

## The Hegemonic System Strategies to Counter the Rise of Islamic Revolution's power in West Asia

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### Abstract

The United States has historically aimed to establish power and dominance within the global multipolar system. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, it emerged as the new unipolar hegemon and sought to prevent the rise of rival superpowers by leading the hegemonic system. Consequently, limiting the emergence of new powers became a fundamental aspect of U.S. foreign policy, guided by a realist approach in its national security documents. In this context, addressing the promotion and export of the Islamic Revolution—an ideological and liberating movement that conflicts with the interests of the hegemonic system—became a priority. To counter the Islamic Revolution gaining power, the U.S.-led hegemonic system devised and executed strategies across nine areas: political, economic, cross-border, social, cultural, spatial, territorial, military, and science and technology. During this process, various complex methods were employed, including "influence" tactics, building a global consensus against the Islamic Revolution, and fostering sentiments such as Islamophobia and terrorism. This research aims to analyze these strategies descriptively within the theoretical frameworks of Patrick Callahan's "Theories of America's World Role" and Joseph Nye's "Future of Power."

### Keywords:

Islamic Revolution, Dominance System, Iran, America, Patrick Callahan, Joseph Nye, Future of Power, Hegemony.

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## **Introduction**

**State the problem:** After the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was a major power in the East, the global system shifted from multipolarity to unipolarity. During this time, the United States emerged as the sole superpower and extended its dominance from the West. Despite its efforts to maintain unilateralism and expand its sphere of influence over various regions, the rise of emerging powers over the last century indicates a shift of power towards the East.

Competition for power has always been constant in global politics, and dominance will inevitably shift between poles. In the West Asian region, the Islamic Revolution in Iran laid the groundwork for creating a significant power center despite extensive international pressure. Naturally, the global hegemonic system led by the United States perceives the potential emergence of a dominant power as a threat to its continued supremacy.

In response, the U.S. employs various strategies using its resources and influence, aligned with Patrick Callahan's realism in his book, *\*The Logic of American Foreign Policy\**. These strategies can be categorized into four main areas: economic, political, military, and cultural. This research will focus on a detailed examination of these strategies.

**Importance:** The Islamic Revolution, as a liberation movement, seeks to achieve its divine and human goals by expanding its influence globally. This involves establishing a unified world government. However, a crucial step toward this goal is becoming a regional power at the center of the Islamic world. To realize this vision, it is essential to identify the strategies employed by the hegemony system, which poses the main obstacle to the Islamic Revolution's objectives. By understanding these strategies, effective countermeasures can be developed.

**Necessity:** Recognizing the strategies of the hegemony system is vital for addressing the challenges posed by the rise of the Islamic Revolution in West Asia. Without a structured understanding of these strategies, the obstacles presented by the hegemony system will hinder the Islamic Revolution's progress and increase the costs of its expansion and development.

**Objectives:** This research aims to categorize and present a strategic map of the hegemony system. It will be based on national security documents and regional and global plans to prevent Iran from realizing its national interests while expanding and developing the Islamic Revolution. The findings will be organized into nine dimensions, providing a clearer understanding of the logic behind Western-American dominative foreign policy in this context.

**Questions:** The main question of this research is: What strategies does the hegemonic system use to counter the rise of the Islamic Revolution as a power

pole in the West Asian region? To answer this question, it is necessary to address the following sub-questions:

- What constitutes the hegemonic system led by the United States?
- What logic governs the foreign policy of the United States?
- What dimensions do the strategies of the hegemonic system to confront the Islamic Revolution include?

**Hypothesis and Method:** This study does not aim to test a hypothesis. Instead, it employs a qualitative analysis based on written scientific sources. Initially, it presents Patrick Callahan's theory of America's global role and outlines the logic that governs America's foreign policy as the leader of the hegemonic system. Subsequently, the various strategies employed by the hegemonic system are categorized and examined through the lens of Nye's Smart Power across nine dimensions.

### **1. Research Background**

The research conducted in various books, articles, and theses on the system of domination and its confrontation with the Islamic Revolution can be classified into two categories:

**A. First Category:** Works that introduce and study the capacities of the system of domination, identifying its tools, such as:

- "The Symmetrical Unipolar System: The Concept of Power from the Perspective of the United States (Daheshyar, 1378)". This research asserts that the United States is hegemonic in the current world order, regulating economic, cultural, political, and military relations according to its indicators. As a result, it occupies a privileged position that chiefly determines how events and behaviors are formed and resolved.
- "The System of Domination and the Reason of Creation of a Hated Other: A Discursive Approach (Sa'iedi, 1395)". This study describes Islamophobia as a strategy of dominant Western discourse used to confront Muslims. It argues that the only way to challenge this discourse is to discredit the signifiers, concepts, and meanings constructed by Western media.
- "The Future of Power (Nye, 2011)" categorizes power into soft and hard forms. The author introduces the notion of smart power, which is the strategic use of both types combination of power to alter the will and decisions of the target. This approach is considered a tactic for the hegemonic system to impose its will on other nations.
- "Five Pillars of American Grand Strategy (Miller, 2012)". Alongside the principle of creating democratic peace, this work outlines four other pillars of the U.S. grand strategy established after the Cold War: preventing attacks on the homeland, maintaining the balance of power among major nations,

punishing rogue actors, and investing in allies and good governance abroad. Each of these five pillars aims to uphold Western domination globally and expand the reach of the system of domination to other countries.

- “New Capitulation and New Strategies of the Hegemony System Against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Mohammadi Zia, 1396)”. This research, within the theoretical framework of soft hegemony, examines the new strategies employed by the hegemonic system led by the United States to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran. It focuses particularly on the cultural invasion aimed at promoting hegemonic values.

**B. Second Category:** Works that discuss the necessity of fighting against hegemony and propose Iran's response measures to confront these attacks, including:

- “American Methods in Initiating, Supporting, and Directing West Asian Terrorism and Strategic Suggestions for Confronting It (Rouhani et al., 1396)”. This article highlights the sense of danger posed by the global hegemony system following the victory of the Islamic Revolution. It examines the methods employed by the United States in facilitating terrorism in West Asia through a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach, identifying goals such as Iran phobia and Islamophobia, engaging Muslims with Islamic countries, and accentuating ethnic and religious differences. The article concludes with five suggestions for maintaining unity among Muslims to counter the machinations of hegemony.

- “Strategies to Confront the Cultural Dominance of the Arrogant System in the Political Thought of Imam Khomeini (RA) (Jafari and Ghorbi, 1392)”. This research analyzes the works and statements of the great leader of the revolution and proposes 13 contextual and operational strategies to combat cultural dominance and the spread of hegemonic culture.

- “Proportional Analysis of the International System of Hegemony and Islamic Awakening Movements\*\* (Poorhasan, 1394)”. This article investigates the third wave of Islamic awakening, which emerged in response to the international system of domination and explores the relationship between these movements and the hegemonic system.

- “Interactive Policies Against the System of Domination (Shafi`efar and Rahmati, 1389)”. This article seeks to identify a model and theory of foreign policy for the Islamic Republic of Iran and its indicators. It uses a descriptive method to develop the model of "interactive policy against the system of domination."

- “Strategies of the Islamic Ummah to Confront the System of Domination from the Perspective of Imam Khomeini (Jafari, 1396)”. This article recalls Imam Khomeini's actions in revealing the true nature of the system of

domination to the Islamic Ummah. It presents four strategies—spiritual, political and social, cultural and economic, and defensive—along with eleven indicators for the Islamic Ummah to combat the system of domination and achieve a dignified life.

Upon reviewing the studies mentioned earlier, it was found that none of them adequately presented the strategies of the hegemony system in a complete and organized manner within the context of the Featured theories of US foreign policy. Therefore, this study's classification of the nine strategies within the framework of Western realist theories is considered a novel contribution.

## **2. Conceptual Foundations**

### **2.1. The Hegemonic(domination) system**

The dictionary defines domination as power, strength, dominance, and rule (Amid 1377, p.798). In English, "domination" is translated similarly, conveying the ideas of domination, dominance, and control. However, domination encompasses a structure that promotes a specific way of thinking and living at all levels of society and among individuals. This structure ensures its superiority and dominance over all aspects of life (Jafari and Ghorbi 1392, p.71).

Within the global system and competition for power, domination refers to the imposition of one-sided views and will from the top down (Shafi'e far and Rahmati 1389, pp. 13-14).

Considering the definition of a "system" as a set of interdependent variables, any change to its components will affect the entire system. Therefore, the system of domination can be understood as a cohesive set of principles, rules, norms, and procedures that colonialists use to conceptualize international political actions and regulate participants' behavior by forming international regimes. This system defines permissible and impermissible activities across three primary areas: military, economic, and socio-cultural. It is based on a colonial and arrogant worldview and resolves conflicts from a position of power, relying on its established worldviews and rules (Poorhassan 1394, pp. 71-72).

More specifically, the system of domination consists of actors in the international arena who aim to uphold the rules of an unfair and oppressive game. To maintain their dominance, they employ various economic, military, cultural, and political tools to exert influence—whether subtle or overt—on the audience of this system (Shafi'e and Rahmati 1389,p. 16).

"Today, this system embodies the domination of developed Western countries, particularly the United States, over underdeveloped and developing nations. This occurs through intervention and influence, capitalizing on various

capacities to maintain their dominant position. "The system of domination means that a few powers, having acquired material capabilities, weapons, and money, seek to rule the world; today, the embodiment of this system is America." (Statements of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution during a meeting with the people of Azerbaijan on the occasion of the 29th Bahman uprising of the people of Tabriz, 18 Bahman 1392).

## **2.2. Strategy**

The term "strategy" is derived directly from the Greek word for command, related to concepts like prudence. In Greek, "strategy" means wisdom and knowledge in command. During the 18th century, at the onset of the Renaissance, the word was introduced to mean "the art of advancing and controlling operations" (Ahmadvand, 1386, p.63). Based on these lexical and historical definitions, strategy can be operationally defined as a set of detailed plans to achieve overarching macro goals within a specific period of time.

## **2.3. Islamic Revolution**

The Islamic Revolution was a movement led by Seyyed Ruhollah Khomeini against the imperial system in Iran, resulting in the fall of that regime and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This ideological movement is based on Javaheri jurisprudence and promotes the slogan of fighting arrogance and domination. It emphasizes a vision that extends beyond national borders, aiming to destroy oppressive forces and lay the groundwork for the global rule of the twelfth Imam according to Shiite belief. In contrast to this divine and human ideal, the statement notes that "America does not refrain from any crime for its political, economic, cultural, and military domination over the world under its rule." (Sahifa Noor, 1383, Vol. 13, p. 83)

## **2.4. West Asia**

West Asia is a subsystem within the Southwest Asia region, overlapping the southern part of the Caucasus with the Middle East, and includes 19 countries. The nations in this area face pervasive and comprehensive insecurity due to their internal conditions and the structure of the international system. These countries cannot ignore how the international system influences their foreign policy and security orientation. The long-standing presence of colonial powers in West Asia has further complicated the situation in this region (Qudsi, 1397, p.204).

## **2.5. Power**

According to dictionaries such as Oxford and Webster, power refers to dominance, the ability to enforce obedience, influence, authority, and control

over others. It fundamentally represents the capability of individuals to accomplish tasks or achieve desired goals. To reach such goals, it may sometimes be necessary to exert influence over others to elicit specific behaviors. Thus, power can be defined as the ability of an individual to perform work and influence others' behavior according to their intentions (Hafeznia, 1385, p.228).

Political scientist Joseph Nye provides a more nuanced definition of power, describing it as "the ability to influence the behavior of others to do or not do something against their wishes." Nye outlines several strategies for influencing the actions and behaviors of others (Afshordi and Akbari, 1392, p.52). He identifies three dimensions of relative power:

1. Coercing others through threats;
2. Alluring them with financial incentives and rewards;
3. Attracting, collaborating, and forming alliances with them (Nye, 2011: 8).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

This research integrates the theories of "America's Global Role," "Smart Power," and "Power Components" to address the questions posed.

#### **3.1. Theory of America's Global Role**

In his book *\*The Logic of American Foreign Policy - Theories of America's Global Role\**, Patrick Callahan outlines six logics of American foreign policy:

**1. Logic of Hegemony:** The United States, as the dominant global power, provides leadership to stabilize the international political system and regulate the international economic system.

**2. Logic of Realism:** To maintain a balance of global power, the United States should prevent the emergence of any dominant power.

**3. Logic of Isolationism:** The United States should avoid external commitments that could harm its domestic economy and governance.

**4. Logic of Liberalism:** The United States should promote freedom in foreign affairs by expanding free markets, democracy, human rights, and national autonomy.

**5. Logic of Liberal Internationalism:** The United States should collaborate with other countries to achieve a broad and diverse agenda addressing common global issues based on shared commitments.

**6. Logic of Radical Anti-Imperialism:** The United States should abandon efforts to maintain and expand a detrimental colonial empire (Callahan, 1387, pp.18-19).

Callahan argues that since the United States emerged as a superpower during World War II, the prevailing logic of its foreign policy has been "hegemony." He posits that the U.S. employs two types of functionalism to maintain its

hegemonic status: functionalism of hegemony and domination through both overt and covert actions.

### **3.2. Smart Power Theory**

In his book *The Future of Power*, Joseph Nye describes smart power theory as combining soft and hard power to influence and shape a target's decisions. He discusses the conflict between realism and idealism in U.S. policy. He characterizes U.S. strategy as a blend of these two perspectives to maintain U.S. superiority and dominance.

In his theoretical framework for smart power, Nye outlines five steps for determining a smart strategy within a U.S.-led hegemonic system:

**1. Clarity of Goals:** Focus on maintaining the superiority of the international hegemonic system and its leadership.

**2. Review of Available Resources and Assessment of Fluctuations:** Strive to maintain U.S. technical and economic superiority while ensuring the dependence of others.

**3. Promoting Legitimate Military Power:** Work to uphold military dominance.

**4. Strengthening Soft Power Alongside Hard Power:** Promote the values of the hegemonic system.

**5. Evaluating the Probability of Success in Achieving Goals:** Formulate a smart hegemonic strategy across all dimensions.

Nye ultimately justifies American hegemony through the lens of smart power strategy, proposing that U.S. hegemony should focus on influencing the desires of others.

In the following sections, we will apply the theoretical framework to analyze the context of the hegemonic system's confrontational approach to the Islamic Revolution.

### **3.3. The Fundamental Components of Power:**

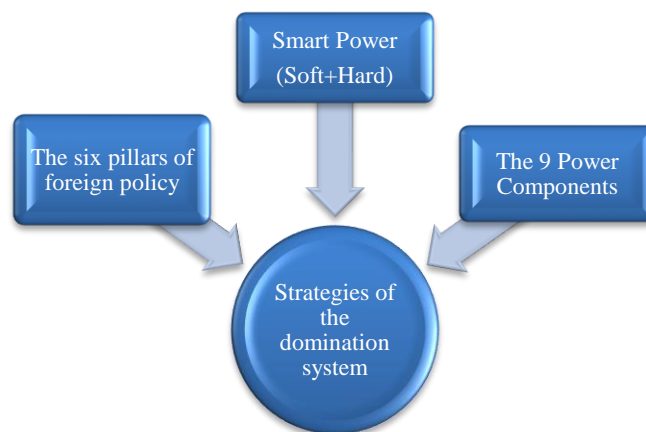
In today's post-industrial and post-modern era, where knowledge and information play a crucial role, Iranian researchers are working to enhance the precision of power measurement components. One comprehensive model currently in use includes nine key components:





**Figure 1:** The 9 Power Components (Salehabadi et al., 1403)

It is evident that the enemy's strategies to counter the rise of the Islamic Revolution are centered around these nine components, which we will discuss individually in the following sections. Consequently, the conceptual model of this research presents these nine strategies within the framework of America's global role and the concept of smart power, as illustrated below:



**Figure 2:** Conceptual model of the strategies of the hegemonic system in the face of the of the Islamic Revolution rise of power

#### **4. Grounds for the Confrontation Between the Hegemonic System and the Islamic Revolution**

The United States' foreign policy has four key pillars aimed at establishing "peace" (Miller, 2012:8). However, this notion of peace often serves as a justification for increasing tension and conflict. The U.S., given its political and military capabilities, tends to justify its presence only in contexts of tension and conflict in a region. By promoting peace, it can effectively prevent the emergence of new powers. The West Asian region, due to its geopolitical significance and location in the Heartland, has always been influenced by hegemonic powers, resulting in border and ideological conflicts. These conflicts are strategically maintained to enable hegemons to play a role in crises and preserve the balance of power.

The rise of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the drafting of its constitution, which transcends geographical boundaries and envisions the creation of an influential Islamic society and government, posed a threat to the hegemony of the world power. The Islamic Republic of Iran has two key characteristics of a power pole: population and culture. It could also develop a third characteristic—economic strength- if not confronted. Consequently, the U.S. decided to leverage its political, military, economic, and cultural resources not only to prevent Iran's progress and economic independence but also to weaken its other power attributes through comprehensive attacks. The United States' national security strategies have reflected this confrontation over the past four years.

The fundamental strategies of the U.S. were established in the form of the "National Security Strategy" in 1947, following World War II and the emergence of the Eastern Bloc. The U.S. National Security Council was formed to develop and implement these strategies. The essence of the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), updated every four years, centers on establishing and strengthening U.S. leadership over the global community. U.S. strategists and officials openly acknowledge the interests of U.S. statesmen and the capitalist system in establishing global dominance (Va`ezi,1388, p.5). To prevent the rise of new power contenders, the hegemonic system must design and formulate its strategies within the framework of its fundamental power components.

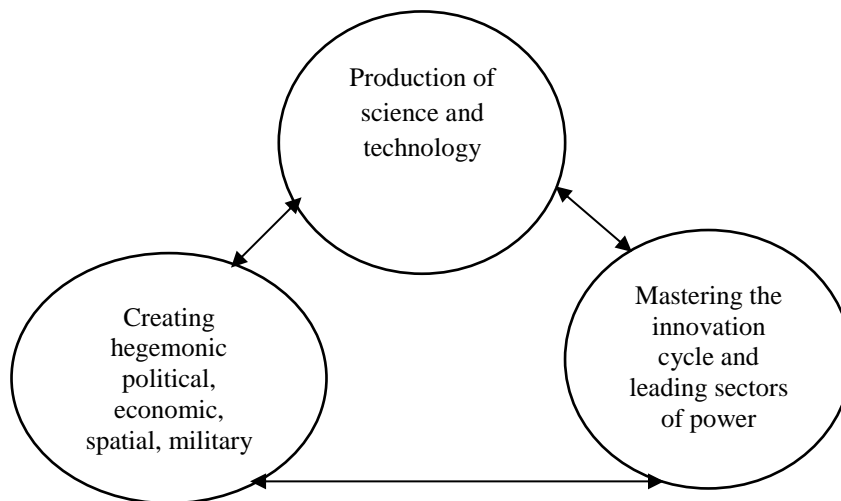
## **5. Strategies of the Hegemonic Regime to Counter the Rising Power of the Islamic Revolution**

To address the previously mentioned areas of conflict, the hegemonic regime has developed nine strategies to undermine the nine components of the Islamic Revolution's power.

### **5-1. Strategies in the Field of Science and Technology**

#### **5-1-1. Strategy to Maintain Technological Superiority**

Science and technology are not only key elements of power but also serve as critical infrastructure for other factors of power. These fields are essential prerequisites for advancing dominating powers and contribute to the authority, sustainable development, progress, and overall advancement of countries as they confront the hegemonic regime. The U.S. National Security Document emphasizes that the development of new technologies is a central aspect of power (Quadrennial Defense Review, 2014: III).



**Figure 3:** Diagram of the national power production cycle (Hedayati, Ahmadvand, Hatami, 1392, p. 131)

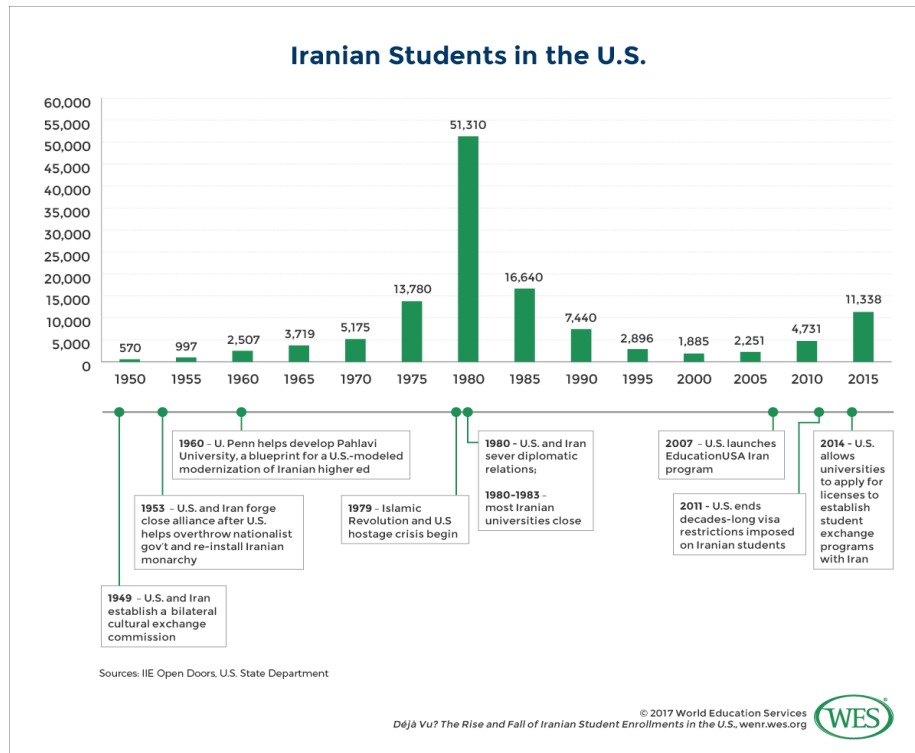
#### **5-1-2. The Strategy of the Philosophy of Science**

Altbach posits that the power system, through its significant influence on scientific and technological functions, has established a kind of information-academic cartel that not only dominates the creation of knowledge but also oversees the primary methods of knowledge distribution (Altbach, 1989, p.

19). Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the world's top universities are situated in the United States. Analyzing student recruitment and acceptance trends in the U.S., which reflect the country's open-door policy, reveals that a key strategy of this dominant system is to instill its imperialist ideology and culture in the minds of elite students from various countries.

The positivist perspective, widely endorsed in many Western academic institutions, views science as neutral, arguing that it exists purely to serve humanity's interests. However, "the directionality of science, from an epistemological standpoint, is not a secret" (Mirbagheri, 2005).

**5-1-3. Student Admission Strategy and Its Influence on Aligning with Hegemonic Goals**



**Figure 4:** The chart below illustrates the number of Iranian students accepted to U.S. universities over various years (Trines, 2017)

Student admissions by hegemonic nations with colonial aspirations exemplify a form of soft influence. These destination countries identify certain students who possess the potential to shape the future of their home countries, attempting to adjust their attitudes and intellectual frameworks to align with hegemonic objectives. As a result, these graduates, influenced by Western ideals, may later become ambivalent within the decision-making structures of the Islamic Revolution's governing system. During critical moments, they may consciously or unconsciously prioritize the interests of the hegemonic system over those of the Islamic Revolution.

The above chart indicates that after the fall of the American-supported Pahlavi regime and the success of the Islamic Revolution, the ruling powers, having lost direct control over Iran, sought to enhance their soft influence. They did this by increasing the number of Iranian students admitted in the years following the revolution, thereby exerting indirect control in Iran.

## **5-2. Economic Strategies**

### **5-2-1. Strategy of Economic Dependence**

Dominant countries often seek to expand their territories and exploit stagnant capital by making other countries economically dependent on them. This strategy manifests as a technological monopoly in advanced nations and as colonialism, often justified under the guise of security, in third-world countries. One significant tool in this system of domination is the creation of multinational corporations. These corporations control a substantial portion of the global economy, collaborating with various nations, and their trade often exceeds the economic capacity of individual countries. Notably, the economies of just 51 companies are equivalent to those of the 49 leading economies in the world (Campbell, Mackinnon & Stevens, 2010, pp. 41-42).

### **5-2-2. Strategy of Multinational Corporations**

Transnational corporations not only dominate the economies of their host countries but also infiltrate political spheres to maintain their influence. They often do this by offering bribes to officials or exerting diplomatic pressure through their home governments. This level of influence requires holding a significant share of the global economy, typically measured by GDP. Recent figures show that the United States has the largest GDP share globally, granting it substantial power to exert influence in both political and economic realms.

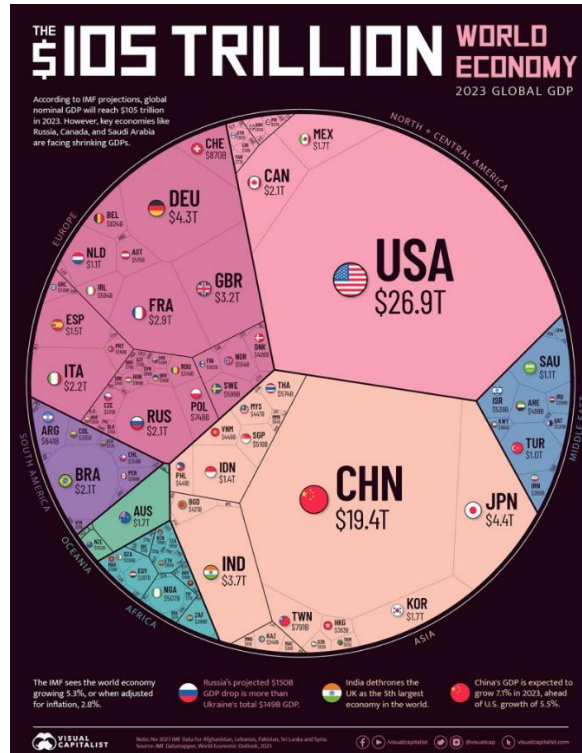


Figure 5: Global GDP by country in 2023 (lunarmobiscuit, 2024)

### 5-2-3. Strategy of Imposing Economic Sanctions

Imposing economic sanctions is a tactic used by dominant powers to exert pressure on nations they wish to control, notably aiming to undermine the Islamic Revolution and prevent its ascendance. Since economic strength is crucial for bolstering other sectors, the United States has consistently imposed severe economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic, often under deceptive pretenses like human rights. These sanctions primarily target two areas:

1. The livelihoods of the population to create economic pressure on the social base of the Islamic Revolution, making them more likely to abandon their ideals.

2. The country is prevented from achieving the added value and accumulated capital necessary for research and development, which impacts essential areas like defense, space, nuclear technology, and medicine.

From the perspective of Wallerstein's world-systems theory, the international system is fundamentally a political structure that sustains capitalism. Thus, the

international system and capitalism are interdependent. Power originates from the capitalist framework. This economic power, obtained through value-added specialization, arises from two key factors: the relentless pursuit of profit by capitalist employers and the central governments that facilitate the functioning of the global economy in service of capitalist interests.

### **5.3-Political Strategies**

#### **5-3-1. International Organizations and Communities Strategy**

In an era where democracy is expanding as a form of governance, the political experience of the United States should serve as a model for other systems around the world. This encourages nations to imitate the American democratic framework and business and entrepreneurship ideology. Collective security partnerships like NATO and economic agreements like NAFTA and the World Trade Organization exemplify this. World leaders should be urged to recognize that the optimal solution for achieving global peace, establishing a new world order, and unifying all major powers under the umbrella of American hegemony is to diminish national sovereignty. (Nicoleta, 2016, p. 174)

#### **5-3-2. Geopolitical Change Strategy**

For instance, when President Bush introduced the Greater Middle East Plan in February 2003, he clearly envisioned the West's intent to establish a new regional order. Subsequent presidents, adhering to U.S. national security directives aimed at confronting asymmetric threats and terrorism, have deemed it necessary to oppose the Islamic Revolution, which supports liberation movements like Hezbollah and Hamas, as a fundamental aspect of this strategy. (Dehghani Firouzabadi & Zabihi, 1391, p. 79)

#### **5-3-3. Training Political Managers Strategy**

A crucial political strategy of the hegemony system involves training managers, elites, and compliant politicians (Jafari, 1396, p. 145) who lack a revolutionary perspective and the ambition for progress and empowerment. These individuals often view development solely through a lens of dependence on the West. Furthermore, political pressure exerted through international organizations and institutions—which serve as instruments of hegemony by superpowers, including the United States—plays a significant role in integrating the political procedures envisioned by this hegemonic system.

#### **5-4. Military Strategies**

The overall perspective of realist views highlights that insecurity is a fundamental and ongoing reality. Consequently, for realists, the focus shifts from security itself to managing insecurity. In this framework, insecurity is authentic, while the notion of security is perceived as elusive (Abdullah Khani, 1389, p.69). The hegemonic system, supported by this theoretical understanding, has consistently sought to generate insecurity in regions such as West Asia, justifying its presence there under the guise of managing this insecurity.

##### **5-4-1. Strategy for Creating and Managing Insecurity**

Following the September 11 attacks, Muslims were widely blamed, creating an opportunity for American leaders to deploy the military dimension of hard power to pursue their hegemonic objectives globally. Under the pretext of combating terrorism—which had resulted in the destruction of the World Trade Center—the U.S. rapidly invaded the Muslim countries of Afghanistan and Iraq. To justify their ongoing presence, they fostered the emergence of terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS in these regions, each playing a distinct role in this American narrative (Saidi, 1395, p.66). Thus, it can be argued that the nurturing of terrorist leaders and the creation of such groups in the West Asian region serve as strategies for the hegemonic system. Just as Al-Qaeda facilitated the U.S. military's entry into the region through its terrorist actions, ISIS allowed for an extended American military presence by committing horrific acts against human rights.

##### **5-4-2. The strategy of Portraying the Islamic Revolution as a Dangerous Enemy**

Similar to how the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor provided a catalyst for America's entry into World War II, the U.S. seeks to justify its military presence in West Asia—primarily aimed at countering Iran's rise—by inciting conflict in the region. Through manipulation of global public opinion, utilizing its media power to evoke emotions, the U.S. aims to portray Iran as the source of these conflicts and itself as the guardian of peace. However, this so-called peace has yet to materialize, despite numerous promises in the countries occupied by the U.S. with the assistance of other hegemonic nations. The levels of violence and conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan have not diminished; rather, they have become increasingly complex (Sa'idi, 1395, p.31).



### 5-4-3. Media Strategy and Propaganda Against the Country's Defense Capabilities

An often-overlooked aspect of this strategy is that the media apparatus of the hegemonic regime rarely presents these terrorist groups as being either dependent on or under the protection of Iran. This absence serves two significant and underlying goals of the hegemonic regime. First, these groups are tasked with undermining Iran's territorial integrity. If they succeed, this could lead to increased insecurity and a breakdown of Iran's security and military authority (as exemplified by attacks on the Islamic Consultative Assembly). If they fail, the Islamic Republic will feel compelled to defend itself, necessitating action against these terrorist groups in neighboring countries to prevent them from encroaching on Iranian borders. The domination regime then frames Iran's response as interference in the region, creating tension with the Islamic Revolution in West Asia, thereby striving for a global consensus that leads to political, economic, and military confrontation against Iran.

This propaganda effort against the military dimension of the Islamic Revolution occurs even as U.S. military spending alone exceeds that of the fifteen leading military powers globally, and it remains involved in numerous conflicts around the world.

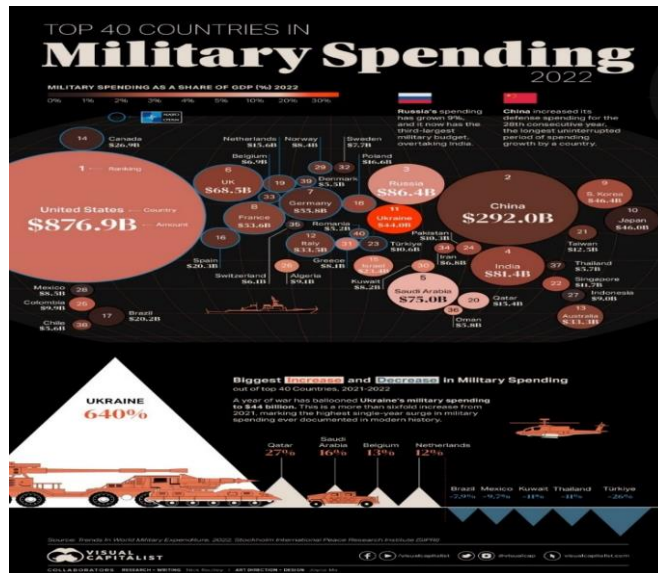


Figure 6: Comparison of US military spending with the top 15 military powers (Rao, 2023)

#### **5-4-4: The Strategy of Strengthening Regional Bases**

A significant portion of the United States military spending is allocated to managing various military bases around the world. These bases operate under independent commands with the aim of maintaining U.S. military superiority, as illustrated in the accompanying figure. These bases exemplify the use of hard power in pursuing hegemony. While the media and psychological operations wing of the hegemonic system attempts to project a heroic image of the American military, historical records reveal that the U.S. military has intervened in numerous countries, including Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, often leaving behind devastation, violence, and suffering among civilians.

These regional bases were primarily established to enable the rapid deployment of forces to target countries and engage in military conflicts, which frequently result in civilian casualties. As shown in another figure, prior to the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the largest American military presence was concentrated in West Asia, particularly at the CENTCOM base. An important observation is that the U.S. has positioned a significant number of its military forces far from its own borders, which inherently fosters insecurity among the countries in that region.

Conversely, the United States has been exerting political and economic pressure to diminish the defense capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, viewed as a strategic adversary in this region. In recent years, the U.S. has sought to enhance the military capabilities of its regional allies to counter perceived threats in Southwest Asia, including Iran and the Islamic resistance movement. Consequently, it has transferred a substantial volume of military weapons to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other nations along the Persian Gulf. This American strategy, which has evolved into a form of soft hegemony, is framed as a legitimate means of ensuring the security of its allies. As in the past, little public acknowledgment exists of the extensive presence of U.S. military forces and advisors and the implementation of laws such as capitulation, which typically generate sensitivity and tension. (Mohammadi Zia, 1396, p.28).

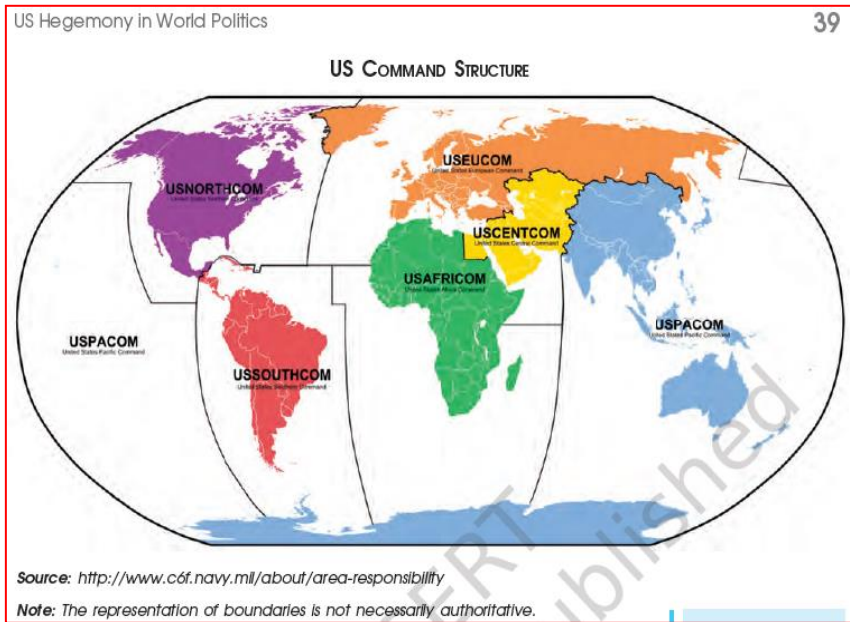


Figure 7: US regional military Commands around the world (Ayesha, Jabu and Andrei, 2018:39)

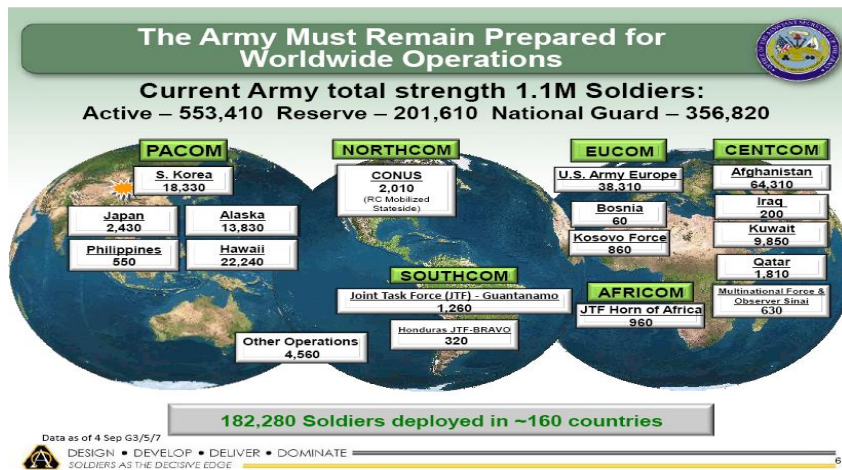


Figure 8: Distribution of the number of American soldiers in different military commands of the world (Ayesha, Jabu and Andrei, 2018:39)

#### **5-4-5. Strategy of Arming Allies**

In recent years, the hegemonic regime has attempted to diminish the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region by bolstering the role and power of the Zionist regime in Southwest Asia. This has involved strengthening the military capabilities of Israel. The Abraham Accords and the Arab peace initiatives with Israel, which took place during Donald Trump's presidency, were largely based on the threatening image of the Islamic Revolution that the hegemonic regime projected to the Arab nations. However, the primary threat in the region comes from the presence of Western hegemonic regimes, which, by making regional countries dependent on them, hinder their progress.

This strategy is grounded in the understanding that the Islamic world's path to achieving power and exporting the Islamic Revolution involves cooperation and convergence among the countries in the West Asian region. In the past, the hegemonic regime has pursued strategies aimed at sowing discord among nations and creating conditions of insecurity to prevent the emergence of new regional powers.

#### **5-5. Cultural Strategies**

While hard power is traditionally viewed as the foundation for maintaining hegemony and superiority in the world, the advancement of technology and the expansion of communication in the global village indicate that soft power will become increasingly vital in the competition for global dominance. A country that successfully institutionalizes its culture in the global public consciousness through tools such as media and social networks, as well as by cultivating elites, can emerge as a significant power on the world stage. Nicoleta notes that although the United States is likely to remain a great power in human history, this does not imply that the struggle for global leadership will cease. This struggle transcends military might, requiring a more nuanced and intelligent approach that first influences economic leaders, then the public, and ultimately the political class through economic, political, social, and cultural means (Nicoleta, 2016: 176).

##### **5-5-1. The strategy of Islamophobia and Iran phobia**

This influence manifests itself as cultural domination in developing countries, which hold worldviews differing from the West. Cultural domination is described as the one-sided exchange of cultural elements and phenomena (Jafari and Ghorbi, 1392, p. 72). In response to the Islamic Revolution, this phenomenon takes the form of Islamophobia and Iran phobia, portraying Iran as a supporter of terrorism.

### **5-5-2. The Strategy of Weakening Religious and National Beliefs\*\***

A significant portion of the cultural strategy aimed at undermining the religious and national beliefs of the populace is executed through public diplomacy and media tactics. In recent years, the role of the media has shifted from “pure propaganda” to “public diplomacy,” which involves communication with non-state actors. Hence, we will discuss the media's role in enhancing the public diplomacy of the hegemonic system. Public diplomacy encompasses dimensions beyond traditional diplomacy, including:

- Influencing public opinion in other countries by governments.
- Engaging with private and non-governmental groups abroad.
- Informing both domestic and international audiences about global developments and their implications for domestic politics.
- Connecting with individuals in communications roles, such as diplomats and foreign journalists (Wolf & Rosen, 2004: 2).

### **5-5-3. New Public Diplomacy Strategy**

The information revolution and the evolving concept of power have created new forms of public diplomacy, including digital and electronic diplomacy. In this approach, digital channels facilitate dialogue between people from different countries. A notable example is the establishment of the U.S. virtual embassy in Iran in 2011, which aimed to enhance communication between the Iranian people and the United States.

Unlike traditional public diplomacy, which has primarily been conducted by governments, new public diplomacy involves organizations and non-governmental actors. Today, various entities—including individuals, corporations, media networks, terrorist organizations, military alliances, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—utilize public diplomacy to pursue their interests. This form of diplomacy relies on soft power, encourages two-way communication, and focuses on information management, branding, and building a national image. Its objective is to foster dialogue between both adversaries and allies. The foundation of new public diplomacy is based on listening to messages from other countries and engaging in two-way communication (Grunig, 1993, pp. 137-162).

In today's world, the Internet is a vital tool for disseminating information. Almost all state and non-state actors use websites to present their history, culture, policies, values, scientific advancements, and other achievements (Drezner and Farrell, 2004: 32-40).

	<b>Traditional Public Diplomacy</b>	<b>Modern Public Diplomacy</b>
<b>Communication Model</b>	<b>One-way</b>	<b>Two-way and dialogue-based</b>
<b>Main Concern</b>	<b>The nature of the message and the method of transmission (messaging)</b>	<b>Building relationships</b>
<b>Communication Method</b>	<b>Monologue</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Influence on the public</b>	<b>Encouraging citizens to take action and creating a conducive environment for supporting the country's policies</b>
<b>Actors</b>	<b>Mainly government forces</b>	<b>Mainly non-governmental groups and institutions</b>

**Figure 9:** Differences between traditional and modern public diplomacy (adapted from Hadian, Saeedi: 1392)

#### **5-5-4. Networking Strategy**

The primary reason for hegemonic media's dominance is its ability to spread messages in a "networked" manner. Much of the Western media is controlled by Zionist interests with specific agendas, allowing them to disseminate desired messages more effectively. The Iran Information Project is an illustrative example of this networking.

In January 2013, the Israeli-American Cooperation (AICE) launched a project called "Iran Intelligence" This initiative aimed to mobilize global public opinion against Iran's nuclear activities by providing analyses from various experts and featuring both primary and secondary sources on a dedicated website. The project does not focus solely on Iranian nuclear issues; it also provides resources related to political matters, human rights, and Iran-Israel relations, both before and after the Islamic Revolution. The website outlines its mission as follows:

- a. To serve as a driving force for research, study, and discussions about Iran's nuclear program.
- b. To provide essential educational resources on key aspects of Iran's nuclear program.
- c. To publicize documents and evidence aimed at halting Iran's nuclear program.
- d. To analyze the behavior and actions of Iranian leaders regarding the nuclear program.

e. To identify issues beyond Iran's nuclear program that may pose threats to the international community.

Another example of networking is the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), which includes the Iran Studies Project. This initiative translates significant analyses from Iranian media covering vital topics such as nuclear issues, military developments, speeches by Iranian leaders, the influence of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, political instability in Iran, and news from Friday prayers.

## **5-6. Social Strategies**

### **5-6-1. Strategy for Intelligent Communication with the Audience**

One media technique the hegemonic system employs is "point scoring." In this approach, individuals should discuss supporting topics while attacking those they oppose. Media outlets associated with the hegemonic system use this method to counter the increasing power of the Islamic Revolution.

### **5-6-2. The strategy of Showing Empathy for Both Sides**

The dominant media aims to win over the hearts and minds of those who oppose the prevailing regime while maintaining the support of those favorable to the West. The first step in gaining Western support is to express a desire for peace and a better future for all children, irrespective of nationality. If the core of the communication is framed as "the West is right, and you are wrong," it is likely to alienate potential Western supporters. Instead, acknowledging the values and beliefs of the opposing side can foster credibility and empathy. For example, recognizing the importance of historical figures to the other side can help build rapport by stating, "I understand and sympathize with you on these issues..."

### **5-6-3. The Strategy of Differentiating Between Leaders and People**

This method emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between leaders and their citizens. For instance, in discussions about Iranian leadership, one could say, "We know that Iranians deserve leaders who care about their well-being instead of those who use the country's resources to fund terrorism or enrich themselves in Swiss bank accounts. Iranians need education, not bombs; they want infrastructure, not missiles."

### **5-6-4. The strategy of Acknowledging Western Mistakes**

This strategy argues against the notion that the West is free of mistakes. Claiming that the West has made no errors will likely undermine the credibility of other statements made. Instead, it is more effective to

acknowledge past errors openly. For example, one might say, “I know that America and the West, in their efforts to protect citizens from terrorists, have mistakenly harmed innocent people; we recognize and regret this. But how can the West effectively defend its citizens? Are Westerners perfect? No. Do they make mistakes? Yes. Yet, we aspire for a better future and are committed to achieving it.”

#### **5-6-5. The strategy of Discussing the Other Side’s Militarism**

This strategy emphasizes that discussing the militaristic tendencies of the opposing side, in this case, the Iranians, can be effective in garnering empathy from others. For instance, one might say, “Achieving peaceful relations requires cooperation among political, business, and military leaders on both sides. We urge the other side to refrain from using language that threatens or promotes aggression.” (The Israel Project, 2009, p. 8).

#### **5-6-6. Strategy of De-Ideologization**

The primary factor in the West's conflict with the Islamic Republic arises from the ideological nature of its regime. As a result, both Zionism and the West are actively seeking to de-ideologize Iranian society through cultural and social initiatives. Influential pro-Western media outlets often portray the actions and activities of the Islamic Republic as significant threats to global peace and security. They exaggerate security threats posed by Iran through the lens of Iran phobia and disseminate a great deal of propaganda, portraying Iran as the foremost security threat in the region. Such propaganda includes alarmist narratives about Iran's ambitions for nuclear weapons, the risks associated with Islamic fundamentalism, the country's efforts to export its revolution, and its support for Islamic movements (Haji Yousefi, 1382: pp. 102-110).

There is ample evidence that the media—particularly those supporting the hegemonic system—plays a central role in promoting Islamophobia across the globe, notably in Western societies (Sa’idi, 1395, p. 34). Utilizing their influential tools, these entities attempt to shape reality in a way that justifies the hegemonic policies while presenting themselves as the saviors and supporters of the world. Countries opposing the hegemonic system are framed as the sources of insecurity. The overarching goal of the hegemonic system's social and cultural efforts against Iran, facilitated by media tools, is to change beliefs and values. This aligns with the theory of layered analysis of causes: changes in beliefs lead to subsequent changes in values, behaviors, and preferences, ultimately fostering Islamophobia and undermining the perception of religion's role in governance.



## **5-7. Transboundary Strategies**

### **5-7-1. Globalization Strategy**

The hegemonic regime pursues its objectives through a globalization agenda. Globalization is a process that has emerged in response to global developments and advancements in communication and media. It facilitates and intensifies interactions and relationships among nations across various fields. This process engages human societies in challenges encompassing economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions, confronting humanity with a complex world (Nekooie Samani, 1387, p. 62, as cited by Derakhsheh, Rahmati, and Javari, 1392, p. 128).

Globalization can have positive attributes, such as being humane and liberating, or it can have negative aspects, rendering it inhumane and domineering. When globalization aims to promote equitable economic conditions, a uniform standard of living, and universal insights while eliminating discrimination and inequality among societies, it embodies a valuable and positive ideal. However, the motivations behind the hegemonic system's approach to globalization often contradict these objectives. The goal instead leans towards creating an unequal world centered around the superiority of Western intellectual, economic, and political systems. To pursue this aim, organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization have been established in alignment with this theory to serve Western global dominance through globalization.

### **5-7-2. Strategy of Multinational Corporations**

Multinational or transnational corporations are prominent features of globalization. They operate on a global scale. According to Ray Kiely and Phil Marfleet (1998), "Transnational corporations can ignore some nation-states, especially weak third-world countries." These corporations represent an external challenge for nation-states due to their significant consumer market and influence. The financial power of 51 companies from the top 100 economies in the world is equal to that of the remaining 49 countries with the highest economies (Campbell, Mackinnon & Stevens, 2010, pp. 41-42).

In addition to dominating the economies of host countries, transnational companies also influence the political sphere and strive to maintain their dominance through tactics such as bribery and economic pressure. These corporations engage in unethical, immoral, and illegal actions to control global markets and further their own interests. A notable example is the involvement of the multinational company ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph) in Chile, where it organized a military coup against President Allende.

### **5-8. Space Strategies**

Satellites are often viewed as the eyes, ears, and nerves of military forces. Great powers, aware of the critical role space plays in military strategy, utilize it to counter threats from adversaries. Currently, the militarization of space and the deployment of space-based military assets pose significant challenges to the international community (Zargar, 1389,p. 695, quoted by Johannes, 2003). Many of the threats primarily target nations lacking advanced technological capabilities, especially in space.

U.S. military documents frequently emphasize the goals of "space control" and "space dominance." The United States aims to deploy weapons in space in the future and is looking to reintroduce space into the battlefield. Consequently, the U.S. has invested heavily in space activities for decades and has encouraged other nations to establish a more significant presence in space. Russia, as the primary successor to the Soviet Union and its substantial space capabilities, remains a major competitor to the U.S. In recent years, China has also emerged as a critical rival, strongly opposing U.S. space policies and arguing that the prospect of U.S. national dominance in space contradicts the established legal framework governing outer space (Zargar, 1389: 698, quoted in Grossman, 2000).

#### **5-8-1. Coercive Space Laws Applied to Less Developed Countries**

An examination of the legal frameworks and performance records of superpowers in space reveals that the United States seeks to maintain its superiority beyond Earth's atmosphere. In line with its doctrine to prevent the emergence of new powers, the U.S. aims to hinder the progress of rival countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, in this domain. A key strategy of the hegemonic system involves enforcing cumbersome international laws that restrict Iran's space activities. These laws are often enacted with the expectation that superpowers can violate them without consequence, while other nations face punishment and sanctions if they do the same. Specifically, sanctions under Article 7 of the UN Charter label Iran's military and missile activities as dangerous. However, military and defense activities are only one aspect of space technology; advancements in this area can significantly contribute to many national interests.

#### **5-8-2. Negative Propaganda Strategy Regarding the Military Use of Space**

Space offers numerous communication, commercial, welfare, and economic opportunities for countries. Space technology can be employed to gather information, monitor conditions, and assess environmental and resource management within specific regions. The benefits of advancing in space

technology include improved mobility, enhanced security, better information production and exchange, increased scientific collaboration, and the development of communication infrastructures such as the Internet. However, the hegemonic regime seeks to prevent Iran from achieving these national interests by focusing solely on its military applications, conducting psychological operations that emphasize the deterrent capabilities of the Islamic Republic, and portraying it in a threatening light.

### **5-9. Territorial Strategies**

Joseph Nye argues that the balance of power does not stem from centers of power but rather from centers of threat. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, threats to U.S. national security were primarily associated with the Eastern Bloc, while threats in the Middle East were considered significant factors shaping U.S. foreign policy in that region. This perspective led to support for emerging states with borders drawn according to the interests of great powers. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union shifted the security discourse in the West. Now, the national interests of Israel and the U.S. were perceived as being threatened by extremist nations, such as Iran and Iraq. Washington and Tel Aviv's strategy to enhance security involved stimulating ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities within these countries to foster their separation from the central government, thereby diminishing the power of those nations in relation to Israel. While this initiative began after the Soviet Union's collapse, it entered a new phase with the occupation of Iraq. From this viewpoint, the shift in the global distribution of power (the structure of the international system) is seen as a driving force behind Washington and its allies' Middle East policy, which aims at national disintegration and divergence.

#### **5-9-1. National Disintegration and Divergence Strategy**

In late September 2007, the U.S. Senate approved a plan to partition Iraq into three regions: Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish (Levey, 2007). This plan is significant because it involves the division of another nation and was proposed and endorsed by a U.S. legislative body. Although the approval of this plan is not binding on the White House, it draws attention to the potential disintegration of Iraq and serves as a warning to the countries in the region. (Deylami Mo'ezzi & Shoj'a, 1387, p.107)

#### **5-9-2. Strategy of Ethnic and Territorial Division**

One of the primary foundations of any nation's power is its territorial integrity. Therefore, it can be argued that the strategy of the hegemonic system involves

generating crises and territorial threats to prevent the Islamic Revolution from consolidating its power. This includes efforts to provoke tribal and sectarian divisions and facilitate the establishment of new borders around Iran. Shimon Peres, a former deputy prime minister of Israel, openly acknowledged in December 2002 that the United States and Israel were involved in efforts aimed at the dismemberment of Iranian territory. Actions such as inciting Pan-Arab and Pan-Turk movements and supporting Kurdish armed groups are part of the West's strategy to destabilize the territories of the Islamic Revolution. Initially, the United States sought to undermine Islam, the foundation of the Islamic Revolution's rise, by fostering Al-Qaeda in eastern Iran. When that strategy failed to produce the desired outcomes, the U.S. introduced ISIS as a representation of revolutionary Salafism. However, the true objective remained to threaten Iran's territorial borders, this time through its significant neighbor, Shiite Iraq, by leveraging global human resources.

### **5-9-3. Strategy of Creating and Equipping Militia Groups on Territorial Borders**

It is crucial to recognize that the United States has created and armed militia groups aimed at threatening territorial borders and generating insecurity for the Islamic Republic. This strategy serves dual purposes: it exerts indirect pressure and threats while simultaneously utilizing media influence and hegemonic diplomacy to impose direct pressure. The U.S. frames Iran's defense of its territorial borders as regional interference, presenting the enhancement of Iran's missile and defense capabilities as a threat to Europe and the West. To prevent Iran from pursuing its national interests in these areas, the U.S. applies international sanctions and diplomatic pressures.

### **Conclusion and Strategic Suggestions**

The hegemony(domination) system, led by the United States as the dominant power in the Western world, operates with the objective of maintaining its superiority. From a realist perspective, one of the key goals of U.S. foreign policy is to prevent the rise of third countries. Patrick Callahan has emphasized this idea. To achieve this goal, the United States employs a strategy known as "smart power," which combines soft and hard power, taking into account available resources and assessing objectives and outcomes.

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran emerged as a nation with the potential to become a regional and global power. After the West and East failed to control this revolution, Iran posed a significant threat to the global powers within the hegemony system. This threat stems from Iran's ambition to establish itself as a global power based on revolutionary

Islamic ideology, which is fundamentally opposed to the principles of arrogance and hegemony. Consequently, the hegemony(domination) system has worked diligently to counter Iran's growth. It does so by leveraging its capabilities across various domains, such as science and technology, and by formulating and executing strategies aimed at limiting Iran's potential as the center of the Islamic Revolution. These strategies focus on weakening Iran's domestic and regional positions across political, military, economic, cultural, social, and territorial domains, with the ultimate goal of dismantling the current system in Iran and replacing it with a dependent one.

Identifying these strategies is crucial for implementing effective defensive and countermeasures. To confront the challenges posed by the hegemony system, the following suggestions are proposed:

**1. Political Sphere:** The Islamic Revolution should continue to cultivate revolutionary, loyal, and anti-arrogance activists, modeling them after exemplary figures from the revolution. This includes identifying and, if possible, closing off avenues of influence that create dependency within this sector.

**2. Cultural and Social Sphere:** Many strategies in this area rely on media and cyberspace, so it is essential to enhance the production of indigenous and revolutionary content. This endeavor requires investment and the training of specialized personnel who can skillfully utilize software capabilities to align with the objectives of the Islamic Revolution.

**3. Economic Sphere:** It is important to invest in non-oil and transformation industries to reduce reliance on crude oil sales. Increasing participation in the global supply and demand system based on actual needs will ensure that, in the event of unilateral sanctions imposed by hegemonic forces, Iran can produce technological and value-added products that the global market requires—products for which no easy alternatives exist. Additionally, establishing regional common markets with neighboring and Islamic countries can foster economic convergence, ultimately empowering Iran in the economic sphere.

**4. Military Sphere:** Enhancing deterrence capabilities, particularly in air and electronic warfare, is crucial. As military and security technology advances, network security, and information protection have become vital security concerns. The hegemony system seeks to undermine infrastructure or extract critical information through cyberattacks. Therefore, it is essential to train skilled specialists in this field, drawing on the experiences of allies.

**5. Territorial and Transboundary Areas:** The Islamic Republic should initially seek to establish non-aggression pacts with neighboring countries. Subsequently, measures to enhance economic relations and facilitate tourism

(such as by eliminating visa requirements) should be adopted to counteract strategies aimed at promoting Iran phobia.

**6. Space Field:** Iran should utilize its indigenous knowledge to exploit available space opportunities. However, the hegemony system is expected to enact restrictive measures as soon as it detects advancements from the Islamic Revolution in this area.

Implementing these strategies will help Iran better navigate the complexities of its geopolitical landscape and foster its growth as a resilient power.

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