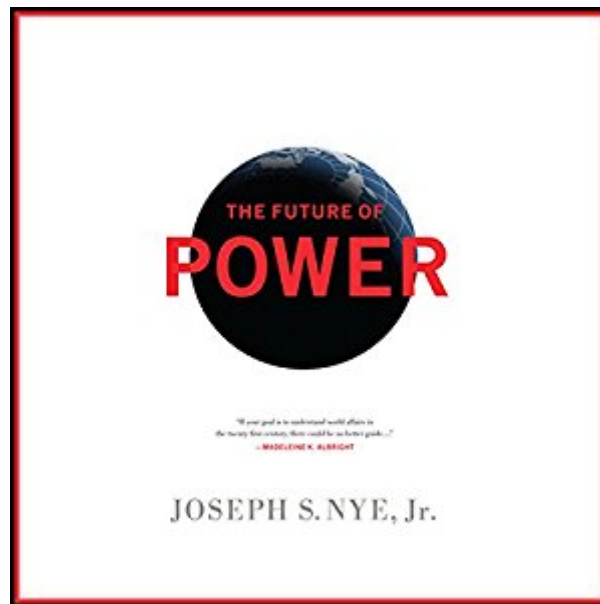


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# The Future Of Power: Its Changing Nature And Use In The Twenty-first Century



## Synopsis

Power evolves. In the 16th century, control of colonies and gold bullion gave Spain the edge; 17th-century Netherlands profited from trade and finance; 18th-century France gained from its larger population, while 19th-century British power rested on its primacy in the Industrial Revolution and its navy. In the era of Kennedy and Khrushchev, power resources were measured in terms of nuclear missiles, industrial capacity, and numbers of men under arms and tanks lined up ready to cross the plains of Eastern Europe. But the global information age of the 21st century is quickly rendering these traditional markers of power obsolete, remapping power relationships. In *The Future of Power*, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., a longtime analyst of power and a hands-on practitioner in government, delivers a new power narrative that considers the shifts, innovations, bold technologies, and new relationships that will define the 21st century. He shows how power resources are adapting to the digital age and how smart power strategies must include more than a country's military strength. Information once reserved for the government is now available for mass consumption. The Internet has literally put power at the fingertips of nonstate agents, allowing them to launch cyberattacks on governments from their homes and creating a security threat that is felt worldwide. But the cyberspace has also created a new power frontier among states, ripe with opportunity for developing countries. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, America had about a quarter of the world's product but only 5 percent of its population. It was indisputably the most powerful nation in the world, unsurpassed in military strength and ownership of world resources. Today, China, Brazil, India, and others are increasing their share of world power resources, but remain unlikely to surpass America as the most powerful nation if the United States adopts new strategies designed for a global information age. The Internet's ultimate impact on the nature of power is a concern shared by nations around the world. *The Future of Power*, by examining what it means to be powerful in the 21st century, illuminates the road ahead.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The US has, since WWII, been the most powerful and influential country in the world. Following the collapse of the Communist system in 1990 it is the sole super power. Nonetheless, there have been limits to the extension of American power. The most obvious example is the defeat in Vietnam. More recently, in response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the US has become engaged in new wars of occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq. And the prognosis of those state building projects remains uncertain today. Joseph S. Nye Jr. has provided a new book, *The Future of Power*, to assess American power and consider the future of America's reach. In some ways this book is an example par excellence of realpolitik. He offers a reasoned approach to assessing the limits of power and provides a methodology, which he terms 'smart power,' as a strategy for the successful extension of American influence in the world. He explains that, while the US remains the dominate military power by far, it cannot successfully impose its will on the world order through military might alone. This is, as far as it goes, a rational critique of US policy and its continued reliance upon projected military strength. Indeed the US cannot afford the expense of maintaining military dominance and policing the world. So the author suggests a mix of soft and hard power that are measured against a prioritized list of goals in order to achieve the maximum influence possible. This is the essence of smart power. His advice would certainly be useful, if it were taken to heart by the many old cold-warriors who lead government policy. So from this perspective I think that *The Future of Power* is a worthy book. However, in the long run not even smart power will be adequate.

I have read a book a day for several decades, and consequently it has been my subjective experience that about one out of every 100 books is a gem, an absolutely wonderful gift to the reader. This book is that gem, and one simply has to read it with an open mind to gain an understanding of how the world works. Regardless of what side of the political fence you find yourself on, the left or the right, you will find *The Future of Power* to be INTENSE, PROVOCATIVE, and NECESSARY. One can choose to maintain their preconceived notions about power, but after

reading this book, it becomes clear that such people will be swept aside by the future that Nye describes so clearly. Your understanding of power will never be the same. We are at an inflection point in world history, and our traditional understanding of extrapolating the past into the future will not be a guide for what is coming next, but this book will be such a guide. If I had to use single words to describe what is in this book, I would say: \* Original\* Brilliant\* Readable\* Clear\* Pragmatic\* Lucid\* Sweeping\* Influential\* Seminal Nye comes to us with extraordinary credentials. The fact that he was Dean of the Harvard School of Government (JFK School) for several years, I do not hold against him. His work in government including high positions at the National Security Council, National Intelligence Council, and the Defense Department have allowed him both influence, and the ability to evolve on a real world basis.

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