

THE IMPACT OF UNITED STATES POWER

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Introduction

Power is a crucial concept in the study of international relations. Power predicts countries' ability to dominate key critical institutions such as political, economic, and social institutions. It helps understand the outcomes of conflicts as closely associated with the "cause" of conflicts among countries. Power provides bargaining in international matters as countries that seem more powerful have certain advantages over those with little power. In particular, the United States is regarded as a powerful country based on its economic, political, and social aspects, giving it an upper hand to influence international grounds' decision-making process. Some evidence has been documented which illustrate how the United State is a powerful country. For instance, through robust domination of vital global institutions.

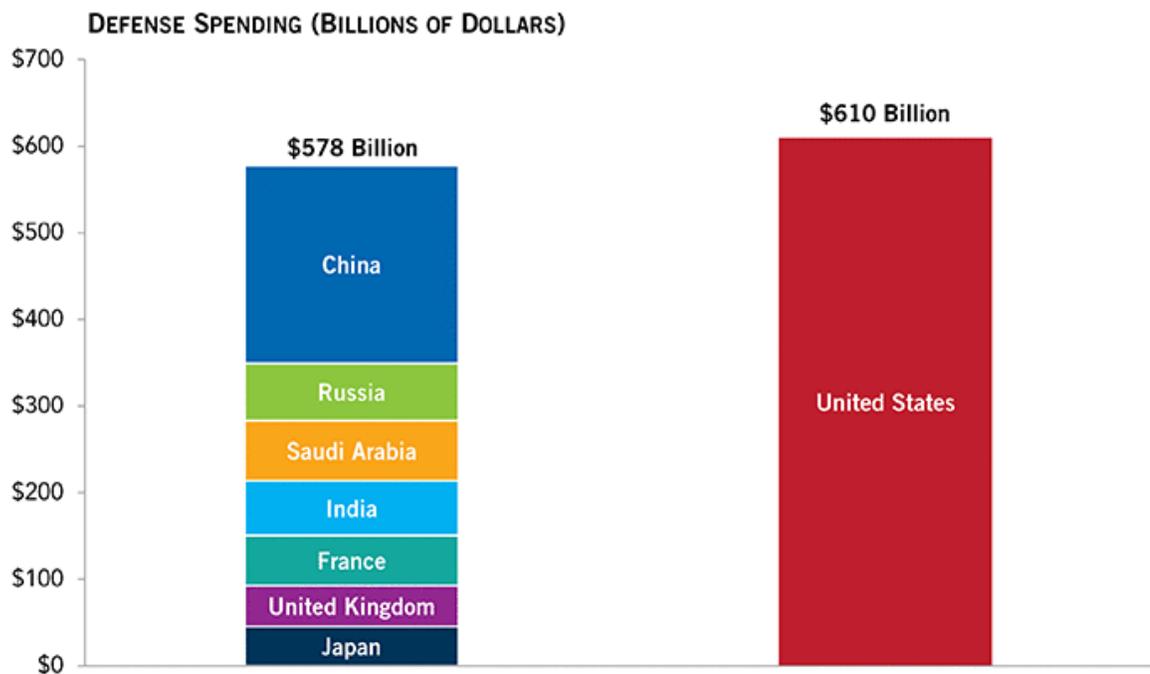
The pursuit of arguments in this discussion is based on critical issues concerning power, such as how power can be misused and how it can be used to promote better international relationships. This document shows the objective measure of power and the necessity of balancing power among countries. It will focus on analyzing the legitimacy needed by the U.S. to control power to achieve better relations with other countries. The U.S. has become firmly established based on ideologies and doctrines. This has, however, resulted in conflicts with other superpower countries in regards to the domination of international political and economic institutions. Thus, power can be perceived as an instrument of development and an agent of conflicts among nations. The United States' ability to dominate is based on hard and soft applicability of power in different aspects such as the military, political, economic, financial, and social institutions. The chart below is indicative of the U.S. expenditure power. It spends more on defense than the rest of industrialized nations.

The Hard Power of the United States

Hard power is defined as any country's capability to use its army to affect other countries' decisions. In multiple incidences, the U.S. has been linked to the use of military force in other countries. This is perceived as hard power as it intends to intimidate other countries due to their inferiority regarding their military strength. With the amount of power that the United States possesses in almost every administration and development institutions, it is evident that it will remain the top country with the highest power levels worldwide. The United States spends more than 40% of its total GDP on military defense.¹



The United States spends more on defense than the next seven countries combined



SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*, May 2018. Data are for 2017. Compiled by PGPF.
 NOTE: Figures are in U.S. dollars, converted from local currencies using market exchange rates.
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¹ Kennedy, John F. 1963. American University Speech (on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty). June 10.

This amount is six times higher than China placed in the second position regarding military power. The United States has the economic capacity as well as technical ability to maintain its military status for an extended period. It has easily integrated numerous complex operations that provide a massive advantage over the other countries globally. The United States has also managed to implement a strategic shift from the typical standoff systems to remotely controlled weapons. For instance, the United States has dramatically used drones and other weaponized systems that are technologically sophisticated compared to other countries for intimidation purposes. Remotely controlled weapons give the United States the power to control military interests around the globe.² It remains a mystery in legally justifying the use of drones and other technologically advanced weapons by the U.S. This has made the U.S. have incomparable power that has, over a long period, enabled it to protect its power from the rest of the countries in the world.

Another element contributing significantly to the U.S. powerful status is the economic and political interests, particularly from the developing countries. It has been accused of exploitation of developing countries' economic resources for its benefit. The increased exploitation of economic resources is attributed to its power as developing countries are perceived inferior in resource management.³ Recently, the United States has reduced its reliance on the energy that comes from developing countries. Despite U.S. being a powerful country, it doesn't necessarily have to safeguard the sea lanes like the Strait of Malacca or Strait of Hormuz.

² "Interchange: Legacies of the Vietnam War." 2006. *The Journal of American History*, vol. 93, no. 2. p. 452-490. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486244>

³ Truman, Harry. 1947. Address Before a Joint Session of Congress. March 2

However, the U.S. has continuously used its power to protect energy resources from other countries to ensure its energy reserves do not deplete in the near future.⁴

After the world war, the Americans become indispensable as they served as the agents of peace from the establishment of policies and official doctrines that advocated for peace. Nevertheless, the U.S. took advantage of this position in adventuring possible opportunities from countries torn by the war. This created conflicts and thus shifting of countries depending on U.S. defense. Many countries rely on the United States for military resources. This on its own makes the United States more powerful than these countries.

The reliance on the United States by developing countries has been alarming, thus creating a conflict of interest. All the war pair capacities of the European countries and the other developed countries depend on the targets that are being set by the American military. They also depend on the United States regarding air refueling, borrowing of the survey drowns, and smart stock bombs.⁵ There are multiple instances where developed countries require the United States to chip into their wars, including those operations against inferior countries deemed powerless.⁶ The United States' status concerning war is complicated for the other developed countries to catch up with. It would require them to increase their military expenditure and reduce the money they use for the other economic developments.

⁴ Ford, Harold P. 1996. "Revisiting Vietnam: Thoughts Engendered by Robert McNamara's In Retrospect." *Studies in Intelligence* (unclassified), vol. 35, no. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶ Yoo, John. 2012. "War Powers Belong to the President." *ABA Journal*. Vol. 98, Iss. 2. P. 1-11.

Soft Power

Soft power refers to a nation's ability to use some of its monetary capability to attract and influence other countries through persuasion and assistance. Over the years, the United States has held soft power over other nations in many ways.⁷ First, it influences some of the basics needs such as the Internet and technology. For a long time, the United States has remained at the helm of scientific and technological leadership due to the country's quality of education. Most of the United States universities are ranked among the best in the world, implying a higher level of education in the United States, thus creating more power concerning the quality of the education being offered. Regardless of the United States' great innovation in the education field, most countries are investing more in education to help cover the gap between them and the U.S. in education matters. Still, irrespective of other countries' investments in education, the United States dominates as backed by the intensive research system in the United States research and development systems.⁸ This makes the innovation system even more incredible than most of the other countries trying to bridge this gap, such as China.

To achieve development in the country, the Chinese government has declared that three percent of the total domestic gross product will be dedicated to research and development. Even though it is difficult to measure the scientific outputs accurately, the United States has remained ahead in producing the best possible scientific output. This is in combination with either the vital capitalism doctrine, a system that fledges on the business. Aspects like technological advancement are among the most significant contributors to the United States of America's

⁷ Carter, Jimmy. 1980. State of the Union Address before a Joint Session of Congress. January

23. <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

⁸ Johnson, Lyndon B. 1965. Address at Johns Hopkins University: Peace Without Conquest. April 7.

powerful status and leadership in the world, followed by Japan and Germany. Apart from the current high cost of living in the U.S., it still has a flexible labor market.

The other aspect of soft power is the favorable demographics. Even though the demographic advantage had been declined through the financial crisis, there is still adequate growth regarding the population in developing countries.⁹ It's predicted that the United States will grow its working population by more than 18% while those of the developing countries will reduce within the next thirty years. Only India is expected to have a growing number of the working population. The main reasons for sustained labor in the U.S. are because the country has continuously attracted the layout force through immigration that acts as a magnet for talents and additional labor.¹⁰ The other aspect of soft power is through the fashion and entertainment industry. The United States has always been the focus of the music industry and the styles and fashion.

The United States musicians and movie stars have robust domination in the global entertainment industry. The preeminence of the American is based on different systems and processes that are subtle.¹¹ These processes are quite complicated and are not easy to replicate. Most of the assets are derived from intangible assets, like the judicial system and property rights. There are also subtle knowledge and trust level that are embedded within the society. This makes the system difficult to replicate by the other countries. Another aspect that contributes to the U.S.

⁹ Kennan, George F. 2012. *American Diplomacy*, sixtieth anniversary expanded edition.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 165-192.

¹⁰ MacDonald, Paul K., and Joseph M. Parent. "Graceful decline? The surprising success of great power retrenchment." *International Security* 35, no. 4 (2011): 7-44.

¹¹ Sestanovich, Stephen. 2014. *Maximalist: America in the World from Truman to Obama*. New York: Vintage Books. p. 121-218.

soft power is its capability to embrace and utilize its system,¹² This is something that the other countries have found difficult. They would not want to adjust their beliefs. The other European countries do not find it easy to compete with the Americans concerning soft power.

Engaging in Nation Building increases Security

The status of security in the United States is achieved through nation-building and the successful application of proactive and long-term military strategies in solving economic and political conflicts. Nation-building is achieved through development policies in southern Pacific regions. Moreover, engaging in nation-building increases the security level in a country.¹³ Some of the United States policies focus on peacemaking strategies as well as disaster prevention. The nation-building efforts provide stabilization after post-conflict through promoting reconstruction. The national security strategies emphasize how political conflicts can be prevented from the region so that there is a coherent nation-building strategy. Such methods are crucial in strengthening the United States' contribution to the other countries considered as allies. International alliances are the main cornerstone and are practical in establishing security policies and a balance of power that protects the nation through security promotion.

National intervention such as nation-building has a massive role to play in international politics. The current debate on the role of the United States on the international stage shows that nation-building is one of the most contestable motions applicable to a different phenomenon and different actors. The United States has undertaken foreign interventions to solve political conflicts that threaten global peace. The United Nation's desires to restore peace have been

¹² Nixon, Richard. 1969. *Televi*

¹³ Bremmer, Ian. 2015. *Superpower: Three Choices for America's Role in the world*. New York:

achieved by promoting good governance in politically hostile countries.¹⁴ In essence, nation-building takes police and military as means of international interventions. The objective of nation-building is a complex one to fulfill.¹⁵ It involves a long-term commitment to resources as well as the demands from the other donor states. Other organizations are involved in nation-building, such as the World Bank and the United Nations bodies. In case some interventions are likely to take place in the future, there is an extent to which they can be driven through the process of nation-building.

There are several ways in which the United States uses nation-building strategies to solve political conflict resolution and prevention. This aspect form an integral part of the national security that takes place in several ways. U.S. key efforts in ensuring that there are peace and diplomacy in the foreign countries entail the use of conflict prevention and diplomatic policies alongside defensive systems. Within the last decade, conflict prevention and peacekeeping strategies have been emphasized in the United States' first National Security statement.¹⁶

President George W Bush addressed the approach of the U.S. towards the regional engagement and focused on the fact that the attention has to develop the security culture and the corporation of the policies. This method is better than the defaults based on the assumption that

¹⁴ Guzzini, Stefano. *On the measure of power and the power of measure in International Relations*. No. 2009: 28. DIIS working paper, 2009.

¹⁵ Hooker Jr, R. D. *The grand strategy of the United States*. National Defense Univ Fort Mcnair Dc Inst For National Strategic Studies, 2014.

¹⁶ Mastapeter, Craig W. *The instruments of national power: achieving the strategic advantage in a changing world*. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey CA, 2008.

political conflicts may be inevitable in different ways.¹⁷ The creative diplomacy power work can identify the various opportunities to promote the United States' security. If not done perfectly, it would otherwise prevent and delay all the emergence of the national securities and different challenges. The United States policies for political and economic conflict prevention are clearly outlined on official doctrines.

The National Security Policy documentation includes the contributions that coordinate the nation-building strategies used in fragile states such as Arabic countries and the Southern and Pacific states.¹⁸ These types of approaches go beyond the interventions that affect the changes in the regime. They also lead to the military victory and kick-start maintenance and reconstruction after a conflict. They also help in the development of the most important Millennium Development Objectives. The Positive policies used in the nation-building policies also enhance the long-term security status in the United States by strengthening the resilience of the other nations. There are several economic and political conflicts within the region and the human-made disasters that the people suffer. Through building these regions, there I the stability that a nation gets from rebuilding a country.

For the national government's approaches to be practical, there is the need for continued strengthening of the whole government and the military units.¹⁹ The personnel assignments and

¹⁷ Fabre, C., 2008. Cosmopolitanism, just war theory, and legitimate authority. *International Affairs*, 84(5), pp.963-976.

¹⁸ Mullen, Michael Glenn. *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership*. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 201

¹⁹ Delahunty, Robert J., and John Yoo. "The Bush Doctrine: Can preventive war be justified." *Harv. JL & Pub. Poly* 32 (2009): 843.

works within the governments, as well as the international and regional organizations, help in solving political conflicts. Significantly, government departments are responsible for contributing towards strategies used in the nation-building in collaborative ways to achieve the required objectives of the United States as the host nation.²⁰

There is never a prognosis for the most effective strategies that are used in the process of nation-building.²¹ Nonetheless, for most conflicts and peaceful interventions, such as Afghanistan, there are fewer strategies for political conflict prevention. Thus, it is not easy to determine the nation-building process's effectiveness as a strategy that can be used to create a security situation. The process of nation-building has a minimum impact on the security situation in countries such as Afghanistan. In the most challenging economic conditions, it is crucial to acknowledge that the conflict is increasingly unpopular. In these situations, the strategies usually shift towards the public expectations and the success that they have.²² Both nations have to prioritize nation-building as a complement to the strategies used for national security.²³ Additionally, the agenda of nation-building at the international community level promotes better international relations. Host nations involved in conflict resolution focuses on the political aspect. However, the crisis from political dynamics is not always well understood by

²⁰ Rapoport, David C. "The four waves of modern terrorism: David C. Rapoport." In *Terrorism Studies*, pp. 63-82. Routledge, 2013.

²¹ Patrick, Stewart. "Failed" states and global security: Empirical questions and policy dilemmas." *International Studies Review*9, no. 4 (2007): 644-662.

²² Hendrickson, Ryan C. "War Powers, Bosnia, and the 104th Congress." *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 2 (1998): 241-258.

²³ Treverton, Gregory F., and Seth G. Jones. *Measuring national power*. RAND Corp Arlington Va National Security Research Div, 2005.

international peacemakers, creating a challenge in the use of a nation in solving political conflicts.

In conclusion, the global situation in the security sector is quite unpredictable. The global disorder has been at the forefront in increasing the disadvantage that the United States has and reducing some of its military advantages. Because of such erosion of the military bodies, there are additional simultaneous security challenges.²⁴ These challenges come from the primary traditional states known and the trans-regional states that are taking advantage of such situations. Because of this, there is the need to employ some of the most effective strategies. One of them is nation-building in the creation of peace and security. This kind of strategy ensures the adoption of the new threats in these countries and maintains a comparative advantage globally. Both the hard and soft power have an immediate impact on the United States' position as a global leader in the political, social, economic, and military institutions. Unless counter-checked, such power levels can have severe implications on the United States' relations with other countries, particularly the developing and third-world countries. It can lead to intimidation and infringement of other nation's sovereignty.

²⁴ Posen, Barry R., and Andrew L. Ross. "Competing visions for U.S. grand strategy." *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1997): 5-53.

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