Güv. Str. Derg. 2022, 18(42): 265-293
DOI: 10.17752/guvenlikstrtj.1104894

Araştırma Makalesi
Research Article

Reading the USA through Strategy Documents: An Analysis on the Change of Hegemonic Security Understanding

ABD'yi Strateji Belgeleri Üzerinden Okumak: Hegemonik Güvenlik Anlayışının Değişimi Üzerine Bir Analiz

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Abstract

It is possible to look for the foundations of the USA's hegemonic security understanding in the days when the Second World War ended. In fact, it is undeniable that this situation creates a perception of confusion all over the world, but especially in countries classified as "allies" of the USA. In the formation of this perception, in addition to the practices of the USA, the discourses of the US Presidents and the imposing policies of the Soviet period have a share, albeit at different rates. Although the number of opponents has increased today, the US military power is superior to that of other states, and the technological repercussions of this power still continue to be envied. This article examines the change in the understanding of hegemonic security within the framework of a combination of the research methods, which consists of historical and content analysis, using the concepts related to the subject.

***Keywords**: International Security, National Security Strategy, United States of America, Hegemony, Content Analysis.*

Öz

ABD'nin hegemonik güvenlik anlayışının temellerini İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın bittiği günlerde aramak mümkündür. Aslında bu durumun tüm dünyada ama özellikle ABD'nin "müttefikleri" olarak sınıflandırılan ülkelerde bir kanıksama algısı yarattığı da yadsınamaz. Bu algının oluşumunda ABD'nin uygulamalarının yanında, ABD Başkanları'nın söylemlerinin ve Sovyet dönemi dayatmacı politikalarının değişik

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Geliş Tarihi / Submitted: 17.04.2022
Kabul Tarihi / Accepted: 07.06.2022

oranlarda da olsa payları bulunmaktadır. Bugün katılmayanların sayısı artmış da olsa, ABD askerî gücü diğer devletlerinkinden üstündür ve bu gücün teknolojik yansımaları halen özenilen olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu makalede hegemonik güvenlik anlayışındaki değişim, konuyla ilişkili kavramlardan da yararlanılarak, tarihsel analiz ve içerik analizini kapsayan bir yöntem kombinasyonu çerçevesinde incelenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Uluslararası Güvenlik, Ulusal Güvenlik Stratejisi, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Hegemonya, İçerik Analizi.*

Introduction

"Hegemony" is a concept coined by the Italian Marxist thinker Gramsci in the 1930s and borrowed by many social scientists in the second half of the twentieth century.

Research since the 1990s has often been based on assumptions that the known world has changed. In its simplest form, "nothing will ever be the same again". It is possible to perceive this rapid change in daily life, especially in the field of informatics. On the other hand, does this change have a reflection on international relations or international security, and if so, how?

According to some academic circles, with the end of the Cold War, the bipolar world order has become unipolar. Also, according to another view, those who made such a comment acted prematurely because although the world has experienced a perception of unipolarity for a short time, what is actually going on is the order of multipolarity. This research is not about which of these debates is true or valid but about an acceptance behind these debates, more precisely, it focuses on "change in the hegemonic security understanding".

Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the difference between "hegemony" and "hegemonic security understanding". While hegemony expresses an objective situation, hegemonic security understanding shows the subjective perceptual effect of hegemony on the behaviour of the hegemon. In other words, examining the decline of US hegemony and examining the change in the security perception of the decision-making elite of the US state are different scientific research problems.

The USA, which is the global hegemon and the "absolute winner of the last age"1 as defined by Fukuyama, faced an asymmetrical but global challenge at the beginning of the new millennium. Therefore, there are a few more questions to ask. First, will the global hegemony of the USA continue, or does it continue? There are many reports on this question in the literature. On the other hand, it is necessary to ask a few more profound questions. Has there been a change in the security understanding, which is still hegemonic, after the September 11 attacks? If it has happened, what kind of change has occurred in the hegemonic security understanding of the USA?

The answers to these two questions can be sought in many ways. From a methodological point of view, the most valid way would undoubtedly be to make an in-depth evaluation through primary sources. The research universe of this article also consists of the US national security strategy (US-NSS) documents, which are the primary sources. US Presidents are obliged to publish a national security strategy under the *Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*.[2] In this context, NSS documents published between 1987 and 2021 also constitute the research sample.

Moreover, in-depth evaluation refers to a research model based on collecting data in accordance with the research model from the beginning and analysing them with a hermeneutical3 point of view, rather than making a superficial generalization by collecting purely quantitative data. In this study, the data were obtained from the US-NSS documents using the *NVivo* data analysis program, and then the general context expressed as "hegemonic security" was analysed by making comparisons between the documents.

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[1] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, The Free Press, New York, NY, 1992, p. 188.

[2] Pursuant to the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act* dated 01.10.1986; by amending Section 15, Section 404a of Title 50 of the US Code on "War and National Defense", it is essential that the US President presents a report on the US national security strategy to Congress each year. The first strategy paper was published by Ronald Reagan in January 1987. (U.S. Government Printing Office, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ USCODE-2011-title50/html/ USCODE-2011-title50.htm, accessed on 17.11.2021).

[3] Here, the term hermeneutics (…) emphasizes the detailed reading or study of a text consisting of speech, written words or pictures. (W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 7th Edition, Pearson, Essex, 2013, p. 103).

1. The Understanding of Hegemonic Security: A Conceptual and Historical Analysis

What is hegemonic security understanding? The answer to this question seems to be given by a three-stage analysis. In the first stage, the concept of hegemony should be put in its place in the conceptual distinction between authority/sovereign and hegemon. In the second stage, hegemony should be associated with national/international security. Finally, in the third stage, the course of the USA's hegemonic security understanding in the historical process should be revealed, and codes on hegemonic security understanding should be deduced. This phasing is considered that it can be useful in framing the general issue and creating data for content analysis.

In ancient Greece, the concept of *ἡγεμών-hḍgemon* was used as a synonym for the word *leader*.[4] As a matter of fact, it can be said that Antonio Gramsci, who brought the concept of hegemony to his political philosophy, used the concept consciously because of this feature. Gramsci, who took a different view of the "force theory" of Engels, answered the questions of "how can an elite minority control the majority without resorting to force?" and "how is it that a handful of capitalists manage and direct society in their own interests, even though Marx foretold a socialist revolution?", with the concept of "hegemony" and revealed "consent"[5] as the key concept. The consent mentioned here both includes emulation or exemplary behaviour and is also an acceptance that fears the magnitude of power and the threat emanating from that power. The one who consents is afraid of the power of the hegemon on the one hand and she/he takes the hegemon as an example on the other hand. In other words, if the leader-follower relationship in power is defined with the concept of force, consent will be decisive for this relationship in hegemony. In essence, this is a situation of "consent by force". [6]

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[4] Walther Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, F. Willam Danker, (eds.), University of Chicago Press, 3rd Edition, Chicago, 2001, p. 275.
[5] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol.3*, Edited by Joseph A. Buttigieg, Colombia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 10.
[6] Michile Barrett, "Ideology, Politics, Hegemony: from Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe", in Eds. Slavoj Zizek, *Mapping Ideology*, Verso, London, 1997, p. 239.

How is such a relationship in hegemony established in the field of international security? According to many neo-Gramscian[7] scholars, international hegemony is not much different from domestic political hegemony. In Cox's words,[8] there is an international hegemonic class here too. At the same time, this class is a "transnational ruling class" that imposes its ideology, strategy, and common actions on its followers. Therefore, the leading and consenting actors of the hegemonic relationship in the field of international relations are shaped as a community of "state that dominates international relations" and "follower states" that consent to this hegemony. As a matter of fact, by emphasizing this relationship in hegemony, Gramsci reveals that a successful alliance, which he calls a "historical bloc", is required for the establishment of hegemony[9]. However, it is useful to remember once again that this cooperation is achieved through force.

Keohane compared the mentioned hegemon-follower relationship with the imperialist-colonial relationship.[10] Keohane's imperialist-colonial relationship also imposes a responsibility on the hegemon as a "senior political figure" to ensure and realize the security of its followers. Taking Keohane's definition as a starting point, Russett focuses on the concept of "cultural hegemon" developed for the USA, based on Gramscian readings. According to Russett,[11] the hegemon expands its control and leadership by spreading its culture as well as its economic and military resources. It is clear that this situation shall lead to the formation of a strategic culture in the security institutions of the followers, in the processes of doctrine,

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[7] Neo-Gramscianism, which can be summarized as the application of Gramsci to the field of international relations, claiming that realism and idealism dragged the environment into a dead end because they functioned as intellectual devices for imperialist powers, problematized these two mainstream theories and introduced concepts such as "institution and structure", "global elite", "transnational ruling class", and "triple elite" into the literature.

[8] Robert W. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations. An Essay in Method" in Eds. Stephen Gill, *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 59-60.

[9] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks,* 3, 2007, p. 184.

[10] Robert O. Keohane, "The United States and the Postwar Order: Empire or Hegemony?", *Journal of Peace Research*, 1991, 28:4, pp. 437-438.

[11] Bruce Russett, "The Mysterious Case of Vanishing Hegemony; or, Is Mark Twain Really Dead?", *International Organization*, 1985, 39:2, pp. 205-231.

organization, defence technologies, and decision-making.

Strange explains this cultural hegemony with four interrelated forces –control over commodity production, financial position, security, and information– and two kinds of power –relationship-based power, and structure-based power– of hegemony.[12] By relationship-based power, the hegemon persuades or coerces its followers to act in accordance with it. Also, it consolidates or increases its followers by creating desired rules, norms or actions in the international environment with its structural power.[13] Strange's structural power is another form of explanation for Russell's cultural hegemony. Nye attaches importance to Strange's persuasion. According to him, a superior power becomes a hegemonic power when it can persuade others to cooperate. Contrary to the hegemonic stability theory, Nye claims that persuasion can also be achieved with soft power elements, not only by the hard power elements.[14] His theory of "soft power" emphasizes that power is not only of military and economic origin. It is followed by countries that emulate the values, welfare, and opportunities of this state and take it as an example.[15] Volgy et.al. also emphasize this transformative power of hegemony.[16]

Although it is possible to take the course of the hegemonic power of the USA to the "Black Ships Incident" in 1853, it is more reasonable to start the course of hegemonic security understanding with the years of the Second World War. Japan's challenge in December 1941 was an opportunity for USA's power to emerge from its nest and spread across the world. After the war, the USA took the European continent under its protection with the consent of these states and against the communist danger that was at

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[12] Susan Strange, "The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony", *International Organization*, 1987, 41/4, pp. 551-574.

[13]Susan Strange, "Toward a Theory of Transnational Empire", in Eds. Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau, *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s*, Lexington Books, Lexington, 1989, p. 165.

[14] Joseph S. Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why The World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

[15] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs, New York, 2005, pp. X-XI.

[16] Thomas J. Volgy, Kristin Kanthak, et.al., *Resistance to Hegemony within the Core*, Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, 2005, pp. 1-2.

their doorstep. The USA became the patron of the "Free World" between the second half of the 1940s and 1950s and established its hegemony in the Western world in the sense expressed in this study. As Lundestad stated, this period of USA hegemony was an "Empire by Invitation". [17]

In the 1960s, at first, Vietnam War and the first oil crisis, and then the social and political tensions such as decolonization, African-American, student, and women movements in the same years let the hegemonic power of the USA come into question. Should the USA still be considered a hegemonic power?

This period was also the time when the above-mentioned hegemony theories were introduced. For example, the hegemonic stability theory questioned how the world economy remained stable after the Second World War and what is the real contribution of the USA to this stability.[18] Bruce Russett argued that the USA retained its hegemony. According to Russett, although the United States had relatively lost power, it continued to control policy outcomes in the system.[19] Strange also agreed with Russett, but the assessment criteria were more quantitative. As a result of her analysis based on the "four powers of the hegemon" mentioned before, Strange[20] still thought that the USA, which had about twenty percent of world production, continued to dominate financial markets, had significant military power and controlled the main power sources, was still the hegemon of the system even though its power has decreased compared to the 1940s.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, the debates continued. According to one view, the USA was gradually losing its hegemonic power. The holders of this view argued that the USA was not alone in the system and that, in addition to the Soviet Union, the two biggest enemies of the Second World War, but now two big economic and technological powers Germany, and Japan, should not be ignored. Finally, the USA could not be considered a hegemon because it could not take punitive measures against its followers, contrary to the hegemonic stability theory.

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[17] Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe 1945-52", *Journal of Peace Research*, 1986, 23:3, pp. 263-277.
[18] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984.
[19] Russett, "The Mysterious Case…", p. 230.
[20] Strange, "Toward a Theory…", pp. 573-574.

Those who claim that the hegemonic power of the USA continues have developed the concept of "benign hegemon" against these claims. Accordingly, the USA was a hegemonic power, but it maintained its hegemony within the framework of liberal and democratic principles. This behaviour encouraged its followers and made the USA a centre of attraction. Establishing a cooperative system in Europe, the USA neither used military force nor threatened to use force against European states for them to join this system.[21] Therefore, although both the USA and the Soviet Union were "Super Powers", the USA was the "Benign Hegemon" for the Western world.

As of the entry into force of the *Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*, it coincided with the last years of the Soviet Union. Therefore, two main features stand out in the first two NSSs published by Reagan. While the Defence Policy section does not consider the elements of national power other than military power, the Foreign Policy section focuses on the Soviet Union.[22]

The disintegration of the Eastern Bloc, which was the only ideological alternative and nuclear equalizer, moved up suddenly the United States alone to the top. Therefore, the first Bush Doctrine or NSS-1990 focused on Eastern Europe. As the leader of the liberal economic system, the USA was generally accepted as the "hegemon", "unique pole", or "hyperpuissance"[23] of the international system, as Bush defined "New World Order".[24] Thus, similarly to the 1940s, the 1990s became an era of "Undisputed US Hegemony" or "Pax Americana".[25] In 1991, the complete elimination of Saddam's forces by the US-led coalition forces in less than a month, on the one hand, facilitated the consent to the hegemony of the USA and, on the other hand, reinforced the legitimacy of the hegemonic security understanding.

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[21] John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1997.
[22] Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of The United States*, The White House, Washington D.C., January 1987, p. II.
[23] François Heisbourg, "American Hegemony? Perceptions of the U.S. Abroad", *Survival*, 1999, 41:4, p. 9.
[24] George Herbert Walker Bush, *National Security Strategy of The United States*. The White House, Washington D.C., August 1991, p. V.
[25] It was explicitly used by US President John F. Kennedy in his speech at the American University on June 10, 1963. (Michael Eidenmuller, *Great Speeches for Better Speaking: Listen and Learn from History's Most Memorable Speeches*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2008).

Clinton maintained the hegemony declared during his predecessor's term with the practices of his own term. In this period, the USA –with the help of military prestige gained during the Gulf War– played a role in the solution of almost all international security problems. The hegemonic security understanding of the Clinton Era was called "interventionism" by many academics. Since it is based on the relative superiority of the intervening actor, it has in its nature a perception of hegemonic power that claims jurisdiction for geopolitical reasons.[26] In more severe criticism, the USA is accused of "state terrorism" using covert operations and low-intensity conflict methods. For Clinton, involvement in international problems is not expansionism, but the liberation of the oppressed, powerless, and helpless people, and hence human dignity, from the oppressors.[27]

The pro-active foreign policy of the Clinton era created such a perception around the world that the USA's involvement in international problems is a "conventional method". The USA was involved in 54 large-scale crises[28] in Africa, South America, and Asia, especially in the Bosnian Civil War, the Afghan Civil War, the Albanian Crisis, the Kosovo Crisis and the Somalia Crisis.

The November 2000 elections resulted in the victory of the Republican Party after eight years, and as of January 2001, the second term of the house of Bush (Bush Jr.) began in the USA. 9/11 marked a turning point in the new millennium, and, among other things, in the US hegemonic security understanding. In fact, both the United Nations Security Council's Decision No. 1368 to condemn terrorism and the NATO North Atlantic Council's "Article-5-declaration" on September 15, 2001, were published at the initiative of the USA, and these were proofs of the effect of the USA's hegemonic power. In his speech to the US Congress on September 20, 2001, Bush called the countries he accused of encouraging terrorism as the "axis of evil" and intimidated these states by saying "you

[26] Robert Higgs, *Opposing the Crusader State: Alternatives to Global Interventionism*, The Independent Inst., Oakland, 2007.
[27] William Jefferson Blythe III Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for A Global Age.* The White House, Washington D.C., December 1999, p. 1.
[28] See Global Security Site, http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/1990-2001conflicts.htm., accessed on 11.04.2022.

are either with us or with terrorism". The American security understanding thought that it could persuade or even coerce its allies to fight the mentioned axis of evil, and it was successful in this.

However, the same expectation did not work in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In his speech at Westpoint on June 1, 2002,[29] Bush stated that "rogue states" that illegally possess weapons of mass destruction, provide logistical opportunities for international crimes, especially drug smuggling, and support terrorism would not be defeated with containment strategies; instead, there should be developed a new strategy called "pre-emptive strike". Bush then based his NSS-2002 on this strategy.[30]

The USA opened a new front in Iraq in 2003, while Operation Enduring Freedom was in progress. Except for the United Kingdom, the operation did not receive international support as two years ago in Afghanistan. The invasion deteriorated the image of the "benign hegemon" of the USA. The financial burden of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began to shake the economic superiority of the US hegemony. Thus, starting from 2006, the hegemonic power of the USA began to be questioned again. The USA began to be called the "Global Gendarmerie" with critical discourse. Therefore, Al-Rodhan refers to this period of US hegemony as the "Empire by Imposition",[31] in reference to Lundestad's description.

Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State of the Second Bush Jr. government, coined the term "Transformational Diplomacy" in 2005 as a response to the international reaction. This concept was adopted by Bush and found its way into the NSS-2006 document. In summary, transformational diplomacy means "working with US partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international

[29] The White House, *President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point.* The White House, Washington D.C., 01st June 2002.
[30] George Walker Bush, *The National Security Strategy of The United States of America*, The White House, Washington D.C., September 2002, p. 15.
[31] Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, *Editorial of GCSP Policy Brief No. 15: US Hegemony and Globalization*, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Geneva, Switzerland December 6, 2006, p. 2.

system".[32] Although this may seem like a definition that includes soft power elements, it is a discourse based on imposition rather than persuasion.

The effort of the USA to apply the "soft power" theory developed by Nye in the form of "transformational diplomacy" was found insincere in the entire contemporary world, especially by its own public opinion. So the Republicans suffered a great loss of support because of these policies. As a result, in the 2009 elections, Barrack H. Obama came to power, scoring points with his promises to bring US soldiers back home and to close the Guantanamo Base.

The evolution of the hegemonic power of the USA reached in 2009 can be explained by the concept of "smart power",[33] which was strongly articulated by Barrack H. Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary R. Clinton. In her speech to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 13, 2009,[34] Clinton said that "we must use what has been called 'smart power': the full range of tools at our disposal –diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural– picking the right tool or combination of tools for each situation."

While the NSS-2010 does not explicitly mention the concept of smart power, it does point to it. In the second chapter titled "Strategic Approach", it is stated that the basis of the spiritual leadership of the USA is to set an example for other societies, but not to impose the USA's system on them.[35] Additionally, according to the text,[36] "yet over the years, some methods employed in pursuit of our security have compromised our

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[32] George Walker Bush, *The National Security Strategy of The United States of America,* The White House, Washington D.C., March 2006, p. 33.
[33] The starting point of the concept of "smart power" is not Clinton. Nossel, defines smart power in her article published in 2004 (See Suzanne Nossel, "Smart Power", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2004, 83/2, p. 138). In addition to Nossel, Nye says that smart power is a combination of power that emerges by combining hard and soft powers in appropriate proportions and claims that it is a method that can be used more effectively in the fight against complex threats such as terrorism (See Nye, *Soft Power*, pp. XIII and 32).
[34] US Department of State Site, "Secretary of State Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/01/115196.htm, accessed on 12.02.2022.
[35] Barack Hussein Obama II, *National Security Strategy,* The White House, Washington D.C., May 2010, p. 10.
[36] Ibid., p. 10.

fidelity to the values that we promote, and our leadership on their behalf. This undercuts our ability to support democratic movements abroad, challenge nations".

It is common for strategies not to consider constraints on the resources, so as not to constrain creative thinking and not be dependent on a faulty trajectory. However, strategies must also prioritize expectations. In particular, the US-NSS documents released in the last two decades either lack any priority or contain too many priorities. It is possible to see the most concrete reflections of this situation in documents such as *Quadrennial Defense Review (from 2018, National Defense Strategy)*, *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, *Nuclear Posture Review,* and *National Cyber Strategy*, which are sub-texts of the NSS production hierarchy. Obama's successor Trump's hegemonic security approach was also based on this criticism of uniformity.

While Trump's NSS-2017 has similar features to the previous ones in terms of ambiguity and uniformity, it stands out as an original text in terms of its opportunist approach and abrasiveness. Trump manipulated the balance of ends and means in terms of resources and tried to use ends to obtain more means. Indeed, the Trump Administration submitted its budget demands to Congress a few months before the publication of the NSS, in fact, the opposite way should be followed. In other words, the strategy should be published first, and then resource requests should be made. Such initiatives show that US-NSSs are beginning to fall victim to populist policies. This approach has special importance in terms of the course of hegemonic security. Trump's "America First"[37] slogan seems to be using this rhetoric as a populist domestic policy tool, rather than emphasizing important Republican rhetoric. Trump defined the elections in 2020 as illegitimate, and his supporters occupied the US Congress. Besides reflecting populism, this event eroded the above-mentioned "emulated values" of US hegemony.

It is precisely from this point that Biden based his criticism of Trump on populism in the 2020 presidential election campaign. The slogan "America

[37] Donald John Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, The White House, Washington D.C., December 2017., p. 1.

is back" used by Biden in his election campaign should be seen as a turnaround and positioning move in the hegemonic security approach. It is useful to look at the content of the *Interim-2021* from this perspective.[38]

Joe Biden followed a different method than previous presidents and published an Interim before the NSS released it. At the time of writing this article, the NSS has not yet been published. For this reason, the Biden period has been examined through this Interim. The increasingly monotonous texts of previous presidents and the practices of the Trump era have reduced expectations from this document. In addition, domestic public support for Biden seems to have decreased. Moreover, criticism of Biden has increased due to his inability to deter Putin from his February 2022 operation against Ukraine. On the other hand, those who see the Biden era as restoration are hopeful about the content of the NSS, which is expected to be published. Therefore, the new administration may be inclined to use the NSS in its domestic policy.

The historical course is shown in Table-1 in the most concise form possible. As can be seen from Table-1, the hegemonic security understanding of the USA has historically followed the processes of first non-rivalry, benign hegemony, second non-competitiveness, and imposing hegemony. Recently, it has been experiencing a period of uncertainty trying to re-establish hegemony.

Table 1. Historical Course of the Hegemonic Power of the USA

Years	Duration	Power definition	Hegemony definition	Elements of the hegemony
1945-1970	25 years	Superpower	Unique Hegemon (The Empire with Invitation)	Consent Cooperation
1970-1990	20 years	Superpower	Benign Hegemon	Consent Cooperation Attraction

[38] Joseph (Joe) Robinette Biden Jr, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, The White House, Washington D.C., March 2021., p. 7.

1990-2001	11 years	Hyperpuissance, Soft power	Unique Hegemon	Consent Cooperation Attraction
2002-2009	8 years	Hyperpuissance	Imposing Hegemon (The Empire with Imposition)	Imposition Restricted Cooperation
2009-2017	8 years	Smart power	The Attempt of being Benign Hegemon	Consent Establishment of Cooperation
2017-2020	4 years	Hyperpuissance by economic power	Declining Hegemony	Imposition Restricted Cooperation
2021-Today	2 years	Power restoration	Return to consent and the attempt to restore hegemony	Consent Establishment of Cooperation

2. Change in Hegemonic Security Understanding: A Comparative Content Analysis

Up to this stage, the historical course of the hegemonic security understanding of the USA was explained and some codes were obtained during this narrative. At this stage, the change in the understanding of hegemonic security has been evaluated with the comparative content analysis on the NSS documents. In the first stage, the data obtained from all documents with the NVivo software have been compared and the effects of the political tendencies of the presidents and the conjuncture on the structuring of the documents have been revealed.

2.1. Phase One: Comparative Analysis of Data

Frequency analysis has been performed at this stage. To put it more clearly, a comparative quantitative analysis has been made based on the changes in the broadcast frequency, naming format, number of chapters, number of pages of the texts, and the most frequently used concepts. Table-2 shows the frequency analysis results.

As seen in the table, the president with the highest broadcast frequency is Clinton. Publishing an NSS every year except for the 2001 election year, Clinton, unlike all other presidents, named these documents

in three different ways according to the period. While the documents of the 1994-1996 period refer to the unrivalled hegemonic power through the concepts of responsibility and enlargement, documents for the period 1997-2000 indicate that leadership will be maintained in the new millennium. The last document in 2001 named the new era the "global age" and world politics was shown as a big confederation under the leadership of the USA. The concepts of "support" and "international", which were the two most used words in the Clinton Era documents, emphasize the unrivalled and interventionist nature of the US hegemony.

Page numbers and segmentation preferences also provide clues about the hegemonic security discourses of the NSS documents. Republicans used more chapters and fewer pages, while Democrats used fewer chapters and more pages. Therefore, it can be said that the Democrats preferred a more open to interpretation and sharing style on fewer subjects, while the Republicans used a clearer and more authoritative style on more subjects.

Another remarkable situation is the relative increase in the number of pages as uncertainty or expectation increases. For example, the NSS-1988, in which the expectation of dissolution in the Eastern Bloc was raised, is longer than the NSS-1987. Similarly, in parallel with the increasing concerns and expectations regarding the new millennium, the number of pages of NSS documents between 1998 and 2000 has increased significantly. Finally, it can be said that there is a direct proportion between the perception of hegemony and the length of the document. For example, while the average number of pages was 36.14 between the years 1990 and 1997 when the unique hegemony became clear, it was 49.33 in the period between the years 2002 and 2010 when the doubts about the hegemony increased.

Table 2. Findings of the Frequency Analysis

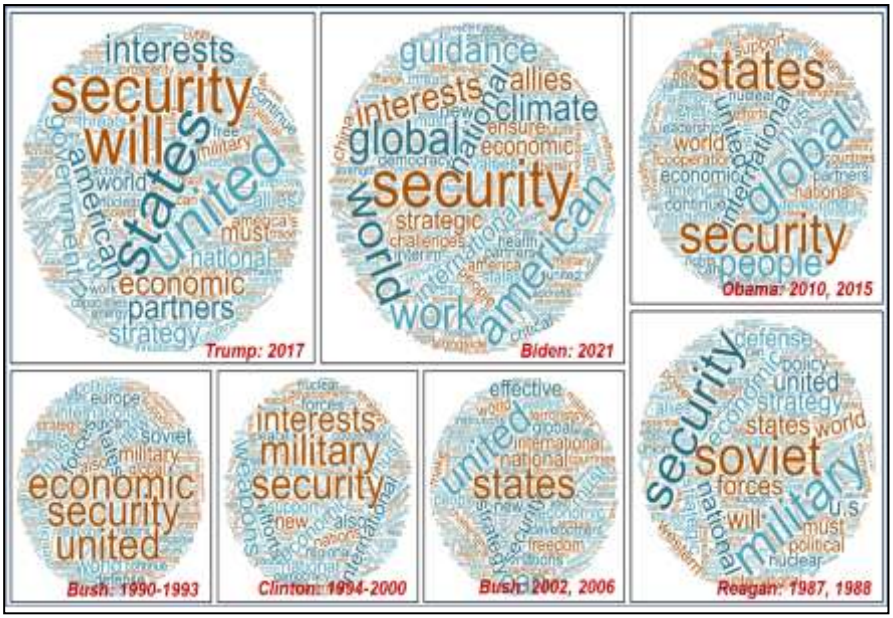
Presidents	Party	Duration	Freq.	Pub. Years	Pages	Section Numbers	Title	Top 3 Concept	Conjuncture
REAGAN	Republican	3 years	2/3	1987 1988	40 48	6 5	National Security Strategy of the United States	National Power Security	* Neoliberalism and the Initiation of Economic Globalization * Glasnost and Perestroika in the USSR
G.H.W. BUSH	Republican	4 years	3/4	1990 1991 1993	34 37 26	7 6 6	National Security Strategy of the United States	Power State Security	* The Fall of the Soviet Bloc * The Gulf Crisis and The Gulf War * Establishment of the EU * New Geopolitical Theories
CLINTON	Democratic	8 years	7/8	1994 1995 1996	32 41 49	4 4 4	A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement	Security Support International	* Political and Economic Crises in Former Soviet Republics * Internal Conflicts in Africa * Preparation for the New Millennium * Emergence of Soft Power Concept * Siloviki in Russia * North Korea and Iran's armament
				1997 1998 1999	34 61 54	4 4 4	A National Security Strategy for A New Century		
				2000	84	4	A National Security Strategy for A Global Age		
G.W. BUSH	Republican	8 years	2/8	2002 2006	34 54	9 11	The National Security Strategy of the United States of America	State Security National	* 9/11 Attacks * Operation Enduring Freedom * Operation Iraqi Freedom * China's Economic Growth * Color Revolutions * Lebanon War * Global Financial Crisis * Global Warming and Major Natural Disasters

Presidents	Party	Duration	Freq.	Pub. Years	Pages	Section Numbers	Title	Top 3 Concept	Conjuncture
OBAMA	Democratic	8 years	2/8	2010 2015	60 32	4 5	The National Security Strategy	Security International Global	* The Arab Spring * Sub-Saharan African Conflicts * Syrian Civil War * Sudan Tribal Conflicts * Syrian Civil War and Ayn al Arab * Starting to support PKK/PYD. * Nuclear Deal with Iran * Ukraine Crisis and tension with RF * Convergence with Latin America
TRUMP	Republican	4 years	1/4	2017	68	6	National Security Strategy of THE United States of America	Security American Economic	* Missile attack on Syria * Cancellation of some international agreements * Abandonment of Obama-era practices * Supporting the PYD * Rapprochement with Israel * Limitation of PRC
BIDEN	Democratic	*Continues*	*1/?*	*2021*	*24*	*3*	*Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*	Security International Strategic	* Syrian Civil War * "America is back" discourse * Limitation of PRC * Evacuation of Afghanistan * Tension with RF * 2022 Ukraine Crisis

A close relationship was found between the way the documents were named and the choice of concepts and the political tendencies of the presidents. While all Republican presidents named the NSS documents "United States of America" or "United States", Democratic presidents chose not to use the state's name.

Figure-1 shows the concept clouds obtained with the NVivo software from the presidents' NSS documents. Concept clouds are meaningful in that they show the periodic trends of document content. As can be seen, while Republican presidents gave high priority to concepts such as "force", "management", and "national", Democratic presidents focused on concepts such as "international", "support", and "development". This allows the researcher to divide the NSS documents into two main discourse groups. Imposing hegemonic discourse can be used for Republicans, while benign hegemonic discourse can be used for Democrats.

Figure 1. Concept Clouds from the NSS Documents



2.2. Phase Two: Comparative Analysis of Change

To analyse the change in the hegemonic security understanding of the USA, the criteria determined because of a detailed literature review have been used. These criteria are shown in Table-3 together with the analysis units and codes. While determining the codes, the outputs of the historical analysis section and the counting results of the documents were used.

The change in the threat perception of the USA can be clearly observed in the content of the NSS documents. The threat perception has changed from the symmetrical Soviet Union, first to asymmetric threats such as terrorism and insurrection and then to uncertain threats that may arise from transnational structures. As in the previous analyses, the data density of the Clinton era is seen in this section as well. Data can be found in all areas of threat detection. In light of these data, it can be said that the Clinton era is a transitional period that includes signs of the threats to be encountered in the twenty-first century.

As known, the division of security into sectors is a concept that emerged with the Copenhagen School. Until the period in which Copenhagen School developed, security had been a limited concept that included mostly military and, partially, economic security factors under the influence of the Realist paradigm.

As seen, the security sectors gain weight and priority in the NSS documents according to the political tendencies of the presidents. For example, social, environmental, and human security are more prominent in the texts of the Democrats than in the texts of the Republicans. The most reference to economic security is in Reagan's NSS documents. This is closely related to neoliberalism in economics, which was initiated in the Reagan era. There are also changes in the expression of security terminology according to the periods. For example, the words "force" and "conflict" are used more by Republican presidents, while softer terms like "responsibility", "cooperation", and "peace" are preferred by Democrat presidents.

An important aspect that stands out is the use of the concept of support. "Support" is a word preferred and frequently used by both Republican and Democrat presidents. It should be considered that this word has a hegemonic meaning as promoting the economic, humanitarian, and democratic developments in other countries as well as promoting the security

of others.[39] It is observed that the concept of "terrorist" as a security term has been used independently of political tendency and in the historical process. Comprehension is mostly included in Bush Jr.'s doctrine.

There is also a temporal change in the way the strategy is expressed. The concepts of "deterrence" and "containment", which were the products of the Cold War period and were developed against the Soviet threat, found their place in the texts of the last two presidents of the Cold War period, and their use decreased over time.

The concept of "containment" is not included in the Obama doctrine. The opposite of this process is observed in the concepts of "counter-insurgency" and "pre-emptive strike". While "counter-insurgency" was a popular security concept in the post-Cold War era, it was included in the doctrines of Clinton, Bush Jr., and Obama. The concept of "pre-emptive strike", which is a product of the Bush era and garner great criticism in the international community, is only found in the NSS-2002 document. Obama was careful not to use the concept that his predecessor introduced into the literature.

It is clearly seen in all NSS documents that military power is given priority over the elements of national power. It is possible to associate this prioritization with military superiority, one of Strange's four hegemony criteria. As seen, no matter how benign and cooperative it may be, the main tool for the security understanding of hegemonic power is still military power. The US Presidents have not given up on this preference in any of the NSS documents. On the other hand, it is understood that technological power is an element that is emphasized by all presidents at the same level of importance. It can be said that some elements of national power (psychosocial, geographical, human power, etc.) other than military and technological power attract more attention from Democrats rather than Republicans.

In the NSS documents, other states are classified as allies and enemies. Although this at first glance resembles Bush Jr.'s "either with us or against

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[39] Reagan, *National Security Strategy…*, January 1987, p. 36; H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy…*, August 1991, p. 32; William Jefferson Blyth III Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.* The White House, Washington D.C., July 1994, p. 27; G. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy…*, 2002, p. 24; Obama, *National Security Strategy…*, May 2010, p. 54.

us" discourse, if the analysis is deepened, it is seen that a different logic is used in the use of the concepts. Because, in all texts, all the states that are referred to as friends, partners, states with cooperation, and states with common democratic values are gathered under the title of "allied". Therefore, in the content analysis, all such synonyms were combined under the concept of "allied". However, there is a decrease in the use of the term "ally" from the first texts to the last ones. The effect of the fact that there was no unified bloc in this situation with the end of the Cold War is undeniable. In other words, since the Western Alliance, which was embodied by NATO during the Cold War, changed its shape after the Cold War and national priorities had precedence over the alliance expectations, the frequency of use of the concept of "allied" seems to have decreased gradually. However, the use of the term "enemy" has increased. In the last period, ambiguous and complex hostilities have emerged instead of the distinctive and unique enemy of the Cold War era. This seems to have caused the word "enemy" to be used more often in texts. Among the statements directed to other states, two concepts, which are not preferred apart from Bush Jr. stand out. These are the concepts of "rough" and "axis of evil". These concepts were used by Bush Jr. after the 9/11 attacks against states that were at odds with the United States, but they received backlash over time. Obama was again careful not to use these terms.

Interestingly, it has been determined that the words "leader", "exemplary", "pioneer", and their synonyms, chosen as hegemonic power expressions, are almost equally distributed within the NSS texts. It is seen that the concept of leadership only takes less place in the Bush Jr doctrines compared to the others. There may be different reasons for this. For example, the NSS-2002 document was published after the 9/11 attacks. During this period, the United States was busy avenging the attacks it was subjected to, and although it issued resolutions from the UN and NATO, the United States almost started this revenge work alone. Therefore, in the NSS-2002 document, one should not have an expectation about leadership. As a matter of fact, leadership concepts are predominantly included in the NSS-2006 document. Democrats are more interested in the concept of "being an example". Thus, it is understood that the "benign hegemon" approach has an effect, which is based on ensuring to be followed through encouragement rather than imposing compliance with the hegemon.

Table 3. Changes in the Concept of Hegemonic Security

Criteria	Unit of Analysis	Codes	Average of codes included in the strategy documents						
			NSSs of Reagan	NSSs of G. H. W. Bush	NSSs of Clinton	NSSs of G. W. Bush	NSSs of Obama	NSS of Trump	NSSG of Biden
Change in threat perception	Words	Soviet	173	67	13	4	-	-	-
		Terrorism	12	27	203	96	17	7	6
		Insurgency	9	7	11	3	1	1	-
		Transnational	-	1	64	9	16	11	-
Change in using sectoral security concepts		Public	12	3	20	9	18	12	8
		Economic	130	83	125	52	66	168	34
		Human	19	15	51	25	50	16	8
		Environment	4	19	31	4	21	15	9
Change in use of security terminology		Force	36	24	32	10	17	43	14
		Conflict	25	16	27	20	-	13	3
		Engagement	10	7	54	10	63	3	13
		Cooperation	25	19	59	19	81	18	12
		Peace	22	30	67	24	41	37	4
		Support	83	34	77	25	68	52	8
		Terrorist	4	4	22	56	31	61	3
		Deterrence	38	11	5	6	3	8	1
Change in expression of strategy		Containment	7	6	2	-	-	-	-
		Pre-emptive Strike	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
		Counterinsurgency	9	4	10	7	8	1	-
Change in expressing limitations of power		Military	317	185	226	162	104	70	18
		Technology	40	33	41	17	40	22	13
		Other Elements	1	18	62	16	46	36	11
Change in statements addressed to other states		Ally	142	51	48	53	52	87	34
		Rogue	-	-	4	12	-	-	-
		Enemy/Adversary	4	4	6	22	10	28	6
		Axis of Evil	-	-	1	3	-	2	-
Change in expressions of hegemonic power		Lead	145	97	170	60	171	38	27
		Example	37	17	45	20	47	8	1
		Exceptionalism	3	3	7	-	2	1	-
		Pioneer	20	13	38	15	36	-	-

Trump's NSS, which rejects Obama's policies and cancels many deals, is also different from previous documents. First of all, this text is one of the longest NSS documents in US history, nearly twice the length of Obama's NSS-2015. Nor has Trump followed the conventions that have been established over the years, such as the directive or the Westpoint speech. Trump also made the presentation of the NSS himself publicly, something that had never been done before. However, this presentation speech did not cover the NSS, but the actions of Trump's first year as President and criticisms of the Obama era. On the other hand, Trump used very soft words for China and Russia in this speech. He even thanked Putin. However, the NSS made it clear that China and Russia aimed to transform the world in a way that was contrary to the values and interests of the United States.[40] As a result, the NSS-2017 is a blend of traditional US strategic culture with purely Republican Party concepts, but it also includes angles that are uniquely Trump.

Instead of Conclusion: A Foresight on US Hegemonic Security Understanding

"President Biden will deliver bold action and immediate relief for American families as the country grapples with converging crises. This will include actions to control the COVID-19 pandemic, provide economic relief, tackle climate change, and advance racial equity and civil rights, as well as immediate actions to reform our immigration system and restore America's standing in the world."[41]

After the populist policies of Trump, the Biden administration's priorities stated above are clear proof that the change in the hegemonic security understanding of the USA has followed a trigonometric wavy course. Those who claim that the US hegemony has come to an end have some truth in their determinations on this issue. However, there are also shortcomings in these evaluations. Going back to the beginning, those who claim that the US hegemony has ended should also explain how they

[40] Trump, *National Security Strategy…*, 2017, p. 2.
[41] The White House Site, "Priorities", https://www.whitehouse.gov/priorities/, accessed on 12.04.2022.

drew the limits of hegemony. If a "global sovereignty" is attributed, it can be said that the US hegemony has come to an end. However, does hegemony really mean that? Let us recall Gramsci's historical bloc, borrowed from Ancient Greek, based on consent, and backed by force. The concept comes from the root of "leader" etymologically and semantically, but it does not include the meaning of "sovereign". In other words, there is not necessarily a single hegemon in the system. Indeed, during the Cold War period, there were two hegemons in the system, each with its followers. The leadership of a real or corporate person is measured by those who consent to follow it. If there are those who follow the USA, its leadership will continue. Today, the USA has a substantial number of followers. It should not be hasty to argue that US hegemony has come to an end.

Therefore, this study was conducted as a triangulation combining historical and content analysis. Historical analysis revealed that the hegemonic power of the USA was established after the Second World War and was accepted as a benign hegemon until 2002. The analysis showed that since 2002, the hegemony was shaken first by the imposing policies of Bush and then by the populist policies of Trump and an attempt has been made to re-establish consent in the global public opinion during the Obama and Biden administrations. In fact, many in the USA are waiting for the recovery Biden promised.

Considering that the US economy has a global impact and that the polarization within the US negatively affects US foreign policy, it would be beneficial to renew the US hegemonic security understanding. Both the allies and rivals of the US think that its hegemonic decline will continue for a while, and it will take time to overcome these tensions. This, in turn, may have a negative impact on the US's hegemonic security understanding.

On the other hand, the US clearly benefits from its driving power in the international economy. Although economic interdependence is conducive to creating a more stable security environment, Biden's expected NSS is a way out of the US's economic and financial power in the protectionist economic-political environment prepared by both Biden's predecessor Trump and the US's global rivals Russia and China. It would be helpful to see it as a point of view. It is, therefore, highly likely that the new NSS will emphasize the open international economy.

Despite all the criticisms against him, what President Biden will say about his national security strategy is more important than all of the above discussions. A conflict with global repercussions and a strategy that is too mundane or lacking in realism against the expectations of its allies from the United States would be a missed opportunity on the way to the restoration of hegemony. The new NSS is, therefore, expected to include a pragmatic and tangible approach that can provide decision-makers with room to manoeuvre in a complex global environment. Biden's strategy should contain clearer statements than previous ones on how the US's core interests are changing and what impact it will have on US hegemonic security understanding. Moreover, Biden's strategy needs to emphasize that, far from being a self-beneficial effort, it can also offer solutions to the world's instability, many of which he has caused. Thus, the new strategy should be able to establish the link between America's institutional restoration and global security requirements. The expectation here is that the predictions and concrete measures regarding the global competition with China should be reflected in the text.

Even though the behaviour of the Presidents has been spread on a wide spectrum, the security strategies of the USA have been severely criticized, and its followers have decreased in the last two decades, the United States' hegemonic security approach continues even today. It appears that the United States will continue to seek opportunities to lead.

Geniş Özet

"Hegemonya", İtalyan Marksist düşünür Gramsci tarafından 1930'larda dile getirilen, yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında pek çok sosyal bilimci tarafından ödünç alınan bir kavramdır. 1990'lardan bu yana yapılan araştırmaların çoklukla, bilinen dünyanın değiştiğine dair varsayımlar üzerine oturtulduğu görülür. Bazı çevrelere göre, Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle birlikte iki kutuplu dünya düzeni, tek kutuplu hale gelmiştir. Başka bir görüşe göre ise, böyle bir yorum yapanlar erkenci davranmışlardır; zira dünya kısa süreli bir tek kutupluluk algısı yaşamış olsa da, aslında yaşanmakta olan şey çok kutupluluk düzenidir. Bu araştırma bahse konu tartışmaların hangisinin doğru ya da geçerli olduğuna değil, bu tartışmaların

ardında yatan bir kabullenişe; daha açık bir ifadeyle "hegemonyadaki değişime" odaklanmaktadır.

Antik Yunan'da hegemon kavramı "lider" kelimesinin karşılığı olarak kullanılırdı. Nitekim hegemonya kavramını siyaset felsefesine kazandıran Antonio Gramsci'nin de kavramı tam da bu niteliğinden dolayı bilinçli olarak kullandığı söylenebilir. Marx ve Engels'in "zor" kavramına farklı bir bakış getiren Gramsci "elit bir azınlık nasıl olur da zora başvurmadan çoğunluğu kontrol edebilmektedir?" "Marx, sosyalist bir devrimi haber verdiği halde nasıl oluyor da bir avuç kapitalist, toplumu kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda yönetmekte ve yönlendirmektedir?" sorularına "hegemonya" kavramı ile cevap vermiş ve anahtar kavram olarak da "rızayı" ortaya koymuştur. Özünde bu bir "güç ile tesis edilen rıza" durumudur.

Hegemonyadaki rıza ilişkisi Yeni-Gramşici olarak adlandırılan sosyal bilimcilerce uluslararası güvenlik alanına uyarlanmıştır. Cox'a göre devletlerin dışında da bir uluslararası hegemonik sınıf vardır. Aynı zamanda bu sınıf kendi ideolojisini, stratejisini ve ortak eylemlerini takipçilerine benimseten bir "ulus ötesi yönetici sınıftır". Dolayısıyla uluslararası güvenlik alanında bir hegemonun varlığını ileri sürebilmek için öncelikle lider rolüne soyunan ya da kendisine bu rol biçilen bir gücün olması; diğer aktörlerin de bu güce rıza göstermiş olmaları gerekmektedir.

ABD, İkinci Dünya Savaşı yıllarıyla birlikte gücünü yayma imkânı buldu. 1940'ların ikinci yarısı ile 1950'lerde de Batı dünyasındaki hegemonyasını da tesis etti. ABD hegemonyasının bu dönemi bir "Davet Yoluyla İmparatorluk" idi. Bu üstünlük, 1960'ların sonuna kadar ciddi bir sorgulanmaya maruz kalmadan devam etti. Ancak Vietnam Savaşı'ndaki başarısızlık ve hemen ardından Arap-İsrail savaşlarının yol açtığı ilk petrol kriziyle birlikte ABD'nin hegemonik gücü sorgulanır hale geldi. Bunlara aynı yıllardaki dekolonizasyon, Afro-Amerikan, öğrenci ve kadın hareketleri gibi sosyal ve siyasi gelişmeler de eklendi. 1970'lerde belli bir düzeyde güç kaybına uğramışsa da pek çok akademisyen tarafından ABD'nin hegemonyasını sürdürdüğü kabul edildi.

1970'ler ile 1990 arasında ABD'nin hegemonik gücünü koruyup korumadığı tartışmaları devam etti. Bir görüşe göre ABD hegemonik güç olma özelliğini tedricen kaybetmekteydi. Bu görüşün sahipleri ABD'nin sistemde tek olmadığını, Doğu Bloğu'nun başat gücü olan Sovyetler

Birliği'nin göz ardı edilmemesi gerektiğini ileri sürüyorlardı. Ayrıca İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın en büyük iki düşmanı ve aynı zamanda en büyük iki kaybedeni Almanya ve Japonya, ileri teknoloji yatırımlarının sonucunda, 1980'lerde ekonomik olarak neredeyse ABD ile başa baş konuma gelmişlerdi. Ayrıca hegemonik istikrar teorisine göre hegemon, sistemin dışına çıkan diğer aktörleri yola sokmalı ve cezalandırmalıydı. Ancak ABD, etkinliği tartışmalı birkaç girişim dışında, takipçilerini cezalandırıcı eylemlerde bulunmamıştı. Öyleyse böyle bir güce sahip değildi; bu durumda da hegemon sayılmamalıydı. Buna karşılık ABD'nin hegemonik gücünün devam ettiğini iddia edenler, ABD'nin güç kullanmamasıyla ilgili olarak "iyi huylu hegemon" kavramını geliştirdiler. Ancak Soğuk Savaş'ın sonra ermesinin ardından, 1990'lar bir "tartışmasız ABD hegemonyası dönemi oldu. Bu durum ise 11 Eylül saldırılarıyla değişti. O dönemden bu yana, akademik yayınların büyük çoğunluğu ABD'nin hegemonyasının tedricen gerilediğini iddia etmektedir. Bu seyri ABD Başkanlarının yayımladıkları güvenlik strateji belgeleri üzerinden gözlemlemek mümkündür. Nitekim bu çalışmada ABD güvenlik strateji belgelerinden ilginç bulgular elde edilmiştir. Tarihsel analiz ve içerik analizi göstermiştir ki; ABD'nin hegemonik güvenlik anlayışı kimi zaman konjonktüre uyarak değişmiş, kimi zaman da değişerek konjonktürü kendisi oluşturmuştur. ABD'nin güvenlik stratejileri eleştiriye uğramış, davranışları belli ölçüde değişmiş ve takipçileri azalmış olsa da hegemonik güvenlik yaklaşımının bugün dahi devam ettiği görülmektedir.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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