

Trump and the Politics of Hegemony: Between Theory and Practice

(Translated)

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Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) in international relations is a concept deeply rooted in the fields of political science, economics, and history. This theory posits that the international system tends toward stability when a specific state serves as the dominant global power. Charles P. Kindleberger was the first to articulate this theory in his book, "The World in Depression (1929–1939)" mentioning, "the financial importance (hegemony) of London." In 2004, prominent political scientists James Fearon and David Laitin wrote of how the United States is now moving toward a form of global governance. They concluded that relevant, yet previously disregarded, conventions should be revived to facilitate the adoption of a new form of trusteeship.

In his paper, "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States," Stephen Krasner observed, "Left to their own devices, collapsed and badly governed states will not fix themselves because they have limited administrative capacity, not least with regard to maintaining internal security... In collapsed or near-collapsed states, however, external actors would have to provide resources at least for some period of time."

On the political front, and in the aftermath of the war in Iraq, George H. W. Bush, Bush Senior, perceiving the United States' supremacy, proclaimed a "New World Order" In his speech, "Toward a New World Order," delivered on 11 September 1990 during a joint session of the US Congress, thereby outlining the contours of American hegemony on the international stage. Furthermore, some trace the origins of this policy of hegemony to President Reagan's announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative, widely known as "Star Wars."

In the late 1990s, what came to be known as the "Project for the New American Century (PNAC)" emerged a project positing that American power, if utilized correctly, is capable of reshaping the international order along democratic lines, asking pointedly, "Does the United States have the resolve to shape a new century favourable to American principles and interests?" George W. Bush, Bush Junior, drew upon this framework in his foreign policy, famously concluding, in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, that "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

With Trump's rise to the presidency, he left no room for ambiguity, bringing into sharp focus the full scope of his policy of hegemony. In a statement delivered during a press conference, he threatened to use military force to annex the Panama Canal and Greenland, to rename the Gulf of Mexico, to employ economic leverage against Canada, and to turn the Middle East into a living hell.

Furthermore, during his Senate confirmation hearing, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio explained, with striking clarity, how Trump had renounced the world order crafted by his predecessors. He stated on 15 January 2025, "The post-war global order is not just obsolete, it is now a weapon being used against us." He further asserted that the rules-based international order was built upon a false premise and, consequently, had to be abandoned.

In this vein, the leaders of Germany, France, and Canada have asserted that Trump is actively working to dismantle the international order; indeed, politicians and analysts alike are nearly unanimous in the view that the new international order is tilting toward absolute American hegemony.

Trump did not wait long before embarking upon acts of hegemony in all their manifestations. On the economic front, he siphoned trillions of dollars from the Gulf States, imposed tariffs on everyone, including his own allies, and demanded access to rare earth minerals from Ukraine, Taiwan, and other nations. Politically, he withdrew from dozens of international organizations, including various United Nations agencies, and announced the establishment of a "Board of Peace" in an attempt to bypass the United Nations itself. Furthermore, in a blatant act of interference, he objected to the designation of Nouri al-Maliki

as Prime Minister of Iraq, and openly declared that he was the one who had appointed Syria's President, Ahmed al-Sharaa.

On the military front, he participated in the destruction of the Gaza Strip in an attempt to extinguish the flame of Jihad, a flame that has remained burning since 1948. In a historic precedent, he orchestrated the abduction of the President of Venezuela from his very bed; he declared his intention to seize Greenland, by force if necessary, and issued threats to invade both Colombia and Mexico. Shortly thereafter, he returned to the Middle East to strike at Iran in an endeavor to contain its influence. While this may have been the immediate objective behind the strike on Iran, an analysis through the lens of Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) reveals that the true target is, in fact, the entire Middle East. This premise rests upon the assertions of Bernard Lewis, often regarded as the godfather of the theory advocating for the repartitioning of Middle Eastern states to facilitate their control, who famously stated in his book, "The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror" that "Americans were willing to use both force and intrigue to install or restore their puppet rulers in Middle Eastern countries."

Geopolitically, the Middle East constitutes the very heart of the world; ideologically, it serves as the beating heart of the Islamic Ummah, a community bound together by an Aqeedah (doctrine) deeply rooted in the earth, with its branches reaching toward the heavens. It is this very nature that has rendered it a source of profound fear and anxiety for Western policymakers. Indeed, a plethora of research, studies, and public statements have emerged reflecting this sentiment. Among these, to cite but one example, are the remarks made by Tony Blair, the former British Prime Minister, in a speech to the defence thinktank Rusi marking the 20th anniversary of 11 September 2001, "Islamism, both the ideology and the violence, is a first-order security threat; and, unchecked, it will come to us, even if centred far from us, as 9/11 demonstrated."

The aforementioned American analyst Stephen Krasner proposed a solution to managing troublesome states, saying, "Protectorates were one alternative to conventional sovereignty; the rulers of a protectorate relinquished control over foreign policy to a more powerful state but retained authority over domestic affairs." Regarding Islam, specifically, former CIA Director and US Secretary of State said to a church group in his hometown of Wichita in 2014, "The threat to America is from people who deeply believe that Islam is the way and the light and the only answer." And George W. Bush declared on 29 September 2006, "And they don't like it because we know they know we stand in their way of their ambitions in the Middle East, their ambitions to spread their hateful ideology as a caliphate from Spain to Indonesia."

Throughout history, both past and present, the West has recognized the threat posed by the unity of the Ummah; consequently, it has strived to fragment and scatter it into petty states, and continues to sow the seeds of discord among them. This stands in contrast to the divine guidance, for Allah (swt) has urged us toward unity, stating, ﴿إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾ **Indeed, this religion of yours is only one, and I am your Lord, so worship Me alone.** [TMQ Surah Al-Anbya, 21:93]. Furthermore, He (swt) has forbidden us from division and fragmentation, as He (swt) declared, ﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ **And do not be like those who split into sects and differed after clear proofs had come to them. It is they who will suffer a tremendous punishment.** [TMQ Surah Aal-i-Imran, 3:105].

Political unity is not merely an option; instead, it is a Shariah obligation—as stated by the Messenger of Allah (saw) in the Hadith narrated by Muslim, «إِذَا بُوِيَ لِخَلِيفَتَيْنِ فَأَقْتُلُوا الْآخَرَ مِنْهُمَا» **"If allegiance is pledged to two Khaleefahs, then kill the latter of the two."** So, shall we not pledge allegiance to an Imam through whom we may repel this American hegemony? The Prophet (saw) said, «إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ، يَفَاتُلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيَتَّقَى بِهِ» **"Indeed, the Imam is a shield; one fights from behind him and seeks protection through him."** [This is an authentic Sahih Hadith, narrated by Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him)].