



A USEFUL CONCEPT OF POWER

A Useful Concept of Power (I)

In this course we will work with a broad definition of power -- **power is the ability to make things happen, to do things.**

Defined as a means (the ability), it is **an instrument to achieve goals and not a goal in itself.**

Defined broadly, **it includes all available instruments** that can be used to achieve goals, not only the coercive military, economic, or political instruments.

A Useful Concept of Power (II)

THE RELATIVE NATURE OF POWER.

NOTHING IS POWERFUL IN AND OF ITSELF. **POWER IS DEFINABLE ONLY IN TERMS OF OPPOSING POWER.** IT IS DEFINABLE ONLY IN TERMS OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED AND, WHEN APPROPRIATE, IN TERMS OF TRANSNATIONAL FORCES.

INHERENT IN THIS DEFINITIONS OF POWER IS THE IDEA THAT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO OPPOSE YOU OR HAVE DIFFERENT GOALS.

WHEN ONE USES POWER, THERE ARE OTHERS WITH POWER WHO MUST BE CONSIDERED DURING THE DECISION PROCESS.

THE POWER OF ONE STATE IS RELATIVE TO THE POWER OF ALL OTHER INVOLVED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

A Useful Concept of Power (III)

The effect of the situation on power.

The capability to make things happen in one situation may not be as effective in another situation. This is different from power's relative nature. **The power of two states is relative, but the power of those two states in a specific circumstance is situational.**

Therefore, there are **three aspects of the concept of power** that you must be able to understand: its definition – the ability to make things happen; its relative nature – power is definable only in terms of all states and organizations involved; and its situational nature – the situation can affect the effectiveness of power.

We will develop a fourth aspect when we discuss national interests -- goals. For the moment, it should be sufficient to state that power is neutral. **It is the means to ends, not an end in itself.**

A Useful Concept of Power (IV)

To be able to use the concept of power, we must have a better idea of what it is in concrete terms. A way is to describe the instruments of power.

Instruments are anything that can cause things to happen. In the reading, the following are mentioned: military, economic, political/diplomatic, societal/cultural, people, and governmental.

A type of power is the capability to create power – to create the ability to make things happen.. The following flow diagram illustrates the idea.



A Useful Concept of Power (V)

THE USE OF POWER HAS TWO ELEMENTS – POLICY DECISION AND IMPLEMENTATION.

USE OF POWER(POLICY DECISION  IMPLEMENTATION)
 OUTCOME

AT THE TIME TO DECIDE HOW TO USE POWER, WHEN THE DECISION-MAKER HAS ONLY WHAT IS AVAILABLE, THE EFFECTIVE USE OF RELATIVE POWER WILL RELY ON WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED ABOVE AS THE GOVERNMENTAL INSTRUMENT, ESPECIALLY THE ABILITY TO MAKE POLICY AND DECISIONS, THE ABILITY TO COORDINATE THESE POLICIES AND DECISIONS WITH THE MYRIAD OF OTHER POLICIES AND DECISIONS IT HAS AND WILL MAKE, AND THE ABILITY TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE POLICIES AND DECISIONS.

A Useful Concept of Power (VI)

POWER AND GOALS

The superb application of very effective instruments to the wrong or a poorly chosen goal is a terrible misuse of effort. An effective foreign policy requires the ability to use power well to achieve the necessary goals. How the state selects those necessary goals is a critical capability, a part of its abilities to make the appropriate decisions and to manage all aspects of foreign policy.

EFFECTIVE USE OF POWER toward APPROPRIATE GOALS



PERHAPS THE DESIRED OUTCOME, **B**

ONE OF THREE EXAM I TAKE-HOME ESSAYS: CHOICE OF EITHER

In a 3/4-page essay, 1) describe the critical elements of the world situation at the end of World War II as seen by the USSR, 2) identify, describe, and justify what you believe were the primary two goals of the USSR, and 3) describe the primary instruments of Soviet power.

In a 3/4-page essay, 1) describe the critical elements of the world situation at the end of World War II as seen by the US, 2) identify, describe, and justify what you believe were the two goals of the US. and 3) describe the primary instruments of American power.