

**APPENDIX B25**  
**WHAT GIVES STATES POWER?**

The following is a list of things one could argue contribute to a state's power. Is there anything you would add or remove from this list? Why?

- 1) Highly industrialized economy.
- 2) Well-educated population.
- 3) Nuclear weapons.
- 4) Strategic location.
- 5) Well-developed communications and transportation networks.
- 6) Large army.
- 7) Citizens committed to the country and its government.
- 8) High regard in the international community.
- 9) Modern military equipment.
- 10) Ability to develop new and useful technology.
- 11) Effective health care system.
- 12) Membership in a military alliance.
- 13) Easy access to energy resources (eg. oil, hydro-electric power).
- 14) Strong, decisive government.
- 15) Easy access to natural resources such as precious metals, forest products, fresh water.

## APPENDIX B26 THE BALANCE OF POWER

'Power' is probably the most often used concept in international politics. In fact, it is argued by some that power is the ultimate aim of international politics. According to this reasoning, when states attempt to reach a goal, they do so by striving for power and making use of it. Leaders seek to promote the interest of their state and they do this by manipulating power. This model of politics is often referred to as 'power politics'.

### What is Power?

Broadly speaking, power is the ability of actor A to get actor B to do X, or prevent him from doing Y. In other words, power is anything that allows one to control or influence another. A frequent measure of power in international politics is military power. Force, and the elements that contribute to the successful maintenance and use of force, are seen as the most certain way for a state to ensure that its interests are promoted.

Power is not only found through force, however. To some extent, power is determined by what is considered acceptable by the current political environment. For instance, even though a state may lack military power, it may be powerful because a position it holds on an issue is backed up by international law. In such a case, the weight of international law and international public opinion may prevent another state from taking an action which would contravene that law and public opinion.

When trying to judge the power a state can bring to bear in a situation, one must look carefully at the factors which contribute to a state's power in each particular case. Often it is true that the power provided by potential military force may be only a small part of a state's total power.

### The Balance of Power

It is argued that each state tries to maintain and even increase its power in order to defend its interests. This constant jockeying for power creates what is called a balance of power system. Within this system, most leaders pursue policies designed to preserve a balance or equilibrium with the power possessed by others.

The goal of states in a balance of power system is to maintain the stability of the system and their own independence: to prevent any one state, or group of states, from becoming so strong that it prevents the others from pursuing their own interests. The important concept is 'balance'. Most often, this is achieved by the formation of alliances which combine the power of several countries in order to offset the power of others.