**SRD 03 – POWER & THE UTILITY OF FORCE**

**Author: Richard** **Craig Nation**. American historian and strategic studies scholar whose research focuses on war, peace, security, and Eurasian affairs. Has served as a professor across a breadth of academic institutions across the globe. He specialises in security affairs of contemporary Europe and Eurasia, with particular emphasis on the Russian Federation. His broad CV enables him to bring both interdisciplinary and global perspectives to his analyses.

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​**Summary of:** ‘National Power’ in J. Boone Batholomees Jr. (ed.) US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues. Vol. 1. Theory of War and Strategy, 5th ed. (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012) pp.147-158 by Richard Craig Nation.

Through the Lense of international relations, Nation explores the concept of power from it’s most basic form as a function of coercive behaviour, to national power which all political institutions are manifestations and materializations of and International power which is facilitated by the absence of any effective supernational authority. Ultimately, regardless of the level, power is the measure of a relationship. Historically, military power has been the most important arbiter in relations between states but superior military capacity alone is not sufficient to achieve successful outcomes in international competitions. National power has evolved away from the core assumptions of the realists paradigm and the the relative importance of military power has diluted in an ever more interdependent world, where a greater emphasis on the economic, informational, diplomatic, and cultural elements of power have now become more critical as part of multidimensional power. In todays world, the challenge for translating power and its maximising its utility of force requires a calculated strategy by states to shape their own outcomes by using all of their instruments of national power judiciously to promote their own interests.

**Author: Michael Beckley.** American scholar of international relations and security studies. His extensive CV spans across education, research, books, journals, essays, reports and public appearances in his field of expertise. He has written extensively on measuring national power, forecasting the rise and fall of great powers and why some states dominate while others decline.

**Summary of:** ‘The power of nations. Measuring what matters’, in International Security, Vol. 43, Issue 2 (2018) pp.7-44 by Michael Beckley.

Beckleys paper begins with a powerful question; “what makes some countries more powerful than others?”, which he contends is the most important questions for the study and application of international relations, relating the balance of power as the motor of world politics. He discusses the various scholarly ways of measuring national power and challenges some of assumptions applied to some methods such as measuring a states wealth, military assets or GDP because they focus on gross resources without accounting for the costs a state has to bear. He proposes that power is better measured in net resources, that is, after subtracting costs such as welfare, security, inefficiencies, etc. Beckleys argument is very sound and logical when presented through his use of case studies and statistical analysis of previous wars and military disputes. Beckley contends that applying this method of measuring will have implications for contemporary power balances today as it is a more accurate and useful way of understanding how some countries are more powerful than others.

**Question 1:** Is military force a declining utility as a tool of national or international policy?

**Question 2:** What other (i.e. non-military) tools are available for the exercise of national power?

**Question 3:** Does ‘soft power’ really exist? Is it a tool that can be exploited by Government.

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