

Concept of national power

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All politics, domestic and international, reveal three basic patterns, that is, all political phenomena can be reduced to one of three basic types. A political policy seeks either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power.

(Morgenthau¹)

Power has always been a central concept in the study of international relations. For students of international relations, it is a must to understand the nature and dynamics of power; how different philosophers and strategists have defined and explained this important factor and how it affects the behaviour of individuals, groups and nations.

Power has been defined in many ways. The simplest of the definitions is given by Wikipedia: “Power is a measurement of an entity's ability to control its environment, including the behaviour of other entities.” A more comprehensive definition applicable to international relations is given by Rosen and Jones² who define power as “the ability of an international actor to use its tangible and intangible resources and assets in such a way as to influence the outcomes of events in the international system in the direction of improving its own satisfaction with the system.”

This definition points to a relationship between power and influence. While some writers fail to make a distinction between power and influence, the latter is actually the carrier of power or the means to use power³ in pursuit of one's own objectives. It must be remembered that power is relative and not absolute. An individual or country possessing power or influence against one may not enjoy the same influence against another. In fact, it may itself be a subject of power and influence of another individual or country.

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States with that of China, we can see that a decade back the U.S. was far more powerful compared to China than today. This is despite the fact that the U.S. power has not declined materially during these days. In fact, its power and influence with respect to the rest of the world has increased, but it has decreased with respect to China because China's power has grown in relative terms. Similarly, while India has grown in military and economic power, it still cannot match that of China because of China's relative growth in both these areas.

According to Alvin Toffler,⁴ power can be manifested in three different ways; that is, violence, wealth and knowledge. Each successive kind of power represents a more flexible kind of power. Violence, which he describes as 'low-quality power' involves coercion or punishment and is extremely inflexible. Hence, even when it 'works', it produces resistance. Wealth, by contrast, is a far better tool of power. It is much more flexible because it can be used in a positive way (through rewards, payments and pay-offs) or in a negative way (by holding or threatening to hold money).

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Power in society is often determined by the possession of these three elements. Of course, maximum power is available to those in a position to use all three of these tools in a clever mix of threat and reward, along with persuasion and intelligence. A skilled power player knows how (and when) to use and interrelate available power tools and resources. Toffler argues that the very nature of power is currently shifting. Throughout history, power has often shifted from one group to another; however, at this time, the dominant form of power is changing.

During the Industrial Revolution, power shifted from a 'nobility' acting primarily through violence to 'industrialists and financiers' acting through wealth. Of course, the nobility used wealth just as the industrial elite used violence, but the dominant form of power shifted from violence to wealth. Today, a third wave of shifting power is taking place with wealth being overtaken by knowledge.

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Kautilya described power as the possession of strength derived from three elements; knowledge, military might and valour⁵. And then there is another way of looking at power, that of Thomas Hobbes who defines power as a “man’s present means, to obtain some future apparent good.” Hobbes writes⁶,

I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death.

As we have noted already, power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the desired outcome. There are two types of power, hard power, which is basically reflective of the material prowess of the state and achieves its objective by coercion and manipulation; whereas soft Power is based on values, culture, policies, institutions, diplomacy etc and their ability to influence through cooperation rather than coercion⁷.

Power does not have to be used to be effective. It is often enough that the other actors acknowledge the presence of power, either implicitly or explicitly, since the potential exercise of acknowledged or presumed power can be as intimidating as its actual use; hence the concept and practice of deterrence. Historically, some international actors have sought power for power’s sake; however, most nation states normally seek and use power to achieve or defend their survival, vital and important interests, goals, objectives, and expectations⁸.

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Since in international relations we are concerned more with the behaviour of states rather than individuals, it is also important to understand the concept of national power; what it means and what it takes. National power or state power may be described as “a mix of strategic, military, economic, political and psychological strengths and weaknesses of a country or a state⁹.” According to the *U.S. Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, “National Power is the sum of all resources available to a nation in the pursuit of national objectives¹⁰.”

It is, however, important to understand that, historically, military strength was considered as the main criterion of national power of a state or country. However, to attain and sustain military strength, other factors are also essential. History has also taught us that militaries alone cannot win, it is only one element of national strategy and many other factors must act in cohesion for the strategy

to succeed. While the military strength of a country is an important ingredient of the national power, there are other vital factors as well which determine the national power of a state. A mix of these factors, commonly referred to as the 'elements or instruments of national power', determine the power of a state.

Elements of national power

National power may, therefore, be regarded as a mix of elements such as population, size, territory, natural resources, economic strength, military force, and social stability, etc. Nevertheless, the presence of one or few elements alone cannot guarantee national power. Similarly, the absence of an element does not necessarily mean a decline in national power. For example, the huge size of India, Brazil or Saudi Arabia; the large populations of India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh, the industrial makeup of Belgium; and the first-class army of Switzerland do not make them big powers.

Morgenthau calls the mistaken attempt to define national power in terms of one element of that power the "fallacy of the single factor."¹¹ Another important factor is to differentiate between possessing the elements of power (potential power) and converting these elements into actual power. The elements of national power have been divided into different categories by different scholars. For example, Organski¹² describe these elements in terms of natural (geography, resources, and population) and social (economic, political, military, psychological, informational, etc). Morgenthau breaks the elements into two groups, those which are relatively stable (geography and natural resources) and those which are subject to constant change (industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, quality of diplomacy, quality of government).¹³

Similarly, Coulombis and Wolfe describe national power in tangible (population, territory, natural resources and industrial capacity, agricultural capacity, military strength and mobility) and intangible (leadership and personality, bureaucratic-organizational efficiency, type of government, societal cohesiveness, reputation, foreign support and diplomacy, accidents) terms.¹⁴ Without subscribing to any particular grouping, some important elements of power are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Geography

The Oxford Dictionary defines geography as "the study of the physical features of the earth and of human activity as it relates to these."¹⁵ In the study of geography as an instrument of national power, factors such as location, size, topography and even climate are taken into account. All these factors affect the

nature of a people and their relationship with other states. Among these factors, location arguably plays the most vital role in determining interstate relations. Therefore, all the historians and writers, previous and contemporary, have elaborated the importance of this element. The value of geography in international relations can be gauged from the fact that it has resulted in an extensive new field of study called 'geopolitics'. It is, therefore, no surprise that geography influences the policies of states towards each other.

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In doing so, the Germans developed what they regarded the science of geopolitics. Geopolitics, to take a convenient definition, is the science of the relationship between space and politics which attempts to put geographical knowledge at the service of political leaders. It is more than political geography, which is descriptive. It springs from national aspirations, searches out facts and principles which can serve national ends.¹⁶

It is primarily the result of its location at the confluence of South Asia, Far East (China), Central Asia and the Middle East that has dragged a landlocked country like Afghanistan in the existing geopolitical quagmire. The Afghan state and nation has always been subjected to invasions, recent examples being the invasion by the USSR for access to so-called warm waters and more recently by the U.S. to occupy a vantage position in a region that is growing in strategic importance and is vital to American interests. Similarly, Pakistan and Iran are on the U.S. wish list for their location (besides natural resources) astride the oil rich Persian Gulf, access to Central Asia with its vast natural resources and proximity to China. The only reason why the foes of the Cold War era, India and the U.S. have turned strategic allies is the location of India vis-à-vis China. That is because the United States considers India to be an important counter-weight to and an ally in the policy of 'strategic hedging' of China. It is purely the irony of geography that has allowed absurd terms like 'Afpak' and 'Chindia'.

Both the UK and USA exploited their strategic location to become great powerful empires. Having a relative immunity from land attack and vast coastlines forced them to invest in their navies which became the instruments of force projection around the world. On the other hand, a tiny state like Singapore has become an important regional actor and a prosperous nation merely because of its location besides the strategic Malacca Straits. Not only states but certain

areas and choke points have also become very important in the power game because of their geography. There are many such areas as the Straits of Malacca, the Persian Gulf, Bab-al-Mandab, the Suez Canal, and the Panama, etc, which are vital for many regional and extra-regional players, albeit for differing reasons.

Besides location, the size (and topography) is also an important factor in determining the national power of a state. Size makes possible the support of a large population and the possession of large resources. A large size can be a blessing, not only because it provides strategic depth and strategy options, but also because larger size is expected to contain more natural resources and space for various activities such as agriculture, farming or scientific experiments. The large size of Russia has on one hand exposed it to incursions from different directions, but it has also provided it depth and resultant attrition against invaders. At the same time, the immense size of the USSR perhaps contributed significantly to its final breakup from within. Similarly, the countries protected by physical features are less prone to attack than those having exposed borders. The entire gamut of the Middle East peace process is based on geopolitics. According to Napoleon, “the policies of all powers are inherent in their geography”.

As pointed out by Morgenthau, the possibility of nuclear war has further enhanced the importance of size as a source of national power. A country needs a large space to disperse its vital assets as well as its population to avoid complete destruction in case of a nuclear attack. Even the capability of second strike is only relevant when a country has the capacity to absorb the first. It is in this context a handicap for countries like UK and Israel and an advantage for countries like USA, China, Russia and India.

Geography is also related to climate which affects the national power both directly and indirectly. It is no coincidence that most powerful empires in history belonged to the temperate zones. Even today, most of the poorest and weakest states are located outside the temperate zones. Climate not only affects the nature of people (as you move closer to the equator, people are generally more lethargic and less laborious) but also provides options for sustenance. Countries are considered blessed if they can enjoy all the four seasons. That provides them the opportunity to the populace to involve in all kinds of activities and also helps in achieving self sufficiency in producing its own food, flora and fauna.

Population

Population in this context does not refer only to the number of people in a country; it also includes the demographics as well as the nature and quality of the inhabitants of a particular state or country. That can be described through the use

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of parameters such as size, age distribution, geographic distribution, ethnic/religious makeup, quality of individuals, etc. The dynamics of population growth, settlement patterns and movement across the borders will have a major impact on the power potential of a state. Therefore, demographic factors need to be viewed as a potentially important contributor to the power of states. A large population is a key prerequisite, but not an absolute guarantee for national strength. Quality, quantity, morale, will of people, demographic shifts and population pressures are all important determinants of national power subject to varying contexts of geopolitics¹⁷.

So, while it is important for a potential great power to have a reasonably large population, the availability and readiness of these numbers to undertake the various tasks that make a nation great, is even more important. These tasks may range from providing food and security (military) to economic and industrial development, from research and academics to other social activities. It is, therefore, important to understand why the United States is the sole super power despite countries like China and India having larger populations. Even countries like Japan and Singapore with much smaller populations may rate a lot higher on the national power index than countries with much larger populations.

According to Morgenthau,¹⁸ the historical increase in American power owes partly to the arrival of more than 100 million immigrants between 1824 and 1924. On the other hand, during the same century, Canada and Australia, comparable in territory and development level but with populations less than a tenth of America's, remained secondary powers. If the immigration law of 1924, limiting the number of immigrants to U.S. to

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150,000 per year, had been enforced half a century earlier, the United States may have been deprived of this important factor in its rise to glory. Nations that are competing against each other for power must, therefore, be cognizant of the size of, and trends in, population among their rivals. However, like most other factors, population may have negative connotation as well. Hence, there is need to maintain a balance between population and resources. Without requisite resources to feed and sustain, large population may even become a liability.

The current shifting of power from west to east owes, besides other factors, to the population trends in the eastern countries, as well, which have substantial work force available at their disposal. One must emphasize though that only having a large population is not enough, but a potentially useful population, i.e.,

skilled population in the right age group (between 20 to 45 years of age). According to some experts, one of the problems in the current financial crisis in the United States may also be the “baby boomer” generation reaching an age where it is leaving the work force and claiming overwhelming social entitlements.

Winston Churchill highlighted the importance of population in his radio address on March 22, 1943¹⁹:

One of the most somber anxieties which beset those who look thirty, or forty, or fifty years ahead, and in this field one can see ahead only too clearly, is the dwindling birth-rate. In thirty years, unless present trends alter, a smaller working and fighting population will have to support and protect nearly twice as many old people; in fifty years the position will be worse still. If this country is to keep its high place in the leadership of the world, and to survive as a great power that can hold its own against external pressures, our people must be encouraged by every means to have larger families.

In the future, global trends also will affect the structure and balance of national populations, particularly those of the poorest countries. In 1830, the global population reached one billion for the first time; it required 100 years to double. It took only 45 more years (1975) for the population to double again to four billion. In the next 21 years, the population increased almost two billion, reflecting a growth rate of about 90 million a year. For the next several decades, 90 per cent of this growth will occur in the lesser developed countries, many already burdened by extreme overpopulation for which there is no remedy in the form of economic infrastructure, skills, and capital²⁰.

The above explains why China exercises stringent birth-control rules. However, India which has not been able to control its birth expansion, will soon take over from China as the most populous country. That may be the biggest obstacle in India’s quest for great power status since almost half of India’s population is living below poverty. Noting that overpopulation leads to insecurity and unrest, Aldous Huxley made an interesting prophecy²¹ in 1958:

Overpopulation leads to economic insecurity and social unrest. Unrest and insecurity lead to more control by central government and an increase of their power. Given this fact, the probability of overpopulation leading through unrest to dictatorship becomes a virtual certainty. It is a pretty safe bet that twenty years from now, all the world’s overpopulated and underdeveloped countries will be under some form of totalitarian rule.

Natural resources

Some writers distinguish between natural resources and raw materials. For example, Palmer and Perkins write that natural resources and raw materials are not the same thing. According to them, natural resources are gifts of nature of established utility, e.g., most minerals flora and fauna, waterfall and fertility of soil. Some of these, like minerals and forests, are commonly both natural resources and raw materials. On the other hand, some raw materials must themselves be produced, as rubber, hides, and cotton²². However, Morgenthau and a few others have discussed food and raw materials as sub-categories of natural resources in their attempt to explain their affect on national power. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, we should also consider raw materials as part of natural resources.

The availability of natural resources, in the form of food, minerals, energy, etc, plays an extremely important role in the relative power structure of nations. Large amounts of natural resources are essential for a modern nation to wage war, to operate an industrial base, and to reward other international actors through trade and aid. Moreover, as in the case of the geopolitical ownership of strategic places, the physical possession of natural resources is not necessarily a source of power unless a nation can also develop those resources and maintain political control over their disposition.²³ The dependence of nations on crucial resources can severely restrict their national power and influence. Conversely, the dependence of others on a resource held by a particular country or countries can add to the latter's influence and power. The dependence of the world on oil supplies from the Gulf has exalted the geostrategic importance of this region and hence provided these states with an instrument of power, which they amply demonstrated in the oil crisis of the 1970s to the detriment of the West. The almost complete dependence of Japan on raw materials is a critical issue in the survival calculations of the Japanese. The importance of natural resources varies with time and technology. A resource, nevertheless, is a potential element of power and if the mother country is not in a position to utilize or defend this resource, it may invite envy or even aggression. So, it is important also to have the technology and the wherewithal to exploit the gifts of nature. The source of strength the U.S. enjoys from its abundant natural resources and immense technological and industrial capability is the cornerstone of U.S. position as the sole super power of the world.

All humans depend on food, the most basic of these resources, for their existence. Therefore, the importance of having access to sufficient food for the population cannot be over-emphasized. A country that is self-sufficient (or nearly self-sufficient) in food supply has a clear advantage over one which has to import its foods from others. The deficiency of this important factor may have

contributed to Britain's becoming a major colonial power, since it was forced to reach out for food and maintain a strong navy to protect its food (among other valuables) supplies from interruption. It is said that Great Britain only grew 30 per cent of the food consumed in the British Isles, before the Second World War. Furthermore, the defeat of Germany in the First World War is also attributed to the Allied blockade, imposing privations upon the German people which sapped their will to resist.²⁴ Countries deficient in food supplies have to ensure uninterrupted availability of alternative sources or else they starve. The plight of many starving Africans dependent partially or sometimes entirely on others to feed them, is a case in point.

Countries enjoying self-sufficiency, such as the United States, Russia or China, need not divert their national energies and foreign policies from their primary objectives in order to make sure that their populations will not starve in war. Self-sufficiency in food is, therefore, always a source of great strength. On the other hand, permanent scarcity of food is a source of permanent weakness in international politics. For an agricultural country like Pakistan, it is, therefore, of utmost importance that it is able to meet the basic food requirements of its growing population because growth in population and neglect of agriculture can adversely affect availability of food. Basic food stuffs such as wheat, rice and corn are essential for national as well as for individual survival and for economic and physical development. According to Miller, hunger is the most important factor in the world today. The real challenge of the century is the race between men and starvation. Malnourished people cannot perform as well as the well-fed ones and hence it affects the quality of population which is another important factor of national power.

Just as food is essential for sustenance of life, other raw materials and minerals required for industrial production and waging of war are equally important for the survival of nations. The dependence of human beings on raw materials has transformed with time. As man learned the techniques to discover, extract and utilize available natural resources, their importance also increased exponentially. The UK and USA became great powers because they had iron and coal, the two most important raw materials of the time, and the technology to exploit these.

While both iron and coal remain important elements, their importance paled with the discovery of oil and its usage in transportation, weapons and industry. The UK and the rest of Europe started losing their strengths to USA and USSR which were rich in oil resource, besides other elements of power. Japan has become vulnerable due to its dependence on imported oil. Since the First World War, oil as a source of energy has become more and more important for industry and war. Most mechanized weapons and vehicles are driven by oil, and,

consequently, countries that possess considerable deposits of oil have acquired influence in international relations which would not have been possible without this precious possession.

French Prime Minister Clemenceau is quoted to having said during the First World War that, "One drop of oil is worth one drop of blood of our soldiers." OPEC's control of oil provided its members influence out of all proportions to their economic and military power. In October 1973, in retaliation to U.S. support to Israel during the *Yom Kippur* war, the Arab countries announced an oil embargo. That created a rift between the U.S. and its NATO allies and they were forced to persuade Israel to withdraw from occupied territories. As a result, Israel vacated some areas of Sinai and Golan heights and the embargo was lifted in March 1974.

The American presence in the entire Gulf, the two Gulf wars and the occupation of Iraq (and the recent regime change in Libya) is the result of the same experience. The U.S. and Europe cannot afford to undergo such a traumatic experience and have, therefore, strengthened their stranglehold on areas containing this important resource. The expansion and variations in technology has a direct impact on importance of raw materials. In today's world, some minerals such as Uranium and Plutonium have become important because of their use in nuclear industry. Whereas others such as quartz, cobalt, chromium, manganese and platinum are considered classic strategic minerals for a host of military, medical, scientific and commercial uses.

New processes and inventions are continuously changing the demand for certain minerals and hence the competition is shifting to areas containing those minerals. Afghanistan and the African continent are the two primary sources of most strategic minerals, and much of instability and wars in those regions is actually a battle for control of and access to the minerals.²⁵ Earlier, coal and oil were considered the chief sources of energy. Now, because of the dwindling sources of oil and coal and concerns of pollution, the world is shifting its focus to other forms of energy such as hydro, wind, solar, as well as nuclear energy. Already, experts have started predicting that the next wars will take place because of water instead of oil. As the humans continue to explore and utilize the resources, the availability of natural resources on land is on the decline. That has enhanced the importance of the seas which contain vast amounts of hitherto unexplored natural resources in the form of food and minerals; not to mention the immense energy generating potential of the oceans.

Economy

The economic factor is becoming more and more relevant to the modern world and may be considered one of the most important elements, especially since it is related closely with and has influence over most other elements of power: natural or social, stable or unstable, tangible or intangible. Economy is a more comprehensive term that encompasses other factors such as industrial capacity and technology, etc., which were referred to as independent elements of power by writers in the past. A strong economy is a must to sustain and exploit other elements of national power. It is gradually taking over from the military element as the chief means to influence another nation or state. No country can maintain a viable military without putting in a lot of money which comes from a strong economy. Even if a country enjoys an ideal geography and abundance of natural resources, it has to have a strong viable economy to exploit its resources, feed its people and run its military establishment, and in turn, maintain the sanctity of its territorial integrity. Without a viable, sustainable economy, a country is at the mercy of others, like Pakistan and many other poorer countries are.

The former Soviet Union was one of the mightiest powers on earth militarily; geographically it occupied the “heartland” which according to Mackinder was the key to world domination; it was almost self-sufficient in natural resources, like no other country, but it disintegrated because it could not maintain a healthy economy. China still regards itself as a developing country. However, it is arguably the most powerful and influential country in the world after the United States. It has achieved this status only on the basis of a strong growing economy and has recently become the second biggest economy bypassing Japan. The strength of China’s economy is inherent in the fact that the so-called sole Super Power United States had to seek China’s help to bail it out of economic recession.

Why a nuclear power like Pakistan is openly humiliated and coerced by the United States and its allies? Because Pakistan is dependent on economic aid from these countries and the international institutions run under their influence. The importance of the Gulf nations in the regional and international politics is only because of their oil economy. Because of globalization and the dependence of nations upon each other economically, this factor has become ever more important. The economic stability or otherwise in one country does not only affect that particular country but it has effects regionally and sometimes globally depending upon the size of its economy and its interaction with other economies. We have recently witnessed the effect of recession in United States on the global economy. The strong economic bloc of the European Union is trembling like a house of cards by the prospects of bankruptcy of Greece.

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In the past, the role of economy was limited to provision of livelihood to the people and maintenance of a country's war machine. Its relations with other countries were dependent more on the military might of the country itself and the combined might of its friends and allies. However, economy has become an important tool that creates non-military national power. Economically strong countries can exercise their power through trade, aid, loans and grants and hence can influence the poorer countries using both carrot and stick, without employing military means. Not only the countries, but some multinational corporations and money lending institutions have become even more powerful than the countries. In today's globalized world, variations in a country's economy can have a ripple effect on countries which are neither physically close nor directly trading with that country.

Hence, the strength of a nation's economy has a direct effect on the variety, resilience, and credibility of its international economic options. Increasing interdependence has caused major changes in the economic element of national power. National economies have become more dependent on international trade and on financial markets that have become truly global in scope. A nation's economic policy is now influenced by a host of factors which include the policies of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the influence of multinational corporations (it is said that multinationals play a major role in shaping the policies of the U.S. since they fund election campaigns of the candidates), and, of course, the policies and state of economy of other countries.

Military

Military strength, since ages, has been the most obvious and visible symbol of a country's national power. The proverb "might is right" is definitely right in international relations. The unchecked and unjustifiable show of force by the U.S. (supported by its Western allies) in countries across the globe, in pursuit of its hegemonic interests, is a clear manifestation of the importance of this element of national power. It was assumed after the two world wars that the world had seen enough destruction, and that the institution of the United Nations would usher in an era of peace and progress. However, the natural lust of humans for power and their mistrust and suspicion of each other has continued to mar the world with more and more conflict and the United Nations has become only a tool in the hands of the powerful. The basic composition of the United Nations, giving preferential status to the powerful five, defied its stated objective from the very beginning.

Military strength does not only mean possession of weapons and sensors to fight a war. It is dependent on a whole lot of factors which include material factors such as economy, industrial development, technology, resources, number of men available to fight, etc., as well as non-material factors such as leadership, quality of the fighting force and their training, the morale of both the armed forces as well as the entire nation, and also the willingness of the nation to support the armed forces. Because of the overwhelming influence of military on national policies, countries tend to lose balance and spend disproportionately on their military establishment, causing harm to other sectors. The collapse of the USSR owed predominantly to this reason, and the current economic crisis in the U.S. also has a share of its overstretched military adventures. However, every sovereign nation requires a balanced military force strong enough to defend its territorial integrity and, preferably, deter potential aggressors.

The importance of technology in raising and maintaining a potent military cannot be overemphasized. Countries that fail to keep pace with modern technology can only do so at their own peril, and they become totally dependent on other countries for provision of latest military hardware and software. Technological innovations have often been the difference between the victor and the loser. Beyond doubt, the current U.S. mastery of the world has only been possible because of its overwhelming superiority in (military) technology. Maintaining a military also requires, as mentioned earlier, a strong economy as well as access to natural resources. However, in addition to material means, the military strength depends a great deal on the quality of the fighting force and its leaders. Of course, the concept of military leadership has somewhat changed in modern war. The individual charisma and bravado of the military commanders is becoming less and less relevant, but their training, ability to comprehend the situation, timely decision-making and judicious use of available resources remain paramount.

Another vital element of military strength is the quality and quantity of its fighting force. In the words of Morgenthau,²⁶

A nation may have a good grasp of technological innovations in warfare. Its military leaders may excel in the strategy and tactics appropriate to the new techniques of war. Yet, such a nation may be militarily and, in consequence, also politically weak if it does not possess a military establishment that in its over-all strength and in the strength of its component parts is neither too large nor too small in view of the tasks it may be called upon to perform.

Must a nation, in order to be strong, possess a large army or is its power not impaired by having, at least in peacetime, only small land forces, composed of highly trained, heavily armed specialized units? Have battle-ready forces-in-being become more important than trained reserves? Have large surface navies

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become obsolete, or do aircraft carriers still fulfill a useful purpose? How large a military establishment can a nation afford in view of its resources and commitments? Does concern for national power require large-scale peacetime production of aircraft and other mechanized weapons, or should a nation, in view of rapid changes in technology, spend its resources on research and on the production of limited quantities of improved types of weapons?

Morgenthau's counsel is more and more relevant with advancements in technology, lethality and reach of weapons. And, in the age where economy is taking over from military as the dominant element of national power and prestige, countries have to address the above questions and many more. With growing emphasis on economic development, the people are less and less willing to spend their hard-earned money on killing people. The future shall belong to smaller, better equipped and better trained forces. The balance of armed forces is a question being discussed all the time in all the countries. Whether Pakistan needs an aircraft carrier to match the designs of the Indians or invest in submarines to counter the threat more effectively? The kind of leverage a few submarines can provide to Iran in the Persian Gulf, can it be possible with surface ships and aircrafts? Why should countries like Pakistan and India invest heavily in conventional weapons when they have nukes? The countries have to find the right answers to these questions. This important element of power can become a liability if the right balance is not achieved.

Intangibles

There are certain unquantifiable factors in the makeup of national power which play an equal, or sometimes more important, role in the application or manifestation of a country's power, than the more visible and measurable elements. The nature of government and its relationship with the people, the willingness of the population to support the policies of the government or its military, national character, morale, nationalism, etc., are factors which can be crucial in determining a nation's power at a given time.

The quality and character of the government is extremely important. It is the government which bears the responsibility of all actions within a state. If the government is honest, capable and efficient, and it has the support of its people, it can take bold decisions and does not have to fear outside forces. The government should have the ability and will to bring all the elements of national power to bear upon an issue. A government has to cater for the interests of its people, ensure welfare and development, guarantee social justice, law and order and harmony. Such a government will always have the backing of its population. When these basic necessities are provided for, it will automatically raise the morale and national integration. The Americans have always trusted and supported their governments in international affairs. This has been a national

character despite repeated betrayals and lies by successive governments. This is one of the strengths which has allowed the U.S. to project its military power around the world with impunity.

However, when the American public withdrew that support, like in Vietnam, the U.S. forces had to withdraw in defeat. The decline in domestic support to military actions around the world is now causing the Americans to find face-saving exit solutions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Iran has been able to face economic hardships and wrath of the U.S. and its Western allies because the people stood behind their government. On the other hand, successive Pakistani governments have not been able to implement important projects like the Kalabagh dam because they lacked public trust and support. Due to this lack of support in the masses, the governments had to look for strength towards foreign forces, particularly the U.S. The U.S. and its allies would not have been able to invade Afghanistan and Libya if a substantial population had not sided against their regimes. Similarly, India would not have succeeded in severing East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) if the local people were united and satisfied with the Pakistani government.

One of the important tasks of the governments includes diplomacy. Diplomacy is the skill of managing international relations. Morgenthau describes diplomacy in the following words:²⁷

The conduct of a nation's foreign affairs by its diplomats is for national power in peace what military strategy and tactics by its military leaders are for national power in war. It is the art of bringing the different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern the national interest most directly.

Diplomacy, one might say, is the brains of national power, as national morale is its soul. If its vision is blurred, its judgment defective, and its determination feeble, all the advantages of geographical location, of self-sufficiency in food, raw materials, and industrial production, of military preparedness, of size and quality of population will in the long run avail a nation little.

National character also plays an important role in diplomacy and policy-making. For example, the Hindus are very shrewd and calculative and have the ability to sweet-talk their opponents; the Americans are very arrogant but when confronted with strong will can easily change their position. The Muslims are generally straight forward and 'non-diplomatic', whereas the Chinese are very pragmatic, cool and calculative in their dealings with the foreigners. The Germans are considered a very disciplined and hardworking nation which has always helped the Germans rally behind their leaders and rise after every defeat.

Concept of national power

It is said that the people living close to the equator are generally lethargic in character and that is the reason these nations have never risen to glory and power. Unlike all great empires in history, the Chinese have not shown hegemonic or expansionist tendencies. The ordinary Americans are less interested in politics and international affairs and more in their own well being and comfort. That is why they seldom question the foreign policies of their governments but raise their voice for economic development and social justice within society. Hence, it is very important to keep a nation's character in mind when dealing with a country to be able to comprehend and predict its response to different situations.

National will and morale may be defined as the degree of determination that any actor manifests in the pursuit of its internal or external objectives. What caused the 313 ill-equipped companions of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) to fight and defeat a much larger army at the battle of Badr? Why Pakistan was able to beat the materially and numerically much superior Indian military in 1965? How a rag-tag army of few thousand ill-equipped, ill-trained, ill-fed Taliban fought the history's mightiest military power and brought the coalition of U.S. and its 40 allies to a situation where they are forced to negotiate an honourable exit for themselves? How the Vietnamese managed to defeat a super power? These questions cannot be answered by counting the material elements of national power.

It is said that in 1969, during the last days of Vietnam war, Pentagon fed all material data like population, gross national product, manufacturing capability, number of tanks, ships, and aircraft, size of the armed forces, etc., with respect to both the U.S. and North Vietnam in the computer and asked the computer, "when will we win?" The computer immediately responded, "You won in 1964"²⁸. This example clearly manifests the importance of national will and morale in the outcome of a conflict. The side which considers that it is fighting the just cause will always enter a conflict with a high morale as against the side that lacks justification or morality. On the other hand, if a people are fighting for survival, they will show amazing and unexpected results.

Another very important factor which relates to and has enormous influence on all the intangible factors mentioned above is nationalism. This factor, unfortunately, is not given due consideration in the discussion of elements of national power. Unlike religion or ethnicity, nationalism has no sects or factions and is therefore the most effective binding force. Nationalism is the only force which can effectively bring people of different colours and creeds together. Once a nation is truly united, it finds its own ways to development and progress. Such a country need not fear an adversary or adversity because the bond of nationhood motivates people to stand by each other and also give strength to the representative government.

Sometimes adversities help bring an otherwise divided people together, as has happened during wars and calamities to the Pakistani people. The United States and its allies could easily invade Iraq and Afghanistan because their people are divided into ethnic and sectarian groups, but they will never venture against countries like Iran and North Korea which stand as one nation. The world's most populous country, China, with a huge landmass, has proved how unity and direction can turn a demoralized, opium infested country into a super power within a short span of half a century. So, nationalism provides a degree of integration and a sense of belonging which contribute to national will and morale.

Conclusion

Power is the ability of an individual or state to influence or control the behaviour of others. Power occupies an important place in international relations and, therefore, has been defined and explained by various writers according to prevailing understanding of international environment. Power can be used in different ways ranging from persuasion to punishment. The concept and tools of power keep on evolving over time, and a skilled player knows how and when to use the right power tools to achieve desired objectives. It must be kept in mind that power is not absolute and may vary in time and space and in relation to others. National power is depended on various elements, and while dealing with other states a comprehensive understanding of their elements of power, both tangible and intangible, is essential.

It must also be borne in mind that the presence or absence of an element of power does not guarantee power or otherwise. A state must continue to revisit its strengths and weaknesses in terms of known elements of power and strive to achieve a realistic balance between its resources and capabilities. Regardless of the material and physical strength of a state, ultimate victory will largely depend on the intangible factors such as the morale, character of people and government, and nationalism. It is, therefore, important for the leaders to pay due attention to this very important element of national power.

Notes & References

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- ⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill 1958), 86.
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