

EXAM-DAY · 90-MIN REVISION CARD

US Hegemony in World Politics

Print this · Fold it · Carry to the exam-hall gate · Revise once · Then walk in.

FORMULAS & KEY RESULTS

HEGEMONY = leadership/dominance of ONE state over the world order. US hegemony began with the SOVIET COLLAPSE 1991 — the 'unipolar moment'.

THREE SENSES: (1) HARD/MILITARY power; (2) STRUCTURAL power (global economy — Bretton Woods, IMF, World Bank, WTO, dollar, sea-lanes); (3) SOFT/CULTURAL power (Hollywood, blue jeans, McDonald's, American dream).

FIRST GULF WAR 1991 = OPERATION DESERT STORM. UN-authorized 34-nation coalition led by US to expel Iraq from Kuwait (Saddam invaded Kuwait Aug 1990). General Norman Schwarzkopf commanded. First show of US post-Cold-War dominance.

NEW WORLD ORDER: phrase used by President George H. W. Bush after Gulf War — US-led order replacing bipolarity.

CLINTON YEARS (1992-2000): US primacy but cautious — focus on soft issues (trade, democracy promotion), limited interventions (Kosovo 1999).

9/11 = 11 September 2001. Al-Qaeda attacks on World Trade Center + Pentagon. Triggered the GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM = Afghanistan, Oct 2001, against Taliban + Al-Qaeda.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM = Iraq, March 2003, US-led invasion toppling Saddam Hussein — WITHOUT explicit UN authorisation; 40+ countries in the 'coalition of the willing'.

CONSTRAINTS (3): (1) US institutional architecture — SEPARATION OF POWERS

TOP 5 PYQ PATTERNS

1 Three senses of hegemony

5 marks · 85% of years

Define + unipolar context + hard/structural/soft with one example each + conclusion.

2 Constraints on American power

5 marks · 75% of years

Separation of powers + open society/free press + NATO/allies + 'constraints from within'.

3 How hegemony can be overcome

5 marks · 70% of years

Bandwagon + hide + balance of power + non-state actors/civil society.

4 First Gulf War 1991 + New World Order

3 marks · 55% of years

Desert Storm + UN coalition + expel Iraq from Kuwait + Bush's 'New World Order'.

5 9/11 and the Global War on Terror

3 marks · 55% of years

11 Sep 2001 + Al-Qaeda + Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) + Iraqi Freedom (Iraq).

90-MIN REVISION FLOW

0-15 min

Memorise the THREE SENSES triad with one example each, and the operation names: Desert Storm 1991, Enduring Freedom 2001, Iraqi Freedom 2003.

15-30 min

Write the 'three senses of hegemony' answer from memory.

30-45 min

Write the 'constraints on American power' answer (3 constraints).

45-60 min

Write the 'how hegemony can be overcome' answer (bandwagon/hide/balance + civil society).

60-75 min

Take the 15-MCQ Quick Drill.

75-90 min

Review wrong answers. Re-derive the 1991-2003 timeline + the India-US debate.

(executive/legislature/judiciary);
(2) OPEN SOCIETY + FREE
PRESS — public + media
scepticism; (3) NATO + reliance
on ALLIES.

OVERCOME HEGEMONY: (1)
BANDWAGON (benefit from
within); (2) HIDE (stay out of the
way); (3) BALANCE OF POWER
(counter-coalition:
China+EU+Russia+India); plus
NON-STATE actors — MNCs,
NGOs, civil society.

SOFT POWER = getting others
to WANT what you want via
ATTRACTION, not coercion
(Joseph Nye's idea).

INDIA-US: shifted from Cold-
War distance to a strong
post-1991 partnership — IT/
software links, large Indian
diaspora, growing trade +
strategic ties; debate in India
between those who want
closeness, distance, or to use
the US for India's rise.

Confidence, not anxiety. You've practised this all year. Trust your steps. Don't change strategy on exam morning.
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