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THE CONCEPT OF «SOFT POWER» IN THE USA FOREIGN POLICY: TRANSITION FROM BARACK OBAMA TO DONALD TRUMP

This paper describes the concept of "soft power" from the American foreign policy perspective. Nowadays, the concept of "soft power" is increasingly described not only in politics, but also in many other spheres of social life by and large. The International Community is faced with it even in the most ordinary situations, such as: cultural exchange, study abroad, trade, language learning, media as well as social networks, and many others. Today, this concept has become a powerful tool for integrating countries through non-coercion and the use of traditional force. On the contrary, "soft power" has come to be described as the most effective instrument for gaining confidence in the current "balance of power" and the "presence of nuclear weapons". The United States is the founder and vivid example of the concept "soft power" implementation into the practice. This concept has been most successfully applied in foreign policy by President Barack Obama. Today, International Community is witnessing a dramatic change in foreign policy with the change of the United States administration from Obama to Trump in 2016.

Key words: soft power, USA, Obama, Trump, foreign policy.

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АҚШ-тың сыртқы саясатындағы «жұмсақ күш» тұжырымдамасы: Б. Обамадан Д. Трампке өту транзиті

Мақалада «жұмсақ күш» тұжырымдамасының Американдық сыртқы саясаты тұрғысынан қарастырылады. Қазіргі кезде «жұмсақ күш» тұжырымдамасы дәстүрлі саясатта ғана емес, қоғамдық өмірдің басқа да көптеген салаларында көбірек естіліп талқылануда. Мұндай құбылыс мәдени жағдайлармен пікір алмасу, шетелде білім алу, сауда, тіл үйрену, бұқаралық ақпарат құралдары, сонымен қатар әлеуметтік желілер, ақпараттық технологиялар және басқа да стратегиялық маңызды жағдайларда да кездестіріледі. Бүгінгі күні бұл тұжырымдама мәжбүрлемеу және дәстүрлі күш қолдану арқылы елдерді біріктірудің қуатты құралына айналды. Оған қоса, «жұмсақ күш» қазіргі күштер теңгерімі мен ядролық қарудың болуына сенімділікті арттырудың ең тиімді құралы ретінде қарастырыла бастады. Америка Құрама Штаттары – «жұмсақ күш» ұғымын қолданудың негізін қалаушы және жарқын мысалы ретінде қабылданады. Бұл тұжырымдаманы президент Барак Обама сыртқы саясатта сәтті қолданды. 2016 жылғы Америка Құрама Штаттары әкімшілігінің ауысуымен және Дональд Трамптың саяси билікке келуімен сыртқы саясаттағы күрт өзгеріске әлемдік қауымдастық куә болып отыр. Оған қоса, Америка Құрама Штаттарының бүгінгі таңдағы саяси-экономикалық мәселелерді қарастырудың жаңаша ойлау қабілеті мен дәстүрлі «жұмсақ күштің» маңыздылығын қарастырады.

Түйін сөздер: жұмсақ күш, АҚШ, Обама, Трамп, сыртқы саясат.

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Концепция «мягкая сила» во внешней политике США: транзит от Б. Обамы к Д. Трампу

В статье описывается концепция «мягкой силы» с точки зрения американской внешней политики. В настоящее время концепция «мягкая сила» все чаще слышится не только в политике, но и во многих других сферах социальной жизни. Мировое сообщество сталкивается с ней даже в самых обыденных ситуациях, таких как: культурный обмен, обучение за рубежом, торговля, изучения языков, средств массовых коммуникации, социальных сетей, информационных технологий и многих других. На сегодняшний день данная концепция стала мощным

инструментом интегрирования стран путем непринуждения и использования традиционной силы. Напротив, «мягкая сила» стала рассматриваться как наиболее эффективный инструмент завоевания доверия в условиях современного «баланса сил» и «наличия ядерного оружия». Основателем и ярким примером применения концепции «мягкой силы» являются Соединенные Штаты Америки. Данная концепция наиболее успешно была применена во внешней политике президентом Бараком Обамой. Сегодня же, мировое сообщество наблюдает резкое изменение во внешней политике со сменой администрации Соединенных Штатов Америки и приходом к власти Дональда Трампа в 2016 году.

Ключевые слова: мягкая сила, США, Обама, Трамп, внешняя политика.

Introduction

The relevance of this paper is the concept of "soft power" by the US foreign policy and a comparative analysis transition from the Obama administration to Trump in its strategic application lies in the similarities and differences in the style of using this political instrument, which plays one of the most important aspects in modern international relations and its future scenario is not only regionally but globally.

The change of administration inevitably led to many changes in the development and application of the concept of "soft power", first of all, of American foreign policy. Barack Obama's calm and moderate gaze was replaced by the confident and aggressive gaze of President Donald Trump, who seemed to be keen to impress a stricter foreign policy outlook, thereby seeking to turn the United States into an isolationist country. B. Obama not only used "soft power" in foreign policy, but also established working relations even with "rogue states". On the other hand, D. Trump, in turn, is trying to strengthen the foreign policy of the state, restoring sovereignty and entering into competition with the leaders of other countries, instead of focusing on dialogue. Donald Trump's accession to the presidency and his more than controversial views on foreign policy have caused a rift in the US establishment, as well as between the US and its allies and competitors.

The hypothesis of this study is the loss of the effectiveness of the concept of "soft power" in US foreign policy after the change of the administrations of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. This paper assumes that today the Trump administration is positioning its influence on the world stage preferably in terms of traditional power, paying less attention to "soft power". The Trump administration is losing the ability to use this concept in foreign policy, due to a different strategy for the development of the state and the means of influencing other countries.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to analyze and compare which styles of foreign policy are guided by the United States within the framework of the concept of "soft power", both under former President Barack Obama and under the current President Donald Trump.

The object of the paper's research is the concept of "soft power in US foreign policy". In this paper, subsequently, the answer to the posed research questions will be disclosed, such as: What are the contours of foreign policy in the formation of Barack Obama and Trump's "soft power"?

The methodology of the paper is a number of methods of comparative analysis, political analysis and forecasting. The article uses the historical method. It is aimed at revealing the introduction and development of the concept of "soft power" from historical perspective. The comparative analysis gives the readers further discussion on Trump's foreign policy for its realization in world's political agenda as the key element to mention about superiority in international affairs by and large.

The authors were involved in writing this paper. In order to give a correct understanding of the concept of "soft power" and its application by the United States by the two presidents, they used information only from reliable primary sources.

Literature Review

At the end of the XX century, the world entered an era of rapid development and transformation. Accordingly, this was also reflected in various changes in theories in the field of international relations. Theories, concepts, directions and schools of international relations offered their approaches to solving traditional issues and situations in the international field. Since the mid-1980s, traditional power has been viewed differently, thanks to the neoliberal school. A new idea was proposed – the idea of "soft power". To begin with to define the concept of "strength" in international relations. Strength is the ability to control and do things for your own political benefit, and to compel others to do things that they would not otherwise do.

There are also no fundamental differences between realism and the concept of "soft power".

Indeed, according to the representative of political realism, Hans Morgenthau, all political relations are led to the struggle for power. He saw power itself as an opportunity to control the minds and actions of people, and political power is a relationship of mutual control between those who have power, and between the latter and the people as a whole. In the sphere of international relations, under the struggle for power, G. Morgenthau meant the struggle of states to assert their power superiority and influence in the world. (Morgenthau). Accordingly, for realists, the use of "soft power" can be an effective tool.

Joseph Nye, Harvard University Professor of International Relations, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security at Clinton Administration and Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, coined the term "soft power" in 1990 and stated that there was a transformation in the definition of power. In his opinion, power is becoming less and less interchangeable; the effect of coercion in the behavior of power loses its significance, and it gives way to cooperative power, which, as a rule, arises from resources such as cultural and ideological attraction. (Nye).

The very concept of "soft power" is the ideas of the liberal and neoliberal directions. It is associated with their theories of international relations such as: Theory of Democratic Peace, Economic Interdependence, Theory of International Organizations.

Based on the first liberal theory of a democratic world, democrats will not go to war against the ideas of other democrats. In a democracy, people have a say in the country and can impose peaceful goals. Therefore, democracies are more inclined to use soft power rather than hard power. Even if, in the event of a difficult situation in the country, the democrats will use the propaganda and self-criticism of their ideas, and thereby they will increase the people's confidence in the country. That is, when a policy is criticized, it can create some soft power, as people from other countries can see it as proof of authenticity and as a sign of free speech. (Parmar I., Cox M.).

The next liberal theory of international relations is economic interdependence. If we look from the prism of globalization, that all countries should be economically connected with each other, it is rather more coercion, respectively, it is closer to "hard power" than to "soft power". After all, a state with significant economic resources is likely to exert pressure and change the behavior of other states that are economically weaker. However, free trade and economic resources can become attractive to other countries. And a successful liberal economy can create willingness in other countries to adopt this model. (Fedyakin A.).

The authors would like to cite as an example the vision and opinion of the Kazakh expert Adil Kukenov. He is the director Center for Chinese Studies. According to the expert: "China has great success in its advancement at the world level, in the twentieth century the country was not in second place in the economy, and literally in a short period, became a great power that continues to grow". He also believes that: "There is a small problem between the ideologies of China and the West, between the democratic and communist idea, which tarnishes the view of the Middle Kingdom in Europe and America" [Kaukenov]. However, despite this, the United States is in any case trying to maintain positive relations with the PRC. In the 1970s, there were attempts to establish diplomatic relations between the United States and China. Namely, this began with the US support for China in the Taiwan issue. In the 1980s, Western ideology began to develop dynamically in China. When Deng Xiaoping came to power with liberal views, the people thought that a state with a conservative policy had turned into a more democratic country. Relations improved, and accordingly this meant the beginning of the introduction of foreign investment.

The contours of foreign policy in the formation of Obama and D. Trump's "soft power"

The historical background for the discussion on "soft power" issue has always been strategic priority in the Unites States foreign policy agenda to mention its strategic and political importance for its realization. Thus, Obama and Trump Administration has some different perspectives on "soft power" concept as well as in interpretation procedure today. The obvious reason is that democratic and republican parties have a strong difference in the US foreign policy that makes attractive its foreign policy from the readers as well as from the policy makers by and large. For the past decade, the world often hears about the concept of "soft power", about the steady expansion and use of this policy instrument not only in international relations, but also in many other aspects of state development. The relevance of "soft power" goes far beyond its use, its universal application has important strategic consequences for the world community, since it radically changed the way countries interact on the world stage. This concept also significantly influenced the art of diplomacy, the perception of the world in terms of

strategy and leadership on the world stage. Today, it is possible to build a positive and at the same time negative correlation between the different styles of foreign policy of the ex-US Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

On November 22, 2016, Donald Trump announced his key directions in foreign policy. He suggested in his presidential speech that his country withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership; develop a plan to defend against cyber-attacks; remove restrictions on the extraction of all energy resources; review immigration policy in order to preserve jobs in the state for Americans. To do this, he proposed to build a wall on the border with Mexico. The president-elect was also determined to reverse 60-70% of the decrees of the forty-fourth President of the United States, Barack Obama. A year after his rule, D. Trump announced the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement. He then canceled his visit to London, citing reluctance to open a new American embassy as the reason. (Pimenova, 2017).

Donald Trump's administration has been, by and large, a disaster for the United States' soft power and international authority. Obviously, American popular culture and the products of American companies remain popular overseas. Opinion polls show that citizens of many countries do not particularly trust D. Trump's policies than they did during the presidency of B. Obama. The selfishness shown by the rhetoric and politics of the United States, its disregard for established norms and values, and Trump's personality alienated even close allies. Donald Trump's politics are not so actively interested in all the resources and instruments of "soft power", especially public diplomacy. After all, this form of diplomacy is one of the key tools used by politicians to create soft power, it is the government's efforts to communicate directly with other countries.

William A. Rugh is Professor of Practice at Northeastern University, US Foreign Service officer from 1964-1995, believes that: "American political leaders in Congress and elsewhere, the American press, and American representatives in nongovernmental organizations across the country, will speak up during the D Trump. They will work to strengthen our practices and core principles that are known and respected around the world. The familiar relationship of American politics will resume, and perhaps the exaggerated rhetoric of the presidential political campaign could fade, at least to some extent. However, at this stage in our history, we must admit that damage has been done to America's reputation abroad. American diplomats working abroad can only hope that the elements of our "soft power" that have helped our national interests so much in the past will come to rebuild. (William A. Rugh).

As a result, it can be concluded that the entire policy of D. Trump continues to be carried out without the intervention of American representatives in non-governmental organizations, despite the fact that some of the president's actions are not approved. Donald Trump is in favor of closing US borders to migrants. That is, it completely contradicts the use of the instrument of soft power, such as supporting migrants and opening borders. And even at the elections it was clear that the President would not support the policy of the previous administration. Most countries also disapprove of the new administration's efforts to restrict people from certain Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States.

According to a Gallup poll in 134 countries, only 30% of Americans today approve of the US leadership. This is a record low, 18% lower than under President Barack Obama. And in the Soft Power 30 rating, which measures the effectiveness of the use of "soft power," the USA slipped from first to third place in 2017, yielding to France and Great Britain. (Karpushina, 2018).

Since the beginning of Donald Trump's rule, the concept of "soft power" has begun to wane. The President's tweets can help shape the global agenda, but they do not create soft power if they are not attractive to others. (Nye, 2019).

Trump's intention to abandon a nuclear weapons deal with Iran has met with less opposition than his other policy initiatives, but even here such actions are frowned upon by the public around the world.

Also a little about recent events. This year, Baghdad airport was hit by a missile attack by the American armed forces. Ultimately, because of this, Iranian military leader Qasem Suleimani was killed. It happened because there was an attack on the American Embassy in Baghdad and they blamed Iran for it. The assassination of Qassem Soleimani set off a shockwave in the Middle East and beyond, raising fears of a full-scale war between Washington and Tehran.

"The Iranian authorities expressed their vision that the United States will not just get away with it for the death of its military leader and General K. Soleimani." (Shilov, 2020). Such actions contradict as much as possible the friendly policy towards any country from the United States.

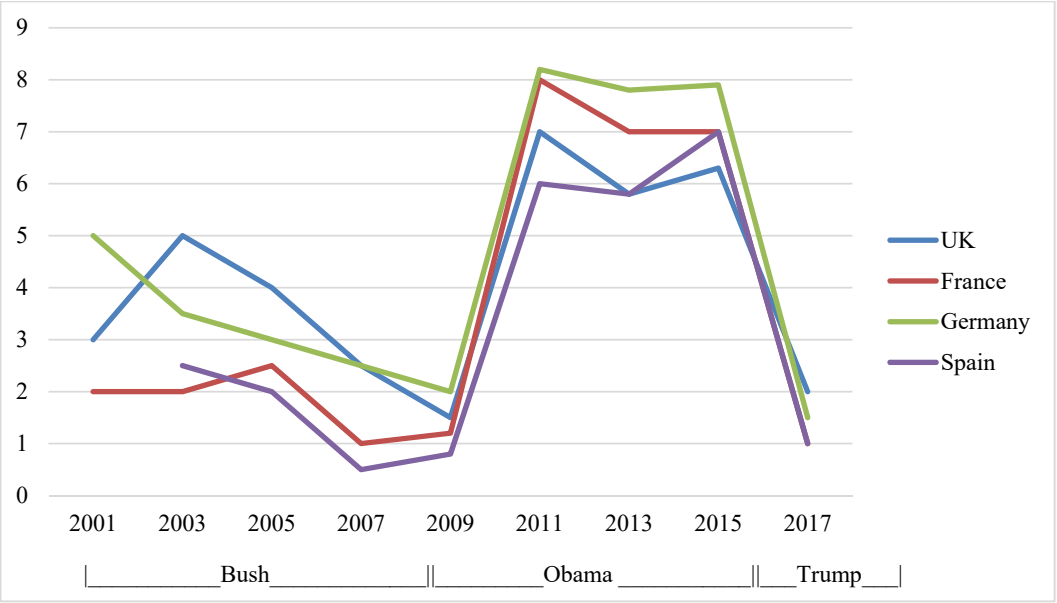

Figure 1 – Indicators of three US presidents assessed by some European countries
Note: compiled by the authors based on sources. (Wike R., Stokes B., Poushter J., Fetterolf J., 2017)

Global research by the Pew Research Center during the presidency of George W. Bush showed that many of Bush's key foreign policy areas were unpopular, and by the time he left office, Bush was perceived negatively in most of the countries were surveyed. His successor, Obama, received more positive ratings overall throughout his tenure in the White House. (Parmar I., Cox M., 2019).

In many countries today, President Trump's ratings look very similar to those of Bush at the end of his term. This picture is especially clear in Western Europe. In the UK, France, Germany and Spain, the low level of trust in Trump is very similar to the low Bush rating in 2008. Analyzing this table, it can be seen a sharp decline, in a short time in Trump's rule.

The United States is increasingly resorting to "hard power" under his leadership. Not only renowned political scientists such as Joseph Nye, but ordinary people blame Trump for the deterioration of the US image. But some aspects of soft power remain in place. Popular culture in the United States (film, television and music) is still as influential as no other (Nye, 1991). Although he was in office for only a few months, Donald Trump's presidency has had a major impact on how the world sees the United States. Trump and many of his key politicians are generally unpopular around the world, and U.S. ratings have plummeted in many countries. The president, with his vision and approach to governing the country, will continue to pursue a less diplomatic policy, but the integration processes that were launched even before Trump's rule will force him to come to a balance. In our opinion, in the future, "Soft Power" will be able to develop itself only under the control of the next, different president.

Conclusion

In the modern world, with the development of the information society, the previous methods of conducting foreign policy activities of states are losing their strength and effectiveness. Today, the key and most important factors in international relations are not so much the military power of the state and the availability of nuclear potential, but economic growth and cultural attractiveness. The experience of recent decades shows that the policy of "hard power" is no longer perceived as the most effective way of confronting states. On the contrary, the concept of "soft power" with its instruments of indirect and non-violent influence is gaining in popularity.

Currently, "soft power" has become the most important instrument in the implementation of the foreign policy of many countries. As Joseph Nye argued, "soft power" is the ability to get what you want based on the voluntary participation of allies, not through coercion or payment. World experience shows that today "soft power" has become a kind of management policy aimed, ultimately, at achieving the geostrategic goals of a particular country.

Taking into account today's realities associated with common transnational problems such as cybercrime, the coronavirus pandemic, the advantage of "soft power" over "hard" is more relevant than ever.

The primary task of this project was to analyze US policy in today's realities. The realities of today are such that countries do not resort to using harsh methods to achieve certain goals, but use more humane methods of conducting their policies. Thus, the object of this study is the concept of "soft power" in the foreign policy of the United States of America during the presidency of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. Based on the paper carried out, the authors stated the following results:

Soft power is the most relevant type of power at the moment. Since in the 21st century humanity is not as apolitical as before, she is more and more interested in politics, since they are directly part of political processes and can be subject to the negative consequences of the political race of states. Realizing this fact, realizing that we live in a time of globalization, states, and in the case of this project, the United States is increasingly using soft power tools. J. Nye, in turn, is the first to schematize this term. He drew the attention of heads of state to the transition from hard to soft principles. Arguing this by the fact that soft power is more humane and more beneficial for countries. But it is a mistake to consider the beginning of the use of soft power precisely after the concept of Hire was written. Gentle tricks have been used long before that. Therefore, the authors dare to believe that the idea itself has come a long way and gained vast experience over many decades.

Speaking of the United States, this country is immediately associated with soft power. The United States has extensive experience in implementing this policy. For example, in the implementation of soft influence, they hold meetings, political visits provide financial assistance. Thus, a new 5-year strategy in Central Asia was launched this year. Where the United States provides comprehensive assistance to countries in the region. Comparing the impact of soft power in Central Asia and China. Central Asia is the most democratic region than the PRC; in this regard, they are more susceptible to the influence of the West. China is a communist country and it is much more difficult to influence.

Summing up, we can say with confidence that Barack Obama's soft power policy has brought the United States to a new level. The public's expectations were fully met. Of course, his policies are not ideal, but Obama has in many ways tried not to use carrots and sticks. Looking back, it can be seen that the results of his policy justify his campaign program.

Donald Trump, in turn, being a Republican, is a direct opposition to Barack Obama. There are hard power techniques in his politics. During his presidency, there have been many conflicts. From the topical, the assassination of Soleimani contradicts the concept of "soft power", the policy of ex-President Barack Obama. The authors of the project group associate his actions with the fact that he is a businessman. His desire for financial enrichment, financial domination is being watched in the international arena.

Ascertaining, the coming of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States has in many ways negatively affected the effectiveness of soft policy. Barack Obama's principles are more appropriate for this type of policy. And D. Trump's next term may repeat the fate of George W. Bush's presidency. Thinking in this way, we came to the following conclusion. The United States needs a new president from the Democrats as well.

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