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Counter-terrorism, Smart Power and the United States

In April 2008 Richard J. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye Jr. presented a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee called ‘Implementing Smart Power: Setting an Agenda for National Security Reform’. Armitage and Nye see smart power as ‘an integrated grand strategy that combines hard military power with soft ‘attractive power’’ (2008, p. 3). Whereas ‘hard and soft’ powers are descriptors, ‘smart’ power embodies evaluation. Smart power is a non-coercive strategy that aims to attract ‘others’¹ to a set of goals and values or a desired agenda. As there is a great variation amongst ‘others’, smart power must be reflexive and intelligent in the face of differing contexts and cultures.

Suzanne Nossel first mooted smart power in *Foreign Affairs* in 2004. She equated smart power to liberal internationalism and advocated a post 9/11 foreign policy ‘focusing on the smart use of power to promote U.S. interests through a stable grid of allies, institutions, and norms’ (2004, pp. 131-142). Armitage and Nye developed smart power ‘in large part as a reaction to the global war on terror, a concept that we consider wrongheaded as an organizing premise of US foreign policy’ (2008, p. 4). Nossel expressed similar sentiments, saying that whilst the Bush regime ‘adopted the trappings of liberal internationalism, entangling the rhetoric of human rights and democracy in a strategy of aggressive unilateralism [...] the militant imperiousness of the Bush administration is fundamentally inconsistent with the ideals they claim to invoke’ (2004, pp. 131-142). In other words the United States (US) has not been very smart in terms of its counter-terrorism policy. Nevertheless smart power was invoked, and indeed embraced in policy circles, as a strategy capable of directing future US foreign policy in a fashion that married the seductive message of soft power with the authority and resolve of hard power. International actors would align themselves with the aims and values of the US and they would do this more or less willingly.

Smart power did not crystalize as a policy until the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) launched a bipartisan Commission on Smart Power in 2006. The CSIS published a report in 2007, ‘A Smarter More Secure America’ (Armitage and Nye, 2007). The report took stock of America’s role in the world and sought to devise ‘smarter’ ways of wielding American power. Various think tanks continue to thrash out ways to operationalize smart power. In a later report entitled ‘Putting “Smart Power” to Work An Action Agenda for the Obama Administration and the 11th Congress’ the authors argue that ‘Despite [...] tactical differences, the path ahead is clear’ (Signer, 2008). In fact the path ahead is far from clear. Smart power exists as an aspiration and sound bite. However in practice it risks being no more than an unsophisticated decanting of the old wines of hard and soft power into

new smart power bottles. Smart needs to be sophisticated and credible not least because new technology and social media easily expose untruths and strategic failure.

The US has struggled to develop meaningful smart power strategies as it has limited 'contextual intelligence'. The US has thrown its own constitutional rulebook away in relation to the Global War on Terror. It has broken national and international laws in relation to e.g. privacy and surveillance and torture whilst at the same time using the moralistic rhetoric of just war to justify its foreign policy interventions. The US is also weak in terms of 'self-knowledge'. Smart power must be mindful of the local environment, structural influences and also the lessons of the past. Contextual intelligence is of key importance to counter-terrorism strategies.

This article starts by assessing the theoretical development of smart power. The article then addresses the problem of measuring power and influence. Smart power is an amalgamation of variables and it is important to understand the interplay between these variables as they relate to compliance. This article then focuses on US counter-terror initiatives since 2001 to show why the need for smart power strategies arose and to test their efficacy. One of the peculiarities of smart power is that the military is seen as a source of soft as well as of hard power. Armitage and Nye argue that this is because 'the US military is the best-trained and resourced arm of the federal government. As a result it has had to step in to fill voids, even with work better suited to civilian agencies' (2008, p. 4). Consequently the concept and agenda of smart power is influencing the evolution of counter-insurgency doctrine. Economic aid and military aid are disbursed under the auspices of USAID and the military is now tasked with soft and hard power strategies that have proven problematic to manage as 'an integrated grand strategy'. This serves as an empirical testing ground on what has worked, to what extent and within which specific contexts.

This article also investigates US foreign aid as an instrument of 'soft' power. Economic power is traditionally mooted as hard power. I argue that foreign aid is designed to co-opt as opposed to other kinds of economic incentives that are designed to induce or compel. However co-option also needs to endure or 'stick'. According to Walter Russell Mead sticky power 'comprises a set of economic institutions and policies that attracts others towards US influence and then traps them in it' (2009). Foreign aid is arguably such a trap. It is a means to enmesh the interests of recipients with those of the US. This is done through a web of attraction and conditionality. Sticky power 'seduces as much as it compels' (Mead, 2004, p.25). As an instrument of sticky power, foreign aid lies somewhere between hard material power and soft attractive power. 'Sticky' power has not become embedded in US political lexicon in the way that smart power has. Perhaps because it invokes the idea of a US controlled quagmire.

The effectiveness of smart power, as a mutually enforcing combination of hard, sticky and soft power, will be measured against notions of public trust in recipient countries. Public trust is an important indicator as terrorists operate in, and are sustained by, social as well as political contexts. It is acknowledged that the cases referenced in this article offer only a partial and context specific picture. Nevertheless a tentative correlation can be drawn between high levels of US aid and low levels of trust in the US in frontline Islamic states. In conclusion it will be argued that smart power is predominantly an aspiration as opposed to a strategy. This has led to slippage between hard and soft power and un-smart or non-stick policy. Consequently a gap has

emerged between what the US hopes that the international community will respond to in terms of smart power as a counter-terror initiative and what actually happens. This phenomenon is particularly apparent in Islamic states at the frontline of the war on terror. The US has tended to revert to hard power tools in the face of this gap. This strategy serves to undermine rather than reinforce smart power initiatives. This article seeks to highlight mistakes that have been made and suggests a more 'contextually intelligent' approach to smart power.

A Brief History of Smart Power

Smart Power is nothing new. In her 2010 *Foreign Policy* article entitled 'Brainier Brawn: "Smart Power", a brief history' Elizabeth Dickinson starts her chronology with the morality and militarism that underpinned the thinking of Carl Von Clausewitz in 1832. Smart power is a nice idea in theory however 'neither the advocates of soft power nor the proponents of hard power have adequately integrated their positions into a single framework to advance the national interest' (Armitage and Nye, 2008, p. 110).

Nye's work on power finds its roots in his 1990 work *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. At this stage Nye's work was a reflection on the position that the US held in the world, the resources at its disposal and how it might choose to convert these to influence. Nye's later 2004 work *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* continued his theorizing on the conversion of resources into power with the development of the notion of soft power. At the time of writing the international popularity of the US was in the doldrums. Nye saw this as a consequence of the Iraq war. He argued that the decline of US popularity matters as the war on terror cannot be won alone and therefore allies are essential. He notes that self-interest will drive allies into the arms of the US. However the more 'attractive' the US is to allies 'the less need there will be for concessions and the easier it will be to obtain desired outcomes' (Nye, 2004a, p. 129). Nye's thinking reflects a deliberate strategy on the part of the Bush regime to articulate terrorism as a universal threat as opposed to a threat to the US only. This strategy was designed to convince the global audience that the US is working for the greater good as opposed to merely its own national interest.

Empirical work on US driven smart power is a relative rarity in International Relations journals. The articles that are in evidence tend to appear in *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy* and wrestle with smart power as an abstract concept. These articles are mostly written by or are heavily referenced to Nye. However there are some notable exceptions; i.e. in Ernest J. Wilson's article 'Hard, Power, Soft Power, Smart Power' in *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* (2008). Wilson argues that the US approach to smart power appears inert compared to sophisticated challengers such as India and China. The most salient aspects of Wilson's work are his comments on the 'target' of soft power, 'self-knowledge' on the part of those seeking to wield smart power, the broader structural environment in which smart power is to be exercised and the attention to what types of tools to use and when (2008, p. 115). These factors relate to what Nye calls 'contextual intelligence' (2008, pp. 85-108). The main focus of Wilson's critique is the institutional complexity and

competitiveness within the US that serves to undermine the consolidated development of smart power as a national security strategy.

Also in 2008 in *The Powers to Lead* Nye continued his theorizing on the conversion of resources to influence by examining 'contextual intelligence'. He argued that 'contextual intelligence is an intuitive diagnostic skill that helps a leader align tactics with objectives to create smart strategies in varying situations' (2008, p. 88). This relates directly to Wilson's reference to 'targets' (2008, p. 115). According to Wilson a target must be understood in terms of 'its internal nature and its broader global context. Power cannot be smart if those who wield it are ignorant of these attributes of the target populations and regions' (2008, p. 115).

More recently Giulio M. Gallarotti's 2015 article 'Smart Power: Definitions, Importance, and Effectiveness' in the *Journal of Strategic Studies* argues that 'soft' and 'smart' power, as theoretical concepts, are in their infancy and 'their historical applications have been limited and far from rigorously executed' (2015, p. 246). Gallarotti posits that soft and smart power will become increasingly important for international relations given the prohibitive costs and consequences of both nuclear and conventional weaponry and the checks and balances that democratic accountability and global socio-economic interdependence bring. Gallarotti's empirical assessment focuses on the US goals of limiting terrorism, promoting democracy abroad and reducing the threat of WMD. He argues that the neo-conservative driven, unilateral, hard power stance of the George W. Bush administration was self-defeating and failed on all three counts.

Smart Power: problems of measurement?

Components of power can include 'influence, control, coercion, force, persuasion, deterrence, compellence, inducement and so on' (Baldwin, 2002, p. 177). Power is commonly defined as: 'a situation in which A gets B to do something he would otherwise not do' (Baldwin, 1979, p. 163). However there is more to understanding power than collating the components that A might have to hand in any particular circumstances. The fungibility of power is important, as the components of power may be more or less useful in differing circumstances. There is also the question of whether A has the inclination or intention to get B to do something it otherwise would not. Is A accepting of the status quo or not and if not does it have the inclination to act and is it willing to accept any unintended or knock on effects? The words 'otherwise would not' are also of key importance'. Influence, as it relates to power, can only be measured if the preferences of B are clear. Nye has noted 'when we measure power in terms of the changed behavior of others, we have to know their preferences' (1990, p. 26).

Nye defines soft power as the ability 'to shape the preferences of others' (Nye, 2004a, p. 5), using the power of attraction rather than threats or force. The shaping of preferences refers to, not just single issue-based compliance but voluntary regulatory and norm based compliance. Mead uses the analogy of a 'carnivorous sundew plant, which attracts its prey with a kind of soft power, a pleasing scent that lures insects towards its sap. Once its victim has touched the sap, it is stuck and can't get away'

(2009). This illustrates how soft power attracts, and sticky maintains, the desired level of compliance. It is for this reason that I argue that international aid and loans can operate as soft, as well as, hard power. In the right context aid can co-opt rather than command changes in behaviour thus shifting hard bribery to soft inducement. The difference between the two may be a fine line. However the ultimate objective should not be just to produce but to also maintain the desired behavior – to make it stick. As already noted smart power is a strategy, the success rate of that strategy is likely to be greater if it is not just convincing, but sticky.

Therefore the distinction between defensive and offensive smart/soft power is useful. ‘*Offensive* soft power deals with shaping preferences whilst *defensive* soft power deals with diminishing the hard and soft power of adversaries’ (Participant Remarks, 2009, original emphasis). The identification of pre-existing preferences offers particular challenges for the exercise of smart power. Has B done what A wants because it was already inclined to that course of action? How far did B’s attraction to that course grow because of the actions of A? Or did B simply decide to acquiesce to A’s threats? In most cases compliance is likely to be a mix of these three variables. However it may be more difficult to identify the extent to which offensive or defensive soft/smart power has been deployed as, in reality, a synergy is likely to exist between these two variables. The bottom line is to appeal to your target and for that appeal to be enduring or ‘sticky’.

Explanations of power are subject to one’s ontological view of the world and the relative weight that one chooses to give the components of power. Smart power can be described as a contextually appropriate combination of power components that can induce B to do what A wants without too much complaint and without too many adverse side effects. The problem for smart power, as a strategy, is to isolate and measure the relevant components, or combination of components, identify why specific combinations of components succeed or fail and under what conditions, and to apply these findings.

Armitage and Nye argue that smart power rests on three principles: that America’s standing in the world matters to security and prosperity, today’s challenges can only be addressed with capable and willing allies and that civilian tools can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of US government policies. They argue that a ‘smarter’ approach to foreign policy is necessary, as contemporary challenges cannot be countered with military force alone. The crux of their argument is for the US to act as, and be seen as, a positive hegemonic force. This requires joined up thinking within the governmental bureaucracy of the US in terms of both international and transnational relations. Rhetoric and attraction are fundamental to soft power. Nye notes ‘success is the result not merely of whose army wins but also whose story wins’ (2010, p. 8).

Post 9/11 the need to rethink the projection of US values and identity to foreign audiences was made clear in George W. Bush’s ‘why do they hate us?’ speech (2001). The US subsequently set about a number of soft power initiatives including the expansion of the Fulbright Educational Program and cultural initiatives such as the touring photography exhibition ‘After September 11: images from Ground Zero’. Charlotte Beers, Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, also addressed international aid as a soft power tool. Quoting from a Qatari news article that stated ‘The irony is the first humanitarian aid came from the Americans. The food

bags have USA written on them. When I saw the Afghans running towards the American bags of flour, I smiled, and for the first time in my life I did not curse America' she notes that 'our goal is to take that kind of response and magnify it many fold so that we have our story in front of such unlikely candidates' (2001). Note the word 'story', in other words the aid altered perceptions of a belligerent US. However the notion that soft power is virtuous and hard power is negative is simplistic. For Nye 'it is not necessarily better to twist minds than to twist arms' (2006). Soft power can attract followers to negative or skewed as well as positive values. In its least sophisticated form US soft power is based upon an exceptionalist myth (Walt, 2011) characterized by 'arrogance and lack of curiosity when it [comes] to other cultures and institutions' (Brooks, 2013, p. 4).

Not only is smart power difficult to measure, values are hard to instill in 'others' with differing social, cultural and religious systems. This becomes especially problematic when notions of e.g. freedom and the rule of law are at one and the same time advocated and abandoned by the US in the pursuit of the Global War on Terror. This is evidenced by e.g. US sanctioned torture on detainees and denying detainees the status of prisoner of war and habeas corpus. To be effective smart power must be credible, attractive and contextualized. In reality this is a constantly shifting balancing act. Ideally smart power should have both a pragmatic and immediate appeal to an audience in terms of costs and benefits (it is rational to acquiesce rather than resist) and an enduring and contextually appropriate appeal in terms of values.

Smart Power as counter-terrorism

According to David H. Ucko the US prefers to avoid counterinsurgency missions as they 'tend to be protracted, demand case specific contextual intelligence and involve reconstruction activities, the provision of basic services and the establishment of governance' (2009, p. 2). He notes that whilst these tasks are best suited to civilian agencies, such agencies are poorly equipped to operate in hostile situations. Therefore, such tasks are devolved to the military. Here we see a need for hard and soft power initiatives and a call for contextual intelligence. Ucko's notion of counterinsurgency mirrors smart power.

The fight against terrorism requires the synchronized deployment of hard and soft strategies. Soft strategies may undermine the environment in which terrorists operate. However, they are unlikely to divert radicals from their calling. There is a simultaneous need to target extremists with hard power and for soft power strategies that will encourage moderates to reject extremism, deny extremist groups recruits and encourage states that suffer from domestic insurgencies to align themselves with the aims and values of the US. International aid has been adopted as a vehicle of soft power by the US since 2001. However, for international aid to be smart as well as soft it also needs to be sticky.

In a speech for the United Nations Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 President George W. Bush stated that 'we fight poverty as it is an answer to terror [and] Developed nations have a duty not only to share our

wealth, but also to encourage sources that produce wealth: economic freedom, political liberty, the rule of law and human rights'. He then announced the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and a 50% increase in core development assistance over the next three budget years. Bush was suggesting that developed countries should seek to foster US type values of freedom and liberty in impoverished countries with populations susceptible to the siren call of radical terrorism. The MCA was premised on a link between poverty and terrorism and development assistance was designed to encourage recipient nations to adopt US values. The MCA was in addition to the \$297 million, \$600 million and \$250 million allocated to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Jordan respectively, states seen as frontline in the war against terrorism, in the immediate aftermath of September 11th.

The MCA marked a sea change in approach for Bush, as he was previously of the opinion that foreign aid was wasted on impoverished nations that were of no geopolitical significance to the US. The expansion of foreign aid was perhaps an indicator that hostility and resentment are better countered by soft as opposed to hard power. The Bush regime was waking up to the fact that US national security could not be achieved through force alone. Although unable to resist a military solution in Africa, Bush later established AFRICOM (Francis, 2010), which was designed to support ineffective African militaries in the face of 'a sea of threats from international terrorists and widespread poverty and inequality' (Keller, 2013).

9/11 also heralded changes in the management of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Since 2001 the US Department of State (DOS) increasingly dominated the workings of USAID and in 2006 then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice finally merged USAID formally with the State Department. This meant that foreign assistance was more concretely identified with 'a powerful foreign policy and national security tool, not just a humanitarian effort' (Waxman quoted in Zwick, 2009). However the danger of this is that aid is directed towards countries that are strategically important to the US in the short term as opposed to sustainably addressing actual need wherever it arises in the longer term. Smart power strategies, as they relate to counter-terrorism, have primarily directed aid towards the former.

According to the 2012 Global Terrorism Index Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India register as having the highest impact of terrorism. Meanwhile USAID statistics show that the major recipients of US economic and military assistance were (in US \$ billions) Afghanistan (12.9), Israel (3.0), Iraq (2.1) and Pakistan (1.7) (USAID). The case of Israel can be put aside as it is an important historical ally of the US. However India, fourth on the list of terrorist impact, does not even make the top 25 recipients of USAID. Traviss Cassidy has mooted that this can be explained as the US dispenses USAID on the basis of self-interest and whilst India has a high incidence of terrorism 'it may be seen as less strategic importance in the war on terror compared to countries like Afghanistan or the Palestinian Territories, which house terrorists with the primary aim of harming the United States and Israel' (2010, p. 69).

George W. Bush's approach to the Global War on Terror was akin to that of a messianic global policeman. The Bush regime ultimately realized the need to sell the 'story' of the US. However it struggled to understand its audience in the Islamic world and lapsed into a 'one-way, message-driven information assault' (Zaharna, 2009, p. 3). Barack Obama is less driven by such a grand vision. His public diplomatic initiatives have focused on rhetoric of mutual interest and hope. He has

called for a sustained effort to ‘listen to each other [and to] respect one another’, (2009).

Obama prefers to focus on specific terrorist targets as opposed to ideology. His fight is crafted as being against terrorists, not Islamist terrorism, as the latter is an ideological strategy, not a target. Nevertheless the US administration makes or accepts the assumption that poverty is conducive to terrorism. Therefore targeting foreign aid at countries that are deemed to harbor terrorists that threaten US interests can be viewed as the deployment of both defensive and offensive soft power. Offensive in that foreign aid may encourage the recipients to align themselves with the values of the donor and defensive as recipients will be better placed to resist the threats and inducements of terrorists or those who oppose political liberty, the rule of law and human rights. Offensive soft power, wielded via foreign aid, relates to sticky power in that it can ‘trap’ recipients into aid dependency, the acceptance of neo-liberal norms and values and the behavioural conditionality that might accompany such payments. The aid is also defensively sticky in that an attack on the US becomes an attack on the flow of aid.

However the balance between soft and hard power is also evident in the composition of USAID, e.g. in Afghanistan of the total \$12, 924.4 million received from USAID in 2011, \$2,659 million is economic assistance whilst \$10, 265.4 is military assistance (USAID). Meanwhile a 2010 Congressional Service Report is clear, ‘The U.S. program of assistance to Afghanistan is intended to stabilize and strengthen the Afghan economic, social, political, and security environment so as to blunt popular support for extremist forces in the region’ (Tarnoff, 2010). The volume of military funding would indicate that the primary vehicle for stabilization in Afghanistan is the military.

No simple correlation can be identified between volumes of US aid and US popularity in recipient countries. US popularity is also a product of historical experience and is therefore context dependent. Where the US has established trustworthy relationships over time foreign aid may be more easily converted to trust. However for those countries where data is available on both volume of aid and trust in the US all predominantly Muslim states in the Middle East receive relatively high volumes of US aid and score low levels of trust in the US according to a 2013 Pew Research Poll (figures for Afghanistan and Iraq are not available).

A partial explanation for this trend could be that, whilst US aid to Pakistan has increased significantly since 2000. Since 2004 most US drone strikes against Afghan insurgents have taken place in Pakistan. This activity peaked in 2010 with 849 deaths recorded, 16 of whom were civilians and 35 of whom could not be identified (New American Foundation, 2014). Drones have been mooted in the media as Obama’s weapon of choice. The identity of casualties is contested. However it is argued that only 2% (Stanford University Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic and Global Justice Clinic, 2012) of those killed have been radical targets. Drone strikes also led to mass anti-US demonstrations in Pakistan. These protests, organized by the opposition party Tehreek-e-Insaf, included blocking main NATO supply routes into Afghanistan (Perera 2013). Meanwhile US aid to Pakistan as a soft power tool has been undermined by the US use of drones.

Bi-lateral relations were also undermined in 2011 when US forces, under Operation Neptune Spear, killed Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan. Bin Laden was found near the

Pakistani capital of Islamabad in a compound that was less than two miles from the prestigious Kakul Military Academy leading to speculation over exactly how much the Pakistani regime may have known of his whereabouts. Obama publically stated that the Pakistani regime was not told of the raid in advance as 'if we had asked Pakistan for permission we would not have got him'. Meanwhile the Pakistani Abbottabad Commission's report called the raid a 'contemptuous disregard of Pakistan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity in the arrogant certainty of [...] unmatched military might' (Hashim, 2013). Obama responded by arguing that the ground operation against Bin Laden was a risky exception. He also used the operation to argue for a continuation of the use of drones as they are effective, legal and, according to Obama, save lives (2013). Obama acknowledged that the cost of Operation Neptune Spear to the US Pakistan relationship was high. However, he also argues effective counter terrorism require sharp, and ideally precise tactics. At the same time he also argued that foreign aid 'is fundamental to our national security. And it's fundamental to any sensible long-term strategy to battle extremism' (2013). Therein lies the problem. Foreign aid needs to be long term to be effective as 'sticky' power whilst hard power can derail that process rapidly.

Pew Research Centre rankings show that 10% of Americans trust Pakistan (Pew Research Centre, 2013). This is unfortunate, as 'Washington cannot hope to exit Afghanistan until it is assured of Pakistan's ability and willingness to stabilize itself and the subregion' (Laidi, 2012, p. 100). Smart power is a strategy not an end state and as such it can be swiftly derailed. Obama knew that Operation Neptune would trigger an adverse reaction from Pakistan and he knew that drone strikes were unpopular. His weapons of choice were sharp and precise rather than soft and sticky. Thus smart power has floundered.

The situation with Afghanistan is deemed to be even worse. A report by the International Crisis Group found that despite the volume of international aid flowing to Afghanistan:

the international community has devoted much of its resources and programming to short-term counter-insurgency goals. In doing so, it has failed to adequately support state institutions such as parliament and the judiciary, that could provide a check on the power of the executive, identify citizens' needs and guarantee the rule of law (2011, p. 2).

This claim correlates with the composition of USAID flowing into Afghanistan as funds are predominantly for military assistance. In this case international aid conforms to traditional notions of economic hard power. The report notes that the militarization of aid has undermined humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, corruption amongst sub-contractors is rife and the impact of aid is difficult to measure as 'assistance is shaped by stabilization goals rather than the needs, priorities and input of the recipients' (2011, p. 21). The tension between short-term stabilization and nation building was evident in the differing strategic preferences of US military policy makers. In July 2010 Vice President Joe Biden went on record to say that the US was not in Afghanistan to nation build, it was 'not there to turn this into a Jeffersonian democracy. We're not there for ten years. We're there to defeat al-Qaida' (Daniel, 2010). Thus contradicting the 'population centric' or 'hearts and minds' strategy advocated by serving Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus.

The controversy over population-centric COIN in Afghanistan versus a target-centred approach in Afghanistan reflected the internal policy debates among American foreign policy elites and a general dissatisfaction among the informed public over the apparent lack of an exit strategy (Wong-Diaz, 2013, 53).

Not only were hard and soft power strategies contradicting each other but policy makers and the public were split over these policies and there was no end of sight.

Meanwhile African recipients of MCA funds, Kenya, Senegal and Ghana rank trust in the US at 81, 81 and 83% respectively. This may be because checks and balances are placed on MCA funding in ways that have clearly failed in Afghanistan. States have to meet strict criteria relating to governance, investing in people and economic freedom and anti-corruption indicators before they are permitted to design, for themselves, a MCA compact funding proposal. If they initially fail to meet these indicators they can apply for interim compact funding to help improve their scores. There are clear measures in place to get US objectives to stick. The MCA rewards initiative and strategies designed by recipients are more likely to be sustainable in the longer term. The US has also capitalized on the goodwill generated by The President's Emergency Plan for AIDs Relief (PEPFAR), initiated in 2002. 'The American government is probably the world's largest supplier of condoms to Africa [and at] least 1m Africans get life-preserving antiretroviral drugs largely thanks to Uncle Sam' (The Economist, 2008). The US track record is not perfect, for instance MCA funds disbursement has suffered from bureaucratic problems and Bush risked alienating African publics by advocating abstinence as a cure for AIDS. Nevertheless African countries are largely favourable towards the US.

Strategy, Trust and Opportunity

Meanwhile the Philippines, the home of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the New People's Army (NPA) and the focus of the 'second front' of the Global War on Terror in South East Asia scored an 85% favourability rating for the US. The Philippines ranked 10th for both recorded USAID obligations and for impact of terrorism in 2011. The Philippines was formerly a US colony and achieved peaceful independence in 1946. The Philippines has been of enduring importance to the US as a gateway to the Pacific, maritime South East Asia and mainland East Asia. The strategic importance of the Philippines is set to continue as the Obama administration moves to consolidate its influence in East Asia via its 'Asian Pivot'. The Philippines has the only deep-water ports and airfields proximate to the South China Sea that are suitable for US needs.

Contextual intelligence, either through accident or design, does seem to be in play in the Philippines. Since 1991 (with a suspension between 1995 and 1999) semi-regular joint military training 'Balikatan' (shoulder to shoulder) Exercises took place in the Philippines between US and Philippine forces. Whilst a vocal minority objects to these exercises as an incursion on Philippine sovereignty, Philippine trust ratings indicate that overall the US is welcome. The regular nature of the Balikatan Exercises

meant that post 9/11 the US was able to conduct counter-terror military operations in the Philippines under the guise of routine operations.

Perhaps surprisingly approval ratings for the post 9/11 US troop presence was highest in Muslim Mindanao (The Sulu archipelago runs south-west from Mindanao. This area is the home of the ASG). Of the 90% of Mindanaoans aware of the exercises 73% were in favour of them continuing (Pulse Asia, 2002). The popularity of troops was perhaps due to the military providing public services such as schools and roads with a degree of competency and accountability that exceeded that of the local and national government in the Philippines. Mindanao is 'a highly destitute area compared with the rest of the Philippines and one in which it is generally accepted that Islamic communities have suffered the most' (Cragin and Chalk, 2003, p. 16). Bush's post 9/11 counter-terrorism initiatives in the southern Philippines were 'smart' even before the term 'smart power' was mooted in policy circles. Here an effective synergy of soft and hard strategy was used to significantly reduce the operational capabilities of the ASG and seriously undermine its ideological appeal.

In recent years the Philippines has been one of the largest recipients of US aid in East Asia and the Pacific. In 2013 the Philippines received \$175, 571, 000, a figure far in excess of every other country in the region (Congressional Budget Justification, 2015, 8). However, as Gallarotti observes, 'the distinction between hard and soft power can be sometimes arbitrary and imperfect [aid...] may enhance a nation's image, but this liquidity can be used to purchase donor exports or pay back debts to banks in donor nations' (2015, p. 254). 2013 figures show that 'two way goods traded between the US and the Philippines totaled \$14.5 billion' (Lum, 2015, p. 8). The external debt of the Philippines totaled \$58.5 billion for 2013. 53.1% of this debt was denominated in US dollars (Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas, 2014). In other words a successful exercise in sticky power for the US.

Meanwhile the Philippines plans to spend \$1.7 billion over the next five years (2013-2017) on 'ships, helicopters and weapons' (Lum, 2015, p. 10) with the 'help' of the US. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has a limited defence budget and this is reflected in its military arsenal. The Philippines has zero aircraft carriers, zero naval destroyers and zero submarines it also has zero fighter aircraft and zero attack helicopters (Global Firepower, 2015). Therefore it is not unreasonable to surmise that aid flowing out of US coffers is flowing back in again whilst also aligning the strategic objectives of the Philippines with those of the US.

Cultural affinity, a more or less stable long-term relationship, economic interdependence and Chinese maritime ambitions in the South China Sea have successfully translated into high trust rating for the US in the Philippines. This means that when aid has been given it tends to be greeted positively rather than negatively. Thus smart power strategies have gained traction. However, overall the examples discussed above indicate that the US needs to develop a more consistent balance, or at least more cross referencing, between hard and soft power and it needs to develop comprehensive contextual intelligence. The statistics on trust indicate no amount of aid will make states adopt the values of the US if it advocates human rights and the rule of law whilst simultaneously undermining human rights, ignoring the rule of law, bombing civilians, and failing to halt the diversion of relief funds into the coffers of corrupt officials.

Conclusion

Smart power is the idea that an actor can design a mix soft and hard power, or inducements and threats, as an integrated grand strategy that will encourage 'others' to adopt designated values and align themselves with requisite policies. Smart power can relate to the foreign policy of states. Non-state actors, specifically terrorist networks, can also deploy strategies that mimic smart power. Smart power, like the war on terror, is a concept that involves both material resources and ideas. Therefore it has emerged as a US policy response to the Global War on Terror.

Whilst US smart power draws on the sentiments of liberal internationalism this has been significantly undermined by a resort to armed conflict and power politics in frontline Islamic states, specifically Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. These states, along with Israel, top the list of recipients for US aid however they also top the list of states that trust the US the least. Whilst the international community may have had some degree of tolerance for the United Nations sanctioned war in Afghanistan the US driven war in Iraq reduced trust in the US even in states that were peripheral to the Global War on Terror. The US has sought to engage with Pakistan. However this relationship has been undermined for a number of reasons. Pakistanis think that the US has brought instability to the region and lacks due respect for its territorial integrity. The lack of trust is compounded by the 'accidental' deaths of Pakistanis during military operations including civilians. If we accept smart power as a strategy designed to counter the Global War on Terror then it seems to succeed least where it matters most. Smart power has tended to be more effective in situations where the US enjoys relations that are stable and relatively good, such as the Philippines. Or where strategies are not dominated by uni-lateral US national security interests. The US needs to develop self-awareness of its appeal, or lack thereof, and contextual intelligence. Smart power strategies should be viewed from the stance of the audience not those who deploy it. It also needs to be reflexive. Smart power has no end point, just a constantly shifting dynamic. Potentially success can also only ever be measured in hindsight.

Clinton's component list of smart power: diplomacy, economics, military power, politics, legality, and culture are established tools of statecraft. By presenting smart power as something new the implication is made that these tools were not used in a 'smart' fashion previously. The only new thing about smart power is the articulation that the balance between these tools needs refining. What actually needs to happen for soft and hard power to be smart is for these strategies to stick. The US needs to listen to the needs of its audience and cater for these needs. The aim should be to create an institutional and material dependency that, whilst sticky, is also viewed as benign. This could be achieved by targeting international aid at the issues that concern the target populations the most. This might include infrastructure and utilities, livelihood and education and health. The recipients of aid and loans should be required to submit and commit to a credible plan for the meaningful management of aid, such as that required by the MCA, and the future disbursement of aid should be conditional on humanitarian performance not alignment with the US. The end result should however amount to the same thing. Infrastructure projects should be clearly branded e.g. USAID from the American People. The inference being that the American people care.

Smart power has emerged as a strategy in response to the multi-dimensional challenges of the Global War on Terror. The Global War on Terror is an extra-territorial and asymmetric, material and ideological war. Soft power is of potential value if it can attract moderates to the aims and ideals of the US. However the US undermines its moderate appeal when it shores up despotic regimes, ignores the human rights and rule of law that it professes to champion and sanctions the torture and killing of civilians. The US has been unable to resist hard power and indeed this may be the only way to counter radical aims and objectives. However this is not sustainable and it is not smart. The US will not attract others to its values if it allocates vast amounts of foreign aid to unstable or weak states without checks and balances as outlined above. Foreign aid needs to be more soft and sticky and less hard and transient.

The enduring nature of the Global War on Terror, the complexity of asymmetrical war fighting, difficulties in identifying the enemy or those susceptible to the allure of the enemy, knock on effects in terms of state implosion and human rights atrocities and the likelihood of a newly emerging Islamic diaspora mean that the need to 'get smart' is pressing. The US must devise effective strategies that counter the threat of terrorism otherwise it is in danger of frittering away foreign aid whilst also underwhelming the rest of the world with its lack of effective leadership. Smart strategy requires innovation and needs to be crafted as a relationship building exercise. For smart strategies to work they need to be orientated for the long-term. This means that smart power generally and international aid specifically must be based on contextual intelligence that can better frame strategies that 'stick'. If crafted well, such strategies can stabilize relationships and limit the use of military force.

¹ 'Others' is a term used by Nye. He includes countries and non-state actors in this categorization (2004, pp. 73-98).

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