

# The Changing Nature of Power

**M**ORE THAN FOUR CENTURIES AGO, Niccolo Machiavelli advised princes in Italy that it was more important to be feared than to be loved. But in today's world, it is best to be both. Winning hearts and minds has always been important, but it is even more so in a global information age. Information is power, and modern information technology is spreading information more widely than ever before in history. Yet political leaders have spent little time thinking about how the nature of power has changed and, more specifically, about how to incorporate the soft dimensions into their strategies for wielding power.

## WHAT IS POWER?

Power is like the weather. Everyone depends on it and talks about it, but few understand it. Just as farmers and meteorologists try to forecast the weather, political leaders and analysts try to describe and predict changes in power relationships. Power is also like love, easier to experience than to define or measure, but no less real for that. The dictionary tells us that power is the capacity to do things. At this most general level, power means the ability to get the outcomes one wants. The dictionary also tells us that power means having the

capabilities to affect the behavior of others to make those things happen. So more specifically, power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. But there are several ways to affect the behavior of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want.

Some people think of power narrowly, in terms of command and coercion. You experience it when you can make others do what they would otherwise not do.<sup>1</sup> You say "Jump!" and they jump. This appears to be a simple test of power, but things are not as straightforward as they first appear. Suppose those whom you command, like my granddaughters, already love to jump? When we measure power in terms of the changed behavior of others, we have first to know their preferences. Otherwise we may be as mistaken about our power as a rooster who thinks his crowing makes the sun rise. And the power may evaporate when the context changes. The playground bully who terrorizes other children and makes them jump at his command loses his power as soon as the class returns from recess to a strict classroom. A cruel dictator can lock up or execute a dissident, but that may not prove his power if the dissenter was really seeking martyrdom. Power always depends on the context in which the relationship exists.<sup>2</sup>

Knowing in advance how others would behave in the absence of our commands is often difficult. What is more, as we shall see, sometimes we can get the outcomes we want by affecting behavior without commanding it. If you believe that my objectives are legitimate, I may be able to persuade you to do something for me without using threats or inducements. It is possible to get many desired outcomes without having much tangible power over others. For example, some loyal Catholics may follow the pope's teaching on capital punishment not because of a threat of excommunication but out of respect for his moral authority. Or some radical Muslim fundamentalists may be attracted to support Osama bin Laden's actions not because of payments or threats, but because they believe in the legitimacy of his objectives.

Practical politicians and ordinary people often find these questions of behavior and motivation too complicated. Thus they turn to a second definition of power and simply define it as the possession of capabilities or resources that can influence outcomes. Consequently they consider a country powerful if it has a relatively large population and territory, extensive natural resources, economic strength, military force, and social stability. The virtue of this second definition is that it makes power appear more concrete, measurable, and predictable. But this definition also has problems. When people define fine power as synonymous with the resources that produce it, they sometimes encounter the paradox that those best endowed with power do not always get the outcomes they want.

Power resources are not as fungible as money. What wins in one game may not help at all in another. Holding a winning poker hand does not help if the game is bridge.<sup>3</sup> Even if the game is poker, if you play your high hand poorly, you can still lose. Having power resources does not guarantee that you will always get the outcome you want. For example, in terms of resources the United States was far more powerful than Vietnam, yet we lost the Vietnam War. And America was the world's only superpower in 2001, but we failed to prevent September 11.

Converting resources into realized power in the sense of obtaining desired outcomes requires well-designed strategies and skillful leadership. Yet strategies are often inadequate and leaders frequently misjudge—witness Japan and Germany in 1941 or Saddam Hussein in 1990. As a first approximation in any game, it always helps to start by figuring out who is holding the high cards. But it is equally important to understand what game you are playing. Which resources provide the best basis for power behavior in a particular context? Oil was not an impressive power resource before the industrial age nor was uranium significant before the nuclear age.

In earlier periods, international power resources may have been easier to assess. A traditional test of a Great Power in international politics was "strength for war."<sup>4</sup> But over the centuries, as technologies evolved, the sources of strength for war often changed. For

example, in eighteenth-century Europe, population was a critical power resource because it provided a base for taxes and the recruitment of infantry. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Prussia presented its fellow victors at the Congress of Vienna with a precise plan for its own reconstruction with territories and populations to be transferred to maintain a balance of power against France. In the prenationalist period, it did not matter that many of the people in those transferred provinces did not speak German. However, within half a century popular sentiments of nationalism had grown greatly, and Germany's seizure of Alsace and Lorraine from France in 1870 became one of the underlying causes of World War I. Instead of being assets, the transferred provinces became liabilities in the changed context of nationalism. In short, power resources cannot be judged without knowing the context. Before you judge who is holding the high cards, you need to understand what game you are playing and how the value of the cards may be changing.

For example, the distribution of power resources in the contemporary information age varies greatly on different issues. We are told that the United States is the only superpower in a "unipolar" world. But the context is far more complex than first meets the eye. The agenda of world politics has become like a three-dimensional chess game in which one can win only by playing vertically as well as horizontally. On the top board of classic interstate military issues, the United States is indeed the only superpower with global military reach, and it makes sense to speak in traditional terms of unipolarity or hegemony. However, on the middle board of interstate economic issues, the distribution of power is multipolar. The United States cannot obtain the outcomes it wants on trade, antitrust, or financial regulation issues without the agreement of the European Union, Japan, China, and others. It makes little sense to call this American hegemony. And on the bottom board of transnational issues like terrorism, international crime, climate change, and the spread of infectious diseases, power is widely distributed and chaotically organized among state and nonstate actors. It makes no sense at all to call this a unipolar world or an American empire—despite the claims of propa-

gandists on the right and left. And this is the set of issues that is now intruding into the world of grand strategy. Yet many political leaders still focus almost entirely on military assets and classic military solutions—the top board. They mistake the necessary for the sufficient. They are one-dimensional players in a three-dimensional game. In the long term, that is the way to lose, since obtaining favorable outcomes on the bottom transnational board often requires the use of soft power assets.

### SOFT POWER

Everyone is familiar with hard power. We know that military and economic might often get others to change their position. Hard power can rest on inducements ("carrots") or threats ("sticks"). But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. The indirect way to get what you want has sometimes been called "the second face of power." A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries—admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness—want to follow it. In this sense, it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions. This soft power—getting others to want the outcomes that you want—co-opts people rather than coerces them.<sup>5</sup>

Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. At the personal level, we are all familiar with the power of attraction and seduction. In a relationship or a marriage, power does not necessarily reside with the larger partner, but in the mysterious chemistry of attraction. And in the business world, smart executives know that leadership is not just a matter of issuing commands, but also involves leading by example and attracting others to do what you want. It is difficult to run a large organization by commands alone. You also need to get others to buy in to your values. Similarly, contemporary practices of community-based policing rely on making the police

sufficiently friendly and attractive that a community wants to help them achieve shared objectives.<sup>6</sup>

Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from attraction. If I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to use carrots or sticks to make you do it. Whereas leaders in authoritarian countries can use coercion and issue commands, politicians in democracies have to rely more on a combination of inducement and attraction. Soft power is a staple of daily democratic politics. The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority. If a leader represents values that others want to follow, it will cost less to lead.

Soft power is not merely the same as influence. After all, influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments. And soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it. It is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence. Simply put, in behavioral terms soft power is attractive power. In terms of resources, soft-power resources are the assets that produce such attraction. Whether a particular asset is a soft-power resource that produces attraction can be measured by asking people through polls or focus groups. Whether that attraction in turn produces desired policy outcomes has to be judged in particular cases. Attraction does not always determine others' preferences, but this gap between power measured as resources and power judged as the outcomes of behavior is not unique to soft power. It occurs with all forms of power. Before the fall of France in 1940, Britain and France had more tanks than Germany, but that advantage in military power resources did not accurately predict the outcome of the battle.

One way to think about the difference between hard and soft power is to consider the variety of ways you can obtain the outcomes you want. You can command me to change my preferences and do what you want by threatening me with force or economic sanctions. You can induce me to do what you want by using your economic

power to pay me. You can restrict my preferences by setting the agenda in such a way that my more extravagant wishes seem too unrealistic to pursue. Or you can appeal to a sense of attraction, love, or duty in our relationship and appeal to our shared values about the justness of contributing to those shared values and purposes.<sup>7</sup> If I am persuaded to go along with your purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place—in short, if my behavior is determined by an observable but intangible attraction—soft power is at work. Soft power uses a different type of currency (not force, not money) to engender cooperation—an attraction to shared values and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values. Much as Adam Smith observed that people are led by an invisible hand when making decisions in a free market, our decisions in the marketplace for ideas are often shaped by soft power—an intangible attraction that persuades us to go along with others' purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place.

Hard and soft power are related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others. The distinction between them is one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources. Command power—the ability to change what others do—can rest on coercion or inducement. Co-optive power—the ability to shape what others want—can rest on the attractiveness of one's culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic. The types of behavior between command and co-option range along a spectrum from coercion to economic inducement to agenda setting to pure attraction. Soft-power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behavior, whereas hard-power resources are usually associated with command behavior. But the relationship is imperfect. For example, sometimes countries may be attracted to others with command power by myths of invincibility, and command power may sometimes be used to establish institutions that later become regarded as legitimate. A strong economy not only provides resources

for sanctions and payments, but can also be a source of attractiveness. On the whole, however, the general association between the types of behavior and certain resources is strong enough to allow us to employ the useful shorthand reference to hard- and soft-power resources.<sup>8</sup>

	Hard	Soft
Spectrum of Behaviors	coercion inducement Command ←	agenda setting attraction Co-opt →
Most Likely Resources	force sanctions bribes	institutions values culture policies

Power

In international politics, the resources that produce soft power arise in large part from the values an organization or country expresses in its culture, in the examples it sets by its internal practices and policies, and in the way it handles its relations with others. Governments sometimes find it difficult to control and employ soft power, but that does not diminish its importance. It was a former French foreign minister who observed that the Americans are powerful because they can "inspire the dreams and desires of others, thanks to the mastery of global images through film and television and because, for these same reasons, large numbers of students from other countries come to the United States to finish their studies."<sup>9</sup> Soft power is an important reality. Even the great British realist E. H. Carr, writing in 1939, described international power in three categories: military, economic, and power over opinion.<sup>10</sup> Those who deny the importance of soft power are like people who do not understand the power of seduction.

During a meeting with President John F. Kennedy, the senior statesman John J. McCloy exploded in anger about paying attention

to popularity and attraction in world politics: "World opinion? I don't believe in world opinion. The only thing that matters is power." But like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, Kennedy understood that the ability to attract others and move opinion was an element of power.<sup>11</sup> He understood the importance of soft power.

As mentioned above, sometimes the same power resources can affect the entire spectrum of behavior from coercion to attraction. A country that suffers economic and military decline is likely to lose not only its hard-power resources but also some of its ability to shape the international agenda and some of its attractiveness. Some countries may be attracted to others with hard power by the myth of invincibility or inevitability. Both Hitler and Stalin tried to develop such myths. Hard power can also be used to establish empires and institutions that set the agenda for smaller states—witness Soviet rule over the countries of Eastern Europe. President Kennedy was properly concerned that although polls showed the United States to be more popular, they also showed a Soviet lead in perceptions of its space program and the strength of its nuclear arsenal.<sup>12</sup>

But soft power does not depend on hard power. The Vatican has soft power despite Stalin's mocking question "How many divisions does the Pope have?" The Soviet Union once had a good deal of soft power, but it lost much of it after the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Soviet soft power declined even as its hard economic and military resources continued to grow. Because of its brutal policies, the Soviet Union's hard power actually undercut its soft power. In contrast, the Soviet sphere of influence in Finland was reinforced by a degree of soft power. Similarly, the United States' sphere of influence in Latin America in the 1930s was reinforced when Franklin Roosevelt added the soft power of his "good neighbor policy."<sup>13</sup>

Sometimes countries enjoy political clout that is greater than their military and economic weight would suggest because they define their national interest to include attractive causes such as economic aid or peacemaking. For example, in the past two decades

and values, its actions will more likely appear legitimate in the eyes of others. If it uses institutions and follows rules that encourage other countries to channel or limit their activities in ways it prefers, it will not need as many costly carrots and sticks.

### SOURCES OF SOFT POWER

The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.)

Let's start with culture. Culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society. It has many manifestations. It is common to distinguish between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites, and popular culture, which focuses on mass entertainment.

When a country's culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates. Narrow values and parochial cultures are less likely to produce soft power. The United States benefits from a universalistic culture. The German editor Josef Joffe once argued that America's soft power was even larger than its economic and military assets. "U.S. culture, low-brow or high, radiates outward with an intensity last seen in the days of the Roman Empire—but with a novel twist. Rome's and Soviet Russia's cultural sway stopped exactly at their military borders. America's soft power, though, rules over an empire on which the sun never sets."<sup>17</sup>

Some analysts treat soft power simply as popular cultural power. They make the mistake of equating soft power behavior with the cultural resources that sometimes help produce it. They confuse the cultural resources with the behavior of attraction. For example, the historian Niall Ferguson describes soft power as "nontraditional forces such as cultural and commercial goods" and then dismisses it

Norway has taken a hand in peace talks in the Philippines, the Balkans, Colombia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, and the Middle East. Norwegians say this grows out of their Lutheran missionary heritage, but at the same time the posture of peacemaker identifies Norway with values shared by other nations that enhance Norway's soft power. Foreign Minister Jan Peterson argued that "we gain some access," explaining that Norway's place at so many negotiating tables elevates its usefulness and value to larger countries.<sup>14</sup>

Michael Ignatieff describes the position of Canada from a similar point of view: "Influence derives from three assets: moral authority as a good citizen which we have got some of, military capacity which we have got a lot less of, and international assistance capability." With regard to the United States, "we have something they want. They need legitimacy."<sup>15</sup> That in turn can increase Canada's influence when it bargains with its giant neighbor. The Polish government decided to send troops to postwar Iraq not only to curry favor with the United States but also as a way to create a broader positive image of Poland in world affairs. When the Taliban government fell in Afghanistan in 2001, the Indian foreign minister flew to Kabul to welcome the new interim government in a plane not packed with arms or food but crammed with tapes of Bollywood movies and music, which were quickly distributed across the city.<sup>16</sup> As we shall see in chapter 3, many countries have soft-power resources.

Institutions can enhance a country's soft power. For example, Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in the second half of the twentieth century advanced their values by creating a structure of international rules and institutions that were consistent with the liberal and democratic nature of the British and American economic systems: free trade and the gold standard in the case of Britain; the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nations in the case of the United States. When countries make their power legitimate in the eyes of others, they encounter less resistance to their wishes. If a country's culture and ideology are attractive, others more willingly follow. If a country can shape international rules that are consistent with its interests

on the grounds "that it's, well, soft."<sup>18</sup> Of course, Coke and Big Macs do not necessarily attract people in the Islamic world to love the United States. The North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il is alleged to like pizza and American videos, but that does not affect his nuclear programs. Excellent wines and cheeses do not guarantee attraction to France, nor does the popularity of Pokémon games assure that Japan will get the policy outcomes it wishes.

This is not to deny that popular culture is often a resource that produces soft power, but as we saw earlier, the effectiveness of any power resource depends on the context. Tanks are not a great military power resource in swamps or jungles. Coal and steel are not major power resources if a country lacks an industrial base. Serbs eating at McDonald's supported Milosevic, and Rwandans committed atrocities while wearing T-shirts with American logos. American films that make the United States attractive in China or Latin America may have the opposite effect and actually reduce American soft power in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan. But in general, polls show that our popular culture has made the United States seem to others "exciting, exotic, rich, powerful, trend-setting—the cutting edge of modernity and innovation."<sup>19</sup> And such images have appeal "in an age when people want to partake of the good life American-style, even if as political citizens, they are aware of the downside for ecology, community, and equality."<sup>20</sup> For example, in explaining a new movement toward using lawsuits to assert rights in China, a young Chinese activist explained, "We've seen a lot of Hollywood movies—they feature weddings, funerals and going to court. So now we think it's only natural to go to court a few times in your life."<sup>21</sup> If American objectives include the strengthening of the legal system in China, such films may be more effective than speeches by the American ambassador about the importance of the rule of law.

As we will see in the next chapter, the background attraction (and repulsion) of American popular culture in different regions and among different groups may make it easier or more difficult for American officials to promote their policies. In some cases, such as

Iran, the same Hollywood images that repel the ruling mullahs may be attractive to the younger generation. In China, the attraction and rejection of American culture among different groups may cancel each other out.

Commerce is only one of the ways in which culture is transmitted. It also occurs through personal contacts, visits, and exchanges. The ideas and values that America exports in the minds of more than half a million foreign students who study every year in American universities and then return to their home countries, or in the minds of the Asian entrepreneurs who return home after succeeding in Silicon Valley, tend to reach elites with power. Most of China's leaders have a son or daughter educated in the States who can portray a realistic view of the United States that is often at odds with the caricatures in official Chinese propaganda. Similarly, when the United States was trying to persuade President Musharraf of Pakistan to change his policies and be more supportive of American measures in Afghanistan, it probably helped that he could hear from a son working in the Boston area.

Government policies at home and abroad are another potential source of soft power. For example, in the 1950s racial segregation at home undercut American soft power in Africa, and today the practice of capital punishment and weak gun control laws undercut American soft power in Europe. Similarly, foreign policies strongly affect soft power. Jimmy Carter's human rights policies are a case in point, as were government efforts to promote democracy in the Reagan and Clinton administrations. In Argentina, American human rights policies that were rejected by the military government of the 1970s produced considerable soft power for the United States two decades later, when the Peronists who were earlier imprisoned subsequently came to power. Policies can have long-term as well as short-term effects that vary as the context changes. The popularity of the United States in Argentina in the early 1990s reflected Carter's policies of the 1970s, and it led the Argentine government to support American policies in the UN and in the Balkans.

Nonetheless, American soft power eroded significantly after the context changed again later in the decade when the United States failed to rescue the Argentine economy from its collapse.

Government policies can reinforce or squander a country's soft power. Domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests can undermine soft power. For example, in the steep decline in the attractiveness of the United States as measured by polls taken after the Iraq War in 2003, people with unfavorable views for the most part said they were reacting to the Bush administration and its policies rather than the United States generally. So far, they distinguish American people and culture from American policies. The publics in most nations continued to admire the United States for its technology, music, movies, and television. But large majorities in most countries said they disliked the growing influence of America in their country.<sup>22</sup>

The 2003 Iraq War is not the first policy action that has made the United States unpopular. As we will see in the next chapter, three decades ago, many people around the world objected to America's war in Vietnam, and the standing of the United States reflected the unpopularity of that policy. When the policy changed and the memories of the war receded, the United States recovered much of its lost soft power. Whether the same thing will happen in the aftermath of the Iraq War will depend on the success of policies in Iraq, developments in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and many other factors.

The values a government champions in its behavior at home (for example, democracy), in international institutions (working with others), and in foreign policy (promoting peace and human rights) strongly affect the preferences of others. Governments can attract or repel others by the influence of their example. But soft power does not belong to the government in the same degree that hard power does. Some hard-power assets such as armed forces are strictly governmental; others are inherently national, such as oil and mineral reserves, and many can be transferred to collective control, such as the civilian air fleet that can be mobilized in an emergency. In contrast,

many soft-power resources are separate from the American government and are only partly responsive to its purposes. In the Vietnam era, for example, American popular culture often worked at cross-purposes to official government policy. Today, Hollywood movies that show scantily clad women with libertine attitudes or fundamentalist Christian groups that castigate Islam as an evil religion are both (properly) outside the control of government in a liberal society, but they undercut government efforts to improve relations with Islamic nations.

### THE LIMITS OF SOFT POWER

Some skeptics object to the idea of soft power because they think of power narrowly in terms of commands or active control. In their view, imitation or attraction are simply that, not power. As we have seen, some imitation or attraction does not produce much power over policy outcomes, and neither does imitation always produce desirable outcomes. For example, in the 1980s, Japan was widely admired for its innovative industrial processes, but imitation by companies in other countries came back to haunt the Japanese when it reduced their market power. Similarly, armies frequently imitate and therefore nullify the successful tactics of their opponents and make it more difficult for them to achieve the outcomes they want. Such observations are correct, but they miss the point that exerting attraction on others often does allow you to get what you want. The skeptics who want to define power only as deliberate acts of command and control are ignoring the second, or "structural," face of power—the ability to get the outcomes you want without having to force people to change their behavior through threats or payments.

At the same time, it is important to specify the conditions under which attraction is more likely to lead to desired outcomes, and under which it will not. As we have seen, popular culture is more likely to attract people and produce soft power in the sense of preferred outcomes in situations where cultures are somewhat similar rather



than widely dissimilar. All power depends on context—who relates to whom under what circumstances—but soft power depends more than hard power upon the existence of willing interpreters and receivers. Moreover, attraction often has a diffuse effect, creating general influence rather than producing an easily observable specific action. Just as money can be invested, politicians speak of storing up political capital to be drawn on in future circumstances. Of course, such goodwill may not ultimately be honored, and diffuse reciprocity is less tangible than an immediate exchange. Nonetheless, the indirect effects of attraction and a diffuse influence can make a significant difference in obtaining favorable outcomes in bargaining situations. Otherwise leaders would insist only on immediate payoffs and specific reciprocity, and we know that is not always the way they behave. Social psychologists have developed a substantial body of empirical research exploring the relationship between attractiveness and power.<sup>23</sup>

Soft power is also likely to be more important when power is dispersed in another country rather than concentrated. A dictator cannot be totally indifferent to the views of the people in his country, but he can often ignore whether another country is popular or not when he calculates whether it is in his interests to be helpful. In democracies where public opinion and parliaments matter, political leaders have less leeway to adopt tactics and strike deals than in autocracies. Thus it was impossible for the Turkish government to permit the transport of American troops across the country in 2003 because American policies had greatly reduced our popularity in public opinion and in the parliament. In contrast, it was far easier for the United States to obtain the use of bases in authoritarian Uzbekistan for operations in Afghanistan.

Finally, though soft power sometimes has direct effects on specific goals—witness the inability of the United States to obtain the votes of Chile or Mexico in the UN Security Council in 2003 after our policies reduced our popularity—it is more likely to have an impact on the general goals that a country seeks.<sup>24</sup> Fifty years ago, Arnold Wolfers distinguished between the specific “possession goals”

that countries pursue, and their broader “milieu goals,” like shaping an environment conducive to democracy.<sup>25</sup> Successful pursuit of both types of goals is important in foreign policy. If one considers various American national interests, for example, soft power may be less relevant than hard power in preventing attack, policing borders, and protecting allies. But soft power is particularly relevant to the realization of “milieu goals.” It has a crucial role to play in promoting democracy, human rights, and open markets. It is easier to attract people to democracy than to coerce them to be democratic. The fact that the impact of attraction on achieving preferred outcomes varies by context and type of goals does not make it irrelevant, any more than the fact that bombs and bayonets do not help when we seek to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, slow global warming, or create democracy.

Other skeptics object to using the term “soft power” in international politics because governments are not in full control of the attraction. Much of American soft power has been produced by Hollywood, Harvard, Microsoft, and Michael Jordan. But the fact that civil society is the origin of much soft power does not disprove its existence. In a liberal society, government cannot and should not control the culture. Indeed, the absence of policies of control can itself be a source of attraction. The Czech film director Milos Forman recounts that when the Communist government let in the American film *Twelve Angry Men* because of its harsh portrait of American institutions, Czech intellectuals responded by thinking, “If that country can make this kind of thing, films about itself, oh, that country must have a pride and must have an inner strength, and must be strong enough and must be free.”<sup>26</sup>

It is true that firms, universities, foundations, churches, and other nongovernmental groups develop soft power of their own that may reinforce or be at odds with official foreign policy goals. That is all the more reason for governments to make sure that their own actions and policies reinforce rather than undercut their soft power. And this is particularly true since private sources of soft power are likely to become increasingly important in the global information age.

Finally, some skeptics argue that popularity measured by opinion polls is ephemeral and thus not to be taken seriously. Of course, one must be careful not to read too much into opinion polls. They are an essential but imperfect measure of soft-power resources because answers vary depending on the way that questions are formulated, and unless the same questions are asked consistently over some period, they represent snapshots rather than a continuous picture. Opinions can change, and such volatility cannot be captured by any one poll. Moreover, political leaders must often make unpopular decisions because they are the right thing to do, and hope that their popularity may be repaired if the decision is subsequently proved correct. Popularity is not an end in itself in foreign policy. Nonetheless, polls are a good first approximation of both how attractive a country appears and the costs that are incurred by unpopular policies, particularly when they show consistency across polls and over time. And as we shall see in the next chapter, that attractiveness can have an effect on our ability to obtain the outcomes we want in the world.

### THE CHANGING ROLE OF MILITARY POWER

In the twentieth century, science and technology added dramatic new dimensions to power resources. With the advent of the nuclear age, the United States and the Soviet Union possessed not only industrial might but nuclear arsenals and intercontinental missiles. The age of the superpowers had begun. Subsequently, the leading role of the United States in the information revolution near the end of the century allowed it to create a revolution in military affairs. The ability to use information technology to create precision weapons, real-time intelligence, broad surveillance of regional battlefields, and improved command and control allowed the United States to surge ahead as the world's only military superpower.

But the progress of science and technology had contradictory effects on military power over the past century. On the one hand, it

made the United States the world's only superpower, with unmatched military might, but at the same time it gradually increased the political and social costs of using military force for conquest. Paradoxically, nuclear weapons were acceptable for deterrence, but they proved so awesome and destructive that they became muscle-bound—too costly to use in war except, theoretically, in the most extreme circumstances.<sup>27</sup> Non-nuclear North Vietnam prevailed over nuclear America, and non-nuclear Argentina was not deterred from attacking the British Falkland Islands despite Britain's nuclear status.

A second important change was the way that modern communications technology fomented the rise and spread of nationalism, which made it more difficult for empires to rule over socially awakened populations. In the nineteenth century, Britain ruled a quarter of the globe with a tiny fraction of the world's population. As nationalism grew, colonial rule became too expensive and the British empire collapsed. Formal empires with direct rule over subject populations such as Europe exercised during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are simply too costly in the twenty-first century.

In addition to nuclear and communications technology, social changes inside the large democracies also raised the costs of using military power. Postindustrial democracies are focused on welfare rather than glory, and they dislike high casualties. This does not mean that they will not use force, even when casualties are expected—witness Britain, France, and the United States in the 1991 Gulf War, and Britain and the United States in the 2003 Iraq War. But the absence of a prevailing warrior ethic in modern democracies means that the use of force requires an elaborate moral justification to ensure popular support, unless actual survival is at stake. For advanced democracies, war remains possible, but it is much less acceptable than it was a century, or even a half century, ago.<sup>28</sup> The most powerful states have lost much of the lust to conquer.<sup>29</sup>

Robert Kagan has correctly pointed out that these social changes have gone further in Europe than the United States, although his clever phrase that Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus oversimplifies the differences.<sup>30</sup> After all, Europeans joined in

None of this is to suggest that military force plays no role in international politics today. On the contrary, the information revolution has yet to transform most of the world, and many states are unconstrained by democratic societal forces. Civil wars are rife in many parts of the world where collapsed empires left failed states and power vacuums. Even more important is the way in which the democratization of technology is leading to the privatization of war. Technology is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, technological and social changes are making war more costly for modern democracies. But at the same time, technology is putting new means of destruction into the hands of extremist groups and individuals.

### TERRORISM AND THE PRIVATIZATION OF WAR

Terrorism is not new, nor is it a single enemy. It is a long-standing method of conflict frequently defined as deliberate attack on non-combatants with the objective of spreading fear and intimidation. Already a century ago, the novelist Joseph Conrad had drawn an indelible portrait of the terrorist mind, and terrorism was a familiar phenomenon in the twentieth century. Whether homegrown or transnational, it was a staple of conflicts throughout the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, Spain, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, South Africa, and elsewhere. It occurred on every continent except Antarctica and affected nearly every country. September 11, 2001, was a dramatic escalation of an age-old phenomenon. Yet two developments have made terrorism more lethal and more difficult to manage in the twenty-first century.

One set of trends grows out of progress in science and technology. First, there is the complex, highly technological nature of modern civilization's basic systems. As a committee of the National Academy of Sciences pointed out, market forces and openness have combined to increase the efficiency of many of our vital systems

pressing for the use of force in Kosovo in 1999, and the Iraq War demonstrated that there were Europeans from Mars and Americans who preferred Venus. Nonetheless, the success of the European countries in creating an island of peace on the continent that had been ravaged by three Franco-German wars in less than a century may predispose them toward more peaceful solutions to conflict.

However, in a global economy even the United States must consider how the use of force might jeopardize its economic objectives. After its victory in World War II the United States helped to restructure Japan's economy, but it is hard to imagine that the United States today could effectively threaten force to open Japanese markets or change the value of the yen. Nor can one easily imagine the United States using force to resolve disputes with Canada or Europe. Unlike earlier periods, islands of peace where the use of force is no longer an option in relations among states have come to characterize relations among most modern liberal democracies, and not just in Europe. The existence of such islands of peace is evidence of the increasing importance of soft power where there are shared values about what constitutes acceptable behavior among similar democratic states. In their relations with each other, all advanced democracies are from Venus.

Even nondemocratic countries that feel fewer popular moral constraints on the use of force have to consider its effects on their economic objectives. War risks deterring investors who control flows of capital in a globalized economy.<sup>31</sup> A century ago, it may have been easier to seize another state's territory by force than "to develop the sophisticated economic and trading apparatus needed to derive benefit from commercial exchange with it."<sup>32</sup> But it is difficult to imagine a scenario today in which, for example, Japan would try to or succeed in using military force to colonize its neighbors. As two RAND analysts argue, "In the information age, 'cooperative' advantages will become increasingly important. Moreover, societies that improve their abilities to cooperate with friends and allies may also gain competitive advantages against rivals."<sup>33</sup>

such as those that provide transportation, information, energy, and health care. But some (though not all) systems become more vulnerable and fragile as they become more complex and efficient.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, progress is "democratizing technology," making the instruments of mass destruction smaller, cheaper, and more readily available to a far wider range of individuals and groups. Where bombs and timers were once heavy and expensive, plastic explosives and digital timers are light and cheap. The costs of hijacking an airplane are sometimes little more than the price of a ticket.

In addition, the success of the information revolution is providing inexpensive means of communication and organization that allow groups once restricted to local and national police jurisdictions to become global in scope. Thirty years ago, instantaneous global communication was sufficiently expensive that it was restricted to large entities with big budgets like governments, multinational corporations, or the Roman Catholic church. Today the Internet makes global communication virtually free for anyone with access to a modem.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the Internet has reduced the costs of searching for information and making contacts related to instruments of wide-scale destruction. Terrorists also depend on getting their messages out quickly to a broad audience through mass media and the Internet—witness the widespread dissemination of bin Laden's television interviews and videotapes after September 11. Terrorism depends crucially on soft power for its ultimate victory. It depends on its ability to attract support from the crowd at least as much as its ability to destroy the enemy's will to fight.

The second set of trends reflects changes in the motivation and organization of terrorist groups. Terrorists in the mid-twentieth century tended to have relatively well-defined political objectives, which were often ill served by mass destruction. They were said to want many people watching rather than many people killed. Such terrorists were often supported and covertly controlled by governments such as Libya or Syria. Toward the end of the century, radical groups grew on the fringes of several religions. Most numerous were the tens of thousands of young Muslim men who went to fight

against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. There they were trained in a wide range of techniques, and many were recruited to organizations with an extreme view of the religious obligation of jihad. As the historian Walter Laquer has observed, "Traditional terrorists, whether left-wing, right-wing, or nationalist-separatists, were not greatly drawn to these opportunities for greater destruction. . . . Terrorism has become more brutal and indiscriminate since then."<sup>36</sup>

This trend is reinforced when motivations change from narrowly political to unlimited or retributive objectives reinforced by promises of rewards in another world. Fortunately, unlike communism and fascism, Islamist ideology has failed to attract a wide following outside the Islamic community, but that community provides a large pool of over a billion people from which to recruit. Organization has also changed. For example, Al Qaeda's network of thousands of people in loosely affiliated cells in some 60 countries gives it a scale well beyond anything seen before. But even small networks can be more difficult to penetrate than the hierarchical quasi-military organizations of the past.

Both trends, technological and ideological, have created a new set of conditions that have increased both the lethality of terrorism and the difficulty of managing terrorism today. Because of September 11 and the unprecedented scale of Al Qaeda, the current focus is properly on terrorism associated with Islamic extremists. But it would be a mistake to limit our attention or responses to Islamic terrorists, for that would be to ignore the wider effects of the democratization of technology and the broader set of challenges that must be met. Technological progress is putting into the hands of deviant groups and individuals destructive capabilities that were once limited primarily to governments and armies. Every large group of people has some members who deviate from the norm, and some who are bent on destruction. It is worth remembering that the worst terrorist act in the United States before September 11 was the one committed by Timothy McVeigh, a purely homegrown antigovernment fanatic. Similarly, the Aum Shinrykio cult, which released sarin

in the Tokyo subway system in 1995, had nothing to do with Islam. Even if the current wave of Islamic terrorism turns out to be generational or cyclical, like terrorist waves in the past, the world will still have to confront the long-term secular dangers arising out of the democratization of technology.

Lethality has been increasing. In the 1970s, the Palestinian attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics or the killings by the Red Brigades that galvanized world attention cost dozens of lives. In the 1980s, Sikh extremists bombed an Air India flight and killed over 300 people. September 11, 2001, cost several thousand lives—and all of this escalation occurred without the use of weapons of mass destruction. If one extrapolates this lethality trend and imagines a deviant group in some society gaining access to biological or nuclear materials within the coming decade, it is possible to imagine terrorists being able to destroy millions of lives.

In the twentieth century, a pathological individual like Hitler or Stalin or Pol Pot required the apparatus of a totalitarian government to kill large numbers of people. Unfortunately, it is now all too easy to envisage extremist groups and individuals killing millions without the instruments of governments. This is truly the “privatization of war,” and it represents a dramatic change in world politics. Moreover, this next step in the escalation of terrorism could have profound effects on the nature of our urban civilization. What will happen to the willingness of people to locate in cities, to our ability to sustain cultural institutions, if instead of destroying two office buildings, a future attack destroys the lower half of Manhattan, the City area of London, or the Left Bank of Paris?

The new terrorism is not like the 1970s terrorism of the IRA, the ETA (the military wing of the Basque separatist movement), or Italy's Red Brigades, nor is the vulnerability limited to any one society. A “business as usual” attitude toward curbing terrorism is not enough. Force still plays a role in world politics, but its nature has changed in the twenty-first century. Technology is increasing terrorists' access to destructive power, but they also benefit greatly from increased capacities to communicate—with each other across juris-

dictions, and with global audiences. As we will see in chapter 3, many terrorists groups also have soft as well as hard power. The United States was correct in altering its national security strategy to focus on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction after September 11, 2001. But the means the Bush administration chose focused too heavily on hard power and did not take enough account of soft power. And that is a mistake, because it is through soft power that terrorists gain general support as well as new recruits.

### THE INTERPLAY OF HARD AND SOFT POWER

Hard and soft power sometimes reinforce and sometimes interfere with each other. A country that courts popularity may be loath to exercise its hard power when it should, but a country that throws its weight around without regard to the effects on its soft power may find others placing obstacles in the way of its hard power. No country likes to feel manipulated, even by soft power. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, hard power can create myths of invincibility or inevitability that attract others. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy went ahead with nuclear testing despite negative polls because he worried about global perceptions of Soviet gains in the arms race. Kennedy “was willing to sacrifice some of America's ‘soft’ prestige in return for gains in the harder currency of military prestige.”<sup>37</sup> On a lighter note, it is amusing that in 2003, just a few months after massive antiwar protests in London and Milan, fashion shows in those cities used models in U.S. military commando gear exploding balloons. As one designer put it, American symbols “are still the strongest security blanket.”<sup>38</sup>

Throughout history, weaker states have often joined together to balance and limit the power of a stronger state that threatens. But not always. Sometimes the weak are attracted to jumping on the bandwagon led by a strong country, particularly when they have little choice or when the large country's military power is accompanied

by soft power. Moreover, as we saw earlier, hard power can sometimes have an attractive or soft side. As Osama bin Laden put it in one of his videos, "When people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature, they will like the strong horse."<sup>39</sup> And to deliberately mix the metaphor, people are more likely to be sympathetic to underdogs than to bet on them.

The 2003 Iraq War provides an interesting example of the interplay of the two forms of power. Some of the motives for war were based on the deterrent effect of hard power. Donald Rumsfeld is reported to have entered office believing that the United States "was seen around the world as a paper tiger, a weak giant that couldn't take a punch" and determined to reverse that reputation.<sup>40</sup> America's military victory in the first Gulf War had helped to produce the Oslo process on Middle East peace, and its 2003 victory in Iraq might eventually have a similar effect. Moreover, states like Syria and Iran might be deterred in their future support of terrorists. These were all hard power reasons to go to war. But another set of motives related to soft power. The neoconservatives believed that American power could be used to export democracy to Iraq and transform the politics of the Middle East. If successful, the war would become self-legitimizing. As William Kristol and Lawrence Kaplan put it, "What is wrong with dominance in the service of sound principles and high ideals?"<sup>41</sup>

Part of the contest about going to war in Iraq became a struggle over the legitimacy of the war. Even when a military balance of power is impossible (as at present, with America the only superpower), other countries can still band together to deprive the U.S. policy of legitimacy and thus weaken American soft power. France, Russia, and China chafed at American military unipolarity and urged a more multipolar world. In Charles Krauthammer's view, Iraq "provided France an opportunity to create the first coherent challenge to that dominance."<sup>42</sup> Even without directly countering the superpower's military power, the weaker states hoped to deter the U.S. by making it more costly for us to use our hard power.<sup>43</sup> They were not able to prevent the United States from going to war,

but by depriving the United States of the legitimacy of a second Security Council resolution, they certainly made it more expensive.

Soft balancing was not limited to the UN arena. Outside the UN, diplomacy and peace movements helped transform the global debate from the sins of Saddam to the threat of American empire. That made it difficult for allied countries to provide bases and support and thus cut into American hard power. As noted earlier, the Turkish parliament's refusal to allow transport of ground troops and Saudi Arabia's reluctance to allow American use of air bases that had been available in 1991 are cases in point.

Since the global projection of American military force in the future will require access and overflight rights from other countries, such soft balancing can have real effects on hard power. When support for America becomes a serious vote loser, even friendly leaders are less likely to accede to our requests. In addition, bypassing the UN raised the economic costs to the United States after the war, leading the columnist Fareed Zakaria to observe, "The imperial style of foreign policy is backfiring. At the end of the Iraq war the administration spurned any kind of genuine partnership with the world. It pounded away at the United Nations."<sup>44</sup>

In the summer of 2003, the Bush administration's initial resistance to a significant role for the United Nations in the reconstruction of Iraq is estimated to have cost the United States more than \$100 billion, or about \$1,000 per American household. In most major peacekeeping missions, the UN covers most of the expenses for countries that contribute troops. In the 1991 Gulf War, the broad coalition assembled by President George H. W. Bush covered 80 percent of the costs, and during the Clinton interventions abroad, the United States shouldered only 15 percent of the reconstruction and peacekeeping costs.<sup>45</sup> But without a UN mandate, some countries refused to participate in peacekeeping in Iraq, and for those who did—countries such as Poland, Ukraine, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and others—it was estimated that the United States would have to spend \$2.50 million to help underwrite their participation.<sup>46</sup>

quarters for American hard power) showed bloody pictures of civilian casualties night after night. An Egyptian parliamentarian observed, "You can't imagine how the military strikes on Baghdad and other cities are provoking people every night."<sup>51</sup> In Pakistan, a former diplomat reported that "the US invasion of Iraq is a complete gift to the Islamic parties. People who would otherwise turn up their noses at them are now flocking to their banner."<sup>52</sup> American intelligence and law enforcement officials reported that Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups intensified their recruitment on three continents by "tapping into rising anger about the American campaign for war in Iraq."<sup>53</sup> After the war, polls found a rise in support for bin Laden and a fall in the popularity of the United States even in friendly countries such as Indonesia and Jordan.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, in Europe polls showed that the way the United States went about the Iraq War had dissipated the outflow of sympathy and goodwill that had followed the September 11 events. It is still too soon to tell whether the hard-power gains from the war in Iraq will in the long run exceed the soft-power losses, or how permanent the latter will turn out to be, but the war provided a fascinating case study of the interaction of the two types of power.

Looking to the future, much will depend on the effectiveness of American policies in creating a better Iraq and moving the Middle East peace process forward. In addition, much will depend on whether the intelligence failures and political exaggeration of intelligence evidence will have a permanent damaging effect on the credibility of the American government when it approaches other countries for help on cases like Iran and North Korea, as well as in the war on terrorism. As the British weekly *The Economist* observed, "The spies erred and the politicians exaggerated. . . . The war, we think, was justified. But in making the case for it, Mr Bush and Mr Blair did not play straight with their people."<sup>55</sup>

Skeptics argue that because countries cooperate out of self-interest, the loss of soft power does not matter much. But the skeptics miss the point that cooperation is a matter of degree, and that degree is affected by attraction or repulsion. They also miss the

Some neoconservatives argued that the solution was to avoid the UN and to deny its legitimacy. For some, thwarting the UN was a gain.<sup>47</sup> They viewed the Iraq War as a "twofer": it removed Saddam and damaged the UN. Some urged the creation of an alliance of democracies to replace the UN. But such responses ignore the fact that the key divisions were among the democracies, and the United States can influence but not alone determine international views of the legitimacy of the UN. Moreover, soft balancing that puts pressure on parliaments in democracies can be conducted outside the framework of the UN. The Internet has allowed protests to be quickly mobilized by free-wheeling amorphous groups, rather than hierarchical organizations. In the Vietnam era, planning a protest required weeks and months of pamphlets, posters, and phone calls, and it took four years before the size of the protest rallies, 25,000 at first, reached half a million in 1969. In contrast, 800,000 people turned out in the United States and 1.5 million in Europe on one weekend in February 2003 before the start of the war.<sup>48</sup>

Protests do not represent the "international community," but they do often affect the attitudes of editorial writers, parliamentarians, and other influential people in important countries whose views are summarized by that vague phrase.<sup>49</sup> Though the concept of an international community may be imprecise, even those who dismissed international concerns about how the United States entered the war seem to appeal to such opinion when they argue that the legitimacy of American actions will be accepted after the fact if we produce a better Iraq. Such post hoc legitimization may help to restore American soft power that was lost on the way in, but it also shows that legitimacy matters. And in the difficult cases of Iran and North Korea, it is worth noting that President Bush appealed to the views of the "international community" that some of his advisors dismissed as "illusory."<sup>50</sup> The continual contest for legitimacy illustrates the importance of soft power. Morality can be a power reality.

The initial effect of the Iraq War on opinion in the Islamic world was quite negative. Al Jazeera television (the soft-power resource owned by the same government of Qatar that provided head-

point that the effects on nonstate actors and recruitment to terrorist organization do not depend on government attitudes. Already in 2002, well before the Iraq War, reactions against heavy-handed American policies on the Korean peninsula had led to a dramatic drop over the past three years in the percentage of the Korean population favoring an American alliance, from 89 to only 56 percent.<sup>56</sup> That will complicate dealing with the dangerous case of North Korea. Whether in the Middle East or in East Asia, hard and soft power are inextricably intertwined in today's world.

### POWER IN A GLOBAL INFORMATION AGE

Power today is less tangible and less coercive among the advanced democracies than it was in the past. At the same time, much of the world does not consist of advanced democracies, and that limits the global transformation of power. For example, most African and the Middle Eastern countries have preindustrial agricultural economies, weak institutions, and authoritarian rulers. Failed states such as Somalia, Congo, Sierra Leone, and Liberia provide venues for violence. Some large countries such as China, India, and Brazil are industrializing and may suffer some of the disruptions that analogous parts of the West encountered at similar stages of their development early in the twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> In such a diverse world, all three sources of power—military, economic, and soft—remain relevant, although in different degrees in different relationships. However, if the current economic and social trends of the information revolution continue, soft power will become more important in the mix.

The information revolution and globalization of the economy are transforming and shrinking the world. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, these two forces have enhanced American power. But with time, technology will spread to other countries and peoples, and America's relative preeminence will diminish. Today Americans represent one twentieth of the global population total, but nearly half of the world's Internet users. Though English may

	Behaviors	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	coercion deterrence protection	threats force	coercive diplomacy war alliance
Economic Power	inducement coercion	payments sanctions	aid bribes sanctions
Soft Power	attraction agenda setting	values culture policies institutions	public diplomacy bilateral and multilateral diplomacy

Three Types of Power

remain the *lingua franca*, as Latin did after the ebb of Rome's might, at some point in the future, perhaps in a decade or two, the Asian cyber-community and economy may loom larger than the American. Even more important, the information revolution is creating virtual communities and networks that cut across national borders. Transnational corporations and nongovernmental actors (terrorists included) will play larger roles. Many of these organizations will have soft power of their own as they attract citizens into coalitions that cut across national boundaries. Politics then becomes in part a competition for attractiveness, legitimacy, and credibility. The ability to share information—and to be believed—becomes an important source of attraction and power.

This political game in a global information age suggests that the relative importance of soft power will increase. The countries that are likely to be more attractive and gain soft power in the information age are those with multiple channels of communication that help to frame issues; whose dominant culture and ideas are closer to prevailing global norms (which now emphasize liberalism, pluralism,



and autonomy); and whose credibility is enhanced by their domestic and international values and policies. These conditions suggest opportunities for the United States, but also for Europe and others, as we shall see in chapter 3.

The soft power that is becoming more important in the information age is in part a social and economic by-product rather than solely a result of official government action. Nonprofit institutions with soft power of their own can complicate and obstruct government efforts, and commercial purveyors of popular culture can hinder as well as help the government achieve its objectives. But the larger long-term trends can help the United States if it learns to use them well. To the extent that official policies at home and abroad are consistent with democracy, human rights, openness, and respect for the opinions of others, America will benefit from the trends of this global information age. But there is a danger that the United States may obscure the deeper message of its values through arrogance. As we shall see in the next chapter, American culture high and low still helps produce soft power in the information age, but government actions also matter, not only through programs like the Voice of America and Fulbright scholarships, but, even more important, when policies avoid arrogance and stand for values that others admire. The larger trends of the information age are in America's favor, but only if we learn to stop stepping on our best message. Smart power means learning better how to combine our hard and soft power.



## Soft Power and American Foreign Policy

**A**NTI-AMERICANISM HAS INCREASED in the past few years. Thomas Pickering, a seasoned diplomat, considered 2003 “as high a zenith of anti-Americanism as we’ve seen for a long time.”<sup>1</sup> Polls show that our soft-power losses can be traced largely to our foreign policy. “A widespread and fashionable view is that the United States is a classically imperialist power. . . . That mood has been expressed in different ways by different people, from the hockey fans in Montreal who boo the American national anthem to the high school students in Switzerland who do not want to go to the United States as exchange students.”<sup>2</sup> An Australian observer concluded that “the lesson of Iraq is that the US’s soft power is in decline. Bush went to war having failed to win a broader military coalition or UN authorization. This had two direct consequences: a rise in anti-American sentiment, lifting terrorist recruitment; and a higher cost to the US for the war and reconstruction effort.”<sup>3</sup> Pluralities in 15 out of 24 countries responding to a Gallup International poll said that American foreign policies had a negative effect on their attitudes toward the United States.

A Eurobarometer poll found that a majority of Europeans believe that the United States tends to play a negative role in fighting global poverty, protecting the environment, and maintaining peace in the world.<sup>4</sup> When asked in a Pew poll to what extent they thought

the United States "takes your interests into account," a majority in 20 out of 42 countries surveyed said "Not too much" or "Not at all."<sup>5</sup> In many countries, unfavorable ratings were highest among younger people. American pop culture may be widely admired among young people, but the unpopularity of our foreign policies is making the next generation question American power.<sup>6</sup>

American music and films are more popular in Britain, France, and Germany than they were 20 years ago, another period when American policies were unpopular in Europe, but the attraction of our policies is even lower than it was then.<sup>7</sup> There are also hints that unpopular foreign policies might be spilling over and undercutting the attractiveness of some other aspects of American popular culture. A 2003 Roper study showed that "for the first time since 1998, consumers in 30 countries signaled their disenchantment with America by being less likely to buy Nike products or eat at McDonald's. . . . At the same time, 9 of the top 12 Asian and European firms, including Sony, BMW and Panasonic, saw their scores rise."<sup>8</sup>

#### THE COSTS OF IGNORING SOFT POWER

Skeptics about soft power say not to worry. Popularity is ephemeral and should not be a guide for foreign policy in any case. The United States can act without the world's applause. We are so strong we can do as we wish. We are the world's only superpower, and that fact is bound to engender envy and resentment. Fouad Ajami has stated recently, "The United States need not worry about hearts and minds in foreign lands."<sup>9</sup> Columnist Cal Thomas refers to "the fiction that our enemies can be made less threatening by what America says and does."<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the United States has been unpopular in the past yet managed to recover. We do not need permanent allies and institutions. We can always pick up a coalition of the willing when we need to. Donald Rumsfeld is wont to say that the issues should determine the coalitions, not vice versa.

But it would be a mistake to dismiss the recent decline in our attractiveness so lightly. It is true that the United States has recovered from unpopular policies in the past, but that was against the backdrop of the Cold War, in which other countries still feared the Soviet Union as the greater evil. Moreover, as we saw in chapter 2, while the United States' size and association with disruptive modernity is real and unavoidable, smart policies can soften the sharp edges of that reality and reduce the resentments they engender. That is what the U.S. did after World War II. We used our soft-power resources and co-opted others into a set of alliances and institutions that lasted for 60 years. We won the Cold War against the Soviet Union with a strategy of containment that used our soft power as well as our hard power.

It is true that the new threat of transnational terrorism increased American vulnerability, and some of our unilateralism after September 11 was driven by fear. But the United States cannot meet the new threat identified in the national security strategy without the cooperation of other countries. They will cooperate up to a point out of mere self-interest, but their degree of cooperation is also affected by the attractiveness of the United States. Take Pakistan for example. President Pervez Musharraf faces a complex game of cooperating with the United States in the war on terrorism while managing a large anti-American constituency at home. He winds up balancing concessions and retractions. If the United States were more attractive to the Pakistani populace, we would see more concessions in the mix.

It is not smart to discount soft power as just a question of image, public relations, and ephemeral popularity. As we argued earlier, it is a form of power—a means of obtaining desired outcomes. When we discount the importance of our attractiveness to other countries, we pay a price. Most important, if the United States is so unpopular in a country that being pro-American is a kiss of death in that country's domestic politics, political leaders are unlikely to make concessions to help us. Turkey, Mexico, and Chile were prime examples in the run-up to the Iraq War in March 2003. When American policies

lose their legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of others, attitudes of distrust tend to fester and further reduce our leverage. For example, after 9/11 there was an outpouring of sympathy from Germans for the United States, and Germany joined a military campaign against the Al Qaeda network. But as the United States geared up for the unpopular Iraq War, Germans expressed widespread disbelief about the reasons the U.S. gave for going to war such as the alleged connection of Iraq to 9/11 and the imminence of the threat of weapons of mass destruction. German suspicions were reinforced by what they saw as biased American media coverage during the war, and by the failure to find weapons of mass destruction or prove the connection to 9/11 in the aftermath of the war. The combination fostered a climate in which conspiracy theories flourished. By July 2003, according to a Reuters poll, one-third of Germans under the age of 30 said that they thought the American government might even have staged the original September 11 attacks.<sup>11</sup>

Absurd views feed upon each other, and paranoia can be contagious. American attitudes toward foreigners harden, and we begin to believe that the rest of the world really does hate us. Some Americans begin to hold grudges, to mistrust all Muslims, to boycott French wines and rename French fries, to spread and believe false rumors.<sup>12</sup> In turn, foreigners see Americans as uninformed and insensitive to anyone's interests but their own. They see our media wrapped in the American flag. Some Americans in turn succumb to residual strands of isolationism, and say that if others choose to see us that way, "To hell with 'em." If foreigners are going to be like that, who cares whether we are popular or not. But to the extent that Americans allow ourselves to become isolated, we embolden our enemies such as Al Qaeda. Such reactions undercut our soft power and are self-defeating in terms of the outcomes we want.

Some hard-line skeptics might say that whatever the merits of soft power, it has little role to play in the current war on terrorism. Osama bin Laden and his followers are repelled, not attracted, by American culture, values, and policies. Military power was essential in defeating the Taliban government in Afghanistan, and soft power

will never convert fanatics. Charles Krauthammer, for example, argued soon after our swift military victory in Afghanistan that it proved that "the new unilateralism" worked. That is true up to a point, but the skeptics mistake half the answer for the whole solution.

Look again at Afghanistan. Precision bombing and Special Forces defeated the Taliban government, but U.S. forces in Afghanistan wrapped up less than a quarter of Al Qaeda, a transnational network with cells in 60 countries. The United States cannot bomb Al Qaeda cells in Hamburg, Kuala Lumpur, or Detroit. Success against them depends on close civilian cooperation, whether sharing intelligence, coordinating police work across borders, or tracing global financial flows. America's partners work with us partly out of self-interest, but the inherent attractiveness of U.S. policies can and does influence their degree of cooperation.

Equally important, the current struggle against Islamist terrorism is not a clash of civilizations but a contest whose outcome is closely tied to a civil war between moderates and extremists within Islamic civilization. The United States and other advanced democracies will win only if moderate Muslims win, and the ability to attract the moderates is critical to victory. We need to adopt policies that appeal to moderates, and to use public diplomacy more effectively to explain our common interests. We need a better strategy for wielding our soft power. We will have to learn better to combine hard and soft power if we wish to meet the new challenges.

As we saw in chapter 1, beneath the surface structure, the world changed in profound ways during the last decades of the twentieth century. September 11 was like a flash of lightning on a summer evening that displayed an altered landscape, and we are still left groping in the dark wondering how to find our way through it. George W. Bush entered office committed to a traditional realist foreign policy that would focus on great powers like China and Russia, and eschew nation building in failed states of the less developed world. But in September 2002, his administration proclaimed a new national security strategy that was based on the recognition that, as Bush said, "We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by cata-

strophic technologies falling into the hands of the embittered few." Instead of engaging in strategic rivalry, Bush declared, "Today, the world's great powers find ourselves on the same side—united by common dangers of terrorist violence and chaos." The United States increased its development assistance and its efforts to combat AIDS because "weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interest as strong states."<sup>13</sup> The historian John Lewis Gaddis compared the new strategy to the seminal days that redefined American foreign policy in the 1940s after World War II.<sup>14</sup>

The new strategy attracted criticism at home and abroad for its excessive rhetoric about preemptive military strikes and the promotion of American primacy. Critics pointed out that the practice of preemption is not new, but turning it into a doctrine weakens international norms and encourages other countries to engage in risky actions. Similarly, American primacy is a fact, but there was no need for rhetoric that rubs other peoples' noses in it. Notwithstanding such flaws, the new strategy was a response to the deep trends in world politics that were illuminated by the events of September 11, 2001. The "privatization of war"—by, for example, transnational groups such as Al Qaeda—is a major historical change in world politics that must be addressed. This is what the new Bush strategy gets right. What the United States has not yet sorted out is how to go about implementing the new approach. We have done far better on identifying the ends than the means. On that dimension, both the administration and the Congress were deeply divided.

According to the national security strategy, the greatest threats that the American people face are transnational terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and particularly their combination. Yet meeting the challenge posed by transnational military organizations that could acquire weapons of mass destruction requires the cooperation of other countries—and cooperation is strengthened by soft power. Similarly, efforts to promote democracy in Iraq and elsewhere will require the help of others. Reconstruction in Iraq and peacekeeping in failed states are far more likely to succeed and to be

less costly if shared with others rather than appearing to be American imperial occupation. The fact that the United States squandered its soft power in the way that it went to war meant that the aftermath turned out to be much more costly than it need have been.

Even after the war, in the hubris and glow of victory in May 2003, the United States resisted giving a significant international role to the United Nations and others in Iraq. But as casualties and costs mounted over the summer, the U.S. found many other countries reluctant to share the burden without a UN blessing. As the top American commander for Iraq, General John Abizaid, reported, "You can't underestimate the public perception both within Iraq and within the Arab world about the percentage of the force being so heavily American." But, Abizaid continued, other countries "need to have their internal political constituents satisfied that they're playing a role as an instrument of the international community and not as a pawn of the United States." Before the Madrid conference of potential donors to Iraq in October 2003, the *New York Times* reported that L. Paul Bremer, the chief occupation administrator in Baghdad, said, "I need the money so bad we have to move off our principled opposition to the international community being in charge."<sup>15</sup> Neo-conservative commentators such as Max Boot urged conservatives not to treat marginalizing the UN as a core principle, and Charles Krauthammer, proud author of "the new unilateralism," called for a new UN resolution because, he said, Russia, India, and others "say they would contribute only under such a resolution. . . . The U.S. is not overstretched. But psychologically we are up against our limits. The American people are simply not prepared to undertake worldwide nation building."<sup>16</sup>

In the global information age, the attractiveness of the United States will be crucial to our ability to achieve the outcomes we want. Rather than having to put together pickup coalitions of the willing for each new game, we will benefit if we are able to attract others into institutional alliances and eschew weakening those we have already created. NATO, for example, not only aggregates the capabilities of advanced nations, but its interminable committees, procedures, and

exercises also allow them to train together and quickly become inter-operable when a crisis occurs. As for alliances, if the United States is an attractive source of security and reassurance, other countries will set their expectations in directions that are conducive to our interests. For example, initially the U.S.-Japan security treaty, signed in 1951, was not very popular in Japan, but over the decades, polls show that it became more attractive to the Japanese public. Once that happened, Japanese politicians began to build it into their approaches to foreign policy. The United States benefits when it is regarded as a constant and trusted source of attraction, so that other countries are not obliged continually to reexamine their options in an atmosphere of uncertain coalitions. In the Japan case, broad acceptance of the U.S. by the Japanese public "contributed to the maintenance of US hegemony" and "served as political constraints compelling the ruling elites to continue cooperation with the United States."<sup>17</sup> Popularity can contribute to stability.

Finally, as the RAND Corporation's John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt argue, power in the global information age will come not just from strong defenses, but from strong sharing. A traditional realpolitik mind-set makes it difficult to share with others. But in the information age, such sharing not only enhances the ability of others to cooperate with us but also increases their inclination to do so.<sup>18</sup> As we share intelligence and capabilities with others, we develop common outlooks and approaches that improve our ability to deal with the new challenges. Power flows from that attraction. Missing the importance of attraction as merely ephemeral popularity ignores key insights from new theories of leadership as well as the new realities of the information age. We cannot afford that.

#### AMERICAN EMPIRE?

Not everyone agrees with this picture of the changing nature of world politics, and thus they recommend a different approach to American foreign policy. Many argue that our new vulnerability re-

quires a much higher degree of forceful control. Moreover, our unprecedented power now makes it possible. The writer Robert Kaplan has argued, "It is a cliché these days to observe that the United States now possesses a global empire; the question now is how the American empire should operate on a tactical level to manage an unruly world."<sup>19</sup> William Kristol, editor of the neoconservative magazine *The Weekly Standard*, says, "We need to err on the side of being strong. And if people want to say we're an imperialist power, fine."<sup>20</sup> Writing in the same journal in 2001, Max Boot agreed in the explicitly titled article "The Case for an American Empire."<sup>21</sup>

Three decades ago, the radical Left used the term "American empire" as a disparaging epithet. Now the phrase has come out of the closet and is used by a number of analysts on both the Left and the Right to explain and guide American foreign policy. Andrew Bacevich, for example, argues that the notion of an American empire is approaching mainstream respectability, and we should not worry about the semantic details—the negative connotations of the word "empire."<sup>22</sup> But words matter. In *Alice in Wonderland*, the Red Queen tells Alice that she can make words mean whatever she wants. But the world of the twenty-first century is not Wonderland. If we want to communicate clearly with others, we have to take care what we use our words to do. If America is like no other empire in history, as Bacevich claims, then in what sense is it an empire? The use of the term may point up some useful analogies, but it may also mislead us and others by obscuring important differences.

In many ways the metaphor of empire is seductive. The American military has a global reach with bases around the world and its regional commanders sometimes act like proconsuls and are even called proconsuls in the press. English is a lingua franca like Latin. The American economy is the largest in the world, and American culture serves as a magnet. But it is a mistake to confuse the politics of primacy with the politics of empire. Though unequal relationships certainly exist between the United States and weaker powers, and can be conducive to exploitation, absent formal political control, the term "imperial" can be misleading. Its acceptance would be a

disastrous guide for American foreign policy because it fails to take into account how the world has changed. The United States is certainly not an empire in the way we think of the European overseas empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because the core feature of such imperialism was direct political control.<sup>23</sup> The United States has more power resources than Britain had at its imperial peak. On the other hand, the U.S. has less control over the behavior that occurs inside other countries than Britain 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. Even where Britain used indirect rule through local potentates, as in Uganda, it exercised far more control than the United States does today. Some try to rescue the metaphor by referring to "informal empire" or the "imperialism of free trade," but this simply obscures important differences in degrees of control suggested by comparisons with real historical empires. Yes, the Americans have widespread influence, but in 2003, the United States could not even get Mexico and Chile to vote for a second resolution on Iraq in the UN Security Council. The British Empire did not have that kind of problem with Kenya or India.

Devotees of the new imperialism say, "Don't be so literal. 'Empire' is merely a metaphor." But the problem with the metaphor is it implies a control from Washington that is unrealistic, and reinforces the prevailing strong temptations toward unilateralism that are present in Congress and parts of the administration. As we saw in chapter 1, the costs of occupation of other countries has become prohibitive in a world of multiple nationalisms, and the legitimacy of empire is broadly challenged.

We also saw that power depends on context, and the distribution of power differs greatly in different domains. We saw that in the global information age, power is distributed among countries in a pattern that resembles a complex three-dimensional chess game. On the top chessboard of political-military issues, military power is largely unipolar, but on the economic board, in the middle, the

United States is not a hegemon or an empire, and it must bargain as an equal when Europe acts in a unified way. And on the bottom chessboard of transnational relations, power is chaotically dispersed, and it makes no sense to use traditional terms such as "unipolarity," "hegemony," or "American empire." Those who recommend an imperial American foreign policy based on traditional military descriptions of American power are relying on a woefully inadequate analysis. If you are in a three-dimensional game, you will lose if you focus only on one board and fail to notice the other boards and the vertical connections among them—witness the connections in the war on terrorism between military actions on the top board, where we removed a dangerous tyrant in Iraq, but simultaneously increased the ability of the Al Qaeda network to gain new recruits on the bottom, transnational, board.<sup>24</sup>

Because of its leading edge in the information revolution and its past investment in military power, the United States will likely remain the world's single-most powerful country well into the twenty-first century. French dreams of a multipolar military world are unlikely to be realized anytime soon, and the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, has explicitly eschewed such a goal.<sup>25</sup> But not all the important types of power come out of the barrel of a gun. Hard power is relevant to getting the outcomes we want on all three chessboards, but many of the transnational issues such as climate change, the spread of infectious diseases, international crime, and terrorism cannot be resolved by military force alone. Representing the dark side of globalization, these issues are inherently multi-lateral and require cooperation for their solution. Soft power is particularly important in dealing with the issues that arise from the bottom chessboard, transnational relations. To describe such a three-dimensional world as an American empire fails to capture the real nature of the foreign policy tasks that we face.

Another problem for those who urge that we accept the idea of an American empire is that they misunderstand the underlying nature of American public opinion and institutions. Even if it is true



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 budget for the State Department (including AID, the Agency for International Development) is only 1 percent of the federal budget. The United States spends nearly 17 times as much on its military as it does on foreign affairs, and there is little indication that this is about to change in an era of tax cuts and budget deficits. Moreover, our military is designed for fighting rather than police work, and the Pentagon under Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld initially cut back on training for peacekeeping operations. The U.S. has designed a military that is better suited to kick down the door, beat up a dictator, and then go home rather than stay for the harder imperial work of building a democratic polity. For a variety of reasons, both about the world and about the United States, Americans should avoid the misleading metaphor of empire as a guide for our foreign policy. Empire is not the narrative we need to help us understand and cope with the global information age of the twenty-first century.

#### AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TRADITIONS

As we saw in chapter 2, the United States has a variety of foreign policy traditions to draw on that overlap, reinforce, and sometimes conflict with each other. The writer Walter Mead has used the device of identifying these traditions with the names of past leaders as a helpful way to distinguish them.<sup>29</sup> The realists, who prudently pursue national interest and commerce, are named after Alexander Hamilton. Populists, who emphasize self-reliance and frequent use of coercion, he names for Andrew Jackson. He calls "Jeffersonians" those who advocate the pursuit of democracy by being a shining beacon to others rather than (in John Quincy Adams's words) "going

that unilateral occupation and transformation of undemocratic regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere would reduce some of the sources of transnational terrorism, the question is whether the American public will tolerate an imperial role for its government. 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 our "chronically short time frame."<sup>26</sup> Although an advocate of empire, Ferguson worries that the American political system is not up to the task, and, for better or for worse, he is right.

The United States has intervened and governed countries in Central America, the Caribbean, and the Philippines, and was briefly tempted into real imperialism when it emerged as a world power a century ago, but the formal imperial interlude did not last.<sup>27</sup> Unlike for the British, for Americans imperialism has never been a comfortable experience, and only a small portion of the cases of American military occupation led directly to the establishment of democracies. The establishment of democracy in Germany and Japan after World War II remains the exception rather than the rule, and in these countries it took nearly a decade. American empire is not limited by "imperial understretch" in the sense of costing an impossible portion of our GDP. We devoted a much higher percentage of GDP to the military budget during the Cold War than we do today. The understretch will come from having to police more and more peripheral countries with nationally resistant publics than foreign or American public opinion will accept. Polls show little taste for empire among Americans. Instead, the American public continues to say that it favors multilateralism and working with the UN. Perhaps that is why Michael Ignatieff, a Canadian advocate of accepting the empire metaphor, qualifies it by referring to the American role in the world as "Empire Lite."<sup>28</sup>

forth in search of dragons to destroy." Finally, "Wilsonians" are the idealists who follow Woodrow Wilson in seeking to make the world safe for democracy.

Each approach has its virtues and faults. The Hamiltonians are prudent, but their realism lacks a moral appeal to many at home and abroad. The Jacksonians are robust and tough, but lack staying power and allies. Both the Hamiltonians and Jacksonians fail to accord adequate importance to soft power. The Jeffersonians, on the other hand, have plenty of soft power, but not enough hard power. As we saw in chapter 1, being a shining city on a hill is attractive but often is not sufficient to achieve all foreign policy goals. The Wilsonians are also long on soft power, but sometimes their idealism leads them to develop unrealistic ambitions. Their danger is that their foreign policy vehicles often have strong accelerators but weak brakes and are thus prone to go off the road.

Whereas Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians tend toward prudent and conservative foreign policies that do not rock the boat, Wilsonians seek to transform the international situation. As we saw in chapter 4 in the case of the Middle East, for years the United States followed a Hamiltonian policy that sought stability through support of autocrats and commerce, but in the end this did not prevent the rise of radical Islamist ideology and terrorism. The Wilsonians urge a transformational rather than a conservative or status quo foreign policy. In their view, without democratization, the Middle East (and other regions) will continue to be a breeding ground of rogue states and terrorist threats. Much of the debate inside the Bush administration over the Iraq War was between traditional Hamiltonian realists (such as Secretary of State Colin Powell) and a coalition of Jacksonians (such as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld) plus neoconservative Wilsonians (such as Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz). Part of the confusion over American objectives in going to war was that the administration used a variety of arguments that appealed to different camps. The suggestion of a connection to Al Qaeda and 9/11 was important to Jacksonians, who sought revenge and deterrence; the argument

that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction in violation of UN resolutions appealed to Hamiltonians, and traditional Wilsonians in the Congress; and the need to remove a bloody dictator and transform Middle Eastern politics was important to the new Wilsonians.

In recent years, the Wilsonians have divided into two camps. President Woodrow Wilson, of course, was a Democrat, and traditional Wilsonians continue to stress both the promotion of democracy and the role of international institutions. The neoconservatives, many of whom split off from the Democratic Party after Vietnam, stress the importance of democracy, but drop Wilson's emphasis on international institutions. They do not want to be held back by institutional constraints and see our legitimacy coming from our focus on democracy. In that sense, the neoconservatives are advocates of soft power, but they focus too simply on substance and not enough on process. By downgrading the legitimacy that comes from institutional processes where others are consulted, they squander soft power.

Ironically, however, the only way to achieve the type of transformation that the neoconservatives seek is by working with others and avoiding the backlash that arises when the United States appears on the world stage as an imperial power acting unilaterally. What is more, since democracy cannot be imposed by force and requires a considerable time to take root, the most likely way to obtain staying power from the American public is through developing international legitimacy and burden sharing with allies and institutions. For Jacksonians such as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, this may not matter. They would prefer to punish the dictator and come home rather than engage in tedious nation building. In September 2003, Rumsfeld said of Iraq, "I don't believe it's our job to reconstruct the country."<sup>30</sup> But for serious neoconservatives, such as Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, their impatience with international institutions and allies may undercut their own objectives. They understand the importance of soft power, but fail to appreciate all its dimensions and dynamics.

## SOFT POWER AND POLICY

We saw earlier that soft power grows out of our culture, out of our domestic values and policies, and out of our foreign policy. Many of the effects of our culture, for better or for worse, are outside the control of government. But there is still a great deal that the government can do. We saw in chapter 4 that much more can be done to improve our public diplomacy in all dimensions. We can greatly improve our broadcast capabilities as well as our narrow-casting on the Internet. But both should be based on better listening as well. Newt Gingrich has written that "the impact and success of a new U.S. communication strategy should be measured continually on a country-by-country basis. An independent public affairs firm should report weekly on how U.S. messages are received in at least the world's 50 largest countries."<sup>31</sup> Such an approach would help us to select relevant themes as well as to fine-tune our short-term responses. And we should greatly increase our investment in soft power. We could easily afford to double the budget for public diplomacy, as well as raise its profile and direction from the White House.

Equally important will be to increase the exchanges across societies that allow our rich and diverse nongovernmental sectors to interact with those of other countries. It was a great mistake for the Clinton administration and the Congress to cut the budget and staff for cultural diplomacy and exchanges by nearly 30 percent after 1993.<sup>32</sup> And it is a mistake now to let visa policies curtail such contacts. The most effective communication often occurs not by means of distant broadcasts but in face-to-face contacts—what Edward R. Murrow called "the last three feet." In chapter 2 we saw how important cultural-exchange programs were in winning the Cold War. The best communicators are often not governments but civilians, both from the U.S. and from other countries.

We will need to be more inventive in this area, whether it be finding ways to improve the visa process for educational exchanges, encouraging more American students to study abroad, rethinking the role of the Peace Corps, inventing a major program for foreign-

ers to teach their languages in American schools, starting a corporation for public diplomacy that will help tap into the resources of the private and nonprofit sectors, or a myriad of other ways. As Michael Holtzman has observed about the Middle East, our public diplomacy must acknowledge a world that is far more skeptical of government messages than we have assumed. "To be credible to the so-called Arab street, public diplomacy should be directed mainly at spheres of everyday life. Washington should put its money into helping American doctors, teachers, businesses, religious leaders, athletic teams, and entertainers go abroad and provide the sorts of services the people of the Middle East are eager for."<sup>33</sup>

As we saw in chapter 2, many of the social and political problems the United States has at home are shared with other postmodern societies, and so invidious comparisons do not seriously undercut our soft power. Moreover, we maintain strengths of openness, civil liberties, and democracy that appeal to others. Problems arise for our soft power when we do not live up to our own standards. As we struggle to find the right balance between freedom and security in the fight against terrorism, it is important to remember that others are watching as well. The Bush administration responded to human rights groups' accusations that it was torturing suspects by reaffirming its rejection of any techniques to interrogate suspects that would constitute 'cruel' treatment prohibited by the Constitution.<sup>34</sup>

Some domestic policies, such as capital punishment and the absence of gun controls, reduce the attractiveness of the United States in other countries, but are the results of differences in values that may persist for some time. Other policies, such as the refusal to discourage the production of gas-guzzling vehicles, damage the American reputation because they appear self-indulgent and demonstrate an unwillingness to consider the effects we are having on global climate change and other countries. Similarly, domestic agricultural subsidies that are structured to protect wealthy farmers while we preach the virtue of free markets to poor countries appear hypocritical in the eyes of others. In a democracy, the "dog" of domestic

politics is often too large to be wagged by the "tail" of foreign policy, but when we ignore the connections between the two, our apparent hypocrisy is costly to our soft power.

The place where the government can do most in the near term to recover the recent American loss of soft power is by adjusting the style and substance of our foreign policy. Obviously there are times when foreign policies serve fundamental American interests and cannot and should not be changed. But tactics can often be adjusted without giving up basic interests. Style may be the easiest part. For one thing, the administration could go back to the wisdom about humility and warnings about arrogance that George W. Bush expressed in his 2000 campaign. There is no need to take pleasure in embarrassing allies, or to have a secretary of defense insulting them while a secretary of state is trying to woo them. As a British columnist wrote in the *Financial Times*, "I have a soft spot for Donald Rumsfeld. But as an ambassador for the American values so admired around the world, I can think of no one worse."<sup>35</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair put it well in his 2003 address to the American Congress when he said that the real challenge for the United States now "is to show that this is a partnership built on persuasion, not command."<sup>36</sup>

On the substance of policy, the Bush administration deserves credit for its efforts to align the United States with the long-term aspirations of poor people in Africa and elsewhere through its Millennium Challenge initiative, which promises to increase aid to countries willing to make reforms, as well as its efforts to increase resources to combat AIDS and other infectious diseases. Success in implementing those programs will represent a significant investment in American soft power. So also will be the serious promotion of the peace process in the Middle East. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice has said, "America is a country that really does have to be committed to values and to making life better for people around the world. . . . It's not just the sword, it's the olive branch that speaks to those intentions."<sup>37</sup>

As for the sword, the United States will continue to need it from time to time in the struggle against terrorism and in our efforts to

create stability. Maintaining our hard power is essential to security. But we will not succeed by the sword alone. Our doctrine of containment led to success in the Cold War not just because of military deterrence but because, as the famous diplomat George Kennan designed the policy, our soft power would help to transform the Soviet Bloc from within. Containment was not a static military doctrine but a transformational strategy, albeit one that took decades to accomplish. Indeed, Kennan frequently warned against what he regarded as the overmilitarization of containment and was a strong supporter of cultural contacts and exchanges. Those lessons about patience and the mixture of hard and soft power still stand us in good stead today.

When we do use our hard power, we will need to be more attentive to ways to make it less costly to our soft power by creating broad coalitions. Here the model should be the patient and painstaking work of George H. W. Bush in building the coalition for the first Gulf War. Those who write off "old Europe" as so enthralled by Venus that it is hopelessly opposed to the use of force should remember that 75 percent of the French and 63 percent of the German public supported the use of military force to free Kuwait before the Gulf War.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, both countries were active participants in NATO's use of military force against Serbia in the 1999 Kosovo War, despite the absence of a formal UN Security Council resolution. The difference was that in those two cases, American policy appeared legitimate. We had soft power, and were able to attract allies.

The UN is not the only source of legitimacy, and many people concluded that the Kosovo campaign was legitimate (though not formally legal) because it had the de facto support of a large majority of Security Council members. The UN is often an unwieldy institution. The veto power in the Security Council has meant that it has been able to authorize the use of force for a true collective-security operation only twice in half a century: in Korea and Kuwait. But it was designed to be a concert of large powers that would not work when they disagree. The veto is like a fuse box in the electrical system of a house. Better that the fuse blows and the lights go out than

and the public, has been torn between different approaches to the implementation of the new strategy. The result has been a mixture of successes and failures. We have been more successful in the domain of hard power, where we have invested more, trained more, and have a clearer idea of what we are doing. We have been less successful in the areas of soft power, where our public diplomacy has been woefully inadequate and our neglect of allies and institutions has created a sense of illegitimacy that has squandered our attractiveness.

Yet this is ironic, because the United States is the country that is at the forefront of the information revolution as well as the country that built some of the longest-lasting alliances and institutions that the modern world has seen. We should know how to adapt and work with such institutions since they have been central to our power for more than half a century. And the United States is a country with a vibrant social and cultural life that provides an almost infinite number of points of contact with other societies. What's more, during the Cold War, we demonstrated that we know how to use the soft-power resources that our society produces.

It is time now for us to draw upon and combine our traditions in a different way. We need more Jefferson and less Jackson. Our Wilsonians are correct about the importance of the democratic transformation of world politics over the long term, but they need to remember the role of institutions and allies. They also need to temper their impatience with a good mixture of Hamiltonian realism. In short, America's success will depend upon our developing a deeper understanding of the role of soft power and developing a better balance of hard and soft power in our foreign policy. That will be smart power. We have done it before; we can do it again.

that the house burns down. Moreover, as Kofi Annan pointed out after the Kosovo War, the UN is torn between the traditional strict interpretation of state sovereignty and the rise of international humanitarian and human rights law that sets limits on what leaders can do to their citizens. Moreover, politics of consensus have made the United Nations Charter virtually impossible to amend. Nonetheless, for all its flaws, the UN has proved useful in its humanitarian and peacekeeping roles where states agree, and it remains an important source of legitimization in world politics.

The latter point is particularly galling to the new unilateralists, who correctly point to the undemocratic nature of many of the regimes that vote and chair committees. But their proposed solution of replacing the United Nations with a new organization of democracies ignores the fact that the major divisions over Iraq were among the democracies. Rather than engage in futile efforts at ignoring the UN or changing its architecture, we should improve our underlying bilateral diplomacy with the other major powers and use the UN in the practical ways in which it can help with the new strategy. In addition to the UN's development and humanitarian agenda, the Security Council may wind up playing a background role related to North Korea; the Committee on Terrorism can help to prod states to improve their procedures; and UN peacekeepers can save us from having to be the world's lone policeman. The UN can be useful to us in a variety of practical ways if we work at it; unilateralist attacks on it by Americans will backfire in a way that undercuts our soft power.

AMERICANS ARE STILL WORKING THEIR WAY through the aftermath of September 11. We are groping for a path through the strange new landscape created by technology and globalization whose dark aspects were vividly illuminated on that traumatic occasion. The Bush administration has correctly identified the nature of the new challenges that the nation faces and has reoriented American strategy accordingly. But the administration, like the Congress