

Decline of US hegemony

- Write a short note on hegemonic stability theory
- Rise & fall of US hegemony.
- Enumerate the development / factors / indications of decline of US hegemony
- Whether decline of US hegemony is better for the world or worse.

What is hegemony?

Hegemony points towards leadership.

USA always aspired to be the leader & actually acted for the construction of new world order. Since the end of ~~set~~ WWII we are living in the world order which has been shaped by USA.

Structures in the world order which denote US hegemony.

- UN & UN Security Council (UNSC).
- IMF & World Bank / Bretton Woods Institutions.

Indicators of decline of US hegemony.

- Attempts by Russia & China to establish an alternative world order, alternative security & economic architecture.

Factors challenging US hegemony.

- Rise of China, Russia, India, Venezuela
- Rise of political Islam / global jihad

Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST)

- Charles Kindleberger
- Robert Gilpin

HST is a combination of realism & liberalism.

Essence of HST

Peace & prosperity is much assured in a situation when there is a hegemonic power rather than in a multipolar world order.

Source of inspiration.

Nature of politics among European countries which resulted into WWI & WWII

Explanation of WWII by Hegemonic stability theory.

Main reason was economic depression during inter-war periods & protectionist economic policies adopted by the states.

Solution:

Maintenance of liberal economic order that ensures free trade.

How to ensure free trade?

This is possible only when some nation is ready to fulfil the global responsibility of maintaining the rule of law in int'l political economy.

benefit of USA.

16/10/14

Conditions for the maintenance of free market economy

- You have to make rules first.
- Establish institutions
- There has to be hegemon to enforce the rule of law.

Characteristics of a hegemon

- should have capacity to enforce rule of law,
- that is why small powers can't be hegemon
- should have will to enforce law

Requirement for hegemon

- hegemon must understand its responsibility
- they talk abt benevolent hegemon

Span of hegemony

At the max, it can be from 80-100 yrs.

Why hegemonic stability theory is a combination of liberal & realists?

- Liberal Assumptions/features.
- free market economy
- establishment of institutions

Realist assumptions/features

- National interest continues to be prime concern of nation states.
- Power will remain ultimate determinant in int'l politics.

Nuclear bombing
→ show that it's super

Rise & Fall of US hegemony

US could establish itself as a hegemon in the immediate context of WWII. US has shown following capacities.

- Preponderant military power
- Economic superpower
- leader in technology (Ger → USA) (news.)
- Ideological & cultural superiority

Acts of USA to establish its hegemony

- In political sphere it has established United Nations.
It has also established UN Security Council.
- In economic sphere it has established for IMF & WIB
- Bretton Woods system.
It made \$ the most important currency.

Status of US hegemony in 1st phase

US could establish its hegemony in the Western world. US hegemony came under challenge from

- USSR and
- NAM

Status of US hegemony in 2nd phase 60's & 70's

- Rise of Japan & European economic community challenged US supremacy in intⁿ trade.

Nixon shock (breakdown of Bretton Woods system)

- & introduction of free floating currency system. [fiat money]

Saddam Hussain - EU
accepted euro for oil instead of \$
oil diplomacy.

- Formation of G7
- Iranian Revolution
- Arab-Israeli war & the use of oil by Arab countries as a weapon / means in diplomacy.
- increasing influence of USSR in third world countries.
- NAM tilted in favour of Soviet bloc
- Latin American scholars offered critique of liberal intⁿ political economy & provided theories like dependency, theory of development of underdevelopment
- formation of G-77 group in AUNCTAD
- UN Conference on trade & development.
- NAM calling for new intⁿ economic order.

Implication of above developments.

- Serious challenge to hegemony of USA, specially to legitimacy of USA.
- Decline in US hegemony resulted into the greater use of hard power by USA.
- USA also tried to built its hegemony. one of the imp. act was forcing OPEC countries for conduct of oil trade only in \$.

3rd phase of US hegemony (80's - disintegration of USSR)

With disintegration of communism in Eastern Europe & the disintegration of USSR which was the biggest challenge to US led world order has strengthened the status of US as a hegemon. The golden period of US hegemony is from 1991 to 2001.

The example of US hegemony the support USA had got for its action in Iraq against the act of

aggression on Kuwait. More than 30 countries joined US led coalition. There was no opposition from USSR, NAM countries. The event is the acknowledgment of USA's leadership status by int'l community.

Why USA was able to generate consent?

- It was not an unilateral action but authorized by UNSC.
- Action appeared genuine to the int'l community.
- In the context of US led intervention in Iraq & the victory in Iraq, former US President Bush Sr. announced the beginning of "new world order".

Features of "new world order" as per US President

- There will be promotion of human rights, liberties, peace & prosperity & growth of democracy.
- world can remain assured under the benevolent leadership of USA.
- US political analyst like Francis Fukuyama described the moment as 'End of History'.

4th Phase of US hegemony: Beginning of decline of US hegemony.

11th Sep 2001 incident marks the beginning of the end of US hegemony. This time US hegemony was challenged not by states but by non state actors. This time political islam, USA had started global war on terrorism.

Pak - non NATO
not favourable

Paul Kennedy
overstretching ↓

oil - to control others.
US doesn't need oil.

Initial aims of global war on terrorism
- Elimination of terrorism completely.

Status of US hegemony

USA was able to generate consent for its action in Afghanistan. Later on action was endorsed by UNSC.

US War on Iraq in 2003

This act was not authorised by UNSC. Many of US allies like Japan & Germany didn't support US unilateralism.

Purpose of the attack

Declared Purpose : To end terrorism

To justify its action US invented the concept of Rogue states & preemptive wars.

US's logic : Al Qaeda's act represented Islamic fundamentalism.

main reason for rise of fundamentalism: failure to resolve the Palestinian issue.

Palestinian issue can't be resolved so long ~~rogue~~ rogue states like Iran, Iraq, Syria, do not stop sponsoring Hamas & Hezbollah. To achieve this objective preemptive war is necessary. Preemptive war was justified as less costlier option.

Real Purpose :

- Strategic location of Iraq
- Iraqi oil wealth.
- Iraq has rich water resources & in long term can address water scarcity of Israel.

Iraq
S.H. - Shia in Sunni majority country,
Iran - Sunni

Israel - USA territory
in Middle East

Alba - Latin America

US support of Yugoslavia
Serbia

trade + talk > loot + war

- Iraq was at that time the greatest supporter for the cause of Palestine.
- Saddam Hussain's insistence to carry oil trade in Euro rather than Dollar.

Impact of US war on Iraq

- Other nations did not consider the act legitimate.
- It has also impacted US image at the popular level in Middle East.
- USA was projected as an imperialist country.
- USA has alienated moderate / liberal muslims.
- It disturbed the Balance of Power in Middle East
- Biggest beneficiary was Iran.
- It also benefited China.
- It has impacted US economy
- It has also impacted US objective in Afghanistan.
- It is said that biggest reason for decline of US hegemony has been the involvement of USA at such a scale in Middle East, excessive use of hard power.
- Failure to generate consent
- US unilateralism.

Reasons for decline of US hegemony

- USA's hegemony was situated in the very world order which it had constructed but it itself started destroying.

Contemporary challenges to US hegemony

- Rise of China
- Resurgence of Russia

- Emergence of BRICS
- ALBA initiative in Latin America
Bolivarian alternative to Latin America
 - It was proposed by Hugo Chavez against USA's proposal for free trade agreement in America.
 - It came into existence in 2004.
 - Against free market economy concept. It is based on interdependence & solidarity.
 - Focus is on sustainable development utilising comparative strength of each other e.g. Venezuela providing oil to countries of South America in return Cuba has offered the services of its medical staff.
- Global Jihad

Views of scholars on status of USA

Views of Samuel P. Huntington

- In his article titled "Lonely Superpower" he talks about the challenge to US hegemony & mentions that just because there is a superpower it does not mean that world has become unipolar.

Farid Zakaria

- Article "Future of American power" mentions the power shift that is taking place & he mentions the rise of 'rest' and decline of West.

Emmanuel Wallerstein

Biggest challenge before USA is how to manage fall of its economy.

blogs of scholar Wallerstein.

Noam Chomsky

Though there is no competitor of USA, but still we can't say that USA enjoys the status of global hegemon.

Joseph Nye

Excessive use of hard power has caused the decline of US hegemony. USA expects others to follow the rules but seeks exemption from them for itself.

Paul Kennedy

Empires fall when they overstretch themselves.

Present status

- Fall of US hegemony but not the collapse of US hegemony.
- There is rise of other powers but their influence is limited.
- USA still retains an advantage in terms of its soft power & still enjoys the dominant status in institutions of global governance.
- Other actors can limit the freedom of US actions but they can't stop US from taking action.

According to the Present President of USA, US will continue to lead the world because people around the world expect US to lead & the foundations of US are as strong as ever.

Rise of China - opportunity of USA.