

1960 (making his pitch for the aerospace vote).

The ranking of Japan is a good example of the method, and even better of its limitations. Here power is seen to come not from the barrel of a gun but from the greatest GNP, in anticipation of which (this before the higher cost of a different kind of barrel) Herman Kahn foresaw the emergence of the Japanese super-state by the year 2,000. For Edwin O. Reischauer (U.S. Ambassador to Japan during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations), there is no need to wait so long: "Japan is the No. 2 power in the world."

How does he know? That being too difficult, what makes it so? If the key to Japanese power is export, the key to Japanese export is the qualities of those who make the product high in craftsmanship, low in cost — qualities once epitomized as those of the chrysanthemum and the sword: the sensibility of Japanese design, the zeal of Japanese application to the task at hand, be that overrunning Southeast Asia in the early 1940s or mass-assembling transistor television sets in the early 1970s. A *New York Times* correspondent puts it this way: "American officials and scholars have produced tomes trying to explain why the Japanese have done so well; it may be an over-simplification, but the fundamental reason is that they work like blazes." That does not explain why they work like blazes, but it may be better than no explanation at all.

Elusive as ever, power now seems to reside in the spirit of a people, in their mood and morale — aspects of might about which even neo-geopoliticians do well to hold their peace. "Great things need no firm foundation," the father of Zionism once remarked. "An apple must be placed on a table to keep it from falling. The earth hovers in the air. Thus I can perhaps found a secure Jewish state without a firm anchorage. The secret lies in movement. Hence I believe that somewhere a guidable aircraft will be discovered." (Herzl's metaphor of "a guidable aircraft", evoked some years before the Wright brothers took flight, is almost as remarkable as his forecast, in 1896, of the State of Israel more than a half a century before its birth.) Using a similar metaphor, a commentator accounted in 1905 for the success of British power in India: "The Indian empire is not a miracle in the rhetorician's sense but in the theologian's sense. It is a thing which exists and is alive, but cannot be accounted for by any process of reasoning founded on experience. It is a miracle, as a floating island of granite would be a miracle, or a bird of brass which flew

and sung and lived on in mid-air. It is a structure built on nothing, without foundations without buttresses [compare Herzl's "without a firm anchorage"] held in its place by some force the origin of which is undiscoverable and the nature of which has never been explained."

The modern illustration is surely Yugoslavia. Some wit once dismissed that country as a fifth-rate power. Asked for his impression of Belgrade, he replied: "Imagine a whole city illuminated with a 10-watt bulb." But the power of Yugoslavia is not to be measured by its wattage. "According to all rational calculations," A. J. P. Taylor has written, "Yugoslavia was the country most doomed to disintegrate in the storms of the twentieth century. It has few natural resources: little coal or iron and a territory largely composed of barren mountains. . . . Historical traditions, though strong, work against unity, not in its favour." Whence, then, derives its power? From defiance — from defying Stalin and succeeding. "Yugoslavia has been living on the strength of this defiance ever since."

The elusiveness of power may be seen not only in its possession by those who, on "rational calculations", have no right to it but also in its lack by those who, on calculations no less rational, have every right to it. Here is the cry of S. John Peskett in *The Times*, who, with the rest of us, has seen the assumptions of geopolitics, like so many sandcastle Gibraltars, washed away by the tide: "All the Queen's horses and all the Queen's men, plus the United States of America, the United Nations, NATO, and all the parachutists and glider troops we so busily train, cannot rescue a couple of hundred hostages and a few million pounds worth of aircraft from a handful of guerrillas half of whom are quarreling with the other

Relative to use

Power is pervasive, power is elusive. Power is also relative — relative not least to purpose. What you have of it depends on what you want to do with it.

The relativity of power is most simply illustrated by the distinction between the power to build and the power to destroy. The power to build — to create, to innovate, to improve — is hard to come by, arduous to exercise. It derives from resourceful diplomacy and nimble statecraft, sustained as these must be by a generous and patient citizenry. Rome was not built in a day; how much longer it takes to build a world free from poverty, ignorance, disease!

*Elusiveness
of power
defies rational
calculation*