



***Smarter Power. The Key to a Strategic Transatlantic Partnership, Aude Jehan & András Simonyi (ed.), Washington DC, Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University, 2015, 160 pp.***

The Iran hostage crisis that took place between 1979 and 1981 in the wake of the assault on the United States embassy in Tehran by supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution gave way to a substantive change in the public consideration of the management of international policies. This conflict was not only decisive in the decline of Jimmy Carter's presidency –he would not be reelected in the 1980 elections– but was also used as the excuse for

establishing a new doctrine reinforced by a newly rearmed Republican party that claimed that American influence should be sustained through coercive power based on a progressive increase of the military budget. According to this discourse, «Hard Power» was presented as the replacement for «Soft Power» (the term would be coined by Joseph Nye in 1990), considered as futile and useless.

Nevertheless, a certain number of events has brought to light the various problems caused by neoconservative dogma in the last three decades. Economic recessions, cracks in the social model, the 9/11 attacks or instability in the Middle East are just a few of the consequences that cast doubt on the supremacy of an intimidating foreign policy. On the other hand, assuming that the strategy of persuasion or seduction (diplomacy or educational exchange, i.e., «Soft Power») might prove to be rather lightweight in some cases, one must conclude that a combination of both is necessary. At this point, «Smart Power» arises to «recognize the diverse ways in which Hard and Soft Power can be combined (...) Smart Power might entail long-term attraction alongside short-term use of coercion when necessary».

Aude Jehan proposes such a redefinition of this concept in *Smarter Power. The Key to a Strategic Transatlantic Partnership*, a volume she has coordinated with András Simonyi within a research project at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University. The lack of interest that this notion has aroused in academic studies is highlighted at the beginning of the book, a remarkable fact considering its growing importance in the political arena. Indeed, Jehan reminds us of a good example involving the former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who «invoked Smart Power as the idea that an effective foreign policy must place principal reliance on a tailored synthesis of Hard and Soft Power adapted to specific circumstances» (p. 4). Therefore, the aim of the book is to draw up an overall analysis of «Smart Power» in order to focus on the social benefits when power does not exclusively rely upon military and speculative impulse, as Jehan explains: «Making power renewable entails several steps (...) the first step is undoubtedly the rebuilding of economic strength to make new investments, and ensuring the support and competence of our own population» (p. 11).

Jehan's contribution opens the first of the three-part structure of the volume. This initial block is devoted to questioning the traditional distinction between Hard and Soft Power, as it is clearly laid out by András Simonyi and Judit Trunkos when they write that «[t]here are tools of power that are hard in appearance and soft in their impact» (p. 17) and vice versa. The use of Western popular culture in the Cold War shows the difficulties when establishing a dichotomy since elements such as rock music, Hollywood, fashion and literature turned out to be crucial in the ideological warfare against the East (as has been deeply described by Frances Stonor Saunders, amongst others). Power requires, therefore, different tools, as Stacia George confirms by arguing that Hard and Soft Power «are desirable and useful, depending on whom one is trying to influence and what would influence them» (p. 31). As for her, George is concerned about the effectiveness of combining both categories because «[p]ossessing the tools of power is not the same as successfully wielding power» (p. 33). One main endeavor of the United States lies in working on a better and more coordinated bureaucracy that might result «in a U.S. Government that effectively wields both its Hard and Soft Power assets such that each is successful on its own, and when combined, exponentially more powerful» (p. 49).

Whereas this first part discusses the prominent position of America in the international scene, the second one is oriented towards the axis United States–European Union and provides us with insights from senior executives on both sides of the Atlantic. Esther Brimmer, who was Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs at the time of writing, reflects on the change of direction of the Obama administration from the George W. Bush period to an efficient multilateral diplomacy by revitalizing entities such as the FAO to solve problems like the food crises in 2007 and 2008. Thus, a new culture of agreement arose that might restore the damaged credibility of the country in dealing with international affairs using force. Brimmer advises: «From terrorism to nuclear proliferation, climate change to pandemic disease, transnational crime to cyber attacks, violations of fundamental human rights to natural disasters, today's most urgent security challenges pay no heed to state borders» (p. 54). Paula J. Dobriansky, an American foreign policy expert

who has served in key roles as a diplomat, and Paul J. Saunders, executive director of the Center for the National Interest, carry out an exhaustive study of the current situation of energy resources and security in transatlantic relations. From a European point of view, two MEPs and former national Ministers provide us with their insights. Alain Lamassoure recalls his intervention at the World Economic Forum in Davos back in 1997 –his voice crying in the wilderness that the 21st century should not belong to any particular power or continent but to the whole world– and demands cooperation among the Member States of the EU and with the USA and the international institutions. Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck indicates that the construction of an European Union based on Smart Power is hindered by the interests of the Member States alongside the struggle between immediacy and patience in finding solutions: «We do live (...) in an era of spectacle and show. It is an era of instantaneity and urgency, of brevity and apparent immediacy. An era in which foreign ministers and even the Pope tweet, is not very conducive to the patient, multilateral and protracted negotiations» (pp. 115-116).

After the social, cultural and political diagnosis is completed, the chapters in the third block take a look at the future with a common message –«smart power needs to get smarter». In fact, this is the title of Daniel Serwer's article, an idea that he develops on page 125: «[Smart Power] should focus on preventing conflict and instability, lead to a serious restructuring of our diplomatic establishments so that they become more expeditionary and anticipatory, share burdens within a clear concept of strategic goals, and shift resources to nongovernmental initiatives». Tyson Barker delves into Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership's (TTIP) geopolitical and economic benefits and Tom C. Wang foresees new challenges if the United States and Europe worked together in areas such as science diplomacy. «Today Americans may be waking up to the fact that they can't withdraw from the world», as Daniel S. Hamilton and András Simonyi conclude (p. 157). A global cooperation is needed to face threats to democratic societies from a redefinition of the «Smart Power» notion, a task that this book fully accomplishes.

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*EU-topias*