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## **U.S. SMART POWER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

The article deals with the concepts of “soft power” and “smart power” in modern international relations. The object of the research is the potential of “smart power” of a state, as a combination of both “hard” and “soft” power, in particular of the USA, and the way this potential may be acquired, maintained and used in the foreign policy of a state. Smart power of a state is analyzed both on a theoretical level and on a practical level, on the example of the United States of America. The conclusion of the research is that “soft” and “smart” power are playing constantly growing role in international relations, and no states may ignore this aspect. In order to ensure the comprehensive perception of this instrument one should address the experience of the country, where the particular concept has emerged, and which was one of pioneers of its implementation – the US.

**Key words:** smart power, soft power, cultural diplomacy, electronic diplomacy, public diplomacy, foreign policy.

After Joseph Nye<sup>1</sup> in the 1990ies coined the term soft power in the scientific turnover, there has settled a division of a state’s potential on the international stage, respectively, on hard and soft power. Hard power of a state, which was more traditional in the past, is the ability of coercing by military force or put economic pressure on other actors to make certain actions. Instead, soft power is the ability to reach desired by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals. However, it would be wrong to consider soft power as definitely more humane than hard power. After all, the ultimate goal of persuasion may also include actions that are quite contrary to interests of an actor under impact.

It is worth to recall that the ideology of the U.S. soft power was suggested as far back as in 1996 by J.S.Nye and W.Jr.Owens<sup>2</sup> as they set out this idea in the study “America’s Informational Edge”. It reads that “the main force of America is its information capabilities”. The study proved the dominant U.S. role in the information revolution, which means the usage of all-important means of communication and informational technologies, the policy of deterrence and neutralization of traditional military threats and of new types of weapons in the world, the availability of information advantage that can cause intellectual link between U.S. foreign policy and its military potential. Information leadership, according to the political scientists, enhances the effect of American diplomacy as a tool of soft power. It will enable the use of information resources for constructive dialogue with potential adversaries such as Russia, China and India.

However, the U.S. informational leadership provides for the resistance to build-ups of informational arms in potentially aggressive countries such as Iran, Iraq and Pakistan etc. The U.S. advantages in the informational sector, according to the experts, will contribute to the prevention and settlement of regional conflicts and solving problems associated with global threats. These issues include: international crime, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, global environmental degradation. The concept of soft power, as noted by J.S.Nye and W.Jr.Owens, is to be implemented in the Doctrine of informational umbrellas, which is to replace the Doctrine of nuclear umbrellas. The U.S. advantages in soft power can be used for the completion of the democratic system in other countries and for the prevention of regional conflicts and to counter new threats on the global arena..

With the establishment of a new world order, soft power ideology becomes a form of support for political dialogue and one of the forms of propaganda for advantages of one system in comparison to another. It also reflects a new broader outlook in politics, new political and cultural values and a way of life in the modern world. Current scope of globalization is forcing leading political actors to seek a comprehensive solution of problems with the broadest possible representation of states. Maximum cooperation of all countries of the world also means finding a compromise between hard and soft power in international cooperation.

However, the imbalance between the use of hard and soft power has led to growing aspirations not to

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1 Nye, J.S. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.

2 Nye, J.S. (1996). America’s Informational edge. *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (2), 20-36.

use soft power in international relations without hard power, but rather in their combination. Therefore, under the auspices of the American Center for Strategic and International Studies, a commission (the so called Smart Power Commission) was established aiming at ensuring the transition to smart power. It presented an analytical report under the heading “More Intelligent, More Secure America” in 2007. Its developers, J.S. Nye and R. Armitage<sup>1</sup>, suggested a combination of hard (military) and soft (cultural) force in a joint effective strategy for the U.S. in the international arena. The intention to implement this report was declared by the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama, although the effectiveness of its implementation is still questionable.

A specific definition of soft power as a democratization component in the larger U.S. strategy was offered by G.Ikenberry<sup>2</sup> and K.Kupchan<sup>3</sup>. The experts consider Democratic Party’s innovation policy as a concept of cooperation with the international community. In the theoretical and methodological terms, the most articulate conceptual ideas for the U.S. national security strategy for the XXI century were suggested by a famous political scientist from Yale University J.L.Gaddis<sup>4</sup>. He presented the idea of preventive response to future challenges and threats. Stressing the possibilities of preventive diplomacy, J.L.Gaddis does not preclude the application of hard power as well. The expert believes that more reasonable foreign policy of any president (at that point it was unclear who would be elected president after G.W.Bush) would be to convince the domestic and international community in the correctness of U.S. policy decisions in the international arena. For J.L.Gaddis this strategy should include liberal democratic ideals as basic principles of forming the security in general.

The victory in the U.S. presidential elections in 2008 of a representative of the Democratic Party led to different estimations of his new foreign policy, as it was declared to reset the international relations. Obama was seen as believing in a set of principles of the world’s democracy, security and freedom, and as trying to implement practical measures to increase U.S. security and global freedom. He rejected isolationism and tried to clearly abandon unilateralism. At the beginning of the campaign, Obama used as a starting point the fact that America could only develop in a stable international environment. Declaring himself as a supporter of the spread of democratic values in the world through providing an example and influencing, he tried to avoid discussing the relevant situation in Russia, China or in the so called Newly Independent States (NIS). Instead, much attention was paid to the component of soft power as a pleasant image of foreign and security policy of the United States. The idea to end the U.S. mission in Iraq to avoid global wave of anti-American sentiment was a proof of such intention. As for the settlement of the situation in Iraq it was suggested to use several instruments of soft power. They included: maintaining of American influence in the Middle East; avoiding of turning Iraq into Afghanistan as a constant problem of international relations, the transition to a political settlement of violent conflicts between branches of Islam.

Currently the main strategy of U.S. soft power in international relations has become the conceptual report «A Smarter, More Secure America»<sup>5</sup>, which was drafted by the experts of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), guided by the specialists closely related to the actual practice of American domestic and foreign policy politics. The members of the American Center for Strategic and International Studies are prominent American theorists of political science, including J.G.Henry, Zb.Brzezinski, H.Kissinger, C.Cohen, R.James and others.

Under the auspices of the American Center for Strategic and International Studies a bipartisan special committee for the transition to smart power (Smart Power Commission) was established. In 2007, the Commission presented analytical report “A Smarter, More Secure America”. The core of the new American consensus strategy was developed by J.S.Nye and R.Armitage and presented a combination of hard (military) and soft (cultural) power in a joint effective strategy for the U.S. in the international arena. Its purpose is to return to the America the status of intellectual leader and maintain the image and reputation of

1 Nye, J.S. (2007). A smarter, more secure America. *CSIS Commission on Smart Power*.

<<http://csis.org/publication/smarter-more-secure-america>>.

2 Ikenberry, J.G. (2004). Liberal Realism: The Foundations of a Democratic Foreign Policy. *National Interest*, vol. 77, 38-49.

3 Kupchan, C. (2004). Real Democratik. *National Interest*. <<http://www.nationalinterest.org/ME2/default.asp>>.

4 Gaddis, J.L. (2002). A Grand Strategy of Transformation. *Foreign Policy*, November-December, 50-54;

Gaddis, J.L. (2005). Grand Strategy in the Second Term. *Foreign Affairs*, January-February. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050101faessay84101/joh>>.

5 Nye, J.S. (2007). A smarter, more secure America. *CSIS Commission on Smart Power*.

<<http://csis.org/publication/smarter-more-secure-america>>.

the United States on the basis of the idea of global wealth and prosperity.

In the preface to the report, its developers J.S.Nye and R.Armitage referred to the fact that the United States has the potential of smart power as an investment in global future. The realization of the strategy should provide opportunities for economic, political and social development of other countries, which do not match the current level of achievements of mankind. America can offer the world a strategy necessary to respond to urgent global challenges by investing not only in a state's economy and military sector, but also in the policy of soft domination.

The document pointed out that impact and power tend to change over time, and this is an inherent trend of modern world politics. Thus, in the 1990s and actually till the mid-2000s, the political leadership of the United States and most American political scientists positioned United States as the only superpower with a powerful set of influence on geopolitics. U.S. leadership both in its total potential and in each of its individual components, as well as their functional terms, can be limited or grouped by only two categories – hard power and soft power.

Analysts say that in this situation there were conditions for imposing ideology and principles of political development on other countries through the use of tough economic pressure and, above all, forcing by military means. However, the imbalance between hard power and soft power of the U.S. has led to the actual crisis of American soft power. As a result of this situation, the U.S. lost their traditional image of fighter for the values of freedom. However, the global spread of American cultural values and identity brought about a natural and predictable conflict with national traditions of other countries.

On the one hand, the mere statement of this fact, its actual manifestations and consequences for the United States form the complex of ideas, which the authors of the report wanted to bring to the political elite and the new U.S. presidential administration. On the other hand, J.S.Nye and R.Armitage offered to the U.S. government a set of specific principles, compliance with which could help to preserve their leadership in world politics. The concept of smart power, in the interpretation of the authors of the report, is used as a synthesis of two concepts: hard power and soft power. Soft power is seen in the traditional sense as the ability to achieve certain goals by attracting without any coercion. Keeping in mind the major soft power resources – culture and political values, J.S.Nye and R.Armitage pay greatest attention to foreign policy and diplomacy. They are considered by other international actors as legitimate and morally authoritative.

The essence of smart power also consists in the ability to consider and coordinate various multilateral and U.S. interests in international cooperation. In the opinion of J.S.Nye and R.Armitage, financing various international organizations and institutions can prove effective from economic point of view. In turn, it will be ineffective and counterproductive to spend considerable resources to the global war on terrorism and military action in Iraq. Such investments, as it is specified in the report, will enable to involve a number of other countries in implementation of such global projects, thus contributing in a balanced redistribution of the world's problems. At the same time, it will allow the U.S. to position itself in the international arena as a political actor which has a set of promising and optimistic projects and ideas for their implementation.

The concept of smart power lies in the ability to provide complete functioning of various sources of soft power which act differently, because they are not directly depending on the government. Among such fields one would mention: private business, civil society (public diplomacy), bilateral agreements and declarations, cooperation and consultation at the level of multilateral organizations. The researchers agree that hard power is a complex set of simpler mechanisms, so it is easier to use it to achieve specific goals. However, smart power provides its application only in terms of international consensus, and that means that it cannot be separated from soft power.

It is stated that thinking in terms of political and military blocs, which were characteristic of the Cold War era, is now obsolete. In today's world only the multilateral diplomacy can be effective, which involving negotiations and collaboration with all actors in international relations. Excessive aggressiveness, as emphasized in the report, is a manifestation of conceptual and ideological weaknesses and technological imperfection of a state. From the perspective of American researchers, the smart power logic makes it necessary to combine the declared ideas and fundamental features of their implementation in real life. The possible situation, when political and ideological allies doubt the officially proclaimed American goals and ideals, is considered unacceptable. Therefore, if the United States choose the smart power strategy, they should take into account the position of other states, namely of those, seen as America's key partners – South Korea, Japan, Europe, etc.

However, J.S.Nye and R.Armitage hoped that the new presidential administration would continue the

political tradition of preserving the US world leadership. Their smart power should allow regaining the status of a state confident in itself and the one, which is ready to solve global problems. The USA should be seen as a state, relying on a broad consensus of the international community and immediate cooperation with the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), which have recently acquired the characteristics of regional leadership.

The political and applied component of the report can be seen directly from the conceptual meaning of smart power. It is reflected in the five areas in which the U.S. government should focus their political attention and financial resources. The first direction is related to strengthening the traditional intergovernmental political alliances and forming the new ones. It also includes the search of partners and the formation of international institutional bodies for various purposes. According to the political scientists, in the current situation, the USA should not contribute to further weakening of existing international institutions, many of which were created with active support of the US, and in which the United States possess quite a significant authority. It is emphasized that the US should not allow other political actors to overtake their initiative to create new international institutions.

Global development is another important direction. It is considered as humanitarian, health, educational, economic and technological support to the most disadvantaged countries in the developing world. These initiatives should be conducted both directly and through international organizations and institutions.

The third area embraces the society and public diplomacy and is associated with the expansion of humanitarian exchanges between the U.S. and other countries. The authors consider as the fourth direction the adjustment of mechanisms of economic integration. They should be based on the effective activities of the international financial institutions, targeted assistance to poor countries and promotion of their economic development. The fifth direction is marked as technology and innovation and is mainly associated with ensuring global energy security, the emergence of information society and the introduction of high technologies.

Smart power politics can also be seen in the context of new, promising ways to influence geopolitics of states, which include informational and intellectual and innovative capacities of modern states. The potential of information and intellectual influence includes the ability of using communication technologies to create relevant images and notions of certain events of international life and international political processes. The innovative capacity can be regarded as the ideological potential of a state, which is created in the framework of analysis and research of academic institutions. The fact that the concept of smart power emerged in the U.S. evidences that the realities of traditional international policy and power relations existing within its framework are now really undergoing significant changes.

A critical examination of the concept of smart power was held in April 2008 in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations chaired by the Vice President Joe Biden. In the presence of concept's developers J.S.Nye and R.Armitage and experts from both parties, the hearings "The idea of smart power: an agenda for reform of the national security" were held. Noting the idea of a new consensus U.S. strategy aimed to return the USA their status of the global leader, the experts pointed to the reason of reduction of confidence in American values. Thus, one suggested to abandon the policy of double standards, inefficient symbols, ruining the positive image of the United States.

The practical implementation of the concept of smart power can be seen in the speeches and statements of representatives of the Obama's Administration. The President's team decided to abandon power diplomacy conducted by the George W. Bush Administration, which in many areas was considered to be ineffective. The decision was made to push diplomacy to the forefront of the US foreign policy and to the balance it with military power together with innovative means of the XXI century. This approach can be called pragmatic diplomacy.

Thus, at the hearing of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on the appointment of the Secretary of State H.R.Clinton, the latter introduced a policy of smart power as an effective strategy for America in world politics. In her opinion, after the policy of unilateral decision-making in the international arena America got a real opportunity to change its reputation in the world community. In order to return to the practice of moral leadership of the US and to restore confidence of other states in the US, the state should use multilateral diplomacy for resolving international problems. Clinton said that the US foreign policy had become imbalanced, and the Administration would try to return it to greater equilibrium. It would benefit the government and the image of the country abroad. Thus, Clinton said, foreign policy should strengthen America's global leadership as a positive force in the world, providing opportunities for

progress and prosperity of other countries. In addition, according to Clinton, foreign policy should be guided by the idea of smart power, which is embodied in Clinton's definition as the combination of diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural means. Clinton stressed the commitment to tough and, at the same time, intelligent diplomacy. Military force, in her opinion, is necessary for protecting the interests of America in exceptional situations. The conclusion is that the basic ideological principles of America's foreign policy should be the pursuit of moral leadership in the world with effective diplomacy and soft power policy<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the willingness of Obama to foster more active international cooperation, he cannot go beyond the established US foreign policy doctrine. It excludes the possibility of dependence of US foreign policy decisions on multilateral organizations in the event of their nonconformity with America's national interests. It is expected that the US administration would keep on more or less the policy of protection of their national interests through the full potential of soft and hard power.

Taking into the account the fact that previously United States had spent too much on foreign policy, the use of US hard power is yet limited. It can be demonstrated by a practical non-participation of the United States in the events in Libya, Egypt and Syria. However, Washington was active in two regional conflicts, in sponsoring the NATO enlargement process, in the deployment of new weapons systems, namely the anti-missile protection in Europe and in financial incentives of loyal partners. In the times of economic crisis, when one of the main problems was the dramatic reduction in public spending, Obama could not disperse resources. For this reason, through both Obama's presidential terms, America found itself in the period of accumulation and concentration of resources and, thus, ensuring the national interests policy through soft power.

Altogether the potential of soft power of a state should be measured and used, with special attention being paid to given declared principles of foreign policy, and can cover diplomatic, political, economic, cultural, technological innovation and information components of soft dominance in world politics. The United States offer us a bright example of how all these factors can be combined and used for use of a state. The concept of smart power promotes a wide range of foreign policy goals of a state, in particular, the policy of global leadership, through a combination of diplomatic, economic and military potential. Ideology of smart power, in the author's opinion, professes the main imperative of functioning of any state and its activity in the international arena – the protection of national interests in the context of new structure of foreign influences.

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