

## **STUDY COURSE MATERIAL** **POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**SESSION-2020-21**

**CLASS-XII**

### **TOPIC: US HEGEMONY IN WORLD POLITICS**

#### **DAY-1**

#### **Beginning of the 'New World Order' by the US**

- The disintegration of USSR led to the beginning of the US hegemony in 1991. It remained with all its powers enhanced and intact.
- Kuwait was invaded by Iraq in August 1990 and was subsequently annexed. After a series of diplomatic attempts failed at convincing Iraq to quit its aggression, the United Nations mandated the liberation of Kuwait by force. This decision of UN was hailed by the US President George HW Bush as the emergence of a 'New World Order.'
- The First Gulf War took place in which Iraq was defeated by a coalition force of 660,000 troops from 34 countries. It was known as 'Operation Desert Storm' or 'First Gulf War'.
- The war was overwhelmingly American. It revealed the vast technological gap that had opened up between the US military capability and other countries.

#### **The Clinton Years**

- George HW Bush lost the US Presidential elections of 1992 to William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton of the Democratic Party.
- During this era, it was believed that the US had withdrawn into its internal affairs and was not fully engaged in world politics.
- The government led by Clinton focused on 'soft issues' like democracy promotion, climate change and world trade rather than 'hard politics'.
- Still, the US showed its military powers. Firstly, in 1999 in response to Yugoslavian actions against the pre-dominantly Albanian population in the province of Kosovo. Secondly, in response to the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam.
- 'Operation Infinite Reach', launched by the US, was a series of cruise missile strikes on Al-Qaeda terrorist targets in Sudan and Afghanistan

# DAY-2

## 9/11 and the 'Global War on Terror'

- On 11th September 2001, four American commercial aircrafts were hijacked and flew into important buildings in the US.
- The first and second airline crashed into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Centre (New York), the third crashed into the Pentagon building (Arlington, Virginia) and the fourth aircraft came down in a field in Pennsylvania. These attacks came to be known as '9/11'.
- The US response to 9/11 was swift and ferocious. George W Bush had succeeded Clinton in the US Presidency.
- The US launched 'Operation Enduring Freedom' as a part of its 'Global War on Terror'.
- The operation was against all those suspected to be behind the 9/11 attack, mainly Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.
- Arrests were made all over the world by the US forces often without the knowledge of the government of the persons being arrested.
- These persons were transported across countries and detained in secret prisons.



## The Iraq Invasion

- Operation Iraqi Freedom' was launched by the US on 19th March, 2003 and was joined by more than forty other countries.
- The purpose of the invasion was to prevent Iraq from developing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).
- As there was no evidence of WMD, it is speculated that the invasion was motivated by other objectives such as controlling Iraqi oilfields, etc.
- The US invasion of Iraq was both a military and political failure as around 3000 US military personnel were lost and Iraqi casualties were much higher.

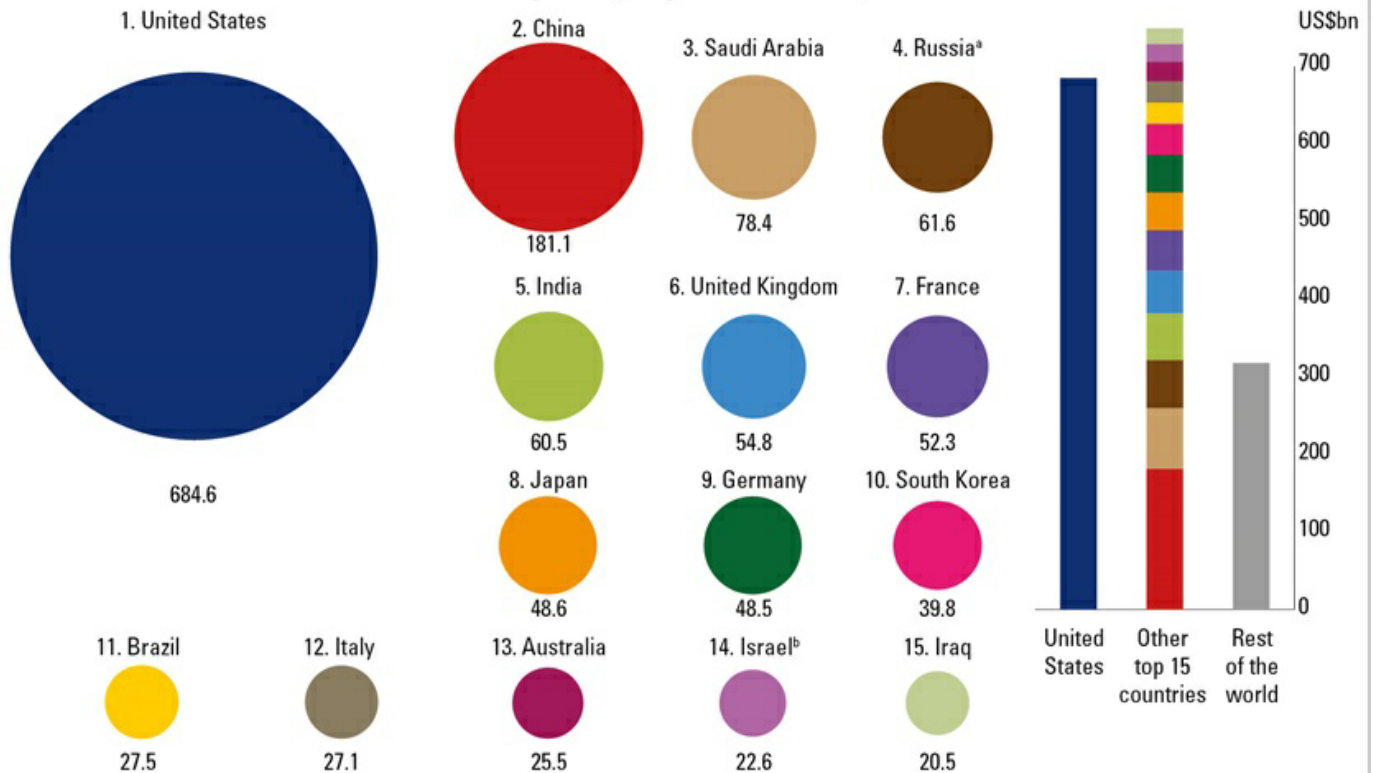
## Meaning of Hegemony

- The word 'hegemony' means the leadership or predominance of one state over others by virtue of its military, economic, political power and cultural superiority.
- Politics is all about gaining power. In world politics, countries and groups of countries are engaged in constantly trying to gain and retain power.
- It is important to understand the distribution of power among the countries of the world in order to understand world politics.
- During the Cold War Era, there were two superpowers, the US and the USSR. But after the disintegration of USSR, only a single power was left i.e. the US.
- The international system dominated by a sole superpower or hyper-power is sometimes called a 'Unipolar system'.

## Hegemony as Hard Power

- Hegemony relates to the relations, patterns and balances of military capability between states.
- The base of US power lies in the overwhelming superiority of its military power. It is both absolute and relative.
- The military dominance of the US is not just based on higher military spending but on a qualitative gap.
- But still, the US invasion of Iraq reveals weakness of American power as it was not able to force the Iraqi people into submitting to the occupation forces of the US-led coalition.

### Defence spending: top 15 in 2019† US\$bn



\*Total defence expenditure, including National Guard, Federal Border Service and military pensions; <sup>b</sup>Includes US Foreign Military Assistance

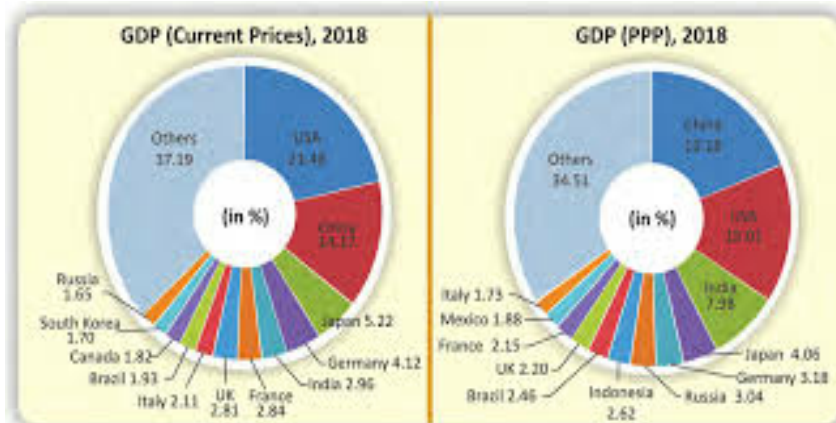
Note: US dollar totals are calculated using average market exchange rates for 2019, derived using IMF data. The relative position of countries will vary not only as a result of actual adjustments in defence-spending levels, but also due to exchange-rate fluctuations between domestic currencies and the US dollar. The use of average exchange rates reduces these fluctuations, but the effects of such movements can be significant in a number of cases.

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† At current prices and exchange rates

## Hegemony as Structural Power

- The idea behind this type of hegemony is that an open world economy requires a Hegemon or dominant power to support its creation and existence.
- In this sense, hegemony is reflected in the role played by the US in providing global public goods. The best examples of global public goods are Sea-Lanes of Communication (SLOCs), Internet, roads, etc.
- The economic preponderance of the US is inseparable from its structural power, which is the power to shape the global economy in a particular way.
- Another example of the structural power of the US is the academic degree called the Masters in Business Administration (MBA). The idea of teaching skills for business is uniquely American.



## Hegemony as Soft Power

- In this type of hegemony, it implies class ascendancy in the social, political and particularly ideological spheres.
- It suggests that a dominant power not only possess military power but also ideological resources to shape the behavior of competing and lesser powers.
- The US predominance in the world is based not only on its military power and economic powers but on its cultural presence.
- During the Cold War, the US scored notable victories in the area of structural power and soft power rather than hard power.

## Overcoming the Hegemony

- It is important to understand that there is no single power to balance the US military. There are various strategies which can be helpful to overcome the hegemony.
- According to the Bandwagon Strategy, it is suggested that instead of engaging in activities opposed to the hegemonic power, it is advisable to extract benefits by operating within the hegemonic system.
- Hide Strategy implies staying as far removed from the dominant power as possible. China, Russia and the European Union are many examples of this behaviour.
- Another belief is that resistance to American hegemony may come from non-state actors rather than other states. It is believed that challenges to US hegemony will come from a combination of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), social movements and public opinion.

## Important Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85aPVBavIXU>

# DAY-4

## Constraints on American Power

- There are three constraints on American power. The institutional architecture of the America is the first constraint.
- The second constraint is domestic in nature and stems from the open nature of American society. There is a deep scepticism regarding the purposes and methods of government in American political culture.
- The third constraint on American power is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) which is only organisation in the international system that could possibly moderate the exercise of American power.

## India's Relationship with the US

- During the Cold War, India closest friendship was with the Soviet Union.
- Over the years, India decided to liberalise its economy and integrate it with the global economy. This made India an attractive economic partner for a number of countries including the US.
- Two new factors emerged in Indo-US relations in recent years. They include :
  - Technological dimension
  - The role of the Indian-American Diaspora.

There are three different strategies to decide what kind of relationship India should have with USA. They are as follows :

- Those Indian analysts, who see international politics in terms of military power, prefer that India should maintain its distance from US and should focus upon increasing its own national power.
- Other analysts see the growing convergence of interests between US and India as a historic opportunity for India.
- A third group of analysts advocate that India should take the lead in establishing the coalition of countries from developing world.

Indo-US relations are too difficult to manage by a sole strategy. There should be mixing of foreign policy strategies of deal with the US.

### Important Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRha1HUGZ2o>

### Important terms:

- **America:** It covers two continents of North and South America and the US is only one of the countries of American continent that symbolizes US hegemony.
- **9/11:** To denote a series of attacks on the US by hijackers from Arab countries on 11 Sep, 2001. It was the most disastrous attack on the US.
- **Guantanamo Bay:** A naval base in Cuba set up by the US where prisoners are forbidden of the protection of international law or law of their own country or that of the US.
- **Hegemony:** An international system to dominate world by only one superpower.
- **Qualitative Gap:** It signifies US superiority in technology and no other power could dare to challenge the US.
- **Bandwagon Strategy:** To extract benefits by operating within hegemonic system in place of opposing it.
- **Global Village:** It refers to the US as the village headman and all the nations as its members are neighbours.
- **Manufacturing Consent:** It refers to win the consent of countries to the dominating power in a manner favourable to ascendancy of the dominant class.
- **Bretton Woods System:** A basic economic structure of world set up by the US after Second World War.
- **Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs):** It is the naval power of hegemony that underwrites the law of the sea and ensures freedom of navigation in international waters. These sea routes commonly waded by merchant ships.

## DAY-5

### Important Facts:

1. America refers to the United States of America. It covers two continents—the North and the South America, the US is only one of the countries of the continent which is a symbol of US hegemony.
2. After the disintegration of USSR in 1991, the first instance of US hegemony came into observation through Operation Desert Storm by the UN during first Gulf War to retreat Iraqi forces from Kuwait. This operation was dominated and won by the US due to vast technological gap between the US military capability and other states.

3. William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton, the newly elected President of the US in 1992 and again in 1996, focused on soft issues like democracy promotions, climate change and world trade rather than of military power and security. .
4. The above mentioned policies of the US were contradicted in response to Yugoslavian action against predominant Albanian population in Kosovo by targeting bombards through Operation Infinite against Al-Qaeda in response to the bombings of US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, Dar-es-Salaam and Tanzania in 1998.
5. On 11 September 2001, nineteen hijackers hailing from a number of Arab countries took control of four commercial aircrafts shortly after takeoff and crashed into World Trade Centre in New York, Pentagon building in Arlington, Virginia (US Defence Department) and the capital building of the US Congress in Pennsylvania came to be known as event of 9/11 in the US.
6. In response to 9/11, George W. Bush won the elections in the US succeeding Bill Clinton. The US launched Operation Enduring Freedom against all those suspected behind attack in 9/11 mainly Al-Qaeda and Taliban regime.
7. The US forces made arrests all over the world, transported and detained the persons in secret prisons like Guantanamo Bay, a US navy base in Cuba where the prisoners did not enjoy the protection of international law or the law of their own country or that of the US. Even the UN representatives were not allowed to meet these persons.
8. On 19 March 2003, the US launched Operation Iraqi Freedom to prevent Iraq from developing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in the ostensible purpose to control oil fields and installing a regime in Iraq friendly to US.
9. Hegemony is an international system with only one centre of power to be gained and retained in the form of military domination, economic political chart and central superiority which was enjoyed only by the US after disintegration of Soviet Union.
10. Hegemony as hard power is based on military capabilities of a country and the US has proved it. The US today spends more on its military than the next 12 powers and even technologically no other power can match with the US.
11. Hegemony as structural power must sustain global structure in economic sense. The US has provided global public goods as sea lanes of communications (SLOCs) as well as accounts for 15 percent of world trade if EU is included and 20 per cent in world economy. The US has contributed basic economic structure in the form of Bretton Woods System and Degree in MBA.
12. Hegemony as soft power implies class ascendancy in social, political and ideological spheres which is more effective than coercion to more hand in hand and the US was proved ultimately triumphant in this.
13. Though the US has been a hegemonic power, still it experiences some constraints in itself as institutional architecture (division of power). Open nature of American Society and the presence of only one organisation in international system to moderate the exercise of American Power i.e. NATO.
14. After the collapse of Soviet Union, India decided to liberalise its economy and integrate it with global economy. Hence the US also found India an attractive economic partner due to technological dimension and the role of Indian-American Diasporas.



15. India needs an appropriate mix of foreign policy strategies to deal with the US. Either India should maintain aloofness from Washington and comprehend its military power or to establish mutual convergences or to lead a coalition in weaning the hegemony assay from its dominance.

16. To deal with the hegemony, all the states bear the different strategies either to extract benefits by operating within hegemonic system or to stay away as far as possible from dominant power i.e. Russia, China and European Union have opted this policy. Both the policies are known as Bandwagon Strategy and to hide respectively.