capability. This includes the deployment of warning systems in neighbouring countries, flights of reconnaissance aircraft or satellites or electronic interference with a country’s defensive communication system. It also involves various patterns of arms transfers, and a fine and subtle way is to allow a neighbouring hostile country of the target nation to silently move towards nuclear weapon capability. A generalized coercive diplomacy is exercised in the Third World by the deployment of nuclear weapons in a manner so as to have the maximum impact on non-nuclear weapon countries.

The contemporary trends in international relations indicate that, if anything, the role of force in such relations has increased. The decolonisation process resulted in the rapid increase in the number of states in the world. Direct political control of the pre-world war-II big powers gradually declined. Not only the superpowers were mostly concentrating on their mutual relationship, they were gradually losing grip over their alliance systems. All this resulted in the emergence of various and diverse new centres for political decision-making. This did not mean the end of conflict, but only some shift in the type of conflict. In the beginning of the decolonisation period, the emphasis and focus of conflict was on national liberation movements. The new groups had become conscious of their new identities and were demanding political expression for that identity. Since the political set-up of the international system was not yet conducive to such demands, any changes could be achieved only by force. Moreover, pre-colonial
conflict patterns reasserted themselves. Whether at the regional or international level, states remain the ultimate decision-making authorities. And the growth of new centres of political autonomy in the Third World will produce new occasions for rivalry, with the potential for that rivalry to erupt into open conflict and war.

It is believed that war has become obsolete not because of a change in the terms of calculation, not because it is no longer considered profitable, but because it is considered unthinkable, because of a change in thinking and mental set-up through the socio-cultural processes. But there is hardly ever any explanation of such cultural changes that make war unthinkable. There is only the explanation for a narrow phenomenon in which wars only of particular type may have become unprofitable, and not all; and definitely not the use of force short of war.

It needs hardly to be emphasized that the mutual possession of weapons of mass destruction has not deterred the superpowers from competitive involvement in conflicts. The great power intervention has remained an element in international politics of many regions. The nuclear stalemate has not rendered the use of other military means obsolete. Indeed, recent developments in strategic thinking suggest that damage limitation techniques are possible and that a limited nuclear war is not all that fearsome. Whereas earlier the belief was that quantitative or qualitative advantages in nuclear weapons cannot be used for political advantage, contemporary thinking is centered around the idea that a nuclear war can be waged in such a way as to achieve national policy goals through coercion. It is true that the possession of nuclear weapons has induced a high level of caution in the superpowers' dealings with each other. But these arsenals have not produced a decline in the use or threat of force, either by them or by other powers. Then, there have been numerous instances in which superpower nuclear arsenals proved to be irrelevant in the resolution of local conflicts. The U.S. failure in Vietnam and the Soviet failure in Afghanistan provide examples of a general condition in which small states may effectively resist superpower pressure and coercion. In many conflict situations, nuclear weapons become useless as instruments of policy as long as their use carries a risk of dangers disproportionate to anticipated gains. But non-availability of nuclear weapons for the resolution of conflict does not imply the absence of conflict or of the use of force in such a conflict.

There is no force in the argument that nuclear weapons have made a war between the present superpowers unthinkable and that
use of force is on the wane because war in Europe has not occurred since the introduction of nuclear weapons. First of all, the utility of force should not be determined simply by the frequency with which it is used physically. Secondly, effect and cause should not be confused. The preparation and deployment for the use of military force, together with the fears of escalation to a general nuclear war, have kept the peace in Europe and between the two superpowers. The absence of war does not signify the irrelevance of military power. The estimates of relative military power keep it this way.

The main shortcoming of the argument, that military force has become obsolete in international relations, lies in its failure to appreciate a subtle and varied role of military power short of war. Day to day experience actually demonstrates that the fearful prospect of war and policies for using, deterring, controlling, and disarming armed forces in the shadow of this prospect play a decisive role in international politics. In many ways, this role is now more pervasive and more comprehensive than in earlier periods of history when war was less dangerous. It may be true that now states dare not resort to war and, for this reason, international politics is bound to depend heavily upon the threat or prospect of war. It does not exclude the possibility of resorting to war as long as states depend on self help for their security. Even the emphasis on disarmament and arms control are indication of the preoccupation of international politics with military concerns. The belief that the proliferation of nuclear weapons will have far reaching implications for international politics belies the assertion that military power (even if based on 'useless' weapons like nuclear weapons) is obsolete. In fact, few things can affect the prestige of a state more than its reputation for using armed force effectively, resolutely and prudently. Military power is still inseparable from issues of prestige, ideology, status and political influence. The magnitude and impact of modern day forces have enhanced the uses of military power short of war. Crises that actually test the national power, and that too under the shadow of war, are major modes of international politics. The art of coercion short of war is being developed and deliberately applied. The first pre-requisite of national security is now deterrence and it has become a sophisticated calculus of contemporary international politics. Political and military factors now suffuse each other in a way that makes a distinction (of earlier periods) irrelevant.

Moreover, the record of the last decades does not support the assertion that the efficacy of military force is on the wane. The Chinese action in Vietnam, the British in the Falklands, the Soviet actions in
Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen and Afghanistan, the U.S. actions in Grenada, Panama, El Salvador, Libya and the Persian Gulf, all have been predicated on the use of conventional military power. Similarly, conventional military power has remained an important instrument of foreign policy for the Third World countries: the liberation of Bangladesh, the India-Pakistan wars and the India-China war, Indian actions in Sri Lanka and Maldives, the Iran-Iraq war, Vietnam’s wars with China and Cambodia, the wars between the two Yemen, the Ethiopian-Somalian war, the Libyan action in Chad, the Moroccan takeover of the Spanish Sahara, and many other such actions indicate that military power and foreign policy continue to be inexorably linked and the efficacy of force endures. The states with the greatest military strength have the greatest influence in international relations. Their status is the most unchallenged, their diplomacy the most successful, their actions the most respected and their threats most heeded. Military power does not have to be used to be useful; it is sometimes most useful when it is not used, and the hazards of modern war, far from changing this situation, have actually reinforced it. The fancied theories about the decline of the utility of force are not just corruption of thinking about international relations but are a distraction from its proper concerns. While it would be a mistake to assume that political influence is proportional to military strength, it would be an even bigger mistake to deny any connection between the two.

Changes, if any, in the contemporary utility of military force reflect the changes in the effectiveness, form and style of the application of force. It is believed that in the contemporary international politics, the value of territorial conquest and acquisition of external sources of supply has diminished, as is the possibility of conducting successful wars because of the increased destructive potential of modern warfare. There has also evolved a shift from overt to covert uses of military force. It is also believed that, instead of being a means of altering the status quo forcibly, the military force has now become an instrument for the preservation of status quo. It is unfortunate that assumptions and pronouncements are made about military force and international relations by persons of apparent intelligence with a naive dogmatism of a type which is hardly discernable in any other area of social sciences.

J.D.B. Miller has rightly summed up this debate thus (48):

"It is thus clear that the study of war—of how it comes about, of what consequences it has, of the likelihood that this or that state will triumph—is of major importance to an understanding of international
politics. Even those who reject war as an act of policy must be aware that such rejection is unlikely ever to be general throughout the international system; and they will have to see the world in grand strategic terms—in terms, that is, of how the grand strategy of each major power is likely to be formulated—if they are to retain contact with reality. It is an unfortunate fact that much study of international politics has proceeded on the assumption that global war was unthinkable, while other studies have assumed that it was unavoidable. Somewhere in between, in a genuine attempt to understand how war affects politics, and how politics affects war, lies the right path for those who would know the world as it is”.

Transformation of the Nature of Force in International Relations

Many scholars hold the view that nuclear weapons have transformed international politics (49). This view is based on the capacity of nuclear weapons to inflict catastrophic damage, suddenly and at great distances, and the ability to destroy a nation without defeating its armed forces, whereas states are not able to offer protection to their citizens or of their territory; and on the superfluous destructive power available to the superpowers and the mutually nullifying effects of their military power. These scholars hold that nuclearization of international politics has resulted into the obsolescence of the classical system of power politics, the political obsolescence of military alliances and the equalization of the power of big and small states.

Actually, since the beginning of this century, there has been growing tension between an increasingly intensive production and exploitation of military energy on the one hand and, on the other hand, a more uneven attempt to moderate and control the competition for power because of its growing volatility and destructive potential. This activity has been wrecked by an unprecedented explosion of technological innovation and mass production, which may be termed the expansion of material energy. At the same time, there have been unprecedented plans and efforts to control this material expansion by a systematic, organized ordering of production and use of energy. “For the very characteristics of modern ... civilization that have intensified conflicts among its members—rapid environmental change and the increased effect of one individual’s, group’s, or state’s actions upon
another—have also, through a mixture of expediency and idealism, inspired attempts to restrain these conflicts for the common welfare"(50). The two decades preceding the First World War had witnessed the height of military laissez faire and glorification of the misapplication of Darwinian theory to the international struggle for power. This was being practiced in the pursuit of technical military strength by the general staffs of major European powers. But the consequences of that war provoked a massive reaction against the prevailing war system. While the governments that were interested in order were paralyzed into inaction due to this reaction, the aggressive states were free to exploit the uses of force short of war until another war could not be avoided. Now, the obstacle to an international order is not the aggravation of international tensions because of nuclear weapons—in fact, they have provided some stability and moderation of conflict—but that even a single breakdown of that order could be catastrophic. There is no escape from the unpalatable fact that the prospect of such a catastrophe is the indispensable basis of an unprecedented order.

As mentioned above, a couple of decades before the First World War, military power had undergone a transformation and the main impetus for it had come not just from the expansion in the destructive power available but also from socio-political changes. There had been an acceleration of technological innovation, mass production and applied sciences; and these developments were interacting with a state’s mobilization and exploitation of mass enthusiasm for military purposes, its peacetime conscription of manpower, and the coordinated utilization of all human, economic and technological resources under professional military staffs. The beginnings of modern military power lie in the erosion of various constrains upon warfare under the impact of a rational and utilitarian approach to force in international politics, to the injection of national and/or ideological fervour into state policy, to the technological and specialized nature of military management, and to the depersonalization of warfare in which the inflictors of destruction are remote from their victims. In the chronological sequence, the sources of the expansion of military power, and of its impact upon international politics, can be summed up as the rationalization, centralization, popularization, professionalization, and modernization of military power.

Clausewitz had emphasized on the controlling effects of the ends of war over its dimensions. But he overlooked the effect of the destructive capacity of armed forces, and had not anticipated the
comparable effect that the professionalization and modernization of military power would exert on international politics. About the political significance of the interaction between the ends and means of war, Clausewitz had this to say:

The greater and more powerful the motives for war, the more they affect the whole existence of the nations involved, and the more violent the tensions which precede war, so much the more closely will war conform to its abstract conception. The more it will be concerned with the destruction of the enemy, the more closely the military aim and the political object coincide, and the more purely military, and the less political, war seems to be. But the weaker the motives and the tensions, the less will the natural tendency of the military element, the tendency to violence, coincide with the directives of policy; the more, therefore, must war be diverted from its natural tendency, the greater is the difference between the political object and the aim of an ideal war and the more does war seem to become political (51).

In the last century, Bismarck had tried to undermine the prevailing politics of force by designing a complicated network of peacetime defensive alliances which were designed to protect Germany's already superior position with a stalemate between opposing combinations of power. He consolidated a pattern of balanced antagonisms in which crisis diplomacy was subordinated to the imperatives of organizing military power in peace time (52). But these alliances provided the political frameworks within which military commitments were consolidated, and this consolidation, in turn, tightened the alliances. In this way, the alliances with which Bismarck had intended to fragment military power became a means of aggravating military power. This was the beginning of the peacetime development of arms as a primary force in international politics.

After the holocaust of the First World War, liberal opinion was of the view that military alliances were responsible for that war and that it was possible to eliminate war by eschewing alliances and arms race in favour of a disarmament and a universal league of nations. As a result, there was a general failure on the part of these states to successfully compete with more offensive states (Germany, Italy, Japan) in exploiting the new utility of force short of war. The defensive nations (-- subsequent Allied powers) had not concerted their military
power just when their security, and the international order, had demanded a united military effort to deter the expansion of Germany. There were some political and psychological developments which were responsible for this: strong inhibitions against war, the fear of revolution (on the pattern of the Russian revolution), the growth of liberal pacific movements, the increased costs of conquering territory as a result of the growing nationalist sentiments. At the same time, parallel to these, were other developments which enhanced the utility of force short of war and which were adroitly used by the offensive states: better and extensive communications between the governments and between governments and their armed forces, larger forces capable of suddenly striking, imperatives of preparing for war in advance of an imminent war, the importance and impact of mobilization plans and strategic doctrine, weapons competitions, the power and mobility of the modern battleship, and the idea as well as weapons of strategic bombing which was oriented toward the direct punitive civilian damage. All this enhanced the threat value of armed forces on a continuing basis in peacetime. These new developments were adroitly exploited by the pre World War -II expansionist powers, particularly Germany under Hitler.

Wheeler-Bennett and A.J.P. Taylor have discussed Hitler's brilliant exploitation of the weaknesses and divisions of potential opponents by which he gradually rearmed Germany and, by piecemeal aggression, improvised an expansion which was, almost, bloodless (53). The basis of his success was his shrewed intuition about the unwillingness of other governments to use force and his capitalization on the general revulsion toward a general war, to confront the democratic states with a series of limited aggressions, none of which seemed worth resisting at the price of general war. He alternated his menacing and conciliatory gestures and placed the burden of undertaking another war on states that were materially and psychologically not prepared for it. His tactical skill was in disarming and isolating the opposition with the prospect of war: techniques of conveying the threat of war and testing the nerve and will of potential opponents; military pageantry; calculated private conversations and inspired rumours about Germany's military intentions and capabilities; troop concentrations and maneuvers; exaggerated claims of military strength; ultimatums and political demands; and alternately or simultaneously rattling the sword and waving the olive branch (These policies and tactics are discussed in detail by E.M.Robertson in Hitler's

The success of these policies marked a failure of military deterrence. It failed because Britain and France failed to form a firm military alliance to convince Germany that aggression would be met by united resistance. In this way, the Age of Deterrence began with a failure; but this failure proved that the pre-requisite of order was the conspicuous will, backed by the capacity, to make war. The organization of such countervailing power requires a peacetime defensive alliance and a steady competition in arms, without which the states interested in order lack the pre-requisites of deterrence and the effective peacetime management of force. The effective regulation of military power cannot spring from a simply anti-militarism; it demands continual studied attention to the development, control and use of force.

It may be pertinent to make a distinction between the impact of military force on the contemporary international situation including crises, conflicts, regional and local balances of power and, on the other hand, the continuous impact on fundamental factors that have a long-term effect on the general course of developments in international relations. Such factors include the structure of the international system, the cohesiveness of the different blocs and the choices of actions for each of them, the concepts of the long-range foreign policies and military doctrines of more powerful countries of the world and the developments in the Third World. Assessments of these developments may differ as regards the impact of military force on world events and the utility of military force in contemporary world—positive or negative, increasing or decreasing, substantial or negligible. The point of convergence may be the assertion that military force, independently of whether its role has increased or decreased, remains an indispensable instrument of national interest. The main reason for the continuing utility, and revival of this utility, of military force is that several of the reasons for resorting to military violence in interstate relations that were regarded as not proper, for nearly two decades after the Second World War, have regained their significance. During the energy crisis of the mid-Seventies, the economic rationale for the use of military force was rediscovered: the access of the western powers to natural resources (for instance, oil fields) became endangered and the idea gained ground that such resources may be defended or even seized by military means. With this, the earlier hope vanished that the growing inter-dependence of all the states would put an end to the
competition for resources with the use of military force. The North-South interaction now resembles a struggle and the growing demands by the developing countries for financial and industrial-technical assistance, and the protectionist policies of the developed countries, have resulted in an increase in tension and in the possibilities of using military force.

Three situations emerged after the Second World War. First, power in international relations became bipolar, with two superpowers possessing the capacity to significantly influence events globally; and regarding their national interests, including those that might be defended potentially with force, as global in nature. Second, the UN Charter was universally accepted, by which states renounced war as an instrument of policy. The result has been not a positive condition of peace but an era in which force continues to be applied under various guises. This situation of Violent Peace (this is the title of a book by Carl and Shelly Mydans, written in 1968) blurs the traditional distinctions between war and peace. Third, through atomic power, mankind created a means of self-destruction and thereby altered the basic rules for defence and war. The superpowers can no longer afford to confront one another in ways that could lead to violence and thus nuclear war; and fear of atomic exchange governs the behaviour of superpowers towards each other. But there is a paradox also. There are parts of the world where interests of nuclear powers are not vital—and, therefore, not worth fighting over—and confrontation is possible and permissible there because it does not raise a spectre of a nuclear holocaust.

The destructive potential of nuclear weapons is no assurance that the deterrent value of measures undertaken to achieve some objective will be any less. The conviction that a relation exists between the measures threatened and the interests for which a threat is made remain unchanged. There is always the possibility that any overt resort to force may eventually lead to the introduction of nuclear weapons, and once nuclear weapons are employed it may prove difficult to limit their use. In this scenario, interests at stake have to be made to appear commensurate to the consequences that might follow a failure of the threat. In this way, once failure is to result in general nuclear conflict, every conflict of interest over which force is threatened is interpreted as posing a critical issue of security and survival. When survival is the issue, specific conflicts of interests are invested with a significance they would not otherwise have. While urging his fellow Athenians to reject Sparta’s ultimatum, Pericles says:
Let none of you think that we should be going to war for a trifle if we refuse to revoke the Megarian decree. It is a point they make much of, and say that war need not take place if we revoke this decree; but, if we do go to war, let there be no kind of suspicion in your hearts that the war was over a small matter. For you this trifle is both the assurance and the proof of your determination. If you give in, you will immediately be confronted with some greater demand, since they will think that you only gave way on this point through fear" (54).

For a contemporary version of this idea, we may easily substitute the Megarian decree with the 'surrender of West Berlin' and then Pericles' speech seems analogous to that of President Kennedy of the U S A in 1961: "West Berlin is more than a show case of liberty, a symbol, an isle of freedom in a communist sea .... above all it has now become, as never before, the great testing place of Western courage and will, a focal point where our solemn commitments.... and Soviet ambitions now meet in basic confrontation.... If we do not meet our commitments to Berlin, where will we later stand ? If we are not true to our word there, all that we have achieved will mean nothing" (55).

What quantum of force is militarily necessary depends not just upon the purposes for which a war is fought but the actual circumstances in which a war is fought. The vital changes in the means of destruction only result in aggravating men's fears of what others are capable of doing. An expression of the principle of proportionality, in the context of people's wars, was provided by the then defense minister of China, Lin Bao : "We know that war brings destruction, sacrifice and suffering on the people. But the destruction, sacrifice and suffering will be much greater if no resistance is offered to imperialist armed aggression and the people become willing slaves. The sacrifice of a small number of people in revolutionary wars is repaid by security for whole nations, whole countries and even the whole of mankind; temporary suffering is repaid by lasting or even perpetual peace and happiness" (56).

Regarding this determination of the quantum of force to be used, it has to be kept in mind that the calculations that inhibit the great powers in their mutual relations need not inhibit them in their relations with the smaller nations. The principle of proportionality expresses the 'logic of justification' and is compatible with almost every substantive justification of force. If war is not justified, it is
because the values sacrificed by war outweigh the values war may preserve. If certain acts in war are not justified it is because the consequences of such acts are disproportionate to whatever good they intended to secure. The difficulty of justifying force is dependent upon the destruction resulting from its use. Whatever the purposes sought through force, they cannot be delinked from the level of destruction attending the use of force.

Whenever a use of military force has been regarded as advisable, states have invented a justification for it. For instance, the right of self-defence has been extended to include ‘self-help’ in defending ‘vital interests’ which are supposed to ensure the survival of a state. Whereas military force still has to be adequate and appropriate in its purposes, what is even more required is the skill in its application. The Vietnam war is the classical example of how a superpower, with the capability to destroy the world, could not subdue a rice-based, bicycle-powered small country—not because there was any inherent defect in the military instrument itself, but due to the incompetent way in which military power was used. American lack of success in Vietnam was not the result of using military force but in using it at a pace and level that the North Vietnamese found tolerable. Similarly, where force was ineptly used by Britain in Suez in 1956, it was successfully used by her in the Falklands in 1982; or whereas force was naturally there in the India-Pakistan war of 1965, its use by India, in 1971, was much more competent, shrewd, and successful. Similarly, unsuccessful interventions (Vietnam, Afghanistan, etc.) do not minimize the role of military force. It would be erroneous to deduce from some failures any general proposition about the ‘diminished’ utility of military force. The fact that many international transactions take place without any military coercion does not mean that diplomatic, economic and other instruments of foreign policy are a universal and comprehensive substitute for military force, or that military force cannot often override all other means.

It is the state’s security, independence and survival that continue to provide the main justification of force in international relations. Although the idea of deterrence is as old as the history of human conflict, the functions that strategists of nuclear deterrence are expected to serve are unique. The scope and intensity of the expectations from nuclear deterrent strategies are much wider and much higher. The issues arising from the possible use of nuclear weapons are vitally different from any other strategic deterrent of the past. There is a willingness to endorse a deterrent strategy but a
reluctance to face the consequences of the thermonuclear war; and while there is a readiness to employ the threat of thermonuclear violence to preserve national interests, there is an insistence that thermonuclear war must destroy the ends for which it is presumably waged. Behind the idea of massive retaliation was the belief that the measures threatened would never have to be carried out. Also, however disproportionate the measures threatened by massive retaliation, these measures were still to be taken only in response to an aggressive act. With the development of theories justifying the mutual assured destruction, in case of a thermonuclear war, a belief developed that such a war would never occur as it would ensure a mutual suicide and would destroy the values for the protection of which that war was being contemplated. Walter Lippmann wrote, in the early Sixties: "Only a moral idiot with a suicidal mania would press the button for a nuclear war. Yet we have learnt that, while a nuclear war would be lunacy, it is an ever present possibility. Why? Because, however lunatic it might be to commit suicide, a nation can be provoked and exasperated to the point of lunacy where its nervous system cannot endure inaction, where only violence can relieve its feelings". (57). Lippmann reiterated this stand, a year later, writing in this journal: "While nuclear war would be suicidal lunacy, it is an ever present possibility. Nuclear war will not be prevented by fear of nuclear war. For, however lunatic it might be to commit suicide, a great power, if it is cornered, if all the exits are barred, if it is forced to choose between suicide and unconditional surrender, is quite likely to go to war".

Even if we accept the view that any nuclear war is necessarily 'suicidal lunacy', it clearly does not follow that no important change in the status quo can be brought about by the threat of force. On the contrary, important changes in the status quo may be affected by the threat of force precisely because 'nuclear war means mutual suicide'. Deterrence is effective because there are interests over which states are willing, if necessary, to use force.

It would be erroneous to assume that nuclear weapons have obviated states' needs for military force. No doubt, some significant changes have been brought about in the nature of international politics because of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but the anarchic environment of inter-state action has not been drastically transformed. The necessity for self-help for the states is still there; nuclear weapons only enabling some states to help themselves better. Military power remains integral to the conduct of foreign policy. What has actually been altered is the way in which nuclear weapon states use their
military power to achieve their goals. Robert J. Art has described this phenomenon thus: "For those (nuclear weapon states) nuclear weapons have downgraded the function of defense, ruled out physical nuclear compellence, enhanced deterrence and nuclear swaggering, and left unclear the utility of peaceful nuclear compellence. It would be a mistake to ascribe all the changes in the ways nuclear states have used their military power simply to nuclear weapons. The changes wrought have been due as much to who has had them as it has been to what the weapons are physically capable of doing..... Nuclear weapons have not eliminated the need for nuclear states to deploy non nuclear forces, nor have they diminished for most non nuclear states the utility that conventional forces have for attaining their foreign policy goals vis-a-vis one another. In short, one can be equally impressed by the enduring realities of international politics and by the changes nuclear weapons have wrought" (59).

The great destructive potential of nuclear weapons has not diminished their political utility, though there are powerful restraints on the physical uses of nuclear weapons. The superpowers intend to avoid actions that may strengthen the incentives of other states to acquire nuclear weapons. The 1972-SALT is its example where both the superpowers agree to act in ways so as to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war between them and between either of the parties and other countries. This desire to prevent nuclear war has an anti-proliferation intent, also. The superpowers do not want that the advantages they themselves derive from the possession of nuclear weapons may be diminished by the erosion of this power through proliferation. Presently, one's nuclear power is checked and balanced by the other's. This makes the nuclear weapons subject to the same laws of international politics as are conventional weapons—that is, only when power checks the power the use of force is restrained, and that only relative power counts in international relations.

Nuclear weapons have not much use for outright compellence and have never been tested for their defensive value. They are either suited for swaggering or for deterring attacks. The bulk of the defense budgets of superpowers still goes for extensive deployment of conventional forces. Moreover, the Soviet possession of nuclear weapons did not give it a victory in Afghanistan nor did it stop the virtual erosion of its control over eastern Europe. The U.S. possession of nuclear weapons did not enable it to check the OPEC, or to win in Vietnam, or to prevail in the Middle East or even in South America. In cases where compellence was emphatically desired, the nuclear weapon
states have reverted to conventional force and to the conventional laws of its use in international relations: earlier Soviet actions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Afghanistan, and the U.S. actions in South East Asia, and against Libya and Panama.

Since it is relatively easy for a nuclear weapon power to deter attacks on its homeland, it has a greater degree of security than others. Definitely, there is a decisive advantage to be secure in a world where others are insecure. It means that the nuclear weapon power is not to be overburdened with national security concerns and, unlike other states, can divert more national resources and energies to other tasks, but, at the same time, such a state can bargain for or wrest political-military-economic concessions from other states. Precisely because nuclear deterrence supplies a high degree of security to a nuclear weapon power certain political advantages are created to be diplomatically exploited, which include the option to divert resources for other pursuits, a greater margin of safety for diplomatic maneuvering, and an opportunity to bargain nuclear protection with that which such a state may want from others. Between deterrence and outright compellence lies a fertile field for subtle and behind-the-scene political use of nuclear weapons as a force in international relations.

The nature and role of military force in contemporary international relations have been thus described by Michael Howard: "International order is based ... on recognition of disagreement... The conduct of international relations must therefore always be a delicate adjustment of power to power ..... Military power, the capacity to use violence for the protection, enforcement or extension of authority, remains an instrument with which no state has yet found it possible completely to dispense. ..... Military force is neither a purely destabilizing factor on the international scene; neither it is the basic factor of international order. Military force should be regarded simply as an intrinsic feature of international relations." (60).

To sum up, even if some states perceive military force as less instrumental they consider that they must possess it, and increase it, since there are 'others' who regard it as still usable and viable. No state has renounced the open or physical use of military force, even nuclear weapons. Comments to the effect that it would not be feasible to use nuclear weapons are usually qualified by an acceptance of the feasibility and utility of wars short of total. For the present, force remains the *ultima ratio* on a broad range of international issues. The real debate must not be whether military force still has utility, but what are the
most essential manifestations of this utility in the changed circumstances of the present.
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