

THE HEGEMONIC ORDER IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received: 16 May 2017</p> <p>Accepted: 28 October 2017</p>	<p>Abstract: The concept of the hegemonic order in international relations is, on the one hand, related to the state-centric understanding of the international system, and on the other hand, to the challenging of the thesis of its polyarchism. While historic hegemonies never had a monopoly on exclusivity, the U.S. has achieved a clear and significant advantage over other powers. This was due to numerous reasons. The multidimensionality of the U.S. power means that no one else is able to match the U.S. in military, economic, technological, political, or cultural-civilizational and ideological terms. The United States has become the only power that can effectively stabilize or destabilize the existing global order. The biggest source of current concern is, on the one hand, a contestation of U.S. hegemony in the world, and, on the other, its actual decline.</p>
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Understanding hegemony

The concept of the hegemonic order in international relations is, on the one hand, related to the state-centric understanding of the international system, and on the other hand, to the challenging of the thesis of its polyarchism.¹ Since ancient times (Herodotus, Xenophon, Aristotle, Isocrates), hegemony has been understood as a political and military system based on a hierarchical relationship between an entity with certain power and a vision to utilize it, and geopolitical units ranked lower in terms of their own potential and motivations.² In most cases, hegemony has meant a negative phenomenon of the stronger dictating the patterns of behaviour to the weaker. It has represented a certain superiority of one entity over the other ones, which in historical systems of international relations was seen, for example, in ancient Greece or among the German states until the 19th century. Hegemony is associated with

attempts by one power to impose its leadership on the others through expansive foreign policy. Such a policy was pursued by Spain in the 17th century, France in the 18th century, and Germany in the 20th century.

Hegemony in international relations is one of the forms of domination, alongside such forms as imperialism and leadership (primacy). While imperialism involves a conquest of some territory and its subordination (as a protectorate or colony), leadership (or primacy) is based on a more altruistic form of domination. In imperialist relationships what matters is control and coercion, while leadership is based on consensus and responsibility for a group accepted by the leader.³ All these forms of domination, however, mean the international order is governed by power and strength. They can be distinguished only in theory, as in reality they are intertwined.⁴

¹ Gałganek, A. Historia stosunków międzynarodowych. Nierówny i połączony rozwój, t. 1. Idee, Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, Warszawa, 2013, p. 474.

² Wilkinson, D. Hêgemonia: Hegemony, Classical and Modern // *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 2008, Vol. XIV, No. 2, p. 119.

³ Sur, S. Stosunki międzynarodowe, Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 167-168.

⁴ Lentner, H.H. Hegemony and Power in International Politics / in: M. Haugaard, H.H. Lentner (eds), "Hegemony and Power. Consensus and Coercion in Contemporary Politics", Lexington Books, Lanham, 2006. Pp. 89-108.

Hegemonic countries usually exercise their leadership in various alliances (military-political and economic groupings), striving for legitimacy of their power among smaller and weaker participants. This way, the international system maintains its constitutive quality of “interstateness” and does not evolve into one globalempire. Despite hegemony in international relations, the phenomenon of coordination undertaken by powers does not disappear, its consequence being superordination, or primacy of the biggest, and subordination, or subjection of the rest. Thus, hegemony does not remove the problem of hierarchy and heterarchy of the international order, on the contrary, it strengthens these qualities, exposing the dependence of the weakest on the strongest one.⁵

Marked by the U.S. power

The United States has practised all the forms of domination in its history – it was imperialist when it made territorial conquests in the 19th century, exercised leadership towards Europe after World War II through the Marshall Plan and its support of the North Atlantic Treaty, and finally, after the end of the “Cold War”, it became the only hegemonic power able to rise to the challenge of taking on responsibility for the maintenance of the global order. Its willingness and ability to bear the costs of maintaining the stability of the international system is, however, being deformed, as a result of a growing egoism in satisfying its ideological, political, military and economic interests.⁶

In the 1970's and 1980's, there were many voices cautioning the United States against its unbridled ambitions and unlimited potential to increase its power. One fashionable stream was the so-called declinism, with Paul Kennedy⁷ bringing it as much popularity as anyone

else. While in the strategic perspective such predictions have lost none of their relevance, at the end of the 1990s they were reassessed in favour of America. The United States became the only universal power as a result of the end of the “Cold War”, and the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union, as well as the victorious 1991 Gulf War meant a triumph of its unipolarity and monocentrism in shaping the international order.⁸ In most countries of the world, there was a nearly universal conviction among intellectual elites about the absolute domination of the United States in modern international relations. Differences of opinion were primarily related to the ways of exercising American leadership and the level of acceptance for their global roles.⁹

11 September 2001 became a symbolic date not only due to the spectacular terrorist attack on the United States, but also because of intensified reassessments of America's political and military doctrine. The political elites in Washington were faced with a difficult task to redefine their mission and interests in the international arena. First and foremost, isolationist pipe dreams, which had influenced U.S. policy for decades, became a thing of the past. A sense of security, determined by long distances from potential enemies and sources of traditional threats, was gone, the historical splendid isolation came to an end.¹⁰ Political forces that advocated unilateral U.S. engagement to restore order in major hot spots and pivotal areas of the globe came to the

⁵ Donnelly, J. Rethinking Political Structures: From ‘Ordering Principles’ to ‘Vertical Differentiation’ – and Beyond // *International Theory*, 2009, No. 1, pp. 49-86.

⁶ Bieleń, S. Erozja monocentryzmu w stosunkach międzynarodowych / in: P. Eberhardt (ed.) „Studia nad geopolityką XX wieku”, „Prace Geograficzne”, No. 242, IGiPZ PAN, Warszawa 2013, pp. 97-115.

⁷ Kennedy, P. Mocarstwa świata. Narodziny, rozkwit, upadek, Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa, 1994.

⁸ Krauthammer, Ch. Unipolar Moment? // *Foreign Affairs*, 1990-1991, No. 1; Mastanduno, M. Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and US Grand Strategy after the Cold War // *International Security*, 1997, No. 4.

⁹ Kowalczyk, M. Lśniące miasto na wzgórzu. Ideowe podstawy amerykańskiego unilateralizmu w okresie rządów George'a Busha, Wydawnictwo von borowiecky, Warszawa, 2008.

¹⁰ Three main tendencies have been a constant theme in U.S. foreign policy since George Washington: isolationist, internationalist (also called multilateralism) and unilateralist (with hints of imperialism), which had its predecessors in early 20th century (Alfred Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt). Russell Mead, W. The American Foreign Policy Legacy // *Foreign Affairs*, 2002, No. 1, pp. 163-176.

fore.¹¹ By launching military interventions on an unprecedented scale, the United States thus took on the role of the empire in the previous sense of the word.¹² It justified its combativeness citing not only the necessity to make up for the damage and the desire to stop escalation of terrorist acts, but also the failure of the existing mechanisms, including, above all, the U.N., to prevent escalation of violence. Thus, the United States turned from a country that participated in the creation of law and institutional guarantees of the polycentric international order into one enforcing the desired behaviours of others, which meant the use of war as a policy tool. It became the only global power, with great advantage over its existing and potential rivals. Aware of its power, it began to manifest its wish to play the role of a „sheriff” that dispenses justice and polices the global order.¹³ As part of such a “philosophy”, America rejected the Kyoto protocol to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, refused to sign an agreement to regulate arms trade, withdrew from the ABM treaty,¹⁴ opposed the nuclear testing ban and the convention on biological weapons. The world opinion treated the U.S. refusal to ratify the statute of the International Criminal Court as a scandal.¹⁵

¹¹ Hirsh, M. Bush and the World // *Foreign Affairs*, 2002, No. 5, pp. 18-43.

¹² Ikenberry, G.J. America’s Imperial Ambition // *Foreign Affairs*, 2002, No. 5, pp. 44-60.

¹³ This situation was predicted by Richard Haass in a book published in 1997. He claimed that fixed and permanent alliances ended after the “Cold War”. Their place was to be taken by ad hoc initiatives to mobilize in defence of specific values or principles under the leadership of the U.S. „sheriff”. This prediction came true for the first time in Afghanistan, where NATO and the traditional allies of the U.S. were completely marginalized. Haass, R.N. *Rozważny szeryf. Stany Zjednoczone po zimnej wojnie*, Wydawnictwo von borowiecky, Warszawa, 2004.

¹⁴ Arms control treaties became a needless restriction of U.S. freedom of action as America realized it was the only superpower with global capabilities and interests. Moreover, the treaties back from 1970s became largely outdated due to technological progress. The Russians also understood the need to change the treaty basis for the strategic balance, accepting the termination of the ABM treaty by the U.S.

¹⁵ Faced with the launch of the International Criminal Court, the U.S. passed the American Service

Members Protection Act which allows for the use of force to rescue any U.S. soldiers detained on the basis of a judgment by that tribunal.

U.S. hegemony is therefore not just a simple derivative of its material (economic, military, technological, etc.) power, as its earlier superpower status was.¹⁶ It is rather a result of the active usage of that power, or the motivation factor, which takes on a very dynamic character. As long as the United States used its potential to uphold the existing international order, its hegemony was seen in a positive light. Undoubtedly, it was thanks to the U.S. power that there was no large-scale armed conflict involving other powers in the postwar period. The idea of an “armed peace” was based on a strategy of deterrence and retaliation, which dissuaded both the U.S. and the Soviet Union from a nuclear attack against the other side. When, however, it chose to impose its model of international order on the world, U.S. hegemonism came to be seen as a source of threats, seeking to obtain an unlimited mandate for the use of force in international relations.¹⁷ Such a logic of prevention against any more surprising attacks on the United States was in conflict with the accepted principles of international coexistence. While relatively few countries unambiguously challenge Washington’s moral claims and strategic objectives, doubts, both outside and inside the U.S., have been raised by its tactics that have alienated its traditional allies, driven potential allies away, which has ultimately undermined the international support for America.¹⁸

Members Protection Act which allows for the use of force to rescue any U.S. soldiers detained on the basis of a judgment by that tribunal.

¹⁶ The superpower status took shape during the Cold War confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The superpower quality attributed to both rivals was primarily based on military power, while hegemony also derives, to a large extent, from economic power. It is expressed in exercising control over access to sources of raw materials, control over the biggest capital resources, control over markets and advantage in production of highly processed goods.

¹⁷ Skarzyński, R. *Anarchia i policentryzm. Elementy teorii stosunków międzynarodowych*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Białymstoku, Białystok, 2006, p. 50.

¹⁸ Kiewerska, J. *Problem amerykańskiego przywództwa w świecie / w: S. Wojciechowski, M. Tomczak (ed.), Mocarstwo na przełomie XX i XXI wieku. Teorie – analizy – prognozy*, Wyższa Szkoła Nauk

While historic hegemonies never had a monopoly on exclusivity, the U.S. has achieved a clear and significant advantage over other powers. This was due to numerous reasons. The pace and scale of economic growth made America an unrivalled power. Not without significance was also the collapse of the bipolar system and the dissolution of the communist Soviet power. The multidimensionality of the U.S. power means that no one else is able to match the U.S. in military, economic, technological, political, or cultural-civilizational and ideological terms.¹⁹ George Modelski pointed out in the 1980s that America also enjoys an advantage over other powers in geostrategic terms (it has a comfortable location due to its big geographical distance that separates it from others, while other powers are condemned to “mutual vigilance” stemming from their close proximity).²⁰ Successive U.S. administrations have enjoyed a strong support of the society, which is coherent and open, while also being committed and ready for sacrifices.²¹ And finally, not without importance is its effortlessness in creating a vision of the global order and active participation in its implementation.²²

In economic terms, the U.S. continues to lead the modern world. Accounting for only about 4.5 percent of the global population, citizens of the United States generate approx. 24 percent of the global GDP (about 18 trillion USD, which is nearly double the GDP of China (World Bank 2015). They also consume one third of oil

produced and account for nearly as much global greenhouse gas emissions. The United States is a promoter and the best example of globalization – free-market capitalism unhindered by borders, vested interests, restrictive and protectionist practices, or state interventionism. At the same time, this very America blocks access to its domestic market for foreign agricultural products, introduces protective barriers and subsidies for its own products.²³

In the military field, U.S. defense expenditure totals 600 billion USD a year,²⁴ a sum higher than the combined budgets of the next 20 countries that spend most on arms. This is still not a very high ratio against GDP, as it stands at about 3.3 percent (2015), while in the “Cold War” years it reached as much as 7-9 percent GDP. The United States maintains its bases, warships, military aircraft and units in different parts of the globe. It has an overwhelming advantage in nuclear weapons. It dominates the world in the fields of military uses of advanced communication and information technologies.²⁵ No one in the world is able to match the U.S. in the development of intelligence services, air transport, systems to disrupt enemy air defence, air tankers for airborne refueling, marine transport, medical services or units for search and rescue operations. It has an unparalleled ability to coordinate and process information received from the battlefield and extraordinary precision in destroying targets remotely. For these reasons, Americans can intervene with the use of force with hardly any space and time constraints.²⁶ They can also conduct military

Humanistycznych i Dziennikarstwa w Poznaniu, Poznań, 2010, pp. 101-128.

¹⁹ Brzeziński, Z. *Strategiczna wizja. Ameryka a kryzys globalnej potęgi*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 2013.

²⁰ Modelski, G. *Qualifications for World Leadership // Voice*, October 1983, pp. 210-229.

²¹ This was related to the vanishing of the Vietnam War syndrome. Along with the activation of a generation that does not remember that war, the fears in the U.S. society over any more armed interventions in different corners of the globe decreased. This situation is changing, which could be seen in protests against an intervention in Syria.

²² Jarczewska-Romaniuk, A. *Amerykańskie wizje ładu międzynarodowego po zakończeniu zimnej wojny / in: R. Kuźniar (ed.), Porządek międzynarodowy u progu XXI wieku*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa, 2005, pp. 227-247.

²³ Dam, K.W. *The Rules of the Global Game: A New Look at the U.S. International Economic Policymaking*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.

²⁴ *Estimates by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) for 2015.*

²⁵ Nowacki, G. *Rozpoznanie satelitarne USA i Federacji Rosyjskiej*, Akademia Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa, 2002, pp. 65-120.

²⁶ „The fundamental fact of today’s geopolitics is the U.S. military power. (...) There are no conventional forces in the world that could wage a total war against America and win. Indeed, to put it in completely unreal terms, if the entire world launched a combined attack against the United States, it would be defeated”. Cooper, R. *Pękanie granic. Porządek i chaos w XXI wieku*, Media Rodzina, Poznań, 2005, p. 63.

operations in several places of the globe simultaneously.²⁷

What the U.S. has to offer in the field of culture (soft power) has proven to be unbeatable and extremely attractive in the global scale.²⁸ But regardless of the results of the so-called cultural imperialism, perceived in terms of “Americanization” of national cultures, the United States is unfortunately losing ground in the sphere of ideological leadership and the attractiveness of its social model. Its traditional missionary zeal and a „didactic attitude to the world” have been undermined due to a clear contradiction between the interests of America and those of the rest of the world. In the economic field in particular, preaching free trade and defending your own interests contrary to its principles is the best way to discredit the whole idea and feed accusations that the United States accepts free trade as long as it serves its interests.

The combination of economic, military and cultural attributes has given the United States a global power of political pressure.²⁹ Any strengthening of the monopolist position of the U.S., however, leads to the emergence of many pathological phenomena that every monopoly breeds, and comparisons between the U.S. empire and the glory days and collapse of the Roman Empire are meant to be a wake-up call against an impending disaster.³⁰

The confidence, or, as some see it, arrogance of America largely stems from its indispensability. The United States has become the only power that can effectively stabilize or destabilize the existing global order. Regardless of criticisms and doubts, it is the unique power that can face up to the international challenges and threats of the post-Cold War era. Procrastination and opportunism of many ruling elites in Western European countries

have painfully exposed the powerlessness of the existing mechanisms in the face of the slaughter in the Balkans, the humanitarian tragedies in the Middle East and Africa. Had there been no decisive response from America, ethnic cleansing would have continued, and peace would have been beyond reach. The U.S. as a strong power is therefore necessary for the world for various reasons. Regardless of vivid anti-American sentiments in different parts of the globe, the United States remains the paramount ideological leader that promotes the ideas of freedom, respect for the law and tolerance.³¹ For these reasons, it continues to be an attractive country for thousands of immigrants from different corners of the world, and not only from countries with undemocratic political regimes.

Politically, it has the determination and political will to exercise leadership roles, especially in the field of preventing conflict escalation in the world. There is a certain social consensus in the U.S. on committing efforts and resources for the purpose of solving international problems, which constitutes an extremely important asset in the hands of politicians and diplomats. “Questions about how the world is organized are at least partly questions about U.S. policy. The United States is the only power with a global strategy – in a sense, it is actually the only power with an independent strategy. The rest of the world responds to America, lives under American protection, envies America, conspires against it, depends on America. Every country defines its strategy in relation to the United States.”³²

The U.S., as the only powerhouse in the modern world, can effectively and decisively enforce observance of universal human rights standards by rogue dictatorships that are yet to be eliminated. It is also the only power that can counter the expansion of the forces of modern terrorism by building coalitions and respecting sovereign rights of other countries. Only under these conditions can the U.S. retain its position of the hegemon whose international roles will

²⁷ Brooks, S.G.; Wohlforth, W.C. American Primacy in Perspective // *Foreign Affairs*, 2002, No. 4, pp. 20-33.

²⁸ Nye, J.S. Soft Power. Jak osiągnąć sukces w polityce światowej, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa, 2007.

²⁹ Brzeziński, Z. Wielka szachownica. Główne cele polityki amerykańskiej, Świat Książki, Warszawa, 1998, p. 28.

³⁰ Bender, P. Ameryka. Nowy Rzym, Wydawnictwo Sic! Warszawa, 2004.

³¹ Buhler, P. O potęgę w XXI wieku, przeł. G. Majcher, Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, Warszawa, 2014, pp. 407-451.

³² Cooper, R. Pęknięcie granic. Porządek i chaos w XXI wieku, Media Rodzina, Poznań, 2005. P. 64.

be assessed positively rather than negatively. Hegemony seen positively can therefore constitute an ideal form of executing leadership roles, expressed in the defence of universally accepted standards and values, shaping and respecting the rules of the game, which form the fabric of the international order.³³

Finally, America is the only „engine” of the world economy, which is reflected in its share of global imports (2,347 trillion USD – 14 percent in 2015) and exports (1,598 trillion USD – 10 percent). Due to the absorption capacity of the U.S. domestic market, the economies of all the other highly developed countries can constantly hope for growth driven by American consumers and investors. The U.S. investment market absorbs more than one third of the world’s foreign direct investments. Due to its potential, the U.S. stabilizes the international monetary system, it is a guarantor of liberal rules in foreign trade. It can improve the social wealth redistribution system in the global scale. Having the biggest resources for donations and various forms of assistance to the poorest countries, Americans are able to reform the existing system of managing funds to prevent monstrous corruption and waste of resources in countries of destination.

Great powers contribute to the international order in two ways: by regulating their bilateral relations and using their advantage over the others in such a way as to impose their leadership on broader groupings of countries, even the entire “international community”.³⁴ Regulation has so far been based on safeguarding the general balance of power, understood after World War II as the strategic balance between the Eastern and Western blocs. The aim was to

control and “manage” crises, and also search for ways to avoid a large-scale war. After the “Cold War”, the function of ensuring the balance of power is still legitimized by mutual deterrence, but the powers of the former East and West are increasingly faced with the necessity to form a common front against extremist forces that violate the previously recognized rules of the game.³⁵

The principles of traditional balance of power, under which every power (individual or collective/allied) produced a counterpower over time, which prevented a world domination by one power or a bloc of powers, do not apply to modern international relations.³⁶ First of all, the motives of searching for the sources of power in international relations have changed. Today’s systemic hegemony does not require the United States to be territorially expansive, which used to be an immanent feature of the traditional models of building advantages in international relations. Moreover, the U.S. is not an enemy, but an ally of most other powers, which reap substantial benefits from their allied relations with America. Even China or Russia, which are placed at the most remote ends of interdependence, do not imagine building their own power without cooperation with the U.S. economy.³⁷

A characteristic feature of the modern international balance is a wide asymmetry in the potentials of particular powers, or associations of countries (like in the case of the European Union). Most powers have a one-dimensional or sectoral character, while the U.S. power has a multifaceted and multidimensional character.³⁸ This unipolar hegemony of the

³³ Krepinevich, A.F. Strategy in a Time of Austerity // *Foreign Affairs*, 2012, No. 6, pp. 58-69.

³⁴ Hedley Bull attributed clearly negative traits to power hegemony, but he pointed out that, regardless of moral qualities, it helps to maintain order in international relations. No matter if it was the Soviet Union or the U.S., during the “Cold War” both powers contributed to the curbing of tendencies to use violence among countries whose sovereignty was restricted by these hegemonies. (Eastern Europe and Latin America). Bull, H. *The Anarchical Society. A Study of Order in World Politics*. Macmillan Press, London, 1977, p. 219 and more).

³⁵ Kupchan, Ch. *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century*. Alfred Knopf, New York, 2003.

³⁶ Bieleń, S. O pojmowaniu równowagi sił w stosunkach międzynarodowych / in: S. Sulowski (ed.) „Polska-Niemcy. Nadzieja i zaufanie. Księga Jubileuszowa na 80-lecie Urodzin Profesora Mieczysława Tomali”, Fundacja Politeja, Warszawa, 2002, pp. 109-126.

³⁷ Lieber, R.J. *Eagle Rules. Foreign Policy and American Primacy in the Twenty-First Century*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2002.

³⁸ Wiśniewski, J.; Zodź-Kuźnia, K. *Mocarstwa współczesnego świata – problem przywództwa światowego*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań, 2008, pp. 41-86.

U.S. in combination with its democratic system prevents an outbreak of a large-scale conflict between powers. Due to America's clear strategic advantage, it is unlikely for any of the existing powers to be able to challenge it and threaten its undisputed reign. „America will not have a global rival. Even for China such a role would be too much in the years ahead. So America will be able to shape coalitions capable of joining forces in order to solve problems. And it could jointly create institutions to serve this purpose.”³⁹

Even if the international order with the United States as its only guarantor is not equally fair for everyone, it doesn't mean it is unbearable. It is unclear if an international order that would be fair for everyone and perfect in every respect is possible at all. However, it is certain that every order in international relations must have its guardians and guarantors whose risks and maintenance costs are much higher than for other countries. For objective reasons, in modern international relations there is virtually no alternative to the order based on a monocentric balance of power. It becomes impossible to distribute responsibility, and thus equal rights, between a larger number of powers (due to the glaring power disparity). Moreover, no non-state actor is able to take the initiative to such an extent as to constitute an alternative world leadership.

Contesting U.S. hegemony

In international relations, the time of crisis reveals the importance of risk present in various dimensions of international life, including geopolitical and geostrategic ones. Questions are increasingly asked about how stable the international balance of power is, where the threats to its functionality and efficiency lie. Can major players in international relations, both state and non-state ones, create reasonably solid guarantees for the existing international order? Will the supporters of preserving the status quo win, or will the revisionists and radicals have the upper hand? Or perhaps the fate of the international order does not depend on

³⁹ Świtalski, P.A. Powracające widmo Tiamat – chaos i porządek w stosunkach międzynarodowych // *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2007, No. 6, p. 53.

conscious actions of its creators and guarantors at all? Perhaps the globalized world is slipping out of any sort of control, and consequently the degree of destruction risk is getting as severe as never before?⁴⁰

At the heart of many deliberations is the global balance of power and its future changes in the polyarchic international environment. What geopoliticians focus their attention on is the evolution of power in time and space.⁴¹ While international behaviours of countries and other subjects of international relations are determined by many factors, it appears that geopoliticians highlight the most important factor that drives the systemic evolution. One feature of geopolitics is confidence that certain timeless truths or principles, resulting from observations of balances of power, are right.⁴²

The contemporary system of international relations is undergoing a tumultuous transformation. Due to the dynamics of changes and the multitude of unknowns, no one is able to predict the effect of these transfigurations. But everyone agrees that a profound decomposition of the existing structures and constellations of powers is underway.⁴³ Just taking a look at, say, the crises plaguing such organizations as NATO or the European Union is enough to understand that the world is in the midst of profound transformations.

These transformations are the result of at least several processes:

There is a *pluralization of the visions of international order*; up to now, the Western vision has been dominant and the primacy of Western values determined how different challenges and threats to this order have been diagnosed. Currently, non-Western perspectives, created by new “rising” powers such as China, India, Russia, Brazil, South

⁴⁰ Bremmer, I.; Keat, P. *The Fat Tail: The Power of Political Knowledge in an Uncertain World*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2010; Taleb, N.N. *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. Random House, New York, 2010.

⁴¹ Lacoste, Y. *Geopolityka Śródziemnomorza*. Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, Warszawa, 2010.

⁴² Agnew, J. *Geopolitics: Re-Visioning World Politics*. Routledge, London, 1998.

⁴³ Cohen-Tanugi, L. *The Shape of the World to Come. Charting the Geopolitics of a New Century*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2008.

Africa, are increasingly visible. Their position increases at the time of the existing crisis that is plaguing Western economies.⁴⁴

Related to the above is the *degradation of Europe's position both in the field of politics and economy*. Participation of European countries in solving numerous international problems is decreasing and in place of or alongside the U.S.-Europe "axis", new decision-making "axes" like U.S.-China or China-Russia are emerging. Europe is, in a way, losing its civilizational authority.

We are seeing a *renationalization of policies of many countries*, which are increasingly driven by egoistic motives and abandon or restrict collective forms of coordination and shared responsibility. It is clearly visible in the European Union. This situation reinstates the importance of bilateral alliances and safeguards based on power balancing.

Besides geopolitics, which forms a spatial background for conflicts of interests between countries and competition between them, we are seeing a rising importance of geoeconomics, which shows concentration of power and the influence of big capital through economic processes of different entities.⁴⁵ It is not geographic location that matters most, what primarily counts is economic potential that determines the weight of powers, not only state ones, in space. And every economic power strives to translate its power into political influence, hence the international system becomes an international economic system. As a consequence of this approach, traditional civilizational and geographical divisions, especially into the East and the West, are fading out. Systemic divisions, like those in the "Cold War", are no longer important. Both authoritarian China and not fully democratic Russia are becoming participants in the same political influence, on par with democratic Western powers.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Kaplan, R.D. *The Revenge of Geography. What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*. Random House, New York, 2012.

⁴⁵ Luttwak, E. *From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce* // *The National Interest*, 1990, No. 20, pp. 17-23.

⁴⁶ Ross, R.S. *The Problem with the Pivot* // *Foreign Affairs*, 2012, No. 6, pp. 70-82.

But the biggest source of concern is, on the one hand, a contestation of U.S. hegemony in the world, and, on the other, its actual decline.⁴⁷ Every global power is exposed to asymmetric threats. In order to advance changing strategic objectives, it is no longer enough to have overwhelming military strength. Instead of defending borders, what increasingly matters is dealing with mobile or invisible threats, knowing how to wage long-distance wars, against enemies with no clear faces. A true hegemonic power status requires responsibility in exercising leadership. At the same time, a country that aspires to lead others has to be resistant to dangers of internal deregulation and disruptions. European allies of the U.S. insist, not only in the name of their own interests, on respecting democratic legitimacy for any international operations involving the use of force. Harmonious cooperation of a broad range of countries can help to strengthen decisions through their collectiveness and transparency. It allows to avoid suspicions and bias. It is also a guarantee of learning responsibility and sharing it. After the tragic lessons related to U.S. involvement in Iraq, Libya or Syria, it is recognized that decisions about international interventions involving the use of force must be the result of consultations and not diktat. There are also signals that only a collective effort of the biggest powers can save the stability of the international order.⁴⁸ The emerging geocracy, or global political integration, must find a place for pluralism and respect for civilizational achievements of all the regions and nations. If the imposition of one civilizational template on the entire world continues, the future threatens to bring a big disaster.

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⁴⁷ Zakaria, F. *Can America Be Fixed?* // *Foreign Affairs*, 2013, No. 1; Kaplan, R.D. *The Post-Imperial Moment* // *The National Interest*, 2016, No. 143, pp. 73-76.

⁴⁸ Kissinger, H. *Porządek światowy*. przeł. M. Antosiewicz. Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec, 2016, pp. 338-350.

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ГЕГЕМОНИЧЕСКИЙ ПОРЯДОК В XXI ВЕКЕ

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<p>Информация о статье:</p> <p><i>Поступила в редакцию:</i> 16 мая 2017</p> <p><i>Принята к печати:</i> 28 октября 2017</p>	<p>Аннотация: Концепция гегемонического порядка в международных отношениях, с одной стороны, базируется на государственноцентричном подходе к мировой системе, с другой стороны, оспаривает тезис о ее полиархическом характере. Хотя ни одна держава-гегемон в истории не имела монополии на исключительность, США очевидно достигли значительного преимущества относительно других держав. Это произошло по целому ряду причин. Сложный характер мощи США означает, что никто не может быть сопоставлен с ними по военно-политическому, экономическому и технологическому потенциалу, а также с точки зрения культурно-цивилизационного и идеологического фактора. США стали единственной державой, которая может как эффективно способствовать стабилизации мировой системы, так и ее дестабилизации. Но наибольшая обеспокоенность сегодня связана с двумя факторами: противостоянию гегемонии США в мире и ее действительный упадок.</p>
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<p>Ключевые слова: гегемония; международные отношения; статус США; противодействие США; гегемония США</p>	

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