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Option: international relations

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The term balance of power came into use to denote the power relationships in the European state system from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to World War I. The term balance of power in the field of international relations dates back to the sixteenth century, although its general concept has been known since ancient times. This term essentially means the situation in which one country, or a group of countries, finds it forced to take precautions against the growth of another country or group of countries, which is a competitor to it, or whose competition is likely to reach the point of threatening the interests of the first country or group, or harming the interests of the first country or group. Its independence and territorial integrity, then the state or group that senses this danger rushes to gather the sources of its strength and align its ranks so that it is equal in strength and readiness to the competing state or group, until a kind of balance is established between the two teams, which is supposed to prevent war, because a tie would make the possibility of one team's victory over the other is remote, which makes decision-makers think carefully before getting involved in a long-term debate war in which the loss is greater than the gain.

One of the renowned political realist, Hans. J. Morgenthau has defined the concept as, "it refers to an actual state of affairs in which power is distributed among several nations with approximate equality". One of the supreme American historians, Sidney B. Fay has defined the concept as "balance of power is such a 'just equilibrium' in power among the members of the family of nations as will prevent any one of them from becoming sufficiently strong to enforce its will upon others.

there is a collection of strategies states can employ to ensure they don't become vulnerable and another collection of strategies the international community can employ to maintain equilibrium between the world's many nations and interests. A few of these strategies include:

Preservation of National Sovereignty

After World War II, many policy experts recognized the extreme danger of permitting one state to invade and control another state. Those who believe in the balance of power theory believe nations should never violate other nation's sovereignty, although nations can divide into smaller nations, if that is the will of its people.

Contained Conflicts

When conflicts do erupt, power is best balanced by containing/stopping that conflict and ensuring it doesn't spread. This was one of the driving rationales behind the UN's involvement in the Korean War, the United States' involvement in Vietnam, and the more recent international involvements in Libya and Syria.

Limited Retaliation

Nations who are attacked by other nations should retaliate only to the extent necessary to preserve their own sovereignty and safety. To preserve the balance of power, the retaliating nation should not seize land or resources.

Strong Military Alliances

Because some large nations desire all the power, nations must form military alliances to prevent international aggression. In particular, stronger nations need to ally with weaker nations to keep those nations from becoming a target of other strong nations. If an aggressive nation cannot easily expand by taking over weaker nations, it can be more easily kept in check.

Robust Trade

Studies have shown that nations that trade together are less prone to engaging in the kinds of disputes that lead to military conflict.³ This is most likely because trade interlinks economies, making conflict between trading partners costly for both parties. As such, mutually beneficial trade agreements can be a useful tool in preserving the balance of power.

Diplomacy is perhaps the most vital tool in avoiding conflict and keeping world powers balanced. While a lot goes into diplomacy, one increasingly important factor is transparency. In a high-tech world, information travels quickly and secrets are difficult to keep. To avoid misunderstandings, nations -and international corporations, which often influence the balance of power-must remain as transparent as possible about their actions and objectives.

Read the text carefully and Answer the following questions

1. Give a title to the text.
2. Extract the general idea and basic ideas from the text.
3. When did the concept of balance of power appear in international relations?
4. How did the balance of power function?
5. What are strategies through which the balance of power operates?
6. Why is the balance of power important in international relations?
7. Summarize the text in your own words.