

Session 7: Joseph Nye and Soft Power

Introduction

JOSEPH Nye was not a Middle East specialist. His earliest regional research focused on East Africa, but the questions that made his reputation lay elsewhere: the changing nature of power, economic interdependence, American primacy, and the rise of new great powers. The central actors in his intellectual map were the United States, Europe, Japan, the Soviet Union and Russia, and increasingly China. The Middle East mattered strategically, but it was not a principal center of world power and never occupied the place in Nye's thinking that it did for Bernard Lewis, Fouad Ajami, or Samuel Huntington.

Nor did Nye invent soft power in response to the post-9/11 Middle East. He introduced the concept in *Bound to Lead* in 1990, as part of a broader argument against predictions of American decline. Conventional measures overlooked an important American asset: other societies were attracted to its culture, institutions, universities, and political ideals. A country able to make others want what it wants need not always compel or buy their cooperation. Soft power began as an argument about American strength in the post-Cold War world, not as a theory for reforming Arab societies.

Then September 11 came. Suddenly the question Americans were asking—"Why do they hate us?"—seemed tailor-made for Nye. The United States possessed overwhelming military superiority yet faced enemies that military power alone could not defeat. Anti-American sentiment could continually replenish their ranks. Donald Rumsfeld posed the crucial metric: was America killing and capturing terrorists faster than radical clerics and madrassas could recruit them? Hard power addressed one side of the equation; attraction, legitimacy, public diplomacy, and appeals to Muslim moderates addressed the other. The Middle East gave enormous new relevance to an idea Nye had developed a decade earlier.

In this sense, soft power hitched a ride on the Middle East rather than originating there. Iraq made the argument still more compelling. The United States demonstrated in 2003 that it could destroy Saddam Hussein's regime in weeks but could not readily convert military victory into political success. Hard power could remove a government; it could not make Iraqis embrace liberal democracy, legitimize an American occupation, or make

American purposes attractive across the Arab world. For Nye, Iraq demonstrated the difference between possessing power resources and achieving desired outcomes.

But the Middle East also exposed a problem in Nye's theory. He explicitly called it "The Special Case of the Middle East." Soft power "depends on willing receivers," and the cultural distance between the United States and the Middle East was greater than that between America and postwar Europe. American technology and culture might be admired while American policies remained intensely unpopular. Attraction did not necessarily translate into influence.

Nye thus returns us, by an unexpected route, to Middle Eastern exceptionalism. His diagnosis makes the region unusually difficult: authoritarian regimes have destroyed liberal opposition; radical Islamists turn modernization and American culture into objects of resistance; economic development is weak; and demographic pressures are severe. American soft power confronts not simply poor public diplomacy but an unusually unreceptive political environment.

This helps explain why Nye never translates soft power into a convincing program for remaking the Middle East. He proposes exchanges, broadcasting, education, economic reform, civil society, indigenous intermediaries, and gradual political opening. These may improve conditions over time, but they cannot reliably produce specific political outcomes. "Democracy cannot be imposed by force," he writes—but neither does he show that it can be produced by attraction. Soft power may improve America's position; it does not solve the problem of transforming Arab political order.

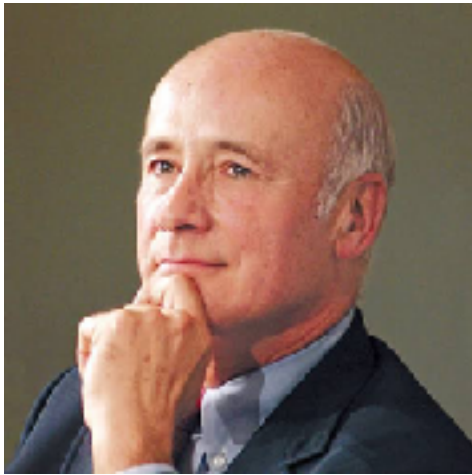
As the post-9/11 era unfolded, Nye became increasingly candid about this limitation. By the Arab Spring he warned against "grandiose visions" and stressed prudence and the limits of social engineering. By 2015 he predicted a "generation of turmoil." Democracy remained his preference, but a Singapore-like combination of openness and central authority seemed a more plausible intermediate outcome. His prescription for America was stark: "We can't [fix it]. We've got to contain it."

This is the liberal realism at the heart of Nye's position. Unlike China or Russia, the Middle East is not a principal center of global power. Disorder

there threatens important American interests—nonproliferation, counterterrorism, Israel, and regional stability—but the United States need not remake the region to preserve the global balance. It can protect essential interests from a less-forward position while local struggles work themselves out. Nye likens the region's situation to Europe's Thirty Years' War: some upheavals cannot be managed from outside and must largely run their course.

There is a final irony. In 2007, the theorist of soft power traveled to Libya through the Monitor Group and spent hours discussing with Muammar Qaddafi how Libya might increase its soft power. Nye wondered whether Qaddafi was genuinely substituting attraction for coercion. But the transaction worked both ways. A regime seeking rehabilitation gained prestige by attracting prominent Western intellectuals to Tripoli. The man who taught governments to appreciate soft power had himself become an instrument of Libyan soft power. The Middle East might resist American soft power, but its regimes could learn to project their own.

Explanatory notes to the readings appear from page 31.



Joseph S. Nye Jr. (1937–2025) was an American political scientist and one of the most prominent public intellectuals in international relations. Educated at Princeton, Oxford, and Harvard, he spent most of his career at Harvard, serving as dean of the Kennedy School from 1995 to 2004. He also moved between scholarship and government, serving as chairman of the National Intelligence Council and assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

Nye established his academic reputation with Robert Keohane in *Power and Interdependence* (1977), but his greatest public success came from rethinking American power. In *Bound to Lead* (1990), he introduced “soft power”—the ability to obtain desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion or payment. He developed the idea in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004) and later *The Future of Power* (2011).

Nye proved exceptionally adept at turning an academic concept into a global brand. “Soft power” was short, intuitive, and adaptable; “smart power,” his later formula for combining hard and soft power, extended its reach. He became a go-to intellectual spokesman for the proposition that military superiority alone could not secure American objectives. His prominence gave him unusual access to American and foreign leaders, and it grew as they adopted his terminology. Chinese president Hu Jintao, for example, publicly embraced soft power, and China’s foreign minister invited Nye to discuss how China might acquire more of it.

By combining academic stature, government experience, access to political leaders, and an exceptional talent for conceptual branding, Nye achieved something unusual for an international-relations theorist: “soft power” became part of the ordinary vocabulary of global politics, while Nye became its indispensable interpreter.



Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (2004, excerpts)

Of particular concern is the role of anti-Americanism in the Islamic world.... A bipartisan panel report issued in October 2003 stated, “Hostility toward America has reached shocking levels. What is required is not merely tactical adaptation, but strategic and radical transformation.” Moreover, the image of the United States has declined there more than elsewhere. In 2003, less than 15 percent of the public in Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Jordan, and less than 27 percent in Lebanon and Morocco, had a favorable opinion of the United States.

This is a matter of particular concern because some Islamist extremists are willing to use terror to force a return to what they portray as a purer, premodern version of their religion. In some areas, such as the Arab countries, anti-Americanism may be a cover for a more general inability to respond to modernity—witness the slow progress of economic growth and democratization as described in a recent report of the United Nations Development Programme, “Arab Human Development Report 2003.” Fouad Ajami, an American academic of Lebanese origin, is correct in saying that America will be resented because our burden is “to come bearing modernism to those who want it but who rail against it at the same time, to represent and embody so much of what the world yearns for and fears.” But he is wrong to conclude from this that “Americans need not worry about hearts and minds in foreign lands.” The situation he describes has been constant for a number of years, and thus cannot explain the recent downward trajectory of America’s reputation in economically successful Muslim countries like Malaysia. The failure of Arab countries to adjust to modernity cannot fully explain the changes in U.S. attractiveness. They are also related to unpopular U.S. policies regarding Iraq and the Israel-Palestine conflict.....

The Special Case of the Middle East

The Middle East presents a particular challenge for American soft power and public diplomacy. Not only was it the home of the terrorists who attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, but the region has not

adjusted well to modernization. Half the world's countries are democracies, yet none of the 22 Arab countries is democratic. Economic growth has been slow, approximately half the women are illiterate, and the region is not well integrated with the world economy. In 2003, the World Bank reported that annual income growth per head in the region averaged a mere .5 percent from 1985 to 2000, while military spending was the highest in the world at 6 percent of GDP. With a population over 300 million, the Arab countries export less to the world, excluding oil and gas, than does Finland. The number of scientists working in Arab countries is about one-third of the global average. There is an enormous "youth bulge" in the demographic tables, yet the region has inadequate opportunities for young people to find meaningful work. Forty-five percent of the population of the Arab world is now under the age of 14, and the population as a whole will double over the next quarter century. Unemployment hovers at 20 percent. At the same time, the Middle East is awash with modern communications, much of it with an anti-American slant....

During the Cold War, the United States' approach to the region was to foster stability, which would prevent the spread of Soviet influence, ensure the supply of oil for the world economy, and provide security for Israel, one of the rare democracies. The American strategy was management through autocratic leaders, and "Don't rock the boat." During the Reagan administration, the United States even supported Saddam Hussein as a counterbalance to the Islamic regime that had overthrown America's ally, the shah of Iran. According to Edward Walker, the president of the Middle East Institute who has served as ambassador to several countries in the region, "While we spoke of human rights, economic development, democracy and the rule of law, our policies and the distribution of our resources did not reflect our rhetoric. We neither challenged the governments in the region to change nor offered incentives to help stimulate change."

After 9/11, the Bush administration launched an ambitious new approach. Drawing on the analogy of the Cold War and the American role in the transformation of Europe, the administration decided that the United States should commit to a long-term transformation of the Middle East. The removal of Saddam Hussein was only a first step. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice argued that "much as a democratic Germany became a linchpin of a new Europe that is today whole, free and at peace, so a transformed Iraq can become a key element in a very different Middle East

in which the ideologies of hate will not flourish.” But the exercise of hard power in the four-week campaign that toppled Saddam Hussein was the easy part. Germany (and Japan) were postwar success stories, but both were relatively homogeneous societies with significant middle classes and no organized resistance to American occupation. Moreover, Iraq’s possession of oil is a mixed blessing, since few oil-based economies have proved hospitable for liberal democracy. And democratization after World War II took years and was greatly assisted by American soft power. The long-run strategy for the transformation of Iraq and the Middle East will not succeed without a similar role for American (and others’) soft power.

The Cold War analogy is useful in suggesting the need for a long-term strategy, but it can also mislead. Soft power depends on willing receivers, and the cultural differences between the United States and Europe were not as great as those between the United States and the Middle East. Thus Europe was more susceptible to American soft-power resources. On the other hand, cultural differences did not prevent democracy from taking root in Japan or South Korea, albeit with a four-decade lag in the latter case. And democracy works in other Muslim countries such as Turkey and Bangladesh. The cultural barriers are far from insurmountable.

Democracy is more than mere voting, which can lead to “one man, one vote, once” if done too hastily. Since the autocratic regimes in the Middle East have destroyed their liberal opposition, radical Islamists often represent the only alternative dissent in many countries. The radical Islamists feed on resistance to corrupt regimes, opposition to American policies, and popular fears of modernization. They portray liberal democracy as represented by corruption, sex, and violence, and American films and television sometimes reinforce that portrait. At the same time, modernization also produces education, jobs, more opportunities, and better health care. Fortunately, polls show that the majority of the populations in the region desire the benefits of trade, communications, and globalization. American technology is widely admired. Given this ambivalence among the moderates in the Arab cultures, there is still a chance of isolating the extremists.

Democracy cannot be imposed by force. The key to success will lie in policies that open regional economies, reduce bureaucratic controls, speed economic growth, improve educational systems, and encourage the types of gradual political changes that are taking place in small countries like

Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Morocco. The development of intellectuals, social groups, and eventually countries that demonstrate that liberal democracy can be consistent with local cultures could have beneficial effects similar to the ways that Japan and Korea demonstrated that democracy can be combined with indigenous values in Asia. But that takes time, as well as skillful application of American soft-power resources.

Soon after 9/11, many Americans were transfixed by the question “Why do they hate us?” But the answer was that many Arabs feared, misunderstood, and opposed American policies, but nonetheless admired some aspects of American culture. Moreover, they share many values such as family, religious belief, and desire for democracy. The grounds for soft power exist, but the world’s leading communications country has proved surprisingly maladroit in exploiting those opportunities. For example, a major effort to produce television advertisements that showed American Muslims being well treated at home had little effect. According to critics, the ground had not been well prepared by polls and focus groups, and many people in the region were more concerned with what they saw as the deficiencies of American policies rather than American domestic conditions....

Like all public diplomacy, effective public diplomacy in the region will have three dimensions. The United States will have to become more agile in the first dimension, quick response and explanation of current events.... The second dimension, development of a few strategic themes, will have to include better explanations of American policies in addition to branding America as a democratic nation. For example, the charge that American policies are indifferent to the destruction of Muslim lives can be addressed head-on by pointing to American interventions that saved Muslim lives in Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as assistance to Muslim countries to foster development and combat AIDS....

Most important, however, will be the development of a long-term strategy of cultural and educational exchanges that develop a richer and more open civil society in Middle Eastern countries. The most effective spokesmen for the United States are not Americans but indigenous surrogates who understand America’s virtues as well as our faults. A fascinating example of this is taking place right now between Los Angeles and Teheran as the Iranian diaspora has been broadcasting a privately sponsored television program into Iran to encourage reform in that country....

If the Soviet Union and Communism presented the most dangerous soft-power challenges to the United States in the Cold War era, today's greatest challenge comes from radical Islamist ideology and organizations. In particular, the fundamentalist Wahhabi sect, which originated on the Arabian peninsula in the eighteenth century, has been augmented by radical outgrowths of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which arose in Egypt in the 1920s. Ironically, Sayyid Qutb, a key intellectual figure for radical Islamists, was a Muslim Brother who lived for a short time in the United States and was disgusted by what he considered the meaninglessness of American life. As noted before, culture that is attractive to many can be repulsive to some.

The rise of radical Islamism received a good deal of state help from Saudi Arabia, where the ruling family agreed to propagate Wahhabism as a means of propitiating the clerics.... Ironically, the soft power of Wahhabism has not proved to be a resource that the Saudi government could control or use to obtain favorable outcomes. Instead, it has been like a sorcerer's apprentice that has come back to bedevil its original creator. The radicals regard the royal family as corrupt and in league with Western infidels. They aim to overthrow or disrupt the government, and launched terrorist attacks in Riyadh in 2003. The royal family's bargain with the Wahhabist clerics has backfired because the soft power of Islamic radicalism has flowed in the direction of Osama bin Laden and his goal of overthrowing the Saudi government, not in the direction of making the Saudi government more secure....

Because the war on terrorism involves a civil war between radicals and moderates within Islamic civilization, the soft power of the Islamists is a disturbing symptom and a warning of the need for Americans and others to find better ways of projecting soft power to strengthen the moderates. Moderate churches and synagogues can play a role with moderate Muslims. In all three religions the prophet Abraham is a revered figure, and so the idea of an Abrahamic dialogue among Muslims, Christians, and Jews may be an example of the ways that nongovernmental actors can exercise their soft power and create bridges of understanding.



The Decline of America's Soft Power (2004, excerpt)

Some hard-line skeptics might counter that, whatever its merits, soft power has little importance in the current war against terrorism; after all, Osama bin Laden and his followers are repelled, not attracted, by American culture and values. But this claim ignores the real metric of success in the current war, articulated in Rumsfeld's now-famous memo that was leaked in February 2003: "Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?"

The current struggle against Islamist terrorism is not a clash of civilizations; it is a contest closely tied to the civil war raging within Islamic civilization between moderates and extremists. The United States and its allies will win only if they adopt policies that appeal to those moderates and use public diplomacy effectively to communicate that appeal. Yet the world's only superpower, and the leader in the information revolution, spends as little on public diplomacy as does France or the United Kingdom—and is all too often outgunned in the propaganda war by fundamentalists hiding in caves.

LOST SAVINGS

With the end of the Cold War, soft power seemed expendable, and Americans became more interested in saving money than in investing in soft power. Between 1989 and 1999, the budget of the United States Information Agency (USIA) decreased ten percent; resources for its mission in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, were cut in half. By the time it was taken over by the State Department at the end of the decade, USIA had only 6,715 employees (compared to 12,000 at its peak in the mid-1960s). During the Cold War, radio broadcasts funded by Washington reached half the Soviet population and 70 to 80 percent of the population in Eastern Europe every week; on the eve of the September 11 attacks, a mere two percent of Arabs listened to the Voice of America (VOA). The annual number of academic and cultural exchanges, meanwhile, dropped from 45,000 in 1995 to 29,000 in 2001. Soft power had become so identified with fighting the Cold War that few Americans

noticed that, with the advent of the information revolution, soft power was becoming more important, not less.

It took the September 11 attacks to remind the United States of this fact. But although Washington has rediscovered the need for public diplomacy, it has failed to master the complexities of wielding soft power in an information age. Some people in government now concede that the abolition of USIA was a mistake, but there is no consensus on whether to recreate it or to reorganize its functions, which were dispersed within the State Department after the Clinton administration gave in to the demands of Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). The board that oversees the VOA, along with a number of specialized radio stations, has taken some useful steps—such as the establishment of Radio Sawa to broadcast in Arabic, Radio Farda to broadcast in Farsi, and the Arabic-language TV station Al Hurra. The White House has created its own Office of Global Communications. But much more is needed, especially in the Middle East.

Autocratic regimes in the Middle East have eradicated their liberal opposition, and radical Islamists are in most cases the only dissenters left. They feed on anger toward corrupt regimes, opposition to U.S. policies, and popular fears of modernization. Liberal democracy, as they portray it, is full of corruption, sex, and violence—an impression reinforced by American movies and television and often exacerbated by the extreme statements of some especially virulent Christian preachers in the United States.

Nonetheless, the situation is not hopeless. Although modernization and American values can be disruptive, they also bring education, jobs, better health care, and a range of new opportunities. Indeed, polls show that much of the Middle East craves the benefits of trade, globalization, and improved communications. American technology is widely admired, and American culture is often more attractive than U.S. policies. Given such widespread (albeit ambivalent) moderate views, there is still a chance of isolating the extremists.

Democracy, however, cannot be imposed by force. The outcome in Iraq will be of crucial importance, but success will also depend on policies that open regional economies, reduce bureaucratic controls, speed economic growth, improve educational systems, and encourage the types of gradual political changes currently taking place in small countries such as Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Morocco. The development of intellectuals, social groups, and,

eventually, countries that show that liberal democracy is not inconsistent with Muslim culture will have a beneficial effect like that of Japan and South Korea, which showed that democracy could coexist with indigenous Asian values. But this demonstration effect will take time—and the skillful deployment of soft-power resources by the United States in concert with other democracies, nongovernmental organizations, and the United Nations.

FIRST RESPONDERS

In the wake of September 11, Americans were transfixed by the question “Why do they hate us?” But many in the Middle East do not hate the United States. As polls consistently show, many fear, misunderstand, and oppose U.S. policies, but they nonetheless admire certain American values and aspects of American culture. The world’s leader in communications, however, has been inept at recognizing and exploiting such opportunities.

In 2003, a bipartisan advisory group on public diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim world found that the United States was spending only \$150 million on public diplomacy in majority-Muslim countries, including \$25 million on outreach programs. In the advisory group’s words, “to say that financial resources are inadequate to the task is a gross understatement.” They recommended appointing a new White House director of public diplomacy, building libraries and information centers, translating more Western books into Arabic, increasing the number of scholarships and visiting fellowships, and training more Arabic speakers and public relations specialists.

The development of effective public diplomacy must include strategies for the short, medium, and long terms. In the short term, the United States will have to become more agile in responding to and explaining current events. New broadcasting units such as Radio Sawa, which intersperses news with popular music, is a step in the right direction, but Americans must also learn to work more effectively with Arab media outlets such as Aljazeera.

In the medium term, U.S. policy makers will have to develop a few key strategic themes in order to better explain U.S. policies and “brand” the United States as a democratic nation. The charge that U.S. policies are indifferent to the destruction of Muslim lives, for example, can be countered by pointing to U.S. interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo that saved Muslim lives, and to assistance to Muslim countries for fostering development and combating AIDS. As Assistant Secretary of State for Near

Eastern Affairs William Burns has pointed out, democratic change must be embedded in “a wider positive agenda for the region, alongside rebuilding Iraq, achieving the president’s two-state vision for Israelis and Palestinians, and modernizing Arab economies.”

Most important will be a long-term strategy, built around cultural and educational exchanges, to develop a richer, more open civil society in Middle Eastern countries. To this end, the most effective spokespeople are not Americans but indigenous surrogates who understand American virtues and faults. Corporations, foundations, universities, and other nongovernmental organizations—as well as governments—can all help promote the development of open civil society. Corporations can offer technology to modernize educational systems. Universities can establish more exchange programs for students and faculty. Foundations can support institutions of American studies and programs to enhance the professionalism of journalists. Governments can support the teaching of English and finance student exchanges.

In short, there are many strands to an effective long-term strategy for creating soft-power resources and the conditions for democracy. Of course, even the best advertising cannot sell an unpopular product: a communications strategy will not work if it cuts against the grain of policy. Public diplomacy will not be effective unless the style and substance of U.S. policies are consistent with a broader democratic message.



Imperial Understretch (2003, excerpt)

The new unilateralists who openly welcome the idea of an American empire mistake the underlying nature of American public opinion. Even if the transformation of undemocratic regimes in the Middle East would indeed reduce some of the sources of Islamic terrorism, the question remains whether the American public will tolerate an imperial role. Neoconservative writers such as Max Boot argue that the United States should provide troubled countries with “the sort of enlightened foreign administration once provided by self-confident Englishmen in jodhpurs and pith helmets,” but as the British historian Niall Ferguson points out, modern

America differs from nineteenth-century Britain in its chronically short attention span.

Some say the United States is already an empire and it is just a matter of recognizing reality, but they mistake the politics of primacy for those of empire. The United States may be more powerful compared to other countries than the United Kingdom was at its imperial peak, but it has less control over what occurs inside other countries than the United Kingdom did when it ruled a quarter of the globe. For example, Kenya's schools, taxes, laws, and elections—not to mention external relations—were controlled by British officials. The United States has no such control over any country today. Washington could not even get the votes of Mexico City and Santiago for a second Security Council resolution. Devotees of the new imperialism argue that such analysis is too literal, that “empire” is intended merely as a metaphor. But this “metaphor” implies a control from Washington that is unrealistic and reinforces the prevailing temptations of unilateralism.

Despite its natal ideology of anti-imperialism, the United States has intervened and governed countries in Central America and the Caribbean, as well as the Philippines. But Americans have never felt comfortable as imperialists, and only a small number of cases led directly to the establishment of democracies. American empire is not limited by “imperial overstretch” in the sense of costing an unsustainable portion of U.S. gross domestic product. Indeed, the United States devoted a much higher percentage of GDP to the military budget during the Cold War than it does today. The overstretch will come from having to police more peripheral countries than public opinion will accept. Even after the second Gulf War, polls show little taste for empire and no public inclination toward invading Syria and Iran. Instead, the American public continues to say that it favors multilateralism and using the UN.

In fact, the problem of creating an American empire might better be termed “imperial understretch.” Neither the public nor Congress has proved willing to invest seriously in the instruments of nation building and governance, as opposed to military force. The entire allotment for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development is only 1 percent of the federal budget. The United States spends nearly 16 times as much on its military, and there is little indication of change to come in this era of tax cuts and budget deficits. The U.S. military is designed for fighting rather

than police work, and the Pentagon has cut back on training for peacekeeping operations. In practice, the coalition of neo-Wilsonians and Jacksonians may divide over this issue. The former will espouse a prolonged U.S. presence to produce democracy in the Middle East, whereas the latter, who tend to eschew “nation building,” have designed a military that is better suited to kick down the door, beat up a dictator, and go home than to stay for the harder work of building a democratic polity.

Among a number of possible futures for Iraq are three scenarios that deserve some elaboration. The first is the example of Japan or Germany in 1945, in which the United States stays for seven years and leaves behind a friendly democracy. This would be the preferred outcome, but it is worth remembering that Germany and Japan were ethnically homogeneous societies, ones that also did not produce any terrorist responses to the presence of U.S. troops and could boast significant middle classes that had already experienced democracy in the 1920s. A second scenario is akin to that of Ronald Reagan in Lebanon or Bill Clinton in Somalia, where some of the people who cheered U.S. entry wound up protesting its presence six months later. In this scenario, terrorists kill U.S. soldiers, and the American public reacts by saying, “Saddam is gone, Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, they don’t want our democracy, let’s pull out.” If this scenario left Iraq in conflict, dictatorship, or theocracy, it would undercut the major post hoc legitimization for the war. The third scenario would be reminiscent of Bosnia or Kosovo. The United States would entice NATO allies and other countries to help in the policing and reconstruction of Iraq, a UN resolution would bless the force, and an international administrator would help to legitimize decisions. The process would be long and frustrating, but it would reduce the prominence of the United States as a target for anti-imperialists and would probably best ensure that America did not pull out prematurely. Ironically, the neo-Wilsonians of the new unilateralist coalition might have to make common cause with the multilateral realists to achieve their objectives. They might find that the world’s only superpower can’t go it alone after all.

Conservative Critique: Kenneth Adelman



Kenneth L. Adelman (b. 1946) is an American foreign-policy official, writer, and conservative commentator best known for his service in the Reagan administration. After earlier posts in the Defense Department, he became deputy U.S. representative to the United Nations under Jeane

Kirkpatrick and, from 1983 to 1987, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In that role he became a prominent defender of Reagan's approach to the Soviet Union and accompanied the president to his summits with Mikhail Gorbachev. Adelman subsequently remained active in Washington policy debates as an author and commentator on national security. A strong supporter of the 2003 Iraq War, he later became sharply critical of its execution. In the debate over Joseph Nye's "soft power," Adelman represented a characteristically skeptical conservative position, questioning whether foreign aid, cultural attraction, and other instruments labeled soft power could substitute for the effective exercise of American power.

Adelman: Not-So-Smart Power (2011)

Joseph Nye is as gifted at branding as he is at thinking, teaching, and serving the public. He turned "soft power" (essential to "smart power") into a golden brand. In Washington, you know something has reached gold when the secretary of state wraps a "strategy" around it, as when Hillary Clinton, days before taking office, announced a "smart power" strategy with regard to the Middle East at her confirmation hearing on Jan. 13, 2009. Even higher is when a full-blown bipartisan commission is formed, as in the "Smart Power Commission" that Nye co-chaired back in 2007.

It has apparently now ascended high enough to provoke a war against it. So Nye contends in his recent article for *Foreign Policy*, "The War on Soft Power."

If there's indeed a war on soft power, allow me to fire another salvo. There's no question that important aspects of U.S. foreign policy—development aid, exchange programs, diplomacy—are “soft.” But are they a part of “power”? If not, are they all that “smart”?

Cutting the budgets of the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) does “serious damage to U.S. foreign policy” and can gravely “dent ... the United States' ability to positively influence events abroad,” wrote Nye in his article. “The result is a foreign policy that rests on a defense giant and a number of pygmy departments.”

Sounds right, even profound. But the deeper you consider it, the shallower it gets.

Early in 1981, as a new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, I launched a computer tabulation to show the correlation between others' receipt of U.S. foreign aid and their foreign-policy stances. I wanted to know: Did all that money buy America any love? The Neanderthal-era computer spewed its result: Nope.

Huge recipients of U.S. foreign aid—Egypt, Pakistan, and the like—voted no more in tune with American values than similar countries that received no, or less, U.S. foreign aid. Instead, their votes correlated closely with those of Cuba, which wasn't a big foreign-aid donor.

That finding, surprising at the time, remains true. Four of the largest U.S. foreign-aid recipients today—Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—all take contrary positions on issues of critical importance to the White House. South Vietnam once got gobs—gobs upon gobs—of U.S. foreign aid. That didn't help much. Likewise with Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Zaire (now the “Democratic” Republic of the Congo), and other “friendly” (read: graciously willing to take U.S. money) countries.

The conclusion seems clear: The relationship between “the United States' ability to positively influence events abroad,” as Nye puts it, and the amount of U.S. foreign aid a country receives is unclear at best. For decades now, the United States has been the No. 1 foreign-aid donor—it has given the most money to poor countries—so it can't move up any on that scale. But this hasn't translated in making America the most popular or most influential country around the world. Quite the contrary.

Even the all-time No. 1 recipient of U.S. aid, Israel, rebuffs Washington constantly, on momentous issues of peace. Moreover, Israeli polls show the lowest approval for the U.S. president of nearly anywhere in the world.

Hence it's hard to see what a "dent" in "the United States' ability to positively influence events abroad" would look like if Republicans in Congress did slice these countries' foreign aid, as Joe Nye dreads. It might look like, well, much like it does today. Put bluntly, this aspect of soft power—foreign aid, by far the biggest in dollar terms, amounting to some \$30 billion a year—may not constitute much power at all.

The reason has to do with peculiar aspects of human nature. Giving someone a gift generates initial gratitude (often along with quiet gripes about why it wasn't bigger). The second time, the gift generates less gratitude (and more such griping). By the third iteration, it has become an entitlement. The slightest decline engenders resentment, downing out any lingering gratitude.

But to soft-power advocates, this misses the point. Economic development aid isn't about gratitude. It's about, basically, economic development.

Does it work, though? It isn't clear that the main recipients of U.S. foreign aid over the past 50 years—again, the likes of South Vietnam, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan—developed all that much. And what development may have happened there could be due to other factors.

Traditional foreign aid has the fatal flaw of going to, or through, governments. That spurs corruption; see big-time African aid recipient Zaire, with Mobutu Sese Seko leaving office a Warren Buffett-sized billionaire. Plus, we all know that government doesn't create economic wealth or prosperity. Private businesses do, even in a strong-government country like South Korea in the 1970s and China today. Foreign aid raises governments' role in a realm where it should generally be lowered.

And what of the other elements of soft power? Like Nye, I've long supported exchange programs. But I began wondering about it after learning that the chief theorist for radical Islam, the Taliban, al Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden—Sayyid Qutb—was an exchange student at Colorado State College of Education. He seems to have gone to Greeley, Colorado

(of all places!) gentle and come out a flaming extremist. Likewise for the influential African radical theorist and political model, Kwame Nkrumah: He was an exchange student at Lincoln University, later to do enormous damage to African approaches to leadership and economic development by blaming the continent's ills on colonialism and capitalism. And Mohamed Atta was an exchange student in Germany before masterminding and leading the 9/11 attacks on the United States. Granted, these may be rare exceptions, but they do cast doubt about the value of such exchanges.

The truth is that many effective exchange programs spring from hard power budgets, not those of soft power. During those recent dicey days in Egypt, we read daily reports of military-to-military, U.S.-to-Egyptian contacts to keep the situation there peaceful while easing President Hosni Mubarak out. Top Pentagon leaders—from the defense secretary to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on down the line—were in touch daily with their counterparts, colleagues, and classmates from U.S. military academies, urging them to act responsibly. We don't know what impact those contacts had on the Egyptian military brass's decision to send Mubarak packing, but we do know it ended in success—a model of “the United States' ability to positively influence events abroad,” as Nye would put it.

I didn't hear of similar activities from soft-power agencies—past diplomats, USAID directors, agricultural-aid types—with their Egyptian counterparts. The only diplomatic initiative that got any public attention involved the gifted former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Frank Wisner, who was suddenly dispatched to Cairo at Clinton's request. But he, or she, made a real hash of it, for just as Obama had finally realized that Mubarak must go, Wisner publicly announced that Mubarak must stay—at least for a while, to provide stability in any transition. Not exactly a case study in smart power.

To his credit, even Nye admits that the line between soft and hard power is a blurry one, though he generally equates the former with the State Department and USAID budgets and the latter with the Pentagon. Yet the distinction breaks down pretty quickly, especially when you consider that many U.S. military activities have boosted America's reputation and enhanced its influence abroad—more so than any diplomatic or U.S. foreign-aid event. The U.S. Navy's quick, effective reaction to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, its timely assistance to Cyclone Nargis in Burma, its relief from awful flooding in Pakistan, and now its efforts in Japan have all been superb. What case studies from soft-power budgets that Joe Nye so

desperately wants maintained could he use in his Kennedy School of Government classes to match these from the hard-power Pentagon budget?

Moreover, America's prime soft-power agency may be too soft to be effective. Let's recall: The State Department agreed to the Mubarak government's request for its approval before any U.S. democracy programs for Egypt got launched. To put it simply, the soft-power agency consented that anti-dictator programs appropriated by the U.S. Congress first get approved by that dictator.

And recent *Washington Post* editorials have complained about the State Department being unable, or unwilling, to spend allocated funds on an effective freedom agenda. Its Feb. 5, 2011, editorial, for instance, included this astonishing fact: "Congress allocated \$30 million in the fiscal 2010 budget for the State Department to fund Internet freedom. But 16 months later, none of the funds have been allocated." What's not to like in such a mission?

The State Department has been reluctant, if not resistant, in helping modern-day freedom fighters in Iran, Libya, and Syria. This seems a no-brainer, as they're all places of need. There should be none of the usual fears of offending the host government, because the governments of these three countries couldn't be any more hostile to the United States or more ferocious toward their own people than they are now.

Besides resting on soft assumptions, emphasis on soft power may lead to soft thinking. Take Clinton's hallmark "three Ds" of defense, diplomacy, and development. While Americans do defense and diplomacy, they don't do development well. The United States can't be held responsible for another country doing what's needed to develop. By now, there's a checklist of how countries can go from poverty to prosperity—low taxes, private property protected by law, restrained and limited government, solid currency, modern infrastructure, and attacks on corruption. But the State Department simply can't do much to ensure these elements are done well.

I wish to end on a positive note, especially because Joseph Nye is such a fine person. He's contributed enormously to the United States, always asking hard questions on conventional thinking. He surely would welcome the same on today's fashionable thinking.

All this may boil down to a big difference. I've come to believe that liberals focus primarily on intentions, while conservatives focus more on results. No doubt the soft-power goals of the State Department and USAID on diplomacy, foreign aid, exchange programs, and the like seem wonderful. They're peaceful, caring, intercultural, and so on. They signal the right intentions.

The hard-power association with Pentagon budgets, weapons, and soldiers seems quite contrary. They signal the wrong intentions. But looking at the actual results of soft power versus hard power may yield results that make today's fashionable thinking seem soft, if not altogether squishy.



Nye in Libya: Tripoli Diarist: Big Tent (2007)

Life can be surreal at times. Earlier this year, I spent nearly three hours in a tent in Tripoli, sitting by a fire and drinking tea. The first surreal thing about this experience was the setting: a tent located in a grassy park where horses, camels, and goats grazed, walled off by a series of gates from the city that surrounded them. The second was the backdrop: the ruins of a building U.S. warplanes had bombed in 1986. The third was the identity of my host: Libya's longtime ruler, Muammar Qaddafi—the very man many believe those planes were trying to kill.

I was in Libya at the invitation of the Monitor Group, a consulting company that is helping Libya open itself to the global economy. As part of that process, Monitor had enlisted a variety of Western experts to speak with government officials, including Qaddafi himself. Qaddafi has long been seen as a bad boy in the West. As an autocrat, he has shown little respect for human rights, and, as a sponsor of terrorism, he has been responsible for many deaths. Indeed, a Libyan bombing in Berlin was the prelude to the U.S. attack in 1986.

Yet, in recent years, Qaddafi has appeared to be changing. He still wants to project Libyan power, but he is going about it differently than in decades past. Where once he had tried to bully and even overthrow governments to his south, now he is hosting peace talks on Darfur. Where once he sought weapons of mass destruction, now he has abandoned his nuclear program.

These moves have paid off: A decade ago Libya was subject to U.N. Security Council sanctions; recently, the United States raised no objection to Libya being seated on the Security Council. Qaddafi, in other words, seems to have become interested in soft power—the art of projecting influence through attraction rather than coercion. Three years ago, I wrote a book called *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, and I have written often about the subject over the years. Was that why Qaddafi wanted to talk to me? I could not be sure, but the possibility did raise other questions. How serious was Qaddafi about exercising soft power? And just

how different was this new Qaddafi—with his preference for diplomacy over weapons—from the old?

On a cool February morning, a car whisked me to a compound in the middle of Tripoli that was fortified with multiple layers of green metal gates. Inside the gates stood several large tents. Qaddafi greeted me at the entrance to one. He wore his trademark hat as well as two cloaks—an outer black embroidered one, and a plain tan one underneath. He was both tall and handsome in a craggy sort of way. He moved with ease and spoke softly. Occasionally, he used English, but he was clearly more comfortable speaking Arabic with an interpreter. We sat in plastic chairs by a table on which five of my books were spread out—including *Soft Power*.

Sure enough, a half hour into our conversation, he asked how Libya might increase its soft power on the world stage. I said there were several ways to cultivate a relationship with the United States. First, Americans appreciate his condemnation of Al Qaeda. Second, we are interested in his efforts to reform Libya economically and politically. Third, we have a common interest in developing energy resources outside the Persian Gulf. But any long-term relationship with the United States, I said, has to include respect for human rights. He replied with a long defense of human rights in Libya and said that economic rights preceded political rights. The United States, he said, was hypocritical in its advocacy of human rights.

Qaddafi, it turned out, was not just interested in discussing his own soft power; he also wanted to discuss America's. He advised us to get out of Iraq promptly because our presence there was seen as colonial and was hurting us badly in the region. I said that, although Iraq had undercut American soft power, I believed that the openness of our system would allow us to make corrections, and some day we would recover our soft power as we had after Vietnam. Qaddafi said that the strength of the United States was the country's diversity but that he thought the president could not be controlled. I replied that, in the climate of fear following September 11, we had made some mistakes, but that a free press, an independent judiciary, and congressional elections served as checks on the president. Thanks to them, I said, U.S. policies could change.

To be sure, the conversation was hardly limited to international relations. Qaddafi also wanted to talk about direct democracy, a way of governing that he sees as a solution to the age-old problem of how to distribute and

exercise power. This, he said, was the heart of *The Green Book*, which he had written three decades ago, after his revolution overthrew the Libyan monarchy. Later in the conversation, he expanded on this theme: Historically, he said, humans have evolved from absolute kings to elected presidents—who only represent about half the people—to direct democracy for all citizens. Achieving this third phase, he said, was his goal for Libya.

Has Qaddafi really changed? It is difficult to know for sure. He has always been a protean figure—part Bedouin libertarian, part revolutionary socialist—and, obviously, his future actions will speak louder than any current words. But there is no doubt that he acts differently on the world stage today than he did in decades past. And the fact that he took so much time to discuss ideas—including soft power—with a visiting professor suggests that he is actively seeking a new strategy.

One thing about Qaddafi, however, has not changed: Even as he takes a softer approach to the exercise of power abroad, he remains the dominant figure at home. At the end of our meeting, Qaddafi signed a copy of *The Green Book* for me. That was a good thing, because when I arrived at the airport and officials told me I had failed to have my hotel stamp the visa in my passport, I pulled out my copy of *The Green Book* and showed them Qaddafi's signature. They inspected it, then waved me through. That was the final surreal moment.



Joseph Nye Responds to Criticism of His TNR Article on Qaddafi (2011)

In February 2007, I was invited by a former student who was working for Monitor Group to go to Libya to give a speech on globalization, meet with government officials, and probably meet with Qaddafi. My colleague Bob Putnam had recently done so and found it interesting. Monitor offered to pay a consulting fee plus expenses, and as someone who writes on international politics and leaders, I was curious to see what Qaddafi was like. Bad leaders are as interesting a topic for research as good leaders, and I later used some of the interview material in my book on leadership. I spent several hours with him, which I described as surreal, but as factually as possible in an article in the December 10, 2007 issue of TNR.

It is important to emphasize that I disclosed my connection with the Monitor Group when I wrote the article. The article says, “I was in Libya at the invitation of the Monitor Group, a consulting company that is helping Libya open itself to the global economy.” The clear inference was that I was paid a fee for this activity. When Mother Jones asked *The New Republic* if I had disclosed that Monitor had paid me as a consultant, TNR maintained that I had not.

But this was mistaken. I dug out the first draft I sent to TNR, and it says clearly, “I was in Libya at the invitation of a former Harvard colleague who works for the Monitor Group, a consulting company which has undertaken to help Libya open itself to the global economy. Part of that process is meeting with a variety of Western experts whom Monitor hires as consultants.” The final sentence of this disclosure was dropped by the editors at TNR. I have sent the original to both TNR and *Mother Jones* and asked for a retraction of the false statement that I did not alert them.

As for the contents of the article, it is hardly a puff piece. Since this was a period when Qaddafi had given up his nuclear program, was inviting American government officials to Libya, and appeared to be changing his international strategy, I thought my impressions were worth reporting. I initiated the article, and it was not at the behest of Monitor, whose staff were somewhat skeptical of the idea. As anyone who reads the article will see, I emphasized that Qaddafi seemed to be changing his foreign policy, but I also referred to him as an autocrat with little respect for human rights and with a record of sponsoring terrorism. The article reports that I told him that if he wanted improved relations with the U.S., he would have to improve his record on human rights. (TNR edited out the statement in my original draft that reported I told Qaddafi he should release a group of Bulgarian nurses being held on false charges at that time.) I asked in the article if Qaddafi had really changed, and concluded that, while it was difficult to know for sure, “One thing about Qaddafi, however, has not changed: Even as he takes a softer approach to the exercise of power abroad, he remains a domineering figure at home.”

My second visit was in October 2008 when Monitor asked me to join a group to meet with Qaddafi to explain the world financial crisis. The meeting lasted a few hours. I doubt we were very successful, and there seemed nothing worthy to report.

A separate issue, which involved no compensation, was a request by a friend to comment on the theoretical chapter of Seif Qaddafi's LSE thesis that mentioned soft power. I frequently agree to such requests. I found the chapter intelligent as were Seif's responses to my criticisms. He thanks me in the preface, but David Held at LSE was his supervisor. I gather from the press that questions have been raised at LSE about Seif's authorship of the thesis, but I do not know anything about that since I only commented on one chapter....

At no time have I supported the Qaddafi regime, and I am on record as hoping for its swift overthrow.

The New Republic responds:

Joseph Nye is correct about the disclosure. While the published piece explained that he had visited Libya through Monitor and that Monitor was working for the Libyan government, the second sentence of the disclosure was edited out of the piece, which it should not have been. We regret the error.



Syria: Grandiose Visions Can Pose Danger (2013)

Barack Obama has been pilloried for his cautious response to the Arab revolutions. One critic writing in *The Washington Post* calls him “a president in full flight.” Many urge the president to make a big bet in favor of democracy in the region. When the uprisings known as the Arab Spring first began, some analysts were optimistic about the prospects for democracy, but the revolutions should be viewed in terms of decades, not seasons. Few observers in Paris in 1789 would have predicted that a Corsican corporal would lead French forces to the banks of the Nile within a decade. And interventions in the French Revolution by great powers such as Austria and Prussia fanned, rather than extinguished, the nationalist flames....

Big bets in foreign policy should have at least a reasonable prospect of success. My research of 20th-century American history has found that transformational foreign policy presidents who made big bets were not better in ethics or effectiveness....

The big problem in foreign policy is the complexity of context. One has to understand not only international and transnational systems but also the intricacies of domestic politics in multiple societies. This complexity gives special relevance to Aristotle's virtue of prudence — avoiding excess or deficiency. We live in a world of diverse cultures and know very little about social engineering and how to “build nations.” That is particularly true with regard to revolutions.

When we cannot be sure how to improve the world, prudence becomes an important virtue, and grandiose visions can pose a grave danger. This is sometimes forgotten by those who want Obama to place bigger bets in the revolutions of today's Middle East. It is one thing to try to nudge events at the margins and assert our values in the long term; it is another to think we can shape revolutions we do not fully understand. There is a difference between a limited punishment of Syria for breaking an international taboo on the use of chemical weapons and becoming involved in a civil war. In foreign policy, as in medicine, it is important to first do no harm. Bush 41, who lacked the ability to articulate a vision but was able to steer through crises, turned out to be a better leader than his son, who had a powerful vision but little contextual intelligence about the region he tried to reshape.

In trying to explain the role of secretary of state, George Shultz once compared it to gardening: “the constant nurturing of a complex array of actors, interests and goals.” One of his successors, Condoleezza Rice, called for a “transformational diplomacy.” There is a role for both, depending on the context, but we should avoid the common mistake of celebrating the transformational landscape architect. In reacting to what may turn out to be a decade of Arab revolutions, the better leader is a careful gardener.



Generation of Turmoil (2015 interview, excerpt)

Charlie Rose: We're looking at a very difficult circumstance in Iraq today —with ISIS taking over, with the problem that the Iraq militia, all Shia, Anbar Province is primarily Sunni, ISIS is Sunni. And how do you pull that off and get rid of ISIS without angering the Sunnis in Anbar Province because of the history of their own victimization?

Joseph Nye: I think the Middle East is in for a generation of turmoil. You have three different revolutions going on breaking the old Ottoman state boundaries. You've got the arrested development that describes the Arab Human Development Report. And you've got the Sunni-Shia schism which has been exacerbated by the post-Iraq invasion. And those are going to go on for 20 years.

Charlie Rose: And what will be the model of government that will be most effective?

Joseph Nye: Well, I think we're going to have to let them solve that for themselves. What we can't do is go in there and turn Iraq into a democracy. What we're going to have to do—

Charlie Rose: No, no. I wouldn't even ask who should do it. I'm asking what ought to be the most appropriate model—is it state capitalism, as the Chinese might suggest.

Joseph Nye: If I would indulge my preferences it will be some day democratic, but to get there I suppose you're going to have to go through something more like a Singapore model where you have some degree of openness but with some—

Charlie Rose: Some degree of central authority.

Joseph Nye: —some central authority. But they'll be lucky if they could get that. I think it's more likely they're going to have a problem of chaos coming out of these revolutions, and the job for us is not to think we can fix it. We can't. We've got to contain it. We're going to have to use various instruments, hard and soft power, to try to protect our interests, which include nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, protection of Israel and so forth. But the idea that we're going to fix it, I don't think it's going to happen in 20 years.

Charlie Rose: Can we contain Iran if it has a nuclear weapon?

Joseph Nye: I hope there will not be an Iranian nuclear weapon, and that's a lot of what this negotiation is about right now.

Charlie Rose: Do you support the framework that exists today?

Joseph Nye: I do. I think it's the best option we have on the table.

Charlie Rose: Because the other option's almost nothing. More so than you have complete confidence in terms of both phasing out the sanctions rather than eliminating all the sanctions at once because there may be some questions about how invasive they will allow the inspections to be?

Joseph Nye: Well, I think if you—if you ask can we get a deal which gives us more security than no deal, I think the answer is yes. But is it a perfect deal and will we be absolutely secure? No—

Charlie Rose: You know Washington. Tell me what you think is in the President's mind. Does he believe that this deal is important, among other reasons—and you know John Kerry well—this deal is important because the alternative is not good? And because it's not perfect but somehow it may give us a chance to kick the ball down the can—down the road, you know, and hope that that regime may change and hope that if you can put a cap on where they are now, they won't be able to go or won't make the final step?

Joseph Nye: That sounds pretty close to what I would think is a reasonable way of looking at it.

Charlie Rose: How would you edit and how would you change it?

Joseph Nye: I think you're going to have to be able to have very tight monitoring—the International Atomic Energy Agency able to go in there and make sure you see what's happening so that you have enough of a warning period, the proverbial one year—that you can mobilize action if something goes wrong. And I think that question of when you reduce the sanctions and keep the monitoring, how you make sure that there is an equation between those two. That will be crucial.

Charlie Rose: What about Syria? We've been talking a lot about Syria here at this table. Things don't look good there, you know.

Joseph Nye: Well, I think the Syrian situation is probably one that's going to have to be resolved by some sort of political deal. You're going to have

to look at a situation where Syria is—I don't think it's going to be solved just by battle alone. And I certainly don't think it's going to be solved by Americans going in—whether the troops that we support can make a difference or not, open question.

Charlie Rose: Is it really an open question?

Joseph Nye: I don't think—in the time horizons we're thinking about, the next two or three years, it's not going to happen. So in having those—

Charlie Rose: So you hope for a political solution. You hope the Russians or the Iranians or the people who back them will somehow inveigh against Assad so he'll either be forced to leave or somebody else—

Joseph Nye: Probably as good as you can get in the short two or three years.



Snippet: Thirty Years' War (2015, interview)

I have a view that the Middle East is going through the equivalent of Europe's Thirty Years' War, that you're seeing religious divisions, state divisions, non-state groups all battling. And essentially, in that kind of a situation, there's going to be a lot of fluidity in terms of what alliances—temporary coalitions are going to happen. We're not going to be able to run that any more than you could run the French Revolution, to switch metaphors, in the period after 1789. And it takes two or three decades for these things to work themselves through. So will we be involved with one group and then another group and the enemy of my enemy and so forth? I think yes.

Explanatory Notes

p. 5 — Arab Human Development Report 2003. One of a series of influential UNDP reports written by Arab scholars. The reports attributed the region's poor development performance to deficits in freedom, knowledge, and women's empowerment and became frequently cited evidence in post-9/11 arguments for Arab political reform.

p. 6 — “youth bulge.” Demographic term for an unusually large proportion of adolescents and young adults. In post-9/11 policy literature, the combination of a youth bulge, unemployment, and authoritarian politics was often treated as a potential source of instability and radicalization.

p. 6 — Edward Walker. Career U.S. diplomat who served as ambassador to Israel, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates and later headed the Middle East Institute. Nye cites him as an insider critic of the traditional American preference for regional stability over political reform.

p. 7 — oil and democracy. Nye is alluding to the “resource curse” or “rentier-state” argument: governments deriving large revenues from oil can finance themselves without heavily taxing citizens, weakening pressures for political representation and accountability.

p. 7 — “one man, one vote, once.” Post-Cold War warning that Islamist movements might use democratic elections to gain power and then abolish democracy. The phrase became especially associated with Western anxieties following the electoral success of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in 1991–92.

p. 8 — Iranian diaspora broadcasting. Satellite television and radio produced by Iranian expatriates, especially in Los Angeles, became an important alternative source of information and popular culture inside Iran despite government efforts to restrict reception.

p. 9 — Wahhabism. Reformist Sunni movement originating with Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in eighteenth-century Arabia and historically allied with the Saudi ruling family. Nye uses Saudi support for its international propagation as an example of soft power escaping the control of the state that helped disseminate it.

p. 9 — Sayyid Qutb. Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood intellectual executed by Nasser's government in 1966. His writings on *jahiliyya* (a condition of pre-Islamic ignorance applied to contemporary society), sovereignty, and

revolutionary Islamic action became highly influential among later radical Islamists.

p. 9 — “sorcerer’s apprentice.” Allusion to the story popularized by Goethe in which an apprentice unleashes forces he cannot control. Nye argues that Saudi promotion of religious ideology generated ideological resources later turned against the Saudi monarchy itself.

p. 9 — Abrahamic dialogue. Interfaith cooperation among Jews, Christians, and Muslims based on their shared identification with the biblical patriarch Abraham. Nye treats religious organizations themselves as nongovernmental sources of soft power.

p. 10 — Rumsfeld memo. October 2003 memorandum by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asking whether the United States was “capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading” terrorists faster than radical institutions were producing new ones. Nye uses the question to argue that military success alone cannot determine victory against jihadist movements.

p. 10 — USIA. United States Information Agency, created in 1953 to conduct overseas public diplomacy, broadcasting, cultural programming, and information campaigns. It was abolished in 1999 and most of its functions absorbed into the State Department—a decision Nye regards as emblematic of the post-Cold War neglect of soft power.

p. 11 — Jesse Helms. Republican senator from North Carolina and longtime chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Helms pressed for consolidation and reduction of U.S. foreign-affairs agencies; the 1998 restructuring legislation abolished USIA as an independent agency.

p. 11 — Radio Sawa / Radio Farda / Al Hurra. U.S.-funded broadcasting initiatives created after 9/11: Radio Sawa broadcasts in Arabic, Radio Farda in Persian, and Alhurra is an Arabic-language television network. They represented attempts to modernize American public diplomacy for Middle Eastern audiences.

p. 12 — demonstration effect. The process by which successful political or economic institutions in one society encourage imitation elsewhere. Nye’s comparison with Japan and South Korea assumes that successful Muslim democracies might similarly weaken claims that liberal democracy is culturally alien to Islam.

p. 12 — “brand” the United States. Application of commercial marketing language to public diplomacy. The idea that America needed better “branding” became prominent after 9/11 but was criticized for treating hostility generated by substantive policies as essentially a communications problem.

p. 12 — William Burns. Career diplomat and, at the time of Nye’s writing, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs (2001–05). Later deputy secretary of state and director of the CIA.

p. 13 — “new unilateralists.” Nye’s label for post-Cold War thinkers who believed American primacy gave Washington both the ability and, in some circumstances, the responsibility to act without broad international agreement.

p. 13 — Max Boot. American foreign-policy writer associated at the time with neoconservatism and an outspoken advocate of using American power for regime change and democratic transformation.

p. 13 — Niall Ferguson. British historian of empire who argued provocatively after 9/11 that the United States possessed many characteristics of an empire while lacking Britain’s willingness to accept the long-term burdens of imperial administration.

p. 13 — jodhpurs and pith helmets. Stock imagery of British colonial administrators. Boot’s deliberately provocative formulation invokes the supposedly competent and self-confident administration of the British Empire.

p. 14 — primacy vs. empire. For Nye, *primacy* means possessing vastly greater power resources than other states; *empire* entails sustained political control over other societies. He rejects the claim that American predominance automatically makes the United States an empire.

p. 14 — second Security Council resolution. The Bush administration sought another UN Security Council resolution in early 2003 that would effectively authorize war against Iraq but withdrew the effort when it became clear it lacked sufficient support. Nye invokes Mexico and Chile—then Security Council members—as evidence of the limits of American coercive leverage.

p. 14 — imperial overstretch. Term closely associated with Paul Kennedy’s *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987): great powers decline when their overseas military commitments exceed their underlying economic resources. Nye coins “imperial understretch” as a counterpoint.

p. 15 — neo-Wilsonians / Jacksonians. Categories derived from Walter Russell Mead's typology of American foreign-policy traditions. Wilsonians favor promotion of democracy and an international order based on liberal principles; Jacksonians emphasize military strength, national honor, and decisive victory while tending to distrust prolonged nation-building.

p. 15 — Lebanon under Reagan. Reference to the 1982–84 U.S. intervention in Lebanon. After the October 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks killed 241 American servicemen, Reagan withdrew the Marines in 1984.

p. 15 — Somalia under Clinton. The U.S.-led humanitarian intervention begun under George H. W. Bush became politically untenable after the October 1993 “Black Hawk Down” battle in Mogadishu, in which 18 American soldiers were killed.

p. 15 — post hoc legitimization. A justification advanced after an action has already occurred. Nye means that establishing democracy became an increasingly important justification for the Iraq War after the failure to find the expected stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

p. 16 — Smart Power Commission. Bipartisan commission organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and co-chaired by Nye and Richard Armitage. Its 2007 report urged the United States to combine military and economic strength with diplomacy, alliances, development, and institutional legitimacy.

p. 17 — “defense giant and a number of pygmy departments.” Nye's formulation for the enormous imbalance between resources devoted to the Pentagon and those available for diplomacy and development. Adelman's essay challenges the assumption that increasing the latter necessarily produces greater influence.

p. 17 — Zaire. Name of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under Mobutu Sese Seko (1971–97). Mobutu's dictatorship became a standard example in critiques of Cold War Western aid to corrupt anticommunist governments.

p. 18 — Mobutu Sese Seko. Authoritarian ruler of Congo/Zaire from 1965 to 1997. A major Western ally during the Cold War, notorious for corruption and personal enrichment.

p. 18 — Kwame Nkrumah. Leader of Ghanaian independence and Ghana's first prime minister and president. A major theorist of pan-Africanism and

“neocolonialism.” Adelman invokes him as an example of an American-educated foreign intellectual who emerged hostile to Western capitalism.

p. 18 — Mohamed Atta. Egyptian leader of the September 11 hijackers. He studied urban planning in Hamburg; Adelman groups his European education with Qutb’s American experience to question the assumption that exposure to Western society necessarily produces attraction to Western values.

p. 19 — Frank Wisner. Former U.S. ambassador to Egypt whom the Obama administration used as an informal envoy to Hosni Mubarak during the 2011 uprising. His public statement that Mubarak should remain temporarily to oversee a transition conflicted with the administration’s evolving position.

p. 19 — Cyclone Nargis. Catastrophic 2008 cyclone in Myanmar (Burma). Adelman includes humanitarian operations by the U.S. military to blur Nye’s distinction between hard- and soft-power institutions.

p. 20 — Internet freedom funding. Programs intended to help users circumvent censorship and electronic surveillance in authoritarian states, especially Iran and China. Their implementation became part of the debate over whether the Obama administration was sufficiently committed to the “freedom agenda.”

p. 20 — “three Ds.” Defense, diplomacy, and development—the Obama administration’s formula for integrating military power, traditional diplomacy, and foreign assistance into a broader conception of national security.

p. 22 — Monitor Group. International consulting firm founded by Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter and others. It was hired by Libya to improve the country’s international image and arranged visits by prominent Western academics and public intellectuals. The relationship became controversial after the 2011 Libyan uprising.

p. 22 — 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya. Operation El Dorado Canyon, Reagan’s air strikes against targets in Tripoli and Benghazi following the bombing of a West Berlin nightclub frequented by U.S. servicemen. Qaddafi’s compound at Bab al-Azizia was among the targets.

p. 22 — Libya’s nuclear program. In 2003 Qaddafi agreed to dismantle Libya’s programs for weapons of mass destruction and accept international inspections, facilitating the normalization of relations with the United States and Europe.

p. 22 — Darfur. Region of western Sudan where rebellion beginning in 2003 produced a major humanitarian crisis. Libya attempted to mediate among Sudanese parties, part of the more conciliatory regional diplomacy Nye describes.

p. 23 — The Green Book. Qaddafi's three-part political tract (1975–79), presenting his “Third Universal Theory.” It rejected both parliamentary liberalism and Marxism in favor of supposedly direct popular rule through “people’s congresses” and “people’s committees”; in practice Libya remained a highly personalized dictatorship.

p. 24 — Robert Putnam. Harvard political scientist best known for work on social capital, including *Making Democracy Work* and *Bowling Alone*. Nye notes that Putnam had previously made a Monitor-arranged visit to Libya.

p. 25 — Seif Qaddafi / LSE thesis. Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, son of Muammar Qaddafi, received a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics in 2008. After the 2011 uprising, allegations that his dissertation had been ghostwritten or plagiarized contributed to a major controversy at the LSE over its relationship with Libya.

p. 25 — David Held. Prominent political theorist at the London School of Economics and academic adviser to Saif al-Islam Qaddafi. His relationship with Qaddafi and public optimism about reform in Libya became controversial after 2011.

p. 26 — “Corsican corporal.” Napoleon Bonaparte. Nye juxtaposes the French Revolution of 1789 with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 to illustrate the unpredictability of revolutionary processes.

p. 27 — Aristotle’s virtue of prudence. *Phronesis*, or practical wisdom: the capacity to judge appropriately under particular circumstances rather than mechanically applying abstract principles. Nye uses it to contrast contextual judgment with transformational foreign-policy doctrines.

p. 27 — “first do no harm.” Traditional medical maxim (*primum non nocere*), though not literally part of the Hippocratic Oath. Nye applies it to foreign policy as a rule of prudence under conditions of uncertainty.

p. 27 — Bush 41. George H. W. Bush, forty-first president of the United States (1989–93), contrasted here with his son George W. Bush. Nye regards the elder Bush’s management of the Cold War’s end and Gulf War as an example of successful “contextual intelligence.”

p. 27 — George Shultz’s “gardening.” Shultz, Reagan’s secretary of state, used gardening as a metaphor for diplomacy requiring continuous cultivation of relationships rather than episodic intervention. Nye contrasts this with ambitious projects of political transformation.

p. 27 — “transformational diplomacy.” Condoleezza Rice’s term, introduced as secretary of state, for using American diplomacy to promote democratic institutions and political change rather than merely maintaining relations with existing governments. Nye uses the contrast with Shultz’s “gardening” to distinguish transformational ambition from incremental statecraft.

p. 28 — Arab Human Development Report. See note to p. 5. Here Nye’s “arrested development” refers to the persistent economic, educational, political, and social deficits identified by the UNDP-sponsored reports.

p. 28 — Singapore model. shorthand for rapid economic modernization and administrative competence under a strong state combined with restricted political competition. Nye invokes it as a possible intermediate model between Arab authoritarian stagnation and liberal democracy.

p. 29 — “the framework.” The April 2015 framework agreement between Iran and the P5+1 powers that supplied the basis for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), finalized in July 2015.

p. 29 — “proverbial one year.” The estimated nuclear “breakout time”—the period Iran would require to produce enough weapons-grade fissile material for one nuclear weapon if it chose to abandon agreed restrictions. Extending breakout time to roughly one year was a central Obama administration benchmark for the Iran agreement.

p. 29 — International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). UN-affiliated organization responsible for monitoring nuclear programs and verifying compliance with safeguards agreements. Its inspection and verification role was central to the Iran nuclear negotiations.

p. 30 — Thirty Years’ War. The devastating Central European conflicts of 1618–48, combining religious, dynastic, and geopolitical struggles. Nye uses the analogy loosely for a Middle East in which sectarian conflict, collapsing state authority, outside intervention, and shifting alliances may require decades to reach a new equilibrium.