

Soft Power in International Politics: Defense and Continued Relevance

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Abstract : The paper will first elaborate on the concept of soft power as formulated by Joseph Nye, who argues that soft power is as important as hard power in international politics as it replaces coercion with non-coercive forms of co-optation and attraction. The central tenet of the paper is to extrapolate the continued relevance of soft power in international relations in the 21st century. It is argued that the relevance of soft power, in concurrence with hard power, is on the rise in the international system. This is found to be emanating out of two factors. First, the state-centric practice of international relations has expanded to allow other actors to participate in policymaking. This has led to the resources for power generation to become varied, largely move away from the control of governments, and to produce both hard and soft power attributes. Second, as the currency of coercive power seems to be devaluing in global politics, the role of intangible factors like soft power is getting more important in policymaking. The paper will then go on to elaborate on the critiques of the formulation of soft power from various perspectives, as well as the defenses to these critiques presented by soft power proponents. The paper will reflect on the continued relevance of soft power in international politics by giving the example of India, and how soft power has continued to serve its policy objectives over the years. It is observed that even as India is recognized as a rising superpower today, yet it has made a continuous effort in cultivating its soft power resources, which have proven to be its assets in furthering its foreign policy interests. In conclusion, the paper makes the point that soft power, in conjunction with hard power, will shape international politics in the coming times.

Keywords : foreign policy, India's soft power, international politics, smart power, soft power

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