

GENESIS OF THE «SOFT POWER » CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLICATION IN THE USA

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Abstract: Today, changes in the world have stimulated the search for new theories that could explain our reality, and these theories have led to the need to rethink the terms of power, power resources, and the development of modern technologies, the use of which allows us to participate in global geopolitical competition successfully. One of the most common trends today is the so-called "soft power" trend, which implies the absence of materialized violence, pressure, and a decrease in the importance of military coercion. The "soft power" theory is quite popular in scientific circles; relative to this concept, active work is being carried out on its theoretical and practical adaptation. However, obvious problems with this concept have also become apparent, including the content and interpretation of the term, its main components and content, etc. Also, the main problems of this concept include an insufficient theoretical base, as well as the impossibility of a clear division of what belongs to the "soft" tools' power " and what the main difference between " soft " power " and such widely used terms as media policy and cultural diplomacy. The article discusses the evolution of the term "soft" power, "the main concepts that formed the basis of the term, as well as problems that can be encountered when interpreting the terminology " soft" power. " This article also discusses the main directions and tactics of using "soft" tools power " in the USA in the field of education, cultural and economic spheres

Keywords: "Soft power," Joseph Nye, the genesis of the term, the practical meaning of "soft power," the content of the term, USA, media policy, tools, and US cultural policy.

Introduction

Today, we can reasonably say that the main instruments of international relations have changed from coercion to the search for consensus and also the search for hidden strategies for influencing one's opponent.

In his work «The concept of "soft power": a review of approaches in foreign science, » Mixalev V.M. said. The concept of soft power is a response to such a need. Today, we can see that several factors have led to an increase in the importance of "soft power":

- 1) increased costs of the use and threat of use of force among nuclear powers;
- 2) democratization of world politics;
- 3) the interdependence of the international environment, in which threats of punishment are becoming increasingly influential tools.;
- 4) social and political changes¹

Also, the rapid development of technology and access to information, which, thanks to the Internet, is complicated to control, has dramatically increased the role of soft power and persuasion today. However, we cannot say that brute methods are complex to power and irrelevant today.

¹Концепция «мягкой силы»: обзор подходов в зарубежной науке /Концепція «м'якої сили»: обзор подходов в зарубешној науке / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

The term was introduced into scientific circulation by the American political scientist J. Nye and very quickly gained popularity, first in academic and then in political circles. Thanks to the use of this tool, it became possible to influence partners and their consciousness to achieve voluntary cooperation and persuasion of an ally.

The study of this term and its origins is an essential part of political science “Although J. Nye coined the term in 1990, the concept of soft power originates in the work of H. Morgenthau, K. Knorr, and R. Kline.” For example, Morgenthau identifies nine elements of national power, among which are “...national character, national identity, the quality of diplomacy, and the quality of government, which are closely related to the intangible sources of power, that is, soft power.” Similarly, Carr writes that the “...power of opinion is no less important for political purposes than, although it is correlated with, military and economic power.”²

Other Western scientists also support this idea; for example, B. Mattern believes that Nye was unlikely to be the first to reveal the essence of power outside the context of threats or promises. However, this is also not entirely true because thinkers such as Foucault, Bourdieu, Gramsci, and others attached similar importance to power but never formulated the concept of “soft power.”³

I completely agree with the opinion of scientists, and I can also give an example of even earlier ideas related to soft influence on one’s enemies. In particular, even in the ancient treatises of Sun Tzu and Confucius, we can find an element inherent in the studied concept of “soft power”; on the other hand, we can also argue that the tradition of dynastic marriages established in ancient history, the tradition in which rulers married off their children to the rulers of other countries to gain some advantage in military or economic power, can be called highly conditional manifestations of ancient instruments of soft power.

Joseph Nye's main merit is that he tried to collect and specify what soft power is and its main properties, tools, and applications. Although his vision of the concept is criticized in many aspects, I believe his enormous contribution cannot be denied. This is to give the idea of “soft power” a more scientific appearance

Evolution of the Term in Works of J. Nye

The concept was first mentioned in 1990 in the article “Soft Power” (Foreign Policy magazine) and the book “Destined to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power.”

Although J. Nye's Concept is considered an original theory, around which there are discussions about whether it can be called fully functional, we cannot deny that it reveals new facets of understanding power, an essential category in political science.

² Концепция «мягкой силы»: обзор подходов в зарубежной науке /Konceptsiya «myagkoj sily»: obzor podhodov v zarubezhnoj nauke / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

³ Концепция «мягкой силы»: обзор подходов в зарубежной науке /Konceptsiya «myagkoj sily»: obzor podhodov v zarubezhnoj nauke / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

Consideration of the evolution of the concept of “soft power” in the works of J. Nye should begin with his first article devoted to this topic.⁴

In the article, Joseph Nye defined “co-optive power,” which was later described as “soft power.” Nye described this term as “the ability of a state to frame the situation in such a way that other countries define their interests in ways consistent with its own.”

In subsequent books, J. Nye refined and developed the theory of “soft power.” However, we should not forget about such an important fact as the circumstances in which J. Nye created his articles and books; we cannot write off the situation in the political arena and what tasks the author faced during this period

His first article was written at the end of the Cold War period, namely in 1990.⁵

In it, Nye writes that “at present, Soviet power is in decline, and Japanese power is growing.” He writes: “At the end of the 20th century, the United States of America lost its influence and became weaker than it was in 1945.” Consequently, it can be argued that J. Nye was trying to solve a problem by introducing and popularizing the concept of “soft power” to dissuade American society from the inevitability of the decline of the United States. This idea was extremely popular during the collapse of the bipolar system, and many scientists supported this pessimistic point of view.

However, as we see today, despite the stagnation of the US political system, the state continues to exist. As we will see later in Nye’s works, the stagnation of the US political system in the future may lead to the renewal and restoration of the country’s power and political influence,

Further in his article, the author noted the importance of the transition to a new type of power (at that time called “co-optive power”), which allows a country to “influence the international environment so that the interests and preferences of other states coincide with its interests and correspond to her intentions.” Nye continued his ideas in his subsequent works.

The 2002 book “The Paradox of American Power” is a reaction to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In it, J. Nye warned US politicians against pursuing an arrogant and indifferent international political course.⁶ In his book, Nye argued that the United States should adhere not to a unipolar but to a multipolar system of political influence in its policies to prevent the emergence of a crisis and stagnation of the political system

Further, in his 2004 work “Soft Power: Means of Achieving Success in World Politics.” Expresses his reaction to the decrease in the international authority of the United

⁴Концепция «мягкой силы»: обзор подходов в зарубежной науке / Концепція «м'якої сили»: огор podhodov v zarubezhnoj nauke / https://madi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

⁵Basic approaches to the study of “soft power” in domestic political science / https://madi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/15_143_148.pdf

⁶Olga Fredovna Rusakova, Aigerim Mukhamedrakhimovna Zhakyanova // Evolution of the concept of “soft power” in the work of Joseph Nye: analysis of the main stages // https://elar.urfu.ru/bitstream/10995/117045/1/978-5-7996-3527-5_2022_011.pdf

States due to its participation in the war in Iraq.⁷

Following this, the work “The Future of Power” was published in 2010. In this book, Nye focused entirely on the concept of “smart power” (Smart power), relegating the idea of soft power to the background. In this work, Nye proposed to rationally combine elements of “soft” and “hard” forces to increase one’s influence, which is today a new concept known as “smart power” or Smart power

It can be seen that this concept greatly influenced the policies of the Barack Obama administration.

Finally, J. Nye wrote a 2015 book, “Is America’s Century Ending?” is devoted to the same problem as his first article in 1990: consistent evidence that the century of American politics is far from over, despite pessimistic analytical forecasts and the impressive development of the PRC in all directions.⁸

In this book, Nye argues that the United States will be ahead of all other countries in the world over the coming decades in terms of its combined potential, which includes military, economic, and “soft” power.

Despite the development of the term through several books written by Nye, we can see that the term “soft power” has not gained clarity and even seems to be the opposite, as Nye himself points out, as a result of the incorrect use of this concept today, the term is “stretched” and becomes more and more vague in its interpretation. The widespread use of a concept with such a vague meaning has blurred its content, and today, we need to systematize the main approaches to its interpretation.

It should be noted that this concept, after its introduction into the scientific community, needed to be correctly interpreted by the general public and experts. The main problem and the essence of this misunderstanding lie in the confusion of the categories used, such as “soft power” and “resources for soft power.” This problem is mainly due to the relatively new concept of “soft power” and poorly developed analytical tools. Today, the understanding of this concept exists both in a narrower sense and in a broader sense.

In a broad sense, the term “soft power” refers to the use of non-military methods of influence, art, culture, and language to increase the economic attractiveness of the state. Cultural influence is a group or person's ability to shape others' beliefs, values, preferences, and behavior. It can be seen in various aspects of life, such as language, religion, art, music, food, fashion, and many more.⁹

In a narrower sense, soft power is similar to cultural influence. The British historian Niall Ferguson and the German publicist Joseph Joffe are considered outspoken

⁷. Nye JS Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: Public Affairs, 2004. 1

⁸Vuving A. L. How soft power works / A. L. Vuving // American Political Science Association annual meeting. Toronto. September 3. 2009. R. 1–20.

⁹<https://fastercapital.com/ru/content.html>

supporters of this interpretation.¹⁰

Summarizing all of the above, we can come to several conclusions. Even though the concept of “soft power” has gone through a long path of evolution and was considered by many scientists, it was Josei Nye who tried to systematize the tools of this concept in his works. However, due to the excessive breadth of understanding of the concept and, in fact, the confusion of the very concept of “soft power” and its tools, as well as the tools for its application by countries in their policies, today, this concept is actively discussed and debated by the world scientific community. At the same time, it must be said that a crucial point is the ability of states that use the tools of “soft power” in their foreign policy to create a favorable and attractive picture of their country and to encourage partners who fall under their influence to pursue policies beneficial to themselves, which in turn, requires these countries to have specific financial or power resources to use these instruments.

Interpretation of the term by Western scientists

If we proceed from the genesis of the very concept of soft power, then B. Mattern believes that it is unlikely that Nye was the first to reveal the essence of power outside the context of threats or promises.

However, this is also not entirely true because thinkers such as Foucault, Bourdieu, Gramsci, and others attached similar importance to power. Still, they could not unite their ideas and obtain the concept of “soft power.”¹¹ He also noted that "Nye failed to distinguish between the various ways in which soft power can co-opt, attract and induce those exposed to it, and between the various ways in which it can only elicit their acquiescence."

Although J. Nye coined the term in 1990, the concept of soft power or a similar idea can be seen in the works of H. Morgenthau, K. Knorr, and R. Kline.

Morgenthau identifies nine elements of national power, including national character, national identity, quality of diplomacy, and quality of government, which are closely related to intangible energy sources: soft power.¹²

Similarly, Carr writes “that the power of opinion is no less important for political purposes than, although correlated with, military and economic power.”¹³ Soft power is a kind of referent of power based on attraction and determines the influence of other powers. "

J. Nye's theory has many critics due to the uncertainty of its interpretation and tools. As written in the above study Stephen Lukes Power: A Radical View calls Nye's approach an "agent-centered strategic" view of power and criticizes it as a "blunt

¹⁰ https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

¹¹ The concept of “soft power”: a review of approaches in foreign science / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

¹² [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324697234_The_Concept_of_Soft_Power_A_Review_of_A](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324697234_The_Concept_of_Soft_Power_A_Review_of_Approaches_in_Foreign_Science/fulltext/)pproaches_in_Foreign_Science/fulltext/

¹³ Vuving A. L. How soft power works / A. L. Vuving // American Political Science Association annual meeting. Toronto. September 3, 2009. R. 1–20.

instrument" that does not reflect the full depth of process research.¹⁴

From this, we can conclude that at the theoretical level, soft power is nothing more than the ability to create a distorted picture of the world, forcing another country that is influenced to make political decisions beneficial to the one who used soft power against it.

According to G. Gallarotti, "This understanding of soft power is close to A. Gramsci's concept of hegemony and S. Lukes' theory of the third party of power. All this forms another, often criticized, basis of soft power: false consciousness."¹⁵

A study by Kovba D.M., "Soft power as a political strategy of the states of the East Asian region," emphasizes that G. Gallarotti believes that soft power is associated with M. Foucault's theory, which is based on the same conflict of interests. At the same time, according to Gallarotti, the specificity of soft power often lies in the ability of the dominant nation to present its interests as the interests of the countries that are influenced. The institutions implementing this policy may also have a certain degree of autonomy.

G. Gallarotti believes: "The tendency of great or dominant powers to invest heavily in the creation of regimes and international organizations suggests that such leverage is significant for these nations.

The fact that such institutions are supported by nations with greater independence suggests that they still serve some purposes in the interests of dominant nations: ensuring the rule of law, protecting reputations, guarding against the interference of unilateralism, and various ways of facilitating the functioning of markets. »

The same study also presents A. Viewing's view of this concept. In his research, Viewing states that "the theory of soft power requires more detailed development, especially in the sphere of the categorical apparatus."

According to him, this will avoid the confusion associated with soft power, its resources, and its institutions. We can say that Viewing' tried to consider changes mainly due to changes characteristic of the era of globalization, such as the mobilization of the ethnic factor, the widespread increase in migration processes, and other aspects of political life.

In turn, S. Lukes, in his interpretation of soft power and its instruments of influence on political power, identifies three approaches to understanding power: "A one-dimensional view in which power in society is distributed pluralistically, emphasizing the study of observable behavior and examples of decision-making. Problems are conceived as debatable; they imply an actual, observable conflict. The representative

¹⁴Концепция «мягкой силы»: обзор подходов в зарубежной науке /Konceptsiya «myagkoj sily»: obzor podhodov v zarubezhnoj nauke / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

¹⁵Концепция «мягкой силы»: обзор подходов в зарубежной науке /Konceptsiya «myagkoj sily»: obzor podhodov v zarubezhnoj nauke / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

of this approach is R. Dahl.

A two-dimensional view assumes agenda control, the power to decide what gets decided. The emphasis is on decision-making, non-decision-making, and observable conflict, overt or hidden. Representatives of the approach are P. Bachrach and M. Baratz.¹⁶

A three-dimensional view in which thought control is exercised in more modest, less total forms, for example, through control of information, use of mass media, and even the socialization process. The emphasis is on decision-making, agenda control, latent and observable conflict, and subjective and objective interests.¹⁷ The peculiarity of the third dimension of power is that it prevents the emergence of dissatisfaction by developing new perceptions and preferences that ensure acceptance of the role either as a matter of course, without providing an alternative, or as natural or even beneficial.

Summarizing everything that was said above, we can come to several conclusions. First, the problem with the soft power theory is that it is challenging to determine individuals' "real interests" if this is even possible. Lukes writes that if "one seeks a materialistic" explanation, the "real interests" will be material. If one wants to explain in terms of "rational choice," then "real interests" will mean the "best interests" of individuals¹⁸

As we can see, the widespread use of a concept with such a vague name has led to a blurring of its content and the need to systematize the main approaches to its interpretation, an essential topic for study in the modern scientific community.

Interpretation of the Term in the Russian Scientific Community

Considering research in this area, you can pay attention to the fact that if we think of this concept in the Russian scientific environment, research on this term is complex because there is not even a fully agreed-upon translation of the term soft power. This is because the English version is a figurative, metaphorical expression that is controversial in interpretation.

As Kovba wrote in her dissertation, "The word power is translated "as power, influence, force," while power is understood not as an authoritative power of authority, but as imperious power in general, in its broadest sense, as the ability to influence in any desired way consciousness and behavior of others.

Power, broadly defined, is synonymous with influence and covers the entire range of influence mechanisms from persuasion (influence successfully exerted without the promise of reward or threat of punishment) to moderate pressure or bargaining and

¹⁶ https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/13_129_135.pdf

¹⁷ Kovba Daria Mikhailovna "Soft power" as a political strategy of East Asian region
<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/strategicheskie-modeli-myagkoy-sily-stran-vostochnoazatskogo-regiona>

¹⁸ Kovba Daria Mikhailovna "Soft power" as a political strategy of the states of the East Asian region
<https://elar.urfu.ru/handle/10995/50372>

further up to fierce pressure, force, or coercion.¹⁹

Next, the author highlights several main points. The main one I would say is that, according to E.P. Panova's research, "It seems that the phrase "soft power" best corresponds to the phenomenon being described because it is about the ability to change the behavior of other actors, causing them to indirectly do something that they would not otherwise do, i.e. This is a category of power, not strength or might."

Based on this fact, we can attribute the concepts of representatives of postmodernism to the same discursive space: these are the concepts of "seduction" by J. Baudrillard and "seduction" by J. Lipovetsky.²⁰

However, it is worth noting that another interpretation of this term is also relevant. There are arguments in favor of using the concept of "power". Today, this term is used not only to refer to the physical capabilities of subjects, but also how the subject determines his moral readiness for active action.²¹

We can see this interpretation in such terms and expressions as: "use force", "armed forces", "force by force", and "air force".

The arguments for translating the term soft power as force is that the term soft power as "soft power" arose as the opposite of hard power (force, including coercion, pressure, as well as other forceful methods of implementing one's ideas).

However, as B. Mattern argues: "Attractiveness in world politics is achieved through non-physical, but still coercive forms of power, which are exercised through language. Therefore, soft power should not be understood in terms of comparison with hard power, but rather as its extension in other ways."

According to A.V. Demidov, "soft power," "smart power," "technologies of color revolutions," and "controlled chaos" all pose a serious threat to international security.

Thus, G. Yu. Filimonov believes that "today "soft power" is called a phenomenon that describes American approaches and methods of a non-military nature in relation to the foreign policy situation of the country."

Filimonov's idea is also exciting; he believes that "soft power" in Russia should be studied as part of the processes in the economy, politics, society, and culture that shape world politics at a new level, with new network structures replacing the hierarchical structural interaction of an international nature.²²

¹⁹ Kovba Daria Mikhailovna "Soft power" as a political strategy of the states of the East Asian region <https://elar.urfu.ru/handle/10995/50372> k

²⁰ Kovba Daria Mikhailovna "Soft power" as a political strategy of the states of the East Asian region <https://elar.urfu.ru/handle/10995/50372>

²¹ Basic approaches to the study of "soft power" in domestic political science / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/15_143_148.pdf

²² Basic approaches to the study of "soft power" in domestic political science / https://madipi.ru/images/discourse-pi/26/articles/15_143_148.pdf

It is advisable to note A's opinion. I. Sukharev regarding "soft power," which, in his opinion, "is a form of state strategy for conducting foreign policy, is a complex mechanism of influence through a system of incentives and consists of a set of techniques and means of political technologies that occupy their own a separate place in the political system."

He also believes this phenomenon aims to influence and galvanize action within an established policy framework.

Summarizing all of the above, what conclusions can we come to? Firstly, despite active study, many aspects of the "Soft" concept of power are still highly confusing, and the scientific community often confuses it with the tools for implementing soft power policies.

Secondly, today, several major rating agencies calculate soft development indicators' power in this or that country

For the convenience of the study, the variables defining "soft power" were divided into three categories:

- 1) global image (global popularity of the country);
- 2) global integrity (compliance by the country with various treaties);
- 3) global integration (relationships between the state and the rest of the world).

Of course, this is only a general designation because each of the three categories includes several subcategories.

For example, the global image often includes the export of media products, the popularity of a language, the number of Olympic medals, and the number of influential citizens and companies that have earned public admiration.

In global integrity, we can include "the country's compliance with unofficial codes of conduct, compliance with various kinds of democratic values, etc."

Global integration can include "the development of tourism in the country, the country's active participation in various meetings and conferences within various types of organizations, and support for initiatives, etc." As a result, soft power is the ability to achieve desired results through attraction rather than coercion, and it has become an essential part of modern science and politics.

Application of "Soft" Technologies in the US

Today, the United States is a country leading the development ratings of "soft power" and has all the tools for its development. There are several leading institutions in the US government whose goal is to promote US soft power.

Among them, the most significant and notable are the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), formed in 1961) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), formed on November 3, 1961 year).

They are the ones who choose the path and priority directions for "Soft power» USA.

As we can see from today's US policy, several main directions can be identified²³

A. Culture and language promotion (programs within the American Council on International Education (American Councils for International Education, ACIE), as well as through some non-governmental organizations (for example, the Council for International Educational Exchanges (Council on International Educational Exchange, CIEE)).²⁴

It is important to note that, in the example of the United States, this direction has distinctive features within the “soft power” policy framework. The United States, unlike such countries as, for example, in the case of Great Britain, France, and other national states, focuses the development of its forces directly on the ideas of freedom, democracy, and human rights. It can be argued that democracy in the United States is not a political idea but rather a kind of political brand that belongs to America.

B. Cooperation in education, scientific, technical, and innovative cooperation (programs within the framework of ACIE, USAID, etc.) and through some non-governmental organizations (for example, CIEE). Here, educational and scientific exchanges and programs allow, among other things, foreign scientific personnel to be attracted to the United States with the “land of opportunity” brand, the so-called “American” brand, which is actively used. Dream” can attract highly qualified personnel, which in turn actively develops the US scientific sector, which in turn is also a small problem; for example, Trump’s political campaign against visitors clearly shows that not everyone in the US is so happy about attracting foreign specialists to various spheres of American life.²⁵

C. Development of business relations (“Economic Support Fund,” “Support for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia”), as well as through some non-governmental organizations (for example, the Center for International Private Entrepreneurship (Center for International Private Enterprise, CIPE)).

D. Assistance to international development (Economic Support Fund, Global Health and Children's Medicine, Anti-Drug Trafficking and Law Enforcement Issues, etc.) The United States actively participates in or is the founder of many charitable private and government organizations, which only strengthens the country's image on the world stage as the main fighter against world problems. Although these areas are a priority, it cannot be denied that the United States is also developing other instruments of its “soft power.”²⁶

The most common direction of the “soft power” policy of any country, not just the United States, can be called educational and scientific programs funded by states and

²³ “Soft power” in international political communication: approaches to interpreting the concept <https://intcom-mgimo.ru/2019/2019-10/soft-power-in-int-political-communication>

²⁵ <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kontseptsiya-myagkoy-sily-vo-vneshnepoliticheskoy-strategii-csha>

²⁶ <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kontseptsiya-myagkoy-sily-vo-vneshnepoliticheskoy-strategii-csha>

aimed at improving their international image and attracting young people to receive education and immerse themselves in the culture of this country

In the case of the United States, such programs include:

- A.** (Fulbright Program) for foreign students, which allows students and young professionals to study or conduct research in the United States for one year or more.
- B.** Hubert H. Humphrey Program. The Hubert H. Humphrey Program is a one-year fellowship program designed for young professionals with leadership qualities, a commitment to benefiting the community, and funding their studies at American universities.
- C.** Edmund S. Muskie Scholarship Program. The Edmund S. Muskie Program for university graduates provides the opportunity to take a course in the United States to obtain a master's degree.
- D.** Program of the Summer Institute named after Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute is for Central Asian students ages 16–18.
- E.** The Global Student Exchange Program (Global UGRAD Program) provides an opportunity for entry-level students of higher education institutions to study during the academic year without obtaining a degree at universities and colleges in the United States

The above is not the entire list of programs. In 2023, there were already almost 1.4 million international students, graduate students, and interns in the United States, coming from 227 countries! Many students also study in American educational centers created in other countries; only several exist in Uzbekistan, the most famous of which is Webster University.

As mentioned above, “soft power” implies various directions, and I believe that the most important tool of soft power is culture. Although theoretically, the American government does not interfere in cultural issues, there are indirect interaction mechanisms to which it can resort, such as some economic instruments. It is no secret that the largest so-called “global producers and suppliers of information” are founded or have their main offices in the USA.

At the same time, American business leads the global media ranking by a wide margin; thus, in 2023, the first four places in it were confidently occupied exclusively by corporations headquartered in the United States, led by Alphabet Inc. (formerly Google), Comcast Corp., Meta, and Walt Disney.

These American media corporations' financial, organizational, and technological capabilities allow them to produce huge amounts of content of all types and purposes, from purely entertaining and educational to content intended for the study of fundamental science.

As an example, we can take that shortly after September 11, 2001, in preparation for military operations in the Middle East, a meeting was organized between high-

ranking White House representative Karl Rove and the heads of Hollywood film studios, as well as with the heads of the guilds of actors, directors, and screenwriters²⁷. It was during this period that the idea of “bad Muslims” was actively promoted in American culture and especially cinema, which partially replaced the concept of the “red threat” during the Cold War and films, as well as other media projects exposing a negative image of Muslims, increased exponentially, which can be said was necessary to justify the US invasion of Iran, which Joseph Nye even mentions in his book.²⁸

Also, these ideas spread on the Internet, not only with the help of some severe articles but also projects aimed at a broad audience, such as memes. It would seem that ordinary funny pictures can have serious power behind them. A striking example is China. After the spread on the Internet of a meme depicting the head of China, Xi Jinping, where he was compared to Winnie the Pooh, this character was forever banned in China, and any image of him on Chinese-made products is an insult to the party and personally to Comrade Xi Jinping²⁹

Today, thanks to the Internet, centers of influence have the opportunity, if necessary, to “bypass” the elites existing in a particular country and directly control the mass sentiments of a specific part of its population and their translation into mass actions. This can have a massive role in destabilizing the political situation in a given country. Today, the Internet is perhaps a more significant tool of influence than propaganda. This experience makes it clear that any government needs to develop its tools to protect the population from introducing harmful ideologies from outside. However, as Russia’s experience in trying to control the Internet using the Yarovaya Package and blocking malicious sites shows, these actions are highly ineffective because today, there are many ways to bypass these blockings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that despite the active study of Joseph Nye’s concept, today, there is not even a full-fledged interpretation or set of tools that would be considered universal in studying a particular country from the point of view of its soft power and influence. The use of cultural, social, economic, and political institutions to interpret this concept makes it extraordinarily multifaceted and exciting to study and analyze. Such a vast versatility is not only a minus but also a huge plus, allowing us to study countries from the point of view of soft power from all sides and aspects. The United States, as a country that was actually the prototype for the creation of the concept and very actively uses the tools of “soft power” in its policies, can become an example of how specific tools can be used to effectively promote one’s ideas and

²⁷<https://ria.ru/20011112/12885.html>

²⁸ Soft power: the means to success in world politics

https://www.academia.edu/28699788/Soft_Power_the_Means_to_Success_in_World_Politics_Joseph_S_Nye_Jr

²⁹<https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-40619595>

influence international relations in general without the use of violent methods. In the future, I believe that the experience of the United States needs to be studied as one of the leading countries using “soft power” tools to develop a way to use these tools in Uzbekistan effectively.

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