
UNIT 3 SOME CONCEPTS: STATE SYSTEM, POWER, NATIONAL INTEREST, SECURITY

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 State System
 - 3.2.1 Features of State System
 - 3.2.2 Evolution of the State System
- 3.3 Power
 - 3.3.1 What is Power?
 - 3.3.2 Elements of Power
 - 3.3.3 Measurement of Power
 - 3.3.4 Methods of Exercising Power
 - 3.3.5 Management of Power
- 3.4 National Interest
 - 3.4.1 Definition of National Interest
 - 3.4.2 National Interest – The Core of Foreign Policy
- 3.5 Security
 - 3.5.1 Security and National Interest
 - 3.5.2 Security and Nuclear Weapons
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Some Useful Books
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit four important concepts of international relations are discussed. After going through this Unit we should be able to:

- explain the meaning and importance of the state system;
- trace the evolution of the contemporary sovereign nation state system;
- define power and explain its dominate role in international relations;
- identify and explain various elements of power;
- describe various methods used for exercise of power;
- analyse balance of power and collective security as means of management of power;
- explain the importance of national interest for any nation–state;
- analyse the relationship between national interest and foreign policy; and
- define security and explain the role of security in the protection of national interest and exercise of power.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The 'State' in its modern sense of a territorial nation-state emerged as a result of momentous developments in Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. In today's world, there are around 185 states which constitutes the international

system. International relations and politics are generally understood as a set of actions, reactions and interactions between sovereign states, through the medium of their foreign policies. As the most authoritative political institution, the state can mobilize all domestic resources needed to carry on international interactions in the form of war, or the pursuit of diplomacy and peace. In this unit we will discuss the evolution of state system and its relevance in contemporary international relations and the world community.

Power is the capacity that enables a person to exercise control over the minds and actions of others. In respect of the sovereign states, power has been defined as the ability of state 'A' to influence the behaviour of state 'B' and other states. A powerful state can ensure that the powerful countries act in the manner that the former would like them to behave. Depending on the power that a state possesses, it may be described as a Super power, Big power or Small power. It is very difficult to exactly measure the power of a state, but power is often measured in terms of its elements. Some elements of power are tangible like the size of the territory, topography and its location; population of a state; the size of the armed forces; and possession of natural resources. There are a number of intangible elements also that determine power. These include quality of leadership and morale of the people and the armed forces. The state exercises power through methods such as persuasion, rewards, punishment and force. Those who possess power, which is like money, manage it by different means. Most prominent of these means are balance of power and collective security.

International Relations are often identified with foreign policy. This is not wholly correct, yet foreign policy is a vital tool of nation-states. National interest is the key concept in foreign policy. Foreign policy makers have to start with proper understanding of the country's national interest. National interest has been described as indeed the last word in international politics.

Primary objective of foreign policy makers is to ensure security of the state. In fact security is the most essential component of the national interest. Security is not merely the protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. It is also vitally concerned with the economic development, which in turn enables a country to increase its power and to use it to secure a place of respect in the world community. Thus, the four concepts that we will discuss in this unit are closely interrelated and their understanding is essential for proper appreciation of international relations.

3.2 THE STATE SYSTEM

The world community is organized into over 185 sovereign states. The organization of humankind into sovereign states is now called the state system. Palmer and Perkins define what is variously described as Western State System, the nation-state system or (sovereign) state system as: "It is the pattern of political life in which people are separately organized into sovereign states that must manage to get along together." Sovereignty and a definite territory are two of the essential attributes of a state. Of course, there should always be, as Garner said, a community of persons, having an organized government. Each state acquires coercive power to ensure compliance. The state system has evolved during the last three and a half centuries. It is the dominant pattern today. International Relations, in fact, are relations and interactions among the states who constitute the state-system.

3.2.1 Features of the State System

Certain features of the state system are essential conditions, without which the state system cannot exist. These features have been described by Palmer and Perkins as corollaries. They are the concepts of nationalism, sovereignty and power. Nationalism is that psychological or spiritual quality which unites the people of a state and " gives

them the will to champion what they regard as their national interest." Sovereignty is the concept of unlimited powers. A group of people who are territorially organized are called sovereign when they possess both internal and external freedom to do what they wish to do. National power is the might of a state which enables the state to get things done as it would like them to be done. Power is a complex of many tangible and intangible elements.

We have studied about the concept of nationalism in unit 2, and the concept of power is analysed in detail in the next section of this unit. The concept of sovereignty is briefly dealt with below. You will notice in every modern state, such as India, Britain, Russia, the United States, Pakistan or Egypt, there lives a community of numerous persons who possess a government which is generally obeyed by the people and which does not obey any external authority. Such a state is situated within a definite territory.

Sovereignty, in simple terms, means the supreme power of the state both internally and externally. It is the attribute of sovereignty which distinguishes the state from other associations or organisations.

One of the earliest definitions of sovereignty was given by the French philosopher Jean Bodin (1530-1596), who defined it as "supreme power over citizens and subjects, unrestrained by law." However, Bodin's main object was to strengthen the position of the French Monarch who was then facing civil war and chaos.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), elaborated on the concept of sovereignty, shifting the emphasis from the person of the king to the abstraction called government or state. Hobbes equated the sovereign with the state and government.

A useful distinction is made between **internal** and **external sovereignty**. Internal sovereignty concerns the supreme and lawful authority of the state over its citizens. External sovereignty, on the other hand, refers to the recognition by all states, of the independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of each state, as represented by its government. Hugo Grotius, (1583-1645), the Dutch jurist defined sovereignty as "that power whose acts are not subject to the control of another." For him, sovereignty was manifested when a state, in dealing with its internal affairs, remained free from the control of other states. Thus defined, sovereignty has become the cornerstone of the modern international system. It is this external sovereignty that we are concerned with here.

This concept of sovereignty was for the first time recognised and institutionalized in the **Treaty of Westphalia in 1648**. It provided that : (i) only sovereign states could engage in international relations; (ii) for the purpose of recognizing a state as an actor in international relations, it must have a geographical territory with a definite population, land and effective military power to fulfill international obligations; and (iii) all sovereign states are equal in international law and international relations.

3.2.2 Evolution of the State System

The signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, after the Thirty years war, is identified as the **beginning of the state system in its modern form**. States did indeed exist before Westphalia, and they conducted relations among themselves, but that was quite different from modern state system. In the ancient world there existed small city states in Greece, India, Egypt and Italy. Athens and Sparta in ancient Greece, and Indraprastha and Hastinapur in India were some such city-states. Then, there had been a succession of sprawling dynastic empires. The world had also known the vast Roman Empire which encompassed the entire civilised Western World. But there had been no nation state with sovereignty.

The Thirty Years War had resulted out of the Protestant-Catholic conflict. The struggle did not establish any dominant religion, yet it ended the undisputed authority of the catholic church. It resulted in a spirit of mutual toleration which has not yet been threatened. It laid the foundation of the nation state system. Palmer and Perkins write : "In spite of enormous destruction, the wrecking of the universal Church, and the fragmentation of Europe into well-defined nation-states, the resulting peace of Westphalia (1648) paved the way for a semblance of European stability."

The culmination of the Thirty Year War in the Peace of Westphalia marked the starting point for new norms governing the behaviour of states in their relations with each other. The medieval conception dominated by the image of a Euro-centric christian commonwealth gave way to a new concept of an international system based on the co-existence of sovereign states. Territorial states emerged as the sole legitimate players in the new international system. Only sovereign states could either wage wars, or enter into treaties, or alliances with each other.

A corollary to the principle of state sovereignty was naturally the principle of state equality. As Vattel puts it in his celebrated argument , "a dwarf is as much as man as a giant is, a small republic no less a sovereign state than the most powerful kingdom.

This was at least the juridical position. Reality, however, was quite different. State equality was practically limited to the great powers of Europe namely France, Great Britain, Austria and Russia. The so-called "anti-hegemony norm" embodied in the concept of a "just balance of power" was the exclusive privilege of the Great powers. The non-European states however, did not figure in the actual scheme of things that emerged after the Westphalian peace.

Rather, the international norms of this period were based on the then extant dynastic concept of state. The principle of sovereignty meant that the dynasties ruling the territorial states of Europe recognized each other as rightful, independent and sovereign. The post-Westphalian system thus developed its own hierarchies.

International relations between peace of Westphalia and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) were marked by the attempts of Louis XIV to establish French hegemony, and rivalry among Britain, France, Holland and Spain. Eventually, France suffered heavy losses by the Treaty of Utrecht. France promised that Spain and France would never be united. Unification of Prussia was encouraged leading to a new balance in Europe. Sweden, Russia and Poland could not take any decision without involving west European countries.

The mutations within the Westphalian system and its further elaboration was seen in the system that emerged after the Congress of Vienna (1815). This system was still Eurocentric with 22 of the 23 member states being European and the last being the United States. Yet in a sense, it was a global system in that it laid the norms that were to affect every part of the world. The backward countries became the battleground for the resolution of the conflicts of great powers. The system that emerged after the Vienna Congress was a system of great-power hegemony and known as the Concert of Europe. It was somewhat of a prototype of the collective security system that we see today. Five great powers, namely, Britain, France, Prussia, Russia and Austria took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining international order. The concert of Europe rested on the assumption that world order could not be maintained without the exercise of special rights by these great powers.

The rise of nationalism and thereby the emergence of new norms led to what has been termed, the updating of the Westphalian system, following the Congress of Vienna (1815). The concept of a sovereign state was not challenged, but its basis shifted from royalty to nationality. Thus merged the concept of the state with nationhood which laid the basis for the modern nation state. Subsequently, the Paris Treaty which ended

the Crimean war recognized the principle of national self-determination. Gradually, therefore, the right of each nationality to become an independent political actor on an equal footing developed as a key principle of international relations.

By 1914, the system's membership reached 43. For the first time the European exclusiveness was affected. There were 17 states from Latin America, 3 from Asia, one from Africa and one from the Middle East. Though the prototype of modern diplomacy was established much earlier at Westphalia, Vienna and Paris, it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that regular international conferences started taking place for adopting conventions regarding the behaviour of states. The subjects covered by these conventions included the rules of diplomacy (rank, protocol, procedure and privilege), the principles of maritime law, neutrality, blockade and contraband, free navigation and international water ways, copyrights and patents, and rules of warfare.

In contemporary international relations, the principles of sovereign equality of all states and non-interference in the internal affairs of states are paramount in the formal conduct of states towards one another. In the absence of any superior legal authority, the present system functions in which each state is at liberty to act to secure its own interests. Though it is largely true about some of the Great Powers, the above characterization is somewhat of an exaggeration. Rules, conventions, procedures that evolved over hundreds of years do have some sanctity. The United Nations, which succeeded the League of Nations, though it has often failed to restrain powerful states from committing aggression at will, still enjoys a certain degree of legitimacy.

With the process of decolonisation having become complete after World War II, the focus on Europe changed to include newly independent states in Asia and Africa.

A rapid scan through recent developments in the international system reveals new trends which suggest that the Westphalian system of territorially sovereign nation-states is on decline.

Though formally sovereign yet vast majority of nation-states try to adjust to a highly hierarchical international system that has emerged. The resulting world is characterized by "super-powers" "satellites", and the UN system's various operations, arm-twistings of super power(s), conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund's and activities of multinational corporations with budgets greater than many states GNPs etc. Due to globalization in various spheres, the state seems to be losing its power. The inter-dependence of world economy and the growing importance of supra-state international authorities like IMF, (GATT) WTO, World Bank points to curtailment of authority. In the post-cold war phase, such curtailment of authority does not however apply to the United States of America whose state has become, if anything, more powerful and domineering.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What is meant by the state system?

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2) Describe three features, or corollaries, of the state system.

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3) Trace the evolution of state system since the Peace of Westphalia.

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3.3 POWER

3.3.1 What is Power?

Power is a phenomenon of all relationships, and political relationship is no exception to this rule. Power has been defined by Hans Morgenthau as "Man's control over minds and actions of other man." But, as minds cannot be seen, power can be determined by the behaviour of individuals and states. In a very broad sense, power has been defined "as the ability or capacity to control others and get them to do what one wants them to do and also to see that they do not do what one does not want them to do." In international relations, **power is the ability of a state to make its will prevail and to enforce respect and command obedience from other states.** This is how Professor Mahendra Kumar has explained power of the states. Simply speaking, power is an ability which may not be exercised. But, when exercised, this ability enables a state to control the behaviour of other states.

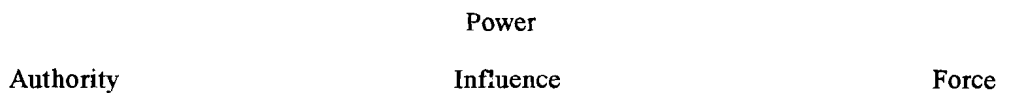
The concept of power was discussed by Kautilya, the master of statecraft in ancient India, in fourth century B.C. He interpreted power as "the possession of strength" derived from three elements, namely knowledge, military might and valour (**Gyan, Sainya bal and Shaurya** respectively). Morgenthau has been described as a realist descendant of Kautilya. His entire approach is based on power. As pointed out in Unit 1, he describes all politics as struggle for power. Therefore, international politics is struggle for power among states. Robert Dahl explained power by saying: 'A' has power over 'B' to the extent that it can get 'B' to do something that 'B' could not otherwise do. Thus, every state has power in respect to certain other states. Smaller powers like Nauru may not be able to get things done as they want, but most states possess power of ensuring that their wishes prevail. However, the quantum of power varies. The ability to get things done of USA is far more than that of India. Thus, USA has more power than India. In turn, India has perhaps more power than Nepal or Indonesia. Strength of power may be demonstrated in several ways. For example, in 1996, The Conference on disarmament (CD) at Geneva could

not adopt CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) because India refused to sign it. That proved India's power even as against the U.S.A.

Power can be easily compared to money. Power plays some role in international politics as money plays in economy. Most people get money so that they can get what they require. But, for some people, money becomes an obsession. They seek money to accumulate it. For most people money is a means, for others it is an end. Similarly, power is a vital means of states. However, it is very often an end in itself. For, every state desires to be more and more powerful. That is why, Vernon Van Duke wrote : Power is both "the capstone among the objectives which the states pursue and the cornerstone among the methods which they employ." He meant that power is the highest of objectives and aims of states, and it is also the basic means which they use to serve their national interests.

Power is the most central concept of international politics. But it is not always easy to define it. Still definitions have been given. Coulombis and Wolfe define power as "an umbrella concept that denotes anything that establishes and maintains the control of Actor A over Actor B." This definition widens the meaning of the concept of power.

Power has three important ingredients. They are **force, influence and authority**. According to Coulombis and Wolfe, authority means voluntary compliance by Actor B of the wishes of Actor A, out of respect, affection, etc. Influence has been defined as use of instruments of persuasion, short of force, by Actor A to get its wishes accepted by Actor B. Finally, force implies coercion by Actor A of Actor B in pursuit of political objectives of Actor A. This, power is a combination of authority (voluntary compliance), Influence (Compliance through persuasion) and force (use of coercive methods).



3.3.2 Elements of Power

A country acquires power through several elements. There is no absolute condition that makes for power. Different elements, in different situations, can make for power. The same elements in another situation may not provide power. A combination of certain elements in one situation may give more power to a country than the same combination provides to another country. The elements may be broadly divided between tangible and intangible elements. But, from another angle the elements of power may be classified as of quantitative and qualitative value. William Ebenstein stressed upon the importance of qualitative elements. He wrote :

"In the field of international relations, the central problem of the strength of a nation is essentially a problem of qualitative judgement and measurement, as national power is more than the sum total of population, new material and quantitative factors. The 'alliance potential' of a nation, its civil devotion, the flexibility of its institutions, its technical 'knowhow', its capacity to endure privations – these are but a few qualitative elements that determine the total strength of a nation."

Elements of power are briefly discussed below :

Tangible Elements : Population can be easily counted. Therefore, it is a tangible element. It is generally believed that states with large population are more powerful. Large population enables a country not only to have strong armed forces, but to have manpower for various economic activities also. But, it is not essential that large population will make for power. China, during nineteenth century, had much less power than Britain which is a less populous state. Contemporary Israel with less than

50 lakh people has proved to be an effective power. She has even acquired nuclear capability. Thus, as Coulombis and Wolfe say, "A population that is healthy, well-fed, unified, evenly spaced, well informed is likely to be much more powerful than a population that is badly nourished, diseased, overcrowded, illiterate, disunited and disloyal."

Territory is the second tangible element of power. Some writers refer to geography as an element, and include territory within 'geography'. Most important among this element are size of a country, its climate, topography and its location. Normally, it is believed that a country large in size would be more powerful than smaller states. A large size not only enables the country to have vast areas under agricultural production and to have industrial growth, but also provide scope for a defensive army to manoeuvre and retreat, allow enemy to enter, then hit it back, encircle it and defeat it. But, a smaller state may at times becomes more powerful. Mere measurement of area is no guarantee of power to a state. Israel is a striking example of a small state that has demonstrated a disproportionately large amount of military power. On the other hand, Canada with its frozen waters and Brazil with its jungles have never been big powers.

Climate of a country also influences its power. Thus, frozen Antarctica and the deserts of Sahara are obviously not suitable for power, although with the potential of uranium for nuclear power, even deserts where uranium is found have assumed importance. A lot depends on the location and topography of a country. Foreign policy – makers find **location** to be a key determinant. Topographic features determine boundaries between nations. Whereas artificially created boundaries, as between India and Pakistan or Germany and France, can weaken the position; the natural frontiers such as high mountains and sea help the power of a state. This again is not an absolute condition.

Natural Resources constitute another element of power. Possession of natural resources such as oil, uranium and various minerals add to the power of a state. Today, importance of oil-rich Gulf has increased. Besides those possessing items like coal and iron can enhance their power. Nations can improve their power, if on account of their natural resources, they can give rewards in the form of minerals, agricultural products or manufactured goods.

The fourth tangible element of power is that of **agricultural capacity**. Such capacity is considered crucial in the sense that countries capable of feeding themselves, especially during the course of a long war, will be relatively more powerful. Self-sufficiency in food is considered critical in this regard.

The fifth tangible element of power is that of **military strength**. This relates to the conventional notion that power is backed by military force. The military strength of a given nation-state can be measured in terms of funds expended for defence and security purposes. A related factor is location outside its territory. Such military mobility hinges on the nation-state's ability to sustain military operations on land, sea and air. The ultimate success of the nation-states, however, would depend on intangible factors such as preparedness, training, leadership, morale, etc. which affect the performance of armed forces in a given situation.

The discussion of **tangible elements of power** brings out clearly that such elements are necessary to generate capability of the nation-states in a sovereign state-system. But this is not sufficient to ensure that capabilities would lead to the overall strength of the nation-states. We need to specify the **intangible elements of power** that contribute in a most critical way to the overall capability of the sovereign state.

Intangible Elements of Power : The intangible elements (attributes) of power include leadership, bureaucratic-organisational efficiency, type of government, societal cohesion, etc. Although such elements cannot be measured or concretely specified, they are critical in terms of the overall power of a sovereign state.

Leadership constitutes the most critical intangible element of power. Its significance relates to the ability of the leader of a sovereign state to motivate its citizens to realise foreign policy objectives of the state. Although we cannot accurately measure this variable, the latter is significant in terms of its impact on the sovereign country's conduct in inter-state relations.

The second intangible element of power refers to **bureaucratic-organisational efficiency**. The underlying reasoning here is that states, having efficient bureaucracies, can implement their domestic and foreign policies in an effective manner.

The third intangible element of power refers to the **type of government**. It is difficult to specify and measure the effect to different types of governance of national power in general and specific situations. All we can suggest here is that governmental decisions in foreign policy matters must be quick and adaptable to the changing external environment as well as domestic needs of the nation-state. Further, they must be accountable in terms of the checks and balances characteristic of democratic regimes. It ensures efficiency and credibility to the foreign policy of a given sovereign state.

The fourth intangible element of power is that of **societal cohesion**. Here the assumption is that internally unified nation-states are stronger. Chronic terrorism, recurring strikes, civil war – these are some of the indicators which point towards internal instability and disruption within the confines of a sovereign state. Such a state will not be capable of sustaining its strength in the sovereign state-system in the longer run.

Lastly, **national morale** is one of the most important of intangible elements of power. If the morale of the army is high it is difficult for any enemy to defeat the country. In peace time also, people's morale enables a country to be effective and powerful. If morale goes down people do not work with enthusiasm, and army tends to lose the battle. Thus, high national morale can overcome shortcomings of various types.

The above discussion on intangible elements of power shows that despite inability to measure, these elements are equally (if not more) important as the tangible elements are.

3.3.3 Measurement of Power

Mere possession of elements of power does not make a country powerful. Thus, huge deposits of minerals and possession of raw material and having huge manpower does not make for power. The resources must be properly utilised. Secondly, a distinction is sometimes made between **Capability** and **Power**. **Mere possession of elements of power may be called capability, and mobilisation of this capability for actual use is power.** Thus, potential to be powerful is capability and mobilisation of capability is power.

An important question that you may ask is how can we measure the power of a country. It is almost impossible to be able to measure the power. It is to be examined in relative context. Thus, country A may be more powerful than C, but less powerful than B. This is because A cannot get things done according to its wishes, as far as B is concerned, but can have its way in regard to C. However, Ray S. Cline has suggested a very useful method of measurement of power. For Cline, power is important in the sense that it is perceived both by its wielders and by those over who it is exercised. He has suggested a formula for measurement of power though it may not give us exact results. If PP is 'perceived power', it can be measured as under :

$$PP = (C + E + M) \times (S + W)$$

Here C means critical mass, which includes population and territory; E stands for economic capability, M for military capability, S for strategic purpose, and W means will to pursue national strategy. Whereas C, E and M are tangible, S and W are intangible elements. Thus Ray S. Cline places very important value on strategic purpose and the will to pursue that purpose.

Robert Dahl offers another suggestion for measurement of power. According to him, "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do". But, even this formula is far from satisfactory and measurement of power remains a very difficult exercise.

3.3.4 Methods of Exercising Power

If power is the ability to get things done, what are the methods that can be employed, by those who possess power, for securing compliance with their wishes. Four methods are generally employed for the exercise of power. These methods are : **Persuasion, reward, punishment and force.** These methods may also be called **instruments** of the exercise of power. **Persuasion** is the easiest of the four methods. In this country A tries to influence the behaviour of country B by persuading the latter to change its decision. In fact, most of the times diplomacy is based on persuasion. This method is free from use of coercion or even threat of use of force. Another method of exercise of power is offer of **reward**. In this method, attempt is made to influence the behaviour of other state by promise of reward, which may be material, economic or political. The reward may take the shape of offer of a territory, or military aid in the form of weapons, bases or training facilities. The reward may be in the nature of economic aid or loan. It may be political if support, or a favourable vote, is promised in the United Nations or other organisations and agencies. The third method of power is **Punishment**. It may take various forms. For example, stoppage of economic or military aid, or even a threat of such a withdrawal amounts to punishment. A threat of unfavourable action also implies punishment. Similarly, punishments include unfavourable propaganda, political support to the opponents or enemies, and imposition of unfavourable terms of trade and transit. Thus when the U.S. promises support to Pakistan or seeks to vote in her favour against India's wishes it amounts to US punishment of India. Lastly, when the threat of punishment is actually carried out, it is called use of **force**. In other words, punishment is a threat, and its implementation is force.

It must be mentioned that only a short or a narrow end view looks at threat and force as ultimate form of power. As Prof. Kenneth E Boulding observes that there has been a remarkable expansion in the area of stable peace among independent nations from the mid-19th century onwards. This always meant abandonment of military threats as a means of changing frontiers. Arguments against 'threat as the sole basis of power' have two interesting developments from India and China coming up during the 20th century. Gandhiji's experiments with organised non-violence leading to achievement of political independence attracted many leaders engaged in nationalist struggles elsewhere (including 1989 happenings in Eastern Europe). Similarly, China syndrome conveys its remarkable capacity to convert its conquerors into Chinese ways of thinking and doing. Further, improvements in the means of destruction has often diminished the power of threat. As Prof. Boulding observes, "It was the invention of the effective cannon that made the feudal castle and then city wall obsolete and created the nation-state with its relatively wide-spread areas of internal peace. Similarly, the nuclear weapon and the long-range missile have probably done for the nation-state what gun-power did for the feudal baron." There hangs a hope for a stable world community of peace-loving people.

3.3.5 Management of Power

Each nation-state tries to manage power for its own advantage in a world of uneven powers. Broadly, two strategies are followed.

Balance of Power : The term balance of power normally implies existence of a rough equilibrium of power among various nations, which means power should be more or less equally shared by different states. However, when we say that balance of power is favourable to such and such country, we mean that there is preponderance of power in favour of that country.

The operation of balance of power requires the existence of five or six big powers who try to maintain equilibrium among them and avoid preponderance of power with any one country. Of course besides the big powers, there may also be several medium and small powers. According to Quincy Wright, there are five main assumptions of balance of power. Firstly, he says, it is assumed that states are committed to protect their vital interests by all possible means. Such vital interests generally include security, territorial integrity, political independence and economic resources. Second assumption is that vital interests of the states are, or may be, threatened. Unless interests are threatened why would any state try to protect them. The third assumption is that balance of power helps the protection of vital interests by threatening other states with committing aggression, or by enabling the victim to achieve victory in case an aggression takes place. In other words, a future aggressor will resort to war only if it is sure of superiority of power. The fourth assumption is that relative power position of various states can be measured so that it may be managed in one's favour. The last assumption is that leaders formulate foreign policy on the basis of an intelligent understanding of power consideration.

Based on these assumptions, it can be concluded that management of power to protect vital interests of a country (which were threatened) is balance of power.

A balance may be brought about through the use of one or more of the following ways. One of the most important means is amassing of **armaments**. Since war is the ultimate instrument of resolution of disputes, countries try to increase military power to secure advantage. But once one country acquires new weapons, the opponents also begin to compete. **Alliances** are often concluded to secure a favourable balance of power. Counter alliances are then concluded to upset the preponderance of power of some against the others. Nations always try to make, abandon and remake alliances. Balances of power becomes effective if there are a number of big powers who often exercise choice of making alliances and counter alliances. Thirdly, in order to maintain a favourable balance of power, or to secure preponderance of power, nations often try to **seize territory**. This increases the power of the nation concerned. This method was very common during the period of imperialism. Even in 1990, Iraq seized the territory of Kuwait though later she had to vacate it. Earlier, several Arab territories were seized by Israel. Fourthly, a nation may acquire and maintain power by setting up **buffer state** between two large and unfriendly countries. For example, at one time Poland was a buffer between Russia and Germany and Tibet was set up as a buffer between China and British India.

Intervention is another method of ensuring favourable balance of power. It often happens that a big power tries to regain a lost ally or pick up a new ally by intervening in the internal affairs of a smaller country and set up a friendly government there. For example the United States intervened in Vietnam, Dominican Republic, and others, the Soviet Union intervened in 1979 in Afghanistan. Lastly, there is a method of altering the existing balance of power by **detaching allies** from the opposite side compelling them to become neutrals or winning them over as allies. All these methods have been used again and again to secure or upset a balance of power.

At times a **laughing third party**, or balancer, plays vital role. This means a third party, uninterested in rivalry between two nations or two power blocs, may help a weaker nation to secure better balance of power. Britain has traditionally been a balancer, or a laughing third.

Collective Security : Collective security is another device of management of power. It is also said to be one of the most promising of all approaches of peace. Power should be so managed that an aggression is collectively repulsed by the international community. It is a better device than balance of power as it does not involve alliances and counter alliances, race for armaments and political manipulations. The concept of collective security implies "Security" as the goal and "collective" as the means. It has been defined as "a machinery for joint action in order to prevent or counter any attack against an established order" (Schwarzberger). There are two basic assumptions of collective security. First, that war is unavoidable and it is likely to occur, and second, that it can be defeated (or prevented) by an overwhelming power. As Inis Claude says, it is not the elimination of Power, but the management of power. It is a middle position between balance of power and the world government. Collective security operates through a system of international organisation – The League of Nations and the United Nations. It is different from collective defence because in the collective security system the principle that applies is one for all, and all for one. The rock bottom principle of collective security is that an attack on any one state will be regarded as an attack on all States. An attack on any one Member Nation of the UN is regarded as an aggression against all, and if the Security Council identifies the aggressor and calls upon all other countries to apply economic and/or military sanctions, all the states are expected to stand together and fight the aggression. Thus, the aggressor is not identified in advance. It can be anyone against whom collective action is taken. **Collective defence**, on the other hand, is an arrangement through alliance system. Here an opponent is identified in advance and others are committed only against that one enemy. It is not one for all, and all for one.

The system of collective security was enshrined in the Covenant of League of Nations and was given a trial by the League. It is also accepted as a device of maintaining international peace and management of power in the present United Nations system.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the concept of power.

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2) What are the tangible elements of power?

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Discuss the intangible elements of power.

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4) Describe briefly four methods of exercising power.

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5) What is balance of power and what are the devices of balance of power?

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6) Explain the concept of collective security.

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3.4 NATIONAL INTEREST

The concept of national interest is of central importance in any attempt to describe and explain the international behaviour. It is almost universally believed that the primary justification of state action is national interest. President Wilson of the U.S. was one of those rare idealists who differed with this belief (see below). National interest is regarded as the 'key concept' in foreign policy. As Hans Morgenthau wrote : "As long as the world is politically organised into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in world politics." It is the only legitimate and fundamental cause of national policy. Lord Palmerston had once said in the nineteenth century: "We have no eternal allies and we have no eternal enemies. Our interests are eternal and those interests it is our duty to follow." It is not only difficult to define national interest, but it is also difficult to understand how different world leaders explain away all their actions in the name of national interest.

3.4.1 Definition of National Interest

What exactly is national interest? Napoleon had said that he was acting in the interest of France when he initiated his campaign against Russia, and later when he launched his desperate battle at Waterloo. Adolf Hitler justified his expansionist policies, including annexation of Austria and breakup of Czechoslovakia, in the name of Germany's national interest. "Friendly socialist" governments were installed in Poland and other East European countries by Stalin in the name of Soviet Union's national interest. President Bush was acting in America's national interest when he led the war against Iraq on the question of Kuwait's annexation by Iraq. Benazir Bhutto thought that it was in Pakistan's national interest to destabilise the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, all actions, howsoever, wrong are taken in the name of national interest. We must now try to find an acceptable definition of national interest.

The idea of national interest is singularly vague. It assumes variety of meanings in different contexts. The concept of national interest has not been objectively or scientifically defined. However, Padleford and Lincoln observe : "Concepts of national interests are centred on the core values of the society, which include the welfare of the nation, the security of its political beliefs, national way of life, territorial integrity and its self-preservation." According to Robert Osgood, national interest is "state of affairs valued solely for its benefit to the nations." Morgenthau maintains that the main requirements of a nation-state is to protect its physical, political and cultural identity against threat from other states. But, Joseph Frankel writes about aspirational and operational aspects of national interest. Aspirational (what one expects) aspects include the state's vision of good life and an ideal set of goals to be realised. Put into operation, national interest refers to sum total of its interests and policies actually pursued.

3.4.2 National Interest – the Core of Foreign Policy

Foreign policy – makers can never ignore their state's national interest as they perceive it. At times leaders like Hitler, intoxicated of power, led to disaster in the name of national interest. But, normally the good of the state is the sole concern of foreign policy. This good of the state, or national interest, remains the core of the foreign policy. The idealist (US President) Woodrow Wilson, however, felt that national interests can be legitimately subordinated to morality and interests of the mankind. He said : "It is perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in terms of national interests we dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us. We have no selfish ends to serve." But this idealist approach of morality has never succeeded in areas of foreign policy. Wilson's views were totally at variance from what the first U.S. President George Washington had said. According to him, "No nation, no matter how lofty its ideals

and how genuine its desire to abide by them, can base its foreign policy on consideration other than its own national interest." He had opined that no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it.

What then are the components of national interest of a state? Security, economic development and a peaceful world order are the objective of a modern state. All countries desire and search for national security, political independence and maintenance of territorial integrity. In other words, defence of the state is naturally the primary concern of foreign policy. Secondly, promotion of economic interest, including securing favourable conditions of trade, is a vital objective of foreign policy-makers. Thirdly, most modern states are also concerned with maintenance of international peace, respect for international law, pacific settlement of international disputes and strengthening of the system of international organisation.

When India, under Nehru's leadership, decided to adopt the policy of non-alignment that was in India's national interest as well as being an instrument of world peace. The Non-Aligned Movement initiated by Nehru, Nasser and Tito was also meant to promote the ideal of peace in a world then divided into two hostile power blocs. If India had aligned itself with one of the power blocs our economic development would have got linked only to one ideology. There are some world leaders who believe that their foreign policy must be committed to a certain ideology, such as propagation of Fascism or communism or the containment of communism. But, realist statesmen emphasise only the national interest. Consequently, the role of ideology has lately declined.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) What is the importance of national interest in foreign policy-making?

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3.5 SECURITY

3.5.1 Security and National Interest

The concept of security is directly related to national interest. The entire state system is the product of the desire of man to protect himself against threats from various quarters. Security of the state is the objective of every government. We have said in section 3.3.5 above about two of the methods of security. The idea of management of power is to regulate power in such a way that security of the state is protected and that none should have preponderance of power so as to be able to threaten security of other' states. Whenever security of the States has been seriously threatened, man has begun to think and device new means of security of political independence and territorial integrity of the states. We have seen (3.2) that the state-system was largely an outcome of the Peace of Westphalia which ended the thirty-years war. When Napoleon was defeated, the suffering states of Europe, after the Congress of Vienna, created the Concert of Europe. The idea was to ensure security of the evolving state systems.

When the Russian Czar took the initiative for the Hague Conferences (1899 and 1907), security was again the objective. The Hague Conferences provided for peaceful settlement of international disputes mainly through arbitration and constituted a Court of Arbitration at the Hague. When international law and morality became victims of unprincipled warfare during the First World War, scholars and statesmen alike initiated the process of setting up a League of Nations to maintain peace and security in the post-war period. The preamble of the League of Nations clearly spelt out the objectives of the new organisation. It said that the High Contracting Parties (Member – Nations) had agreed to the Covenant "In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war" The League made several attempts for international security, but eventually it failed. The Charter of the United Nations also declares : "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security that armed forces shall not be used, save in the common interest" Thus, the international concern for security has been consistently expressed.

3.5.2 Security and Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons have altered the security perspective of nation-states. But, even before such deadly weapons were produced, nations were always concerned with their security. For that purpose they often entered into alliances and counter-alliances, and race for armaments was vigorously carried on. After the First World War, a victorious France was so much scared of defeated Germany that she insisted on her security in the Paris Conference, in the League of Nations and outside it. French search of security dominated many of inter-war years. Having been dissatisfied with the security provisions of the League Covenant, France sought guarantees from various quarters including an abortive joint Anglo-American Guarantee, the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance (1923), the Geneva Protocol 1924 (both failed to take off), the successful Locarno Pact (1925) and the Pact of Paris (1928) for the renunciation of war. Before as well as after the Second World War also search for security has been the principal concern of numerous countries.

Alliances like NATO, SEATO, Baghdad Pact and Warsaw Pact were all aimed at security either against the Soviet Union or against the United States. Besides, military bases and assistance to several countries, including Pakistan, were in order to satisfy their quest for security.

When the United States manufactured and dropped the first two atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 1945), to secure surrender of Japan, the whole nature of war changed. With that the concern and nature of security also changed. For four years, till 1949, the United States was the only nuclear power, which placed the security of entire world at her mercy. Nobody was sure of one's security. Even Soviet Union remained in constant fear as it was not known whether the US had another bomb or not, and whether she had any intention of targeting Moscow in its ongoing ideological conflict. Once Soviet Union tested its first nuclear device in 1949, the race for nuclear weapons began. Britain, France and finally China became nuclear powers. Since then at least three more countries have acquired nuclear capability. These are India, Pakistan and Israel. Together they are known as "threshold countries". India insists that she will use nuclear power only for peaceful purposes. There are many other countries that can acquire nuclear capability.

In the nuclear age security of nations requires not merely amassing of traditional weapons and conclusion of alliances. Seeking nuclear umbrella also became objective of many. The cold war expressed concern for security and nations sought even nuclear missiles and military bases from Big Powers. The disaster that nuclear weapons can bring about is unprecedented, and as Max Lerner says, we are living in the period of "overkill", for nuclear weapons that nations now possess can destroy the whole world several times over. The war in nuclear age is no more limited to the armed forces. Civilian targets are aimed at even by non-nuclear, traditional bombs. In such a situation the concern for security has assumed alarming concern.

- Note : i) Use the space below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.
- 1) Highlight the relation between security and national interest.

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- 2) What the reason for the concern for security in the nuclear age?

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have dealt with four concepts : state system, power, national interest and security. In the ancient period there did exist states, but these were mostly city - states in Greece, India, etc. Then there came into existence huge empires such as the Holy Roman Empire. The modern state-system began to evolve after the Peace of Westphalia (1648). It is after the Congress of Vienna that the concept of sovereign nation-states developed. The emergence of several nation-states after First World War was a welcome development in international relations. The state-system today consists of territorial entities which enjoy both internal and external sovereignty. The state system represents a clear advance over the previous international system. It is based on the key concept of equality of all states. Present international system has its foundation in nation-states.

Power is the ability to control the minds and actions of others. In international relations it means ability of states to control the behaviour of other states. Power is like money in market economy. Like all politics, international politics, is struggle for power. There are various elements of power – some are tangible which can be measured, and others are intangible which cannot be measured or quantified. Yet they are critical in terms of overall capacity of sovereign states. The tangible elements include population, territory (its size, climate, topography and location) natural resources, agricultural capacity, and military strength. None of these elements is absolute as their position is relative. Intangible elements are equally important. They include quality of leadership, type of government, societal cohesion and national morale.

It is only a very short-run view which looks at threat and force as the ultimate forms of power. Such a view overlooks vast areas of stable peace among independent nations built over years, successful strategies of organised non-violence etc. It is not easy to measure the power of a state. It depends on many factors. There are four recognised methods of exercise of power : Persuasion, reward, punishment and force.

Peace has become a greater need today than ever before. It can be made possible through proper management of power. Three common methods of management are : balance of power, collective security and world government (the last mentioned is still a dream). Balance of power has been practised for a long time to ensure that no state acquires preponderance of power. Balancer often plays important role, and is called "the laughing third". National interest is a concept of central importance in understanding international behaviour. The concept is difficult to define, yet it is the core of every foreign policy. It includes welfare of the nation, security of its political beliefs, security of the state and its territorial integrity. Primary objectives of national interest are security, economic development and a world order that is stable and free of serious disputes.

Security is the primary concern of every state. It is, as mentioned above, the primary concern of every state and objective of national interest. Power is exercised to promote national interest in general and ensure security in particular. Security in the nuclear age is generally threatened and has acquired greater importance.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Sovereignty	:	Supreme Power of the state subject to no internal or external limitations.
National-State	:	The form of state based on ethnic identity of its people. People feel united by common bond, and are territorially organised under a government that is independent.
International System	:	Independent political entities – states, nation, empires are variables of a worldwide system, together called international system.
Power	:	Ability or capacity to get things done as one would like others to do. It also ensures that others do not do what one does not want them to do.
Tangible Elements	:	Elements like population and territory that can be measured or quantified.
Intangible elements	:	Elements that are not visible and cannot be measured.
Collective Security	:	Method of ensuring security of nations through collective economic and military action against the aggressor.

3.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Henz, John H	:	The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics.
Morgenthau, Hans	:	Politics Among Nations
Deutsch, Karl W	:	The Analysis of International Relations
Palmer & Perkins	:	International Relations
Martin Wright	:	Systems of States, Leicester, 1977
Kenneth E. Boulding	:	Three Faces of Power, California, 1989

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Answers to Check Your Progress 1

- 1) A system in which sovereign nation-states interact with each other through the medium of their foreign policies. A state is a community of persons, territorially organised with an independent government and enjoying sovereignty. Nation-states are units of present international system.
- 2) Three prominent features of state system are (i) nationalism – a psychological quality that binds people; (ii) sovereignty; (iii) national power, the capacity to get things done according to its wishes.
- 3) Territorial states based on nationalism; Eurocentric system with about 22 states; nation-states after the First World War; and multiplication of states after decolonisation after 1945.

Answers to Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Power is ability to control the behaviour of others. It is man's control over minds and actions of other men. In international relations capacity of state to get things done, as desired by a powerful state.
- 2) Elements that can be quantified : population; territory – its size, climate, topography etc. natural resources, raw material, industrial units, armed forces.
- 3) Elements that cannot be measured; quality of leadership; bureaucratic efficiency; type of government, societal cohesion and national morals.
- 4) Persuasion, Reward, Punishment and Force.
- 5) A system in which about half a dozen states enjoy more or less equal power, check each other so that none acquires preponderance of power; often a 'balancer' ensures equilibrium. Devices : alliances, armaments, buffer states, intervention, etc.
- 6) International security is the aim, collective is the means. Aggressor has to face the collective might of world community. 'One for all and all for one' is the principle; operates through international organisation like the U.N.

Answers to Check Your Progress 3

- 1) National interest seeks to protect core values of the society including welfare of the nation, economic prosperity, security of political beliefs, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national honour. National interest is a key concept in foreign policy; it is the starting point as well as a goal of foreign policy.

Answers to Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Security is the main objective of every government. Foreign policy is the instrument through which national interest is protected. Thus, if security is not ensured, national interest is sacrificed.
- 2) Nature of weapons, and of war, has changed with the coming of nuclear weapons. It is an age of overkill, and nuclear weapons can endanger security of entire mankind due to their capacity of total destruction.