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**The US policy of soft power in Central Asia**

**Introduction**

This work is devoted to the study of “soft power” - the ways in which a country can influence the processes taking place in the world.

In the 21st century, the channels through which each state can influence international processes and other countries are expanding. Today, a country’s economic success, its ideological credibility, and its cultural appeal are often more important factors than its military power and possession of nuclear weapons.

When Joseph Nye coined the term “soft power” in 1990, the Cold War was coming to an end, and the Soviet empire was crumbling. Countries ceased to conduct dialogue with each other from a position of only power and strength.

“Soft power” remains a priority tool in regulating relations not only outside the country, but also within the country.

**The relevance of this work** is explained by the fact that in today’s world the processes of globalization and migration are intensifying. People change their place of residence, moving to other countries, but without losing touch with the original culture. Through immigration, the experience of other countries spreads around the world, creating the cultural image of the country. And the more great people support the ideals and values of this or that country, the more attractive this country becomes in the eyes of other people.

For example, an attempt to establish a harsh dictatorship in Russia and instill in the population hatred of the West also failed because American values, such as freedom and equality, are very attractive to Russians. And no new laws and “propaganda of national historical values” can make it attractive to humiliate women, migrants, members of minorities. A repeat of the Cold War is becoming impossible because ideologically, Russia and the United States are already close to each other and share universal human values. American popular culture has penetrated into the life of every Russian through television. Exports of films and television from the United States in 2016 alone amounted to \$16.2 billion. In comparison, exports of films and television from Britain, which reached a wave of popularity, amounted to 1.2 billion dollars.

The US policy in Central Asia is also often viewed from the position of “soft power”, especially in the cultural and humanitarian dimension. In many ways, this position is more cultivated by adherents of conspiracy theories and geopolitics. We are talking about the formation of an alumni pool, i.e. alumni network of American exchange programs. This is what the United States has been actively doing and continues to do at the present time - to actively invest in the development of human capital by providing various kinds of educational and / or research programs in the world and in the Central Asian region in particular. Moreover, it is important to note that the policy of encouraging and promoting democratic values and human rights has been a key tenet of Washington's foreign policy strategy for at least the past 30 years.

As part of this work, we will consider how the United States applied the concept of “soft power” and why it was successful.

**The object of our research:** US foreign policy at the end of the 20th - at the beginning of the 21st century.

**Subject of study:** the U.S. public diplomacy in Central Asia as an instrument of its foreign policy.

Territorial and chronological framework of the study. The study of the components of “soft power” in US foreign policy as a whole is concentrated within the period 2000-2018 years. And territorial limits of the United States of America in countries of interest in the zone of influence of US foreign policy.

The degree of study of the topic. When writing the work, a fairly wide range of sources was involved, which, in turn, can be divided into: publications of official documents and speeches, official websites of ministries and departments, and reports of officials.

Meanwhile, there are many different articles and essays by Russian and foreign scientists devoted to a topic consonant with “soft power” - information wars, their spread, cultural and ideological propaganda, which to some extent also turned out to be useful for our work, especially when working on paragraph on public diplomacy and Web2.0 diplomacy.

The basic source of the study was such works by Joseph Nye, the author of the concept of “soft policy”, such as: *The Powers to Lead: Soft, Hard, and Smart*; *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*.

We also analyzed such sources as the speeches of American politicians, for example, D. Bush and H. Clinton, when studying the experience of applying the concept of “soft power” within the United States.

The works of I. Wallerstein and M. Weber were also of great value for research.

Among the Russian scientists represented in the literature base of our study, the works of Americanists I.V. Antimony, V.V. Sogrin. N. Tsvetkova.

**The purpose of our research:** to reveal the features of the concept of “soft power” as the US foreign policy in Central Asia.

**Our research objectives:**

1. Consider the history of the formation of the concept of “soft power”;

2. To study the mechanisms and tools for the implementation of “soft power”;

3. Describe the geopolitical position of the United States, the main directions and instruments of foreign policy;

4. To study the official and unofficial institutions for the implementation of the concept of “soft power” of the United States in Central Asia;

5. Analyze social networks as one of the instruments of US foreign policy in Central Asia;

6. Consider the prospects for the use of “soft power” in US foreign policy in Central Asia.

### **Research methods.**

In the course of work on the first chapter of the work, such research methods as: generalization, cause-and-effect analysis, method of systematization and classification were used.

When writing the second chapter, we used the methods of abstraction, description, as well as forecasting and situational analysis of development paths.

The systemic approach made it possible to explore the role and significance of the “soft power” tools in US foreign policy through the main properties and functions of the system “immersed in the environment”, in our case, the international one. This approach is especially relevant in connection with the processes of globalization, which enhance the role and importance of the “soft” components of US foreign policy in Central Asia.

### **Description of the structure of the final qualifying work.**

This work consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of references.

The first chapter examines the historical and theoretical calculations about the phenomena included in the concept of “soft power”, and also examines the US foreign policy. The second chapter outlines the official and unofficial institutions for the implementation of the US “soft power” concept. The third chapter is devoted to the analysis and processing of the information received in the course of research, and outlines the analysis of one of the unofficial institutions in the context of US foreign policy in Central Asia. A situational analysis of the likely manifestations of “soft impact” for the next five years was also carried out.

## **1. Discourse of soft power and public diplomacy**

### **1.1. The history of the formation of the foundations of “soft power”**

Recently, bypassing diplomats, the term “soft power” has become increasingly common. This term is often used in the media, and as a result, it becomes rather vague over time. Means of significance distort concern and mean by “soft need” any action, except for anxiety, directed at the perception of feeling.

The blurring of definitions through wide distribution includes wide-ranging ambiguities, which include the interpretation of retail chains as representative of the general public who are not widely distributed.

This phenomenon is based on the search for «soft power», in the study and empirical consideration of the problem as a solution to international relations in the 21st century.

To solve the problem associated with rapidly growing dynamics, in this paper we develop the most concrete and clearly formulate the definition of “soft power”, based on the historical development of the study of the theory and logic of changing objects.

The end of the 20th century was marked by the Commissioner for Regulating the Role of the State in International Relations. Thanks to the research of J. Nye and R. Cohane, the «concept of neoliberal institutionalism» took place, the primary principle of which was «complex» interdependence, consisting in economic interpenetration in the sense of international trade and capital redistribution, in the interest of states in the approach of nuclear war and other complex problems [Keohane R., Nye J., 1977, p. 23].

The new concept, as opposed to realists, equates the state with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, transnational corporations, revolutionary movements, etc.



In this sense, global interpenetration appears as yet another proof of a future world order based on liberal democracy and individual human rights.

Taking into account the decline of the military force factor in the power balance, which is giving way to cultural diplomacy, J. Nye and R. Kohane present such a general methodological tool as «game theory», which is considered as a method for studying optimal strategies in games. Game theory helps to choose the best strategies, taking into account ideas about other participants, their resources and their possible actions.

This tool allows you to explain the reason for cooperation or confrontation between national governments. Theorists use it to identify potential benefits from international cooperation, relying on transnational institutions (institutions) that can function on the basis of mutually beneficial agreements and compromises [Keohane R., 1984, P. 65].

The significance of this concept was confirmed at the beginning of the 21st century: the United States, based on the principles of neoliberal institutionalism, advocates globalization in politics, culture, economics, finance and information, which, as a result, significantly limits the role of a sovereign state, turning most of the world's political elites into obedient executors of the will of the «leader of progress».

The desire to strengthen Washington's dominance in the world system through the planetary spread of American culture has enriched neoliberal ideology with the concept of «soft power».

The author of the term was the aforementioned J. Nye (who headed the John F. Kennedy School of Management at Harvard University in the mid-1990s), who first used it in 1990 in the book *The Call to Leadership: The Changing Nature of American Power*. In his work, the scientist gave him the following definition:

*«Soft power» is the ability to get what you want through the voluntary participation of allies, and not through coercion or payments». Moreover, this*

*phenomenon organically fits into the US strategy in the 21st century, which, according to the author, should be accelerated: «If the United States slows down the mobilization of its resources for the sake of international leadership, polyarchy can arise quite quickly and have its negative impact. Interdependence management is becoming the main motive for the application of American resources, and it should be the main element of the new strategy» [Nye J., 1990, P. 258-260].*

In his analysis, J. Nye identifies three types of foreign policy resources on which the combined power of the US is based:

1. Military potential, in which the United States is ahead of the rest of the world;

2. Economic power, within which Washington is gradually being replaced by the European Union and China;

3. Intangible resources - the image and cultural power of TNCs, NGOs, mass culture; foreign policy ideology (popularized by public diplomacy).

The key component of Washington's cultural policy is becoming popular culture (identified by most experts with the concept of «American culture»), the success of which is explained by the rapid development of high technologies, thanks to which American pop culture is broadcast to the whole world, becoming an effective political and ideological tool in the service of from various media tycoons, transnational corporations, representatives of political clans, financial, industrial and other business circles.

In the book *Soft Power. Means of «Achieving Success in World Politics»*, published in 2004, the scientist supports the innovativeness of the theory with the following thesis:

*«If Napoleon, who spread the ideas of the French Revolution, was obliged to rely on bayonets, then now, in the case of America, the inhabitants of Munich,*

*as well as Muscovites, themselves strive for the results achieved by the leader of progress»* [Nye J., 2004, P. 87 ].

In other words, the classical military theory based on «hard power» is undergoing significant changes, carefully emphasized by the author:

*«When you can get others to want what you want, you get less of the carrots and sticks you need to move people in the right direction. Temptation is always more effective than coercion, and values such as democracy, human rights and individual opportunities are deeply seductive»* [Nye J., accessed at: [http://www.situation.ru/app/j\\_art\\_1165.htm](http://www.situation.ru/app/j_art_1165.htm) (accessed 22.02. 2022)].

It follows from this that the cultural attractiveness of a country, when used in a balanced way, can also weaken the desire of potential opponents to create a counterbalance in the form of various alliances and coalitions.

Thus, one of the key tasks of American geostrategy, formulated by George W. Bush Sr. (relevant to this day) is

*«The United States considers it their vital interest to prevent the dominance of any hostile power or group of powers on the territory of Eurasia»* [Doyle M., 1983, P. 205-235] - inevitably involves the use of «soft power» capable of exerting an indirect influence on potential allies and Washington's competitors.

The concept of «power» is compared to the weather, on which everything depends, but whose influence is not always amenable to rational explanation or mathematical calculation. The emphasis is solely on the tools and resources that allow participants in international relations to achieve their goals.

At the same time, Nye refers economic and military power to the «hard power» of states.

In comparison with the «hard power» focused on military coercion by the state, «soft power» appears as a kind of «translator», cultivating the glowing on the

hill among the foreign audience through the coordinated actions of the entire state apparatus.

Considering “soft power” as a tactical weapon that uses the “attractiveness of democracy and the free market”, the White House is invited to use its leadership in the cultural communication sphere to enhance the «effect of American diplomacy» [Nye J. S., Owen W. A., 2015. Access mode: <http://www.infousa.ru/information/gjcom6.htm> (accessed 02/22/2022)].

The totality of all information capabilities that reinforce the geostrategic advantage of the United States creates an «information umbrella» through which the Americans can exchange information with their allies unilaterally, determining their positions on key issues on the international agenda.

That is, «soft power» is presented as a kind of information calling for political action by states that are part of the zone of national interests of the Stars and Stripes Flag.

Thus, the meaning of power as such («hard» or «soft») is determined by the ability to achieve a set goal from others. This possibility itself depends entirely on the availability of certain resources for exercising power in a particular regime, the ability to use them, as well as on the "context", that is, on the conditions for their effective use.

Even half a century before J. Nye, the British researcher in the field of political science and international relations, Edward Carr, also noted the growing role of the power of motivation in resolving international issues. Edward Carr believed that there are three types of power: military, economic and «power over opinions» [Carr E.H., 2001, p. 102].

Most remarkable is the fact that Edward Carr wrote about «power over opinions» as early as 1939, when Europe and the entire civilized world were already clearly threatened by Nazi and fascist dictatorship, which did not have the slightest resemblance to the policy of «soft» power, although the origin of this

phenomenon, according to Carr, became possible «thanks» in many respects to the same power over opinions.

Of course, it is a mistake to believe that «soft» power originated only two centuries ago, it was inherent in the Greco-Roman world with the cultural policy of Alexander the Great, and the Middle Ages in the works of the political figure Niccolo Machiavelli, but only in the twentieth century did researchers characterize the term for this phenomenon.

Nevertheless, modernity in quantitative terms has given us relatively little new in terms of the development of the «soft» power approach.

The wheel of «soft» power set in motion by the power of the «Hellenistic» era (Europeans - the Chosen People, who easily imposed their cultural heritage on peripheral countries), in the twentieth century is spinning at a speed never seen before.

The technical innovations of recent decades have become not just a tool to reach new heights, but also a means of exploitation used to consolidate the existing dominant position of a number of countries.

The latter is trying to maintain a monopoly on welfare and tie it to its own universal cultural value system, thus placing the rest of the world in front of a clear dilemma: either accept this system, implement it and enjoy its benefits, including material ones, or reject and become a rival.

In this sense, «democratic» Western universal liberalism is by no means tolerant.

For countries that were not originally part of this system for geographical or other reasons, «the fateful question arises: can anyone borrow a foreign civilization in part, without the risk of being gradually drawn into accepting it entirely?».

The answer to this question was again given by Arnold Toynbee, to whom we turn.

Viewing the relationship between the West and the Islamic world in a global context, Toynbee writes:

*«These concentric attacks of the modern West on the Islamic world marked the current clash between the two civilizations. Obviously, this is part of a larger and more ambitious plan, where Western civilization has as its goal nothing more and nothing less than the inclusion of all mankind in a single society and control over everything that is on earth, in the air and on the water and to which for the benefit of the business modern Western technology. What the West is doing now with Islam, it is simultaneously doing with all the civilizations that exist today - the Orthodox Christian world, the Hindu and the Far East - including the surviving primitive societies that are in a hopeless situation even in their own citadel - in Tropical Africa. Thus, the modern clash between Islam and the West is not only deeper and more intense than any of the previous ones, it also represents a very characteristic episode in the West's desire to westernize the whole world; an enterprise that will probably be considered the most important and almost certainly the most interesting in the history of the generation that survived two world wars. at the most critical moments of the Crusades, because the modern West is far superior to it not only in the power of arms, but also in the economy on which the military spider is ultimately based, but most of all - in spiritual culture - the only internal force that creates and maintains the external manifestations of that what we call civilization.» [Toynbee A., 2009, p.160-161; 177-178].*

As Toynbee rightly points out, the same issue of absorption by the soft power of the West is not only for Islam, but also for other civilizations.

This, perhaps, is characteristic of the 21st century, as the century of globalization: any action taken in the sphere of international relations, at least

between two civilizations, will necessarily have some effect on the entire system of international relations as a whole.

I would like to draw attention to another interesting issue related to the nature of soft power. Joseph Nye believes that soft power is a product of a democratic society.

In our opinion, it is impossible to fully agree with this statement. And the point is not only that it existed and was used in non-democratic societies. The fact that in democratic political regimes, due to its very nature and specificity, they resort more to peaceful persuasion than to violent one, does not give us the right to assert that soft power itself originated in democracy, and, moreover, those regimes that are called authoritarian or even totalitarian, completely alienated from the policy of «soft power».

Moreover, as history proves, it is a mistake to attach clichés of «good» or «bad» phenomena to political concepts, like soft power. They need to be considered only from the position of naked pragmatics and efficiency. Often, soft power itself was a means of transit from democracy to authoritarianism and totalitarianism.

*«Soft power is attractive power, and soft power resources are those assets that produce, generate this attractiveness.» Nye Jr. Joseph S., 2004, p. 6].*

Analyzing the theoretical development of the concept of "soft power", we can conclude that «soft power» is a weapon of mass influence that is not inferior to modern military means. Its impact is so impressive that if hard power is capable of destroying an object, then soft power forces it to voluntarily switch to the side of the subject, sharing the values and beliefs of the latter. As with any weapon, the use of soft power requires responsibility and a conscious approach to its use.

## 1.2. Mechanisms and tools for the implementation of “soft power”

Before considering «soft power» as a way to implement foreign policy, one should understand what foreign policy is, its forms and tools.

At present, it is difficult to give a clear definition of foreign policy, as there are many concepts in political science and international relations.

When reviewing the literature, it becomes clear that scholars often talk about different phenomena when they are defining foreign policy.

Christopher Hill defines it as «the sum of external relations conducted by an independent entity (usually a state) in international relations [Christopher Hill, 2003, p. 24].

According to White, foreign policy is «*the activity of government concerned with the relationship between the state and other entities, especially other states in the international system*» [Derek Beach, 2018, p. 2].

A nation or a state forms its foreign policy taking into account its national interests and goals. Under the influence of these factors, foreign policy takes on different forms and types in different countries.

Forms of foreign policy of states:

- The policy of imperialism - a policy aimed at creating an organization and maintaining the empire; using engines of power and diplomacy to acquire territories, protectorates, and spheres of influence;
- The policy of the balance of power - aimed at creating and maintaining a balance or imbalance;
- Alliance policy - the provision of mutual military assistance between two or more sovereign states;
- Politics of allegiance - third world countries become allies of one of the two superpowers, in the hope of certain benefits;



- Isolation policy - low level of involvement in military, diplomatic and commercial relations with other states;

- The policy of neutrality is the state of those states that during the war do not take part in hostilities, but continue peaceful communication with the warring parties, and so on.

The main foreign policy instruments are:

- Diplomacy;
- Alliances, unions;
- Economic instruments (foreign economic policy and economic sanctions);
- Military instruments [Foreign activities, access mode [is.mendelu.cz](http://is.mendelu.cz) (accessed 22.02.2022)].

However, in the twenty-first century, the channels through which the state influences international processes and other countries are expanding.

Today, a country's economic success, its ideological credibility, and its cultural appeal are often more important than its military strength and possession of nuclear weapons, which is a manifestation of hard power. Thus, this allows us to identify the following management mechanisms and tools of influence intended for international processes applied in the modern global world: soft power, hard power. Each country forms its own content of soft power, determined by political, economic and socio-cultural differences between different countries of the world. Hard power has recently been considered almost the key instrument of foreign policy.

Hard power, as we know, is a coercive policy based on the threat and/or use of military force against a given country. However, in a globalizing world, in the context of global interconnection and interdependence, it is no longer effective to use outdated political instruments, including nuclear weapons, which can lead to

the complete economic collapse of the country that initiated the nuclear attack (with the exception of «rogue states» that are not included in the world economy) .

The threat or use of hard power (warships cruising along the coast, or aircraft patrolling the skies over the country) is rather ineffective, since it entails more negative side effects than potential dubious benefits for the aggressor [NiJ., 2015, accessed at [http://www.situation.ru/app/j\\_art\\_1\\_165.htm](http://www.situation.ru/app/j_art_1_165.htm) (accessed 02/22/2022)].

This is well illustrated by Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq. In any case, this is fraught with serious losses of reputational capital, which subsequently may turn out to be harmful to quite tangible capital.

Today, the global world is gradually fragmented into macro-regional systems, which include several countries led by a strong regional power. Possessing at the same time the parameters of economic, political and military poles, such regional systems may well claim the status of global centers of power in the future. With such a configuration of the geopolitical space, a potential aggressor must be aware that he will have to deal not with one specific country, but with an entire regional system, whose economic, political and military potential can be compared with the potential of the aggressor or surpass it [Nye J., 2015, regime accessed [http://www.situation.ru/app/j\\_art\\_1\\_165.htm](http://www.situation.ru/app/j_art_1_165.htm) (accessed 02.22.2022)].

Hard power methods rely on armed violence (military intervention), economic pressure, intimidation (military, political, energy, raw materials, food, etc.) and bribery of the national political elite. In the modern world, there is a flexible balance between the use of soft power and hard power methods. Soft power and hard power use different ways of gaining power, which may differ depending on the status of the country.

Typically, for a rogue state, such methods of influence include the threat of the use of force; for a satellite country, these are rewards or economic incentives;

and for a partner or ally, these are methods from the package of «soft power» tools, that is, a declaration of common interests and goals and a promise to achieve a common result with a «fair» distribution of preferences.



Figure 1. Differences between «hard» and «soft» powers.

Based on what was stated in the previous paragraph, we define «soft power» as a foreign policy resource and a special tool for the covert management of international processes, which is paid attention to in the era of globalization.

The objects of latent management are international processes and relations, as well as individual countries and regions of the world. Such hidden control has its own distinctive features: firstly, the influence of the subject of control is transformed into the motivation of the actions of the control object; secondly, there are no formal institutions, methods and control levers.

The processes of globalization cause the reformatting of the geopolitical space, the formation of a new hierarchical system (poles, centers of power and regional powers) and the emergence of new geopolitical axes. Such conditions make it necessary to form a foreign policy that meets the new realities, search for new tools and methods to achieve the strategic goals of the state and meet national interests. Soft power allows even those countries that have a limited range of traditional resources of influence (for example, states that are not members of the UN Security Council, states that do not possess nuclear weapons, or states on the geographical periphery) to exert covert influence on international processes.

In the context of a multipolar polycentric world, any country, regardless of its position in the global hierarchy, can secretly influence international processes taking place in a given macro-region or even on a global scale, provided that it effectively uses soft power tools. One of the most important tactical goals of soft power is to create attractiveness, for example, by building an effective image of the country and influencing the object of control. Taking into account the definition proposed above, we can define the strategic goal of «soft power» as inducing the object of control to act and make a political decision through influence and influence.

The most important soft power tools are:

- information flows (media);
- political PR intended for a foreign audience;
- global marketing;
- positioning of the country in the global hierarchy;
- the language of the country and its ranking in the world;
- public diplomacy;
- tourism;

- sports and cultural exchanges;
- system of education and exchange of students (youth);
- the ability to wage media wars (media, social networks, etc.);
- migration policy;
- cultural dialogue.

The effective use of soft power tools can contribute to the illusion of mutual interest, trust, respect and understanding, and also enables this state to influence political and humanitarian processes in the world and in individual countries. Soft power has its limits. A natural limiter to the impact of soft power is the cultural and historical tradition of the impact of the object. The liberal concept of soft power has its limitations in the non-Western world.

Some components (formulated by J. Nye) of soft power do not have effective influence in the countries of the Eastern world. Due to the specific political culture of Eastern countries, some of the political values of liberal democracy, such as the idea of liberal democracy, human rights and freedoms (as in the West) are frowned upon. However, the idea of charity and social support for vulnerable social strata (which are the essence of the welfare state concept) is understood quite well there.

In terms of consumer preferences, despite the universal proliferation and truly global intervention of Coca-Cola, sneakers, MacDonald's, jeans, innovative devices (mobile phones, iPads, tablets) and technologies (including software), Eastern society remains the same with respect to its culture and essence.

The limiting line of soft power runs along the so-called "tectonic fault of civilizational plates." The natural limiting factors of soft power are civilizational barriers and civilizational filters. Civilizational barriers select (sort out) economic, political and socio-cultural phenomena that are the most inappropriate for the civilizational matrix of a given country.

Civilizational barriers operate at the level of archetypes of national self-consciousness and categorically reject (or do not accept) certain phenomena of economic, political or cultural life that invade from outside.

In Russia, such civilizational barriers are demonstrated by the fact that our society does not accept the violent cult of a strong personality, the Lone Ranger and the sexual revolution (in the Islamic republics), and also imposes the criterion of «career, money, success» (as sociological survey data show). Young people prefer family values more). Doctrines of the free market and monetarism, positioning of such areas as education and healthcare as a service sector, etc., are perceived negatively.

Civilization filters are mechanisms for interpreting and adapting exported economic, political and socio-cultural phenomena, which, although not true for a given civilization matrix, may have certain elements consistent with civilizational algorithms and can be adopted to them. An example of the functioning of such civilizational filters can be a special Russian interpretation of the theory and practice of the Western parliamentary system, democracy, the institution of the presidency, the electoral system, the party system, the banking system, etc.

Where the effect of soft power ends, political technologies are used. However, most often soft power methods and political technologies are used simultaneously. In a broad sense, soft power is part of global political technologies. When there is a contradiction between the need and the ability to use soft power, political technologies are also used. As one of the options for using "soft" power in a set of measures, public diplomacy can be considered.

These two concepts should not be confused, the concept of «soft» power is much broader in scope, and public diplomacy can be considered as one of its components, or as a separate manifestation of «soft» power as a phenomenon of international politics. As part of our work, we will understand public diplomacy as a joint activity of non-governmental players and state bodies with the aim of

exerting a communicative influence on foreign public opinion and solving certain political, diplomatic, economic and military tasks.

The term «public diplomacy» was first used in 1965 by career diplomat and dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Massachusetts, Edmund Gallion, who defined it as «government-funded programs aimed at informing and influencing public opinion in other countries».

Among the prominent scientists dealing with this issue, the above-mentioned American political scientist Joseph S. Nye should be mentioned. He considers public diplomacy as one of the most effective methods of building up the potential of American «soft power». The central role in the implementation of public diplomacy belongs to such an important resource as information and control over information flows.

Public diplomacy, according to J. Nye, cannot be reduced to ordinary propaganda or marketing, since the latter involve a one-way process - the transfer of information, a monologue, and the first - an interactive dialogue in order to establish long-term relationships [Joseph Nye, 2013, p.6-10] .

However, along with the traditional understanding, there is such a thing as «new public diplomacy», «public diplomacy 2.0» or «digital diplomacy». For the first time they started talking about it in the State Department in 2006-2007, when Condoleezza Rice was still Secretary of State.

Unlike traditional public diplomacy, «digital» diplomacy contains the idea of «managing the international situation» and serves as a tool for attracting the attention of a foreign target audience to a specific problem that is relevant to the United States. It would be appropriate here to recall the theory of the agenda or «agenda-setting» from journalism, according to which the impact on the target audience is achieved by the very formation of the agenda, and not by the content, when people are not told what to think, but are told what to think about.

Digital diplomacy is seen as the widespread use of information and communication technologies, including social networks, blogs and similar media platforms on the global Internet to assist government agencies in exercising their functions and communicating on issues related to foreign policy, including mechanisms for influencing foreign audiences [ Surma I.V., 2015, p. 222].

The development of the Internet and Internet technologies has led to the emergence of digital diplomacy. In the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), the United States is the undisputed leader on the world stage, so the emergence of this direction and type of diplomacy is quite logical and justified. The United States is well ahead of foreign countries in conducting this form of diplomacy.

The expansion of US capabilities in the field of global information influence through the use of information influence tools and digital diplomacy scares the less advanced states in this area. They have a feeling of vulnerability and a desire to isolate themselves from the global information impact, including adopting information warfare programs.

Therefore, the aggressive offensive policy of the United States is perceived as an attempt to interfere in internal affairs, threatening to violate their state sovereignty. This will be confirmed by regular attempts to block access to Facebook, YouTube, Blogspot, Twitter services - at different periods of time they were blocked in Vietnam, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Myanmar, North Korea and in a number of other countries [Freedom of the Net., 2009, accessed at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/special-reports/freedom-net-global-assessmentinternet-and-digital-media> (accessed 02/22/2022)]. Soft power has always been a key element of leadership. The ability to attract - to make others want what you want, to formulate problems, to set the agenda - has its roots in thousands of years of human experience.



Skillful leaders have always understood that attractiveness comes from authority and legitimacy. Power never came solely from the barrel of a gun; even the most brutal dictators relied on attraction and fear.

One of the most important tactical goals of soft power is to create attractiveness, for example, by building an effective image of the country and influencing the object of control.

Taking into account the definition proposed above, we can define the strategic goal of "soft power" as inducing the object of control to act and make a political decision through influence and influence. The effective use of soft power tools can contribute to the illusion of mutual interest, trust, respect and understanding, and also enables this state to influence political and humanitarian processes in the world and in individual countries.

## **2. The US policy in Central Asia**

### **2.1. The US foreign policy: principles, main directions, tools**

Before considering US foreign policy, it is necessary to consider its geopolitical position.

Scientists define the concept of «geopolitics» as:

1) The direction of political thought, a concept based on the recognition of the interests of the state, extending beyond officially recognized borders. He studies the dependence of state actions on the influence of geographical factors on the state and evolution of the economic, political and social systems of society [Political Science. Dictionary. RGU. V.N. Konovalov. 2010];

2) The political science concept, according to which the policy of states, mainly external, is predetermined by geographical factors (the position of the country, natural resources, climate, etc.). It originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (F. Ratzel, Germany; A. Mahan, USA; H. Mackinder, Great Britain; R. Kjellen, Sweden). Used to justify external expansion, especially by German fascism. The term «geopolitics» is also used to denote a certain influence of geographical factors (territory of position, etc.) on the foreign policy of states (geopolitical strategy, etc.) [Political Science: Dictionary Reference. comp. Prof. Sex of Sciences Sanzharevsky I.I. 2010].

The current stage of development of geopolitics reflects the transitional stage of the formation of a new system of international relations and is characterized by the need to analyze the global distribution of forces and search for options for its subsequent dynamics: the concept of «clash of civilizations», «end of history», «management of the world community», numerous environmental concepts [Andreev V. G., 1999, Access mode: [www.mirkin.ru/\\_docs/\\_dumnaya/russ.pdf](http://www.mirkin.ru/_docs/_dumnaya/russ.pdf) (date of access: 22.02.2022)].

Thus, geopolitics in modern conditions is the most important direction of world politics and international relations, which is taken into account when each country develops a strategy in the field of foreign policy.

As a result of European colonization, America was divided into two main socio-cultural and ethnic areas: North America, which includes countries with a predominance of English (USA and Canada) and Latin America (countries of South America, Mexico, countries of Central America and the West Indies) . Administratively, the continent is divided into states, the composition of which was considered earlier. In the economic division, America is divided into North America (USA and Canada), as well as large enough developed countries of Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, Argentina) and other less developed countries. In geopolitical terms, the center of the region is undoubtedly North America. It is here that the center of economic, military and political power. The United States of America is located on this continent.

The territory of the country is conditionally divided into three parts: continental - located in the center of the continent, the Alaska Peninsula and the Hawaiian Islands. In general terms, the United States covers an area of 9.5 square kilometers (fourth largest in the world) [US Encyclopedia. Access mode: [http://prousa.info/us\\_cinema](http://prousa.info/us_cinema) (date of access: 02/22/2022)].

The geographical position of the United States is quite favorable: natural conditions are diverse and generally favorable for life, natural resources are also rich and varied. The subsoil of the states is rich in reserves of various natural resources, such as black and brown coal, iron ore. Also provided with oil and natural gas.

There is access to three oceans, which has a positive effect on transport and economic relations with other countries [US Encyclopedia. Access mode: [http://prousa.info/us\\_cinema](http://prousa.info/us_cinema) (date of access: 02/22/2022)].

The United States is washed by the waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic oceans. The fourth largest country in the world has a very good location in the central part of the continent. Canada and Mexico are the only states that border the United States. The country is located far from the most unstable regions of the modern world. And at the same time, long ocean coasts, convenient for sea transport (especially in the east).

The country's land borders are easily traversable and neighboring countries are friendly, but Mexican illegals haunt the modern government. The German lawyer and political philosopher Karl Schmitt developed the idea of confrontation between sea and land forces, in which, after the Great geographical discoveries, sea powers clearly won, establishing dominance on the seas [Schmitt S., 2000, p. 840-883].

The population of the United States is very diverse in terms of ethnicity and nationality, so the United States is quite reasonably called a nation of immigrants - from 1790 to 1994. Almost 64 million immigrants arrived in the country from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. According to experts, in 2018 the population of America reached 327 million people (the third largest in the world). The official language is American English. The US economy is equally highly developed industry and agriculture, non-manufacturing industries.

The structure of industrial production is characterized by a significant predominance of manufacturing industries. The leading branches of heavy industry in the United States are mechanical engineering and the chemical industry. In world GDP in nominal terms it is 20-25% (1st place), and in terms of purchasing power parity it takes 15-16% (2nd place after China). According to Paul Kiernan, America's influence on the planet's financial system can hardly be overestimated. In fact, she is its main beneficiary and controls most of the cash flows [Kiernan P., publication date 22/02/2022]

## ВВП США

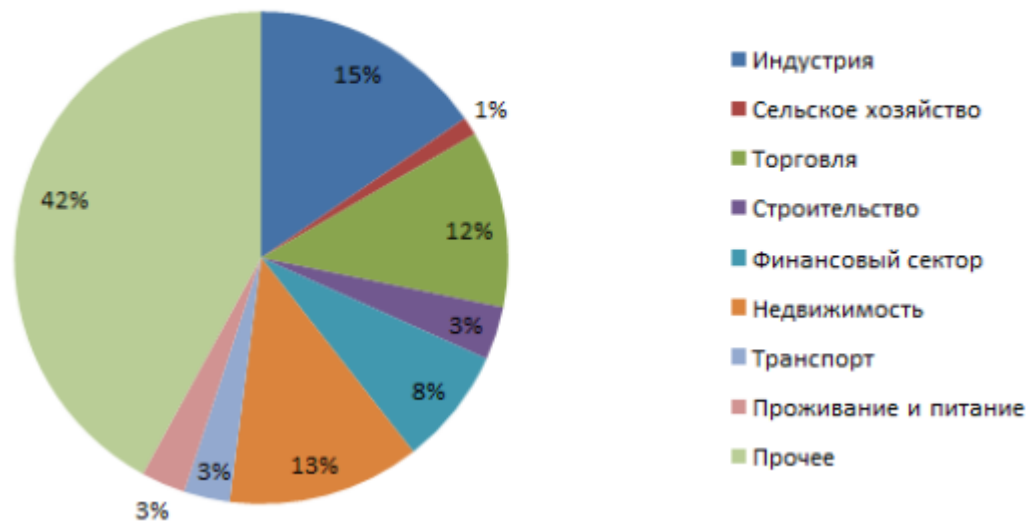


Figure 2. Major components of US GDP. Indicators 2018.

The special geographical position of the United States, namely the vastness and topography of the territory, ensures the development of land transport. One of the major transport hubs, combining air, sea, rail and road, is Chicago. The length of oil pipelines in the United States is the longest of all capitalist countries. [Encyclopedia of the USA. Access mode: [http://prousa.info/us\\_cinema](http://prousa.info/us_cinema) (date of access: 02.02.2022)]. The United States of America is a federal republic of 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The highest legislative body is a bicameral parliament - the US Congress: the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. Each state has exactly two representatives in the Senate (senators). The number of members in the House of Representatives from each state is determined every 10 years depending on the population of each state (the larger the population in comparison with other states, the more representatives). Every state has at least one representative, regardless of population. Senators are elected for a six-year term, representatives for a two-year

term. Both senators and representatives can be re-elected an unlimited number of times. The President of the United States is the head of state, government, commander in chief of the armed forces [The Constitution of the United States. Access mode: <http://constitutionus.com/> (date of access: 02/22/2022)]. Below is the structure of power in the United States:

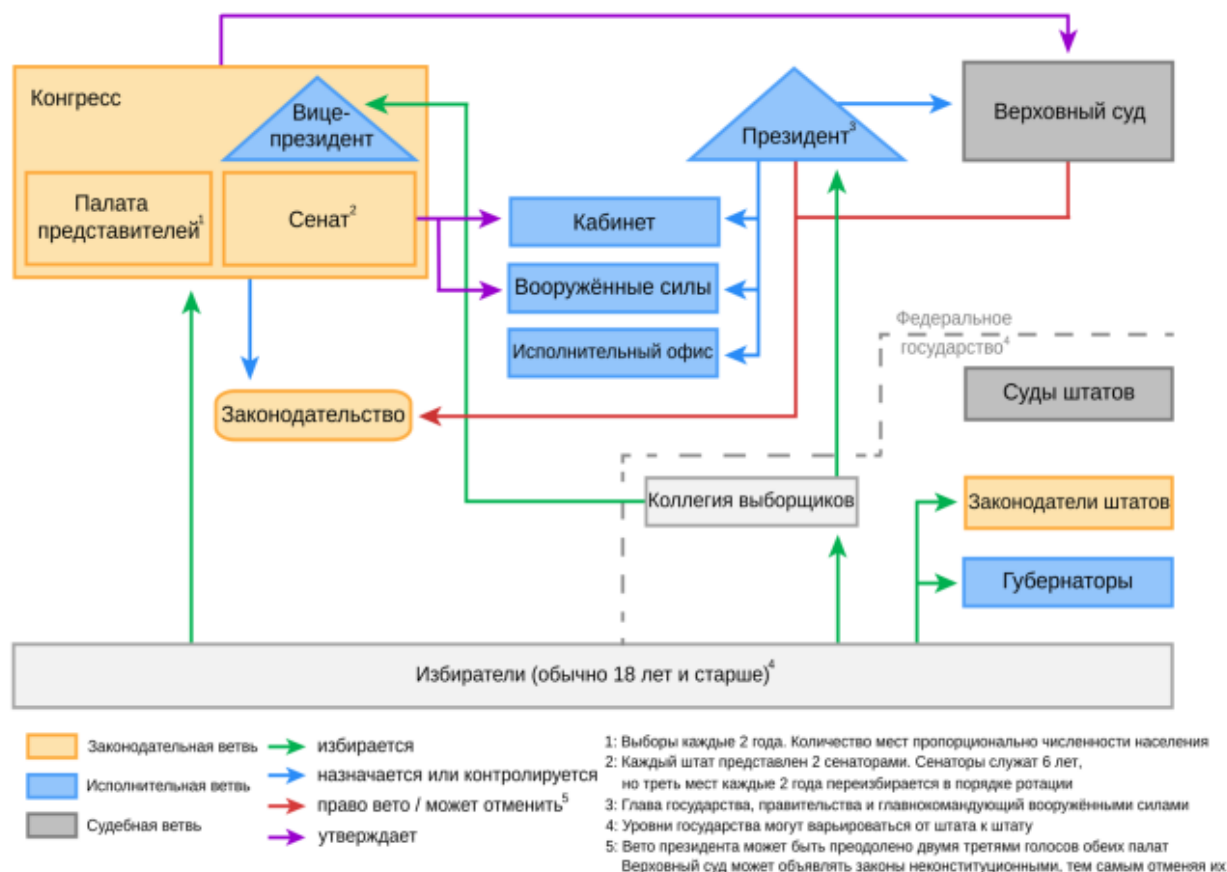


Figure 3. The structure of power in the United States.

According to V.V. Sogrin, at the present stage, domestic politics in the United States is divided into several different categories, each of which focuses on different aspects of life in the United States. Regulatory policy - aims to maintain public order by prohibiting behavior and actions that endanger the public. This is usually achieved by enacting laws and policies that prohibit individuals, companies, and other parties from taking actions that may threaten the social order. Such regulatory laws and policies can range from mundane issues such as local

traffic laws to laws that protect the right to vote, prevent racial and gender discrimination, stop human trafficking, and combat the illegal drug trade and use.

Other important policy laws protect the public from abusive business and financial practices, protect the environment, and keep the workplace safe. Distributive policy - aims to ensure fair provisions for public benefits, goods and services supported by taxpayers, to all individuals, groups and corporations. Such goods and services funded by citizens' taxes include items such as public education, public safety, roads and bridges, and welfare programs.

Government-supported tax incentives include programs such as farm subsidies and tax write-offs to encourage homeownership, energy conservation, and economic development. Redistribution Politics - focuses on one of the most complex and controversial aspects of domestic politics: the fair distribution of national wealth. The purpose of a redistributive policy is the fair transfer of funds received through taxation from one group or program to another. The goal of this redistribution of wealth is often to end or alleviate social problems such as poverty or homelessness.

However, because Congress controls the discretionary spending of tax dollars, legislators sometimes abuse that power by reallocating funds from programs that address social problems to programs that don't. Constituent Policy - focuses on the creation of government institutions to help provide services to the public. For example, over the years, new agencies and departments have been created to handle taxes, administer programs such as Social Security and Medicare, protect consumers, and provide clean air and water, to name but a few [V.V. Sogrin, 2015, pp. 23-27].

Within each of the four main categories listed above, there are several specific areas of domestic policy that need to be developed and continuously modified to respond to changing needs and situations.

Examples of these specific areas of U.S. domestic policy and the executive branch offices at the Cabinet level that are primarily responsible for their creation include:

- Defense Policy (Ministries of Defense and Homeland Security)
  - Economic Policy (Departments of Economics, Trade and Labor)
  - Environmental Policy (Ministry of Interior and Agriculture)
  - Public Health Policy (Department of Health and Human Services)
  - Transport Policy (Department of Transportation)
  - Welfare Policy (Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Education and Veterans)
- The State Department is primarily responsible for the development of US foreign policy As far as the foreign policy of the United States is concerned, three rays of thalassocracy can be drawn from the center: to the south, to the east (towards the Atlantic Ocean) and to the west (towards the Pacific Ocean) .

The first task - the organization of geopolitical space along the southern beam - was solved in the first half of the 20th century by implementing the Monroe Doctrine.

It is clear that the United States has always shown a special interest in its closest neighbors - the peoples of the Western Hemisphere. It is equally clear that expressions of this concern have not always been well received by other American peoples. The Monroe Doctrine is the most famous US policy towards the Western Hemisphere. Veiled in an annual message delivered to Congress by President James Monroe in December 1823, the doctrine warns European nations that the United States will not tolerate further colonization or puppet monarchs.

The main idea of this doctrine was to solve the main problems at that time, but soon it became the slogan of US policy in the Western Hemisphere. The



Monroe Doctrine was applied in 1823 when the US government applied diplomatic and military pressure in support of Mexican President Benito Juarez.

This support enabled Juárez to lead a successful uprising against Emperor Maximilian, who had been placed on the throne by the French government.

- Energy Policy (Ministry of Energy)
- Law Enforcement, Public Safety and Civil Rights Policy (DOJ)
- Public Health Policy (Department of Health and Human Services)
- Transport Policy (Department of Transportation)
- Welfare Policy (Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Education and Veterans)
- The State Department has primary responsibility for developing US foreign policy.

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Nearly 40 years later, in 1904, European creditors in a number of Latin American countries threatened armed intervention to collect debts. President Theodore Roosevelt immediately proclaimed the right of the United States to use «international police power» to stop such «chronic offences».

As a result, the US Marines were sent to Santo Domingo in 1904, Nicaragua in 1911, and Haiti in 1915, ostensibly to keep Europeans out. Other Latin American nations viewed these interventions with apprehension, and relations between the "great Colossus of the North" and its southern neighbors remained tense for many years.

In 1962, the Monroe Doctrine was used symbolically when the Soviet Union began building missile launch sites in Cuba. With the support of the Organization of American States, President John F. Kennedy declared a naval and air quarantine around the island. After several tense days, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw the missiles and dismantle the facilities. Subsequently, the United States dismantled several of its obsolete air and missile bases in Turkey. In the eastern direction, the geopolitical space is organized with the help of the NATO bloc.

In this direction in Europe, thalassocracy has direct contact with representatives of tellulocracy. It is here that the front of the confrontation between the two elements takes place. The current stage of this confrontation is characterized by the onset of thalassocracy (NATO expansion, the reorganization of the internal organization of the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia, and much

more). Since the beginning of the XX century. The fundamental geopolitical axiom proclaimed the United States as a continental island in relation to the much larger landmass of Eurasia. The pooled resources of Eurasia were seen as a serious threat. Therefore, the American interest was that no single power or group of powers hostile or potentially hostile to the US should dominate this region or a large part of it. The end of the Second World War, the victory of the revolution in China (in 1949) frightened the thalassocrats.

As a measure to stop the expansion of tellulocracy was the beginning of the Cold War. The North Atlantic Alliance was created, many economic, political, ideological and other measures were implemented. In the course of the confrontation, crises repeatedly arose (the blockade of West Berlin, the "Caribbean crisis", etc.). The Western alliance wanted to replay the results of the Second World War from the standpoint of economic military and moral strength.

The Soviet bloc wanted to expand the sphere of influence of socialism, emphasizing the ideology of equality and military assistance to «class allies». The development of relations with Russia is considered to be a separate area of US geopolitics and foreign policy. Relations between the United States and Russia are a major public concern today. In order to better understand their relationship, it is extremely important to look into the past. To understand the relationship between the United States and Russia, we must first understand where it came from. This complex relationship goes back hundreds of years.

As American and Russian influence and power began to grow after World War II, the two countries began to experience mounting tensions that only intensified when the nuclear arms race began. Both nations became capable of producing nuclear weapons, the crowning achievement of military power even today. This sparked an arms race and what is known today as the Cold War. The Cold War was devastating to US-Russian relations.

While the two powers were not actively involved in military aggression, the US was actively trying to stop the spread of communism and both countries were trying to “outdo” the other with ever-increasing production of nuclear weapons and development of space programs. While relations between Russia and the United States have certainly improved since the end of the Cold War, mounting tensions have begun to mount again over recent events in Syria. Once again, the two nations seem to be at odds.

Fortunately, as many times as Russia and the US have had disagreements in the past, there has never been an act of open fighting between them. Also, US foreign policy in the east is better characterized by Middle East policy. This takes its full-scale development during the presidency of Barack Obama and is characterized by several key trends: a change in the priorities of the American government, as a result of which full-scale armed aggression in the Middle East has ceased to be among the main measures. Washington began to use the "Arab revolutions" and proxy wars as an alternative to direct military action.

As a result, leaders in four countries of the region (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen) were overthrown, but the uprising in Syria and Iraq was not crushed. Direct military occupation was too costly, in this regard, less expensive, but more effective methods are used, for example, inciting Islamic states and their groups, including terrorist ones.

This made it possible to support the parties at war with each other so that they concentrated on themselves, and not against the United States. On the western beam, i.e. in relation to China, the task is to gain this state as allies (recall that by its nature, China is classified as a geopolitically unstable state).

Already in November 1997, President Clinton made an offer to China on a strategic partnership, i.e. more than a year before such a proposal came from Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov during his visit to Delhi (December 1998). Noted the US geopolitician Brzezinski argues that without Sino-US

strategic cooperation serving as the eastern anchor for the US presence in Eurasia, America will have no strategy for the Asian continent, which in turn will deprive it of a geostrategy for Eurasia as a whole. As can be seen from this statement, there are no longer enough «small anchors» in Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and a number of other Asian countries for America to «embrace» the tellulocracy and establish its «soft hegemony» over it. The United States and China may well be the two most important countries in the world system, and competition between them could become a dominant feature in the coming decades.

But this rivalry is not between an aging king and an up-and-coming throne-shooting usurper, as is often portrayed in the media. Rather, it will be similar to the dynamics that have defined US-China relations since Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China in 1949. China will try to protect its vast vulnerabilities while the United States seeks its foothold as a world superpower and an indispensable anchor in a rapidly globalizing economy.

These features defined US-China relations in different ways in three different periods. The first began with the end of World War II, when the United States became the dominant power in the Western Pacific and Mao consolidated Communist Party rule over the Middle Kingdom. The main feature of this relationship was that the United States and China were on opposite sides of the Cold War, which is most clearly illustrated when the two countries clashed briefly in Korea in the 1950s.

This period lasted until about 1972, when the US and China discovered that their strategic interests were tied to the threat of the Soviet Union. The two decades that followed Richard Nixon's famous trip to Beijing were marked by increased cooperation as the two countries put aside their differences over Taiwan primarily in the interests of countering the Soviet Union. The third stage began after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Since China and the US were no longer united by a common enemy, they turned their attention to economic integration. China made; USA bought. China has become richer, but it has also become dependent on cheap exports to the vast US consumer market, as well as shipping lanes dominated by the US Navy. Today, as China's domestic economic vulnerability and its permanent military vulnerability on the high seas become more acute - and as China becomes more determined in its efforts to change the status quo - the US-China relationship is beginning to enter its fourth phase. The United States and China quickly found themselves on opposite sides of the Cold War after Mao announced the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Communist China has largely turned inward, concerned with consolidating power after more than 20 years of civil war and Japanese occupation and pursuing a collectivist economic policy. The US sought to isolate the new communist regime by cutting off all trade and coordinating an international embargo, seeking to ease tensions with post-Stalinist Moscow as a means to partly weaken Sino-Soviet solidarity. The US and China will not have diplomatic relations or any meaningful bilateral trade for another three decades.

And with the support of the US nationalists who fled to Taiwan, and the support of anti-communist regimes in South Korea and Indochina. But over time, the United States realized that the country's large population allowed China to produce a huge amount of goods at labor costs. Over time, this advantage led foreign firms seeking cost savings to move their manufacturing and assembly operations to China. As a result, the United States quickly became the largest destination for Chinese exports. And China has become the largest source of US imports. As American firms moved en masse to China, much of the US manufacturing sector collapsed.

Both sides, however, benefited from this relationship. China's development has been truly remarkable, albeit overpriced and unsustainable, with hundreds of millions of people lifted out of poverty in just a few decades.

Economic growth over the past four decades has raised living standards, provided domestic stability, and given the Communist Party legitimacy.

## **2.2. The Central Asian Direction of the US Foreign Policy**

At the present stage, the US public diplomacy can be called an independent tool of foreign policy, which includes such mechanisms of influence on foreign societies as information programs, educational exchanges, projects in the field of culture and sports, etc. For some time now, American public diplomacy has been implemented with significant based on the concepts of «soft» and «smart power», which are based on “the desire of the United States to expand the number of adherents of American values abroad and involve the international community in the political agenda proposed by Washington” [9, p. 121]. Some experts, not without reason, consider these concepts as «an element of the US strategy aimed at maintaining its own leadership in the world» that is, «simultaneously a theoretical and applied product» [4, p. 57].

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, American public diplomacy began to work in the newly independent states of the post-Soviet space, in particular in post-Soviet Central Asia, Russia’s longtime sphere of influence. In this region, it is not limited to explaining American foreign policy to the local public and taking measures to improve the image of the United States, but has very dynamically transformed into one of the tools for realizing US foreign policy goals, both tactical and strategic.

The American side sees the mission of its public diplomacy as «supporting the achievement of the goals and objectives of American foreign policy, advancing national interests and strengthening national security by informing and influencing the foreign public, as well as by expanding and strengthening relations between the people and the US government and citizens the rest of the world».

Public diplomacy programs overseen by the Under Secretary of State include outreach to international audiences, cultural programs, research grants, educational exchanges, US visiting programs, and the US government’s efforts to counter ideological support for terrorism.



The collapse of the Soviet Union and the appearance on the political map of the world of the new independent states of Central Asia to some extent relieved this region of its peripheral status. Central Asia has become a significant geopolitical space in which the interests of the leading world powers collide. Moreover, in the case of the United States, the factor of maintaining a high level of Russia's regional influence and the strengthening of China's regional presence are among the main motives for various initiatives to consolidate their positions in the region. In general, the increased US interest in Central Asia is due to several interrelated factors, the most important of which, according to American experts, are the following:

- geopolitical position of the region;
- underdevelopment of democratic institutions in the states of the region, their socio-economic problems and vulnerability to new threats;
- prospects for bringing hydrocarbon resources to the world market [2, p. 64];
- the factor of Russian influence and the activation of China in the region.

The evolution of American approaches took place in several stages, defined in modern American expert circles as «US Policy in Central Asia 1.0; 2.0; 3.0», respectively [12, p. 3–4].

But Russian researchers usually write about four periods in the evolution of the US Central Asian policy [3, p. 163]. After the collapse of the USSR and the independence of the countries of the region in 1991, the first stage of American policy towards Central Asia began, which continued until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. American experts argue that at the first stage, US foreign policy in the region had three priorities:

- Ensuring security from weapons of mass destruction inherited from the USSR;

- assistance to the states of the region in strengthening the newly acquired sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity "in the event of the revival of Russian neo-imperialism" [12, p. 3];

- overcoming the Russian monopoly on pipeline systems and oil and gas transit routes from the countries of the region.

Although the Americans say that at the first stage, «the United States rejected the geopolitical approach towards Central Asia in favor of a long-term policy of supporting the formation of a democratic system, a free market and economic integration in the region» [12, p. 3], however, the above approach fits well into the framework of a certain long-term geopolitical strategy. But still, it should be recognized that the United States did not attach priority importance to Central Asia at that time. The increase in the importance of the region occurred within the framework of the «US Policy in Central Asia 2.0».

The nature of US cooperation with the states of the region changed dramatically after the events of September 11, 2001. Although the American side retained its interest in implementing a long-term program of political and economic reforms, security issues came to the fore, since the United States needed logistical support for the military operation in Afghanistan. This need has led to a shift in US priorities from promoting political and economic reform and respect for human rights to issues of access to the region's military infrastructure.

Washington gained bases in the region, its geopolitical positions strengthened, which turned the Central Asian space «from a zone of secondary attention to a region that occupied an important place in US strategy, even if this was not due to its own importance, but to a supporting role in stabilization efforts.» situation in Afghanistan» [12, p. 3]. In this context, the US geopolitical project «Greater Central Asia» appeared, the theoretical basis of which was the development of F. Starr, which was released in 2005 [13; fourteen].

«American Policy in Central Asia 2.0» has generally achieved its goals in terms of providing logistics for the US and NATO contingents in Afghanistan. However, in the mid-2000s until the end of the Bush Jr. presidency. In the Central Asian direction of US foreign policy, an increasingly obvious crisis was brewing related to the US approach to interaction with some regional actors, which was built in the spirit of the concept of «aggressive realism». The desire of the United States to actively spread and even the willingness to forcibly introduce democratic institutions spoiled US relations with the countries of the region, setting the next American leadership the task of rethinking policy in Central Asia [3, p. 159–161].

In addition to the awareness of the steady deterioration of the situation in the Central Asian direction, changes in US policy were influenced by such moments as the withdrawal of the main forces of the American contingent from Afghanistan, the Ukrainian crisis and the unprecedented activation of terrorist groups in the world. At the same time, some experts believed that the American leadership began to proceed from the hypothesis that the entry of Crimea into Russia and the events in the East of Ukraine demonstrate Moscow's ability to take active steps in its near abroad, including Central Asia, and the conjugation of the Russian and Chinese presence will encourage the states of the region to strive to maintain US involvement in the affairs of the region in order to curb the ambitions of Moscow and Beijing.

*«These factors... provide the context for «US Policy in Central Asia 3.0»* [12, p. 4]. However, in the current (2016–2018) conditions, the place of Central Asia on the American agenda is relatively weakening. This circumstance is influenced by both the reduction in defense spending and assistance to foreign states, and the aggravation of international conflict situations, which are of greater interest to the United States. Of course, the US will not withdraw from the region, but it will have to prioritize various strategic goals. There are serious disagreements among American experts and practitioners on this issue. One part of the experts advocates the promotion of the principle of «democracy first» the other

- for the strategy «security first», and the third group - for the principle of balanced strengthening, in which great importance is given to the energy factor [7, from. 72].

The last approach, which is distinguished by a balance between values and security, enjoys the support of the American leadership, and it is this approach that, apparently, is becoming the basis of the current US policy in Central Asia, which will be implemented at stage 3.0. The mechanisms of American public diplomacy were connected.

In other words, in the context of increasing turbulence in the international arena and uncertainty in domestic politics that have developed after the 2016 US presidential election, public diplomacy is becoming an increasingly important resource for the American side of the regional strategy in the southeastern segment of the post-Soviet space.

### **3. The US Public Diplomacy in Central Asia: Apparatus and Strategies**

#### **3.1. The role of the institution in the implementation of foreign policy goals**

The activation of the policy of the leading powers of the region creates a competitive regional environment in which “elements of cooperation and mutual support are combined with rivalry, misunderstanding and mutual fears” [1, p. 6].

In these new conditions, reminiscent of the images of the “Great Game” of the second half of the 19th - early 20th centuries, the struggle is not only for geopolitical positions and economic benefits, but also for the “minds and hearts” of the population, which is the main target audience of public diplomacy in the region.

The US public diplomacy in Central Asia intensified immediately after the collapse of the USSR. The United States tried to take advantage of the information and cultural vacuum that had formed in the region and actively began to fill it with products of the American mass media.

Americans have acquired a wide network of resource centers throughout the region, which are actively working with the population in the most remote areas. There are about fifty such centers in the United States, and the most important of them are the so-called “American corners” (American corners), the number of which in the countries of Central Asia reaches 24 [8, pp. 78–79].

These “corners” are engaged in the dissemination of information about American foreign policy, about life, work and education in the United States, that is, generally speaking, what the routine part of work in the field of public diplomacy usually consists of.

It is noteworthy that in the already mentioned article by F. Starr “Partnership for Central Asia” it is indicated that “it is necessary to achieve from the local population an understanding of the intentions underlying the US programs and those fundamental American values that inspire them ... To do this, it is

necessary to work in the field of folk diplomacy, education and the media. The beginning of public diplomacy should be laid through the spread of American cultural centers (under the name “America’s Corner”) [13, p. 175].

That is, it is routine and systematic activity that is considered as a prerequisite for an accelerated regional transformation. Another important mechanism of US public diplomacy in the region is NGOs that cooperate in various fields both with government agencies and with local independent and/or opposition media.

The degree of their “sympathy” for oppositional sentiments varies, although attempts to play the role of an arbiter or, moreover, a link between the official authorities and their opponents, were almost never crowned with success. In addition to active work in traditional formats on the ground, US public diplomacy in the region has recently been very actively using the possibilities of Web 2.0.

This is due, firstly, to a more convenient way to quickly transfer information; secondly, a significant spread and constant increase in the number of Internet users in the states of Central Asia, as well as their citizens temporarily abroad (mainly in Russia).

Almost all the US embassies and resource centers are represented in the most popular social networks of the post-Soviet space (Odnoklassniki, Vkontakte, Facebook, YouTube video hosting). The time-tested information tool of US public diplomacy, Radio Liberty, works very productively and in all languages of the Central Asian region. There is also an Internet version of the American channel “Voice of America” in Uzbek and Persian.

The number of users of these information sources does not have any reliable estimates, but thanks to the network activity, the American side has secured a stable information presence in the regional space, which can be used situationally, depending on changes in the national system of strategic goal setting.

The US public diplomacy in Central Asia, as a tool for achieving foreign policy goals, has regional and global dimensions. Both of these dimensions are interrelated, but regional goals are more variable, while at the global level they practically do not change: as authoritative experts note, the American foreign policy line has always been distinguished by continuity, it retains two components of the US global strategy - hegemonism and messianism (see [10 ; eleven]).

They serve as constant guidelines for the conduct of American foreign policy in Central Asia - appeals to the development of democratic institutions, expansion of bilateral economic cooperation, ensuring American leadership in the information space and creating a favorable image of the United States in the eyes of the local population. What role does the US public diplomacy play in the region in achieving these goals?

The status of civil society, transparent elections, freedom of speech - these are all traditional issues that US public diplomacy in Central Asia focuses on, using all available organizational resources. For example, since the early 2000s Representatives of the Peace Corps actively worked in the region, but the hypertrophied attention of this organization to issues of democracy, human rights and other sensitive aspects in Central Asian realities led to its departure, and, as observers believe, “expulsion” from the region.

Currently, the Peace Corps continues to work only in Kyrgyzstan, but even there it periodically becomes the object of sharp criticism, which it cannot ignore, that is, it has to adapt to the moods, conditions and rules of the host society. The United States explains the high activity of American NGOs in the field of regional public diplomacy by the need to combat “Russian propaganda” and “information aggression” in Central Asia, which until recently, according to the annual report on public diplomacy and international broadcasting of the United States (2014 - fiscal year) additional funds were allocated.

To be fair, the Fiscal Year 2016 Update in the context of Central Asia no longer uses such strong phrases when assessing Russian information activity, but the growing influence of Russia and China in the region is called a challenge to US national interests. At the same time, the information impact is also increasing with the use of localized American media resources. It is the latter tool that is becoming the most popular and convenient today.

In addition to being on social networks and other Internet platforms, Americans are training bloggers and the so-called independent internet journalists. Internews Network, a well-known American non-governmental organization, stands out in this direction. It has branches in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

And, like other American NGOs, it pays special attention to projects in the field of Internet journalism, explaining the technical and legal aspects of creating media on the Internet, distributing the TunnelBear program and other utilities to overcome the blocking of social networks. American NGOs in Central Asian countries often invite IT specialists from the USA who give lectures to local colleagues, hold seminars and competitions [5].

It cannot be said that the US efforts to democratize Central Asia, as they claim, bring direct political dividends, and the overall effectiveness of American public diplomacy in achieving this goal should not be overestimated. However, the tasks solved with the help of public diplomacy are of a long-term, strategic nature, closely related to the issues of consolidating the American presence in the center of the Eurasian continent.

Therefore, the American side not only does not stop the core work, but, on the contrary, increases it and, most likely, will not abandon most of the unpopular installations at the stage of 2016-2020, despite all the nuances of the political rhetoric of the Republican administration of the White House. If in the political sphere, on issues of democracy, human rights and freedom of speech, American



public diplomacy in Central Asia cannot boast of great successes, then in terms of mediating the geo-economic goals of US foreign policy, it is more effective. In 2011, H. Clinton, then Secretary of State, announced the launch of the New Silk Road initiative, the implementation of which provided for the creation of regional economic integration of Central and South Asia. In the implementation of this project, one of the main components was the establishment of business contacts between countries, which is exactly what US public diplomacy in the region is constantly doing. For example, thanks to American funding, conferences are being organized for entrepreneurs from Central Asian countries, analytical work is being carried out in universities, and communication infrastructure is being improved.

The USAID Regional Economic Cooperation Project (REC) should be noted. One of its events, the annual Central Asian Trade Forum, is an important platform for establishing trade relations, establishing direct business contacts, and promoting the development of international trade.

In recent years, more than 3,000 entrepreneurs, experts, and public opinion leaders from 20 countries have taken part in the forums. In 2015, following its results, Memorandums of Cooperation and protocols of intent were signed for a total amount of more than \$45 million for the supply of goods, the provision of transport and logistics services, the organization of trainings, exhibitions and fairs<sup>6</sup>.

Indeed, the Americans have done a lot of work in this area, which, on the one hand, is really important for the socio-economic stability and development of the region, but, on the other hand, raises concern about the obvious anti-Russian orientation of the geopolitical project as such.

The political leadership of the United States has repeatedly emphasized that the Americans will in every way impede the creation of the Eurasian Union and other possible formats for the “re-Sovietization” of Central Asia. Actors of US public diplomacy represented by embassies, NGOs, media resources repeated the

thesis about the exceptional importance of the New Silk Road project in the economic field and in the field of security.

However, Russian experts have considered and continue to consider it as part of a conceptual plan to create a “Greater Central Asia”, the implementation of which is aimed at “weakening Moscow’s position in the region and against integration processes driven by Russia” [6].

In other words, the challenges provoked by American public diplomacy could move from a latent state to an active phase, and only the fundamentally different approach of Russia and China, embodied in the Comprehensive Economic Partnership plan (2016), created a real alternative to the prospect of a clash of geopolitical interests in Central Asia. Nevertheless, the main vector of the US public diplomacy in Central Asia set in 2011 remains.

Permanent contacts of both officials and NGO leaders with the elites of the Central Asian states, confirmation of the readiness to provide financial support for holding conferences, round tables, meetings of business elites, and information support for previously proposed plans continue.

Therefore, the start of construction of the KASA-1000 high-voltage power line (from Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan) and the TAPI gas pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) can be considered, among other things, a local success of American public diplomacy, which worked very actively to popularize these projects, both on their traditional platforms and in a wide information space.

At the same time, the fact that American public diplomacy turned out to be focused not only on promoting the interests of American business, but to a large extent on defending geopolitical projects - and projects that are not directly related to issues of American energy security - objectively limits its possibilities in the near future.

Along with foreign policy goals that belong to the sphere of “high politics”, US public diplomacy in Central Asia is also actively involved in the struggle for

cultural and communication dominance. The main tasks in this regard are related to the creation of a positive image of the United States; the spread of American culture, values, ideas; promoting understanding of the American system of government and a positive perception of American foreign policy.

Thanks to the various resources of its “soft power”, the United States quite successfully competes with Russia in the regional cultural segment, although it is inferior to it in terms of representation.

In particular, such factors as the prevalence of the Russian language, migration flows, and historical memory, common values that persist not only among the older, but also among the young age groups of the titular population of all post-Soviet states, and the presence of Russian-speaking diasporas play in favor of Russia.

Nevertheless, the US public diplomacy actors are actively working with the younger generation of citizens of Central Asian countries, for whom learning English is often included among the top priorities. American centers, “corners” and educational programs offer very interesting options for learning the language and applying the acquired knowledge.

Graduates of American universities and participants in exchange programs are distinguished by good subject preparation and social activity. As a rule, they find employment in Western NGOs, and their knowledge of local customs, traditions, mentality and stereotypes helps to increase the effectiveness of American public diplomacy in the region. Standing out moreover for their increased political activity, this contingent is both a product and a strategic resource of US public diplomacy, which can be in demand to achieve a wide variety of foreign policy goals.

In seeking to achieve regional goals in Central Asia, the US public diplomacy inevitably becomes a tool for achieving global goals, such as containing the influence of Russia and China. Considering its “softness”, “veiled” (if the

corresponding set of measures is carried out with the use of independent American NGOs) and the flexibility in which it differs from traditional state diplomacy, the importance of this instrument of the US strategy in Central Asia will only increase in the medium term.

The US public diplomacy in post-Soviet Central Asia is not limited to explaining the goals and motives of the country's foreign policy, creating its favorable image and working to establish cooperation between peoples. It is a systematic continuation of the foreign policy of this state.

In this capacity, it will compete with the growing strength of Russian public diplomacy, which will lead to an aggravation of the confrontation between the “soft forces” of Russia, the United States, and China in the Central Asian region in the near future.

### **3.2 American public diplomacy in Afghanistan**

The political and military strategy of the United States in the Afghan war, designated by the administration in December 2009 under the name counterinsurgency strategy, assumed not only the conduct of military operations, but also the implementation of a set of measures aimed at preventing the spread of the ideology in Afghanistan coming from the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

In the same strategy, Pakistan was designated, or rather, its border and impassable areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, in which military units of various branches of the Taliban movement are still localized. These uncontrolled areas are the epicenter of anti-US propaganda.

Various propaganda operations by the Taliban and members of the Al-Qaeda movement against coalition forces in Afghanistan (sending “night letters”, killings and captures of Afghans who cooperate with coalition forces, the burning of American schools, the creation of mobile and elusive radio stations, etc.) the success of not only the Afghan campaign, but also the victory of the United States in the anti-terrorist war that began in November 2001 is doubtful.

Because of this, the US administration designated as its task a new ideological campaign on the territory of Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to attract the elite and the population to the side of the United States. This campaign is carried out within the framework of the US public diplomacy and includes such areas as: 1) information propaganda against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda; 2) training of certain socio-professional groups in the society of Afghanistan and Pakistan; 3) holding events on the Internet against media jihad.

Representatives of the US Army, including such public figures as the former Commander-in-Chief of the Coalition Forces S. McChrystal, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff M. Mullen and General D. Petraeus, who commanded the US Army and NATO in Afghanistan, at various times stated that the United States was losing the information the war against the Taliban and their propaganda is

extremely effective, as it nullifies many US projects to democratize the country. The United States first acknowledged this fact in 2008.

The effectiveness of Taliban propaganda is measured by the simplicity of the slogans and methods used to discredit the US policy. In Afghanistan, where radio, paper and the mosque remain the main sources of information dissemination, the Taliban use traditional methods of influencing the population.

Radio Shariat is the main and illegal (for the coalition forces) conductor of propaganda of the Taliban. According to the US experts, the radio is popular in many provinces of Afghanistan, and especially in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This radio station was established in 1996 after the establishment of the Taliban regime. After the start of the operation in Afghanistan, the US banned Sharia Radio, and its office is used by Radio Afghanistan, which has restored its broadcasts with the help of the US government.

However, in 2005 Shariat Radio was re-established by the Taliban, and it broadcasts every night from unauthorized mobile radios. The main informational message of the radio programs is a call to fight against the US and NATO coalition forces, called the occupiers. The radio also broadcasts speeches by rebel leaders (namely, the name of the Taliban movement in American documents), and the most popular speaker was Mullah Omar.

Informational programs are replaced by “musical” ones, but there is no music in our understanding, as well as female vocals. Finally, the radio is used by the rebels to intimidate local residents, blackmail and threaten. The main element of propaganda in this direction is stories about committed terrorist attacks against the occupying forces.

In addition to radio, traditional Taliban propaganda includes so-called “night letters” or leaflets that urge Afghans to donate money to jihad and harm coalition forces. In the leaflets, the Taliban leaders explain why they launched a

war against the United States. They write that “the invaders have occupied the holy land and our courageous nation, and that is why a jihad has been declared against the American occupation in this country and throughout the world. It is the duty of every Muslim to participate in this holy war”.

The leaflets broadcast the slogan about the punishment of those Afghans who cooperate with the United States. Undoubtedly, the threats affect the Afghans, which leads them to refuse to participate in the projects of the US government. For example, the leaflets contributed to the stalling of the American project to create a local police and army, which is the main link in the US exit strategy from the war.

The effectiveness of the impact of Taliban propaganda on the local population is also explained by the fact that every informational call is followed by action. For example, in 2009, the house of Pakistani journalist R. Baeiri, who collaborated with the Voice of America radio station, was burned down because of his unflattering reporting on the Taliban movement.

Through radio and leaflets, this journalist received repeated threats that many Afghans have heard about. The threats were followed by actions that discouraged local Afghans from cooperating with the US. In addition, the insurgents set fire to American schools, threaten and maim those Afghans and Afghans who attend them, and destroy books in various education offices set up by the US government.

The threat and call to war are considered the most effective means of any ideological confrontation. However, only with the help of this message it is impossible to win the information war. You also need information about your superiority over the enemy.

The propagandists of the Taliban movement understand this very well and use it in their work. Throughout 2010 the Taliban began to use the slogans put forward by the coalition forces in Afghanistan.

This approach is known as triangulation. Theses such as the need to rid Afghanistan of corruption, create transparency in governance at all levels, improve the socio-economic situation of the country, expand women's rights, have become the main slogans in the information propaganda of the Taliban movement since 2010.

Mullah Omar's constant claims that the Taliban will return to the country and implement reforms that the corrupt Karzai government is unable to carry out are broadcast in leaflets and on radio stations of the movement in Afghanistan. The thesis of the Taliban as an alternative to the weak, puppet and unpopular government of Karzai has a serious impact on the population and is the main reason for the new wave of popularity of the movement in the provinces of Afghanistan.

In addition to putting forward theses about alternatives and carrying out reforms, the Taliban for the first time began to use the slogan of expanding women's rights. A similar thesis appeared after the magazine "Time" began to publish and disseminate information in Afghanistan about the situation of women during the rule of the Taliban and about their life today.

Harsh photographs and videos cannot but arouse support for the reforms that the United States is trying to implement in relation to increasing the participation of women in the political and public life of Afghanistan. Taliban propagandists, in turn, also understand that this part of society plays a role in the ideological war.

That is why the Taliban leaflets began to contain ideas about expanding the rights of women in the new Afghanistan after the return of the Taliban government. Such turns in the information propaganda of the Taliban from threats to soft attraction of the population to their side are extremely alarming for the US government.



This propaganda deprives America of support from the Afghan population. Namely, this support ensures the successful implementation of the US military and political strategy in Afghanistan. Many Afghans who would like change in the country are willing to accept the leadership of the Taliban in carrying out reforms.

According to the US, Pakistan is the key to defeating al-Qaeda, the Taliban and terrorists. However, in this largest Muslim state, the attitude towards the United States is the most negative, and the attitude towards the Taliban and Al-Qaeda is the most positive among other Muslim countries. If in 2000 about 23% of the population of Pakistan spoke positively about the United States, then in 2010 - only 17%.

Such a decline in the image of the United States was not observed in other countries of the world. In 2010, the Obama administration acknowledged that propaganda of extremism and anti-Americanism dominates the media space in Pakistan.

If in Afghanistan the radio stations of the Taliban had a significant influence on the creation of a negative image of the United States, then in Pakistan the information and educational activities of the higher Islamic theological schools of Muslims (madrasas) are still the conductors of anti-Americanism.

According to the US government, these schools are not only engaged in anti-American propaganda, but also provide military training for potential terrorists. About 30% of all students in Pakistan study in these schools, and this is, according to the most approximate estimates, 20,000 Pakistanis.

New seminaries are opened every year, and the number of seminarians is constantly increasing. The US views the activities of these schools as the main threat to the policy of strengthening ties between the US and Pakistan.

In addition, US experts note that the specifics of the Pakistani education system are very diverse, namely, the presence of a huge percentage of private

schools, seminaries and institutes (only 25% of schools are state institutions), creates conditions for the development of uncontrolled military training.

Moreover, the effective propaganda activities of US adversaries coming from the border areas create almost insoluble problems for the successful ideological campaign of the US government. The northwestern territories of Pakistan, which border Afghanistan, are the most problematic.

The Government of Pakistan does not control these areas. It is in them that the rapid growth of various FM radio stations takes place. For several years, the Islamists have created about 150 radio stations that broadcast to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The most popular radio station is FM Mullah or Radio Mullah, owned by the eponymous leader of one of the strongest groups in Pakistan.

It has been operating in the Swat valley since 2005. Mullah Fazlullah himself is a very odious person: he runs a theological school in the valley, personally broadcasts on the radio and is popular among the residents of the region due to his good oratory skills.

For Washington, the spiritual leaders of Islam are a source of propaganda for anti-Americanism and the struggle against the occupying forces. In Afghanistan alone, there are 7,100 mosques officially supported by the Afghan government and tens of thousands of private mosques that are closely associated with Pakistani theological academies.

Such facts indicate the existence of a serious ideological enemy of the United States, which also operates with propaganda and persuasion technologies, which undermines all US attempts to build a new pro-American Pakistan.

## Conclusion

A pragmatic view of the diversity of the real experience of public diplomacy convinces us that this format of international cooperation is not only in demand in the activities of various actors in world politics, but also very variable. However, the decisive role is invariably played by the goals of the foreign policy of states seeking to confirm, expand or advance their influence on the scale of a certain space.

Therefore, in order to assess the prospects of the programs put forward in the context of public diplomacy, it is necessary, firstly, to determine whether they are aimed at ensuring the stability of the host societies or, on the contrary, at creating a new balance of internal political forces, that is, at destabilization; secondly, to find out whether the practice of public diplomacy mediates the long-term goals of co-development of partner countries or is aimed only at connecting their potential to unilateral projects.

And, finally, thirdly, the possibilities of public diplomacy should not be used as a new tool for intensifying international competition. Despite increasingly disturbing examples, soft power should not play the role of the vanguard of hard power.

Along with the Balkans, whose military-political instability was finally extinguished in the first years of the new millennium, one of the most unstable regions of the world at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries and also in our time is also Afghanistan - a state on whose territory the fighting has been going on with variable activity since 1978.

As in the case of the Balkans, this region at the turn of the century also served as a demonstration of the military and political potential of the United States and a number of European states. As part of the war between America and

its allies, since 2001, there has been a confrontation in Afghanistan with the international terrorist organizations Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

This conflict can also be considered as a platform for the implementation of the “soft power” of the parties involved. When analyzing the military operations that the United States has launched in Afghanistan since 2001, the decisive factor, at first glance, is the use of “hard power”: bombing, missile strikes. US military dominance ensured American success in the first phase of the war in Afghanistan.

At the same time, the implementation of "soft power" in relation to terrorism, ideologically based on a fanatical belief in a certain cultural and religious value system, seems doubtful. As Nye himself states, “soft power will never convert fanatics.” In this light, Nye rightly notes the confrontation between radicals and moderate Muslims in the Islamic world and points to the importance of political support for moderate Muslims from the United States and countries with developed democracies, more effective use of public diplomacy to explain common interests.

And at the same time, the American scholar emphasizes the fallacy of looking at US actions in Afghanistan as a victory over terrorism in the form of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Al-Qaeda as a transnational organization has cells in many states (Nye gives the number 60).

The possibility of a bomb attack on the branches of the organization located on the territory of the United States, Canada or Germany (Hamburg cell) seems impossible. As part of the fight against such points, it is important not military, but peaceful cooperation, involving various measures: joint tracking of global financial flows, the exchange of intelligence data, and coordination of police actions at the borders.

The difficulties that the United States and its allies have encountered in the fight against international terrorism are largely determined by the strategy and tactics chosen by the terrorists. Realizing their limited military and economic

resources in direct competition with the enemy, terrorist organizations resort to targeted measures that provoke the enemy to incorrect actions.

Osama bin Laden's strategy envisaged a set of measures aimed primarily at discrediting confidence in the United States and weakening America's allies in the Muslim world. As part of the Afghan campaign, the United States and allies also faced the tactics of pinpoint strikes that destabilize the situation in the country.

It was much easier for the United States to win the original war against the government than it was to defeat non-state militant groups. Such formations played a significant role in Afghanistan in 2001-2002 during major American operations. But their role has become even more significant since 2003, from the beginning of the Taliban guerrilla war and the transition to pinpoint strikes and terrorist actions, as mentioned above.

It was within the framework of the fight against international terrorism that the possibility of conjugation, a combination of "soft power" and military power, was determined as one of the main components of "hard power". "Hard power" is used to clear a particular territory from militants, after which the construction of new hospitals, schools and roads on the territory becomes a source of "soft power".

Along with counter-terrorist operations involving military intervention, the struggle for the public opinion of the civilian population is no less important, in light of which the implementation of "soft power" through cooperation and involvement of people through the creation of a protective mechanism that not only provides military protection, but also socio-economic assistance, seems to be decisive. The possibility of implementing "soft power" and counter-terrorism measures on the territory of Afghanistan is also related to the aspect of the legitimacy of power in the territory controlled by the United States.

The legitimacy of the actions of the Americans and their allies in the eyes of the civilian population of Afghanistan could also be achieved through the implementation of "soft power", but in general, the presence of legitimacy is

interconnected with the possibility of implementing counter-terrorism tasks and “soft power” in general: in the absence of the first, the implementation of the second seems difficult due to the confrontation of the population, while in the presence of the legitimacy of the power of the military contingent, the implementation of soft power, in turn, is able to strengthen it. Within the framework of the US war in Afghanistan, the legitimization of American power was also closely connected with the perception of the representatives of the allied military contingent by the Afghans.

In *The Future of Power*, Nye quotes former Allied commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal: “The most important thing is to convince the Afghan people. This whole war is a war of beliefs. It's not a physical confrontation about how many people you kill or how much land you take, how many bridges you blow up. It's all in the minds of the participants.”

Undoubtedly, in Afghanistan, the Taliban waged a struggle with allies for the support of the Afghan population, a struggle for public opinion, within which they waged an information war using various media, building a much “softer” image in the eyes of ordinary Afghans compared to that which was determined by their terrorist activity. In this sense, the representatives of the Taliban involved in the information war were able to organize and use their resources to create their own soft power apparatus.

The antiterrorist activity of the United States in Afghanistan, associated with the elimination of militants inside the state after the withdrawal of the main contingent of allied troops in 2014, continues to this day. The militants combine local terrorist acts with larger-scale operations: the capture of cities (Musa-Kala, Kunduz), territorial entities (Yamgan, Gizab).

The implementation of “soft power” on the territory of Afghanistan at the moment can be defined by the “Resolute Support” operation, which involves a combination of “hard power”, for the implementation of which the Afghan military

is mainly responsible, and “soft power”, which involves the involvement of the US and NATO contingent mainly in the role of military trainers and diplomatic cooperation with government forces, while the contingent continues to maintain legitimacy within the country. In the light of the combination of "hard" and "soft power" methods, the operation can also be attributed to the manifestation of what Nye will define as "smart power".

One of the aspects of the political activity of the American administration that Nye most frequently touches upon in his writings (primarily in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* and *The Future of Power*) is the US war in Iraq. The four-week confrontation in the spring of 2003 can be regarded as a benchmark for the implementation of American “hard power”. At the initial stage of the conflict, the American armed forces in the shortest possible time (03/20/2003-05/01/2003) defeated the regular army of Iraq and occupied its territory.

But within the framework of the “soft power” resource that the United States had and its implementation on the territory of European countries, providing support for the actions of the Americans - both diplomatically and at the level of public opinion, such an operation did the United States more harm than good. Nye points to a sharp drop in US popularity even in those countries whose governments supported US actions in Iraq - Italy and Spain.

A public opinion poll conducted by the BBC in eleven countries in 2003 showed that within each country participating in the study (including the United States itself), the majority of respondents (65% in general across all countries) consider the United States an "arrogant superpower" that poses a greater threat to the world than North Korea. A sharp drop in American positions in the countries of the Islamic world, from Morocco to Turkey and even in Southeast Asia, has also become natural.

Cooperation with such countries seems necessary for the United States in the framework of antiterrorist measures: tracking terrorists, financial flows, and weapons. Against the background of the US actions in Iraq, even America's political opponents in the Islamic world were able to activate and properly use their resource of "soft power". The Al-Jazeera TV channel played a significant role in this by disseminating bloody footage of the consequences of the actions of the American military contingent, footage of civilian losses and destruction into the information space.

The invasion of Iraq turned out to be an ideal American initiative for radical Islamists, who use the circumstances of the war as a mechanism to build their "soft power" resource based on attracting the civilian population with their ideas in contrast to US actions in Iraq. Al-Qaeda launched its activities on three continents, relying on a wave of popular discontent with US policy.

The war has contributed to the fall in US popularity (and, in contrast, the growth of support for Osama bin Laden) even in American-friendly countries such as Indonesia and Jordan. In the light of the September 11 attacks, European countries expressed their sympathy and support for the United States and for the political measures that were proclaimed to combat international terrorism. But the excessive reliance on "hard power" and underestimation of the factor of soft power in the course of the implementation of the George W. Bush administration's military campaign in Iraq undermined even the support of European countries.

The loss of soft power associated with the military campaign in Iraq during the conflict proved to be able to influence the possibilities of using hard power. For example, during the conflict, countries such as India, Germany, France and others were ready to send their forces to Iraq to maintain peace and law and order only on the condition that these forces would operate under the auspices of the UN, but not the United States.



Thus, the methods of implementing political tasks, along with the rhetoric of Bush and his administration, have confirmed their destructiveness both for the US diplomacy in general and for the American resource of soft power in particular. Just like during the military campaign in Afghanistan, the US actions in Iraq were ambiguous in terms of their legitimacy. As noted above, the very presence of legitimacy of actions in the eyes of local civil society is associated with the perception of certain actions of a foreign contingent by the local population.

The absence of a second UN resolution also had a negative impact on the legitimization of the US actions in Iraq. Also not in favor of legitimation was the inability to prepare forces to ensure the suppression of looting, violence on religious grounds, and rebellions.

The legitimacy of American actions in Iraq was also influenced by the media, which published not only scenes of the consequences of battles or (especially after 2003) terrorist attacks, but also organized interviews with a wide variety of representatives of both the American contingent and the Iraqi (for example, citizens of Iraq who lost loved ones or lost property as a result of the war).

During 2003-2007, the US military doctrine regarding Iraq has not changed significantly, only the number of military contingents and the freedom of action of the highest ranks have grown (this was provided for by Bush's new strategy of 2007 "The Big Wave").

The level of legitimization of US actions in Iraq in 2007 was indicated by an ABC News poll: 51% of Iraqis considered it possible to tolerate cruelty against US military contingents. In 2008-2011 there was a gradual withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, while, as in the course of the Afghan campaign, part of the armed forces was used to cooperate with the local military, to train and instruct local law enforcement forces.

The “soft power” of the United States in Iraq was undermined by the incorrect implementation of the military campaign, the diplomatic miscalculations of George W. Bush and his administration in organizing the invasion, a multitude of local acts of human rights violations leaking into the media and forming the image of the American aggressor in the eyes of the Iraqi and world community as a whole.

Despite the fact that, as part of the Iraqi campaign, the United States used, among other things, measures to restore the country's destroyed infrastructure and actively cooperated with the local administration on law enforcement issues, the implementation of such measures seems to be ambiguous (this applies primarily to the reconstruction of Iraq by the UN forces, which at the initial phase of the conflict was actively resisted by the Bush administration).

The aforementioned decline in the popularity and attractiveness of the United States in the world also had a negative impact on the implementation of measures to restore Iraq. The course of the protracted conflict showed the significance of a set of American miscalculations, primarily the insufficient use of their own “soft power” and the underestimation of their own military operations as a factor in the implementation of the "soft power" of the enemy.

The role of international terrorism in the history of the development of “soft power” at the turn of the century was considered on the example of several military conflicts. International terrorism is inherently transnational, having no single support, base in a particular state, which does not dictate its political goals on behalf of the state regime.

In the light of the realization of their interests outside the state system, transnational corporations and non-state organizations are similar to international terrorism, which J. Nye also identifies as a special type of “political player” on the world stage. Corporations and non-governmental organizations can have their own

soft power. Such players can interact with states and societies, while being guided by their own interests.

For example, in his work *The Future of Power*, Nye draws a diagram of such interaction: the government of country A is trying to influence representatives of society B, but transnational organizations in society B are also able to conduct their own information campaigns in order to influence the governments of countries A in turn and B.

They use whistleblowing campaigns to influence governments and pressure other non-governmental organizations, including large multinational corporations. Sometimes they may act through intergovernmental organizations.

Thus, the possibility of non-state structures and companies to initiate the creation of coalitions, often eclectic in composition, seems to be certain and realizable. In their interaction with governments, the most influential representatives of business or with each other, such organizations are able to develop new norms by pressuring the government or business leaders to change their policies, they are also able to influence public opinion, changing people's ideas about what should be done, deal with the government.

In the framework of the implementation of “soft power” and their undertakings in general, the interests of non-governmental organizations and transnational corporations can often collide. Non-governmental organizations like Greenpeace can use their resources to prevent corporate actions that the organization believes will harm the environment.

Nye illustrates this with an example of Greenpeace’s actions towards Shell: when Shell proposed deep-sea salvaging of its Brent Spar drilling rig, which allegedly could pollute the ocean, Greenpeace initiated a boycott of the company, which led to the choice of another option for dismantling. Subsequently, it turned out that the option with disposal in water was more environmentally friendly; it was a blow to the reputation and “soft power” of Greenpeace.

This example indicates not only the possible presence of conflicts among non-governmental users of “soft power”, but also shows how inappropriate or based on incorrect data use of the “soft power” resource can undermine the reputation of a non-governmental organization, which is a resource necessary for its accumulation. The very possibility of non-governmental organizations to have “soft power” is closely linked with the development of information technology.

The history of international organizations is quite old: back in the 19th century there were such organizations as the Socialist International, the Universal Postal Union, and the International Olympic Committee.

Before the First World War, there were 176 international non-governmental organizations in the world. But it was the last decade of the 20th century marked the rapid growth of their number - from six to twenty-six thousand. The Internet has greatly simplified communication between people and communication over vast distances is not a problem.

In the light of the availability of means that ensure quick and convenient communication even at the intercontinental level, the growth in the number of international non-governmental organizations seems to be fair - the very form of organization is now devoid of the difficulties that were inevitable before. In turn, the XXI century. is able to give several examples of campaigns whose activities are largely determined by the resources provided by the World Wide Web, while these same campaigns, in turn, use the Internet as a platform to achieve their goals and objectives, to realize their “soft power” resource. First of all, we are talking about Microsoft, Apple and Google - these campaigns not only correspond to all of the above, but are also economically successful structures.

As of 2009, Microsoft had annual revenues of \$58 billion, Apple \$35 billion, and Google \$22 billion. Together, these companies also provided jobs for more than 150,000 people. These companies are still powerful transnational structures that use markets and resources around the world. Their “soft power” is

aimed both at their own clients and at state structures, within the legal framework of which they exist and function.

As already indicated above, the “soft power” of transnational corporations and international non-governmental organizations can be implemented in various situations. But it is difficult to argue with the fact that the most typical adherents of the “soft power” of non-governmental organizations are supporters of their ideas and the values they proclaim. At the same time, the “soft power” of transnational corporations is aimed primarily at attracting consumers of goods or services.

The implementation of “soft power” occurs through the economic and (in some cases) cultural sphere. For example, the world's leading music labels (such as Atlantic Records, Universal Music Group) are multinational companies by nature, with departments, divisions and offices in many countries.

These kinds of companies are instrumental in the production of popular culture products. At the same time, the “producers” of this product themselves - the performers of popular music, can, in turn, take part in the implementation of “soft power” by offering in their songs a certain set of ideas and values. J. Nye points in his work to the vocalist of the rock band U2 Bono and his ability to “present ideas in a brighter, more attractive, accessible format.”

Thus, speaking about the existence of “soft power” at the turn of the century, it is worth noting that along with states, terrorist organizations, international non-governmental organizations and transnational corporations, an individual can also act as its carrier.

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