

who agree with his conclusions will find his treatment of issues (such as the purposes of the aluminum tubes and the claim that Saddam tried to procure uranium from Africa) one-sided and without nuance, just as the Bush administration's treatment of them was. Similarly, much of his critique of the intelligence community parallels that of the neoconservatives he scorns (pp. 289, 292, 294). On the frontispiece, Bamford quotes Feodor Dostoyevsky as saying "While nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer, nothing is more difficult than to understand him." Unfortunately, the book bears witness to the validity of this insight.

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Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics by Joseph S. Nye.
New York, Public Affairs, 2004. 208 pp. \$25.00.

Joseph Nye has done his usual masterful job in this elegant monograph, describing the many sources of influence in international relations and reminding readers that excessive reliance on military or economic instruments of policy can often trigger backlashes that harm the nation's interests in the longer term. Nye points out that rather than either coercing others to share our objectives or buying their agreement with economic incentives, it is better for the United States to get what it wants because others share our goals. Soft power, he says, is more than influence or persuasion, "it is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence" (p. 6).

Much of the book is devoted to descriptions of the sources of soft power in the United States and other countries, including the nation's values and the styles of individual behavior expressed in the dominant culture and transmitted through both commercial activities (Hollywood movies, for example) and personal contacts, and the nation's policies, particularly when they reflect values that are widely shared around the world. Thus, Nye argues, the United States won the Cold War in part because of the attractiveness of the American form of government and economy, and because American values, or American soft power, eventually came to dominate global perceptions of the two superpowers and induced others to want to share in our vision of the world.

Although Nye makes a persuasive case, in the end, the book is unsatisfying because of inherent limitations in the concept of soft power. It is a form of power, yes, but not an instrument of power that can be deployed in specific situations or even one that can be shaped in a meaningful way by the government. Soft power exists, and may be influenced by governmental choices, but it is more an existential factor in the policy environment than something policy makers can utilize to their advantage.

A nation's "attractiveness" to others is not a factor that can be exploited in any coherent way. Indeed, the chapter "Wielding Soft Power" is devoted solely to public diplomacy—the various means available to the government to communicate the nation's policies and values. But in our interdependent and

interactive world, government-inspired communications of all types are only a tiny fraction of the information received by people around the world about the United States. Even if the United States spent a more reasonable amount on its public diplomacy than it does now, as Nye rightfully suggests, its diplomacy would still be dwarfed by the private sources of information in the United States and abroad, and by the huge volume of interactions among citizens of all nations that take place independent of government actions or inactions.

Nye suggests that the current administration is squandering U.S. soft power by its unilateralist approach to world affairs, by its attacks on the United Nations and other international institutions, and by its rejection of such popular global initiatives as the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court; and he is correct. But the intractable problem is that necessary exercises of military or economic hard power often undermine a nation's soft power. This is nowhere more apparent than in U.S. relations with the Islamic world. Take Nye's Pakistan example. Describing President Pervez Musharraf's difficulty in helping the United States to pursue antiterrorist objectives in the face of a large anti-American constituency, Nye says, "If the United States were more attractive to the Pakistani populace, we would see more concessions in the mix" (p. 129). Of course, and if pigs had wings, they could fly. So what! Anti-American Pakistanis oppose our intervention in Afghanistan and support the Taliban and al Qaeda. U.S. soft power is meaningless in a context dominated by hard-power considerations.

Joe Nye is correct. Soft power contributes importantly to the nation's ability to achieve its goals in the world. But I don't think Professor Nye would disagree that soft power also has its limitations. U.S. attractiveness to others will never be shaped fundamentally by the government, nor can it be tapped for use in particular situations. Nor will soft power be a dominant consideration in situations in which there are real differences of interest and perspective. In these cases, harder forms of national strength will continue to dominate policy choices.

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Surprise, Security, and the American Experience by John Lewis Gaddis.
Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2004. 160 pp. \$18.95.

How can one get really angry at Voltaire's Doctor Pangloss? His conviction that this was the best of all possible worlds may have been wrong-headed, but he was so cheerful and optimistic. John Lewis Gaddis is also cheerful and optimistic. *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* began as the 2002 Joanna Jackson Goldman Memorial Lectures at the New York Public Library, and the book retains the chatty tone of a public lecture series. The chapters are organized around the three surprise attacks the United States has suffered in its history: