



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Weapons or Economy Makes the Powerful Nation: An Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study evaluates what nations need to become powerful, economy or weapons. The main objective of the study is to explore the significance of economy or weapon for a nation. The study adopts the secondary qualitative method with data analysis techniques of content analysis to describe the study's objectives and variables. Power is a subjective term subject to growth and decline over time. Weapons and the economy are both powerful tools of powerful nations, and in today's time, both are necessary for nations to have. A weapon is a tool with which a nation safeguards its national boundaries from the threats of rival nations. Economic growth/advancement is another powerful tool with which nations attain resources necessary to finance the advancement of weapons to protect national boundaries. Both are interconnected and go side by side with one another; without any, a nation could not become powerful. Decades ago, China was not assertive compared to the USA, but in recent times, China is aligned to be the world's next superpower. The USA did not lose its power or influence or face a decline in its power. However, China has gained economic significance, bringing China next in line to become a world superpower. The study has utilised previous researchers' work to evaluate what makes a nation powerful. The findings of the study depict that for a nation to be powerful in recent times, economic growth is the priority, followed by advancement in the military to safeguard national borders and national interests.

**Keywords:** Economy, Globalization, Military power, Nation, National interest, Power, Security, War, Weapon

**Introduction**

Before jumping directly to the conclusion of declaring what is needed by powerful nations, weapons or economy? It is significant to know how weapons are balancing the power in the region and protecting the boundaries while giving a sense of protection against adversaries, and how economies are enhancing the living standards, innovation and technology, businesses, and per capita income increases through GDP growth, every other aspect of human lives, and ultimately providing resources to have advancement in weaponry (Beckley, 2018). The motive of this study is to evaluate the indicators of economic and military resources that are making a nation powerful in this contemporary era. As time passed, things have drastically changed and evolved for the better.

The betterment in every field of the world has brought ease, but every field has gone through amendments which happened by learning through past experiences in every field. The definitions and elucidations of power have also changed as the world continues evolving. Experiences have also continuously changed over the course of time through indulgence in different experiences, which aided in better learning (Bondurant, 2021). Why is there a need for nations to have weapons at their disposal, or why is there a need for robust economies for nations? Weapons and economies have become the cornerstones of nations in this contemporary era for various reasons (Rosecrance et al., 2016).

Nations prefer spending on military power enhancement to maintain the balance of power from their adversary nations and to spend on military advancement. Economic independence is required to fund weapons advancement (Rosecrance et al., 2016). For instance, India and Pakistan both spend gigantically on military power to maintain the balance of power in the region to safeguard their nations and prevent any military action against them by one another (Javaid et al., 2016).

In the context of the balance of power, nations or group of nations are protecting themselves by matching their powers to other nations, and they need both weaponries and a robust economic stance against a nation or a group of nations (Paul, 2018). For a nation to support its military power, it is significant for that nation to develop its economic independence. Otherwise, the nation will fall prey to the powerful nations of the world who will, through their dominance, will take over the poorest and weak nations (Markovits et al., 2018)—for instance, overtaking of Iraq by the USA, the dominance of Israel over Palestine, the dominance of the USA over Iran by restricting the country to trade, etc.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review in this research inquiry has provided significant and exciting contemplation of the general literature in accordance with the study, which is aligned with its objectives also. What is needed for powerful nations, weapons or economies has been critically analysed through general literature in this section while keeping in mind the alignment of the general literature with the objectives of the research inquiry.

### **Significance of Economies and Weapons for Nations**

In the context of weapons and economies, none of the field specialists agrees with another and always present anti-approaches. Economists argue that economic independence through robust economic growth is the factor of dominance in this world (Wade, 2018). On the other hand, military governance stresses the enhancement of the military to put dominance over other or rival nations (Samuels, 2018). Both of the specialists in their respective fields are right to some extent. However, in this contemporary era, globalisation has created a cut-throat competition in which individuals, organisations, or firms compete to attain sustainability for their organisations, which will ensure their competitive advantage and bag gigantic profits for them (Bashir et al., 2017).

Through the profits or revenues generated, the nations attain significant dominance over their rival nations, and they can spend their profits on the attainment of desirable enhancement for their nations (Perroux, 2017). For instance, the USA is considered the most militarily advanced nation in the world, while at the same time, the USA is an economically powerful nation (Trump, 2017). On the other hand, on the front, China is economically dominating the world through its trade with almost every nation of the world. Recently, China has showcased its weaponry and military achievements, which were all attained through economic independence (Fenby, 2017). Before becoming an advanced military power, the USA had economically become the world's superpower (Brooks et al., 2016).

The context of power and war has changed in this contemporary era. Even though some nations have a grasp over nuclear powers, they are bound not to take any action involving nuclear attacks (Morgan, 2017). For instance, in the recent ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, even after being a nuclear power, Russia did not use its nuclear power to attack Ukraine. Power in recent times is the attainment of economic status which makes nations independent economically (Snyder et al., 2017). At the same time, power in earlier history was considered a nation's dominance through its military power (Sempa, 2017). Weaponry is significant, but the priority is the grasp of economic power in today's globalised world and the attainment and fulfilment of military power for the nations to secure themselves (Samuels, 2018).

### **Need for Balance of Power through Weapons in the Region among Nations**

Balance of power is a relatively old term which came into existence to denote the significance of power in the European state system during the era of Napoleon and from then continued its movement till World War 1 Paul, (2018), where the UK demonstrated its role as a balancer of power among nations. The UK played a vital role during World War 1 as a balancer by having military supremacy, which spread to naval dominance and invulnerability from foreign invasions, ultimately allowing the UK to become a balancer among nations (Gates et al., 2016). The United Kingdom and its allies had ended World War 1 and significantly defeated one of the world's significant powers, the Ottomans (Haass, 2019).

Ottomans are among the nations that have a long history. Through the efforts of the Bedouin people, Arabs became an empire and relied majorly on the power of its military, and achieved through much effort an empire known to the world as Ottoman Empire. So, the balance of power from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century has undergone significant changes as per the practical experiences and political integration, which further aligned the objectives of the balance of power as per its need among nations (Luard, 2016). Balance of power is a powerful tool available for nations requiring economic spending, which in return, it provides nations with security that will keep their adversaries from harming them (Luard, 2016).

### **Need of Having a Robust Economy to Become a Powerful Nation**

Economic growth for nations is significant to ensure the availability of resources at the disposal of nations to utilise in times of need. When a nation grows economically, it gets in a position to impose taxation over the earning machinery of the nation, which will, through their taxation, provides the nation with a capacity to generate resources to smoothly continue the affairs of the nation by providing public goods and services, and other basic facilities to the natives of the nation (Yeager, 2018). Economic growth generates wealth for nations from which a significant portion directly goes into the pockets of the revenue generators and their employees, which increases their well-being, and becomes a cause for people to fight poverty and improves their life standards (Kelley et al., 2017). Economic growth and advancement encourage innovation which encourages attaining economic independence for nations, and economic independence ensures power for nations in recent times (Gorodnichenko et al., 2017). Economic growth then, in turn, provides nations with resources to spend on their military or weaponry enhancement for the security of their borders and keep their rivals off from them (Gorodnichenko et al., 2017).

### **A Recommendation on the Selection of Weapon or Economy for a Powerful Nation**

As elucidated above from the general literature of this research inquiry, the significance of economics and weapon for nations, and in the light of the contemporary era, a wise and appropriate selection through the examples of current super-powers of the world can be concluded that growing economically first is the dire need for nations who are seeking to become influential in recent times (Safranchuk, 2020). Through economic growth, nations can finance their growth of weaponry which will maintain the balance of power among their regional rivals and ensure the smooth flow of internal and external affairs of nations (Gilpin, 2016). Nations that enjoy economic independency keep their common masses happy. A nation can become wealthy and powerful, but if the citizens are unhappy, and living short lives, then the future of that nation is in jeopardy (Harari, 2018). Citizens make a nation; without their happiness, a nation cannot grow (Uchida et al., 2016). In recent times, citizens of nations have become happy through economic growth, which uplifts their living standards. It is recommended that nations first grow economically and then spend their economic resources to attain the growth of weaponry (Ijaz, 2018).

The overall discussion of the LR depicts that economy and weapons both are necessities of a mighty nation. Weapons aid nations in mentioning the balance of powers in the regions, while economies provide nations with resources to manage BOP.

### **Material and Methods**

The methodology of a research inquiry is all the activities along with its elucidation are the strategies, techniques, and processes that are being indulged in gathering information required for a research inquiry and evidence for the analysis of collected information (Kumar, 2018). The methods being utilised while conducting a research inquiry aid the researchers in revealing the latest information/data better to comprehend the research inquiry (Kumar, 2018). The research methods commonly utilised by the researchers are quantitative and qualitative (Kumar, 2018). Quantitative research methods use numerical data, which can be further quantified and analysed by the researchers with statistical tools (Kumar, 2018).

On the contrary, qualitative research methods are those methods which include extensive and thorough comprehension of the notions and concepts that are being gathered as information to conduct research inquiry entrenched in the information gathered from a targeted population (Pandey et al., 2021). Specifically, in this research inquiry, the researchers utilised the qualitative research method to comprehend "what is needed for powerful nations: weapons or economy", as the topic is subjective. The qualitative research method for this research inquiry has been selected because it allows the researchers to evaluate the gathered information from different perspectives of the past research as they are evidence for the research inquiry (Pandey et al., 2021). Furthermore, with the aid of the qualitative research method for analysing data from secondary research, the research inquiry through qualitative research method enlightened to utilise the philosophy of interpretivism. The philosophy of interpretivism works on interpreting and analysing the gathered information by considering the opinions, views, concepts, perceptions, and evidence from past research in an interpretive manner (Tracy, 2019).

This philosophy has been widely utilised by researchers who have conducted qualitative research methods in their research inquiry to comprehend the topic of the research inquiry comprehensively. The researchers of this research inquiry have utilised the philosophy of interpretivism to grasp the concept of "what is needed by powerful nations: weapon or economy" from different perspectives in relevancy to the topic. The data and information in this research inquiry have been collected from secondary sources, including various books, journals, websites, and research articles. The selection of the sources for the collection of data/information is entirely entrenched in the usage of inclusion and exclusion criteria, which made it easy the selection of appropriate and relevant data for conducting the research inquiry further.

The use of secondary sources for conducting information required to formulate this research has led the researchers towards utilising content analysis through the analysis of themes. The themes analysed in this research inquiry were entrenched in the findings of the collected information from secondary sources. Contrast and comparison have been made to highlight the argument for the considerable selection of weapon or economy choices. Furthermore, the researchers of the research inquiry ensured ethical considerations while conducting this research inquiry concerning the use of secondary data. The researchers have comprehensively ensured not to indulge in academic misconduct by ensuring the rules of plagiarism, and the authors' work has been rightly cited in this research inquiry.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Content Analysis**

## **Evaluating What Matters: Economy or Weapons**

In this today's world, the widely growing concerns about the economy or weapons, which is the appropriate tool with which a nation can become powerful, have different perspectives of different scholars (Sechser et al., 2017). Since the end of World War 2, Japan, even after suffering a devastating blow in recent times, has become a leader in innovation and technology with its minimal spending on defence or military (Tipton, 2017). Japan is now the world's most advanced country, which owns state-of-the-art aircraft carriers. Japan first became economically independent, which enabled the country to become a gigantic supplier of technological wonders to the world (Ito et al., 2020). Due to the heavy dependency of the world on Japan for its trade, Japan has no significant conflict with any other nation, and Japan is growing without any halts day by day (Ito et al., 2020).

The era of becoming powerful through the power of war has ended. As a consequence of globalisation, the world has become interconnected in which every nation relies on another nation for economic generation (Gamble, 2016). The interdependency of nations on one another does not eliminate the fact that the security of national borders for every nation is still a significant aspect that needs to be addressed. Nations have understood the significance of economic growth, which is integral to other associated aspects of nations' growth. Without a robust economy, protecting national assets and interests is perplexing. Economic growth is a dire need for nations to finance their security needs for which weapons are required (Samuels, 2018).

The higher the economic growth is, the higher the advancement in weaponry will be achieved (Coccia, 2019). For instance, America in today's time is the superpower of the world and is considered to have the most advanced military weaponry in the world (Boggs, 2016). All of this was attained by America through economic growth (Boggs, 2016). Without economic growth, there would be no resources to spend on the development and advancement of powerful weaponry for the protection of national interests and borders for a nation (Boggs, 2016). Among the world's most powerful nations, America is at the number one position, followed by China at the number two (Brooks et al., 2016). It depicts that China is in line to become the next super-power of the world with robust economic growth that has provided it with the resources to finance its weaponry advancement (Brooks et al., 2016).

Getting into direct conflict with nations and declaring war on them in recent times is impossible because there is an abundance of international bodies that are formed for the protection of the weak and to prevail a strong watch through checks and balances (Mearsheimer, 2017). Still, nations are continuously developing weapons to maintain a balance of power in the region and spending gigantically to attain supremacy over their rival nation in the context of weaponry (Vivekanandan, 2022). In a broad concept, power for a nation is not just its military or weapon or economic independence. However, it includes abundant other elements like the nation's population, territorial size, economic strength, military strength, and political stability in the international setting in this era of globalisation (Samuels, 2018).

Power for centuries has been the desire for nations and empires to attain. In its simplest form, it means the ability to control the surrounding environment while having the ability to change the behaviour of others regardless of the force that is getting used in doing so. It could either be a tangible or intangible force (March 2017). The use of force by which changing the outcomes as per desired outcomes is considered power, which is the ability to give direction to improve the user's satisfaction within the system. Power is a subjective term vulnerable to increase or decrease (March 2017).

Power is not static but requires strategic management in today's time because it is subjected to growth and decline (Emerson, 2019). For instance, the USA is a powerful nation,

but China was not powerful decades ago. However, China has become a powerful nation in today's time and is next in line to become a superpower. Power is not subject to only the demonstration of military power, but it is a source of many elements in today's time (Hatziaargyriou et al., 2020). In comparing the USA and China, the USA has not declined materially. However, China has significantly gained economic growth with which China is matching up the power to be as equal or near to of USA (Beckley, 2018).

In another instance, compared Pakistan and India, it was always a balance of power between both nations, and both nations are spending gigantically on their military advancement (Naseer et al., 2016). Since their independence, both nations have been in conflict, and four major wars have been fought between them, and in every war, India came out victorious. However, in recent times even after the abundance of disputes between both nations, none of the nations can dare to indulge in a direct war (Naseer et al., 2016). There are various reasons for nations in today's time not to indulge in direct wars. There are international bodies who are regulating laws and conventions to forbid countries from getting to war. Economic instability is another broad concern for nations to forbid war, due to which nations not only decline their growth but also jeopardise their citizens' suffering (Cheng, 2017). Another primary reason preventing both nations from getting into direct contact with war is that both nations are nuclear powers, and none of them can afford nuclear warfare between them (Naseer et al., 2016). The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has not been forgotten by the world, as the suffering that a nuclear attack can do from the acts of the USA on Japan (Maguth et al., 2020).

Hence, it is suitable and appropriate for nations in this contemporary era to become economically robust to safeguard their national interests and citizens while avoiding the path of war. However, it is significant to keep powerful weaponry in case of its need. Advanced weaponry can be achieved through economic advancement, which will safeguard all the national interests of nations. In its real meaning, power is subject to growth and decline, so nations should be prepared for war too.

## **Discussion**

The study's findings illustrate that the selection and perception between economy and weapon to declare a nation powerful has changed over time. The significance is equally needed to be powerful. Samuels (2018); Mearsheimer (2019) supported the significance of the economy for nations that are seeking to be powerful because economic growth is a tool by which nations fulfil their self-interests and protecting those self-interests while attaining authority over others by influencing or changing their behaviour within the economic system in order to make strategic decisions. Different nations in different epochs have different approaches to becoming powerful (Russell, 2017).

Earlier nations relied heavily on the sword's power to become powerful and attain economic growth in the way of their conquests (Armstrong, 2017; Russell, 2017). However, today, nations rely heavily on economic growth to become powerful while enhancing their military power during their economic growth (Ali et al., 2018). It means today's nations are compelled to attain economic growth first, which will fuel their growth of weapons. For instance, Alexander the Great spent most of their life on a war field and conquered more than half of the world, and at that time, the empire of Alexander the Great was ruling over the world and was the most economically well country (Holt, 2016). Alexander the Great built his great empire from one corner of the world to another, spreading the culture of ancient Macedonia in significant parts of the world (Holt, 2016). Now, the decades-old collapses of the Soviet Union have presented an idea that the era of significant wars has ended, and regional conflicts or civil wars are a terrible influence on a country because they can impact the economic growth of the country (Fearon, 2017).

The economy in today's time has become the only fuel for nations with which they can advance and develop, so economic growth for every nation in this contemporary era has become a dire need (Beckley, 2018). Beckley (2018); Harff (2018) has supported the argument that nations seeking to become influential in this contemporary era must become independent and robust economically. Only then can a nation protect its self-interests among its rival nations and have an influencing power to change the behaviour of rival nations. Balance of power is, without any doubt, a significant aspect for nations to consider, and a soft balance of power is necessary. However, profound spending on direct military advancement should not be a priority for nations (McClam, 2016).

The world has evolved, and technological advancement played a vital role in the evolution of the world. The traditional conceptualisation and ideologies have become dearth due to direct conflicts or actions of war, even though they are avoidable possibilities (Steger, 2017). Strong nations in the world often play the role of balancer between nations and subduing their conflicts through their powers which can change the behaviour of disputing nations. The First World War is an excellent example in which Britain played a significant role of a balancer and drastically changed the course of the war by their advancement of military and navy, which turned the scale of war in favour of British and its allies (Balci et al., 2020).

Hence, it is suggested by the analysis of the content above that the time has changed. For nations to become powerful to ensure their sustainability and protection of their self-interests, they have to become robust economically so that they can finance their development and growth of weapons which will provide nations with the power with which they can attain the ability to influence the behaviour of others. The attainment of economic growth first ought to be the priority of nations with which they attain the growth of weapons through which comes an ability of power with which they can become capable of changing or influencing the behaviour of others. For a nation, it is equally significant to balance its power with its rival nations as the attainment of economic growth to safeguard its boundaries and self-interests.

## **Conclusion**

The motive of this study was to measure for nations what is needed for them to become powerful, economy or weapons and concluded that there is a limitation in this study. The limitation presented in this study is initially the absence of a universally accepted objective definition of power through which concrete evidence can be collected. Due to this absence, the chances of getting biased during the selection between weapons and economy for nations to declare power are high. Secondly, the findings of the study in the general literature are inconsistent. They require further research to eliminate the contradictions in selecting a tool for the nation to depict that it is powerful. Through the epoch of times and advancements the world has achieved, direct engagement in wars is still present. However, the rising economic competition between worlds has mitigated the possibility of war, due to which the economic stability of nations gets in jeopardy. Nations of the world ought to develop and advance their economic growth, which in today's time holds the power to change and influence the behaviour of others.

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