
Reshaping U.S. Smart Power: Towards a Post-Pandemic Security Architecture

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Introduction

Almost two decades after September 11, 2001 (9/11), the world is once again on the brink of a global political, economic and humanitarian crisis. These dynamics has shifted the balance of powers in international relations. The purpose of this article is to explore the U.S. strategic involvement in the post-pandemic security architecture at a global level. Shortly after 9/11, a number of state and non-state actors challenged the U.S. global leadership. Crossborder terror networks declared war on Washington.¹ China achieved sustainable economic growth and created a new model that pretended to be an alternative to the free market.² Russia declared the end of America's global dominance and the emergence of a multipolar world order.³ European Union (EU) was planning to build its own defense capabilities in attempt to emancipate from the United States.⁴ Despite all these challenges, Washington was able to maintain its global dominance.

This article argues that if the United States wants to preserve its dominant position in the post-pandemic security architecture, Washington has to reshape its concept of smart power. Smart power constitutes the theoretical core of U.S. foreign policy after 9/11.⁵ However, with the outbreak of COVID-19, it became less effective. The use of hard power in times of pandemic would inevitably provoke exhausting conflicts. Military operations will remain expensive considering the Coronavirus death toll. United States Soft power, on the other side, also needs to restart. Washington has to improve bilateral relations with its allies from Europe, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Asia Pacific (APAC). The Pandemic challenged the primacy of smart power in U.S. foreign policy. However, more important is that the United States needs a new strategy to sustain its global dominance.

The research roadmap for this article includes three sections. The first reviews the basic theories of smart power and introduces an alternative post-pandemic definition of this concept. The second analyzes the current implications of U.S. foreign policy. The third operationalizes the post-pandemic smart power concept by examining four strategic implications of U.S. Foreign policy. A brief conclusion summarizes the main arguments of the article and derives two scenarios for the place of the United States in the post-pandemic age.

Assessing and Explaining the Importance of Smart Power Theory

A central contention in this article is that smart power will shape U.S. Foreign policy in the post-pandemic age. Therefore, an understanding of its theoretical importance is a starting point for this section. Most political scientists and academics appear to agree that hard power determines Washington's Foreign policy in Iraq and Afghanistan. For these reasons, many believe that the United States should continue to use hard power as a primary foreign policy tool in the post-pandemic security architecture. Others rely on the presumption that soft power should build U.S. grand strategy in the post-pandemic age. Such analyses are one sided and often misleading because they do not consider alternative hypothesis – for example, there is unchallenged consensus that both hard power and soft power are integral part of U.S. Foreign policy. Moreover, soft and hard approaches are methodologically problematic because they rely on most likely cases from the pre-pandemic security environment: wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), China's rise, Russia's New Imperialism. In other words, hard and soft power theories fail to answer the questions of what will be and what should be the place of United States in the post-pandemic world order.

Smart power theories, on the contrary, challenge soft and hard power theories on methodological and theoretical level. Despite their substantial differences, smart power theoreticians have consistently agree that smart strategies have the capacity to affect U.S. global leadership. Thus, this article argues that the United States needs to reshape smart power in order to maintain the American global order. This section also challenges hard power and soft power theories on empirical level by arguing that they have contributed far less to U.S. Foreign policy than the concept of smart power. The article suggests that the main reason lies in the strategic inefficiency of soft and hard power during decision making in times of crisis such as the Coronavirus outbreak and 9/11. To avoid simply theoretical comparisons the analysis below examines a case study – the 9/11 attacks by simultaneously operationalizing three variables – hard power, soft power and smart power. The article moves beyond operationalization to explanation why smart power is more effective than hard and soft power.

Hard Power, Soft Power, and War on Terror

United States hard power after 9/11 has four basic aspects: Neoconservatism, unilateralism, multilateralism, preemptive strike, and war on terror. Washington's use of hard power after 9/11 came because of the political debate between neoconservatives and realists. The neoconservative vision of U.S. Foreign policy provided the theoretical and policy content of the Bush doctrine.⁶ Unlike neoconservatives, realists were circumspect about the use of hard power. Realists argued that the invasion of Iraq would direct attention away from the real terrorist threats: Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, and the Taliban.⁷ Therefore, neoconservatism shaped President Bush unilateral strategy in the Middle East.

Unilateralism addresses a tendency to opt out of a multilateral framework (whether existing or proposed) or to act alone in addressing a particular global or regional challenge rather than choosing to participate in collective action.⁸ The unilateral nature of the Bush doctrine draws inspiration from the neoconservative axiom that superpowers do not need to act multilaterally. They have the geopolitical resource to choose whether to act multilaterally or unilaterally. Therefore, both multilateralism and unilateralism can use hard power as a foreign policy tool. United States unilateralism after 9/11 has two forms. The active form of unilateralism advocates unilateral military operations, humanitarian assistance, and mandatory peacekeeping operations. The passive form involves Washington's attitude towards international organizations and international law. For example, the United States does not recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Despite the predominantly unilateral nature of the Bush, doctrine U.S. military strategy under Bush administration integrated some multilateral approaches such as forging coalitions. In March 2003, the United States led into Iraq a coalition of the willing with the United Kingdom, smaller contingents from Poland and other applicant states.⁹

The pre-emptive military strike is a unilateral action taken in defense of national interests and homeland security. This strategy inevitably involves the use of hard power under three conditions: Presence, probability and imminence of threat.¹⁰ Preemptive attacks originate from the assumption that the enemy is about to attack, and that striking first will be better than allowing the enemy to do so.¹¹ However, if such certainty appears to exist, striking out first may appear to be the only way to suppress the adversary.

The War on terror doctrine occluded all but military solutions to the problem, calling for special powers for a wartime president and demanding patriotic allegiance.¹² The use of military in the fight against global terrorism involves the strategy of targeted killing. Targeted killing is premeditated, preemptive, and intentional killing of an individual or individuals who represent a present and/or future threat to the safety and security of the state through affiliation with terrorist groups or individuals.¹³ A mission impossible approach advocates the elimination of all potential threats to U.S. National Security.

U.S. soft power after 9/11 has three basic pillars: Liberalism, multilateralism and neighborhood policy. Liberalism in the post-9/11 era has two lays: Ideological liberalism (multilateralism and cooperative engagement with America's opponents) and theoretical liberalism (democracy promotion and liberal institutionalism).¹⁴ Soft power determines the multilateral nature of the liberal approach by enhancing the cooperation between America and its allies. The more the United States works its partners and allies and through international institutions, the more legitimacy and support it would gather.¹⁵

Multilateralism refers to the cooperation of three or more states in a given area of international relations.¹⁶ U.S. multilateralism after 9/11 also has a dichotomous nature. Active multilateralism advocates building alliances and coalitions, enhancing cooperation, and strengthening U.S. presence in international organizations. Passive multilateralism involves U.S. adherence to conventions and international agreements.

Neighborhood policy is a concept that dates back to the Roosevelt era. The concept states that the United States will act as a good neighbor of Latin America and the West.¹⁷ President Obama endorsed and globalized President Franklin D. Roosevelt's doctrine by enlarging its geopolitical scope. Obama's strategy followed four strategic lines: Improving relations with Europe, rapprochement with Latin America, restoration of the relations with Cuba, and enhanced cooperation within the United Nations. United States foreign policy under the Obama administration has ruled out hard power as a basic approach. Thus, the United States has significantly reduced its military spending in favor of diplomacy.

Smart Power and Dumb War

U.S. smart power after 9/11 emerged under the Obama administration. United States military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have proven to be an excellent example of the American military strength. However, U.S. interventions in the Middle East also showed the limits of Washington's hard power. United States hard power could not easily snuff out insurgencies or rebuild broken governments.¹⁸ President Obama announced the end of the war on terror and the beginning of a peaceful transition to a post-9/11 world order. Nevertheless, Obama's purpose did not change – the President argued firmly that the United States should remain a global leader.¹⁹ His successor – Donald Trump also rejected the Sino-Russian vision of Multipolar World Order. Trump's response to this concept was to Make America Great Again.

U.S. smart strategy relied on a variety of resources. President Obama's strategy included a significant reduction in the use of hard power at the expense of soft power.²⁰ This approach worked in Libya and led to the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. The second major success of Obama's smart strategy was the elimination of Osama bin Laden. However, the Obama doctrine was not entirely successful. The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq created a strategic vacuum in the region. Part of Saddam Hussein's former colonels joined forces with the radicals and created ISIS. President Trump revised the Obama doctrine, but continued to use a smart approach in his foreign policy.²¹ U.S.–North Korea diplomatic maneuvers were only part of this strategy. Trump's approach, however, was different from that of Obama, who, under the guise of smart power, relied on soft power.

The smart face of U.S. Foreign policy changed after the financial crisis of 2008. Smart power became much more popular in the White House. For the Obama administration, hard power was necessary, but not inevitable and attractive. Shortly before the elections senator Obama shared his vision on U.S. military interventions:

“I will not hesitate to use force, unilaterally if necessary, to protect the American people or our vital interests. We must also consider using military force in circumstances beyond self-defense in order to provide for common security that underpins global stability – to

support friends, participate in stability and reconstruction operations, or confront mass atrocities.”²²

The pacifist rhetoric of the Obama administration turned out to be quite appealing to the voters. President Trump, on the other hand, introduced hard power as necessary and attractive, but preventable. His international priorities cover not only trade and economic issues, but also the essential challenges to the American military power.²³ The United States used smart power consistently against Russia, North Korea and Iran. Washington also applied the same smart approach to China after Beijing tried to veil the rising wave of sickness in its border.

In conclusion, the article points to three findings that provides a better understanding of smart power’s theoretical importance. First, smart power theories do not subject claims about most likely cases. They provide a flexible and plausible methodological approach by analyzing the use of both hard and soft power in each case study. Second, smart power concepts offer a two level theoretical approach that combines soft and hard power. Only a two level combined approach rather than military strategies or shuttle diplomacy can increase the strategic efficiency of foreign policy decision making process and crisis management. Third, smart power theories reveal that over focusing only on hard or soft power is counterproductive. For example, use of conventional military forces against invisible foes or diplomacy dialogues in times of illegal annexations appears to be losing strategies. Smart power, on the contrary, provides a strategic and constructive balance between hard and soft power.

Defining the Concept of Smart Power

There is no single definition of smart power. Most of the existing theories limit their definitions exclusively to foreign policy and information technology. This section seeks to analyze the current discussion of smart power theory in the context of U.S. National Security Policymaking. Furthermore, the section contributes to the smart power debate by introducing a modified, post-pandemic explanation of this concept. In general, there are four basic theories of what the nature of smart power is.

Joseph Nye's Theory

Nye's theory has a strategic nature. Nye defines smart power as a set of smart strategies that combine the tools of both hard power (use of coercion and payment) and soft power (obtaining preferred outcomes through attraction).²⁴ The former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the first to integrate Nye's concept in U.S. foreign policy. United States President Barack Obama also relied on smart power in the fight against global terrorism. Obama's smart strategy included cutting military spending and conducting more operations that are special.

In his theory, Nye emphasizes the need for strengthening the U.S. alliance system and developing public diplomacy, economic integration and technological innovations.²⁵ It is precisely what defines alliances as the most important precondition for the protection of U.S. National Security.²⁶ In other words, the United States would not be able to effectively implement the smart power approach without enhancing the U.S. alliance system. This article supports Nye's assumption. United States military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were indeed a proof of Washington's military strength. However, relations with European allies deteriorated, while China seized the opportunity to play a more active role in the world market.

Last but not least, Nye describes smart power as the approach that allows the United States to maintain its global leadership.²⁷ Moreover, he assumes that smart power is in fact a revision of the attractive power – a tool that helped Washington to win the Cold War.²⁸ U.S. Military and American culture deterred Soviet aggression and Communism. Global terrorism, however, is another case. Nye asserts that Washington cannot win this war without using both hard and smart power.²⁹ The author concludes that U.S. Foreign policy faces five major challenges that will require use of smart power: nuclear terrorism, political Islam, China's rise, oil crisis, and ecological breakdowns.³⁰ Nye's assertion is that only smart power – a strategy that combines the soft power of attraction with the hard power of coercion – will provide both Democrats and Republicans with the winning foreign policy strategy. Thus, Joseph Nye legitimizes the strategic importance this concept has for the U.S. global dominance.

Ernest Wilson's Theory

In contrast to Nye, Wilson describes smart power rather as a tool than a strategy. Wilson's explanation defines smart power as "the capacity of an actor to combine elements of hard power and soft power in ways that are mutually reinforcing such that the actor's purposes advance effectively and efficiently."³¹ He assumes that no major actor in the international system has the capacity to combine soft and hard power. For Wilson, smart power is only a theoretical concept without practical application. This author presents three arguments in support of his theory.

First, smart power requires knowledge of all the strengths and weaknesses of hard and soft power.³² No major actor in international relations has full knowledge of the other actors. Second, state actors do not have the capacity to institutionalize smart power.³³ Establishing an institution that combines hard with soft power will require significant financial resources. For example, the United States would spend three times as much as Washington did in Afghanistan. Finally, there is no way to combine soft and hard power mechanically.³⁴ Such combination is a complicated strategy that requires considerable political, economic, and military resources.

Wilson also argues that the allies of hard power are much more numerous, visible, and powerful than their soft power counterparts while smart power needs a smart campaign.³⁵ The institutional landscape of hard and soft power needs a political and theoretical revision that will enable Washington to sustain the balance between military and diplomacy. Wilson admits that smart power is a step in the right direction but the lack of hard – soft power balance creates strategic barriers to the effective use of U.S. smart strategies. The author claims that hard power actors such as the Pentagon marginalize soft power by creating institutional and political tensions. United States diplomatic structures, on the other side, fail to convince American people that soft power can advance the national wellbeing. Wilson concludes that smart power is the best option for the United States to ensure the Nation's future. However, he rejects Nye's optimism that smart power is achievable in short term.

Leslie Gelb's Theory

A starting conception in Gelb's theory is that the twenty-first-century is highly pyramidal. Therefore, the United States is alone at the pinnacle, with formidable and unique powers of global leadership, but without the power to dominate.³⁶ Russia, China, India, Brazil, Japan, Germany, France, and Britain constitute the second level of the pyramid while influential actors such as Saudi Arabia and Canada occupy the third. Gelb believes that Washington needs a new strategy – not simply to lead, but also to use U.S. power towards solving common problems.³⁷ This new Grand Design should rely on all dimensions of power – military, economic, political, or diplomatic.³⁸ In other words, the author admits that the combination between hard and soft power is the right strategy for maintaining the American leadership.

Gelb rejects the definitions of Nye and Wilson. Gelb's theory assumes that smart power is simply “a mechanical combining rather than a genuine blending of the two ideas.”³⁹ It is not a unique set of strategies, but rather an alternation of weapons, diplomacy, and economic sanctions. Moreover, Gelb believes that the U.S. Cold War strategies have not lost their relevance after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. For example, the policy of containment would be much more effective than any smart power strategy when it comes to China.⁴⁰ Thus, Gelb does not support the smart approach of Nye, but rather criticizes him for designing a mechanical blend of two concepts.

Gelb also argues that the United States can preserve their influence over global affairs only if Washington impose the American strategic interests over the other major actors in international relations.⁴¹ This strategy has three pillars: Unilateralism, use of force, and complete revision of the Cold War doctrines. Gelb assumes that United States should not limit its efforts to protecting national security. In this regard, Gelb's theory is inconsistent with the definitions of Nye and Wilson. Gelb rejects Wilson's theory, arguing that smart power is not just a theoretical concept but also an existent tool of U.S. Foreign policy.⁴² However, he rejects Nye's definition as well; emphasizing the nature of smart power is not unique to U.S. National Security Policymaking.

Paul Cammack's Theory

Cammack claims that Nye's theory is contradictory and untenable. Cammack's theory rejects Nye's interpretation of smart power as a multilateral approach.⁴³ The author assumes that the United States can preserve its global dominance only through unilateral use of hard power while Nye's theory promotes multilateralism and good neighbor policy. According to Cammack, Nye contradicts himself by asserting that alliance building should be integral part of U.S. Foreign policy. If the United States seeks to sustain its global leadership, the U.S. Grand Design should not rely on multilateralism. Otherwise, America will not be a global leader but only first among equals.

Cammack defines smart power as a repackaged version of soft power.⁴⁴ He argues that Joseph Nye's concept of smart strategy is unable to sustain the American global dominance. On the contrary, the United States should detract hard power from soft power in order to act as a rational global actor because genuine smart power requires Washington to put common interests above their own.⁴⁵ In other words, smart power is a concept that advocates liberal realist foreign policy. As such, it should include not only multilateral agreements and coalition building but also use of military force where it is necessary.

Cammack's theory supports Nye in his assumption that American soft power is in comprehensive crisis.⁴⁶ Cammack believes that U.S. global leadership is at stake precisely because Washington does not have a clear foreign policy strategy. There are some specific issues on which America should not lead, and other specific aspect, on which America cannot lead in near future. The author asserts that the U.S. Grand Design should relinquish the claim to leadership because there are scenarios where common goals and approaches exist. Finally, Cammack concludes that if America continues to follow the bound-to-lead principle Washington is going to waste soft power resources.⁴⁷

Pre-pandemic theories of Smart Power: A critical review

Nye, Wilson, Gelb, and Cammack have different perspectives on what would have to change in U.S. Foreign policy. Smart power is the common ground that builds the core of their theories. This article does not intend to exaggerate the gap separating Joseph Nye's theory from the others. Nye

puts all pieces of hard and soft power together in a quite fruitful way to shape the concept of smart power. His concept has become the main alternative to hard and soft power theories that failed to determine the future of U.S. Foreign policy after 9/11. Furthermore, Nye's concept has proven highly robust empirically and theoretically. From a strategic point of view, smart power was successful – the United States sustained its military, economic, and cultural leadership. Nye was also correct in his belief that Washington faces five major challenges and needs smart power to overcome them. Smart power turned out to be the winning strategy that the United States needed to deter China and Russia, to fight ISIS and to enhance the U.S. – led alliance system. The central problem is that the Coronavirus outbreak undermined the theoretical core of smart power. Nye points out that the combination of hard and soft power requires contextual intelligence. He defines this term as intuitive diagnostic skills that help policymakers align tactics with objectives to create smart strategies.⁴⁸ The Pandemic forced U.S. decision makers to address foreign policy challenges by applying smart power in a less coherent and distinctive manner. Their smart strategy failed because contextual intelligence collapsed. This happened not only in the United States but also in China, Russia, and Europe. The article assumes that Nye's theory can provide a considerable starting point for a new, post-pandemic concept of smart power that will increase the geopolitical outcomes for Washington.

Wilson shares a number of aspects with Nye. However, this article does not support Wilson's theory for three reasons. First, the U.S. Intelligence Community has proven to be one of the most effective in collecting, processing and storing information.⁴⁹ Washington is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of all major U.S. adversaries. Second, U.S. National Security Council has the institutional capacity to apply smart power. NSC has been successfully developing and proposing strategies to the White House for decades. In 2006, the Center for Strategic and International Studies launched a bipartisan Commission on Smart Power. The purpose of this institution is to develop a vision to guide U.S. global engagement and to implement a smart power strategy.⁵⁰ Third, the United States has all necessary resources to combine hard with soft power. There are many examples of smart operations, including the elimination of Osama bin Laden and the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. Therefore,

Washington has the capacity to apply smart power in its foreign policy and to develop other smart approaches in short term.

Despite the strong arguments in favor of his pyramidal vision, Gelb tends not to account for the actual effects of smart power. Three specific limitations stand out in Gelb's mechanical combining theory. First, U.S. Cold War strategies are not applicable to U.S. National Security Policymaking in 21st century, because the nature of war is constantly changing. Conventional warfare has given way to cyberwarfare and hybrid threats. Second, smart power requires contextual intelligence. The ability of policymakers to create smart strategies by aligning tactics with objectives allows the United States to exercise its superpower potential. This is not simply a combination of hard and soft power but a strategy that involves foreign policy decision making and crisis management. Finally yet importantly, Gelb's theory advocates revision of the Cold War doctrines and this is precisely what endorses smart power. Containment was indeed a successful strategy against the Soviet Union, but Chinese Communism represents a different issue. Smart power, on the contrary, provides U.S. decision makers with the contextual intelligence to deter China.

Cammack's recasting of smart power provides a foundation for further interpretations. However, there is a tension between his theory and the other three. Nye, Wilson, and Gelb address smart power by analyzing its efficiency, significance, and flexibility in the context of U.S. Foreign policy. For Cammack smart power is a revised version of smart power. He argues that hard power is the key to the American global dominance while smart strategies cannot sustain the U.S. leadership. In fact, Cammack contradicts himself by assuming that United States should unilaterally use hard power by prioritizing common interests.⁵¹ U.S. unilateralism advocates one-sided actions to protect U.S. national interests. Multilateralism and good neighbor policy promote international cooperation and alliance building efforts. Considering that smart power combines both approaches, it is much more effective than hard power. This does not mean that Cammack's theory is of no importance but for authors who would defend his assumption there is a problem. The author assumes that smart power is ineffective because the United States should relinquish its claim for global dominance. However, when the global balance of power changes one's theory should take into account perceptual variables such as polarity and new security challenges such as the Coronavirus pandemic. Since global

actors do not manipulate polarity scholars and policymakers are able to develop new foreign policy tools such as smart power. Smart strategies advocate U.S. involvement in the world affairs. Thus, smart power promotes global leadership rather than isolationism.

Smart Power: Towards a Post-pandemic Explanation

Nye, Wilson, Gelb, and Cammack provide a plausible starting point for a further explanation of their concepts. This article introduces a new definition of smart power by employing two approaches sequentially: The four basic definitions and the structural approach of theory building. The article assumes that there are three additional aspects of smart power: smart target, smart strategy and smart face. They are the binding connection between hard and soft power in U.S. Foreign policy. Therefore, smart power has five dimensions:

- **Hard Power.** It includes economic sanctions, political pressure, or the use of military. The purpose of hard power is to defeat the enemy.
- **Soft Power.** It involves the use of intangible sources of influence that weaken the adversary: Values, dialogue, and diplomacy.
- **Smart target.** The use of smart power requires a smart target. Target is smart when realistic. If the target is not realistic, it may result in overfocusing on either hard or soft power. In the first case, military operations exhaust the economy, forcing it into recession. In the second case, diplomacy fails and the military takes over.
- **Smart Strategy.** Resources spent on smart power should not outweigh the benefits. Whether it is arms, money, advertising or promoting values the smart strategy must follow clear priorities. Any use of smart power outside these priorities can result in a complete failure of the strategy.
- **Smart Face.** The faces of war are weapons and destruction. The faces of diplomacy are treaties and agreements. The face of smart power depicts certain hard power action as inevitable, necessary and attractive.

In conclusion, this article defines smart power as a five dimensional strategy that combines the tools of hard and soft power and seeks to achieve a realistic target, at a reasonable cost under conditions that seem

to be unavoidable, necessary, and at the same time attractive. Smart target, smart strategy, and smart face are the smart essence that transforms hard and soft into smart power. Smart essence is in fact the contextual intelligence that provides decision makers with smart tactics. After all, the primary task of decision makers is to set up a smart strategy by considering resources and predicting outcomes. Some would argue that this definition is similar to the other explanations. The explanation of this article indeed reflects other definitions because smart power theory presupposes continuity and consistency. However, the article reshapes the concept of contextual intelligence by emphasizing on three additional aspects that are methodologically vital to decision making and crisis management – target, resources, and outcomes. All of them are relevant to the challenges the United States are facing during the Coronavirus pandemic.

U.S. Foreign Policy and the Pandemic: Basic Implications

To say that smart power is the key to the American geopolitical dominance is neither to overestimate this concept, nor to accuse the United States of imposing its global leadership. In the following section, the article points out five basic implications on U.S. Foreign policy relevant to the Pandemic outbreak. Each implication corresponds to a different dimension of smart power. The assumption that smart power still occupies a primary position in U.S. Foreign policy is a logical starting point for this analysis.

First, the United States should continue to unilaterally use hard power to support COVID-19 affected countries and regions. This strategy will limit Chinese influence in strategic regions such as Central Africa and Latin America. In addition, humanitarian hard power can replace the old school military strategies with a new generation of interventions:

A humanitarian military intervention is referred to as a type of foreign military intervention that responds to a situation in which a government severely represses the human rights of its own people; thus, it intends to save lives, to relieve suffering, and/or to distribute foodstuffs to prevent starvation.⁵²

In the light of the Coronavirus pandemic, humanitarian interventions and military power are two sides of the same coin. While liberals argue that,

the purpose of an intervention is to protect victims of human rights violations, realists contend that interventions have little relation to humanitarian concerns and aim, instead, at certain national interests such as securing an oil supply.⁵³ Washington should take advantage of this opportunity to uphold the U.S. global influence and to raise the U.S. global approval rating. For example, Washington may apply a modified Marshall Plan strategy at a global level. Thus, the United States will successfully counter Russia's growing influence in Europe and Chinese presence in APAC.

Second, America needs to sustain and develop the U.S. alliance system. Indeed, that is what Washington achieved after World War II: It used soft-power resources to draw others into a system of alliances and institutions that has lasted for 60 years.⁵⁴ Any military escalation is undesirable, as it will drain the U.S. economy. United States should reaffirm the Nation's commitment to all U.S. allies. Moreover, Washington must convince them that America has the political will to protect its partners. Russia and China are systematically trying to undermine the confidence in the U.S. leadership among key U.S. allies, such as Germany and Japan. The United States should not allow geopolitical compromises that would cost Washington post-Cold War spheres of influence.

Third, the United States has to avoid geopolitical temptations such as isolationism. Were the United States to cede its global leadership role, it would forgo these proven upsides while exposing itself to the unprecedented downsides of a world in which the country was less secure, prosperous, and influential.⁵⁵ Despite all negative effects of the pandemic, the United States still holds the strategic economic balance. At this stage, China does not have the economic potential to disintegrate the Bretton Woods system. However, Washington should keep an eye on Beijing's attempts to manipulate the Yuan. This common Chinese strategy poses a long-term challenge to the U.S. dollar's dominance.

Fourth, Washington should build a smart strategy that promotes smart power and minimizes the use of hard power. The post-Cold War order is a world order building on principles that emphasize inclusiveness and self-restraint among major powers.⁵⁶ America can partially preserve this order by designing a smart approach and revising the Cold War containment strategy. For example, Washington should seek to convince the rest of the

world that a Chinese-led international order is not an alternative to the U.S. dominated security architecture.

Fifth, the smart face of U.S. Foreign policy should change completely by adopting the principle of dumb war under a smart mask. Washington has to depict hard power as inevitable, but not attractive and necessary. Because extreme weather, terrorist attacks, and health epidemics are inevitable, citizens should rely less upon outside assistance and depend more upon their personal resources, enabling communities for the future disasters.⁵⁷ In other words, the United States must change the face of war. Cybersecurity strategies have to replace conventional warfare scenarios. Washington won the Cold War by investing in emerging technologies, while the USSR accumulated weapons that never came into use. China is now trying to turn this strategy against the United States.

Operationalizing these implications is only the first step to the explanation of the post-pandemic smart power concept. By focusing on the post-pandemic reality in the next section, this article moves beyond theoretical discussions and current implications to explanations how smart power could affect U.S. Foreign policy. Therefore, the second step is to analyze the potential effects that the Corona virus will have on America.

United States after the Coronavirus: Strategic Implications

This section begins by discussing to what extent the Coronavirus pandemic could affect U.S. Foreign policy. The section seeks to answer the question by operationalizing three variables: Polarity, Security, and Leadership. This article joins the debate by reasserting the statement that the Coronavirus pandemic will not change the global order. However, the Corona virus could affect the following aspects of Washington's Foreign policy.

China

China will remain the strongest adversary of the United States in the post-pandemic age. In the years since 9/11, the Chinese Grand Design tried to displace America from the world stage.⁵⁸ The starting point for Beijing's strategy is APAC. There is a little chance that China will directly intervene in the region. However, Chinese Communist Party has a long history of using North Korea as cannon fodder against Japan and South Korea. Latin

America and Africa are also an important part of the Chinese Grand Design. Although Latin American countries are, still the backyard of Washington, China will not hesitate to launch more economic interventions in this region.

Therefore, the United States should use the full branch of U.S. economic levers to deter the Chinese strategy. America is a major investor in major international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Since the end of World War II, the Bretton Woods system has established the dollar as a major reserve currency. Although the Yuan is, also a reserve currency China and Russia are unable to dethrone the dollar domination. Beijing, however, can severely limit Washington's influence in the global economic organizations by using the potential effects of the recession. Therefore, the United States should not suspend the financial support for those institutions.

Finally, America should invest more in the development of emerging technologies. Washington needs to improve the U.S. cyber defense potential. Second, the United States should develop a Unified Strategy for countering Hybrid Threats. Over the last few years, China has developed high-level cyber spyware capabilities that could pose a challenge to U.S. National Security.⁵⁹ For example, the Chinese hacker group “Javaphile”, that attempted to hack the White House website has a formal relationship with the Shanghai Public Security Bureau.⁶⁰ Beijing’s strategies improve steadily as presently cyber-attacks aims to affect not only the U.S. information infrastructure but also to access classified information. This is crucial for the U.S. National Security Policymaking. In the wake of the Corona virus, these attempts are becoming more common.

Russia

Russia will be the second major opponent of Washington. Some have argued that Russia is not a U.S. National Security challenge and that now, more than ever, the Kremlin and the White House must work together to overcome the crisis.⁶¹ This article does not support such point of view. Russia is not a U.S. ally. Russian hybrid warfare is a challenge not only to Europe, but to the United States as well. For example, during the Pandemic, Russia is trying to undermine Europe's confidence in America and to disrupt the Euro Atlantic relations. The starting points for this strategy are Eastern Europe and the European states which suffered the

most COVID-19 casualties. In his open letter, the Russian Ambassador to Croatia Mr. Anvar Azimov states that European Union's main ally, the United States of America, in recent years earned the reputation of a country that creates rather than solves problems.⁶² Following the Coronavirus outbreak in Europe, the Russian government sent Italy a military convoy of medical supplies. The humanitarian aid that Vladimir Putin sent to his Italian counterpart turned out to be more than an ordinary military operation. Leading Italian media have shown that much of the Russia aid is useless.⁶³ In response, the spokesman for Russian Defense Minister Igor Konashevko made a direct threat to the Italian media investigating Russian support for Italy.⁶⁴ These actions of the Russian Federation show that Moscow has not given up its hybrid strategy to contain U.S. influence in Europe.

Another important actor in the U.S. – Russian relations is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO is the most successful military alliance in the U.S. history.⁶⁵ U.S. military presence in Europe prevents Russia from expanding its influence on the Old Continent and guarantees U.S. National Interests in the region. However, Moscow still has two effective tools to influence the decision making process in the European capitals: gas and ideology. Russian energy projects such as Turkish Stream and Nord Stream have dictated the political course of a few European governments in Eastern Europe, which have not been determined to oppose Moscow. Russian far right movements enjoy great support from a number of European politicians, who declared themselves the new conservatives whose mission is to defend traditional European values from global liberal elites. Thus, slowly and imperceptibly Russia has shaped its own doctrine of smart power.

Moscow's smart strategy in Europe has one key purpose – to convince European allies that they can no longer rely on the United States and NATO. If the Russian strategy succeeds, European member states of the Alliance could renegotiate and move beyond Article 5 of the Washington Treaty to build their own defense capabilities. NATO will not die, it will transform into a global military alliance that will continue to serve the U.S. Foreign policy. This article assumes that such scenario will unconditionally damage the European security architecture for three reasons. First, Europe does not have the economic resources to maintain high-tech military equipment. Less than 1.5% of the EU Growth Domestic

Product goes for defense expenditures.⁶⁶ Second, most of the European countries do not have the political will to create Joint Armed Forces of Europe. France has initiated such projects many times, but then abandoned them on its own because of the prospect of German leadership. Finally, without NATO there will be a resurgence of European nationalism. This will lead to the disintegration of the EU.

Middle East and North Africa

The Coronavirus pandemic will inevitably shift the balance of power in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by challenging the U.S. military presence in the region.⁶⁷ This article argues that the United States should reduce the use of hard power in MENA. Large-scale combat operations are exhausting and expensive. There are high risks to the deployment of military personnel in regions where the Coronavirus pandemic continues to grow. Covert operations and clandestine activities, on the other side, are cheaper and resilient. Some would argue that strategic surprise often comes because of intelligence failures. Even so, smart power has the capacity to provide a better coordination between U.S. Intelligence Community and decision makers at the highest political levels. United States military presence in MENA should remain a priority for all Presidential administrations. However, the National Military Strategy for the post-pandemic age should be restraining, not offensive. For example, the potential withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan is not a reasonable option because it would lead to the emergence of a second ISIS. The first ISIS emerged in 2014 from the remnants of Al-Qaeda. Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, religious radicals allied with Saddam's former colonels, who survived the war. Together, they established ISIS and declared a Caliphate. This scenario could repeat in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have consistently violated the peace deal with the United States.

Israel and Saudi Arabia remain key U.S. allies in MENA, while Iran poses a challenge to the American national interests in the region. Syria is a hot spot, because of the Russian military presence in the country. Another non-rational actor in this region is Turkey. United States–Turkish relations quickly deteriorated after the unsuccessful coup d'état attempt from 2016. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took a political course towards centralizing political power and eliminating the opposition. Moreover, as a NATO member state, Turkey openly challenged

the United States by purchasing S-400 missile system from Russia. Despite the economic sanctions and all human casualties, Iran will pose a long-term challenge to Washington. Allegedly, despite the tensions between the two countries, the United States will not go to war against Iran, since the war will not grant Washington interests and will impose a huge cost on the U.S. nation.⁶⁸ Part of this is true. Although the United States is capable of defeating Iran in a military conflict, the Trump administration is highly unlikely to risk the use of hard power until the end of the pandemic. On the other hand, a military conflict between Iran and Israel is highly probable if Washington decides to tighten economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Of course, Washington could suspend U.S. military aid to Israel and could withdraw U.S. political support for Saudi Arabia. This article assumes that such course of actions will be a strategic mistake for two reasons. First, U.S. – Israel relations are one of the most salient characteristics of U.S. Foreign policy. The American support for the Jewish state is essential because Israel is Washington’s most reliable ally against Iran and Syria. Moreover, Israel provides an outpost testing for the U.S. arms companies considering the permanent conflicts in the region. Finally yet importantly, Israeli Intelligence Community has a long standing practice of constructive cooperation with U.S. Intelligence by sharing data on potential threats for U.S. National Security. Second, Saudi Arabia is in a period of ongoing reforms that could be a major opportunity for the United States to reshape the balance of power in MENA.

Asia Pacific

This article argues that the United States needs to strengthen its presence in two key points of the APAC – Japan and South Korea. China is trying to establish control over this region through one of the major U.S. adversaries – North Korea. However, Pyongyang is not a rational actor and does not always follow the strategies of Beijing. South Korea alone cannot counter a potential military threat from North Korea. Therefore, Japan needs additional U.S. support to deter Pyongyang’s nuclear diplomacy.

Some scholars and decision makers make claims that the United States should negotiate a new strategic agreement with Japan that will allow the Japanese government to increase Tokyo’s military capabilities.⁶⁹ Such

agreement would require essential reforms of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. This article does not support such an alternative because of the potential consequences it would have for Japan. A major reform of Article 9 will allow Tokyo to revise the Yoshida Defense Doctrine and to adopt an offensive military doctrine. From an ideological point of view, the new military strategy of Japan could revive Japanese nationalism from the pre-World War II period. From a strategic point of view, a potential military reform of the Japanese Self Defense Forces could force the Japanese government to change its non-nuclear policy in the face of the North Korean threat. If Japan decides to launch its own nuclear project this will reshape the balance of powers in APAC to the detriment of South Korea and Indonesia.

The article concludes that the Coronavirus pandemic could affect U.S. Foreign policy in four strategic directions: U.S. – China relations, U.S. – Russia relations, U.S. military and strategic involvement in MENA and APAC. However, hard power and soft power are still subject to two objective limitations: it is easier to fight a war than to achieve peace but it is cheaper to sustain peace than to fight a war. Obviously, U.S. smart power matters most in relations with allies and adversaries. Therefore, avoiding the strategic temptation of over focusing on hard or smart power will be the greatest geopolitical challenge that U.S. Foreign policy will face during the Pandemic.

Pre-pandemic vs Post-pandemic Smart Power: Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership

This section explains how the post-pandemic concept of smart power in this article would benefit the strategic implications of U.S. Foreign policy. The best way to determine the influence of smart power on Washington's Foreign policy would be to analyze each implication by operationalizing the five dimensional structure of the revised concept. However, two methodological problems could affect the outcome of this analysis. A first difficulty is that most decision makers and scholars are still skeptical of the Pandemic's end in near future. A second problem lies in the determining what will be U.S. Foreign policy under the next Presidential administrations. Therefore, the article's assumptions do not pretend to be unambiguously acceptable or universally accurate. The validity of the arguments, however, rests on two perceptions, that are integral part of

Joseph Nye's theory. First, the Pandemic will not dethrone America as global leader. Second, smart power will guarantee the American global leadership in the post-pandemic age.⁷⁰

China

Washington's smart approach towards Beijing should include the following steps:

- **Hard Power:** Forging a military coalition between the United States, Australia, and Japan in South China Sea.
- **Soft Power:** Imposing diplomatic sanctions on China over Uyghur rights and Hong Kong's autonomy.
- **Smart Target:** Economic, political, diplomatic, and cultural containment of Chinese global influence.
- **Smart Strategy:** Supporting Taiwan's independence and providing anti-government movements in China with enough resources to undermine the legitimacy of the Communist regime.
- **Smart Face:** Recognizing Tibet as independent nation by formally establishing diplomatic relations with the sovereign country.

Opponent of this doctrine would argue that such strategy is aggressive and highly offensive. This claim is timely because the last decade has witnessed a continuous debate over China's ambitions to replace the United States as a global leader. For these reasons, many believe that the American strategy towards Beijing should be soft. The might even choose to criticize military coalitions or diplomatic sanctions over Uyghur rights. However, those critics overlook the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic. The classic justification of global leadership is to act at any time anywhere in the world. So far, only the United States has the willingness and the capacity to act as a global major actor in international relations. Advocates of the Chinese leadership seek to convince American allies that the Pandemic will affect Washington's potential of superpower. For that reason, the United States has to act more decisively than ever.

Russia

The U.S. smart approach on Russia should include the following aspects:

- Hard Power: Economic sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.
- Soft Power: Media coverage of human rights violations in Russia.
- Smart Target: Containment of Russian energy influence in EU and NATO member states through enhanced cooperation in the U.S. – EU Energy Council.
- Smart Strategy: Humanitarian, financial and military support for the European allies.
- Smart Face: Deterrence of Russia by relocating more U.S. troops on NATO's Eastern flank.

This article is in support of the second option for three reasons. On the contrary, the smart scenario will improve and consolidate Euro-Atlantic relations despite the economic tensions between Washington and Brussels. Thus, smart power will satisfy both U.S. National Interests and European need of collective defense.

Middle East and North Africa

The second alternative rests on five smart pillars:

- Hard Power: Providing military aid to Israel, imposing more economic sanctions on Iran, and continuing the fight against ISIS.
- Soft Power: Expressing political support for Saudi Arabia, encouraging the Israeli – Palestinian peace talks, and imposing diplomatic criticism on Turkey.
- Smart Target: Reshaping the balance of power in the Middle East by establishing an open Israeli–Saudi partnership.
- Smart Strategy: Allocating enough financial resources to defeat ISIS and initiate cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia.
- Smart Face: Maintaining U.S. military presence in MENA.

Some will argue that this smart scenario is impossible or inconsistent with the cultural cleavages that exist in this region. Such statement is methodologically misleading because it takes into account only cultural variables. This article argues that for the United States those cleavages might be an opportunity not an obstacle. Israel and Saudi Arabia have one major adversary – Iran. If the partnership between the two states deepens, Tehran will also strengthen its ties with the other Russian allies in the

region. Turkey will finally have to choose a side as a NATO member state. The rest of the MENA countries will either follow Iran or support the partnership between Israel and Saudi Arabia. This will make it much easier for the United States to balance Russian influence in MENA.

Asia Pacific

Washington's smart approach in APAC should include the following steps:

- **Hard Power:** Keeping U.S. troops in Japan and South Korea.
- **Soft Power:** Promoting the concept of special relations between United States and Japan as cornerstone of peace and security in APAC.
- **Smart Target:** Deterring the North Korean nuclear diplomacy towards South Korea and Japan.
- **Smart Strategy:** Providing military support for Seoul and Tokyo.
- **Smart Face:** Launching more military exercises on the Korean Peninsula.

This scenario will maintain the balance of power in the region for two reasons. First, Tokyo will give up on his plans for a military reform, convinced that Washington will fulfill its commitments to Japan under the Treaty for Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. Second, the smart approach will consolidate Japan and South Korea largely, despite the economic and historical tensions between Tokyo and Seoul.

This section aimed to prove that the post-pandemic concept of smart power is not only a theoretical discussion. It also has a practical significance. More broadly, such a concept can contribute in overcoming the negative geopolitical consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic. Critics of smart power are right in assessing smart power as less effective than before the Corona virus. However, they are wrong in their belief that the United States should abandon smart power as foreign policy tool. Their criticism has no trouble exploring how U.S. Foreign policy needs a new strategy. Their problem is with smart power. However, they fail to explain why the United States sustained their global leadership after 9/11. Therefore, such criticism of this type does not give enough empirically tested arguments.

Conclusion

The Coronavirus pandemic will have a huge impact on the global security architecture. Therefore, Washington should seize the opportunity to adapt to the post-pandemic geopolitical realities. The United States needs a subsequent strategy to preserve its global dominance. This conclusion summarizes the article's main arguments by suggesting four recommendations for the post-pandemic nature of the U.S. smart approach. The Coronavirus pandemic will not change the global order but it will reshape the global security architecture. However, the rise of the Post-Pandemic World Order will not mark the end of U.S. global dominance.⁷¹ This section outlines two scenarios for the U.S. role in the post-pandemic world. Each scenario corresponds to a different geopolitical configuration.

First scenario: U.S. dominated security architecture. In this scenario, the United States will remain a global leader. Washington will maintain its global military presence and cultural dominance. Cross-border terrorist networks will no longer have the resources to large-scaled terrorist attacks. Iran will remain under the pressure of the U.S. sanctions while relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia will improve. Russia will sustain heavy losses and Moscow will not be able to achieve economic recovery. Under this scenario, China will lose the disinformation warfare and Beijing will be under pressure to take responsibility for the Coronavirus pandemic. This act will delegitimize the Communist regime to such extent that China will have to give up its hegemonic ambitions.

Second scenario: A new bipolar system. Under this scenario, the Coronavirus pandemic will result in the emergence of a bipolar security architecture. However, this confrontation will be much different from the Cold War because Communist China bears no relation to Soviet Russia. Washington and Beijing will simply need allies to maintain the strategic balance in the international system. Although Russia has a little to offer, China will need Moscow as Beijing is not yet ready to sustain global military presence. The United States will have to renegotiate NATO and reaffirm Washington's commitment to all U.S. allies. The Sino-Russian bloc will have to combine Russian hard power with Chinese smart power.

The Euro-Atlantic bloc, on the other side, will have to revise the Cold War containment strategy and adapt it to the new geopolitical realities.

In conclusion, smart power gives little place for the major U.S. adversaries and provides the United States with enough resources to preserve the U.S.-led international order. This objective is true not only for the current U.S. foreign policy implications but also for the strategic implications that will emerge in the post-pandemic security architecture. Without defying, the geopolitical potential of the American adversaries such as China, Russia, and Iran this article argues that the United States will maintain their global leadership in the post-pandemic age. China's rise brought international relations to the point where it challenged the U.S.-led international order. However, there is still a big political, economic, military, and cultural disproportion between the geostrategic potential of Washington and Beijing. Thus, a new bipolar system would be rather a foreign policy temptation for China than geopolitical reality for America. In long-term, the new concept of smart power will ensure U.S. global dominance. In short-term, it will minimize the geopolitical casualties of the post-pandemic transition.

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