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# The Accelerated Military Withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan and its Turn to East Asia: Changing the Path of Forced and Political Hegemony

Muaiyid Rasooli<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Ekram Yawar<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Qasim Shaiq<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD Candidate, School of Law, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China.

Email: muaiyid.rasooli1992@gmail.com, Tel: + 008618521083167. ORCID: 0009-0000-8968-8910

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Ekram Yawar, PhD Candidate, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations, Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Qasim Shaiq Bachelor's degree, Faculty of Dari Language and Literature, Balkh University.

Email: qasimshaiq558@gmail.com, Tel: +93 780032330. ORCID: 0009-0006-6369-2202

Correspondence: Mohammad Ekram Yawar, PhD Candidate, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations, Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey.

Tel: +905373804027. E-mail: ekramyawar93@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0003-3198-5212

## Abstract

In continuation of Obama and Trump's strategy, Joe Biden's government considered America's withdrawal from Afghanistan as one of its foreign policy priorities and quickly withdrew the country's soldiers from Afghanistan by September 2021. The objective of this article is to analyze the worldwide strategy of the United States in leaving Afghanistan and the strategic turn to East Asia. This article answers the question with a descriptive-analytical method, why did America end its 20-year military presence in Afghanistan after bearing large financial and military costs? In response to the mentioned question, this hypothesis has been proposed that "the rise of China's economic and military power in the shadow of the transfer of global security responsibility to America poses an unprecedented threat to America's perceived global hegemony and the international order." Hence, from the American decision-makers perspective, the withdrawal of the military forces of this country from Afghanistan is a strategic opportunity to move to East Asia and create a new coalition in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of control. "The most significant finding of the research is that, in order to maintain its hegemonic position against China's threat, the United States is trying to divide the huge burden of global security responsibility among its partners, using a forced hegemonic strategy with a focus on East Asia. The method of data collection was library and using specialized magazines and reliable internet resources.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, China, United States, Demilitarization, Forced Hegemonic Path

## 1. Introduction

In July 2018, the Trump administration started negotiations with the Taliban authorities in Doha in order to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan, and these negotiations concluded in February 2020 with the Doha Agreement<sup>1</sup> on guarantees against terrorism and the withdrawal of forces. An American from this country died in September. 2021, the government should withdraw all American military forces from Afghanistan based on this agreement.

The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan coincided with the resurgence of the Taliban in reclaiming power can be analyzed as a strategic issue from various angles. After the incident of September 11, 2001, Afghanistan was transformed into a model for the spread of the interventionist strategy in the global strategy of the American government.

The government of George Bush considered Afghanistan to be the center of the spread of terrorism, and by creating a relationship between the two variables of "terrorism" and "failed governments,"<sup>2</sup> he assumed the direct responsibility of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan.

America started state building in Afghanistan with the premise that state building could be the basis of accountability and a new order in this country. But the geopolitical, political and ethnic structure characteristics in Afghanistan caused the governments of George Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump to be caught in Afghanistan for years.

America's military occupation in Afghanistan imposed billions of dollars in military costs along with lost opportunities on the economy of this country and did not provide a suitable space for China to emerge as a strategic rival of this country in the world. The long-term and attrition American military presence in Afghanistan provided a time to rethink America's foreign policy priorities and recognize new threats in America's security strategy.

In this regard, Asia Pacific, as the most important center of threat against American hegemony, is the decision-making apparatus of this country is giving special attention to the subject, aiming to identify and control the threat posed by China as a "strategic rival"<sup>3</sup> of this country. Despite the extreme polarization of politics in America, the two main parties of this country, i.e. Democrats and Republicans, have the same point of view regarding the threat of China and the need to control it.

This article examines the issue of leaving Afghanistan and America's turn to East Asia from the hegemony's perspective and as an attempt to revive America's global influence. The main question of the article is why America ended its 20-year military presence in Afghanistan after bearing large financial and military costs.

The hypothesis of the article is that "China's powerful economic and military rise in the shadow of the transfer of global security responsibility to America has posed an unprecedented threat to America's perceived global hegemony and the desired international order of this country." Therefore, in the perception of American decision-makers, the withdrawal of this country's troops from Afghanistan is a strategic opportunity in the field of foreign policy to turn to East Asia and create a new coalition in the Asia-Pacific region. China provides the threat of trolls.

## 2. Research background

In relation to the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan and the issue of turning to East Asia, a few scientific-research articles have been written. In the article called "America and the reconciliation strategy in Afghanistan; from Kaari Neoconservatism to Neo-Hamiltonism. (Hamidi et al., 2022: 29-59), America's

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<sup>1</sup> 2020 Doha Agreement

<sup>2</sup> Failed State

<sup>3</sup> Strategic Competitor

presence in the reconciliation process in Afghanistan during the last two decades has been analyzed under the headings of intervention, reconstruction and backwardness strategies, and the government's policy should mean an effort to revive the return of America.

In the article "America's withdrawal from Afghanistan; Reflecting on the rebalancing strategy" (Soleimani Pourlak, 2022: 233-258), the author discussed the issue of the American military withdrawal from Afghanistan in the framework of "balancing" and believes that America's war of attrition in Afghanistan It has led to the analysis of the strategic power of this country. This timely issue revived the debates about redefining the prioritization of threats in America's foreign policy. These discussions concluded with the conviction that the fate of the world will not be shaped in the Middle East but rather in the Asia-Pacific region. And America's effort to play an effective role in the Asia-Pacific regional order is understandable.

In the article "Strategy of turning to Asia; The rise of China and America's national security policy in East Asia (Jamshidi and Yazdanshenas, 2020: 91-116), the authors have discussed the issue of America's turn to East Asia from the perspective of the wheel of power and by examining the changes The power of the United States, they believe that it is the same time the increasing decline of the relative power of America and the increasing growth of the relative power of China, and the time when these two countries are getting closer to the turning points on their power cycles, is the main reason for the priority of the Asia-Pacific region.

In the article "Policy against America and China in Asia and the Pacific (Ayesha Zafar, 2022: 1-13)", the author believes that China's geopolitical dynamism has caused the United States to become a superpower after C from Afghanistan, Change the focus to the Asia Pacific region. This transfer of power, with the emergence of China as a responsible key player and the United States playing a more active role, has opened a new arena for the future of Asia-Pacific geopolitics. Both countries in the Asia-Pacific region are striving to shift the balance of power in their favor. In relation to America's withdrawal from Afghanistan and turning to East Asia, many articles have been written.

The most significant difference among the present article and the previous articles is the approach of the article to this topic, which tries to analyze it from the perspective of forced hegemony. This is the first time that America's behavior in the discussion of leaving Afghanistan and turning to Asia will be discussed from this analytical angle, which in turn can be considered as an innovation of the article.

### **3. Theoretical framework: from "hegemonic stability"<sup>4</sup> to "forced hegemony"<sup>5</sup>**

Hegemony in international relations refers to the extraordinary ability of an actor in shaping the international system through compulsory and non-compulsory instruments. According to "Len Clark," the discussion of hegemony mainly revolves around two main concepts: power and leadership<sup>6</sup> (Clark, 2011: 18-19). In realist literature, hegemony is usually mistaken for unipolarity; those who equate hegemony with unipolarity emphasize the superior material power of the hegemony and ignore the leadership element of hegemony. According to this formula, hegemony and unipolarity are synonymous with superior material power; while this approach to hegemony is rejected by many theoreticians. Material power must be able to give leadership power to the enemy.

Leadership power refers to abilities such as "soft power" or ideological power that can make the behavior of others under the influence of one's own normative and value system (Fettweis, 2017: 432). From these theorists' perspective, hegemonic power tries to combine hegemonic terms, i.e. "superior power" and "leadership." In fact, the hegemony power as a superior and dominant power, by creating rules, norms, institutions and international regimes in the framework of the principles of liberalism, has the task of preserving the liberal world order and towards that. that the enemy takes the most benefit from the existing situation. It opposes any change in the international order with all its might (Schubert, 2004).

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<sup>4</sup> Hegemonic Stability Theory

<sup>5</sup> Coercive Hegemony

<sup>6</sup> Leadership

From this theory perspective, the existence of a hostile power is an essential and not a sufficient condition for maintaining stability in the liberal international economy. In this regard, the "hegemonic stability theory" used by some political thinkers such as Charles Kindleberger<sup>7</sup>, Stephen Krasner<sup>8</sup>, Robert Gilpin<sup>9</sup>, and Robert Cohen<sup>10</sup> to explain the mechanisms of the new economic order in the world after World War II presented, argues that the international system, it is high time that an "individual-only" government, as the dominant power in it, can solve the problems of collective action and provide expensive global public goods, according to its political, military, economic and cultural capabilities, security, economic, life fields environment, health<sup>11</sup>, etc., which is necessary for the dynamics of global trade.

The theory of hegemonic stability with a benevolent hegemonic approach claims that the hegemonic power does not have to accept the costs of public goods in order to pursue its short-term benefits against other power centers; but what is important is the long-term benefits of the hegemonic power in maintaining the stability of the international system and strengthening hegemony.

According to Kindleberger, hegemonic leadership is responsible for providing "public interests" in the international system and must prevent actions against "public interests." Such a function can lead to the establishment of hegemony in the long term (Stokes, 2018: 7).

Contrary to Kindleberger, Gilpin presents the argument of forced hegemony and argues that hegemony provides public goods, but it has little tolerance for governments that try to free ride. Therefore, there is no Kindleburger-style transfer of resources from Hajmon to the international community at all, and the provision of public goods is desirable for Hajmon when other states are willing or able to pay for them.

The significant point is that the use of coercion to cover the costs of public goods may gradually reduce the legitimacy of the hegemon's power (Schutte, 2021:8) and lead to an increase in the gap between it and the suspect.

In the conditions that the financial obligations of the hegemonic power do not have much proportion with its economic capacity, moving towards forced hegemony is the most important security strategy to prevent the decline of hegemony.

The frequent costs of benevolent hegemony (non-compulsory) and the revelation of the inability of the host power to bear these costs will inevitably push the host power towards a forced approach in order to be able to transfer some of the security responsibility. yeti to guarantee the continuation of his hegemony to his allies. Forced hegemony is the last chance of the hegemonic power to preserve hegemony.

At this stage, the power of the hegemon loses its past generosity and makes non-stop efforts to preserve its hegemony by making its allies share in the costs of the hegemony. The effort to maintain the hegemonic stability since the Second World War has imposed a heavy financial burden on the American economy and the balance of the budget of this country, especially after the war in Afghanistan and Iraq and the cost of economic incentives during the Yes, Obama's republic is messed up and has an unprecedented budget deficit imposed on this country and increased its foreign debts more than before.

For this reason, in the Trump era, with the aim of lightening the financial burden of maintaining hegemony, the US government expressed its objection to allies and countries that are used to free riding. In fact, Trump's foreign policy was based on two principles: fewer international costs and more domestic benefits (Marchetti, 2017).

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<sup>7</sup> Charles P. Kindleberger

<sup>8</sup> Stephen D. Krasner

<sup>9</sup> Robert Gilpin

<sup>10</sup> Robert Keohane

<sup>11</sup> For example, at the beginning of the spread of the Corona virus, the mass production of masks, ventilators, oxygen capsules, special clothes, and corona identification kits had become a global problem.

In fact, America has been forced into a period of hegemony since Trump's arrival. During this period, this country has seriously wanted to reduce the security responsibility of America in the world and to have its allies in NATO, East Asia and the Persian Gulf share in the costs of international security. In this framework, he started negotiating with the Taliban leaders to leave Afghanistan and as a chain of some international agreements such as the Pacific Trade Agreement<sup>12</sup>, the American Free Trade Agreement. The North, known as NAFTA<sup>13</sup>, withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement<sup>14</sup> and at the same time exerting pressure on NATO member countries increased their share from the military budget of this military union for the fair sharing of the wealth of this military union<sup>15</sup>, and South Korea and Japan also agreed to increase the costs of hosting the military forces.

While the United States remains the most powerful country globally, possessing essential components of power, some political researchers argue, based on available evidence, that the hegemony of America is declining and the actions taken by America forced hegemonic framework to maintain its hegemonic position and control China As a hegemonic competitor, it will only accelerate this decline, but it cannot prevent this decline.

The US Information Council, which is an official agency of the US government and one of the 16 information agencies, has predicted that by the year 2030<sup>16</sup>, there will be no enemy power in a report published under the title of Global Trends in 2030. There will not be a future security system based on balance in the world (National Intelligence Council, 2012). Emanuel Wallerstein, an American theorist who believes in the irreversible decline of American hegemony, believes that a world without hegemony will be created earlier than 2030. (Wallerstein, 2014: 19)

#### **4. The history of the presence of American soldiers in Afghanistan**

After September 11, 2001, with the establishment of neoconservatives in America under the leadership of Bush, an aggressive policy with the aim of removing international challenges to America's interests as a priority to preserve hegemony was on the agenda of the political agenda.

From the neo-conservatives' perspective, America must be able to respond properly to the current global crises and the disturbing elements of the existing system in order to establish its hegemony. For this reason, during the Bush era, the fight against international terrorism in the form of the doctrine of "preemptive war<sup>17</sup>" became the top priority of America's foreign policy. There was no difference between the terrorists and the governments that sheltered them (the axis of evil) in the strategy of the preemptive war, so Afghanistan and Iraq were the two main targets of the preemptive war in 2001 and 2003, respectively.

From the American government perspective, failed governments have the greatest capacity for terrorism, so during the post-war period, state building became one of the most important strategies of America in this country. The Bush administration pursued the fight against terrorism and peace building through state-building in Afghanistan.

The implementation of this strategy in Afghanistan was successful in the first stage, which was accompanied by the military defeat of the Taliban, but it failed in the final stage, which aimed to create stability and help Afghans to create a modern state. (Rahman, 2018: 3). In fact, all subsequent American governments were caught in the wake of the Afghanistan war, from which America's exit was not easily possible. For this reason, it is called "endless war" (Walt, 2019).

The extensive military presence of America in Afghanistan and the start of the state building project imposed huge military costs on the economy of this country. The reputable Watson Institute of Brown University, in

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<sup>12</sup> Trans-Pacific Partnership

<sup>13</sup> North American Free Trade Agreement

<sup>14</sup> Paris Agreement

<sup>15</sup> In this regard, Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, announced in November 2019 that NATO members agreed to increase the defense costs of the European Union and Canada from 300 to 400 billion dollars by 2024. (NATO, 11/29/2019)

<sup>16</sup> 2030 Global trends

<sup>17</sup> Preemptive War

relation to the military expenses of the United States in the war in Afghanistan, stated that from 2001 to 2020, the United States has spent more than 2300 billion dollars to fight terrorism in this country (Crawford and Lutz, 2021).

Considering the costs incurred, the next president, that is, Obama could not stop the process of government building in Afghanistan, nor was he inclined to bear the costs incurred. It was in such conditions that the Afghanistan file was handed over to Donald Trump, the next president. Trump believed that America should avoid making troublesome foreign commitments so that the American economy does not get hurt.

The most important element of Trump's strategy in Afghanistan was the transfer of responsibility to the people of Afghanistan, especially the Taliban, as the only possible option, which was achieved within the framework of the Doha Agreement. In the end, Trump announced that state building in Afghanistan will never be successful; he believed that it is the duty of the people of Afghanistan to take their own future and America will not build a nation in this country again.

Hence, following unconditional negotiations between the United States and the Taliban, the Doha Agreement was signed in February 2020. In this agreement, the representatives of the stable government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan were removed and the Taliban, without being officially recognized by the US, was handed over to the Afghan Affairs Department. The analysis of the spirit of the Doha agreement is an indicator of America's evasion of responsibility in Afghanistan and the transfer of responsibility to the group that Bush invaded Afghanistan 20 years ago to destroy them.

The non-threat of the national security of America from within the soil of Afghanistan in the different parts of this agreement, especially the 5 clauses of the second part, is the most important concern of America and another of the international responsibilities and duties of the enemy to fight against terrorism and threats. There is no global news. (2020, State Govt.)

Biden's government, which completed the official withdrawal of American soldiers from Afghanistan in its own name, denying the goal of state-building in Afghanistan, announced that America was pursuing two main goals in Afghanistan, which it has succeeded in: first, killing Ben Laden, to eliminate al-Qaeda; but "nation-building in Afghanistan never meant anything to me" (Washington post, 2021).

## **5. The perspective of American hegemony and China's threat**

### *5.1 China's rise and America's strategic turn to East Asia*

China faces the most hegemonic tendencies in the Asia-Pacific region. Of course, the strategic competition between China and America is more from the Asia-Pacific region. The change in America's Middle East strategy from a military presence to a balance from afar<sup>18</sup> and focusing on East Asia has changed the security equation in this region. In this regard, China seeks to fill the existing security gap by asking for the opportunity and concluding military contracts with the countries of the region, especially Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Although China's view of the region is economic rather than security, and in terms of security, it still has a habit of free riding. And it is not expected that he will involve himself in the security equations of the Persian Gulf region in a short period of time. Today, China is mainly an economic player rather than a political or security player, as well as the United States in the first half of the 20th century, although it was the world's first economic power, but compared to Britain, it lacked the ability to play a political role.

Therefore, in the short term and at the tactical level, China tries to behave in the foreign policy, even if possible, within the framework of the rules written by the United States. A good illustration of this is the country's compliance with the US sanctions regime against Iran and Russia.

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<sup>18</sup> Offshore balancing

This has been a topic that many of Iran's decision makers have been completely unaware of. The statesmen of Iran like to see the power play in the international system in the framework of their ideological thoughts and on this basis they expect China to start a behavior that is more anti-American than anything else.

In the long term and at the strategic level, it seems that with the economic and military development of China, the playing field will change for this country and, of course, the rules will also be played around the axis of balance with America and "partnership in the axis of hegemony."

In other words, during the 1990s, the United States accepted China as a trading power in the hope that it would become a responsible stakeholder at the international level and a multilateral regime at home by integrating it into the liberal world order. Be heartbroken; however, in 2018, the United States abandoned this hope and prepared to confront China from a geopolitical and economic point of view (Mastanduno, 2019: 52).

During the past years, China has narrowed its distance with America in terms of military and economy. China's military budget has reached 252 billion dollars since 2011 with a growth of 76 percent, while the US military budget decreased by 10 percent during this period and reached 778 billion dollars this year (Sipri, 2021: 4).

China's military expenditures in 2021 will reach 293 billion dollars with an increase of 4.7% this country, with a share of 14 percent of the world's military budget, still ranks second after America with 800 billion dollars (38 percent). China's military expenses have grown for 27 consecutive years (Sipri, 2022: 3).

In terms of military, China is rapidly strengthening its air force and navy by producing stealth fighters, ships and new nuclear submarines in order to increase its competitive power with America. The US Department of Defense estimates that the number of submarines carrying Chinese ballistic missiles has increased from 1 submarine in 2001 to 6 submarines in 2021, and it is predicted to increase to 8 submarines by 2030 and reach 10 submarines by 2040. China's nuclear attack submarines 6 submarines in 2001 to 9 submarines per year 2021 has increased and it is predicted to reach 12 submarines by 2030 and 16 submarines by 2040.

And the number of Chinese diesel attack submarines has increased from 51 submarines in 2001 to 56 submarines in 2021, and the number of this weapon platform is expected to increase to 55 by 2030 and to 46 submarines by 2040, because Beijing is putting more emphasis on its nuclear submarine capabilities.

These emerging nuclear submarines include Shang-class nuclear<sup>19</sup> attack submarines and Jin-class ballistic missile<sup>20</sup> submarines equipped with 12 JL-2 ballistic missiles each and air dragons to trick them into killing. Superficial tests are difficult (Chapman, 2022: 6).

Economically, China's gross domestic product is growing rapidly, so that it has grown from about 1200 billion dollars in 2000 to about 20 thousand billion dollars in 2022, that is, about 1700 percent (Statista, 2022). While the gross domestic product of the United States has reached from about 10,200 billion dollars in 2000 to about 25,000 billion dollars in 2022, which has grown by 150 percent (Statista, 2022).

The British consultancy center for economic and business research<sup>21</sup> has predicted that China's gross domestic product will grow by 5.7 percent per year until 2025 and then by 4.7 percent per year until 2030, and this country will be able to grow by 2030 with Taking something from the economy America should become the first economy in the world (Ceber, 2022).

Considering that economic power can be converted into political and military power, China has the potential to not only challenged the economic supremacy of the United States but also its military power in the future. The most significant factor altering this trend can be seen in the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. After this crisis, China became economically stronger and narrowed its distance with western countries.

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<sup>19</sup> Shang-Class Nuclear-Powered Submarine

<sup>20</sup> Jin-Class Ballistic Missile Submarine

<sup>21</sup> British consultancy Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)

In terms of export value, China overtook Japan as the leading Asian exporter in 2004, i.e. three years after joining the World Trade Organization, and in 2007 overtook the United States and in 2009 overtook Germany and became the world's largest exporter. It was changed (WTO, 2015).

In 2020, China has maintained a meaningful gap with America with exports of about 2500 billion dollars (Statista, 2021). Foreign direct investment<sup>22</sup> has played a significant role in the economic development and social transformation of China and has turned this country into a global factory. According to available statistics, in 2020, despite the Corona crisis, China became the largest recipient of capital in the world. This year, despite a 42 percent decrease in foreign direct investment in the world, it reached 163 billion dollars in China with a growth of 4 percent (Unctad, 2021).

The upward trend of foreign investment in China after Mao and with the open economy policies of Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's reforms, has reached a level from 1.43 billion dollars in 1984 to 173.5 billion dollars in 2021. Over the past few decades, the influx of foreign investment has propelled China to become the second-largest economy in the world (Scmp, 2022).

One of the most important effects of China's economic power is the "Belt and Road" initiative, through which China is trying to include more than 100 countries in four different continents in its economy. Some researchers have tried to introduce China's "Belt and Road" initiative as a new "Marshall Plan" through which this country is trying to gain military, political and economic advantages around the world.

The Marshall Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative were presented in a situation where the world system after the Second World War and the 2007 World Financial Crisis has been dysfunctional, imbalanced and has a "global power vacuum" along with "hegemonic opportunities." (Mirnezami and Gholizadeh, 2023: 16).

Through leveraging its substantial economic power and advantages, Beijing has managed to enhance its influence, even in the Asia-Pacific region, extending its reach even over the United States. Beijing's institutional approach, such as the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank<sup>23</sup>, are considered the most important steps of Beijing in increasing its regional influence in challenging the American system (Ramezanzpour Shalmani and Hedayati Shahidani, 2019: 83).

China's economic power has been the basis for increasing its political influence in different regions of the world, especially in the strategic region of the Middle East. In this regard, the successful mediation of China between Iran and Arabia (after 7 years of political conflict between the two countries) and the decision to reopen the embassies, after warning of the dangers of isolation to Iran in the framework of the visit of the president. the country to Saudi Arabia in December 2022 and implicit support from the claim of the United Arab Emirates about the three islands can be seen as a sign of China's increasing political influence in the region and a sign of the weakening of American hegemony.

### *5.2 The United States and the strategy of maintaining hegemony*

Usually, the end of hegemony is marked by a "final crisis", as the rival state begins another period of material expansion. However, before this happens, there is a relatively long period of "dual power" between the rival centers. There are different scenarios as to what stage of the hegemonic cycle we are in.

The first scenario is that China will replace the United States as an emerging adversary. Each hegemonic cycle is started by a capitalist state with a larger scale (eg population, geography) than the previous period. Each hegemonic cycle has been noticeably shorter than the previous one. Each enemy was a naval power that could control the world's most important maritime trade routes. All these can strengthen this scenario that shows China as the next aggressor. It is noteworthy that historical hegemony has consistently played a role in bolstering the

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<sup>22</sup> Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

<sup>23</sup> Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

power of succeeding hegemony, offering them financial support. Similarly, the United States has provided financial support to China through foreign investment and technology transfer.

In the second scenario, there is also the possibility that the history of hegemonic cycles has come to an end. In this scenario, the United States has become very powerful and is able to integrate rival centers into its global capital network.

The third scenario is that a rival system is emerging in East Asia. Although this scenario considers America's hegemony to decline, it still considers this country powerful enough to be able to maintain a balance with its emerging rival. In this scenario, the future of the international system can be examined based on the balance of power system or the bipolar system between China and America (Theme, 2019: 2).

According to these scenarios, China considers the threat against America's interests to be serious, so with America's withdrawal from Afghanistan, this country will find more capacity to strengthen military coordination with its allies. In fact, withdrawing from Afghanistan and transferring responsibility to the Taliban has been justified due to creating more opportunities to focus on other areas of concern, especially the competition with China in the Indian and Pacific regions. Today, the "China threat theory" which considers the Chinese aggressor in Asia as a threat to the liberal world order (Soleimani Poulak, 2022: 240).

The most important challenge is the American foreign policy. For this reason, on September 15, 2021, i.e., about a year after the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan, with the aim of maintaining hegemony and strategic focus on East Asia, AUKUS<sup>24</sup> agreement should be signed with the membership of America, England and Australia is the foundation.

This agreement seeks to increase the "security and defense capabilities" of the members in East Asia with the aim of placing China in a strategic dilemma. In fact, the member countries of this agreement pursue three main goals.

1. Preservation of America's hegemony through the strengthening of security alliances in the Asia-Pacific region and economic empowerment of the United States against the rapid emergence of China in the region.
2. Australia's growing awareness of China's threat, which prompts this country's urgent need to join the nuclear submarines club
3. The more noticeable international security presence of Britain and the creation of the vision of "Global Britain" as the main player in India and Oceania after Brexit. (Panda and Swanstrom, 2021: 19).

Also, the United States after leaving Afghanistan in the framework of the agreement (QUAD<sup>25</sup>). Or the Quadrilateral Security Forum<sup>26</sup>, which was established in 2007 with the membership of America, Australia, India and Japan to ensure security in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, called the largest joint campaign Malabar<sup>27</sup> 2021 in the Bay of Bengal with 25 thousand marines and using A ship and a submarine to simulate the occupation and control of the islands of the western Pacific Ocean.

America's attention to these maneuvers and security alliances shows how much the concentration of the American army has changed since the invasion of Afghanistan two decades ago. With this campaign, which was carried out with the aim of countering China's territorial ambitions, the United States was looking for some reassurance to its allies who had doubts about America's military commitments after the fall of Kabul. (Gale, Wang and Norman, 2021). Preserving the hegemony of the United States hinges on its ability to effectively address the security concerns facing the nation.

After the Second World War, America, by accepting the costs of hegemony, carried the main burden of preserving the existing liberal order and provided strong security for its allies and even its competitors; While

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<sup>24</sup> AUKUS

<sup>25</sup> Quad

<sup>26</sup> Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD)

<sup>27</sup> MALABAR 2021

today the heavy costs of maintaining hegemony on the general budget of America are felt more than in the past, and the United States, realizing this issue and in order to reduce the costs, put the strategy of forced hegemony on its agenda. It is given that in that hegemonic alliance must be responsible, part of the costs for maintaining the existing order.

From America's point of view, there are two countries in the international system: they are either "hegemonic allies" or "hegemonic rivals." In spite of this, at least in the short term, the United States will not accept any state, even its closest allies, as a hegemonic "partner" because from America's point of view, it is an indivisible axis of hegemony and this is America's will. It is that the international agenda and the rules of international politics will be born.

In such a space, it will be possible that China, as a strategic competitor of America, in the long term, with the rapid increase of its military and economic power, wants to be a partner in the axis of the hegemony based on the rules of politics. The international community is no longer based on the individual will of America, but on the basis of bilateral will is defined and China's will become one of the defining elements of the international agenda.

The report of the National Defense Strategy Commission<sup>28</sup>, taking China's threat seriously and acknowledging the gradual decline of American power, stated that "America is facing a severe crisis of national security and national defense, because the military advantages of the United States will disappear and the strategic dimension will be it becomes more and more threatening.

If the United States does not show more urgency and innovation in its response to this crisis, if it does not take decisive steps now to restore its military advantages, the damage to America's security and influence could be devastating" (USIP, 2018:99) China's huge economic benefits thousands of projects are being implemented in different parts of the world, so China's economy is highly vulnerable to global crises. Therefore, entering into security conflicts will greatly affect the global economic interests of this country.

Since the military capability is based on the economic infrastructure and China is growing faster than America in terms of economy, technology and technology, so it is expected that in the future, it will decline at the same time. As America's power grows, or in other words, the power of this country grows. Due to China's rapid growth, this country can also become a powerful political and security player in the international scene, and the international developments revolve around the axis of bilateral balance. Although America tends to enter this country into a security game in order to control China, and to repeat Russia's quagmire in Ukraine for China.

In this regard, the trip of some high-ranking American officials to Taiwan, such as the trip of Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as the highest American official after 25 years on October 2, 2021, can be in the direction of China's movement. And the scenario of this country is one conflict the security of the region should be evaluated so that the international conditions for curbing this country are also provided.

Meanwhile, before the trip, China had held the largest military exercise in its history, but in response, it was enough to impose a Nancy Pelosi sanction and a few limited economic sanctions. China's intelligent response to this historic trip has been worthy of reflection and shows that it will not intend to engage in a security conflict with the West until the vital interests of this country are seriously threatened. Even in the conditions where the ACOUS agreement was formed as one of the strongest signs of the United States against China, Beijing's response to this security alliance has been very measured.

In fact, Beijing knows that under the current conditions, entering into any kind of security and geopolitical conflicts with the United States will be the starting point of its economic decline and lead to a serious decrease in foreign investment, which is the basis of its development. It has been popular since the 1970s, it will continue. In

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<sup>28</sup> National Defense Strategy Commission

general, there is this prevailing idea in the American political apparatus that this country should pull itself out of the Great Middle East in order to be able to take the threats in India and the Pacific Ocean seriously.

Also, at the same time as the withdrawal of America from Afghanistan, the need to focus on the priority of Washington's foreign policy, that is, China emphasized and announced that when an autonomous superpower is emerging, it is looking for this. the interests of the United States from a technical, military and economic point of view Al-Shaa'a decides that we cannot be captured in an endless war.

From his point of view, ending the war in Afghanistan allows America to direct its energies towards new and more urgent challenges, the most important of which is the "severe" competition with Beijing (Paul et al., 2021: V).

In fact, the military withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan has created new opportunities for this country to focus on East Asia. Getting out of Afghanistan's quagmire, which has imposed military costs on the American economy for two decades, can be achieved by saving money and freeing the military resources in Afghanistan and directing them towards Asia-Pacific, the strategic advantage of this country against its powerful rival. The three-way security agreement of ACOS and the strengthening of the QUAD agreement in the form of new military maneuvers is an obvious form of strategic empowerment after the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

## 6. Conclusion

The failure of the state-building process in Afghanistan and the imposition of heavy costs of the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq on the American economy, which is still feeling the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis, is the global strategy of this country. It has changed the international system from hegemonic stability to forced hegemony.

America sees itself in a situation where on the one hand it is witnessing the economic and military rise of China and on the other hand it is witnessing its own economy being mired in the swamp of hegemonic stability. In these conditions, the United States, by adopting a forced hegemonic approach and dividing the heavy burden of the responsibility of maintaining the world order among its allies, has tried to consolidate and strengthen its military and economic capabilities and push them towards Asia Pacific to control China.

Transformation and displacement in America's foreign policy priorities were seriously pursued with Obama's Asia-oriented strategy<sup>29</sup>. Obama considered the main threat to be emerging Asian powers that challenge America's hegemony, and he believed that preventing the expansion of China's geopolitical influence should become America's most important security concern.

This required a change in America's strategy from a military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan to a strategic focus in Asia-Pacific. Some thinkers considered the long-term US military presence in Afghanistan to be a strategic trap, whose beneficiaries were countries like China and Russia.

With the understanding of this issue and with the revision of its global military presence, the United States is reorganizing the large group of foreign forces, bases and military capabilities of this country with the aim of reducing its presence in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Pay more attention to the Asia-Pacific region.

According to observers, the United States sees the decline of its hegemony vis-à-vis China in a long-term process; therefore, in order to preserve its position, it is inevitable to take the approach of forced hegemony and division. It is a huge responsibility of global security. America's security alliances in the form of ACOS and QUAD in East Asia can be evaluated in this direction to exert strategic pressure on China.

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<sup>29</sup> Pivot to Asia

China's strategy in international politics in a long-term perspective, along with the increase of its economic and military power, is a partnership in the hegemonic axis and the creation of a power structure with America; but in the short term, he doesn't want to have sensitive behavior by ignoring America's security concerns and breaking norms against the liberal order.

Since the time of Deng Xiaoping, China's main strategy has been to avoid costly and unnecessary conflicts with the US and try to accumulate power within the framework of the liberal order. China knows very well that if it wants to participate in the global hegemonic axis, contrary to its domestic policy, it has no other way than to accompany the liberal order in foreign policy. He doesn't like the liberal order, for America it has become much more difficult.

Today, if China has changed from a weak country in the 70s to the second largest economy in the world, it has been due to behavior within the framework of existing rules, despite tactical conflicts. China knows the rules of the game with America very well. If it is to be presented as a superpower on par with America in the future, it should avoid conflicting policies with the West that imposes unnecessary costs on this country. China's cautious policy towards Russia after this country's attack on Ukraine in February 2022 showed that this country is not willing to confront the West even for the sake of its closest allies.

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