

National power and political elite behavior

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Abstract

Many scholars of international relations estimate that capacity-building of national power has significant impacts on the behavior of states, while its absence directly affects the capacities of national power, hence the weight of a country in the international arena. For a small country, the magnitude of power is compared to relations with neighboring countries or even a little more in the region, but without going further. It is the obligation of political elites to evaluate and influence the capacities of national power. The fact that many lecturers mention the concept of 'sovereignty' while conventional sovereignty (at least the aerial and naval spaces) fail to secure even with minimal power capacities and turns the discourse of leaders into

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momental behavior. Without power capacities (economic, military, moral-political), a country can only be as a 'sovereign without sovereignty'. For all above, we have presented few reflections to national power, its role and perspective. The goal is to emphasize that national power is essentially for the interests and vitality of the nation on the present and the future. It is not the aim to exhaust the concept, but to sensitize objective reflections about the opportunities and the need for a comprehensive analysis. Further, it can be a major national project, encouraging contributions by researchers, experts, analysts and leading elites into political tactical and operational level and dynamic unity at a strategic level.

Key words: *national power, grand strategy, leadership, national sovereignty.*

I. Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of the unilateral world presented that the process of survival for the small countries has not only failed, but the dilemmas have increased and confrontation is more difficult. Many countries demonstrate the dilemma of survival by focusing on the drafting of strategies, the recognition of the national power, in terms of the conduct of political elites, the preservation and creation of strategic alliances and partners. For a long time the concept of elite behavior and referral to power capacities was thought to belong to only great powers, there is now no dilemma that it is just as important a matter for small countries as well. Everything is related to the same dilemma with the limitations in the trinity: resources, instruments, interests. The debates about the way in which strategic behavior (the elites) should be projected are still very active in the academic, public and political fields. But what distinguishes large countries from small countries is the difference that the first do not suffer from the construction of this strategic trinomial, as the small countries face (Cohen 1997).

Another difference is that large powers configure their (strategy) strategy to maintain and expand their role as small countries to consolidate survival elements (Morgenthau 2006). Because a strategic behavior must be quite clear to allow for broad interpretation, to inform resource allocation, and finally, when implemented, it must finally guide the nation increasingly towards security and prosperity, this makes the task of intellectual and political elites even more difficult (Hurt 2002). This is also the dilemma that not often the lack of a constant strategic behavior, in itself, appears as 'strategy', especially for a small country. The following paper aims at expanding the debate on the concept of national power and its relation to the behavior of elites. Under this idea are brought some reflections on national power, its role and perspective, and its derivation in the conduct of leading political elites.



The goal is always to emphasize that national power is at the heart of the interests and vitality of the nation for now and the future and the behavior is more or less effective. It does not take the objective to end the concept, but to sensitize objective reflections about the opportunities and the need for a comprehensive analysis. This may be a major project, which is above all national, but that encourages contributions by researchers, experts, analysts and leading elites that may be divided into political tactics but close to the operational level and in the unity dynamic at the strategic level.

II. Theory of national power

The term “power as a goal in international relations” has been widely used by political theorists, such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Hans Morgenthau. Especially among Classical Realist thinkers, power is an inherent goal of mankind and of states. Factors of this power include economic growth, military growth, cultural spread etc – all of which tend to achieve the ultimate goal of international Power as influence. In other words, “power” is an actor’s ability to exercise influence over other actors within the international system. This influence can be coercive, attractive, cooperative, or competitive. Therefor Freeman (2011, p. 35) states as follows:

“Power is the capacity to direct the decisions and actions of others. Power derives from strength and will. Strength comes from the transformation of resources into capabilities. Will infuses objectives with resolve. Strategy marshals capabilities and brings them to bear with precision. Statecraft seeks through strategy to magnify the mass, relevance, impact, and irresistibility of power. It guides the ways the state deploys and applies its power abroad. These ways embrace the arts of war, espionage, and diplomacy. The practitioners of these three arts are the paladins of statecraft.”

Buzan and Ueiver (2012) believe that the core of state behavior is the capacity of national power. Based on the concept of power capacities today, countries are categorized into hegemonic powers, great powers, regional powers, ‘small’ and small powers (Buzan 2012). Morgenthau (1989), one of the prominent figures of the study of International Relations, mentions that the national capacity or capabilities of a nation to realize its national goals and objectives in relation to other nations. It includes the capacity to use or enable the use of force by influencing others ... Currently hegemone power is just the US. Russia is a powerful force with powerful military potentials, but economic potentials do not allow it to emerge as hegemonic powers. China is a powerful force with powerful economic potentials,

but military arsenal restrictions, but not comparable to those of the US and Russia and necessarily do not make it a hegemonic power. England and France are great powers, but with military and economic potential not comparable to the first three.

Hegemone powers and great powers are also conditioned by the possession of nuclear power (Collins 2011). Germany and Japan possess strong economic potentials, perhaps even bigger than the others, but limited military power, and this is not because of inability, but because of the constraints imposed by the winning powers since the Second World War. Regional powers are smaller than great powers and much smaller than hegemonic powers. Continuing the argument in their work "Region and Powers", Buzan and Ueiver list only one hegemonic power (US), five major powers, that are also members of the UNSC and 13 regional powers. In our region as a regional power, there are Turkey and Italy. The other countries are either 'small powers' in the best case or simply 'small countries'. While countries classified in the first three categories (hegemonic, large and regional) are not challenged by survival risks, others (small) countries according to Milan Kundera struggle for their survival and modify in any case behavior to avoid the risks of survival security. David Mitran, author of some important works and favor of small countries, when comparing power capacities, finds the position of these countries mainly in alliances or in strong strategic partnerships for survival and prosperity.

National power

"Power is the capacity to impose the will on others, relying on the capacity of effective power in cases of non-compliance", -Schvarzenberger -2003. National power is expressed by a number of elements that international science policy scholars classify in different ways. The well-known scholar Morgenthau (1989) classifies them into two categories - permanent and not permanent, while Organski (2008), author of the Transitional Power theory, has preferred to classify in the natural and social resources. Other scholars as Palmer, Perkins, Charles O. Lerche, Abdul Said, Couloumbis and James H. Uolfe discuss for two groups: tangible and untouchable or in more articulated languages in 'soft power' and 'hard power'.

In a more detailed form all the above classifications of power capacities are related to : geography, natural resources, economic development and industrial capacities, technology, military power, ideology, leadership, governance quality, national character and morality, diplomacy etc. In the follow-up to Ajsle Tojle's analysis (2011) she simplifies the definition of power in economic, military, and moral power. All three forms of national power are inseparable from one another. Without any economic power, no nation can develop its military power, and without that, no nation can have the moral power to play an active role in international



relations. Disconnected from this trinity, countries are intertwined in situations that few opportunities and capacities have to show a 'unitary' behavior, much less affecting the behavior of the greatest. If political elites do not respect this equation early or late, they are in unforeseen situations or even in adventure.

National Power is the 'most interchangeable currency' for communication in international relations. Each country uses its power or at least one of its forms (economic, military, and diplomatic) to secure its interests in the international arena. It is this characteristic that makes us see international relations as a competition for power. The nature of this 'struggle' for power can only be analyzed through a comparison with other nations within, neighbour closer to or far from the region. The role a nation plays or can play in international relations can be judged by appreciating its power. Hence the fact that the interest in preserving and enhancing national strength is the primary interest of every nation on the path of survival.

National power is the means to meet the needs and aspirations of a nation. As such, it remains essential that on the basis of national power we can appreciate the importance and weight of a country in international politics. Hence, it emerges one of the most important conditions of elites and political leadership behaviour. Beyond the 'genius' that a leader can reveal, what gives weight to his attitudes and declarations is the power of its nation. No nation can overcome its 'weight' in international relations outside the context of alliances and allies. National strategies are those that balance the weight and role of political elites. Losses or not serious attitudes towards allies lead to a state at risk of survival...

Western Balkan countries and balance of power. The Balkans with an area of 550,000 km² and a population of around 55 million are made up of 13 states. Western Balkan include only five countries. None of the Balkan states can be classified as 'great power'. Only Turkey and Italy in the region, as mentioned above, are assessed at the level of regional powers. Other states are divided into the category of 'small powers' or simply as small states. Their economic and military powers do not rise to the level of regional powers or beyond. To clarify this submission, the concept of national power becomes necessary. This is why we value the categories we mentioned above: economic, military, moral-political.

Military power is one of the most important forms of national power and for a long time it so traditional language was united with the term of national power. It (military power) is considered absolutely essential to the nation's security objectives from self-confidence as the most vital element of national interest. In fact, military power is at the same time the main concern of every nation for its security. The possibility of violating the security of a nation through threats (war and aggression) from other nations is always seen as a special case, but it can not ignored, so each nation gives priority to its security through military power. To

keep security from potential dangers, each country creates and consolidates the armed forces by assessing them as the main means of security and territorial integrity.

The capabilities of military power in the countries of the region. Based on the global power index 2016, Albania ranks 115 out of 125 countries under review. It is a disagreeable position on a regional scale as well. Using the same source of reference (CIA fact book 2016), for the global index of military power, the countries of the region are ranked: Turkey 8, 10th Italy; 28th Greece; Romania 43rd; Bulgaria 67th; Croatia 68th; Serbia 83th; 115th Albania; Slovenia 111th; Bosnia is the 120th. Turkey and Italy are ranked in the top 10 countries and are classified as regional powers even in the military sphere. Greece rises in the context of a power, but not regional, while other countries are at the level of 'small' powers (Croatia and Serbia). Other Balkan countries are simply considered 'small countries'. In this regard, therefore, in the context of military power, our country remains a 'small country' and far from categorization as 'small power' compared to neighbors, who have the most preferred positions in the ranking.

Even the trend of increasing military power is dominated by neighbors. According to SIPRI, based in Stockholm, the 2016 military spending for the countries in the region continues: Italy, \$ 27.3 billion; Turkey 14.9; Greece 4 billion 973 million; Serbia 710; Croatia 695; Albania 147 and Kosovo 51 million dollars. Despite being in powerful alliances (NATO) or strong strategic partnerships (Serbia-Russia), this has not prevented the region's countries from entering a "strong armament race" at regional level, making the region even more fragile and less secure. Referring to the 'security dilemma', countries in the region, although recognizing the balance of power, are not reluctant to invest in internal power capabilities. In the national defense slogan, they do not hesitate to seek modern war systems and order armaments to gain supremacy within the region largely with neighboring countries. Greece spends over 5% of GDP for defense needs, while other countries such as Serbia, Turkey and Croatia have surpassed 2%. Our country has failed to reach 1% of the total GDP, though compared to the above countries there is lower. In a simple comparison Greece has an annual budget nearly 30 times bigger than Albania, while Serbia is 5-6 times too. Balkan countries are looking for the highest positions in military capabilities. All countries are members of powerful alliances or partnerships, but this does not stop their growth trends in military spending.

International relations scholars estimate that securing basic military capabilities influences the behavior of states, its minimal power directly affects the capacities of national power, and consequently the weight of a country in the international arena. For a small country the magnitude of power is related to relations with neighboring countries or perhaps even a little further in the region, but without going further. It is the obligation of political elites to evaluate and influence the



capacities of national power. The fact that many lecturers mention the concept of 'sovereignty' while conventional sovereignty (at least the aerial and naval spaces) fail to secure even with minimal power capacities and turns the discourse of leaders not in normal behavior. Without power capacities (economic, military, moral-political), a country can only be a 'sovereign without sovereignty'.

Serbian Prime Minister Vucic earlier completed the honeymoon week in Russia. The great Slavic-Orthodox brother, President Putin, filled his hands with 'war toys' as gifts to a younger brother on 2017 Christmas Eve. They were modern Mig- 29, Tanks T-72 and a considerable number of war machines. The Russian emissaries assured Vucic that they would always stand alongside. In this case, the same positions of both countries Russia and Serbia were cited for Kosovo. Vucic assured that these weapons would be vital for Serbia and that "we will now be able to defend our territories ...". He did not have to define the term of Serbian territory, because the Constitution helps. A tripartite Russian-Serbia-Belarus exercise was agreed to develop soon with the broad participation of modern forces and armaments. Croatia, a NATO member country, closely following and sensitizing the latest developments in the region, has reacted strongly by planning to buy a modern helicopter squad and also in March 2017 a supersonic aircraft squadron from the US. Croatian President Kitarovic said the modernization of the armed forces responds to Croatia's needs. So both leaders of Serbia and Croatia have assured that modern armaments respond to defense needs alone. None of them, of course, admitted that this is an arms race in the heart of the Balkans. While many analysts are reluctant to name these developments as the dynamics of a strategic rivalry of power not only between these countries, but the super-great ones, who have not been able to express themselves alongside them.

Shortly thereafter, the foreign and defense ministers of Greece, our neighboring country did not hesitate to declare their military superiority in the armed forces this time directly against Albania. A military exercise at the borders with our country was used by the Defense Minister to directly indicate the military force. Our country responded "strongly" to this blackmail by the the top executives of the departments through the Facebook and twitter blogs, bringing to the attention that we are a NATO member country. It was hinted at this, that in any case "we will protect NATO". Perhaps it is 'land and sea' because for five years, the neighboring country (charged by NATO) 'oversees and preserves' our airspace. So even NATO has not solved the dilemma of how to defend itself from its member states!!! But even without the Greek ministers telling us, the truth is bitter. Albania is today the country with the lowest capacities of national power in the region. And it seems that even for an indefinite time will continue to be such.

Economic power, according to scholars, is the most important form of national power. It presupposes a nation's ability to meet its needs and to control the behavior

of other states by economic means. Economic instruments in foreign policy are currently considered the most vital means a country can use to influence its actions and behavior towards and from other states. Palmer and Perkins in their book (2010) 'International Relations' argue that no country can become a 'power', even small, without adequate economic power. On the other hand, economic power is inseparable from military power, says James Uolfe (2013), because it is one of its basic components in the conditions of modern warfare, moreover that economic power can be considered also with the effects of military power, but expressed in the most 'soft' form.

Using the logic and reference (CIA fact book 2016), we can clearly distinguish the economic power capacities of the countries in our region. Italy needs to be analyzed, ranked 12th, while the other countries are: 13th Turkey; 57th Greece; 76th Bulgaria; Serbia is 81; Croatia of 84; 98th Slovenia; Bosnia 111th; 121st; Albania; 125th Macedonia; Kosovo 145th; Montenegro 153. The position of most of the countries in the region, excluding the first two, does not provide estimates that any of these countries have the capacity of economic power in the international arena. But on the other hand, this does not mean that in the regional space each of them plays according to their specific weight.

Unfortunately, the Albanian states or where the Albanian population placed, do not enjoy enough economic weight to feel 'economic power' and to modify their behavior or the behavior of others towards them by economic means. So, despite the terms of 'sovereignty', this does not avoid economic dependence, even within the region. Even in the near future, the ranking position will hardly exceed the rankings presented in the CIA fact book 2016. Meanwhile, there would be optimism if we were to refer to a 'great strategy' that would express a goal that could to be realized after several years. So, in terms of capacity, looks that we are not able to get up in the power category yet we are just a small country.

And thirdly, the 'moral power' that we can find as 'soft power', 'psychological power', 'national morality' and other forms, is considered to be another important national power. It implies the power of thought and the image of the nation, the behavior of elites and national culture. Even though they are not measurable they are quite sensitive. They are the forms used by states to provide a desired change in relation to the behavior of other states. With the use of formal, informal, public and cultural diplomatic means, a state always tries to influence the public's opinion and leadership of other states. The ability to influence others through communication is the 'soft' part of a national nation's power. Josef Noer describes the soft power in his book 'Tools for Success in World Politics' (2014) as an opportunity that '... a country can achieve the results it wants in world politics, because other countries admire its values, using the example by aspiring the level of prosperity and well-being - they want to pursue it...' This soft power - makes others to positively



influence the national goals you want - to bring people and states closer to them than to force them.

III. Political elite behavior. Limited alternatives

It is within the unique context of the particular circumstances that each nation designs its own major strategy. In a quick incursion to history, for small countries, distinguishes the way of strategic behavior approaches with three different recourse alternatives to ensure national strategic interests. The small number of alternatives, only three, implies the same strategic constraints to choose and implement strategic behavior. Alternatives, according to geopolitical circumstances, may evolve into each other, but do not change the variety of choice. David Mitran (1989) defines these alternatives as a. strategy of neutrality; b. the merger strategy in alliances and c. partnership strategy with a strong regional or global country.

a. Neutrality strategy

Merriam - Webster, but also Dictionary.com define the concept of neutrality as a country position not to support any party in an argument, in a conflict, in a war etc.: the quality or the state to remain neutral . For a long time, neutrality has been seen as an alternative to military alliances, a security patch, whether collective security is challenged or even fails. In a realistic estimate, neutrality is foretold by exogenous forces and material resources - imposed by major powers, or dictated by geography or the status of small power. Critical criticisms of the neutrality strategy come from realistic theory, which has dominated the course of understanding neutrality for small countries as inability, weakness and inactivity in the international system. Other critics argue that the Neutrality Strategy does not work without its recognition of great powers, regardless of whether a country can declare its choice in the international arena. In the “real war theater” slogan, the warring parties were not limited either in World War I or World War II to respect the neutral status of selected countries. In World War I neutral countries were Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. These were the only 10 countries that were able to remain neutral throughout the First World War.

The strategy for the status of a “neutral country” did not work for our country during the First World War. All the fighting parties, with more than 250,000 troops, crashed in the Albanian territory without worrying about the status of our country declared earlier but interested in operational aspects related to each other. The particular thing was in this case, since in some sense the neutral status,

or the protectorates, had themselves directed these powers, with the approach of Prince Vidit in the direction of the small Albanian state. The period 1914-1918 found our country unable to defend its sovereignty under the strategy of neutrality and turned it into a theater of warfare even without ever fighting power.

The First World War, which touched Albania, has become the object of research by many foreign historians and scholars, who, using the memoirs published by former military personnel in Albania, as well as the rich documentation that has been preserved the archives of Italy, Austria-Hungary, Prague, Belgrade, and some other European states that were involved in the vortex of that war, have occasionally published books that have inspired interest from many readers.

b. The strategy of joining with powerful alliances

Alliances can be defined as formal groupings of states related to joint engagement to use military force against non-member countries to protect integrity. For Hans Morgenthau, alliances are “the most important manifestation of the balance of power.” (Morgenthau 1985). In this finding, alliance members have common interests based on fears from other states. Stephen Walt has modified this concept. For that, the alliances themselves are the result of a “balance of threat.” In the old system the existence of alliances and potential threats were inseparable. (Walt 2013)

Alliances promote the commitment of all participating States to take effective and coercive measures, in particular the use of military force, against an aggressor. This strategy seems to be one of the most attractive to many European small countries, part of the ambition to become a member of a strong alliance like NATO. But this may be the moment of dilemmas: Can small states be sure the system will help you in the eventualities of an alliance’s foreign aggression? If the alliances are too wide in what position it will stand if the threats arise between the countries of the Alliance itself. Will particularly the major powers consider a threat to small states or a civil conflict as a worthy threat to collective action? After the end of the Cold War, the focus shifted. Now, a good part of the critical literature on alliances tries to explore the questions: Why do alliances end? What are the forces or events that lead states to disconnect common commitments in security matters compared to the period they were directed towards? Why are some alliances still struggling with suspicion of alliances? Why do some alliances continue to survive even after the arguments of their creation do not exist any further?

c. Seeking protection or partnership with large allies / powers

This is the third alternative that recognizes and accepts ‘grand strategy’. As previously stated, there are many factors that can affect a small country to develop



a great strategy. The strategy itself connects the survival not only with power but also with geography, history, politics, analysis and finding common interests with other countries, especially with regional and hegemonic powers. This election could be even more credible if the country had some historical precedents of cooperation with the category of these great powers. For some small countries, there is a conflict of such factors - eg. where the proximity of the great powers and the economic interests of the union imposes a subordinate attitude to the allies.

Located in the heart of Europe, Albania has traditionally pursued a security policy based on the idea that the country is surrounded by countries that have rarely shown non-friendly access. Despite the fact that in the National Security Strategy (2014) or in the Defense Strategy (2015) there are no comments on the term hostile countries, this does not impede the 'grand strategy' to overcome the scope of these definitions and to orient them in situations where the regional context can become more fragile and more unstable. On the other hand, since the 'grand strategy' comes from the nation and state level, and most of the nation is outside the grand strategy of the state, the national strategy needs to be seen more than state risks. This is another reason why the country does not formally foresee a neutral status in the international position.

IV. Conclusions

In defining strategic allies, it helps not only history, geography, the economy, but especially the mode of state behavior. Major powers in any case have their primary strategic interests. A small country is convinced that they will not always be the same as those of the great allies. He strives to find harmony in the least about those interests related to his geography and to influence as much as those (interests) do not contradict or face different lines with that of strategic allies. All states, large and small, expressed Krasner "play" within their context of power: military, economic, diplomatic and intelligent. These are the instruments of power that make "big" or small states (Krasner 2005). Successful use gives the opportunity and opportunity to be considered or ignored. Small places have no luxury to appear more than they weigh. Strategic allies increase the power elements of small countries. Lack of allies or unmatched behavior against them jeopardizes the power of a small country.

For the above, only a few reflections have been made of the national power, its role and perspective. The goal is always to emphasize that national power is essentially the interests and vitality of the nation for the present and the future. It is not taken to exhaust the concept, but to sensitize objective reflections about the opportunities and the need for a comprehensive analysis. This can be a major project that is above all national, but that encourages contributions by researchers,

experts, analysts and leading elites that can be divided into political tactics but close to the operational level and dynamic unity at a strategic level.

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