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## Cooperation needed to succeed in emerging sustainable economy

By **TONY PAUKER AND MARY LYDON**

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Joseph S. Nye Jr., is former assistant secretary of defense and dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is author of "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics." Soft power is a term that distinguishes the subtle effects of culture, values and ideas on others' behavior from more direct coercive measures called hard power such as military action or economic incentives. In these changing times, soft power may be a tool to a more effective transition to the new social and economic structure that we are being propelled into.

Since the industrial revolution our means of success has brought phenomenal new technologies in the areas of communication, agriculture, transportation, entertainment, manufacturing, finance, research and development. But when we look back to see what has been left in its wake we see war, poverty, environmental degradation, growing disparity in incomes, specie extinction, unprecedented CO2 levels in the atmosphere, melting snowcaps and disease. This is certainly not the full picture, but when one makes a comparison from this perspective there does seem to be something missing from the equation. Soft power could be a bridge to help solve some of our great challenges by connecting our advanced technology to a more solid sustainability platform.

There are 218 sustainability-focused organizations in San Diego, and if you Google sustainable technology on the Internet, you come up with more than 10 million results. Both locally and internationally, there is not a lack of focus on sustainability. It is very clear that we do have the technology to move sustainable measures into place, but what is also just as clear is that we have not evolved our social skills to make it happen.

Cooperation, as defined by Wikipedia, is the process of working together which can be accomplished by both intentional and non-intentional agents. In its simplest form, it involves things working in harmony, side by side, while in its more complicated forms, it can involve something as complex as the inner workings of a human being or even the social patterns of a nation. It is the alternative to working separately in competition. Cooperation is a key factor of soft power. Other components of soft power include: listening, tolerance, willingness to try new ways, for the good of all approaches, truth - such as incorporating the true costs for products and services to include environmental cleanup and renewability factors -- and enlightened leadership.

So how do we implement these big-picture dynamics into San Diego so we can participate and reap the benefits of this new world? This spring, we are already starting to see new buds of cooperation emerge. A collaboration between the county Department of Health, the American Planning Association, Walk San Diego, New School of Architecture and Design and the Urban Land Institute is working to develop models for healthy communities through the built environment. San Diego Roots, in partnership with the San Diego Natural History Museum and OB People's Market are working to develop an organic farm and education center model that demonstrates how growing food locally is less expensive and better for the environment. The formation of the CleanTech Initiative through the Regional Economic Development Corporation in an effort to promote the expansion, attraction and retention of businesses that develop products and technologies that provides environmentally sustainable solutions. The National Energy Center for Sustainable Communities in Chula Vista focuses on building neighborhoods that consume less energy and produce less waste and is the first of an international network. The city of San Diego Environmental Services Department has taken a leadership role to work in concert with City Departments and the community to advance all aspects of more sustainable policies and procedures, and measures outcomes through a series of City Council-approved indicators and a Climate Protection Action Plan. Primary target areas include energy-efficiency and renewable energy, alternative vehicles and fuels.

These are but a few emerging local initiatives and our challenge to you is that you get involved and become the water to help these kinds of visionary, cooperative-based, sustainability-focused technologies grow and flourish.

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*Pauker is chair and Lydon is executive director of Urban Land Institute of San Diego/Tijuana.*