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University of Karachi

Department of International Relations
GRADUATE STUDIES DISCUSSION GROUP

Simulation and Soft Power

Day & Date: Thursday, March 11, 2010
Time: 1310h (1:10 pm)
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Department of International Relations (IR)
University of Karachi, Karachi 75270, Pakistan
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Prof. Dr. Syed Arif Kamal 
Professor, Department of Mathematics,
University of Karachi, PO Box 8423,
Karachi 75270, Sindh, Pakistan
Telephone: +92 21 9926 1300-15 ext. 2293
e-mail: profdrakamal@gmail.com
Homepage: <https://www.ngds-ku.org/kamal>

This talk focused on the role of simulations in deciding the use of soft power. Recent international conflicts have indicated that soft power is a better option as compared to hard power. After defining simulation, the speaker introduced the concepts of *guarded-graduated use of soft power* through precedence and influence graphs, with analysis of consequences of each action. A carefully-selected roadmap of progressively intensifying actions to pursue an issue, consistent with national grand-strategic objectives, was suggested as a better course of action as compared to sudden outburst of emotional actions, with zero follow through (monitoring) and follow up (evaluation). The conflict situation arises when the present state of affairs (concept of navigational path in space-flight dynamics) is very far away from the desired state (concept of guidance path). Calculated use of soft power (concept of optimal control) may take things in the desired direction (Fig. 1). The concepts of equilibrium, non-equilibrium, transient and steady state (perspectives from statistics, physics and control theory) were brought out to study international conflicts. Steady state was shown to be the optimal solution resulting in conflict management, and a sustained steady state might be achievable after conflict resolution. Simulations should help in making decisions to choose an optimal path to reach steady state with minimum loss of life and damage to eco system in the least-possible time.

Keywords: Conflict management • Decision theory • Passive engagement

Conflict of Interest Statement: No potential conflict of interest was identified for this work.

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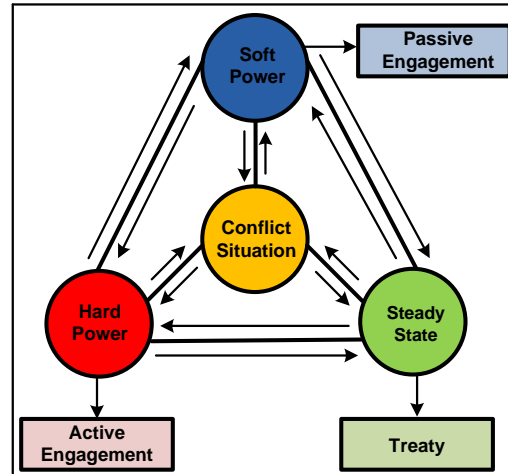


Fig. 1. Handling of conflict situation

About the speaker: Professor Dr. Syed Arif Kamal, Ex-Chairman, Dept. of Mathematics, Convener, National Curriculum Revision Committee in Mathematics, Higher Education Commission and Convener, Subject Committee in Mathematics, National Testing Service obtained his BSc (Honors), MSc and PhD from this university, MS from Indiana University, United States and MA from the Johns Hopkins University, United States as Quaid-é-Azam Scholar. His awards and honors include throughout First-Class-First Position and 4 gold medals for scholastic achievements. He had an opportunity to lead teams in 14 different capacities throughout his 28-year research, teaching, administrative and policy-making experiences. He takes keen interest in programs of this department. He taught MSc (Final) Course: *Science, Technology and IR* and gave seminars in this forum entitled *Communication Skills in IR and Role of Information Processing in Conflict Resolution*. He traveled to Austria, Germany, Italy, Sweden and United States as part of his academic endeavors.