

**TESTING THE THEORY OF SOFT BALANCING:  
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AFTER SECOND IRAQ  
WAR**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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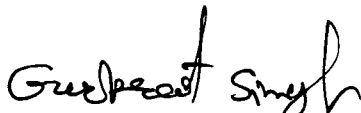
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**DECLARATION**

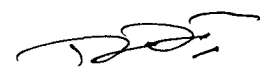
I declare that the dissertation entitled “**TESTING THE THEORY OF SOFT BALANCING: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AFTER SECOND IRAQ WAR**”, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of **MASTTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. Dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

  
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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for the evaluation.

  
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Dedicated to My  
Loving Family Members,  
&  
Friends

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## **List of Abbreviations**

WTO	World Trade Organization
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Treaty
IMF	International Monetary Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
RATS	Regional Antiterrorist Structure
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPC	Caspian Pipeline Consortium
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
RFE	Russian Far East
EU3	France, Germany and United Kingdom

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The main objective of this study is to test major propositions of soft balancing theory. The scholars of international relation theory attempted to explain the post cold war scenarios of international politics with new theoretical perspective. The exponents of soft balancing theory claim that theory of soft balancing explains the behaviour of second tier<sup>1</sup> states in post cold war unipolar system. The emergence of soft balancing theory is a milestone for explaining balancing relations between great powers. Traditional theory of balance of power has explained the bipolar structure of world politics. So the theory of soft balancing tries to explain balancing effort against the United States according to consequences of unipolarity (Walt 2005: 126-132, Pape 2005: 9, Paul 2005). Exponent of soft balancing explain that United States is not direct threat to second tier states. So hard balancing is not logical strategy against the United States. But second tier states are feared from the unilateral U.S. policies of preventive war<sup>2</sup> (Pape 2005: 10). Policy of preventive war can be potential threat against second tier states. That is why second tier states are engaged in soft balancing to undermine U.S. unilateralism. According to Pape “soft balancing measure: that is actions that do not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance but that use non-military tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral U.S. military policy. Soft balancing using international institutions, economic statecraft, and diplomatic arrangement has already been a prominent feature of the international opposition to the war against Iraq” (Pape 2005: 10). In the history of international relations every hegemon has been resisted by the potential great powers by military measures. But in post cold war period potential great powers do not engage in military

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<sup>1</sup> Second tier major powers are states that possess the actual or potential capability to engage in balance of power coalition building against the United States. In addition to china and Russia, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, India, and Japan can be included in this group (Paul 2005: 46)

<sup>2</sup> A preventive war is fought to keep an opponent from acquiring military capability long before-often years before-it begins to mobilize forces for an attack. Preventive war logic generally takes the opponent's intent to use newly acquired military capability for the granted or bases such expectations on broad conclusions derived from the opponent's character or past behaviour. The primary purpose of preventive war is to not to merely to deny the aggressor the advantage of striking first-this is a lesser included benefit. Instead, the chief purpose is to engage the adversary before it can shift the long term military balance of power in its favour. For this reason, the timing of a preventive attack has little to do with the change in the operational status of the enemy's military forces, because goal is to conquer the target state before it has gained those military capabilities. The war starts when the preventive attacker's forces are ready (Pape 2005: 27).

resistance against the United States. Scholars have given many different views about the exempt of U.S. from potential balance.

### **U.S. As a Benign Hegemon:**

United States is benign toward the other great power in post cold war era. Every state wants to take economic benefits by maintaining cordial and friendly relations with the United States (Walt 2005 126-132). U.S. did not coerce or subjugate the countries that were not harming it. During cold war ear European countries and others powers like Japan were bandwagoning with the United States for ensuring their security interest. United States remained non-aggressive benevolent hegemon during past centuries, however did not refrain from carrying out humanitarian interventions in Haiti, Somalia, and Balkans. Even liberal theory of international relations believes that hegemon is required to accelerate the market based global system. United States pursue the policy of offshore balancing and remain isolate from regional balance of power. That is why second tier states did not attempt to balance against the United States (Mearsheimer 2001: 234-40). But resent policy of preventive war changes the U.S. image as a benign hegemon.

### **Preventive War as Potential Danger**

After 9/11, U.S. adopted the new policy of preventive war against the rogue states. The policy of preventive war violated an old norm of sovereignty and sanctity of borders. In 2003 Bush administration aggressively invaded Iraq under the policy of preventive war (Pape 2005: 25). Preventive war is the policy to prevent an aggressive state from acquiring weapons that could be dangerous for international security. It is different from the traditional policy of pre-emptive war<sup>3</sup>. The bush administration was inclined to pursue the policy of preventive war as a cornerstone of US grand strategy. This policy was intended to retain the American primacy in the post cold war era. Nevertheless it did not pose the direct threat to the second tier states prevailing within

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<sup>3</sup> Preemptive war is fought against an opponent already in the process of mobilizing military forces for an imminent attack, usually within a matter of days. The enemy's intent to attack is not assumed or even merely expected; it is observed by concrete change in the operational status of the enemy's military capabilities. With war under way, the incentive for the preemptive attack is to deny the aggressor the advantage of completing the first move: that is, to destroy oncoming enemy forces while they are mobilizing and more vulnerable than they would be once the enemy's first strike has begun. The timing of a preemptive war is determined by observable changes in the operational readiness of the enemy's military forces (Pape 2005: 26)



the international system. However in future second tier states could come under pressure to surrender their interest for U.S. policy of preventive war. Pape aptly describes the nature of threat perceived by second tier states (Pape 2005: 29) as:

For other major powers, the main threat to their security stems not from the risk that the United States will eventually pose a direct threat to attack their homelands, but the U.S. policy of preventive war is likely to unleash violence that the United States cannot fully control and that poses an indirect threat to their security. As a result, even though the United States means them no harm, other major states must still contend with the spill over effects of U.S. unilateral uses of force. These indirect effects are especially pronounced for U.S. military adventures in the Middle East, which could stimulate a general rise in the level of global terrorism targeted at European and other major states.

Thus second tier states, in order to protect their security interests, tend to resist the U.S policy of preventive war. The second tier states are increasingly wary of U.S. aggressive unilateral policy of preventive attacks. So US image as benign hegemon is often downplayed that created incentives for the second tier states to balance against unipolar leader (Walt 2005: 62-96)

### **Strategy of Soft Balancing Against United States: Efforts toward Hard Balance**

The exponents of soft balancing theory like Pape and Pole opined that the second tier states resist U.S. unilateral policies through soft balancing. Before 2003 Iraq war, second tier states used the strategy of soft balancing against United States. The second tier states such as France, Sweden, Russia and China used institutional rules and procedures in United Nations to delay and make harder the United States policy of preventive war against Iraq (Pape 2005: 38-39). In 2002 United States proposed resolution before the UNSC for gaining sanction of Iraq war. In this way United States tried to legitimise the Iraq war. But second tier states created obstacles in UNSC against U.S. proposed resolution. France, Russia, Germany and China demanded inspection of Iraq weapons. Finally in November 7, 2002 UNSC passed resolution 1441 that established inspection regime for Iraq's WMD (Paul 2005: 65). No weapons of mass destruction had found in Iraq after inspection. Despite having no clear evidence against Saddam regime this, U.S. bypassed UNSC framework and aggressively invaded Iraq in 2003. But exponents of soft balancing theory believe that

during war soft balancing strategy can work. Turkey was strategically important for the United States to invade the northern part of Iraq. However Turkey denied permissions to its territory by United States for war purposes. Similarly Saudi Arabia did not allow United States the use of their territory during Iraq war. Thus both the second tier states used soft balancing tool of territorial denial against the ambition of United States (Pape 2005: 36-39, Paul 2005: 64-70). The major proposition of soft balancing theory is that, soft balancing is eventually evolved into hard balancing (Pape 2005: 10). In this backdrop this study attempts to examine the instances of soft balancing to see if the instances of soft balancing have actually moved towards traditional hard balancing against the United States after second Iraq war?

### **Definition, Rational and Scope of Study:**

Theory of soft balancing is pioneer work to explain the behaviour of second tier states in unipolar world. If assumption of soft balancing would prove in this research, then this theory would be important to explain the role of second tier states in international politics. Today theory of soft balancing is becoming popular to explain the second tier state behaviour. One of the major perspectives that are often peddled is that any instance of institution building that do not partake U.S. is essentially a soft balancing. That is popularly dubbed as an anti-American axis. This has made it difficult to estimate how far a state has gone toward challenging the position of sole superpower. What is the difference between balancing, soft balancing and typical diplomatic disputes? This research would explain the theoretical puzzles among theories of diplomacy, balance of power and soft balancing. The questions have been raised by critics of the theory and put some alternative explanations. Yet, no one has conducted a rigorous and comprehensive empirical evaluation of the soft balancing theory by putting it side by side with alternatives. The aim of research is to apply the theories of soft-balancing and to examine its fundamental assumption to the various instances of non-US alliances worldwide. The major focus of this study is to understand the instance of soft-balancing against United States in UN Security Council on the eve of Iraq invasion. The objective is test if the very alliance that soft-balanced against US, had moved further to transform itself into hard balancing. In the aftermath of Iraq war, much of the strategic cooperation took place among second tier states where United States was not party. One of the major claims of soft balancing theory is that the

phenomenon of soft balancing against hegemon is recurring. However this study, would attempt to find if any contradictory evidence occurs against the very claims of soft balancing theory.

### **Research Questions:**

This study is guided by the enquiry of the following research questions.

- 1) What is soft balancing theory and how it is different from the theories of balance of power and diplomatic bargaining?
- 2) Does theory of soft balancing better explain the behaviour of major second tier powers than traditional theories of balance of power?
- 3) What kind of soft balancing strategies have been adopted by major second tier states after Iraq crisis to undermine United States?
- 4) What are the reactions of United States towards second tier states after second Iraq war? Do relations between second tier states with United States have worsened or improved?
- 5) Are soft balancing strategies shifting towards hard balancing against United States?

### **Hypothesis:**

The central hypothesis of this study is

Soft balancing Strategies do not convert into hard balancing.

The theory of soft balancing is not appropriate for explaining the behaviour of second tier states in unipolar world order.

### **Research Methods:**

Research methodology is most important part of any research. Inductive and deductive research methods have their own advantages and limitations as well.

However, the very structure of this study necessitates employing deductive method in order to explain the balancing strategies of second tier states against US. The proposed hypothesis deduces against the main propositions that makes it easier to falsify the theory with empirical evidences. Keeping this in mind, the study tests different cases in which soft balancing measures are adopted by the second tier states against the unipolar leader. This research will adopt the qualitative technique because qualitative variables are forms the very basis of this study. The study will be based on both secondary as well as primary sources. Primary sources would be UN documents, and other official reports, factsheets and policy documents.

### **Chapterization:**

First chapter of this study has provided the broad introduction about the basic theme of research. This chapter will introduce issues and ideas in brief.

The second chapter titled as “Theoretical Framework”, examines the theoretical discussion among traditional theories of balance of power, soft balancing and theories of diplomacy. This chapter has explained the answer of first and second research by critically analysing various merits and limitations of multiple theories.

Third chapter, “Regional Cooperation: A Soft Balancing Strategy”, will analyse the strategic regional cooperation among second tier major states. The aim is to explore idea behind non military strategic cooperation among China and Russia in central Asia. The role of SCO in Central Asia is discussed in this chapter.

Fourth chapter, “Countering the U.S.: Critical Evaluation of Soft Balancing Theory”, would examine the effect of soft balancing strategies on United States in order to find enquire if, “soft balancing shift into hard balancing”? The cases of soft balancing are explained with alternative explanations. The relationship criteria between United States and second tier major power have been established in this chapter.

The final chapter summarizes the finding of research that emerges out of in depth analysis of the study using multiple cases.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

The concept of balance of power has profoundly influenced the study of international relations since long. It has been one of the most influential theoretical ideas in IR since the days of Thucydides, who considers it as a policy, and even earlier to that. In Indian politics Kautilya has theorized about it when he discussed his Mandala theory and foreign policy. Later on realism and more particularly, neo-realism theorized this concept. For realists, states maintain security and stability at system level through balancing. Thus the fundamental goal of balance of power politics is to maintain the survival and sovereign independence of states in international system. Related to it has another objective of balance of power to restrict any state to dominate the system. Neo-classical realism and more particularly Waltz are more concerned with the balance of power idea. Theory is further developed by Stephen Walt, Schweller and others who have tried to remove the loopholes of Waltz theory of balance of power.

The balancing behaviour of states can be seen all the time in the system. But after the end of cold war and emergence of US as a single great power question arises on the notion of balance of power and its relevance in current world politics. Critics of balance of power argue that aside from traditional relevance of balance of power concept it is possible that the world is evolving into an international system in which balance of power is far more applicable than it was in past. There is both, inter-theoretical and intra-theoretical debate on the issue of whether balancing is taking place in today's international system. The liberal scholars argue that with increasing interdependence of states in the world of today and increasing importance of international organisations, states are no more interested in balancing, as they consider the current world system as less anarchic and more interdependent. Constructivists on the other hand argue that the emergence of global norms of non-intervention, democracy, sovereign equality and increased emphasis on importance of peace made balance of power as less important.

But the most interesting debate on balance of power is going on within realism. The realist scholars are broadly divided into three groups on the question of relevance of

balance of power in today's world. The first group argues that balancing is in process and states are balancing at regional as well as system level. This group is further divided on the type of balancing taking place. Kenneth Waltz, Mearsheimer and others opined that states would hard balancing against U.S. The scholars of soft balancing theory explain that second tier major power would soft balance against U.S. unipolarity (Pape 2005: 7-45, Paul 2005: 46-71).

The second line of thought is that no balancing is taking place against US. This is further divided on the causes of states not balancing, like, lack of threat, interest of states to follow other methods than balancing, lack of material capabilities of other states, lack of motivation to balance, transformation of system after the cold war etc. The third group of scholars argues that the second tier states are building their capabilities to balance US in near future. They give the example of growing power of EU, Russia, China, Germany, India and others and consider them as potential balancer. Increasing capabilities and their mutual cooperation made them able to check US power. At the same time US action in Iraq and its current policies induces the other great powers to balance against it.

### **Balance of Power:**

This chapter analyse the traditional theory of balance of power with the newly emerged theory of soft balancing. Historically the policy of balance of power has been adopted by many states to advance their security interests. The basic research of traditional theory of balance of power is emerged within the broader framework realism. To realists, a state maintains security and stability at the systemic level through balancing. Theory of balance of power has given more stress on the metaphor of balance with the concept power. Balance of power is the most popular concept in the academic world of international relations after Second World War. But still in social sciences and in common society the term balance of power is used in different context unlike international relations. Similarly concept of balance of power is very ambiguous in international relations. The meaning of balance of power has been defined in deferent ways in academic world. Morgenthau opined that balance of power is the essential factor to maintain and preserving the stability among the sovereign nations (Morgenthau and Thomson 1991: 189). Nations always use the

strategies of balance of power for self defence. Balance of power theory predicts that states always oppose potential powerful states. Balance of power strategise is used if one state appears too strong, others will ally against it to avoid any threat to their own independence (Nye 1990: 35-36). Thus the fundamental goals of balance of power politics are to maintain the survival and sovereign independence of states in international system. Addition to security another objective of balance of power is to restrict any states from dominating the system. But the main propositions of the balance of power theory are based on the some assumptions. (1) The international system is a state-centric system where nation states are key actors. (2) States exist in anarchy with no super and subordinate authority. (3) States value their independence above all else. (4) Every state is responsible for their security and independence. Waltz defines the balance of power (Waltz 1979: 118) as:

A balance- of power theory, properly stated, begins with assumptions about states: they are unitary actors who, at minimum, seek their own preservation and, at maximum, derive for sensible universal domination. States who act for them, try in more or less sensible ways to use the means available in order to achieve the ends in view. Those means fall into two categories: internal efforts (move to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strength and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one)

Thus Waltz concludes the balance of power that in self help system if states do not help themselves while others do, they will become disadvantaged. He further explains that security dilemma compel states to automatically engage in balance of power. Waltz throws the lights on two very important insights that balancing is inherent in the international system as a means of self help. Similarly he viewed that balancing can be both internal and external which is not limited in terms of military power. States are also inclined in enhance their economic power to balance others. Thus balancing can be achieved by adoption of different means that can be internal and external.

Historical examples of power balancing are found throughout history in various regions of the world. If we take the period of seventeenth century to late twentieth

century we had two types of system: the multipolar system till the second world war dominated by almost equally capable states like, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan and others who form alliances to check the growing power of any single state and to counter their hegemonic tendencies.

There were no permanent alliances and there was a concept of “balancer” and Britain played the role of maintaining the equilibrium. States fear the concentration of power as threat to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Balance of power theorists talk about the balancing coalitions against the Hapsburgs under Charles fifth, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Phillip 2<sup>nd</sup> at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, combined strength of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire in Thirty Years War against France. Thus we see that balance of power during this period was dominated by two propositions: hegemonies do not form in multi-state system and attempt of anyone to dominate the system will lead others to balance against it. In this period we can see changing alliance pattern in Europe with no conception of permanent friend and foes (Kaufman et al 2007).

In the bipolar system established after the Second World War the world was having two great powers with other states bandwagoning with them to balance the system and to ensure their security. The two great powers made alliances against each other to counter the threat emerging from other in the form of NATO and Warsaw Pact and throughout the period act of balancing took place which aims to counter each other's power to ensure their security. The cold war politics arise many questions on realist theories and the unexpected way in which cold war ended started the debate that realism is no more useful to describe it. Ideational factors came into picture to explain this development and the realist prediction that bipolar system is more stable than multipolar one and it will last long. Opposite to it bipolarity beaked down and USSR declined in a way that was never expected. If we see the period from the point of view of balance of power, the move was again different from waltz and majority of states joined USA, which was more powerful than USSR. Stephen Walt describe through balance of threat, that USSR seemed to be more threatening than USA and that's why states preferred to join USA. But we cannot deny that balancing was going on during the period of cold war and cold war strengthened the concept of balance of power. Waltz considered it as a long enduring system which was not going to demolish in near future.



But with the decline of USSR contrary to the predictions made by Waltz and balance of power theory, USA remained the unchecked and unchallenged power and till now with no states coming forward to counter it. Many scholars argued that balancing is taking place and states are trying to counter USA. There is a great debate on balancing as an act and balancing as an outcome and these scholars opined that balance of power does not mean to attain an equilibrium, as it has never happened neither it is possible. Rather balancing is an act in which states aim to reach the position where no single state dominates the system and if someone attempts to do this other will counter this tendency.

The notion of balance of power theory is used to understand the power politics at systemic level. There is not single definition of balance of power theory many thinkers explain the theory by their own way. But despite of that Griffiths and O'Callaghan explain the meaning of balance of power (Griffiths and O'Callaghan 2004: 12) as:

The term indicates the distribution of power among states into equal or unequal share. Traditionally, it refers to a state of affairs in which no one state predominates over others. Prescriptively, it refers to a policy of promoting power equilibrium on the assumption that unbalanced power is dangerous. Prudent states that are at a disadvantage in the balance of power will (or at least should) form an alliance against a potentially hegemonic state or take other measures to enhance their ability to restrain a possible aggressor. Also, one state may opt for a self-conscious balancing role, changing sides as necessary to preserve the equilibrium. A balance of power policy requires that a state moderate its independent quest for power, since too much power for one state may bring about self-defeating reactions of fear and hostility from other states.

Realists opined that balance of power is immutable in an anarchic international system. Waltz opined that even after the end of the cold war power vacuum would be filled by another rival power. He argues that as nature abhors vacuum similarly there would not be power vacuum in international system (Waltz 2000: 28). But, the absence of balancing behaviour in an era of unipolarity has presented a systemic anomaly before the traditional balance of power theory. Why have no powerful coalitions yet been formed to resist American unilateralism in the post cold war international arena? These questions pose a serious challenge before the scholars of balance of power theory.

## **Balancing Behaviour vs. Bandwagoning**

Despite military balancing which is defined as allying with others against the prevailing potential hegemonic power, states can also choose bandwagon. It refers to alignment with the source of danger or whoever seems stronger. (Walt 1990: 17) Bandwagoning, however, is not common in international politics. As Schweller suggests, states engage in cost and benefit calculations on the alternative courses of action available to them. Both bandwagoning and balancing are subject to this cost and benefit calculation and balance is found to be more costly for the low capable powers (1994: 72-102). Because, if vulnerable state adopt the policy to bandwagon, because they have to place undue trust on a powerful state. In contrast, credibility is less important in a balancing world because one's allies will resist strong states for their own self-interest (Walt 1990: 27). So, placing trust on others is a costly and risky option in international politics which may induce oneself to lose its independence.

Here taking the aggressive intention into account, if the aggressive states are not likely to be changed by its allies. It is very possible for vulnerable states to become victim of powerful state. In contrast, balancing with others to work against the aggressor may be the way to escape this fate. (Walt 1990: 26) Besides, counterbalancing alliance is usually weaker and needs more assistance so vulnerable states can have greater influences in balancing (Walt 1990: 18-19). Therefore, balancing is a more attractive option for states to maximize their gains. Still, bandwagoning is favourable in certain situations, for instance, when states are too weak to form counterbalancing alliance or strong allies are not available for balancing purposes. Therefore, these weaker states may prefer bandwagoning either to avoid an attack by diverting it elsewhere hopefully, or to share the spoils of victory (Snyder 1991: 127). To conclude, balancing refers to states allying against states that threaten them whereas bandwagoning means states allying with powerful states to avoid threat. Both are plausible foreign policy options for states to take up and states may adopt both policies alternatively to accommodate different situations and the respective cost and benefit calculations. However, bandwagoning is believed to be more costly option because, weak states have to trust the potential hegemon that might be enemy in future for their self interest. In contrast, it is less risky to join the weaker states and

help the underdogs. This fact not only strengthens balancing as inherent in international politics but also turns it into a more common option in foreign policies.

### **Balance of Threat and Balance of Power:**

Balance of power theory gives important insights about behaviour of states against powerful state that would be the potential danger to their security. Balance of power theory only imagines the permanent anarchy and chaos in international system. But it tells little whether states form alliance against the powerful state or they resist powerful state that has intention and capability to harm others states security. The academic debate about balance of threat perception arise many questions against the balance of power theory. But Walt replaces balance of power theory by theory of balance of threat. He argues that states ally against threats rather than against power alone (Walt 1990: 5). Walt stress on the perceived intentions of states instead rather than only distribution of power or capability. The notions of capability are not only incentive for states to balance against the powerful states, but if less powerful states may have aggressive intention other states would balance against it. So balance of threat become more sensible when states come together to balance against those who have aggressive intention. States that are viewed as aggressive are likely to provoke others to balance against them (Walt 1990: 25-26).

### **Threat Perception and the Concept of Interdependency:**

Keohane and Nye in their classic 'Power and Interdependence' (2001) introduce an important concept of interdependence. Simply put, it means mutual dependence. More specifically, it refers to situations in which actors or events in different parts of a system affect each other. This reciprocal effect should be costly so there is really interdependence. Where interactions do not have significant costly effects, there is simply interconnectedness. Interdependence can be in military or economic terms.

Interdependence refers to the mutual dependence that arises from military and economic competitions. Economic interdependence is linked with the military interdependence may be mentioned sometimes in reasoning due to its linkage with the economic interdependence. (Keohane and Nye 2001: 7-8) Interdependence does not mean good or bad as there is not necessarily a mutual benefit. As Keohane and Nye

suggests, an interdependent relationship will always involve costs (Keohane and Nye 2001: 8-9). Interdependence restricts autonomy, but it is impossible to specify a priori whether the benefits of a relationship will exceed the costs. Also, interdependence does not mean harmony because mutual dependence is often unevenly balanced. Symmetry describes situations of relatively balanced dependence versus unbalanced dependence. Perfect symmetry is rare. Most of the time, there is asymmetry in mutual dependent relationships and which provides sources of influence. If two parties are interdependent to each other but one of them is less dependent, then the less dependent one has more source of power as long as they both value the interdependent relationship. (Keohane and Nye 2001: 202) The less dependent one in the interdependent relationship can often derive power from threats to manipulate that interdependence, because it is less vulnerable or to say it pays relatively less for any change of the interdependence. The power derived by the less dependent party can be used as control over resources or the potential to affect outcomes.

Thus above discussion describes that economic interdependence refers to mutual dependence arising from economic competitions between actors. Once actors are engaged in the interdependent relationships, their autonomy is restricted. There is seldom balanced dependence. In an unbalanced interdependent relationship, the less dependent one may possess more power to manipulate the interdependence so as to control the resources or affect the outcomes to its favour. In other words, overdependence can be a source of threat for the more dependent party from the less dependent one.

### **Balancing Against Asymmetric Interdependence:**

Nye gives us a solution when there is asymmetry of interdependence. He says asymmetry often varies according to different issues such as security, trade and finance. States can try to link and unlink different issues to avoid, or at least to limit, the costly effect of asymmetric interdependence in each issue. This strategy he called as linkage strategy. For example, a state can use its strength in an area in which it is less dependent and more powerful to cancel out its weakness in other areas. Thus, creating and resisting linkages between issues, where a state is either less or more vulnerable than the other, becomes part of the power game. The working principle is that states want to manipulate interdependence in areas where they are strong and

avoid being manipulated in areas where they are relatively weak. Furthermore, he argues that political leaders can discourage or promote such linkages with the help of international institutions. The leaders will shop for the best forum that best suits their interests in defining scope of an issue. On the other hand, balancing is described by him in military terms totally as an instrument of security. It is said that balance of power is a zero-sum game. Though it is still an alternative strategy, it is far more limited in today world in which economic and ecological issues involve large elements of joint gain (Nye, 1990: 180-1).

Though Nye provides us with a solution called the linkage strategy to minimize threats from asymmetric interdependence, it has its limitations. First, promoting and discouraging linkages between issues have assumed that there are varied asymmetries in different issues. Hence creating linkage is possible and can make a difference in each issue. However, what if asymmetries in different issues are largely the same? Then, no matter how one state links or unlinks to whatever issues, the general asymmetric pattern is the same. The more dependent state is still threatened by the less dependent state. Second, Nye further points out that international institution can helps political leaders to link and define the scope of issues that best suit their interests. He implies international institutions are neutral and independent which facilitate linkage politics. So there is a web of linkages among different issues. Threat stemming from this asymmetric interdependence can be cancelled out by the power generated from another asymmetric interdependence. Therefore, there is complex interdependence instead of asymmetric interdependence in separate issue. However, why are international institutions so independent? How are they created? Is it possible that the strongest parties have only an equal voice like other weaker parties? In particular, the joint gain needs to be divided among all the parties. As Nye mentioned himself, this division is a zero-sum game. (Keohane and Nye 2005: 199) Whether the gain is divided equally or who will get the lion's share are also questions of power politics. As international institutions cannot remove the underlying power realities, one can doubt how effective the institutions can be, in helping states to deal with asymmetric interdependence through linkage strategy. In other words, to what extent are the international institutions able to help discourage power politics and promote linkage strategy?

Third, balancing is described totally in military terms as an instrument of security. Thus, the conclusion is that balancing is still an alternative strategy, but its use is limited due to its costly consequence. Of course, it is costly if balancing is in terms of military action. However, if interdependence can happen in both military and economic areas, balancing can also be in terms of economic power, balancing without military. An alliance can be formed on the basis of non-military means like economic cooperation against the threatening state. In this section, one argues that threat stemming from asymmetric interdependence is not necessarily and effectively 'solved' by linkage strategy. Instead, one suggests states can also form an alliance through economic cooperation to balance threats posed by their common 'less dependent party' in certain issue. This kind of balancing newly merged soft balancing. The major difference between linkage strategy and soft balancing is that the former is 'balancing' a threat from asymmetric interdependence in one issue to another between the two concerned parties, whereas the latter is about balancing a threat by aggregating a number of states and their power in non-military terms. Both of them are possible policy options. Nonetheless, when there is always the same 'less dependent' party in varied issues and it is very invulnerable, then soft balancing by allying others in non-military terms may be a more effective and efficient option.

### **Offshore Balancing:**

Realist scholars explain the international relation by balance of power and balance of threat theories but the history of international relations was explaining different about great powers perceptions of balancing behaviour. According to Mearsheimer "every great power would like to dominate the world, but none has ever had or is likely to have the military capability to become a global hegemon. Thus, the ultimate goal of great powers is to achieve regional hegemony and block the rise of peer competitors in the distant areas of the globe. In essence, states that gains regional hegemony act as offshore balancers in the other regions" (Mearsheimer 2001: 236-37). The offshore balancer minimizes the influence of other potential powers by strategy of buck passing. Mearshimer summarize that United States remained as offshore balancer during 1900-1990. During first period of World War 1 United States did not involve in total war and buck pass the responsibility on triple entente the United Kingdom, France and Russia. But finally United States took part in World War 1 for becoming

regional hegemon in Europe. Similarly at beginning of the Second World War United States did not play important role and pass the responsibility on the European great powers. But after the declaration of Hitler against United States there was no alternative for United States despite of direct involvement in war. So Mearsheimer explain that the core idea of offshore balancing for great powers to adopt the policy of buck passing to contain potential hegemon as did by United states (Mearsheimer: 2001 252-56).

Layne define that “offshore balancing is a grand strategy based on burden shifting, not burden sharing. It would transfer to others the task of maintaining regional power balance; checking the rise of potential global and regional hegemons; and stabilizing Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf/Middle East. In other words, other states would have to become responsible for providing their own security and for the security of the regions in which they live (and contiguous ones), rather than looking to the United States to do it for them” (Layne 2002: 245-246). After 9/11 United States redefine the Middle East by waging Iraq War and maintain the rough balance of power in gulf and middle east. Long term hegemonic policy is dangerous because other rising power tries to defeat hegemonic power by cooperative military alliances. But United States did not repeat history in post cold war world, he abandon the traditional policy of maintaining hegemony and adopt policy of offshore balancing. U.S. Strategy of offshore balancing make better outcome than strategy direct balance it would reduce probability the anti hegemonic backlash and maintain sphere of influence after winning war (Layne 2002: 245-247).

### **Buck Passing:**

Buck passing and balancing are the two options to contain the aggressor. States do not always prefer to buck pass because cost of war reduce the power of states which aspire to balancing act. Great powers are tries to shift cost of war on other states in multipolar world by buck passing strategy (Mearsheimer 2001: 67). The strategy of buck passing is adopted alternatively according to world scenario. After Second World War international system changed from multipolarity to bipolarity and after the end of cold war period is known as unipolar system. Cold war period was bipolar

system where two rival powers USSR and U.S. were containing each other by balancing rather than buck passing.

A careful review of the historical evidence suggests that we need to revise this account of American grand strategy in the immediate post war period. There is no question that the United States did indeed adopt a balancing strategy in these years because; buck passing was second-best approach to dealing with the Soviet Union during cold war period. So, Washington's preferred strategy was to return to buck-passing as soon as possible. For two years after the defeat of Nazi Germany, the United States had two major fears. Firstly, Soviet Union might launch a bid to dominate the European continent by force of arms, or that the West Europeans would simply surrender Russia through sheer exhaustion. This being the case, the U.S. moved to balance Soviet power and to revive Western Europe by launching the Marshall Plan. By early 1948, the situation appeared to have stabilized and American decision makers begun planning for a return to buck-passing. Their logic was straightforward. The United States did not want to remain in Europe without primacy. Western Europe had the capability to defend itself against the Soviet Union. All that was required was the creation of a unified West European military-industrial power complex. But such a complex only stood a chance of balancing against the Soviet Union. Secondly, the greatest fear was that Germany would come to dominate the Third Force and bid for continental domination once again. So U.S. adopts the policy of balancing during cold war, because U.S. had no favorable ally for taking responsibility. Great powers adopt policy of buck passing only where buck catcher would be available. Without USSR and U.S. there was no any potential powerful state that can take the responsibility of balancing. So buck passing strategy does not take place in bipolar international system (Mearsheimer 2001: 270).

### **Methods of Balancing:**

A major problem with the concept of soft balancing, critics argue, is that it is too vague or indeterminate. Another concern, which stems from the first, is the overabundance of concepts or "theories" in the literature that can rise to the level of "soft balancing," but go under terminologies not associated with balance of power logic. One term these concepts "methods of balancing," which are a means, to



balancing itself, which is an end. To this end, one offer soft balancing as a distinct mechanism that states might use to counteract actors that have become hegemonic or accumulated a preponderance of material power in the international system or subsystem. A number of strategies will fit into this framework.

### **Hard Balancing:**

Balancing of the hard variety is a core tenet of the realist research program, whether it is external or internal. Unlike hard balancing, however, soft balancing is likely to involve alignments rather than arms build-ups and formal alliances. Snyder's definition of an alliance provides a strong description of what is generally thought of as traditional hard balancing: "formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership." (Snyder 1997: 4) Snyder's theory of alliance politics is based on the Austro-German alliance of 1879, which was targeted at France, and the Franco-Russian alliance of 1891-1894, which countered the Austro-German pact. Although Snyder's work is more about alliance formation than balancing itself, it does demonstrate what balancing behaviour might look like. Another form of hard balancing is an internal arms build up by one more states to roughly match the power of the targeted state, or to at least develop defences effective enough to make invasion by a preponderant state cost prohibitive. Neither of these versions of hard balancing appear to be relevant to contemporary international affairs. No state has undertaken a massive arms build up to match the military might of the United States and no formal alliances have been established to target American hegemony because of the high costs.

Although balancing behaviour is absent in the modern world, balancing in past international systems has founded with other strategies. From the Peloponnesian War to the Cold War, countervailing coalitions have sought to restrain rising great powers or hegemons (Healy and Stein: 1973: 33-61). That past coalitions were formed against non-hegemonic great powers that possessed far fewer material capabilities than the hegemonic United States currently retains, leaves the lack of any serious balancing effort against America becomes conspicuous by its absence.

## **Balance of Power and Unipolar System:**

After the end of cold war and with the demise of USSR, the system remained dominated by the only great power and contrary to the predictions made by balance of power theorists no state or alliances emerged to check its increasing influence. U.S. paramount had been there going on for more than a century from the time of the war with Spain in 1898 and after the end of cold war it has hardly faced any check. There is no state in the system which has relative power nearly equal to USA, and they are more engaged in their internal affairs. No state has capabilities to step into post cold war system to fill the power vacuum created after demise of USSR.

Christopher Layne, in article, "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited" gave three attempts of balancing against U.S. – Britain attempt in 1945-48, France under De Gaulle and EU today(Layne 2006: 233-248). But these states lack in their material capabilities and relative power. Also they do not show any attempt to go against U.S. and rather are going with it. Lieber and Alexander in their article "Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back" show that there is lack of hard as well as soft balancing today. They, taking the case of hard-balancing argue that no internal and external balancing is taking place as states are neither attempting to build their material capabilities ( Defence spending of the others are much lower than USA), nor any alliance formation is taking place (Lieber and Alexander 2005: 109-139). They relates this move with lack of motivation on the part of the second great powers, and opined that problem is not lack of capabilities but that states are not mobilising their latent capabilities to counter the increasing power and influence of United States.

But Waltz opined that balancing is taking place and states are balancing against USA. He says that those who argue that no balancing is taking place misunderstood balancing as an outcome whereas it is a process which continues. Waltz opined that it is too early to judge that no balancing is taking place as what seems to be long period will seems like a blink in history. He thus suggests that USA unipolarity is a transition phase which will soon pass away when any state will develop the capacity to challenge its power.

Mearsheimer, on the other hand also opined that balancing is taking place and there is no reason to discard this development. He argues that it is wrong to say that international system has transformed, because system is still anarchic and states aim their survival as primary goal. Although he differs from Waltz on the issue that state aims to defend them. He opined about U.S. as an offensive power and describes the tragedy of Great Powers. Thus according to Mearsheimer balancing is taking place because the conditions have not changed after the end of cold war (Mearsheimer 2001).

All these scholars and others give the example of Russia, China, Germany, E.U., India and powers as challenger to USA unipolarity and its unchecked power. They argue that these states are balancing to the great power of the system although they are not able to check it due to lack in their capabilities. Balancing may not be successful to establish equilibrium but the attempt to balance cannot be ignored. Thus these scholars emphasise on attempt to balance. But if we observe the states behaviour and their policies, there is no attempt of balance against United States. All these states are growing faster in economic term but no attempt of military build-up against the hegemonic tendency is taking place. Also these scholars do not explain how to figure out the attempt of balancing when there is only one great power. In multipolar and bipolar system these attempts can be pointed out with the formation of alliances and conflicts among two groups, one trying to dominate and other trying to check. This is not possible in unipolar system. Thus we can say that no attempt of hard balancing is taking place.

The advocates of the case of soft balancing on the other hand opined that states are not going for hard balancing because of many reasons like, lack of material capabilities of the second great powers, lack of threat from USA, image of USA as a benign and peaceful hegemon. T.V.Paul, in his article, "Soft balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy" argued that second-tier major powers have not balanced against US because it does not appear to be challenging their sovereign existence. Its war against terrorism and rouge states do not affect these states negatively but they get benefits from it. He further opined that the fundamental cause of hard balancing has also changed after the end of cold war and none of the great powers fear to be conquered because of three reasons: their possession of nuclear weapons, US decision not to

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intervene in the affairs of these states, and an understanding by all that permanent occupation of another states is not possible. Thus in post-cold war era second great power states have been balancing against US through coalition building and diplomatic bargaining to mainly check unilateralism and interventionist tendencies of United States(Paul 2005: 46-71).

Robert A. Pape, another advocate of the theory of soft balancing wrote that directly confronting U.S. preponderance is costly and risky. Hence, major powers like to adopt the soft balancing measures. Another reason for states adopting soft balancing is that US enjoyed the reputation of peaceful hegemon and non-aggressive power. Although it has fought many wars its intention was never to destabilise the system but to bring stability. He further goes on that second tier states are unlikely to respond with traditional hard balancing measures like military build-ups or war fighting alliances. He says that soft balancing will increase the cost of U.S. power if it continues to pursue its aggressive national policies and thus may shift balance of economic power against it. His first argument which he has given as a cause of absence of alliance is convincing that no one would like to rely on alliances because it does not ensure cooperation. But his second argument that U.S. is a peaceful hegemon does not seem correct. U.S. has been using its influence in every sphere to fulfil its interest and many times against the wishes of other powers (Pape 2005: 7-45). Also it is a leading economic power and there is no hope in coming future that a shift against it is going to take place.

But the theory of soft balancing has many flaws, like what Brooks and Wohlforth pointed out that it is unable to differentiate between normal diplomatic bargaining and soft balancing. One cannot consider every policy of states constraining the U.S. as an attempt of soft balancing because states may have other interests. Also there is lack of an empirical analysis to measure the strength of theory of soft balancing (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005: 72-108). Lieber and Alexander in their article "Waiting for Balancing: Why The World Is Not Pushing Back" explain that no attempt of soft balancing or hard balancing is taking place and no balancing is taking place in international system. But they suggest the formation of alliance as a measure to check the hegemonic intentions which is not very convincing (Lieber and Alexander 2005)

## **Soft Balancing:**

Theory of soft balancing is recent explanation that claims to define the contemporary reactions of second tier major powers against post cold war unipolar world order. According to exponent of theory of soft balancing second tier major powers are state that have actual or potential capability to engage in balance of power of power coalition building against the United States (Paul 2005: 46). The second tier states use the soft balancing measure, these measure are different than traditional measure of hard balancing or direct military reaction against the potential hegemon. Pape opined that "Soft balancing measures are the actions that do not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance but that use non-military tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral U.S. military policies. Soft balancing using international institutions, economic statecraft, and diplomatic arrangements has already been a prominent feature of the international opposition to the U.S. war against Iraq" (Pape 2005: 10). The most important proposition of this theory is that soft balancing would evolve in traditional hard balancing (Pape 2005: 10). According to balance of threat theory, states' alliance behaviour is determined by the threat they perceive from other states. United States is not performing offensive behaviour against the second tier major states. In unipolar world second tier major states have not faced the direct threat from the United States but United States is indirect threat for second tier states. United States may evolve into unrestrained global hegemon that why soft balancing is preparation is necessary step for second tier states (Pape2005: 35).

Second tier states deny for use of their territory to superior power for reducing their ambitions. In second Iraq war 2003 the territory of Turkey and Saudi Arabia has been strategically important for the United States for winning the war. But Turkey and Saudi Arabia denied the United States to use their territory and undermine U.S war strategy (Pape2005: 39). Second major second tier states tries to undermine and frustrate the potential hegemon by adopting diplomatic policies and improving bargaining powers. For diplomatic bargaining second tier states use the International organisations to obtain better outcomes. In unipolar era United Nations, World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are important organizations for global negotiations. These organisations are used by

second tier as tool of soft balancing. These states use international organisations states for their policy preferences. Among these international organisations the World Trade Organization (WTO) is the most important economic that deals with regulation of trade between participating countries. It provides a framework for negotiating and formalising trade agreements, and a dispute resolution process aimed at enforcing participants' adherence to WTO agreements which are signed by representatives of member governments and ratified by their parliaments. Many developing countries and their groupings have voiced their positions on the current status of the WTO for achieving modalities in agriculture and non-agriculture market access (Walt 2005: 127-28). Thus making favourable trade policy that would enhance interests of second tier states and other hand undermine the influence of powerful states. Second tier States also uses the U.N. forum for making delay and frustrate the unipolar leader. Before Iraq war 2003 France, Sweden, Russia, Germany and other European states pressurize United States within United Nations. France one of the permanent members of United Nations Security Council has threatened to veto against the United States resolution of authorizing war against the Iraq. Thus second tier states try to reduce and undermine policy of United States by adopting diplomatic procedures within United Nations (Pape 2005:38-39).

Third tool of soft balancing is strengthening economic power of second tier states. Behind every powerful state economic well being is important factor that is deriving force for internal and external policies. United States is not only, powerful military states, but he also occupied powerful position in economic structure. United States is getting big chunks in world trade and commerce. So second tier states tries to increase their economic power and create economic barriers before United States for reducing his economic power. Fourthly second tier states resolve their mutual disputes by peaceful manner and increase trust among them. The purpose of demonstrating coordination is to affecting the current policies and future ambitions of unipolar leader. (Pape: 37-38)

### **Soft Balancing as a Hard Concept:**

Bull relates the balance of power into local and general spheres provides a strong framework to begin evaluating the concept of soft balancing. He opined that the

general balance of power pertains to the absence of a preponderant power in the international system as a whole, whereas the local balance of power applies to the lack of a predominant power in a particular segment of the system (Bull 1977: 98-99). In the Cold War for example, the Soviet-U.S. balance made up the central balance whereas subordinate or local balances existed in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. In an age of unipolarity, global balancing is unlikely because the superpower's capabilities far greater those of each of its nearest competitors. But this does not predict that balancing at the local or regional level, where soft balancing would be more effective. Mearsheimer's concept of offensive realism explains the balancing from distance regions. Mearsheimer's theory predicts states that have achieved hegemony in one region of the world will attempt to arrest the hegemonic aspirations of great powers in other regions of the world (Mearsheimer 2001:234-60). In order to restrain the rise of a peer competitor, the United States has instituted a network of military bases and diplomatic enclaves around the world to offset the rise of potential regional hegemon. However, the action of the "off-shore" balancer is likely to provoke a counteraction from the great powers in that particular region. It will be in these contested regions, such as Central Asia and the Middle East, not at the systemic level, where soft balancing will be played out. It is hard to implement soft balancing hard for every region.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus we see that no hard balancing is taking place against U.S. We do not have balancing as a process which we had found during cold war before it. Waltz that it's not possible to have equilibrium in international politics and it's hard to measure the absolute material capabilities of states. But when we talk about balancing a great power, it matters. In multipolar and bipolar system we had states with almost equal power and frequent conflicts challenging the aspiring power. With anarchy and quest for survival we also need capabilities to challenge, which states lack in unipolar world. Thus major theories are discussed in this chapter but which theory explain behaviour of second tier states. In next chapters the case of soft balance against the United States has been explained.

## Chapter 3

### Regional Cooperation: A Soft Balancing Strategy

Recent changes in the international political system have altered both the possibilities and the strategies of second-tier states such as Russia and China. Soviet Russia has gone from being one of the two superpowers to just one among a number of potential great powers. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia experienced innumerable economic and political reforms and a state system based on communism gave way to one promoting democratic ideals (Li 2007: 488). Russia is struggling to receive their loss of pride, self-confidence and the spheres of influence it feels that it lost at the end of the Cold War. How far this search for status as a great power has reached is open for debate. One can, as Macfarlane argues, say that the Russia of today is not an emerging power in a traditional sense but “more probably seen as a state that has recently experienced damage and is attempting to stop the bleeding” (Macfarlane 2006: 43). On the other hand Richard Sakwa opined that, listen to the increasingly strident criticism of the United States coming from the Moscow and ask whether a new Cold War between Russia and the U.S. might be in the making (Sakwa 2008: ).

The end of the Cold War transformed Russia. the economic reforms towards market economy similarly end of the 1970s paved the way for unprecedented change in China (Mandelbaum 1995: 9). After years of strong economic development, China has emerged as a wealthy country with a great self confidence in international politics. Since the 1980s, the Chinese strategy has been to insert itself into the existing world order and to becoming responsible great power (Ferdinand 2007: 842). China is widely seen as the rising star in international politics with the U.S. as its main opponent (Lo 2004: 301). At the same time, China seems neither able nor willing to challenge U.S. hegemony directly. As one scholar opined that China avoids antagonizing the U.S. while preparing for a world order in which the country will play a much more prominent role than today (Foot 2006: 93). Mao’s and Stalin’s strategic alliance of 1950 soon turned into open rivalry due to unsolved border disputes and contradicting interpretations of Marxism-Leninism (Li 2007: 484). Throughout the Cold War, Sino-Soviet border disputes continued to produce tensions and as a result the 4300-kilometer long border became one of the most military-tense regions in the



world (Mandelbaum 1995: 480). In 1996, the Shanghai Cooperation was initiated and the year after, the two presidents Yeltsin and Zemin announced a commitment to develop a strategic partnership (Lo 2004: 295). Suddenly half a century of prejudices and suspicions were giving way to cooperation based on common interests in the political, security and economic spheres. In 2001, the Treaty of Good Neighbourly, Cooperative and Friendly Relations confirmed the deepening rapprochement between the two countries (Li 2007: 478).

Contemporary cooperation between the two Cold War-rivals is one the more important phenomena in international politics. Russia and China's good relationship originates in a common view on international relations. They both advocate an enhanced role of the U.N. in global decision-making, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the precedence of sovereignty over humanitarian intervention, both prefer a shift to a multipolar and a more democratic international order (Ferdinand 2007: 856). Both China and Russia adopt similar policies on many contemporary political issues, for example, their joint opposition at the U.N. against the proposed American-led invasion of Iraq. Similarly they do not agree that U.S. would interfere on issues of Chechnya and Taiwan (Li 2007: 483). Today, the deepening Chinese and Russian collaboration include an increasing rate of high-level meetings, official visits, joint energy agreements, and technology cooperation. But the cooperation has also reached security related spheres such as import and export of advanced military equipment (Li 2007: 482). Furthermore, in 2002 Russia and China conducted their first joint military maneuver since the 1950s. The drill was followed by a second and a third one in 2005 and 2007 (Ferdinand 2007: 854).

### **Cooperation in Central and Soft Balancing Coalition between Russia and China:**

One centrepiece in Sino-Russia rapprochement is their cooperation in Central Asia. In Central Asia, Russian and Chinese collaboration is institutionalized through a regional security and economic cooperation organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO originates from the time after the collapse of the USSR and the power vacuum created in the Central Asian region at that time. Between 1992 and 1995, Russia and the three Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan become engaged in delineation, demarcation and confidence building talks

with China, a country which they all share border (Chung 2004: 990). The talks had the intention of hindering China from pressing for territorial claims in the wake of the Soviet dissolution (Chung2004: 990). In 1996 the leaders of the five countries met in Shanghai and managed to settle a number of border disputes and in 1997 they reached an agreement to demilitarize their respective border regions (SCO 2001).

If the Shanghai Five, as the cooperation came to be called, initially functioned as a rather simple meeting forum where the leaders of Russia, China and the three Central Asian states could meet to discuss border issues, the cooperation soon grew deeper. In 1998, the fight against the “three evils” of separatism, fundamentalism and terrorism became an especially important cause of the organization. One of the underlying reasons to this was the threat posed by the Taliban regime in neighbouring Afghanistan. The Taliban had come to power in 1996 and were supporting and inspiring Islamist groups all over Central Asia, as well as in Chechnya and China’s easternmost province of Xinjiang<sup>5</sup> (Guang 2007: 238). As a result, SCO’s intensifying fight against regional terrorists became something that all member states could gain from. The political elites of the Central Asian states wanted to crack down on opposition groups but lacked the resources. Simultaneously, Russia and China wanted to sweep the region from terrorism since instability could produce negative repercussions in their own countries (Chung 2004: 995).

In 2001, the SCO was founded when Uzbekistan was brought into the cooperation. In the founding document, the six heads of state praised the positive role that Shanghai Five had played and declared that the governing norms of the new organization were going to be “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for multicivilisations, striving for common development” (SCO 2001). However, it was another event in the same year that came to influence the cooperation. The September 11 terrorist attacks and the ensuing American presence in Central Asia radically changed the conditions of the SCO cooperation. United States had toppled the ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan, one of the threats that had stimulated the development of SCO’s anti-terrorist efforts in central Asia. As a result of this new turn, two different developments took place. On one hand the regional states (Russia and China included) signed bilateral agreements with the U.S. in its War on Terrorism. All parties complied with American demands for support in form

of territorial space in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and in intelligence sharing mechanisms from Russia and China (Guang 2007: 234). On the other hand, SCO continued to step up its own anti-terrorist efforts in the region. Among other things, an anti-terrorist structure with an aim to gather and share intelligence in the fight against terrorism was established in 2004 (Chung 2004: 995). In addition, the countries have continued to hold joint counterterrorist maneuvers in their respective border zones. These two, somewhat ambiguous developments, are still important factors for understanding of the sometimes sudden shifts of cooperation and competition among the regional states and the three powers of Russia, China and the United States.

### **China and Central Asia:**

China visualises the broader vision in Central Asia in areas of security cooperation to fight terrorism, promote regional stability, extend economic and trade relations. Collaboration of Russia and China create a new diplomatic image of both about multipolar world. Central Asia also is viewed as an important future source of energy for China's rapidly growing economy. China's rising imports of oil at present and natural gas in the future have made energy security one of the top concerns for the government (Chu 2006: 134-152).

For some analysts, the formation of the SCO can be interpreted as an effort by Beijing to secure energy dominance in Central Asia. China has other concerns in the region as well. Consistent with offensive realism, the United States has begun to slowly encircle regions with military bases and installations in East Asia, South Asia and now in Central Asia (Speed and Vinogradov 2000: 378). Whether or not Washington consciously seeks to constrain the rise of a hegemonic China in Asia, the growing American military presence on the Eurasian landmass is viewed by China as a threat. United States is not only a global hegemon that needs restraining, but also poses a threat to the stability and status of China's regional concerns. Thus China has valid reasons to undermine and remove the U.S. influence in Central Asia.

### **Russia and Central Asia:**

Similar to China, Russia also can use the SCO for reducing Islamic terrorism and increasing stability along with its former Soviet republics. Both can ensure joint

proprietorship with over Central Asian energy resources. Russia also shares with China the fear of U.S. encroachment on its borders. NATO expansion to the east and the U.S. establishment of bases in Central Asia has placed the American military directly in Russia's strategic backyard. Russia does not possess enough military capabilities to internally balance against the United States through an arms build-up. Thus, it can make better outcomes by relying on China that would ensure their security in the region. Trenin describes as "leaning on the east to raise its stakes in the west." (Trenin 2007: 83). There are number of scholars and policy analysts have argued that the Sino-Russian asserts the fears of U.S. unilateralism in the region. Buszynsky argues that, "Russia appears to regard the growing American influence in Eurasia as more threatening to its interest than a rapidly growing China. Thus, both China and Russia are eager to foster a strategic partnership aimed at heading off American ability to extend its global dominance in the region" (Buszynksky 2004: 163-164).

#### **U.S. Interests in Central Asia:**

For much of American history, Central Asia has not registered on the strategic radar of U.S. officials. Remote and inscrutable, the region was too American security and too impenetrable during the time of the Soviet empire to be of interest. Yet after the implosion of the Soviet bloc, the region slowly began to open to American capital and, much later to political and military objectives (Rumer 2007). Currently, U.S. objectives in the region are to fight terrorism, open the energy-rich Caspian basin to American capital and development, support human rights and foster to democratization. Key to this strategy has been the stationing of American troops in Kyrgyzstan, which has been an important command for anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan (Akbarzahed 2004: 689-705) More disturbing for Moscow and Beijing, however, is the potential for the American presence in Central Asia to become an off-shore balancer against Chinese hegemony and Russian revanchism. The USA appears to have at least a potential objective of containing both China and Russia in geostrategic terms by its military presence in Central Asia.

### **Soft Balancing Strategy:**

In order to test whether soft balancing is an appropriate way of describing Sino-Russian behaviour in Central Asia, first consider what reasons the two countries may have to oppose of U.S. foreign policy objectives. Secondly we use strategies of soft balancing explained by Pape and Paul and try to find signs of this behaviour in the empirical record of Sino-Russian actions towards the U.S. While doing this, one will also consider the perception of U.S. policy toward Russia and China. Walt argues that soft balancing is changing form of balance of power according to unipolarity (Walt 2005: 126-130)

### **Why Soft Balancing against the United States?**

When Russia and China accepted U.S. presence in Central Asia after 9/11, one condition was they should leave when their mission in Afghanistan was accomplished. However, as Cornell argues, the importance of Central Asia in United States' security policy has gone from moderate to immediate and vital, which indicates that the U.S. will stay in the region for many years to come (Cornell 2004: 239-254). From an American vantage point, the two bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan played a pivotal role in the initial phase of Operation Enduring Freedom. However, disregarding the fact that the U.S. now can operate from bases within Afghanistan and other neighbouring states, there are at least two good reasons for them to stay in Central Asia. First, a change of U.S. policy from a short-term objective of getting rid of the Taliban to a long term objective of diminishing the underlying conditions for terrorism. Secondly, a strong incentive to secure a share of the vast amounts of energy resources in the Caspian basin is holding them back (Cornell 2004: 240). Both China and Russia are, at the same, increasingly showing dissatisfaction with the sudden shift of military-strategic balance of the region. There are some obvious reasons to this. First of all, U.S. presence is threatening the geo-political influence of China and Russia. Russia has recently become more aware of Central Asia's importance as a buffer zone and the country's attempts to strengthen their position in the region are not facilitated by the presence of American troops. Today, Russia's core objective in Central Asia is to, as Lo points out, "re-establishing itself in a traditional sphere of influence" (Lo 2004: 308). In a speech before a group

of foreign diplomats in 2004, president Putin talked on the importance of improving the country's international prestige. He expressed that particular attention was going to be paid to the preservation of Russia's leadership role in its former republics (Sakwa 2008: 245). China, on the other hand, is most concerned that the U.S. is using the war on terror in order gain a strategic foothold in Central Asia. According to the Chinese leadership this could be a step to further encircle China from the West (Yinhong 2007: 169). Secondly, the American presence in Central Asia is threatening both countries' future national prosperity. Both Russia and China have strong geo-economic interests in wresting cheap oil and gas concessions from the Central Asian governments. Especially China sees the increased pace of American companies concluding oil and gas deals in the region as a threat to its long-term energy strategy (Azizian and Davis 2007: 6).

From this part one conclude that the American presence is threatening Russia and China's national interests. Furthermore, seen from a balance of power perspective, both military and economic recourses are obviously playing an important role. In the next section the empirical test of soft balancing theory is described with Pape's framework that provide further evidence supporting the soft balancing argument.

### **Testing the Tools of Soft Balancing Theory:**

#### **Territorial Denial: Soft Balancing Tool**

“Superior states often benefit from access to territory of third parties as staging areas for ground forces or as transit for air and naval forces” (Pape 2006: 36).

Key to the soft balancing strategy of China and Russia is the removal of the U.S. military presence in Central Asia. After the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, both Russia and China acquiesced to American bases in the region to combat Islamic extremists in Afghanistan. Although neither Russia nor China was in the position to deny American basing rights in the region, both initially benefited from operation “Enduring Freedom,” which overthrew the Taliban. Beijing and Moscow have battled Islamic insurgencies in their own territories and used the invitation of U.S. forces in the region as a green light to crack down on their own Muslim radicals. However,

neither great power is likely to countenance a long-term American military presence on its borders. “While the Chinese and Russians recognized the United States’ right to respond to sources responsible for the terrorists attacks, the establishment of bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan raised concerns”(Turner 2005). Those concerns were voiced at the July 2005 summit in Astana, where at the behest of Russia and China, the SCO called for a timetable for the removal of the military contingents of the “antiterrorist coalition” from the territories of member states. Later the same year, the U.S. left the base in Uzbekistan and had to renegotiate a much more expensive deal with Kyrgyzstan (Cooley 2007). Many commentators have seen the declaration as part of “concerted efforts to attack U.S. regional sway.” Further evidence of balancing came at the St.Petersburg summit in July 2002, when the member states created the Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) for joint military maneuvers. In August 2005, China and Russia held their first-ever joint military exercise through RATS. Dubbed “Peace Mission 2005,” the war games were ostensibly an anti-terrorism exercise. Another “peace mission” was held in August 2007 and included 10,000 troops from land, sea and air units. Many commentators believed the exercises were meant to send Washington a message: “The fact that it involved amphibious landings, sea blockades, and other operations that were irrelevant to the geography of landlocked, desert Central Asia suggests that the SCO is primarily a vehicle for a new Moscow-Beijing condominium in Asia, and is not intended as a true multilateral security framework for Central Asia” (Cooley 2007: 65-90). Overall, the American response to the SCO has been tepid, largely because of the mixed signals being sent by Beijing and Moscow. In July 2005, for example, the House passed an amendment to the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for fiscal year 2006 and 2007 expressing concerns that the SCO called for a deadline to remove U.S. troops from Central Asia. The status of Iranian membership in the SCO is troubling for the United States. Currently, Iran is an observer, but Tehran is seeking full membership (Cooley 2007)

### **Diplomacy: Soft Balancing Tool**

Another soft balancing strategy is to make it difficult for the U.S. to use the full capacity of its power through diplomatic maneuvers (Pape 2005:36).

One Sino-Russian maneuver, which has entangled U.S. foreign policy objectives, has been to exploit the ambivalence of American democracy promotion in the region. The U.S. has been pending between a strategy aimed at developing deeper partnerships with the regional governments of Central Asia and an understanding that the repressive leadership of those governments in itself is creating Islamic radicalization (Simons 2007: 277). The elevation of democracy promotion in U.S. policy towards the region has made it impossible to overlook human right abuses. Consequently, the U.S. is pressing for political and economic reforms while trying to maintain good relations with the individual governments. A development that has not facilitated this strategy is the alleged American support for colour revolutions in the larger region. Political stir-ups is not in the interest of the political leadership of the Central Asian states which are, as Torbakov notices, more interested in an ally that can provide security assistance for themselves (Torbakov 2007: 154). This development made Russia and China able to kill two birds with one stone. Both Russian and Chinese leaders share the Central Asia governments' concerns with regional instability, as well as their views on non-interference in states' domestic affairs. In this way, "China and Russia have been playing on the fear of that local elites, have of conditioned aid packages and persuaded them that the SCO and its much broader definition of terrorism, rather than a deeper partnership with the United States, will help create stability in the region" (Cooley 2007: 67).

### **Economic Strengthening as Tool of Soft Balancing**

"Militarily strong, threatening states that are the target of balancing effort usually derive their military superiority from possession of great economic strength. One way of balancing effectively, at least in the long run, would be to shift relative economic power in favour of the weaker side" (Pape 2005, p. 37).

Both official documents of the SCO and estimations of future developments indicate that Sino-Russian cooperation might change traditional patterns of wealth in the international economic system. According to the founding document of the SCO, the organization "will make use of the huge potential and extensive opportunities in the mutual beneficial cooperation in economic and trade fields among its member states"



(SCO 2001). Even though, as many commentators notice, the actions of the SCO are not directed against any third party (Ferdinand 2007: 855), two predictions about the future development are worth mentioning here. First, as one commentator puts it, with the current membership intact, if trends continue, the GDP of SCO's member states will constitute one third of the world by 2020 (Ferdinand 2007: 855). Secondly, Sino-Russian cooperation might eventually decrease the status of the dollar as the most important currency: "with China holding \$1 trillion in reserves and Russia also holding large reserves of foreign currency, the Russian and Chinese leaders have agreed to bilateral financial and trade agreements outside the sphere of the dollar" (Cambell 2008: 96).

### **Signals of Resolve to Balancing:**

One problem of second-tier states when confronting the U.S. is estimating other's will to act collectively: "soft balancing, in addition to its direct usefulness in restraining aggression by a unipolar leader, may also address this problem by helping to coordinate expectations of mutual balancing behaviour" (Pape 2006: 37). In regard to this tactic, the mere existence of the SCO has signalled that Russia and China can develop patterns of collaboration outside U.S. control. In the founding document of the SCO before 9/11 it was defined that promotion of multipolarity was the organization's core institutional objective (Allison 2004: 478). Furthermore, it is also true that Russia and China is using the SCO as a mean to signal unity among other potential balancing partners. In 2005, India, Iran and Pakistan were given observer status of the SCO, which was another signal to the U.S. that the organization might step up its balancing efforts. Even if it is not sure whether these states will become permanent members or not, the SCO now together with its observer states - contains all the nuclear powers of the region and have changed the relative distribution of military power against the U.S. (Brooks & Wohlforth 2005: 83). Official statements of the SCO also signal unity, such as the one at the 2002 St Petersburg summit reiterating the SCO's call against "power politics" and unilateralism" (Chung 2004: 994). Although not in the interest of all SCO states, the organization has also taken the Chinese side in opposing any U.S. involvement in solving the Taiwan issue. Similarly, it has taken the Russian side on NATO's eastward expansion (Chung 2004 994-998).

### **Aggressiveness of Unipolar Leader:**

Even if the 9/11 attack made the two Eurasian powers set aside some of their own national interests in an international effort to fight the Taliban regime and terrorism, it is obvious that the honeymoon-relationship with the U.S. is about to fade away. Both Pape and Paul - two proponents of the soft balancing theory argue that Russia and China have increased their cooperation in Central Asia as a result of, what those countries believe is, U.S. increasingly aggressive intentions (Pape 2005, Paul 2005). Other scholars have expressed important view about the U.S. behaviour. In 2002, a landmark deal was signed between Russia and NATO and the same year the two presidents of China and the United States expressed their will to build up a constructive cooperative relationship. However who argues a series of events - most notably the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the following attempts to dominate the Middle East, the colour revolutions in the CIS states, the fact that the U.S. is still in Central Asia.

Li opined that there is no doubt that there is a strong connection between American use of its power and a feeling of being threatened in Moscow and Beijing: "intense examination of the developing trajectory of Russia-China relations reveals that it is external, rather than internal factors that constitute the primary dynamics to the deepening rapprochement between Russia and China" (Li 2007: 497). Of these external factors Li considers the American approval of NATO's expansion in the boundaries of former USSR and its enacting of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act as best explaining the Sino-Russian rapprochement (Li 2007: 497). Ferdinand argues, when commenting on the deeper understanding between Russia and China, that "as for the impact of the U.S., there is no doubt that the repeated calls for multipolarity are a reaction against perceived American unipolarity, and that this has become stronger with the Bush administration" (Ferdinand 2007: 862). He continues by arguing that 2003 was a turning point in the relationship between the two countries. The main reason for this was that Russia, after having realized that the country was not welcome as a member state in either NATO or the EU, was forced into seeking partnership with other states (Ferdinand 2007: 858). Before moving on to the next section that adds to this reasoning, it is possible to conclude that both Russian and Chinese leaders have increasingly been starting to perceive American unilateralism in

general and its anti-terrorist efforts in Central Asia in particular as a development which threatens their national interests. Furthermore, Russia and China have taken actions that have been constraining the foreign policy of the United States in the same region. Consequently, the logic of the theoretical framework discussed above, there are signs of soft balancing in Central Asia.

### **Alternative Explanations of Soft Balancing:**

The realist perspective on state behaviour has been widely contested. For example Hurrell argues that most of its literature is concerned with the policies that the U.S. have adopted or should adopt and that it may not “correspond particularly closely either to policy options that have actually been adopted or to understanding of those choices within the second-tier states ”(Hurrell 2006: 6). However, there are many realist and non realist predictions of state behaviour, I will here focus some criticisms of soft balancing argument that other scholars have put forward. Why it is not in the interest of Russia, China or any other second tier states engaging in hard balancing against the rising power of the United States. In the literature there is many theoretical critique of the soft balancing argument, namely, how should we define it? What is the difference between soft balancing and a typical diplomatic dispute? Lieber and Alexander’s conclusion on the matter is worth citing at length: “Current trends also do not confirm recent claims of soft balancing against the United States. And when these trends are placed in historical perspective, it is unclear whether the categories of behaviours labelled ‘soft balancing’ can be rigorously distinguished from the type of diplomatic friction routine to virtually all periods of history, even between allies” (Lieber and Alexander 2005: 139).

Brooks and Wohlforth, two other critics of the soft balancing argument, are also concerned with how to define this behaviour in unipolar international system. In their critique they are concentrating on the soft balancing theory’s underlying core assumptions: “Other states obviously sometimes take actions that make it harder for the United States to advance its foreign policy goals, including its military security. Yet just because other states’ actions periodically constrain the United States does not mean that soft balancing explains their behaviour” (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005: 74). States that chose soft balancing as a strategy must believe that this behaviour will help

them to survive and to overcome the security dilemma. Hence, the balancing behaviour must be a reflection of U.S. concentration of power and would not have been taken in the absence of the current systemic structure (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005: 78). Brooks and Wohlforth put forward three obvious, but overlooked alternatives to soft balancing: economic interests, regional security concerns, and policy disputes. In addition to it there are other academic explanations about the state behaviour in unipolar world order. I will discuss some explanations behind Sino-Russian cooperation that might have constrained U.S. freedom of action in Central Asia. I will in the next section go through these alternative explanations in Central Asia. As we have seen in the last section, Russia and Chinese have periodically taken actions that have constrained the foreign policy of the U.S. However, if it can be shown that those states' actions have had little to do with U.S. as a potential threat. Thus, can we really label their behaviour as soft balancing?

### **Economic Interests:**

A state may “undertake actions that hamper the conduct of U.S. foreign policy not principally because they wish to do so, but rather to advance economic gains, either for the state as a whole or for powerful interest groups or business lobbies” (Brooks & Wohlforth 2005: 79). In both Russia’s and China’s case economic development is strongly connected to their external behaviour, albeit for different reasons: “the importance of raw material and energy in Chinese foreign policy” and “the role of energy exports as one of the most crucial bargaining tools within Russian foreign policy” (Hurrell 2006: 17). From, the Chinese perspective, deepening collaboration with Russia and the Central Asia states is crucial for its economic development. According to Chinese estimates, the country will import one-third of its oil from Russia and Central Asia by 2020 and almost all its gas from Russia by 2010 (Ferdinand 2007: 852). Since the mid-90s, China has invested billions of dollars in different pipeline projects transporting oil from Central Asia (mainly Kazakhstan) into China. Trough argued that, “these multi-billion dollar projects had been impossible without China’s greater involvement in the security infrastructure of Central Asia” (2007: 219).

Russia is also highly dependent on Central Asian energy for its economical development, especially due to its increasing export commitment. Today there is a strong connection between Russia's economical growth and the increasing energy prices on the world market (Sakwa 2008: 246). As described above, China is increasingly importing energy from Russia and in order to safeguard a continued flow of energy to the east (and money in the opposite direction), deeper collaboration over Central Asia has become an important factor: "with Russia's major gas reserves steadily depleting and the development of the untapped fields in the Arctic being extremely costly. Russia's state-run energy monopoly, is increasingly turning its gaze to Central Asia's gas riches"(Torbakov 2007: 155). Furthermore, Norling and Swanström argue that even though it is tempting to explain the SCO's cooperation with Iran, India and Pakistan in terms of balancing U.S. hegemony, it is easy to find economical reasons as well. According to them, "a main reason why the SCO is engaging with Iran, India and Pakistan is due to a favourable political and bilateral developments in Eurasia in the past 15 years and the fact that these states have legitimate concerns about coordinating trade and infrastructure developments" (Norlin and Swanstom 2007: 442).

### **Regional Security Concerns:**

"States routinely pursue policies to enhance local security that are unrelated to constraining U.S. hegemony" (Brooks & Wohlforth 2005: 79). According to this view second-tier states sometime take actions, often in collaboration with other regional states against organized crime, terrorism, drug trafficking etc. that result in reduced U.S. freedom of action.

In both Russia and China's case, the countries' regional context strongly influences their respective foreign policy; not in the least by the emergence of new security threats (Hurrell 2006: 8). From a Russian vantage point, the war on terror had started before America came into the picture. When president Putin assumed the presidency in 1999, one of the most important tasks on his agenda was to hinder further loss of territory and the insurgency in Chechnya to spread to other groups inside the Russian sphere of influence (Macfarlane 2006: 47). In many ways, Russia considers Central Asia its "security belt" against northward expansion of terrorists, separatist and

extremism (Yinhong 2007: 165). As a result of the growing threats of instability in Central Asia, Russia and the governments of the region are cooperating on security and anti-terrorist related issues within both the SCO and the CIS structures, but also through the CSTO (the Collective Security Treaty Organization). However, despite its status as the most important external influence over Central Asia, Russia needed to share the burden of fighting militant Islamists in Central Asia with China, who had similar problems (Trough 2007: 220). According to Yinhong, the determination to fight regional terrorism was the main objective of China to strive for cooperation with the Central Asian states and Russia in the SCO (Yinhong 2007: 165). In China's westernmost region the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region - Muslim Uyghurs, residing on both sides of the Chinese border, have been striving for separation of Xinjiang from China for years (Yinhong 2007: 165). An approximate estimation is that 500,000 Uyghurs reside in the Central Asian states (Kerr & Swinton 2008: 128). Since the Uyghurs receive arms, funding, and training from their brethren in the Central Asian states, China see the SCO as a mean to guarantee security by limiting terrorist, separatist and extremist activity from spreading into China (Chung 2004: 996).

### **Pipe line Politics in Central Asia:**

The formation of economic blocs can be a key tactic in the strategic success of a balancing coalition. Although economics generally take a backseat to security issues in realism, number of balancing strategies, such as blockades and economic boycotts are aimed pacifically to diminish a state's ability to generate wealth and reduce its power. As Mark R. Brawley points out, economic ties can make alliances more credible and solidify the support of allied partners' domestic constituencies. "Alliances can harness the mutually beneficial aspects of international economic policies to make themselves more successful and more militarily powerful. If trade or international investment makes both parties better off, then such activities should be diverted from the threatening power. External balancing should redirect trade towards alliance members." (Brawley 2005: 81)

As in the sphere of international security, soft balancing alignments would likely favour less confrontational economic and trade strategies to reduce the presence of the

outside actor in a targeted region. A major objective of the SCO, therefore, is the creation of a regional economic bloc that sets asides preferences for Moscow and Beijing. To do this, both great the powers have signed deals with Central Asian autocrats, who have criticised the democratization and human rights norms attached to Western aid and development packages.

In an effort to carve the region economically, Russia and China have attempted to set up near monopolies with the petroleum and natural gas companies in Central Asia. In June 2003, Russia signed a wide-ranging set of agreements with Kazakhstan, ensuring a Russian near monopoly on the transit of oil from Kazakhstan. The Russian government and Russian companies have secured the largest share of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), totalling 43 percent, which gives Russia control of the pipeline connecting the Teniz oil field in Kazakhstan to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiik. Similarly, the Chinese National Petroleum Company signed a \$4 billion deal for a 60 percent share in the Uzen oilfield in western Kazakhstan. Furthermore, China views pipelines to Central Asia as key to its economic security because the United States could strangle Chinese energy imports with a naval blockade during a crisis (Goldstein 2005: 13-34).

Although energy competition would occur outside of any balancing effort, the drive for energy extraction in Central Asia is especially acute, and U.S. officials are aware of Chinese and Russian attempts to block American access to the region's resources. Too offset a Sino-Russian duopoly, the U.S. has advocated that pipeline routes in the region be diverted from China and Russia and rerouted towards its ally Turkey (Rumer 2007). The push for energy dominance has become a national security concern, particularly for a rapidly growing China, and to remove American interests from the region, the PRC has joined Russia to limit American influence in the economic sphere.

### **Policy Disputes:**

Brooks & Wohlforth opined that "States may undertake actions that constrain the United States not in response of the security threat presented by U.S. hegemony, but rather because they sincerely disagree with specific U.S. policies" (Brooks &

Wohlforth 2005: 80). Both Russia and China share the will of the U.S. to stabilize Central Asia. However, both countries have strong reservations about the way the U.S. is pursuing its policies in the region. The two countries see the democracy promoting strategy of the U.S. as naïve and subversive (Rumer 2006a: 1). In Russia some strategists think that U.S. democracy spreading in Central Asia will fail as they think it has in the Middle East. They see the American attempts as premature and lacking an understating that modernization must come before democratization (Torbakov 2007: 154). Sakwa is very much to the point: “the fundamental object of Russian criticism of the U.S. is its politics, not its ontological status” (Sakwa 2008: 250). China on the other hand opposes the American democracy promoting strategy due to its own policy of non-interference in other states’ internal affairs. Furthermore, from a Chinese perspective, the spread of ideas surrounding the colour revolutions into China could seriously undermine the ruling elites hold of power and the future of the one-party system: “Americans’ often-expressed desire to proselytize the virtues of individual rights and democracy also appears to the Chinese as a form of domestic political inference that may subvert China’s social stability and its process of development through undermining the CCP regime’s control of the country” (Chung 2004: 993).

### **Mutual Conflict of Second Tier States:**

Another alternative explanation to why Russia and China have deepened their cooperation in Central Asia can be that they want to contain the threat from each other. Since the fall of USSR, the two countries have been uncertain about how they have been evaluated in the other state’s foreign policy. From a Chinese vantage point Question arises, if Russia can entirely rely upon them. Furthermore, the question is if Russia will accept the “inevitable” fact that China’s steady growth will eventually lead to its demotion to junior status in the relations between the two (Lo 2004: 303). From a Russian perspective, China is a strategic partner, competitor and a potential security threat at the same time: “Many in Russia see a dynamically growing China as a serious threat to Russian control over Siberia and the Russian Far East, and to Russia’s strategic position in the north-western Pacific. This perception creates certain ambivalence in Russian policy towards China: is China a friend to be supported and strengthened, or is it a threat to be contained?” (Macfarlane 2006: 55).



The border talks which the Shanghai Five group was founded on can be seen as reflecting a fear in Russia that China would press for territorial claims in Central Asia. Historically, China has had close ties to the region since the time of the Silk Road, two thousand years ago (Chung 2004: 990). For Russia, deeper relations with China over Central Asia can therefore be seen as a mean to contain that threat: "Indeed, there is a compelling argument that the best way of neutralizing the 'China threat' is to tie Beijing more closely into trans-Asian energy and infrastructural projects, facilitating the transformation of the RFE into a commercially lucrative region in whose stability all parties have a stake" (Lo 2004: 305).

From a Chinese perspective, deepening the cooperation with Russia in Central Asia can be seen as a way to hindering Russia from tilting even more to the West. As a consequence of Russia's partnership with NATO, the U.S. is now discussing security related questions in Central Asia directly with Russia in a setting where China is not a member (Chung 2004: 1006). China is also afraid that Russia is using the CIS and the CSTO structures to secure closer ties to the Central Asian states. This is adequately summed up by Kerr and Swinton: "SCO exists more to restrict the political options of others than to extend the political options of China" (Kerr and Swinton 2008: 138).

### **Conclusion:**

This chapter has evaluated the soft balancing theory by applying it in a situation which others have framed a typical example there of. The case of research is to find the soft balancing strategy behind Sino-Russian cooperation in Central Asia. In other words, has the American way of using its power in the region provoked enough resentment in Beijing and Moscow for them to take actions that is making it harder for the U.S. to achieve its foreign policy objectives? According to the argumentation discussed above, this fear origin, in a worry that the U.S., with its immense power, is taking or will take actions that are threatening Russian and Chinese national interests. Seen from a Sino-Russian vantage point, the act that might have incited such a worry seems to be that the U.S. first promised to leave Central Asia when the job in Afghanistan was done, but that did not happened. The question is if the presence of U.S. troops, unsure for how long, in a region. Reducing possibilities of Russian sphere of influence and a pivotal element in Chinese long-term energy strategy, has provoked

those two countries to step up their cooperation efforts in the region. In other words, the deeper SCO cooperation reflects this worry and being used as a mean to constrain the Americans from further threatening Sino-Russian national interests?

The first analytical section of this chapter makes the argument that Russian and Chinese collaboration in Central Asia is a response to U.S. primacy. Both countries feel that their geo-political and geo-economical interests are at stake by the mere presence of U.S. troops. My analysis shows that Russia and China have, in one way or another, been engaged in making it harder for the U.S. to access land, constrained their ability to cooperate with the regional governments of Central Asia, declared a will to increase their economic cooperation in an economic bloc outside American control, and lastly, signalled that they might step up their cooperation by involving other regional powers. In terms of responses to U.S. aggressiveness, there seems to be a connection between Russian and Chinese disappointment with the foreign policy of the United States and the intensity in their relations.

The other analytical part of this chapter asks whether China and Russia might have had other legitimate reasons to deepen their collaboration in Central Asia. Contrary to the first section, This section argue that the two countries' economic interests, regional security concerns, dissatisfaction with the Bush administration's overall strategy of democratization, as well as a will to contain each other might have provoked their will to cooperate in Central Asia. At this point, rather than to ask which of the two analyses that have the most explanatory power, to evaluate whether soft balancing succeed in explaining the behaviour of China and Russia in one specific situation. As I have been trying to show, there are as many explanations to why China and Russia have chosen to collaborate in the region as different angels adopted. How do we know what part in their relationship that is a response to an American decision not to leave Central Asia and what is not? The two criticisms of the Soft balancing theory are useful in that they point at two flaws in the theory's underlying assumptions: (1) it fails in differing between actions taken to constrain the exercise of U.S. power and day-to-day diplomatic wrangling, and, (2) it fails in considering alternative explanations to state behaviour. If Sino-Russian actions, taken in concert or not, can be regarded as diplomatic wrangling and or are not responses to U.S. power, then it does not make sense to invoke either traditional balancing

reasoning or the soft balancing theory. Do states soft balance the power of the United States at all? Just because this chapter shows that there is a difficulty in deciding whether the behaviour of two states is soft balancing or not, research is not in the position to make generalizations about other cases. However, what one can say is that if soft balancing is a tactic of second-tier states at all, one could expect it to happen here.

The Sino-Russian cooperation in Central Asia involves coordination between states in areas directly related to security, it involves two of the world's most powerful states after the U.S., and it features state actions that are seriously limiting American ability to pursue its foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, as we have seen, it involves actions taken by two states which are very critical to how the United States has used its power. Having come this far, I conclude that anomaly extent, but that inherited flaws in the theory makes it impossible to say if other explanations might have played a role as well. I do not conclude that states never balance the power of the U.S., either it is hard or soft. In this one agree with Lieber and Alexander in their critical response to Brooks and Wohlforth's definition of soft balancing: "by defining balancing in such a restricted way, they miss and so will others if they adopt this definition that a lot of balancing behaviour in international politics" (Lieber and Alexander 2005b: 138).

States do certainly balance the power of the U.S. and the Sino-Russian cooperation in Central Asia might be one case thereof. Important, however, is that before we conclude that certain behaviour is soft balancing, we have to understand what is balancing and what is not. In this sense, this article is not criticizing the traditional balance of power theory, quite the contrary. Just because no overt balancing coalitions can be seen today, the theory does not fall. The problem with the theory is its indeterminacy in explaining when unipolarity will give way to another structure or how states will balance the power of the superpower. Hence the problem is out of reach of the theory itself. This is the only one selective case of soft balancing theory in next chapter other case of soft balancing are examined.

## Chapter 4

### Countering the U. S.: Critical Evaluation of Soft Balancing Theory

In previous chapter one case of soft balancing has explained. But one case is not sufficient to test any theory. So, in this chapter other cases of soft balancing are examined. The first case related to the second Iraq war when the second tier states such as German, France, Russia, China and other important European states began the soft balancing strategy within UNSC against the U.S. plan of invading Iraq. According to Pape this was the strongest case of soft balancing against the United States (Pape 2005). Second case the soft balancing is related to policy debate between the EU3 and U.S. about the Iran's nuclear ambitions. The third case of soft balancing is about the long term policies of EU. This case examine that how EU forward their policies from economic to defence and how the role of U.S. has reduced. These three cases are briefly examined in this chapter with the alternative explanations.

#### **Second Iraq War and Soft Balancing Theory:**

After invasion of Afghanistan, United States started making plan for Iraq's disarmament. In 2002 United States describe their motives within United Nations Security Council and presented resolution of war against Iraq. On October 22 France and Russia strongly opposed the U.S. proposed resolution of use of force. There has been significant opposition to the Iraq war by European and non-European within United Nations before U.S. invasion of Iraq. U.S. wants legitimate the War on Terror by the approval of UNSC. But UNSC passed the resolution 1441 for establishing inspection regime and this resolution make important step to diminishing the chances of war. According to exponent of soft balancing theory that second tier states that has veto power in UNSC use this power as soft balance against the unipolar leader (Pape 2005: 39). Paul opined that, "second-tier great power states have been pursuing limited, tacit, or indirect balancing strategies largely through coalition building and diplomatic bargaining within international institutions, short of formal bilateral and multilateral military alliances. These institutional and diplomatic strategies, which are intended to constrain U.S. power, constitute forms of soft balancing."(Paul 2005: 58-59).

On March 5, Russia, France and Germany declared that they would not support to any U.S. proposed resolution of waging war against Iraq. Even, Germany and France tried to resist U.S. attempt to involve NATO in Iraq war. Similar institutional bargaining policy was initiated within EU. France tries to convince EU to declaring statement against the U.S. motive of invading Iraq. Thus Europeans and non Europeans opposed the U.S. unilateral policies by using multilateral institutions such as U.N., EU and NATO. Similarly after beginning of Iraq War France, Germany, Russia and China declare that they would block U.N. resolutions of authorising internal administration to United States or United Kingdom, Thus, these second tier states tried to reducing U.S. attempt gaining oil productions (Pape 2005: 42). Saudi Arabia and Turkey used the soft balancing tool of territorial denial during second Iraq War 2003. Turkey was strategically important for the United States for winning the war. U.S. troops can easily capture the northern part of Iraq by invading from turkey, but Turkey did not allow United States to use their territory for invading on Iraq. Thus Turkey increases the cost of war and undermines U.S. policies of war by Soft balancing measure (Pape 2005: 36-39). This way second tier states undermines U.S plan of Iraq war by soft balancing measures.

### **Alternative Explanations: Why Second Tier States Disagree with Policies of Unipolar Leader**

Exponent of soft balancing theory believe that present soft balancing measure are preparation for future hard balance (Pape 2005: 42). The theory of soft balancing predicts future profit by adopting non-cooperation against the policy preference of unipolar leader balancing. On other hand soft balancing theory ignore the present politics of weak state in anarchical world. One of the different explanations of soft balancing theory is Strategic non cooperation tool of soft balancing as weapon of weak states (Kelley 2006: 53-54). Weak states use this strategic non-cooperation as mean to getting favourable outcome out of policies that are negotiated at international forums. Weak state rationally uses the strategy of cooperation or non cooperation for getting better out come for present and future possible interests. Kelley explain that “Strategic non-cooperation is when a weak state seeks to increase future influence vis-a-vis a strong state by deliberately rejecting inequitable cooperation”,(Kelley 2006). Because, weaker states either accept the unfavourable policies or they can

adopt non-cooperative strategy against policies initiated by the powerful states. This explanation reflected from the policy of Turkey because Historical incidence of Gulf war in 1991 is one of the determinant factors for Turkey's policy for Iraq war in 2003. After Gulf war 1991, Turkey faces spill over effect war against their regional security and integrity. Kurdish terrorist movement from northern Iraq has created regional security problem for Turkey since long. Thus Turkey was reluctant to support Iraq war in 2003 because it feared that after war Kurdish recession movement would affect the southern Kurdish majority part of Turkey. Thus Turkey's long term security preferences better reflects its decision of isolation from U.S. motive of second Iraq war (Walker 2007; Brooks and Wohlforth 2005: 94-97, 93-109).

European was considering as more important actor during oppositions of Iraq war. Strategically, European rejected cooperation with the U.S. was an attempt to creating relative balance of influence for global decision making. Because European did not find any positive beneficial cooperation for Iraq war (Kelley 2006: 159). Oye explains that "When you observe conflict, think Deadlock-the absence of mutual interest-before puzzling over why mutual interest was not realized. When you observe cooperation, think Harmony-the absence of gains from defection-before puzzling over how states were able to transcend the temptations of defection" (Oye 1986: 7). Howorth (2007) in the article "France: Defender of International Legitimacy" opined that France stressed for creating inspection regime for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The rationale behind the French proposal was to increase their decision making role for European and global policies. Gallis (2008) in "France: Factors Shaping Foreign Policy, and Issues in U.S.-French Relations" explains that economies of France and United States are so integrated but France afford to reduce the US influence in the European continent. Thus, he opines that France wants to regional dominance but it did not afford toward balancing the United States. Ahearn (2008) in "U.S.-French Commercial Ties" explains that commercial relations between France and United States are taking place more repeatedly. France is the ninth largest merchandised trading partner for the United States. In 2006, US direct investment in the France increased up to \$ 65.9 billion values. Similarly, France is the largest direct investor in the United States with \$ 159 billion.

Similar argument can also explain the Germany's role after second Iraq war. Timmins (2007) in article "German: Solidarity Without Adventure" opined that Germany's views against Iraq war was consequence of her domestic politics. Schroeder used anti-Americanism as electoral tool to win election and after elections German government began to minimise the gap with United States. Karp (2005) opined that German has not any intention to balance against United States, but it wants to play prominent role in European leadership. German plays diplomacy to convince United States for their policy preferences and international responsibilities.

Mankoff (2007) opined that after the collapse of the USSR, Russia abandoned the policy of balancing act against the western liberal democracies and United States. But Russia strategically pursues integration with the international institutions are the attribute of their national interest and strengthening internal power. Within multilateral institutions, Russia plays prominent role because it wants to be an important pole of multipolar world. Lynch (2004) in the article "Russian strategic partner with Europe" describes that Russian economic strategy with EU opens the way for common European Market Space without binding obligations. He argues that Russia conceives the ESDP positive than NATO for multipolar world. Thus, Russia wants to collaborate with western world for formation of multi-polar world without domination of single power. So there are different views about behaviour of second tier states in unipolar world.

Weak states rationally use the strategy of non-cooperation on specific issues for enhancing the position in bargaining (Kelley 2006: 58). Thus soft balancing strategy of non-cooperation on particular issue is not always a policy to undermine the preferences of unipolar leader, but it is an incentive that motivates states for accepting or rejecting the particular proposal presented by the unipolar leader. (Kelley 2006).

### **U.S. Policies against Iran: Soft Balancing Measures by EU3 against the United States**

United States strongly opposed the Islamic revolution 1979 and thereafter broke its diplomatic relations with Iran. President Clinton imposed economics sanctions against Iran in 1995. Even, President Bush several has taken actions against Iran since he

came to power in 2001. In 2002, he described Iran, along with North Korea and Iraq, as an axis of evil of great danger to the U.S. and encouraging terrorism. Since 2003, nuclear activity has been in focus of Iran's international relations as United States claimed that Iran has a program to develop nuclear weapons (Keddie 2006). Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. It has continuously been denied by Iran that the country is developing nuclear weapons. The issue has been frequently discussed in IAEA, which is responsible for controlling that the NPT-members follow the treaty. The U.S. asserts that Iran is supporting terrorism and development of a nuclear weapon program. IAEA has made inspections in Iran and United Kingdom, France, and Germany, known as EU3 have acted as negotiators. EU3 wants to contain the United States against Iran's nuclear ambition. Once again, as was the case with Iraq, the United States has put process of regime change by military measure, but EU3 (France, Germany and United Kingdom) block, the U.S. efforts and demand to transfer case of Iran's WMD to the Security Council. Thus EU3 tries to change military policy of United States and after Iraq war United States abandon the use of force against the Iran (Pape 2005: 43-44).

Such kinds of strategy has explained by the theory of soft balancing that define it as means of second tier states. The theory explains that of soft balancing relies on the non military tools include territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic strengthening, and signalling of resolve to participate in a balancing coalition (Pape 2005: 36). According to the assumptions of soft balancing theory Second tier states undermine the preferences of unipolar leader by diplomacy. Exponent of soft balancing theory believe that "Even strong states do not have complete freedom to ignore either the rules or procedures of important international organizations or accepted diplomatic practices without losing substantial support for their objectives. Accordingly, states may use international institutions and ad hoc diplomatic maneuvers to delay a superior state's plan for war and so reduce the element of surprise and give the weaker side more time to prepare. (Pape 2005: 36).

In case of Iran EU3 Puzzled the United States In Institutional Diplomacy such as investigation by IAEA. Thus EU3 tried to undermine US by adopting diplomatic tool of soft balancing. But after Investigation IAEA 35-member Board of Governors in September 2005 stated that Iran is not compliance with the safeguard obligations in



the NPT (IAEA GOV/2005/77). In the vote 22 states were in favour, among them India, whereas 12 states were abstaining, among them Russia and China. Venezuela voted against. In February 2006 another vote in IAEA decided to report Iran to the UN Security Council. In March 2006 the Director General of the IAEA, Mohamed El Baradei announced that there was no indication of any nuclear weapon development within Iran. But, in June 2006, UNSC together with Germany offered Iran a package of economic incentives and civil nuclear technology transfer, in exchange to permanent abortion of the uranium enrichment programme. Iran did not accept the offer, and demand its right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes and justified its position with accords signed when the Shah was in power (EUMA2005: 4-5). UNSC imposed a first series of sanctions against Iran in December 2006. In March 2007 UNSC adoption of Resolution 1747 and Imposed sanction on Iran (S/Res/1747/2007).

#### **Alternative Explanations: EU3 and United States**

Iran's nuclear history describe regarding its nuclear program, in which Iran hid critical aspects of this effort from the international community. Iran's nuclear program is a conflict between the majorities of the international community. France, Germany and Great Britain have always seen themselves as intermediaries rather than as problem solvers themselves. Washington more or less accepted the European efforts without supporting them pro-actively. EU3 and other important member of international community involved to solve the issue of Iran's nuclear ambition by the NPT regime. Other hand Iran is signatory member of the Non Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, that why it want to enrich nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Like United States western world fear from Iran's uranium enrichment program. Three powerful states of the western world EU3 offered Iran diplomatic settlement for strengthening NPT regime. Thus Iran is not ally of EU3 against undermining United States, because Iran is sceptical about the motive of Europeans and United States. Both EU3 and U.S. want to disarm Iran's nuclear access; here difference is adoption of means not in aims of both parties. Iran accused that states outside the NPT that were allowed to acquire nuclear technology. Other hand states inside the NPT regime that want to acquire nuclear technology and were denied their right to do so. The end

goal of EU3 is not soft balancing against the United States, but western world want to encourage those states outside the regime to join NPT (EUMA 2007).

EU3 has not encouraged Iran for uranium enrichment. International community, combined with U.S. pressure, convinced the IAEA to finally recognize Iran's non-compliance with its treaty obligations in September 2005, although the Board of Governors of the IAEA that met again in November 2005 postponed the referral of the Iranian case to the UNSC in order to allow more time for negotiations. This postponement served Iranian interests in gaining time within its "talk and build" strategy. Only in February 2006 the United States finally win approval from all key players in the IAEA, especially Russia and China, to send the issue of Iran's highly suspect nuclear program to the UNSC.

After the end of the cold war many structural changes have taken place in international system. The United States emerge as a unipolar leader and other important states have not adequate capability to balance United States. But these low capable powers use international institutions like WTO, IFM, and UN for getting short term and long term objectives. Because, multilateralism appeared optimism before the U.S. unilateral policies of regime change. Multilateralism involves binding rules reciprocity and trust among those states that want cooperative solution for multilateral disputes (Glen 2006: 320). The broader issues of collective security and legitimate use of force are discussed within the United Nations. The most powerful state also wants international organisations for preserve their position and stable world order (Glen 2006: 309). During Iraq war 2003 second tier states demands multilateral solution against the U.S. unilateralism. Similarly, EU3 wants the multilateral solutions of Iran's nuclear ambition.

One can believe that EU3 undermine the United States. But the other hand United States take full benefits from economic sanctions and other economic tool that undermine Iran's nuclear ambitions. Jacobson explained that United States and its allies have imposed huge financial burdens on Iran by international trade and banking institutions. United States win the favour of public and private financial entities which are providing financial help to Iran's nuclear projects. United States has given whole responsibility to their treasury department for observing the financial entities that are

directly or indirectly providing finance to Iran (Jacobson 2008: 69-71). Thus second tier states can use the tool of soft balancing within international organisations, but out of UN in other private sector private financial and trade areas second tier states are weak than United States. Jacobson opined that United States has not depended on UN decisions, but he use their domestic banks, private firms for imposing financial burdened on Iran. United States has banned all access of finance for Iran's Bank Saderat from 2007. Jacobson Opined that United States make helpless condition of Iran by adopting sanctions and tracking it in international organisations (Jacobson 2008: 73). Sanction regime became stronger after passing UNSC resolution 1803 in March 2008. The resolution has given directions to member states for their financial and trade relations with Iran. States are inspecting on their financial institutions that are directly or indirectly linked with Iran. Economic sanction regime has been creating obstacle before Iran rather than America.

So there is paradox in soft balancing theory. The theory of soft balancing explains that second tier states trapping unipolar leader within international organisation to undermine its policies (Pape 2005: 36). But, international institutions have undermined Iran's nuclear ambitions by strengthening sanction regime.

Similarly, unipolar leader also play the politics by private sector of finance and trade to undermine the second tier or weak states. Thus theory of soft balancing is insufficient to explaining behaviour of second tier states. The theory is silence in the case of soft balancing between EU3 and United States. Both the parties involve in non-military activities to enhance their policy preference. But, United States is more sufficient to undermine the Iran's nuclear activity by adopting non- military strategy of finance and trade. So it means that unipolar leader can also take benefits by adopting soft balancing tools. If both parties adopt the soft balancing strategy then soft balancing theory is can not explains the issues of soft balancing.

### **De Facto Soft balancing: Long Term Policies of EU**

"It is hard to detect soft balancing by focusing on the military chessboard while ignoring the chessboard of economic competition and its long term impact on geostrategic roles. It is also hard to detect soft balancing if it is defined narrowly as

state behaviour driven mainly by the intention of counterbalancing United States primacy” (Oswald 2006: 147)

The exponent of soft balancing theory begins to theorise the development of European Union as means of soft balancing against. One can not detect immediate effect of soft balancing Strategy. Oswald explained that de facto soft balancing is happening within European Union in economic areas that would counter the United States in other areas such as security (Oswald 2006: 47- 48). Oswald explains the different perspective of soft balancing theory than Pape and Paul. He has given the examples of development of EU from economic to security areas. EU member states have adopted the common currency euro in 1999 since then the role of dollar has been diminished from Europe. After this the path of economic development runs toward regional security in form of ESDP.

EU has enhanced their global role by their various agencies in field of economic, defence and peace keeping. EU reduced the NATO from European continent because ESDP take the security responsibilities of member states. Thus essence of the economic soft balance strategy of EU reduced the U.S. role from European continent (Kupchan 2002: 91). Similarly EU enhances their role in crisis management activities and became a global responsible organisation. In 2003, Under UN mandate EU launch military operation outside from Europe for maintaining peace and stability in Congo. Oswald claims that EU begins the process of soft balancing against the United States since 1991 (Oswald 2006: 146).

“European integration constitutes de facto soft balancing through decades of economic integration and, more recently, through the post-Cold War claim for an autonomous EU security role. The intention to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), beyond the customary economic role, was stated in 1991 and turned more serious in 1998/1999, after the Yugoslav crises had highlighted EU weaknesses. The reallocation of responsibilities for European security, from the US to the EU, began in 1991, was accelerated in 1998/99, and received additional momentum by transatlantic differences over the Bush administration’s post-2001 war on terrorism and the 2003 intervention in Iraq.”

Thus policies of EU supposed to be case of soft balancing against the U.S. unipolarity. In this case the new concept soft balancing arises in form of de facto soft balancing that is detected from the economic development. The de facto soft balancing is another means of soft balancing with factors of economic, security concern, domestic motive, and occasionally desire of counterbalance (Oswald 2006: 47). The economic development has spill over effects on areas of security, peace keeping missions and diplomacy. European Union is growing toward balancing partnership with the United States in forming transatlantic relation (Oswald 2006: 57).

### **Alternative Explanations:**

Oswald tries to make new developments in the theory of soft balancing involving de facto soft balancing. He opined that economic development further develop the areas of security and defence. EU starts the de facto soft balancing by economic development. But, such explanations are found in structural realism. Structural realism divides balancing process in two part internal balancing and external balancing. States engage in external balancing by making military alliances against rival state. Despites of external balance of power states also develop their domestic economic structure because external military balancing depends on internal resources. States get better out comes from external balancing effort by using their internal resources. Thus concept of de facto soft balancing proposed by Oswald is similar to structural realist notion that increase internal capability for better out come from balance of power. Waltz opined (Waltz 1979: 118) as

“States who act for them, try in more or less sensible ways to use the means available in order to achieve the ends in view. Those means fall into two categories: internal efforts (move to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strength and enlarge one’s own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one).”

Other hand EU wants to enhance friendly relations with U.S. rather than balancing it. Dependency of EU on United States resists it for taking independent security policy. There is vast capability gap between EU and United States and other research

programmes (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005: 92). There is not unanimous opinion about the activity of EU. Does EU is engaging in process of traditional military hard balancing of long term policy of soft balancing? Oswald opined that, “The consolidation of European defence industries in the 1990s also constituted soft balancing by building a European Defence Industrial and Technological Base” (Oswald 2006: 155). But such kinds of military preparations supposed as balancing process rather than soft balancing. Still there is not unanimous view among scholar about definition soft balancing theory. Thus many concepts of soft balancing theory are ambiguous.

### **Evaluation of Soft Balancing Theory:**

Waltz opined that “as nature abhors a vacuum, so international politics abhors unbalanced power” (2000: 28). But, still American hegemony is unbalanced. There are not any hard balancing efforts by the second tier states against unprecedented power of United States in this post cold war era. Brookes and William argue that American predominance in every critical dimension of power explains why no challengers have arisen (Brookes and Wohlforth 2002: 20-30). Since no potential rival can match the United States in material capability. Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander opined that U.S. power has not threatened to other potential powerful states, so there is no countervailing coalition in unipolar world. They opined that “The major powers are not balancing against the United States because of the nature of U.S. grand strategy in the post-Sept. 11 world. There is no doubt that this strategy is ambitious, assertive, and backed by tremendous offensive military capability. But it is also highly selective and not broadly threatening”, (Lieber and Alexander 2005: 133). Similarly, many liberal scholars argue that international relations are combined with so many political and non political factors that are interrelated. Rosecrance opined that economic interdependence has made war among great powers largely obsolete (2006:31-35). There are academic dispute on the relevance of traditional soft balancing theory in contemporary unipolar world. Theories can not be right or wrong, but if new theory better explain the same phenomenon than previous theory so it has more explanatory power (Waltz 1969: 1-17). This section is evaluating that how soft balancing theory explains realities of post cold war world and how it is increasing our understanding of ongoing events.

## **Rationale Behind the Non-Cooperative Strategy of Second Tier States**

States in this contemporary world are interdependent upon each other so many. So states involve in interstate dealing on issues for getting favourable share out of bargaining process (Kelly 2006:153-155). The traditional power asymmetry is not always the determining factor in negotiations. So rational behind the soft balancing policy of strategic non-cooperation on particular issues is not always to resisting the proposed policy of unipolar leader. But parties want favourable outcomes out of negotiation that why issue like regional security, trade, armament and disarmament are facing non-cooperation. But other way round non-cooperation is not deadlock or future balancing effort. Kelley opined that "that it is an analytical fallacy to assume that all situations of conflict are situations of deadlock. Rather, sometimes states deliberately opt for strategic non-cooperation as a soft balancing tool to regain influences vis-a-vis a stronger partner" (Kelly2006: 167).

The cases of soft balancing prove the above explanations of strategic non-cooperation. EU3 resist the U.S. proposed policy of disarming Iran's WMD by military measure. EU3 and other important member of international community involved to solve the issue of Iran's nuclear ambition by the NPT regime. In this case rational behind the conflict between the EU3 and U.S. motivated from proposals of both parties. The U.S wants to impose unilateral decision on Iran and on other hand EU3 want involves NPT for enhancing multilateralism. Thus EU3 deliberately use the strategy of non-cooperation against the policies of the unipolar leader. In this case dead lock emerges out of conflict over bargaining on particular issue. Thus one can analyse other cases of non-cooperation with similar way, such as non-cooperation on trade issue within WTO, during second Iraq war etc. So in this way second tier states getting better outcomes by using soft balancing tool of strategic non-cooperation or cooperation during negotiations on particular issues.

### **Regional Security Dilemma:**

The formation of regional military and non military organisations is not strategy for future balance, but contemporary regional security threats is deriving force of collaboration between weak states in their region. These kinds of strategy can be

observed from the formation of SCO. Russia shares with China the fear of U.S. encroachment on its borders. NATO expansion to the east and the U.S. establishment of bases in Central Asia creates security dilemma for Russia in central Asia. Russia no longer possesses the military capabilities to internally balance against the United States through an arms build-up. Its current strategy is to rely on China, a strategy that Trenin (2007) describes as “leaning on the east to raise its stakes in the west.” Similarly other policy analysts have argued that the Sino-Russian tensions outweigh their respective fears of U.S. hegemony and American unilateralism. “Russia appears to regard the growing American influence in Eurasia as more threatening to its interest than a rapidly growing China. Thus, both China and Russia are eager to foster a strategic partnership aimed at heading off American ability to extend its global dominance in the region” (Buszynski 2003: 163-164). This way regional security dilemma motivate Sino-Russia collaboration through SCO to reduce U.S. influences in central Asia. Similar example was found in second World war in which major European powers felt forced to go to war by feelings of insecurity over the alliances of their neighbours, despite not actually desiring the war. Thus if unipolar leader is threat to particular region then weak states collaborate in region for mutual interest. The soft balancing based on the predictions of future possibilities of balance against the United States but it fails to explain regional security issues. Thus theory of soft balancing is not better explaining the rationale behind the formation of regional organisations.

### **Short Term or Transient Coalitions:**

Different cases of soft balancing explain the major proposition of the theory. These cases are mostly found in formal and informal organisation. Second tier states use the international organisation for the purpose diplomacy, where they can bargain on issues. United States is equally member of many these organisations such as WTO, UN, and IMF like other weak or second tier states. There are so many regional organisations in which U.S. is not member. So it is not easy to detect possibility of soft balancing from every issue in which U.S. is not a party. After end of bargaining on the issue of soft balancing second tier states begin to make better relations with the unipolar leader. Similarly these issue based informal coalitions could not make any solidarity to resist U.S. in near future. After the collapse of issues or bargaining, these



second tier weak states abandon the policy of future balancing. Thus strategy of soft balancing is issue based game of second tier states. Example of this are find after the Iraq case of soft balancing because after Iraq second tier states begins to win the favour of United States. Ahearn (2008) in explains that commercial relations between France and United States are taking place more repeatedly. France is the ninth largest merchandised trading partner for the United States. Thus France begins peaceful trade relations with United States after second Iraq war. In 2006, U.S. direct investment in the France increased up to \$ 65.9 billion values. Similarly, France is the largest direct investor in the United States with \$ 159 billion. Karp (2005) describes that how German plays diplomacy to convince United States for their policy preferences and international responsibilities. Similarly policy of peaceful relations other European states and non Europeans maintain the peaceful and beneficial relations with the United States.

### **Behavioural Explanations: State Reaction to Unipolarity**

Peaceful end of cold war pose many questions on the realist theory of balance of power. The soft balancing theory tries to redefine the possibilities of balancing effort by weak or second tier states according to post cold war unipolar order. Similarly the theory of soft balancing deal with the behavioural aspects of the second tier or weak states and explains the rationale behind adopting the soft balancing measure rather than traditional hard balancing to resist the policies of unipolar leader. Unipolar world order is different order than multipolar and bipolar order. Thus, behaviour of second tier states would also be different in unipolarity (Ikenberry et. al 2009: 1-5). The structural changes in post cold war era make many changes in the behaviour of United States toward other great powers. Mearsheimer opined that geographical divides the United States and other great powers in two difference regions. That is why United States is not pursuing more military power. So, United States is status quo power with little danger to other great powers. Thus there is no balancing coalition taking against United States (Mearshiemer 2001: 112).

### **The Theory of Soft Balancing and Cultural Factors:**

The soft balancing theory is silent about cultural factor that are affecting directly or indirectly the state policies. Such kinds of cultural facts can be found in German about United States. Thomas Forsberg (2005) in “German Foreign Policy and the war on Iraq: Anti-America, Pacifism or Emancipation” explains the cultural and constructivist aspect of post unification German foreign policy behaviour. He opines that historical legacy of anti-Americanism in Germans and emancipation of self assurance is causes for Germany resistance of Iraq war 2003. But, he argued that political emancipation was the prominent determinant for Germany’s response during Iraq crisis. Thus soft balancing theory is silence about the cultural variables that affecting international politics.

### **Distribution of Capability:**

Contemporary distribution of power make U.S. primacy in every areas of powers such ass trade, military, science and technology. Second tier states changed their behaviour accordingly. Krauthammer opined that, “ However, the contemporary position of the U.S. does not resemble a power first among equals as was the case in the nineteenth century concert of Europe Rather, the U.S. resembles a great power in an international system of second rank powers” (Krauthammer 1990/91: 23-33). Such vast gap of capability compels second ties states to adopt selective choice of policy toward United States. Thus States policies are driven from their capability the distribution in capability put new challenges before states. That is why it is logical for the second tier States to adopt the non-military policy against the United States. Kelley opined that, “When power is conceptualized not only at the aggregate level, but also at the issue-specific and behavioural level, then strategic non-cooperation may be both necessary and an entirely logical soft balancing strategy” (Kelley: 158). But theory of soft balancing skip the perceptions of capability when it explain the behaviour of second tier States.

### **Ambiguous Concept of Second Tier States:**

Majority of scholar of the soft balancing theory opined that second tier or second ranked states are engaging in soft balancing. But there is ambiguity in declaring a

state in category of second tier states. Walt divides the states in three categories that are opposing United States in contemporary unipolar world. One category of the states believes United States as fundamentally hostile and believes in defiance. There are other states that resist United States on limited issues but believe in good relationship with U.S. on other issues. Third such kinds of states that worried from United States that it might be harm their interests in future ( Walt 2005: 114)

### **Strategies of Oppositions in Unipolar World:**

The soft balancing strategies of opposition of United States are not the sole strategy of opposition. But, there are other strategies equally adopted by the weak or second tier states other than United States. States in contemporary era of U.S. primacy adopt many strategies along with Strategy of soft balancing. Walt argues that, “weaker states in today’s international system employ various methods either to evade U.S. control or to limit the ability of the United States to have its way. These Strategies may not undermine U.S. dominant position—at least, not in the short terms—but they complicate its diplomacy and forms much of the context in which U.S. foreign policy must now be conducted”,(Waltz: 2005: 111-112). In this sense other strategies of opposition have same expected outcomes like non- military strategies of soft balancing. Weak States adopt Strategies of opposition other than soft balancing such as balking, binding, blackmailing, delegitimation. These strategies are equally adopted in unipolar world with the soft balancing strategy. Weak states use the strategy of balking when they want to improve their position relative to United States. In Such kind of strategy weak states avoid some action that is imposed on them by United States. In 1990 Saddam Hussein refused to readmit UN weapons inspection in Iraq (Walt 2005: 141-142).

In strategy of black mailing states threaten to do actions against the unipolar leader. But states offer demands to compromise with them. But this strategy adopted in some conditions (Walt 2005: 152-153) Third strategy is when states try to delegitimise some actions of unipolar leader as in the case of Iraq war. These Strategies are similar to soft balancing strategy. How can one make difference between soft balancing strategies and other non military strategies? Thus this is the big theoretical ambiguity

among scholars to make about defining the strategies of oppositions in this unipolar world.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter three difference cases has discussed to test the propositions of soft balancing theory. Comparative analysis if these three cases with soft balancing theory and other alternative explanations one can conclude that theory of soft is not the single theory to explain the behaviour and action of weak states in this unipolar world. This is academic debate about reactions of states against the unilateral policies United States. States uses many means to resist the U.S. unipolar policies. Soft balancing strategy is one of the strategies. In above case alternative of soft balancing theory are available. These alternatives are explaining similar case with different explanations. Theoretical explanations are overlapping with other. But despites of many critical views, exponents of soft balancing theory initiate the major task of defining the non-military reactions of states.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions

In the Proposed research, the main task is the testing of the major proposition of the theory of soft balancing with the cases relevant to the theory. The first analytical argument is testing the soft balancing theory with the other relevant theories in which balance is used as metaphor for explaining the international politics. This part of the research has analysed the major proposition and claims of soft balancing theory. The soft balancing theory has endeavoured to define the behaviour of second tier states in post cold unipolar system because traditional theory emerged and applicable in bipolar international system like period of cold war. The theory of soft balancing tries to implement the applications of the balance of power theory with the modified new theory of soft balancing. The traditional theory of balance of power is based on military alignment to taming rising hegemon. Alliance formation was the conscious effort of the great power in pre cold war period. But the soft balance theory is based on the non-military tools to undermine the policies of the unipolar leader. The non-military tools are used by many non military informal alliances. But theory of soft balancing could not validate to explain the purpose of these non-military alliances because there are number of alliances working at regional and international level. These organisations are pursuing the policies that enhance their foreign policy goals. So these alliances are using suitable beneficiary means for getting better outcome. If alliance is using tools of soft balance as means for getting foreign policy goal then it can not be soft balancing effort. Soft balancing theory is silent to explain such cases where alliance uses limited soft balancing tools as means with other means.

Applications of soft balancing theory are tested in case of regional cooperation between China and Russia with the alternative explanations. The first analytical section of this article makes the argument that Russian and Chinese collaboration in Central Asia is a response to U.S. primacy. Both countries feel that they could not get their geo-political and geo-economical interest if U.S. troops remain in the region for long period. The analysis explains that Russia and China have been engaged to undermine the United States. They reduce the ability of United States to cooperate with the regional governments of Central Asia. They increase their economic

cooperation in the Central Asia by making economic bloc outside American control. This is conscious effort of Russia and China for getting their foreign policy goals in Central Asia. They reduce the influence of United States by using different non-military means. These means are the cases explained by the soft balancing theory. China and Russia are conscious about security and economic interest in the Central Asia that is why the both states collaborate. The soft balancing theory has applied in this case for explaining the behaviour of Russia and China.

The critical aspects about the theory are reflected in the case. It fails in differing between actions taken to constrain the exercise of U.S. power and day-to-day diplomatic wrangling. There is anomaly with the theory because theories of foreign policy can also explain the case with alternative explanations. Both these second tier states wants to get oil from central Asian region. So these second tier states are building the internal capability. Is it balancing effort or soft balancing? The states behaviour about security dilemma and increasing internal capability can be explained by the realist theory. Despite of this the tools of soft balancing theory can be applied in similar cases for reducing the influence of powerful states from particular region. The definitions of soft balancing tool have enriched the theoretical literature.

Do states soft balance against the power of the United States at all? States do certainly balance the power of the U.S. and the Sino-Russian cooperation in Central Asia is the only one case. However, before concluding the certain behaviour is soft balancing, we have to understand what is balancing and what is not. There is no overt balancing coalitions can be seen against the United States, It does not means that the theory of balance of power fail to explain states behaviour in unipolar world. The problem with the theory is in explaining when unipolarity will give way to another structure or how states will balance the power of the superpower. This is the only one selective case of soft balancing theory so we can not generalise other case.

The theory of soft balancing proposed that second tier states undermine the unipolar leader by adopting diplomatic practices within international institutions. During the second Iraq war second tier states resist the unilateral policy of United States in UNSC. In this case international institutions are means of second tier states. Scholars of soft balancing are not explaining politics of international institutions with single

view. Kelley one of scholar of soft balancing theory explains the politics of international institutions with different perspectives. He opined that strategic non cooperation in international institutions is a means of soft balancing. But weak states use this strategic non-cooperation as mean to getting favourable outcome out of policies that are negotiated at international forums. Weak state rationally uses the strategy of cooperation or non cooperation for getting better outcome for present and future possible interests. Kelley explain that “Strategic non-cooperation is when a weak state seeks to increase future influence vis-a-vis a strong state by deliberately rejecting inequitable cooperation”,(Kelley 2006: 53-54)). Because weaker states either accept the unfavourable policies or they can adopt non-cooperative strategy against policies initiated by the powerful states. This is strong criticism of the soft balancing theory. On this case the same strategy is explained by two scholars with different goals. It is problematic to decide what is exact purpose of soft balancing strategy in case where states non-cooperate against the proposed policies of unipolar leader. Do second tier states cooperate if proposal would produce favourable outcomes? If second tier states accept the proposal then theory of soft balancing is failed to explain the long term policies of second tier states. Thus soft balancing strategy of non-cooperation on particular issue is not always a policy to undermine the preferences of unipolar leader, but it is an incentive that motivates states for accepting or rejecting the particular proposal presented by the unipolar leader. (Kelley 2006). In such kinds of case theory of soft balancing is weak because exponent proposing dual and opposite explanation to define particular phenomenon.

Theory of soft balancing is inadequate to explaining the behaviour of second tier states when they involve as intermediate between two states. The examples of this found in the case of Iran’s nuclear. EU3 are involved to compromise between United States and Iran. Similarly other second tier states are supporting U.N. imposition of the sanction against the Iran. In this case international community including EU3 involve Iran into NPT regime. In this case United States get better outcome from international institutions. Recently UNSC passed new resolution 1803 to reduce the Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions. Thus theory of soft balancing could not explain the strategy of EU3. According to theory effort of EU3 reduced ambitions of the United States of invading Iran. Despite of this, United States plays the politics out of UNSC where the

other second tier states are weak. United States uses international financial and trade institutions to reduce Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The theory of soft balancing is explaining one aspect of second tier states where these are strong. But theory is silent in the case where unipolar leader is strong and making the favourable outcomes against the ambitions of second tier states.

The exponent of soft balancing theory explains the economic strengthening as a de facto soft balancing tool of second tier states. The de facto soft balancing is the notion that believes that security issue can be detected from economic strengthening. The theoretical claims of de facto soft balancing are evaluated in the brief case study of EU. The EU can adopt the hard balancing policies in future. If particular organisations are enhancing their role from economic to security, one can not make prediction for balancing in future. Is it internal balancing effort or soft balancing? Thus theory is not clear about what is balancing and what is not. The theorist of soft balancing has not explained unanimous definition of soft balancing theory.

The second tier states resist the unilateral policies of United States by soft balancing measure on many different issues. But after the collapse of issues these second tier weak states abandon the policy of future balancing coalitions. Thus strategy of soft balancing is issue based game of second tier or weak states. Example of this are found after the Iraq case of soft balancing because after second Iraq war second tier states begins to win the favour of United States. Similarly second tier states are not united and unanimous on every issue areas. During Iraq war United Kingdom did not take part in resistance against the United States. Similarly only three member of the EU used soft balancing strategy against the United States. But other second tier states perform limited role. Thus second tier states do not resist against the United States with collectively. The second tier states are more concern with their regional and national interest.

On the bases of major finding in this research work we can conclude that theory of soft balancing is insufficient to explaining the behaviour of second tier states. Despite of this the theory of soft balancing tries to conclude the behaviour of second tier or



weak states. The theory of soft balancing can make progress in future by increasing more explanatory result.

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