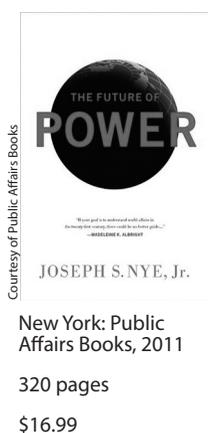


To be certain, heroic valor and endurance were abundant, tragically all too abundant given the nature of the regime for which people struggled. Nonetheless, they were and should remain to be seen as human beings not plaster saints. Reese goes a long way in addressing the question of the Red Army's motivation while revealing the genuine complexity that underlay the motives of its soldiers, sailors, and airmen (and women) in all their diversity and complexity. Similarly, the author effectively points to the diversity of motivation that sustained unit cohesion and military effectiveness in spite of all the disasters of 1941-42 and the associated suffering of all Soviets. In demythologizing the war, Reese gives back to the Soviet people something of which both Hitler and Stalin sought to rob them—their humanity and complexity. For this readers should be grateful.



## ***The Future of Power***

by Joseph S. Nye Jr.

**Reviewed by Louis J. Nigro Jr., US Ambassador (Retired),** author of *The New Diplomacy in Italy*

Anyone who tells you that America is in decline or that our influence has waned, doesn't know what they're talking about.  
—President Barack Obama, 26 January 2012

This monograph presents Professor Nye's current reflections on the nature of power in international affairs and how states and nonstate actors will manage (or mismanage) the power available to them in the future. The author artfully blends theory and history, concept and concrete example to make his case. His conclusions are sensible, centrist, and unsurprising. Among other things, he makes an important contribution to our understanding of current trends, especially in his analysis of the debate over whether or not the United States is "in decline," either relatively or absolutely, in international affairs.

Joseph Nye has been making important contributions to American foreign and national security policy and policy debates for decades. As a University Distinguished Service Professor and former dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Security Assistance, Science, and Technology (1977-79), chair of the National Intelligence Council (1993-94), Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (1994-95), and the author of many influential books, he has been one of the most prominent and consequential of the nation's public policy intellectuals. His theory of "soft power" introduced a new and useful concept to the panoply of political science tools for understanding the international system.

With *The Future of Power*, Nye makes yet another important contribution to understanding how the international system works by updating his views on power while providing a refined version of his signature concept of soft power,

offering significant arguments in the debates related to questions of America's alleged decline, and prescribing the use of "smart power" to US policymakers and implementers. As in so many of his previous efforts at explication, including his outstanding textbook, *Understanding International Conflict: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, Nye's writing in *The Future of Power* balances simplicity and accessibility with scholarly precision and documentation.

Nye divides his exposition into three parts. First, in four chapters on "Types of Power," he describes the nature of power in international affairs, and deals with military, economic, and soft power in detail.

Second, in two chapters on "Power Shifts," he educates his readers on the difference between power transition from one nation-state to another or others (a familiar historical process) and power diffusion from nation-states themselves to nonstate actors (a new phenomenon born of globalization and the information revolution): "the problem for all states in today's global information age," Nye says, "is that more things are happening outside the control of even the most powerful states."

For this reviewer, Nye's take on the "American declinism" debate is a key strength of the book. This debate got front-page news coverage as a result of news reports that President Obama's statement in his State of the Union Address (quoted above) was inspired by neoconservative strategic thinker Robert Kagan's new book, *The World America Made*, which strongly opposes the view that American power and influence is on the decline in the international arena.

Nye carefully analyzes the elements of the argument related to the debate regarding American decline, denying that of possible competitors (Europe, Japan, Russia, Brazil, India, and China) only China can be considered a serious contender for the title of top nation. Nye shows how enduring US international advantages—viable alliances and partnerships, economic adaptability, flexibility and innovation, significant soft power attractiveness in the culture and ideology of an open society—make predictions of American's decline far too pessimistic and unrealistic. Nye asserts that, despite major problems and obstacles, the US domestic front provides ample reason to believe the United States has the capacity to maintain its current international leadership position. This is based on continued prosperity and a constant national sense of purpose, as the United States exploits alliances (with states) and networks (civil society, the internationalized information society) in the twenty-first century. Finally, in a chapter titled "Smart Power," Nye tries to define how to exercise power to accomplish foreign and national-security goals, specifically addressing the American policymaking and policy-implementing elite.

As a practical matter, Nye's chapters on the nature of power in international affairs, the military, economics, and soft power, respectively, will be useful if assigned by educators as authoritative reading for classes on this crucial subject. As noted, Nye's chapter on "American Declinism" will be highly useful in classes that deal specifically with America's international role in the twenty-first century, especially when considered in relation to the rise of China.