

1. Definitions

Power:

- "the ability to act or produce an effect."
- The capacity of one actor to influence or determine the behaviour of another, whether by persuasion, threat, authority, bribery or force.
- The ability to get another to do what he/she would not otherwise have done.
- Power is normally to serve the interests of the exercisor of power.

National Power:

- the ability of one nation-state to cause another nation-state to do something it may not wish to do.
- "The aggregate capacity of a state to safeguard its national interests and to influence the behavior of other states"
- States exercise power over other states strategically, economically, ideologically and by diplomatic persuasion to enhance and protect their perceived national interests.

“It can be argued that the quest for power, the exercise of power, and sometimes the obsession with power is at the heart of all collective relationships; and most dramatically in international relations.”

2. The Components of National Power

- Strength (the most resources) does not always prevail, because power has tangible, intangible, and potentiality aspects.

Tangible (hard) Power:

Intangible (soft) Power:

Potentiality of Power:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population & demographics, • geographic location & size, • natural resources, • geopolitical position, • economic and technological strength, • military capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legitimacy of govt • nationalism/mobilization • make rules, get others to adopt your values • diplomatic skill • attractiveness of one's culture and the mastery of institutions and information technologies to disseminate persuasive information is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to maximize the influence of capabilities through a psychological process, • rapidity with which the tangible and intangible components of power can be brought together to focus on an issue • <i>perceived</i> potentiality is equally significant
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- To be powerful, one must have resources and demonstrate the willingness to use them to influence others.

3. Measuring National Power

- Power is an element in a *relationship* and therefore can only be measured in terms of its relativity - the *relative* power between two or more states.
- In attempting to understand the relationship between one state and another, and in measuring the relative power of the states, we need to consider all the relevant tangible and intangible factors.
- Also, the states themselves often have very different perceptions about their own capacities.

4. The Balance of Power

- Balancing power between strong states was historically an effective way of managing power and keeping the peace.
 - Consider the Soviet Block vs. the U.S. and its allies
 - Consider the European nations through much of history
- Today, with the U.S. alone as a superpower, with many strong allies, power is not so evenly balanced.
- But even a superpower is vulnerable to attack, as it a small, weak power.
 - Consider Sept. 11 and terrorism

5. Is the Nature of National Power Changing?

- Soft Power may be growing in importance over hard power.
- The definition of national power continues to evolve and change. The U.S. possesses unchallenged dominance, yet its actions are constrained by an increasingly interconnected world. The evolution of international and regional organizations continues to erode the traditional definition of national power. Global interdependence constricts all nations alike.

Joseph S. Nye (Dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a former Assistant Secretary of Defense):

- The US is at a pinnacle of world power comparable to that reached by the British and Roman Empires, yet in today's world its military might, economic power, and cultural sway aren't enough to go it alone.
- Both hard and soft power are critical to U.S. dominance. The two types of power must be managed wisely. The US must act multilaterally - after consultation with friendly nations or through international organizations - whenever possible. It must reserve unilateral action, particularly unilateral military action, for those instances when critical national interest demands it.
- US's go-it-alone approach to global warming by rejecting the Kyoto Accords, its announcing its intention to withdraw from the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty, as well as other instances when the Bush Administration has turned its back on European and other allies, has hurt the US's soft power. Unilateral military action against Iran, Iraq and N. Korea would draw less support than the U.S. action in Afghanistan.
- The strength of US soft power can be seen in the spread of popular music, American fashions, the adoption of democratic governments, and in the way other nations look to the United States to protect freedoms and human rights.