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SOFT POWER AND THE UK'S INFLUENCE

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Questions 176 - 186

TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2013

Witness: Professor Joseph S Nye

Members present

Lord Howell of Guildford (Chairman)
 Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top
 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean
 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts
 Lord Janvrin
 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

Examination of Witness

Professor Joseph S Nye, University Distinguished Service Professor and former dean of Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Kennedy University

Q176 The Chairman: Thank you very much for joining us. We are looking forward to this session very much indeed. I have one little formality that arises from the way our Committee works, which is that I have to say that the declared interests of Members of this Committee are on the website. Whether that interests you or not, that is something I just have to say. Can I just ask, Joe, how long you have for us?

Professor Nye: I am good through a little after 12 pm. I have a lunch that starts at 12.15 pm our time, so about 14 minutes past the hour.

The Chairman: Sorry, how long does that mean? An hour?

Professor Nye: An hour and 15 minutes.

The Chairman: That is excellent. We should begin by explaining that the remit of this House of Lords Select Committee is to look at the deployment of soft power and Britain's overseas influence. As you would expect, being in a British Parliament, a British Committee, we are obviously focused on our own affairs. Over 20 years or more, you have written immensely interesting books codifying, clarifying, the concept of the deployment of soft power.

Let me start with a question, which sounds a bit parochial but it is to do with us. Here we are in Britain. We have to make our way in a totally transformed international scene, in an era of the digitalised world, changing/shifting power centres, new markets and new challenges. How do we do that, and how do your thoughts about the deployment of soft power come into play for us?

Professor Nye: Britain has a lot of assets in the area of soft power. The world is changing in the direction of—the cliché is—the global information age, but it does mean that many more aspects of networked power that rely on information are going to be important. Therefore, the ability to use those assets that you have of previous networks is something that Britain stands well prepared for.

Let me just tick off a few things that might be worth noticing—there are many more. If soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction and persuasion, the fact is that Britain has institutions that have been widely admired and often emulated in other parts of

the world; Britain has the English language, which gives you access to many more networks; Britain's historical role still has a residue in the Commonwealth, which means that you have contacts not just among Governments but among many social groups, as you know so well, through the Commonwealth; there are Britain's universities and the role that Britain plays in educating people in British universities; there is broadcasting, and you could argue that the BBC is still the most credible of the international broadcasters; and there is the monarchy, which is quite fascinating. I had a piece in the *Financial Times* last summer saying that it is quite amazing how many people around the world are stirred by the birth of a young royal. I could go on and on. Britain has an extraordinary number of assets, without getting into many aspects of British culture: arts, literature or painting.

One could go on, but as somebody in California at the RAND Corporation said, the point is that it is not just whose army wins, it is also whose story wins in an information age. Britain has extraordinary assets to have the story to attract others and to prevail. I would argue that if I had to pick countries that are well endowed with soft power resources, I would put Britain pretty close to the top of the list.

The Chairman: Professor Nye, what does that mean in terms of what we should do that we are not doing now? What does it mean in terms of what the Government's change of priorities should be, or are you saying we are doing all the right things already and there is not much else to do?

Professor Nye: Obviously anything can be improved, including my own writings. I would say that I am not sure you are cherishing some of the assets that you have quite as well as you might, particularly the BBC, which I know gets into issues about the way it is financed, taxes on home televisions and so on, but the BBC World Service has an extraordinary position in terms of credibility. My impression is that the new financial arrangements may mean that the BBC, and particularly the World Service, is going to be a little less well endowed and protected than it was in the past. I may be misinformed on this. I may have listened to too many British friends who have one view on it rather than an alternative view, but one thing I would point to is the question of the changes in the financing of the BBC.

The Chairman: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots would like to come in. He is sitting over there – now you can see him.

Q177 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots: You gave us a flattering list of our soft power assets. Then at the end you said that we would come close to the top of a list of countries when you listed soft power capability. What other countries do you think have a strong presence and from whom we could or should be learning?

Professor Nye: If you look at the polls that have been taken, including a BBC poll, polls by the Pew trust or the efforts by *Monocle* magazine to rank these, generally speaking the Americans come out near the top, although I think *Monocle* put Britain ahead of America this past year. One can quibble about some of the measurements and so on, but the United States is also extremely well endowed with soft power resources, not only in its cultural industries, of which Hollywood is obviously a global industry, but also I think in American policies of openness on immigration help.

We are going through a domestic debate about immigration, and we complain about it, as you are in your country. The fact that so many Americans are parts of diasporas and have contacts back home and that Americans in many parts of the world “look like” people in those other parts of the world, is I think another aspect of American soft power. There are a number of assets the Americans have. I will not go through them all and tick them all off

for you, but I would say that Britain and America are probably as well positioned as any two countries in this domain.

Lest we think it is just an Anglosphere question, I should note that sometimes smaller countries are able to exercise soft power. It is not that they have as much as a large country, but they are able to punch above their weight. I think of a country like Norway, which is not a member of the European Union and has only five million or six million people. Not many people speak Norwegian, yet Norway often ranks very high in polls of attractiveness, partly because it is seen as a well ordered society that has done a good job in reconciling individual freedoms and liberties with having a welfare state. In addition to that, Norway has international policies with an emphasis on development assistance and its efforts at various times are to wield a role as a peacemaker. These have enhanced Norway's attractiveness and reputation. In my answer to your question, I did not mean to make it sound as though an Anglosphere was the answer, and I have just given you an example of a country that is not English speaking which I think does punch above its weight in soft power.

Q178 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Professor Nye, you have been very flattering about our institutions. That poses a dilemma for us because we have been set up to look at ways in which we can improve what we are doing, at new ideas and new areas that we can work in. A few months ago one of our witnesses described the danger of the arrogance of our excellence, and I think that is one of the difficulties. I wonder if you could identify the areas that we are weak in. We get the impression that some of the other countries are getting past us, in particular, with smart power and we are being left a bit behind. Could you identify the weaknesses that we have?

Professor Nye: As Lord Howell said, we have to declare our interests. I should declare the interest that I am a victim of British soft power, since I was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford and therefore I have been brainwashed by British institutions. Leaving that aside, if I were to find fault, let me pick up the point about immigration that I just mentioned. Britain has many immigrants, but it is also true that immigration is now a fraught issue in British politics, as it is in Europe generally and to some extent in the United States. The extent that other countries see the door closed, or believe that there is a repudiation of immigration, can hurt. I suppose it comes particularly in the area of political asylum, although that is an area that is sometimes abused. If one looked at other parts of the world and people said, "Is Britain friendly?", perhaps the immigration issue might be an area that would be difficult. Knowing the difficulties of the political issue at home, I do not see how you can do much to change that, but as an analyst the answer to your question is that I would think immigration is a weak spot.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Are there any other areas in the cultural and sporting field as opposed to the mainstream area that you have been talking about up until now?

Professor Nye: The British Council does a good job on British culture, and the various efforts that the British Council makes in teaching English also transmit a degree of British culture. By and large, on the culture, I do not think there is much to be changed there. There are things that one can complain about in British culture. Many times foreigners will be struck a bit by some of the rough edges of the class system; there are dimensions of inequality that can be unattractive to others. It is not as though Britain is a perfect nation. Nor is the United States, of course. I do not see your ability to change those. I do not think you can do much about those as a means of increasing soft power. That is the way things are.

The Chairman: Would it be cynical to say that the most effective soft power is projected by countries with the strongest economies and the biggest resources? You mentioned Norway. Norway has masses of resources to hand around the world, so is it not the need for a strong economy in order to have one's impact overseas?

Professor Nye: I think that is right. A strong and growing economy is a great asset. It is attractive to others, so it generates soft power in attractiveness. It also provides the economic wherewithal in budgetary terms for overseas development assistance to support the British Council or the BBC and so on. A strong economy is a good attractor, in and of itself. It is also a great source of support for other instruments.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Professor Nye, we are discussing soft power, the concept of government and parliaments, big businesses and vast economies. Do you feel that the growth of networking and the internet have fragmented soft power: that in a sense they have given power into the hands of people of the globe, in which case it is a completely different instrument? It seems to have been embraced by Government as another tool for Government. Do you think it is possible in fact it is the way that people may be able to exercise their will a great deal more effectively than they have done in the past?

Professor Nye: I think that is correct. I have often argued that a great deal of soft power of a country is produced by its civil society, not by its Government. If soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction, aspects of civil society can produce attraction even when policies of Government may be running in the wrong direction.

I am always struck by an example from the American experience in the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was an extremely unpopular policy around most of the world and you had people marching in the streets opposing American government policy, but the thing that always intrigued me was that when they were marching they were singing not the Communist "Internationale" but Martin Luther King's "We Shall Overcome". Here was a cultural artefact from an aspect of an American protest movement—the civil rights movement—which became the international mantra of those opposing the American Government's policies. In that case, the American Government was destroying American soft power at the same time as American civil society, in its openness, diversity and robustness of protest, was creating an admiration for America simultaneously.

When one translates that into the current network world, as you described it, we have to realise that for every speech given by a Minister, or every official broadcast that goes out, there are millions more tweets and Facebook postings. An awful lot of what is happening in public diplomacy today is not done from a Government to people but people to people, and that has a very powerful effect. Being open in that sense, which of course Britain is, and having a society and economy that is open to the use of the networks and social media, is an asset in and of itself.

Q179 Lord Janvrin: Professor Nye, thank you. I am interested in pursuing this shift away from that area of soft power where government has some kind of policy-making function and handle on it into the civil society and, as you say, the soft power that derives from civil society. An area that a Government has some kind of control over is the whole aid programme. You did not mention that in your list of British assets, and I wondered whether that was because you see that as a separate area of policy.

Professor Nye: No, I should have listed it if I had done a complete list. I am afraid I would have bored you if I had gone on and on, but aid is certainly an important instrument for generating soft power. That said, let me admit that I sometimes have second thoughts about

aid, and I will address this in terms of the American context. Very often when you have large aid projects that are more or less bureaucratically implemented, it is not clear that they are generating much soft power. There is a debate among economists as to whether they are generating economic development—and there you can hear both sides of that—but the question is: are they generating soft power?

I was looking at a study that was done on American aid in Afghanistan. It concluded that many of the large-scale projects did not generate soft power but could often consume it. For example, if you build an aid project, a bridge or a school or some big road in one area and the next area does not benefit, you may attract some people in the tribal area that you built it in, but in fact it may create jealousies in the area next door, or there may be a corrupt local road builder who is getting most of the benefits, and that is deeply resented.

This study showed that large aid projects were not necessarily sure fire generators of soft power. The projects that tended to produce soft power tended to be smaller projects that became possessions of the local people: in other words, converting the local people to saying, “This is our project. We are going to defend this school against the Taliban because it is ours. We are the ones who wanted it built here”. That was the secret to successful aid.

Sometimes I have a feeling—and this is a bit unfair to my colleagues and compatriots—that the aid bureaucracy is a little like the old Soviet bureaucracy, where you measure success by how much money you shovel out the door not by whether it changes minds on the ground. I am not trying to sound anti-aid. I think aid is an important essential source of soft power, but I am against the idea that we measure the amount of money spent on aid and treat that as though it is producing soft power. It may or may not.

Q180 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Professor Nye, I think I saw somewhere that you were quoted as saying that soft power was about getting other countries to want the things that you want. I wonder if you could say a little bit about how successful you think the United States has been in exercising its soft power. One of the things that alarms me, particularly in places like Pakistan and the Middle East, is the degree to which hostility has grown towards the United States, sometimes because people believe that the United States—and I think this has probably been accelerated by the neoconservative movement—do not respect the cultures and values of the countries themselves. Given that the United States is such a strong economic power, as well as obviously being the world’s strongest military power, I wonder to what extent soft power is failing. One sees a degree of hostility towards the United States growing around the globe, which I personally, as a great supporter of the United States, find very alarming. What can soft power do to resolve this?

Professor Nye: I do not disagree with the premise, but let me qualify it a bit by saying that if you look at the recent poll done by the Pew trust, you will see that American soft power has gone up in some areas and down in others. If you take Asia, which is now a high priority for the United States, given the President’s so-called rebalancing toward Asia, the recent polls—both by Pew and by the BBC—show the Americans doing better. Although the Chinese have been spending billions and billions of dollars to increase their soft power in Asia, the Americans still score significantly higher than China in most parts of Asia.

The areas where American soft power has gone down, as measured by public opinion polls, tend to be where there is a conflict over policy. In an area like Pakistan, Palestine or much of the Middle East, you will find a decrease in the attractiveness of the United States. I think that gets to the following point: that the resources that produce attractiveness or soft power for a country are threefold, to simplify a bit. One is a culture where the culture is attractive to others; the second is values, when they are attractive to others; and the third

are policies when they are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others. You will find American culture is still attractive but American policies are very unattractive. That is true in large aspects of the Muslim world, where the policies that grew out of the so-called war on terror have alienated a lot of people. The drone strikes in Pakistan is a case in point, but also in Palestinian public opinion or Egyptian public opinion with the Arab/Israeli dispute. The Americans are seen as strongly on the side of the Israelis and that has an effect.

I think the answer is that in some places policies are undercutting soft power, even where culture and values may still be enhancing soft power, but if the policies are unpopular enough that becomes the dominant hand in the issue.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I accept all of that. I was also getting at the point that the idea that it is about getting other countries to want what you want runs against the idea of respecting other people's cultures and way of life. For example, they may not see the Western democratic model as the ideal model for those countries and that if you are seen to be an evangelist for that, that can create a negative effect. That is nothing to do with broader policy but is to do with a different set of values, a different identity and a different historical position.

Professor Nye: I think that is right and it depends a lot on how you are preaching your values. I remember going to Argentina in the 1970s when I was in the State Department in the Carter Administration, and we were preaching human rights—Jimmy Carter's policy was to preach human rights to the Argentines—and we were very unpopular as a result. I went back to Argentina in 1991 and all of a sudden I discovered the Americans were extremely popular, so I asked some people, "Why is that?" and they said, "Because the people who are in power now in 1991 are the ones who were having their fingernails pulled out in 1977". So what is attractive depends on where you are sitting, which has something to do with where you stand on this. You are not going to attract all people all the time.

I think standing for certain values is important. The question is how much do you beat people over the head with them. I think the invasion of Iraq was a terrible strategic blunder, and not only militarily. It was a blunder in terms of soft power because it was trying to impose these values. On the other hand, telling the Chinese that we think that Liu Xiaobo should not be in jail, yes, that is a Chinese decision, and some Chinese react negatively on that, but it does strike me that we do need to make clear that those values are important. How we apply those values at home is equally important, though. If we look hypocritical, then I think that undercuts these stands on values.

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top: It does seem to me that when the whole debate about soft power came in, there was a relationship between military or hard power and influence and soft power. I wonder how you see that relationship now. In the connected world that Baroness Nicholson was talking about, it is much more difficult to be absolutely clear about what the issues are, as both your nation and our nation have discovered this year. Using military power is becoming increasingly difficult, partly because of the nature of opposition to Western values and how that opposition expresses itself internationally. It seems to me that we do not quite understand—let me personalise this: I do not understand—the link at the moment between hard and soft power, because I think it is very difficult to express it. I am interested in how you have moved your arguments since you first began to talk about soft power.

Professor Nye: I think hard and soft power sometimes reinforce each other and sometimes they compete with each other. I go back to my example a minute ago of the invasion of Iraq: the use of hard power there greatly undercut American soft power. You can see this in the

public opinion polls, not just in the Middle East but in Western Europe as well. That is a case where the use of hard power achieved an objective. It only took us a few weeks to overthrow Saddam Hussein but at an enormous cost in terms of our soft power.

There are other cases where you can use hard power in which you can reinforce your soft power. Britain's intervention in Sierra Leone, where a modest amount of hard power prevented an atrocious group of thugs from lopping off people's arms and limbs, I think made Britain more attractive in Sierra Leone and in other parts of Africa as well. To give you another example where you can use hard power resources—not in a hard power sense, but to generate soft power—is where the United States used its naval resources to provide tsunami relief after the 2004-05 tsunami in Indonesia. It is interesting to see what happened to the attractiveness of the United States in Indonesia. It had gone down dramatically after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 but, after this intervention in support of the tsunami relief, it went back up to about half of where it had been before. So you can use hard power resources, in this case a naval resource, in a way that produces soft power. You can also use hard power for a hard power result, as in getting rid of the terrible thugs who were terrorising Sierra Leone. That was a hard power purpose and a hard power accomplishment, but it produced soft power in terms of admiration for those.

I have used this term “smart power” to refer to the ability to combine hard and soft power in ways that reinforce each other in terms of a successful strategy. I suppose the obverse of that means “dumb power”, when you let your soft power and hard power undercut each other.

Q181 The Chairman: Do you think the recent Syrian situation, with all the to-ing and fro-ing on chemical weapons, has some interesting lessons for hard power and soft power in it?

Professor Nye: The game is not over yet, so we do not know how to judge the outcome fully, and I am not sure it was all handled as smoothly as it might have been. If we do successfully destroy Assad's chemical weapons, I think the fact that there was a credible threat of force which led the Russians to intervene to press Assad to do this, if this leads to such an outcome, this might be a smart power strategy: the threat of force led the Russians, as Assad's protectors, to press him to move on this, which then led to the UN resolution and the work that is being done there now. But we still do not know the outcome. We will not know for some time.

The Chairman: Did the British Parliament, and indeed the Congress of the United States, also play their soft power role in this?

Professor Nye: I think they weakened the hand. If my previous argument is correct, that a credible threat of hard power, in the sense of an air strike, was an important incentive, I am not sure that your or our legislators helped much.

The Chairman: Earlier on, you mentioned the people telling the national story, *We Shall Overcome*. What are the implications of that? They could be big, could they not? If the projection of a nation's interests and story are outside the control of the diplomats and official Government, that surely raises a number of risks. You are moving into uncontrolled territory, are you not?

Professor Nye: You are, and it raises interesting puzzles for what we think of as public diplomacy. I have a little diagram in my book, *The Future of Power*. Traditionally, Cabinet diplomacy was one Government Foreign Minister speaking to another. Then, in the 20th century, we developed a form of public diplomacy in which Governments would broadcast

to the people in another country to try to get them to put pressure on their Governments. Now what we are seeing is that people in different countries are communicating directly with each other. That means a series of messages are being passed that Governments do not control, neither Government to Government nor Government to other people. This is more or less people-to-people. That has raised questions for some people, who theorise about public diplomacy saying, “Should we not have the Governments and their public diplomacy be more involved in this?” For example, that has led some in the State Department to encourage the idea that lower-level diplomats, particularly, should be using Facebook and Twitter to get messages out. It is a good thing because in fact it does get some Government views into this stream of people-to-people thinking.

The danger is it is very hard to control from the centre. There was a case in Egypt last year, where an American diplomat issued a tweet about what he thought was going on in Cairo. It turned out later to be wrong, and then it was criticised in congressional hearings and so on. So there is a loss of control from the top that is a risk that goes with this. On the other hand, if we do not accept a certain degree of looseness from traditional perspectives in that sense, we are not going to be effective in this domain.

The Chairman: Are we entering into an era of more informed people and weaker government?

Professor Nye: Yes, although I think we need to be careful. What you see on the blogosphere, what you see on the internet, is not always more informed people. It is often a lot of people saying a lot of things, some of which is extremely ill-informed. One of the virtues of having your diplomats being able to respond quickly is not just to reach the informed, but to counter some of the uninformed. If an event occurs and somebody says, “This event in the capital of country X was created by British intelligence services who are trying to overthrow the Government”, there would be a role for somebody in the British Embassy who is constantly in contact with opinion-makers in that area, who is saying, “That is nonsense. This is not our policy and we have not been doing this”, and who has developed a bit of credibility because they have been in contact with these people before. It is not that the people are always well informed. Some of the people are extremely ill-informed or mal-informed. They may be trying to do damage with the information they are propagating on the internet, and if you wait for an official statement from London it may be too late. The rumour may get legs and be around the world on the internet before you can catch up with it.

Q182 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Professor Nye, a little earlier you commented that aid projects that produce soft power tend to be small projects that effectively feel owned by the people. The other side of that, I would suggest, is that aid is being used as a soft power tool by aid-giving Governments more and more, through very large NGOs generally speaking, or delivered directly to Governments that perhaps have a less-level playing field on corruption than might be the case in the donating Government. This has resulted in recipient Governments mistrusting large aid—Russia is a very obvious example of that—and therefore forbidding it entry more and more. As this degrades the growth of local civil society, how do we find a balance in the middle that enables the growth of civil society locally, which does need some funding generally from outside, and yet detach big Governments from using soft power aid as a big tool? What is the key there?

Professor Nye: First of all, let me say that there may be some virtues to some big aid projects. If I understand DfID’s emphasis on generating economic development, there may be reasons why a large project makes sense from DfID’s point of view. I was addressing

simply the case of: does a big project generate soft power? The answer is: sometimes it may but sometimes it may not. What we do in aid of using non-governmental organisations and civil society contacts I think is a healthy thing. It does tend to get more people-to-people contact and a sense of direct contact and ownership and that is healthy, but it does create problems for authoritarian countries.

If you look at Russia under Putin. He has been emphasising nationalism and sovereignty, partly as a way for him to recruit support from elements of society where he needs to counter the disillusion among the young middle-class voters who seem to have fallen away from him. The expulsion of many of these civil society agencies, and the efforts that the Russians have made to make some of these groups register as foreign lobbyists, is a problem. I am not sure there is much we can do about it. I would not say that we should stop these efforts. I still think that using civil society organisations makes sense, but we have to realise that there are going to be some authoritarian countries who are going to see this as a threat and will prevent us from doing it. There are indeed dilemmas, some of which are not easily resolved in this business.

The Chairman: One difference between you and us is that we are here in the European Union and part of the European continent, of course, whereas you are a continental power. Do you think that means that we have to approach soft power projection in different ways? In your view, is our membership and involvement in Europe a weakening or a strengthening of our capacity to project our soft power?

Professor Nye: From Britain's strategic position, I would think it gives you a second arrow in your quiver: you can do things directly as Britain and things through the European Union. In some countries sometimes it may turn out that the European arrow will look a little less threatening and other times it may be that the British arrow looks a little less threatening. In any instance of using an instrument for soft power, you have to realise that soft power depends on the eye of the beholder. In other words, it matters tremendously how it is seen. In a country, perhaps an ex-British colony, where there may be some residual resentments about our fears of neo-colonialism and so on, the European arrow may work. In other areas, say, another ex-British colony, where there are very strong pro-British views, the British arrow might be better. From your point of view, I would think being able to use both makes sense. One of the problems for the United States is that, as a large power, it is often suspected and we cannot switch back and forth as you could.

The Chairman: Going to the general question of whether the ownership of soft power, which is largely—as you have rightly said in your writings and just now—in the hands of people rather than officialdom, does the Government of the United States have a soft power strategy that you are aware of or have they read your books and responded in that way?

Professor Nye: I believe they have read the books, or some have. Certainly Secretary Clinton, when she was Secretary of State, used the term “smart power” as the guiding principle for her diplomacy. I would like to say we had a strategy but I do not quite discern it. As in many things, we have a series of competing programmes and it is hard to see them knit nicely into a strategy. In budgetary terms, it is not clear that there is anyone who is looking carefully at the overall pattern of how we invest in public diplomacy or in soft power. Ideally, you would see somebody in the Office of Management and Budget doing a consolidated budget in which they said, “Here is what we spend on aid. Here is what we spend on broadcasting. Here is what we spend on cultural exchanges. Here is what we spend on people-to-people projects”. I do not think that happens very effectively. For example, sometimes you will find that a decision is made to stop broadcasting in some

foreign language by the Voice of America and it will save \$1 million, and yet you may have some aid project that has just wasted \$100 million. The question is whether those things are ever thought through in terms of clear trade-offs. I would like to say yes but I have not been convinced that that is the case.

Q183 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I have this difficult task of trying to imagine the ideal way forward. What is the silver bullet? What is the magic formula? I wonder if you have had any particular eureka moments recently when you have said, “Hey, that is great. That is the best example I have seen of soft power. That fulfils my ideal, my whole philosophy, my theory”. Do you have any great examples you can give to us?

Professor Nye: It is interesting that sometimes you will find parts of the military and the people in the Pentagon who are a little bit ahead of the game in this. SOUTHCOM is one of the American combatant commands, as they used to be called. When he was in SOUTHCOM, Admiral Stavridis—who later became Supreme Commander of NATO—said, “I have all these ships and planes in this capacity. How likely is it that I am going to use them to shell Buenos Aires or Caracas? Not very likely. But how likely is it that I will use them to deal with humanitarian catastrophes or the results of hurricanes or pandemics or whatever? I need to have a strategy in which I can use these resources for soft power generation without diminishing their capacity to wield hard power if I need it”. When he was head of SOUTHCOM he did a very good job of thinking that through and setting up a budget. I addressed that in my answer to the question asked a minute ago about where is the intelligence in doing a budget that says, “Here is the whole range of assets that we have. Here is the whole range of programmes. Are we spending as much on this as on that? Should we allocate resources from this area to that one?” That has been done in places. My example of SOUTHCOM, when Stavridis was its commander, is a good one. That was budgetary allocations and resources between hard and soft power within one military command.

Ideally, it would be nice to have somebody doing an inventory of assets and Government programmes, in an effort to say, “How do we allocate our investments between them and are we doing it in the most effective way for the Government as a whole?” I do not know whether you have something like that in Britain or not. I fear we do not in the US.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: That is a very interesting suggestion. I think we could follow that up. I wonder if there are any people you have met, when you have talked about soft power or smart power, who you think could give us a new insight into thinking on this, who would come in from left field with some divergent thinking. No disrespect to any of our staff or our Chairman who, as you know, is a distinguished person—

The Chairman: No disrespect to him.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: No disrespect whatever to him. But the people we have tended to have are the traditional people who say, “This is what we have always done and it is going well. Why do we not keep on doing it?” I wonder if you have any more imaginative, radical thinkers to suggest.

Professor Nye: There is a retired military officer who came in to see me in the last six months, who is trying to develop a way to get a usable index for soft power for programmes that are run out of the Pentagon. I can provide his whereabouts to Lord Howell after this. I do not have it at the tip of my mind now. I was quite struck by the fact that he was being very imaginative about how to make a soft power budget operational within the parts of the Government that he had been involved in. Let me see if I can pass that along. We will do

something by email after the hearing. There are some people who are trying to think of ways to make this more effective.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Thank you, you have been very helpful.

Lord Janvrin: Can I just pick up on that? Do you think that the whole way in which people are trying to measure the outcome of soft power is worthwhile, or still very much in its infancy or something that is extremely difficult to measure in an effective way?

Professor Nye: Measurement will always be difficult, but let me point out that it is not unique to soft power. One of the problems we have with power generally is power refers to behaviour, getting what I want. We sometimes treat it as though we measure it in terms of resources, I have this big stick. I may have a big stick but it may not get me what I want. Even if you talk about hard power, if I say that I have 10,000 main battle tanks and you have 1,000 main battle tanks, our tendency is to say, “Those hard power resources mean that I am 10 times stronger than you”. If we fight in the desert in Iraq that may be a good predictor of behaviour, I will win. If we fight in the swamps of Vietnam it may be a very poor predictor of behaviour, as the Americans found out in Vietnam.

Even when you are looking at hard power where we do orders of battle all the time, totalling up resources, we are not getting at whether those resources are going to produce the behaviour we want. When we look at soft power we can look at the resources that should generate attraction. We can then look at public opinion polls as a surrogate to say, “Have they generated attraction?” But whether they have produced the behaviour we want we do not know, unless we know what is in the mind of the perceiver. There is a problem with measurement of soft power, but I would submit there is a larger problem with measurement of any type of power. It is a little bit harder with soft power because many of the resources are somewhat less tangible. We kid ourselves if we think that when we measure orders of battle in hard power that we are predicting behavioural outcomes.

Q184 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Professor Nye, as the godfather or midwife of the soft power concept, when you began to develop this concept what were your beliefs about its likely ends? Did they include economic advantage in the propagation of good soft power? Did they include increased world stability, a sort of pro bono publico role of making the world a safer place? Was it making a nation feel good about itself, a bit of national vanity from creating a soft power concept? How did you see that in your mind’s eye when you started it, and how has your thinking on that changed?

Professor Nye: It is interesting, I basically embedded this as an analytical concept. My friend the great British historian Paul Kennedy wrote a book in the 1980s called *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, in which he predicted the decline of the United States. I thought, “I think he is wrong”. So I wrote a book that I eventually published under the title *Bound to Lead*. I first totalled up the American economic capacity and compared it to other countries. Then I totalled up the American military capacity and compared it to other countries, and I said, “But there is still something missing here. When we try to understand the capacity of the Americans to get what they want, compared to the Soviet Union—which was then still in existence—there is something about American attractiveness that the Soviets do not have. They may have had it back in 1945 but they certainly do not have it now. How can you conceptualise this?” That is what led me to develop the concept of soft power.

It seems to me that all too often we are mesmerised by the apparent concreteness of the resources that produce hard power but fail to notice that when you are looking for outcomes sometimes attraction can produce those outcomes. Indeed, I think you can make

a case—as I have tried to in some of my publications—that the Cold War was won partly by the hard power of the deterrent capacity of our militaries and by the hard power of our economic productivity. But it was also won by soft power, by the ideas that basically ate away faith in communism then behind the Iron Curtain. As I have said, when the Berlin wall went down it went down under hammers and bulldozers wielded by people whose minds had been changed. The purpose I had in trying to generate a concept was to get people, as they thought about power, not to stop short. In other words, hard power is tremendously important but it is not sufficient. It is not everything. I generated the concept to get people to say, “Okay, as you do budgets or as you do assessments or orders of battle, do not stop just with the hard power. There is another aspect called ‘soft power’ that can make a big difference”. Sometimes hard and soft power can counter each other and cancel each other out. Sometimes they can reinforce each other, but a good analyst needs to look at all three sources of ways to essentially affect others to get the outcomes you want.

My purpose was analytical but, to my surprise, it got picked up by politicians. I think the biggest surprise I had was in 2007 when Hu Jintao gave a speech to the 17th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party saying that China should invest more heavily in its soft power. I would never have expected that when I was writing this back in 1989.

The Chairman: You called your earlier book *Bound to Lead*, but in the networked world is leadership the right concept? As I think you have said in your later books, is it not partnership rather than leadership? When some countries claim they are leaders, is that not the way they turn other people off?

Professor Nye: That is right, if we think of leadership in traditional terms. I think the modern theories of leadership are that it is distributed leadership. In other words, it is not just the ability to say something or give an order, it is getting others to pick up your agenda. Dwight Eisenhower had a wonderful phrase for this. He said leadership is not just giving commands, anybody can do that. Leadership is getting other people to want to do something for you because they want to. That is what leadership really is. Of course, this came from a general who had all the authority he needed to give commands.

The Chairman: Baroness Nicholson, one more. I am mindful of the time but we will fit in a few more.

Q185 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Professor Nye, you commented that people’s minds being changed was a measurement of the success of soft power. But statistical measurements are difficult in terms of measuring human emotions and human well-being. Have you devised any mechanisms whereby you can grasp that problem? Is there anything that you could offer us so that we can define our own soft power influence, from the UK, for example, in any sector of society? What measurements are there?

Professor Nye: Although it is imperfect, the easiest measurement is public opinion polling. In other words, if you are talking about attractiveness and you notice that when you have a policy that is followed by a great reduction in the polls or by a great increase in the polls, that may tell you something about whether that policy has generated or consumed soft power. If you have a programme you can do the same sort of thing. For example, when you look at these Pew polls they will ask questions about, “What do you find attractive about—in this case let us say—the United States? Is it the science and technology? Is it the economic growth? Is it the openness of society?” Then you can go through and find what things are more likely to produce attractiveness. Polling is a surrogate measure, but the real measure you want is whether people’s behaviour changes. That is hard to measure en masse. In other

words, sometimes you can see that behaviour will come out in the way you want but if you say, “What is a metric for measuring?” it is hard to tell. It may come out in subtle ways. If you look at the Falklands War, officially the United States did not come down on Britain’s side on the Falklands War. But if you look at the relations between the British Navy and the American Navy, all sorts of information and intelligence was being passed from the Americans to the British. The Americans were not violating anything in a formal policy but they wanted the British to win. They were attracted to the British.

If you go back to World War I, there have been studies done about when Woodrow Wilson was debating between Germany and Britain and how would he feel about this. There were studies done that showed that Britain had much better contacts throughout the American elites, which essentially meant that when Wilson was trying to make his choices the British were much better networked into American society and this had an impact on the American decision to come down on the British side. So you can do historical studies or case studies that will show how behaviour was influenced, sometimes with important results for hard power but an overall metric is hard.

You can also do the converse. You can find situations where a loss of soft power has affected decisions. For example, when George W Bush wanted to get the vote of President Vicente Fox of Mexico—Mexico was then on the Security Council—for a second UN resolution, even though Fox had made a major effort to be close to Bush and to align Mexican policy with American policy, he basically said to Bush, “Frankly, the American position on Iraq has been so unpopular in Mexico that, much as you are my friend, I cannot support you. There has been such a loss of American soft power that I cannot help you”.

You can find concrete instances where a good journalist or a good historian can trace the effects but it is hard to put a precise metric on them. I think the closest you will come to a metric is probably public opinion polling. Since that is not the ultimate outcome, which is changed behaviour, I would call it a surrogate rather than a perfect measure.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: These are very crude measurements, are they not? They are quite rough and ready. The State Department, the World Bank and so on, demand something much more sophisticated nowadays for the release of funding to start to alter things. Has soft power any capacity to lean into those much more complex measurements, or should we still view it that public opinion is the only real measurement?

Professor Nye: As I said, public opinion is not a perfect measurement because it does not go to the actual changed behaviour. I suppose if you put enough funding into it you could do studies in particular instances to show how a policy does in fact change behaviour. It would be very expensive and very cumbersome. In principle, you could do it. I do not suspect we are going to see a lot of investment in that.

Q186 The Chairman: I am going to make this the final question, because I am worried about your lunch and our schedule, Professor Nye.

If we are going to urge on our Governments more of a soft power strategy, and we are going to talk about budgets and so on, how does one distinguish between that and the whole thing drifting into propaganda? When you mentioned earlier that China was spending a lot of billions, was the implication that if that turns into propaganda it is not much use?

Professor Nye: Yes. The danger that the Chinese have is that they think that if you invest a lot of money in turning Xinhua and China Central Television into worldwide broadcasting networks, and make *China Daily* a worldwide paper, that you are going to get attraction. But it is the extent to which the messages that come across on these media strike the listeners

or readers as rather brittle propaganda. They are not very credible. If you are not credible you are not going to be able to generate soft power. The scarcest resource in an information age is attention. We are all deluged with information and the problem is: what do we pay attention to? We pay attention to that which is credible. That which is credible is not propaganda.

If you look at one of the things that is intriguing about the BBC, it is its ability to maintain its credibility despite the fact that it is Government funded. You ask, "Why is that?" It is because of an institutional framework that allows a degree of distance from the Government, but even more important is the ability to be self-critical. The fact that the BBC can bite the hand that feeds it occasionally means the BBC is seen as credible rather than as propaganda. You do not see that with the Chinese media broadcasters. In that sense, I think investing a lot in Government broadcasting that is not self-critical, which does not show that it is able to see different points of view, is not a very good investment. There is a very interesting book by David Shambaugh on China's efforts to rise as a great power, which has a long 60 or 70-page chapter on Chinese efforts to increase its soft power. He gives chapter and verse on how this has not worked as well as the Chinese would like. I think the best summary of it would be a statement that I quote in one of my books from a young Czech student, who was at one of the Salzburg seminars where you spend two or three weeks with students from other countries. After this whole session the student was interviewed and asked, "How do you like it?" He said, "I suppose you might say it was American propaganda but it did not feel that way. The best propaganda is not propaganda". I think that may be the answer. If you try to generate a message that is too single-minded you lose what is the great asset that Britain, the United States and other Western societies have, which is the ability to be self-critical, to open up, to generate debate and diversity. That is one of our great assets, which I did not properly give enough attention to right at the start.

The Chairman: I think that is an excellent note on which to end. We must release you and thank you very much indeed. As you say, credibility is the key to all this, and a bit of self-criticism as well. Professor Nye, we are extremely grateful to you. Your input, both today and obviously through your massive works and influence, is marvellous. We are very grateful to you and look forward to meeting you perhaps in the flesh on other occasions. Thank you very much indeed.