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## National Power: Elements, Evaluation and Limitations

By Dinesh

National Power of a nation is dependent upon several factors which are together called the components or elements or determinants of national power. Frankel calls these as capabilities or capability factors. Several other scholars prefer to use the name 'Determinants of National Power.' However, more and more scholars now prefer to use the name Factors/Elements of National Power because no single factor or element is a determinant of National Power.

### Elements of National Power:

There are a number of elements of National Power. Several political scientists have attempted to classify these. Whereas Morgenthau has classified these into two parts— permanent and temporary elements, Organski has preferred to classify these into the natural and social determinants—the former including geography, resources and population and the latter economic development, political structures and national morale.

Palmer and Perkins, Charles O. Lerche, Abdul Said, Theodore A, Coulombis and James H. Wolfe have classified these elements into two parts; Tangible and Intangible Elements— the former category includes those elements which can be assessed in quantitative terms and latter such elements as are ideational and psychological and cannot be quantified. Geography, raw material, natural resources, population and technology are the tangible elements, whereas ideology, morale, leadership, personality, organisational efficiency and quality of diplomacy are the intangible elements.

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In a simple way we can discuss the following seven elements of National Power:

1. Geography
2. Natural Resources
  - (a) Raw Materials
  - (b) Food
3. Population
4. Economic Development and Industrial Capacity
5. Technology
6. Military Preparedness
7. Ideology
8. Leadership
9. Organisation and Quality of Government
10. National Character and Morale
11. Diplomacy

### 1. Geography

Amongst the elements of National Power, geography is the most stable, tangible, permanent and natural element. Its importance as a factor of national power can be judged from the fact that Geo-political scientists, like Moodie, Spykman, Haushofer, Mackinder and others, regard Geography as the determinant of international politics.

While describing -the importance of geography in international relations Napoleon, observed. "The foreign policy of a country is determined by its geography." Geography is, however neither an independent determinant of national power nor of foreign policy. It is just an element of National Power.

Nature and Role of Geography as an Element of National Power:

#### (i) Maps:

Maps are always geographical in nature. These are sometimes used by nations to justify a particular course of policy or action as well as to reject the views of other nations.

"Observers of international relations always need an atlas showing population, raw materials, communication routes and other data and the ability to interpret maps." —Padelford and Lincoln

The Sino-Indian dispute has been a dispute of maps regarding McMahon Line. Maps are used as instruments for justifying a particular demand or action of a nation. These are used to influence decisions in ones favour.

#### (ii) Size:

Size is another geographical element of national power. The large size of a country can accommodate a large population, offer better natural resources and raw materials, and can be

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more helpful in the defence of the country. A large size can help the country to defend by retreat in the event of an attack. It is definitely more, rather very difficult for a state to defeat a big country. It was also the large size of the erstwhile Soviet Union that helped it to defeat the forces of Hitler.

Large area also makes it possible for a country to establish vital industrial complexes far away from the borders and thereby, to organize effective defence. Thus size is a component of national power. A united Germany as a big state is bound to be a new powerful state in the world politics of 21st century.

However, size can be both a helping as well as a hindering factor. A large size with inadequate natural resources, inaccessible mountains and forests, unhealthy climate and topography can be a hindrance in the way of national power. It can also pose a defence problem.

The Himalayas in the North and a long sea-coast in the South have made the defence of India a complex and difficult problem. Moreover, the existence of some other factors can help even the small sized states to develop a large amount of national power. The location of England and the rapid industrial development that it could achieve after the Industrial Revolution helped it to establish and maintain a big empire and be a virtual ruler of the seas till 1945.

Japan, even with its small size, scored a victory over Russia in 1905. The USA has a relatively smaller territory than Russia yet it has more power than the latter. Israel offers another striking example of a small sized country that has a disproportionately large amount of power.

On the other hand, some large sized countries such as, Brazil, Canada, Zaire, Australia and Sudan, and now Russia are not as powerful as their sizes might indicate. In spite of these exceptions, it cannot be denied that a large territory generally creates the possibility of a great power, or, conversely, small states are normally not expected to be great powers.

### **(iii) Location:**

Location of a nation can be as helping as well as a hindering factor for its national power. It determines whether a nation can be a sea-power or not. England could become a big naval power and thereby an imperial power because of its location. The location of Japan has helped it to be a major ship- building nation. Location of Germany in the heart of Europe has been a source of strength for it.

The location of the USA helped it to adopt (1823-1945) and follow the policy of isolationism. Further, its location, being relative to land as well as seas, has helped it to be a both land and sea power. The location of Switzerland has been instrumental in securing for it the status of a permanently neutralized state.

Middle East and Continental Europe have been the potential zones of power rivalry because of their geographic and strategic locations. Location of Canada has hindered its emergence as a great power. Hence, a favourable geographical location among other things can help a nation to be powerful and an unfavorable location can limit the national power.

### **(iv) Climate:**

No one can deny the importance of climate in the context of National Power. Climate determines the food production, economy and even the culture of a nation. It can be a source of

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big limitation or help for the human capabilities. The cold climate of Arctic zone and Antarctic and the excessive heat of the Tropical zone, and Sahara have kept the development of life backward in these areas.

Extreme heat or cold are unfavorable conditions for national power. The prosperity of India stands inseparably conditioned by Monsoons. A failure of Monsoons weakens India and likewise timely and good Monsoon rains help India to be self-sufficient and even surplus in food production.

It is a well-known fact that the great centres of power have so far emerged only in the moderate temperate zone, between 20 and 60 degrees north. A helpful climate can be a source of power and an unkind climate can be a source of weakness.

### **(v) Topography:**

The nature of terrain, together with other geographical elements, is an important factor of national power. Terrain can influence the power of a state and its potential for offence, defence and growth. A nation with plane and artificial boundaries can be an easy victim of expansionism on the part of a powerful nation.

Natural boundaries with strategic advantages are always a source of strength for a nation. It is terrain which determines decisions concerning physical security of the state. The English Channel has remained a source of defence and some security for England. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans have provided strength to the security of the United States.

Since mid-1950s defence of the Himalayas has been a source of limitation on India's power. The lack of a good number of natural harbours along the sea coast has hindered the development of economic and trade relations of India with other countries. All these examples highlight the role of topography in determining the national power of a state.

### **(vi) Boundaries:**

Boundary is also a geographic factor of national power. Settled and natural boundaries are always a source of friendly and cooperative relations among the nations of a region. Undefined and disputed boundaries are potent sources of conflict which weakens national power e.g. the boundary disputes between India and China, Israel and Arab states can be quoted as examples. Natural boundaries are helpful to national power and conversely artificial boundaries are a source of weakness and conflict.

Everyone accepts that Geography is an important element of National Power. However, its role can be both helpful and hindering. Ideal geographical conditions can be a source of strength and negative and hindering geographical factors can be a source of weakness for the national power.

Further, role of geography as an element of national power is linked with several other elements, like population, level of scientific and industrial development means of transport and communication, and the like. In fact, scientific inventions and technological innovations have made it possible for man to adjust with and overcome geographical problems and hindrances. Geography is an element but not an independent determinant of national power. The Geopolitical scientists over-rate its importance.

## 2. Natural Resources:

No nation can hope to be a powerful nation if its territory is not adequately graced by natural resources. Natural resources are indeed “gifts of nature of established utility.” The industrial and military capabilities of a nation as well as its economic well-being are dependent upon the existence of natural resources.

A self-sufficiency in certain key resources can be a big source of power of a nation. The USA has been in a position to be a super power in the world mainly due to its near self-sufficiency in respect of several key natural resources. No nation can be powerful without becoming a developed industrialized nation and the chances of becoming an industrialized nation are basically linked with the possession of natural resources, particularly industrial raw materials and minerals. Natural resources, in the form of minerals, fertile soil, flora and fauna, through planned exploitation and use always make a nation powerful.

In analyzing the role of National Resources as a factor of National Power Morgenthau discuss it in two parts:

1. Raw Materials and
2. Food.

### 1. Raw Materials:

Raw materials can be further sub-divided into three categories:

- (i) Minerals— Coal, Petrol, Iron, Copper, Zinc, Tin, Manganese, Uranium etc.,
- (ii) Natural Products— Rubber, Jute, Bamboo, Medicinal Plants, Wood Pulp, Wood, Plants, Colours, Varnishes, Forest Products etc., and
- (iii) Animal Products—Milk, Eggs, Meat, Wool, Hides, Feathers, Silk etc.

It is impossible to develop power in modern times without industrialisation and it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a nation to get industrialized without adequate possession of key raw materials. Raw materials influence national power, national policies and international trade of the nation.

The United States has been nearly self-sufficient in respect of key minerals and this fact has largely contributed to its industrial and military strength. The interdependence among nations stands largely constituted by the necessities of trade relations in respect of minerals and raw materials for their industrial needs.

A nation cannot hope to be a big military, industrial and economic power without the possession of adequate quantities of raw- materials. The importance of oil as the key source of energy is a well known fact of present day international relations. Oil diplomacy in world politics of our times solely depends upon the fact that the OPEC countries monopolies world crude production and have vast oil reserves.

Oil has tremendous importance, both for industrial production and military strength and mobility. Clemenceau’s observation; “One drop of oil is worth one drop of blood of our soldiers”, is true even today. The importance of uranium as a source of atomic power is well

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known. Adequate means of energy security contribute to the national power of a nation. As such, raw materials constitute an important element of national power.

However, merely the existence of raw materials cannot be automatically a source of power. The ability to exploit and utilize the raw- materials is a factor almost as important as the existence of raw-materials. This ability is directly linked with the level of scientific, technological and industrial advancement.

### 2. Food:

Food indeed is an important element of national power. Food determines policies. The existence of large stocks of food grains and surplus food production can be a source of vital strength of a nation. A nation deficient in food production can rarely become a major power.

“Nations self-sufficient in food are better placed than nations which import food.” —  
Morgenthau

The food shortage in India was a highly limiting factor of the Indian foreign policy during 1950s and 60s. Food shortage leads to power shortage. Acute food problem is a big source of weakness for all the developing countries. It is keeping them dependent upon developed states who have surplus food productions. The Green Revolution of 1970s enabled India not only to sustain its economy but also to preserve and develop its national power.

The military preparedness of a nation is dependent upon adequate supplies of food. A popular valid saying has been; “Armies travel on their stomach.”

However, the food factor is also inseparably linked up with other factors particularly with population, science and technology. Food production is dependent upon agricultural technology and industrial capacity. Man-power is vitally important for food production. Production of food can be stepped up by human efforts and the application of advanced agricultural technology.

The ability to utilize sea food resources can help a nation to overcome its food problem. This ability is dependent upon science and technology. As such food is again an element of national power. However its role as a factor of National Power has to be evaluated along with other factors, population, climate, and level of scientific and technological development of a nation.

### 3. Population:

Another basic element which affects national power is population. “As long as men are needed for production and fighting, other elements being equal, the state with a large number of men and women to perform such tasks shall be more capable of becoming a major power.”  
Manpower continues to be a key factor which determines the industrial and military capacities of a nation and its status as a power in international relations.

In this age of science, machines have come to perform a large number of functions which were previously being performed by men. Yet machines have failed to completely replace men. Even today men behind the machines continue to be more important than the machines.

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Manpower alone can exploit the natural resources and utilize these for the satisfaction of national needs. Geographical hindrances can be overcome by men. Scientific and industrial development cannot be accomplished without men.

Men are needed to fight. Voltaire's observation: "God is always on the side of the biggest battalions" holds good even today. The mechanization of warfare has not seriously limited the importance of man as the soldier. Manpower alone can register a military victory.

Hence, population is a source of power. The major powers of our times are states with fairly large populations. Large concentration of man-power in Asia, particularly China and India, has been an important factor of the power structure in international politics. Human Power resulting from the presence of a large class of skilled workforce has been a source for the emerging power of India in the world.

Thus, it can be observed that:

1. Population is an important element of military power.
2. Man power is needed for fully exploiting the resources of the state. Industrial production depends upon man-power as well as machines.
3. Population factor determines both national needs as well as policies designed to serve these needs.
4. Population is an important human element of National Power.

However, it is not merely the large number of people that determines the power of a nation. Britain, with a very small population, was in a position to rule many countries, even heavily populated countries like India. Israel with a small population has been demonstrating a larger amount of power than Arab countries.

Disproportionately large populations with a high growth rate have been hindrances in the way of China and India. Population factor has been a source of limitation on India's national power. It has adversely affected the economic growth rate and has posed a perpetual food problem for India. Poverty of India has been largely due to its over-population.

Moreover, it is not merely the quantity of population that influences national power. The quality of population is a more valuable factor in the context of National Power. Dedicated, disciplined, hardworking, healthy, educated and skilled manpower alone can be a source of power.

A nation inhabited by unhealthy, unemployed, lazy, unskilled, illiterate and ignorant people is bound to be a weak and inactive power. Further, the large size of population is a big source of strain as it leads to a rapid dilapidation of national resources. As such the evaluation of population as a factor of national power must involve an evaluation in both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

### **4. Economic Development and Industrial Capacity:**



### A. Economic Development:

Economic power is a vitally important part of national power of a nation because it is the means for military power and the basis for welfare, prosperity and development of its people. A nation with developed, healthy and growing economy alone can be a great power in world politics. Effective economic organisation and planning are essential qualities of a powerful nation. Poverty is always a source of limitation of power. It is this factor which has been largely forcing most of the developing countries of the Third World to live with neo-colonialism.

The increased importance of economic instruments of foreign policy is a recognized fact of present day international relations. Only nations with developed economies can use the economic instruments—aid, loan, rewards, trade, grants and denial of rewards or punishment, for securing their desired goals in international relations. By using economic means a nation tries to exercise its national power in a productive and useful way. The level of economic well-being determines the power of a nation.

### B. Industrial Capacity:

The economic factor is intimately linked up with industrial capacity of a nation. In this age of science, industrialisation and technology developed industrial capacity alone can be a source of enduring and effective economic development. Only industrially advanced nations can become great powers. Today, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Japan and Germany are powerful nations because of their huge industrial capacities. They have the ability to process raw materials, and thereby are in a position to control international economy. India is now emerging as an industrial power.

Industrial capacity of a nation is thus an important factor of national power. Industrial backwardness, despite the possession of raw materials, can be a source of weakness for any nation. The USA, Russia and India have almost equal coal and iron resources, but some weakness industrial capacity in India has been responsible for her comparatively less powerful position. Since her independence, India has been trying conceitedly to develop her industrial capacity and technology for increasing her power and role in international relations.

The modern warfare has made industrial capacity a significant factor of military power of a nation. The agricultural production of a country can be increased only through industrialized farming. Increased industrial capacity increases the agricultural capacity and the power of a nation.

Thus, economic development and industrial capacity are important elements of national power. However, like other elements these two are also closely related to other elements, particularly, raw materials, technology, skilled human power, scientific talent and research, economic resources and the like. Their role as elements of power has to be analyzed in relation with other factors and not independently.

## 5. Technology:

Technology is the application of knowledge of science for promoting human welfare. It is the ability to use scientific inventions for the promotion of human welfare. Progress in engineering and industrial production is directly related to the nature and level of technology. It has been the

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advanced technological ability that has largely contributed to the prosperity and power of the developed countries.

In fact the level of technological advancement determines the power-status of a nation. A nation backed by highly developed and advanced technology alone can be recognized as a developed nation. The USA and other developed countries are technologically advanced nations and this fact has been a major source of their power. Now nuclear technology has emerged as an important source of power and influence in international relations.

Initially, monopoly over atomic secret was sought to be used by the USA for maintaining her power superiority in relation with the erstwhile USSR. The success in acquiring the nuclear technology in early 1950s, however, made it possible for the erstwhile USSR to successfully compete with the US power in international relations.

The overkill capacity achieved by the nuclear powers, resulting from the huge stockpiling of nuclear weapons of mass destruction, has been a source of limitation for other nations. The nuclear technology, missile technology, space technology and information technology have given a big boost to the power of some of the states. It has decidedly been a source of power for India.

The capacity of a nation to develop is greatly related to the capacity for technological advancement. Industrial development, development of means of transport and communication, military preparedness and all-round economic and social development can be really possible only when a nation has access to advanced technology.

The ability to achieve this through self-efforts is a bigger source of strength than the capacity to import know-how. The inability to register self-development makes a nation dependent upon technologically advanced nations and hence it limits its national power.

The technological development secured by the Indian scientists in various spheres has been a source of power for India. However, the continued dependence upon advanced nations for the import of highly advanced technology in respect of certain vital spheres has been acting as a source of limitation on India's national power. Many developing or lowly developed countries have not been in a position to fully use their natural resources because of the low levels of their technological development.

The role of technology as a factor of national power can be judged from the fact that today technological aid or assistance, weapon-technology, nuclear technology, information technology, communication technology, dual use technology, and space technology are elements of international relations and all these have been influencing the foreign policies of both the developed and under-developed countries.

However, here again it must be pointed out that the importance of this factor stands linked up with several other factors, like scientific and industrial capacity, raw materials, government policies and educational facilities.

### **6. Military Preparedness:**

Military power is a vitally important part of national power of a state. The importance of military factor as an element of national power can be judged from the fact that many persons regard

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these synonymous. Military power is not national power, nevertheless it is an important part of national power which contributes to its strength and effectiveness.

Military preparedness is a background factor for the success of a foreign policy and it is a tangible factor capable of supporting the foreign policy and promoting national interest.” It influences the level of success of foreign policy. The super powers and other major powers of our times have been big military powers. By virtue of being a major military power, India, besides other factors, is considered to be a major power having a potential to be a super power in the next 20 years or so.

While evaluating military preparedness as a factor of national power, we have to take into account three factors:

- (i) War technology or technological innovations,
- (ii) Military leadership, and
- (iii) Quantity and Quality of soldiers.

### **(a) War Technology:**

War technology refers to the nature and type of weapon system that is available with the army of the state. Modern warfare is a sophisticated technological warfare. The quantity and technical quality of weapons and military equipment is a major factor that determines the level of military power of a nation. Advanced military technology is always a source of strength and strategic advantage.

### **(b) Quality of Military Leadership:**

War technology is an important factor but it can be fruitful only when backed by efficient planning and systematic and effective use. This brings into focus the role of military leadership. Military planning is a valuable factor of military action in a war. Skilled, trained, experienced, dedicated, energetic and disciplined military leadership alone can make the best use of available weapons, equipment and manpower. A war victory can be possible only under effective and efficient military leadership.

### **(c) Quantity and Quality of Soldiers:**

In a war weapons and equipment play a key role but their role and effectiveness is dependent upon the quantity and quality of soldiers. Military equipment and weapon-system is important, but not as much as the soldiers who actually use these weapons and equipment. The number, skill, training, discipline, dedication and morale of the soldiers are essential factors which can make possible an effective and successful use of military weapons and machines.

Pakistan had a superior weapon system, tanks and aircrafts in both the 1965 and 1971 wars with India. However, it failed to use this to its advantage because of inadequately trained and less skilled men behind these machines. Indian soldiers could provide a decisive and befitting answer to Pakistani aggressions because of their superior qualities. Kargil Victory was also the outcome of the qualities of discipline, training and dedication of Indians Officers and Jawans.

We have to take into account these three factors for judging the level of military preparedness as an element of national power. However, military preparedness is directly dependent upon such factors as technology, industrial capacity, economic development, state of economy, policies of the government, and strategic factors. Hence it is not an independent determinant of national power.

### 7. Ideology:

Ideology is an intangible element of national power. It can be a source of both friendship and enmity in international relations. "Ideas and ideologies are elements of the power of a state." Pen is mightier than sword or at least pen has a might which can be a source of strength for a nation. The ideology that a government upholds can be a source of unity and support of the people at home and abroad. The ideology of communism served as a big source of strength for the communist states between 1917 and 1990.

Ideology helps a nation to influence the exercise of its power. It serves as a source of unity and strength both at home and abroad. The adoption of the ideology of democratic socialism helped India to establish friendly and cooperative relations with the democratic west and the socialist east. It also acted as a source of popular support for the Government of India.

However, a choice of wrong ideology can be a source of weakness. Nazism weakened Hitler's Germany and Fascism did the same to Mussolini's Italy. Further, ideological differences within a nation, as well as among different nations can be a source of weakness.

Capitalism vs. Communism paved the way for the emergence of a cold war between the West and the East. It kept the powers of two super powers conditioned and limited. The ability of the nation to use several ideological principles (particular ideologies) always determines its national power.

While evaluating the role of ideology as an element of national power, we must also take into account the means which a state has at its disposal for advertising and propagating the ideology. The propaganda and publicity facilities available to a state also act as a factor of national power.

### 8. Leadership:

Leadership of a nation is an important human element of national power. The utilization of man power resources, natural resources, raw materials, technology, industrial capacity, military power and ideology for strengthening the national power of a state is dependent upon the qualities of the leadership that runs the government of the state.

Civil and Military planning is a function of the political leaders. To make and implement foreign policy is the responsibility of the leadership, the decision-makers of the state, in particular. National Power is basically the power of the leaders, statesmen and diplomats of the nation to act strongly in international relations.

The quality of leadership determines the nature and extent of power that a nation can use for securing its national interests. Efficient, devoted and mature leadership can be a source of national power in the sense that a judicious use of power can surely increase the national power

and its operational effectiveness. National Power really means the ability of national leaders and decision-makers.

### **9. Organisation and Quality of Government:**

The mere possession of material and human resources cannot lead to national power if the agency for steering and coordination of human efforts, that is, the government of the state is not well organised, efficient and effective. It is the business of government to coordinate direct, control men and material resources for securing power for fulfilling goals of national interest.

There are many examples which highlight the importance of this factor of national power. For decades China (Before 1949) remained a weak power because, among other reasons, the central government lacked effective control over major portions of the country. Similar was the case of France. Until De Gaulle took control in France in the year 1958, political power remained divided among a number of political parties.

This not only brought repeated crisis to the polity but also made it difficult for the French government to pursue policies on an enduring basis. Such a situation acted as a serious limitation on French power in international relations. As such, effectiveness of governmental organization and administration within the state is very essential for a nation to become powerful.

Frequent and big changes in Pakistan's leadership have been an element of its national power. It has tended to weaken Pakistan. Only a well-organised and well-functioning democratic government can be an enduring and helpful factor of national power.

### **10. National Character and Morale:**

#### **(i) National Character:**

An important but intangible element of national power is national character. National character is a collective name for referring to the traits of the people, their attitude and aptitude towards work and national needs. National character undoubtedly influences national power as it manifests qualitative make up of the people in their actual behaviour.

Scholars tell us that Russians are known for their sturdiness, elementary force and persistence. Americans for their inventiveness, initiative and spirit of adventure. Britishers for their un-dogmatic common sense, and Germans for discipline and industriousness, Japanese for their nationalism, Indians for their tolerance, idealism and faith in rich cultural traditions and Chinese for their cosmic un-changeability. Traits of national character definitely influence the national power of a nation.

#### **(ii) National Morale:**

Along with national character, national morale is also an element of national power. National morale, in the context of national power, refers to 'the degree of determination with which a nation supports the foreign policy of its government in peace and war, it permeates all activities

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of a nation, its agriculture and industrial productions as well as its military establishments and diplomatic service.” (Morgenthau).

High morale means a healthy frame of mind characterised by fidelity to cause and it depends upon a combination of circumstances and the quality of leadership, and can be subject to frequent and sometimes sudden fluctuations. Indian morale became quite low after severe reverses in Sino- Indian War of 1962.

The success in 1965 and 1971 wars, the successful green revolution and the entry into nuclear club through a peaceful nuclear explosion in May 1974, followed by 1998 nuclear explosions gave vital strength and reinvigorated Indian national morale. Development of IT sector and steady economic development have how increased the morale of the people of India as well as India’s credibility in the world.

A high and healthy national morale can be a big source of power which can lead to successful use of power for securing the national interest. The high morale of Indian army was a factor in the victories in 1971 Bangladesh war and 1999 Kargil war with Pakistan.

National character and morale are elements of national power but their role can be positive or negative. Further, their evaluation as factors of national power must be done with reference to other human and material factors. The intangibility of these factors particularly, national character must also be kept in mind.

### 11. Diplomacy:

Diplomacy is another important element of national power. Hans J. Morgenthau regards it as the most important, though unstable element of national power. Diplomacy is the means of foreign policy and as such helps it to achieve better results through judicious hard work and persuasion in international relations. Success of foreign policy of a nation largely depends upon the quality of Diplomacy that takes it to foreign capitals.

Diplomacy of high quality can bring the ends and means of foreign policy into harmony with the available resources of national power. It can trap the hidden sources of national strength and transform these fully and squarely into political realities.

British diplomacy has been instrumental in projecting Britain as a major power in world politics, even after the loss of its status as a mighty imperial power. During the inter-war period, the USA was politically and militarily very strong but it played a minor role in world politics because of its weak diplomacy. At times, weak diplomacy has acted as a source of weakness for India.

The role of diplomacy as an element of national power has undergone a big change in contemporary times. The emergence of new diplomacy—open and conference diplomacy, has somewhat limited its role as a factor of national power. We cannot accept Morgenthau’s thesis that diplomacy is the most important of all the elements of national power. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that diplomacy is an important factor of national power. A diplomacy of high quality can effectively contribute towards an effective and successful exercise of national power. All Elements of National Power are Important:

These are the major elements of national power. Besides these, Wolfe and Coulombis refer to several other elements like:

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- (i) Reputation, i.e. reputation for action in response to challenges,
- (ii) Foreign Support and links, i.e. nature of alliances, treaties, agreements that a nation has with other nations, and
- (iii) Accidents in the form of sudden natural calamity or calamities can be a source of weakness whereas a sudden accidental discovery of vital raw materials like oil in the off shore basin can be a source of strength.

We have to take into account all these tangible and intangible elements for evaluating the national power of a nation. However, it must be remembered that these factors do not individually and automatically determine the national power of a nation. Only when material factors are combined with right type of human factors that these become factors of national power.

Moreover their relative importance and role keeps on changing from time to time. Hence these have to be systematically and continuously evaluated. Moreover their interdependence has also to be always kept in view. In this age of knowledge power and highly increased importance of economic relations, human power and ability, along with economic growth rate and potential have come to be major elements of National Power. It has been because of this change that India is now being perceived as an emerging super power in the world.

### Measurement of National Power:

A nation with developed technology, surplus food, large industrial production, healthy and developed economy, good natural resources— particularly oil, uranium, natural gas etc., can exercise more power over other nations. Thus, by measuring the scope of resources and capacities of a nation we can measure the scope of power of a nation.

The 3 factors used to measure the national power of a nation are as follows: (a) Domain of National Power (b) Range of Power (c) Scope of Power.

The measurement of power is a difficult task because it involves the task of measuring and analyzing quantitatively and qualitatively, a large number of tangible and intangible elements of national power. The need to analyze the actual and potential power of a nation further makes the task difficult. However, Karl Deutsch and several other political scientists advocate the measurement of national power in respect of three factors: Domain, Range and Scope.

#### (a) Domain of National Power:

Karl Deutsch defines Domain as, “the set of persons whose behaviour is significantly changed by the application of power.” Coulobombis and Wolfe divide domain into internal domain and external domain. Internal domain is constituted by the territory and population within the boundaries of a country External domain includes those territories and populations outside the concerned nation-state that belong to its “sphere of influence”.

The internal domain can be measured in terms of population, area and gross national product. The external domain can be analyzed in terms of spheres of influence, alliances, dependencies and the degree of penetration in the political processes of other countries. The external domain

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of the USA can be measured in term of its alliances likes etc. NATO, SEATO, ANZUS, OAS G-8, NAFTA OAS etc., and the number of its foreign military bases and areas of influence in different parts of the world.

However, the measuring of domain is a difficult task. The areas of influence and the degree of penetration cannot be empirically measured. The quality of alliance relations is not measurable. NATO now continues to be in existence and it has registered an expansion.

However it now operates with a relatively less effective and less useful role. We cannot ascertain precisely as to how much influence the USA has over France, Germany and Russia. As such measurement of domain of power can be done only in a limited way.

### **(b) Range of Power:**

Karl Deutsch defines Range as, “the difference between the highest reward and the worst punishment which a power holder can bestow or inflict upon some persons in his domain.” Range is the intensity of power exercised upon others. The internal range or intensity of power can be measured by taking into account the use of force and punishment as well as of reward or distribution of values for exercising power over the people at home. A democratic government uses influence, persuasion and rewards, whereas a tyrant or a dictator uses force and punishment for securing obedience to his policies and laws.

The external range or intensity of power can be measured in terms of the means which a state actually uses or can use for securing its desired ends and policies. The amount of economic rewards (aid, grant, loans) that a nation gives or receives can indicate the range of power that it has in international relations.

However, there exists no specific way to precisely measure the intensity of power of a nation. We can have some data to judge the ‘intensity’ but we cannot be sure about the real impact of the exercise of power by a powerful nation over a weaker nation.

The USA has been the biggest aid-giver and the most developed country of the world, yet we cannot exactly measure the intensity of its power over other nations. India has been a major recipient of US-aid but this cannot be taken to mean that the US range of power over India is substantially vast and big.

### **(c) Scope of Power:**

Scope of National Power means, as Karl Deutsch writes, “the set or collection of all the particular classes of behaviour, relations and affairs that are effectively subjected to government power.” Scope of National Power consists of all the activities of government, internal as well as external. The external activities include the demonstration of power to keep others dependent for one thing or the other and to use the interdependence of relations for ones benefit.

A nation with developed technology, surplus food, large industrial production, healthy and developed economy, good natural resources— particularly oil, uranium, natural gas etc., can exercise more power over other nations. Thus, by measuring the scope of resources and capacities of a nation we can measure the scope of power of a nation.

Karl Deutsch’s attempt to measure power on the basis of their three variables can be of some help to the students of International Politics. However, such a measurement can give us only some information and not a complete picture of the national power of a nation. With these we



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can, to some extent, quantify the national power of a nation but this cannot help us to specify fully the national power that a nation can exercise over other nations. National Power does not admit full measurement. Intangible elements and the factor of quality can never be really measured.

A popular way of evaluating national power is to evaluate its elements and components. The power of a state is dependent upon certain tangible and intangible, material and human, stable and non-stable, factors, which can be evaluated. Such an exercise can lead to an assessment of national power of a nation.

Evaluation of Nation Power:

By evaluating geography, population, natural resources, technology, industrial capacity, military preparedness, diplomacy, governmental organisation, national character, national morale, leadership and some other elements we can have a fairly good assessment of the national power of a nation. However, the evaluation of these factors has to be done with utmost care and objectivity. In doing so, certain facts must be kept in mind.

Factors and Features which must guide every Evaluation of National Power:

Frankel lists seven features which must be kept in mind while evaluating the elements of national power:

- (1) The relative and comparative nature of national power,
- (2) The dynamic nature of elements,
- (3) The interdependence of all the factors
- (4) The need to evaluate both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of these factors,
- (5) The factor of ability to use the factors,
- (6) The level of preparedness in respect of these factors, and
- (7) The need to measure both actual power and potential power.

1. Relativity of National Power:

All the elements of national power of a nation have to be evaluated in relation to those possessed by other states, especially neighbours and possible competitors, rivals and opponents. An absolute and isolated evaluation of national power of a nation can never be realistic. It can even prove to be suicidal.

### **2. Qualitativeness of various Factors of National Power:**

The evaluation of the elements of national power must involve analysis in terms of both quantity and quality. Mere quantities are fairly meaningless. For example a big size of territory and a large sized population without ideal qualities can never be a source of power. The number of aero planes is important but along with it their range, speed, weapon-system, load capacity and operational role and training and commitment of the pilots are equally important and must be taken into account.

### **3. Interdependence of all the Factors:**

A supreme fact that must be kept in mind is that no element of national power is or can be individually a determinant of national power. No one element can lead to power if a nation is deficient in respect of several elements. All the factors of national power are interdependent and these have to be evaluated as a one group.

### **4. The Ability to use the Resources is a Factor:**

The existence of certain elements does not lead to national power. It is only when the nation has the ability to efficiently use the elements that these lead to national power. The production of industrial goods must be related to the needs, resources and use-capacity of the nation.

#### **5. Dynamic Nature of National Power:**

The relative importance of the elements of national power is always changing. In our times of rapid technological changes the relative importance of various elements has been constantly changing. Oil has replaced coal as the main source of fuel and may itself be soon replaced in future by uranium.

Uranium can lose its value if the solar energy can be used and developed to cause fusion of atom. Military technology is a fast changing technology. A powerful weapon can become obsolete after a few years. Hence, one must keep in mind the dynamic nature of various elements while evaluating their role as elements of national power.

### **6. Preparedness is a Factor:**

The state of preparedness must not be neglected while evaluating the role of elements of national power. A difference has to be made between soldiers in readiness and soldiers who have to be mobilized. In this era of push-bottom technology the state of preparedness has become a vitally important factor of national power. The modern warfare has virtually become a time warfare because the first strike capability and reward strike ability can be together a determinant of the results of war.

### **7. Actual and Potential importance of Elements:**

The analysis of various elements must not be limited to available data on the present or the recent past. It must perforce include an estimate of trends both in the elements of power currently considered important and in those likely to become so in the future. Both the actual and potential positions of various elements must be analyzed for evaluating their present and future roles as elements of national power.

All these features must govern the analysis of various factors of national power. In the absence of attention towards these, the conclusions regarding the evaluation of national power are bound to be faulty and misleading. The evaluation of national power is indeed a difficult and complex task. One can be successful only by maintaining objectivity and by eliminating the possible errors and fallacies. Further, the evaluation should be continuous and repeated regularly.

#### **Limitations on National Power**

Exercise of national power by every nation is an accepted reality of international relations. Power and its individual distribution is one of the major determinants of the behaviour of a state in

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international relations. However, an unlimited use of power by the states can be a source of war, anarchy and chaos in international relations.

The humankind fully realizes the dangers of an unregulated use of national power by each state. The states now themselves realize their increased international interdependence and the need for exercising restraint in the use of power.

In this nuclear age, the danger resulting from an unlimited use of power involves the possibility of a total destruction of the humankind by a nuclear war. The new need for sustainable all round development has again compelled all nations to accept the need for controlling and regulating the use of power by all states in the interest of preventing war and anarchy in the international relations. This objective, is sought to be realized with the help of several devices which act as limitations on national power.

The major limitations on national power of each state can be discussed as under:

### **1. Balance of Power:**

Balance of Power is a device of both power management and limitation of power. Its underlying principle is that the power of several equally powerful actors can be a source of limitation on their powers. The major actors should maintain a sort of balance in their power positions.

No state should try to become unduly powerful as can endanger the balance. If a state becomes or tries to become unduly powerful, another state or states should collectively pool their powers and create a preponderance of power against the offending state. Through use of force or coercion or other devices, these states should act to reduce the power of the threatening state and restore the balance.

No state should be eliminated completely but the power of the state should be kept under control in the name of 'balance'. Balance of power places restraints upon the states by preventing all attempts at an unjustified increase of power on the part of any member of the balance of power system.

This concept was used in the 19th century by the major European states for adjusting their relations. This system was successful in preventing the outbreak of any major war during 1815-1914 period. Currently the device of Balance of Power is used only at the regional or sub-regional level. At the global level it has lost much of its relevance and applicability.

### **2. International Law:**

International Law is the body of rules that the nation-states accept as binding upon them, and which regulates their behaviour in international relations. It is an important limitation on the power of a nation. It directs and controls the behaviour of the nations engaged in international relations.

International law constitutes a legal framework for the orderly conduct of international relations both in times of peace and war. Backed by common consent, natural law, international morality, world public opinion and its utility, International law acts as a major limitation on the misuse of power by the states. It enunciates the do's and don'ts for the states.

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It declares war as an illegal means for the promotion of interests. It lays down rules for the establishment and conduct of diplomatic relations. Violations of International Law can invoke sanctions against the violating states.

However, International Law is a weak law. It is not backed by force. It is also subject to different interpretations. It often fails to meet the pressure exerted by a powerful nation pursuing aggressive nationalism. Its objective is to secure international peace, security and development, by securing orderly international relations through the prevention of use of force, war and violence. However, its weakness as a law, rather half-law, and half-morality, tends to limit its role as a limiting factor of national power.

### 3. International Morality:

Just as human behaviour in a society is regulated by a set of moral norms or rules, likewise behaviour of states in the international environment is limited by International Morality. International community accepts certain values—peace, order, equality, goodness, mutual help, respect for life and liberty of all, and respect for Human Rights of all, as right and good values which must be accepted and followed by all states.

International Morality is “a generally accepted moral code of conduct which nations usually follow in international relations”. It acts as a limitation on the national power of each state. It has played a role in strengthening human consciousness against war i.e. against misuse of national power.

### 4. World Public Opinion:

The democratization of foreign policy and the coming of communications and IT revolutions have together made possible the rise of organised and strong World Public Opinion in contemporary international relations.

It has emerged as an important factor of international relations. The presence of strong global peace movements, strong movements in favour of Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament, a very strong and healthy global movement for the preservation of Earth’s ecological balance, the environment protection movements, Human Rights protection movements and several other such movements clearly show the presence of a strong World Public Opinion.

It is now fast emerging as a big limitation on national power. Fear of adverse world public opinion often forces a nation either not to follow a particular policy or to take a decision or even to pursue a particular goal or decision. Strong world public opinion in favour of Arms Control and Disarmament has been a factor behind the INF Treaty, the START-I, START-II, the Chemical Weapons Elimination Treaty and the continued talks on the issue of disarmament, nuclear disarmament and arms control in international relations.

Moreover, in contemporary times, the widespread support of World Public Opinion for the protection of Human Rights and Freedoms of all by all the countries has been a source or big influence on the role of national power in international relations. However, World Public Opinion is a limiting factor in itself. It often fails to neutralize or forcefully control strong and aggressive nationalism. It has failed to prevent the US war against Iraq.

## 5. International Organisations:

Since 1919, the world has been living with a world organisation, except for the years of the Second World War. Since 1945, the United Nations has been functioning as a global organisation of all the members of the international community. Its Charter specifies certain aims and objectives which its members are committed to follow.

It specifies certain means for pacific settlement of disputes among the member states. It provides for collective security of peace in times of war and aggression. The United Nations constitutes a global platform for the conduct of international relations in a peaceful and orderly manner. Nations are bound by the UN Charter and they are expected to use their powers only in accordance with the dictates of the UN Charter.

Along with the multipurpose United Nations, there have emerged several well organised international and regional organisations like UNESCO, WHO, ILO, UNICEF, which guide, direct and control the actions of their member states in various spheres of activity. Some Regional Organisations also act as a source of limitation on the national power of each member state.

Living in this age of international interdependence which is characterised by the existence of several powerful non-state actors, the modern nation-state very often finds its power limited. This fact has also been a source of a big limitation, or check against the misuse of power by the states. However, the continued love and respect for sovereignty and nationalism continues to keep the role of international organisation and non-state actors limited.

## 6. Collective Security:

It is a device of power-management which also acts as a limitation on national power. The system of Collective Security is based on the principle that international peace and security is the common objective to be secured by all the states through collective action against any violation by any state or states. It is a device of power management and its purpose is to maintain international peace and security by the collective efforts of all the states.

As such, the power of a state which violates or seeks to violate the freedom, sovereignty or territorial integrity of any other state is limited by the fear that any aggression or any such act committed by it will be met by the collective power of all other states. In this way collective security is considered to be a deterrent against war and aggression i.e. against the misuse of power by any state.

## 7. Disarmament and Arms Control:

Since military power is a formidable dimension of national power and armaments form a formidable part of military power, Arms Control and Disarmament are regarded as devices of limiting the national power. Arms Control refers to the control over and limitation or reduction or control of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, through internationally agreed decisions, policies and plans. Disarmament refers to the liquidation, gradually or in one stroke, of the huge stockpiles of arms and ammunition which the nation-states have come to possess till today.

Both Arms Control and Disarmament are based on the belief that by eliminating or reducing the possession and production of weapons, the military power of a nation i.e. the national power of

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the state can be limited. Any success towards Arms Control and Disarmament can be a source of limitation upon the national power of the states. The decision to adopt arms control and limited disarmament due to internal economic necessities has decidedly limited the role of power in contemporary international relations.

All these factors act as limitations on National Power. Several scholars, however, advocate that an effective and powerful limitation on the National Power can be the creation of a permanently organised world powers—a world government or a world state.

Well so long this does not happen; the devices discussed above can be used for keeping the national power under check as well as for keeping contained the struggle for power among nations. At least these can help the humankind to keep on avoiding a Third World War as well as to keep on working for ensuring some order in international relations.