

= Hegemony or Survival =

Hegemony or Survival : America 's Quest for Global Dominance is a study of the " American Empire " written by the American linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky , a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology . It was first published in the United States in November 2003 by Metropolitan Books , and later republished in the United Kingdom by Penguin Books .

Chomsky 's main argument in Hegemony or Survival is that the socio @-@ economic elite who control the United States have pursued an " Imperial Grand Strategy " since the end of World War II in order to maintain global hegemony through military , political and economic means . He argues that in doing so they have repeatedly shown a total disregard for democracy and human rights , in stark contrast to the US government 's professed support for those values . Furthermore , he argues that this continual pursuit of global hegemony now threatens the existence of the human species itself because of the increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction .

Drawing historical examples from 1945 through to 2003 to support his argument , Chomsky looks at the US government 's support for regimes responsible for mass human rights abuses (including ethnic cleansing and genocide) , namely El Salvador , Colombia , Turkey , Israel , Egypt , South Africa and Indonesia . He also discusses US support for militant dissident groups widely considered " terrorists " , particularly in Nicaragua and Cuba , as well as direct military interventions , such as the Vietnam War , NATO bombing of Yugoslavia , Afghan War and Iraq War , in order to further its power and grasp of resources . In doing so , he highlights that US foreign policy ? whether controlled by Republican or Democratic administrations ? still follows the same agenda of gaining access to lucrative resources and maintaining US world dominance .

Mainstream press reviews in the US were mixed and were largely negative in the UK , although a review in Asia was more positive . In a speech before the UN General Assembly in September 2006 , Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez openly praised the work . Sales of the book surged after the recommendation , its rank on Amazon.com rising to # 1 in paperback and # 6 in hardcover in only a few days .

= = Background = =

Noam Chomsky (1928 ?) was born in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , to Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe . Becoming academically involved in the field of linguistics , Chomsky gained a PhD and secured a teaching job at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology . In the field of linguistics , he is credited as the creator or co @-@ creator of the Chomsky hierarchy and the universal grammar theory , achieving international recognition for his work .

Politically , Chomsky had held radical leftist views since childhood , identifying himself with anarcho @-@ syndicalism and libertarian socialism . A staunch critic of U.S. foreign policy , he arose to public attention for these views in 1967 , when The New York Times published his article , " The Responsibility of Intellectuals " , a criticism of the Vietnam War . His media criticism has included Manufacturing Consent : The Political Economy of the Mass Media (1988) , co @-@ written with Edward S. Herman , an analysis articulating the propaganda model theory for examining the media .

Chomsky is the author of over 100 books , and has been described as a prominent cultural figure . According to the Arts and Humanities Citation Index in 1992 , Chomsky was cited as a source more often than any other living scholar from 1980 to 1992 , and was the eighth most cited source overall .

The book was published as the first in The American Empire Series , edited for Metropolitan Books by Steve Fraser and Tom Engelhardt . The series had been devised as a vehicle for works of anti @-@ imperialism that were critical of U.S. foreign policy . Engelhardt informed an interviewer that the series reflected their " counterinterventionary impulse " and represented an attempt to reclaim " the word " from the political right in the U.S. They agreed to publish with Metropolitan because it was co @-@ run by Engelhardt and Sara Bershtel . In conjunction with the publication of the book , Chomsky answered a series of public questions on the website of The Washington Post .

= = Synopsis = =

Chomsky 's first chapter , " Priorities and Prospects " , provides an introduction to U.S. global dominance at the start of 2003 . He looks at the role of propaganda ? employed by government and mass media ? in shaping public opinion in both the U.S. and United Kingdom , arguing that it allows a wealthy elite to thrive at the expense of the majority . As evidence for the manner in which the media shapes public opinion on foreign policy , he discusses the role of the U.S. government in protecting its economic interests in Nicaragua , first by supporting the military junta of General Somoza and then by supporting the Contra militias , in both instances leading to mass human rights abuses which were ignored by the mainstream U.S. media .

Chapter two , " Imperial Grand Strategy " , looks at the U.S. government 's belief that it should take part in " preventative war " against states who threaten its global hegemony , despite the illegality of these actions under international law . Chomsky argues that the targets of U.S. preventative war must be weak , yet important and easy to depict as a threat to the U.S. populace . Using the 2003 invasion of Iraq as an example , he discusses how the U.S. government and media portrayed the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein as a threat to the U.S. and other Middle Eastern states , something which Chomsky argues it was not .

Chapter three , " The New Era of Enlightenment " , explores further examples of U.S. interventionism in world affairs . Criticising the standard U.S. government claim that such interventionism is for humanitarian purposes , Chomsky maintains that it is an attempt to further the power of U.S. capitalism , with little interest in the welfare of the people involved . Using the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo as an example , he argues that western forces intervened not to protect Albanian Kosovans from Serbian aggression (as they claimed) , but to humiliate and weaken Serbian President Slobodan Milosovic , who had remained resistant to western demands for years . He asserts that western criticism of foreign human rights abuses is politically motivated , highlighting that while the U.S. were intervening in Kosovo , they were simultaneously supporting the governments of Turkey , Colombia and Indonesia , all of whom were involved in widespread human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing .

In the fourth chapter , " Dangerous Times " , Chomsky focuses primarily on U.S. interventionism throughout Latin America , which the government has defended through its Monroe Doctrine . He discusses the U.S. campaign to topple the socialist government of Fidel Castro in Cuba , highlighting both its economic embargo of the island and its financial backing for militant groups that attack Cuban targets , including the perpetrators of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the bombing of Cubana Flight 455 . He furthermore discusses the U.S. government 's role in training Latin American right wing paramilitary squads , who have perpetrated widespread human rights abuses across the region .

Chapter five , " The Iraq Connection " , looks at the background to the 2003 Iraq War , beginning with an analysis of the activities of the Reagan administration in the 1980s , who focused their military efforts in Central America and the Middle East . Chomsky argues that Reagan 's administration utilized fear and nationalist rhetoric to distract the public from the poor economic situation that the U.S. was facing , finding scapegoats in the form of the leftist governments of Libya , Grenada and Nicaragua , as well as the international drug trade . He examines the long relationship that the U.S. had with the Hussein 's Iraqi government , noting that they actively supported Hussein throughout the Iran ? Iraq War , Al @-@ Anfal Campaign and the Halabja poison gas attack , only turning against their former ally after his Invasion of Kuwait in 1990 . Proceeding to critique the idea that the Bush II administration was genuinely concerned about threats to U.S. security , he criticises their attempts to undermine international efforts to prevent the militarization of space , the abolition of biological warfare , and the fight against global pollution , as well as the fact that they ignored all warnings that the Iraq invasion would cause a worldwide anti @-@ American backlash . Exploring the dismissive attitude that the U.S. took towards European governments who opposed the war , namely France and Germany , he critiques the idea that the U.S. wanted to install a democratic government in Iraq , arguing that they wanted to install a puppet regime that would be

obedient to U.S. corporate interests .

In the sixth chapter , " Dilemmas of Dominance " , Chomsky explores the relationship that the U.S. has had with Eastern Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union and with East Asia since the Second World War . In the former , Chomsky argues , the U.S. has allied itself with the capitalist reformers who have advocated privatization and neoliberalism at the expense of the welfare state , leading to increased poverty and demographic decline across the region . In the latter , he has explored the role that the U.S. has played ? through the likes of the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 ? in supporting capitalist development , but trying to ensure its own economic hegemony at the same time .

Chapter seven , " Cauldron of Animosities " , opens with a discussion of U.S. support for the increasing militarization of Israel and its illegal development of nuclear weapons , something Chomsky believes threatens peace in the Middle East by encouraging nations like Iran and Iraq to do the same . He explores the longstanding western exploitation of the Middle East for its oil resources , first by the British Empire and subsequently by the U.S. post @-@ World War II , and then looks at the U.S. ' role in the Israeli ? Palestinian conflict , continually supporting Israel both militarily and politically , furthering human right abuses against the Palestinian people and repeatedly sabotaging the peace process .

The eighth chapter , " Terrorism and Justice : Some Useful Truisms " , looks at what Chomsky calls " a few simple truths " regarding the criteria that is accepted for a conflict to be internationally recognized as a " just war " . He argues that these truisms are continually ignored when it comes to the actions of the U.S. and her allies . Exploring the concepts of " terror " and " terrorism " , he argues that the U.S. only use the term to refer to the actions of their enemies , and never to their own actions , no matter how similar they may be . As an example of such double standards , he highlights the public outcry at the killing of Leon Klinghoffer , a disabled American murdered by Palestinian militants in 1985 , contrasting it with the complete U.S. ignorance of the Israeli military 's killing of a disabled Palestinian , Kemal Zughayer , in 2002 . Focusing in on the Afghan War ? widely described as a " just war " in the U.S. press ? he criticizes such a description , arguing that the conflict was opposed by the majority of the world 's population , including the Afghan people .

In the final chapter , " A Passing Nightmare " , Chomsky turns his attention to weapons of mass destruction . He argues that rather than helping to eradicate nuclear , chemical and biological weaponry , the U.S. has continually increased its number of nuclear warheads , thereby encouraging other nations to do the same , putting the world in jeopardy of nuclear holocaust . Discussing the role of the U.S. in creating ballistic missile defense systems and encouraging the militarization of outer space , he notes that the U.S. government have continually undermined international treatise to decrease the number of weapons of mass destruction , because the American socio @-@ economic elite believe that " hegemony is more important than survival . " However , he argues that there is still hope for humanity if the citizens of the world ? the " Second Superpower " ? continue to criticize and oppose the actions of the U.S. government .

= = Main arguments = =

= = = U.S. Imperial Grand Strategy = = =

Chomsky 's primary argument in *Hegemony or Survival* is that the United States government has pursued an " Imperial Grand Strategy " in order to maintain its status as the world 's foremost superpower since at least the end of the Second World War . Adopting the term " Imperial Grand Strategy " from international affairs specialist John Ikenberry of Princeton University , he quotes Ikenberry on the nature of this doctrine and the manner in which it considers the " rule of force " to be more important than the " rule of law " , thereby ignoring international law . Quoting liberal statesman Dean Acheson , Chomsky asserts that the purpose of this strategy is to prevent any challenge to the " power , position , and prestige of the United States " .

Noting that economic decision making in the United States is highly centralized among a select

socio @-@ economic elite who control big business , he argues that this elite play a dominant role in this Imperial Grand Strategy because they consistently maintain a strong influence over successive U.S. governments . As a result , he argues that U.S. foreign policy has focused on gaining and maintaining unrestricted access to markets , energy supplies , and strategic resources across the world . Chomsky goes on to categorize the specific purposes of the doctrine as :

containing other centers of global power within the " overall framework of order " managed by the United States ; maintaining control of the world 's energy supplies ; barring unacceptable forms of independent nationalism ; and overcoming " crisis of democracy " within domestic enemy territory .

Chomsky argues that as a part of this strategy , the U.S. has regularly engaged in " preventative war " , which he highlights is illegal under international law and could be categorised as a war crime . Preventative war refers to conflict waged to prevent a nation ever reaching the stage where it could become a potential threat , and according to Chomsky , under the regimes of Ronald Reagan , George H.W. Bush and his son George W. Bush it has actively involved attacking " an imagined or invented threat " such as Grenada and Iraq . He differentiates this " preventative war " from " preemptive war " , which he argues can be justifiable under international law in cases of self @-@ defence . Examining examples of preventative war waged by the United States , he notes that all of the nations that have been attacked have shared the same three characteristics : 1) they are " virtually defenseless " , 2) they are " important enough to be worth the trouble " and 3) there has been a way to portray them as " the ultimate evil and an imminent threat to our survival . "

= = = The Bush administration and the invasion of Iraq = = =

Chomsky argues that the Republican neoconservative administration of President George W. Bush , elected to the presidency in 2001 , differed from earlier administrations in one key respect : it was open about adhering to the Imperial Grand Strategy , outright declaring that it would be willing to use force to ensure U.S. global hegemony despite international condemnation . Chomsky sees this as being in contrast to previous administrations , who had never explicitly informed the public that they adhered to such a doctrine . Instead , earlier administrations had discussed their intentions within elite circles which were known only to specialists or readers of dissident literature . Thus , where once only the socio @-@ economic elite and their left @-@ wing critics knew of the Imperial Grand Strategy , now the entire American populace are potentially aware of it . He considers this a " significant difference . "

In Chomsky 's view , the invasion of Iraq by a U.S. and U.K. coalition must be seen in the wider context of the U.S. government 's Imperial Grand Strategy . He claims that the Iraq invasion fits the three criteria that he has highlighted for being classified as a U.S. target for preventative war . Considering the country " virtually defenseless " against the superior might of the western armed forces , he also notes that securing control of the country would be an important move for the U.S. socio @-@ economic elite , gaining unlimited access to the country 's lucrative oil resources and asserting their own military might to intimidate other nations into compliance . He also argued that government and media propaganda also set out to forge an erroneous link between Iraq President Saddam Hussein and Al @-@ Qaeda , playing on the American people 's horror of the 9 / 11 attacks . Furthermore , he stated that they also wrongly claimed that the Iraqi government was developing weapons of mass destruction to be used against the U.S. or its allies . Chomsky remarks that the 2003 invasion of Iraq is particularly significant because it signals the " new norm " in international relations , and that in future the U.S. might be willing to wage a preventative war against " Iran , Syria , the Andean region , and a number of others . "

= = Reviews = =

= = = Academic reviews = = =

Writing in the International Affairs journal , Michael T. Boyle of the Australian National University

reviewed Hegemony or Survival alongside Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Decline of American Power : The U.S. in a Chaotic World* (2003), considering both to be " well @-@ considered if imperfect arguments " that the Bush administration's foreign policy was in keeping with a long history of U.S. interference in global affairs . Praising its " prescient " appearance and its analysis of the historical evidence , Boyle did present some criticism of the book . In stressing the Bush administration's continuity with earlier presidencies , Boyle argued that Chomsky had neglected to highlight the differences between the Bush administration and its predecessors , in particular its willingness to break relationships with long @-@ standing allies . Furthermore , Boyle opined that Chomsky had failed to offer a " compelling explanation " for why the U.S. government was willing to declare war on Iraq in 2003 , a conflict that was far costlier and riskier than the 1980s military adventures in Nicaragua and Grenada .

Journalism lecturer David Blackall of the University of Wollongong reviewed Chomsky's book for the *Asia Pacific Media Educator* . He noted that it would polarize readers between those whose anti @-@ imperialist beliefs would be reinforced and those who would denounce Chomsky's ideas as conspiracy theories . He thought the book was important in reminding readers that the War on Terror was keeping the US public in fear and was ensuring an ongoing international market for weaponry . However , he thought that there were " recurring attribution problems " in Chomsky's text , for instance by referring to the international press as if it were a homogeneous entity with a single point of view . Ultimately , he thought that the book had something to teach educators of journalism : that " [w] hen there is a desire of the power elite to move on an issue , and the population is generally opposed , then the issue is removed from the political arena and from the news media priorities ? distraction being a primary method . "

Eliza Mathews of the University of Queensland published a review of the book in the *Journal of Australian Studies* . She considered it similar to other books criticizing Bush's administration , such as those of Michael Moore , John Dean , and Bob Woodward , but thought it novel in acknowledging prior policy . She thought some of his research to be " inadequate " in supporting his arguments , relying too heavily on newspaper reports and not verifying secondary sources . In other instances , she thought it unsatisfactory that Chomsky used his own work as a reference . She thought that despite being aimed at a wide audience , the text was not " light reading " , and expressed dislike at Chomsky's " sarcastic tone " .

= = = Press reviews = = =

Views in the U.S. press were mixed . In a review for *The New York Times* , current U.S. ambassador to the United Nations , Harvard scholar , and Pulitzer Prize winner Samantha Power described the book as a " raging and often meandering assault " on U.S. foreign policy . Believing that Chomsky divides the world into two camps , the oppressor and the oppressed , she asserts that in *Hegemony or Survival* he portrays the U.S. as " the prime oppressor , [who] can do no right " , meanwhile overlooking the crimes of the oppressed . Arguing that he completely ignores the concept that the U.S. might undertake any foreign interventions with good intentions , she asserts that his book is not easy to read , and that his " glib and caustic tone " are distracting . Furthermore , she highlights problems with his use of end notes , particularly when some of these notes simply reference his earlier publications . Although disagreeing with his arguments , she believed that reading his book was " sobering and instructive " , having value in illustrating how many non @-@ Americans viewed the U.S. and highlighting many of the " structural defects " in U.S. foreign policy . Furthermore , recognizing that Chomsky's " critiques have come to influence and reflect mainstream opinion elsewhere in the world , " she concedes that Chomsky's analysis has a coherence that , for many , resolves much of the post @-@ 9 / 11 confusion and disillusionment stemming from the Bush administration's standard response to the question , " Why do they hate us ? " .

Carol Armbrust discussed Chomsky's book critically in *The Antioch Review* , claiming that his writing style was " a monumental turnoff " and that only those who already agreed with Chomsky's political views would read the book . Claiming that his opinions constituted " conspiracy theories " ,

she compared his arguments to adding " two and two " together and getting " minus six " . Conversely , Publishers Weekly considered it " highly readable " and thought it both " cogent and provocative " , representing a significant addition to the debate on U.S. foreign policy .

Views in the British press were largely negative . Writing in The Observer , journalist Nick Cohen wrote disparagingly of Hegemony or Survival , describing Chomsky as a " master of looking @-@ glass politics " , exemplifying a trend in the western Left for being more interested in anti @-@ Americanism than in opposing the " fascist " regime of Saddam Hussein . Focusing his critique primarily on Chomsky and his readership than the book itself , he refers to its " convoluted prose " , and remarks that its argument is " dense and filled with non sequiturs " . In a shorter review published in The Observer , Oliver Robinson described the work as an " unequivocally incensed , if meandering " study of U.S. foreign policy .

Piyush Mathur reviewed the work for Asia Times Online , a joint Thai @-@ Hong Kongese publication . Praising the book , Mathur argued that by being a U.S. citizen who was willing to criticise his own government , Chomsky was showing " a way beyond parochialism " that avoided nationalistic or ethnocentric intentions . Highlighting Chomsky 's " wry humor and sarcasm " , he notes that the author " successfully shows that the American emperor , while preaching modesty to the rest , himself struts about rather ostentatiously . " Mathur also turned his attention to the most prominent press reviews of the book that appeared in the U.S. and U.K. , those of Power and Cohen . He argues that the former 's review was " hardly charitable " , and that she had narrowly framed Hegemony or Survival as a critique purely of the Bush administration , something Mathur stated it clearly was not . Turning to Cohen 's " venomous " review , he highlights that it actually dealt very little with Chomsky 's book , instead offering a diatribe against the Left , one which consisted of a " thoroughly convoluted vagueness " . Ultimately , Mathur notes that the " strangely defensive and rather parochial posture " adopted by Power and Cohen was " entirely in line " with the reception that Chomsky had received from the Anglo @-@ American world .

= = = Hugo Chávez 's endorsement = = =

In September 2006 , Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez held up a Spanish @-@ language copy of Hegemony or Survival during his speech at the United Nations . Chávez praised the work as an " excellent book to help us understand what has been happening in the world throughout the 20th century " . He urged everyone present to read it , including those in the U.S. , remarking that " I think that the first people who should read this book are our brothers and sisters in the United States , because their threat is right in their own house . " A vocal anti @-@ imperialist and prominent critic of U.S. foreign policy , particularly in his native Latin America , Chávez went on to describe U.S. President Bush as the " devil " in his speech .

In the U.S. , demand for the book dramatically increased . Within a week , sales had risen tenfold ; it reached number 1 on amazon.com 's best @-@ seller list , and number 6 in the best @-@ seller lists of the bookstore chains Borders Group and Barnes & Noble . A prominent critic of Chomsky 's political views , Alan Dershowitz of Harvard Law School , told The New York Times that he believed most of those buying Hegemony or Survival would not read it , remarking that " I don 't know anybody who 's ever read a Chomsky book " . Furthermore , he related that the MIT professor " does not write page turners , he writes page stoppers . There are a lot of bent pages in Noam Chomsky 's books , and they are usually at about Page 16 . "

In response to Chávez 's endorsement , Chomsky told The New York Times that he would be " happy to meet " the Venezuelan President , asserting that he was " quite interested " in what his administration had achieved and thought many of Chávez 's views to be " quite constructive " . This meeting came about in August 2009 , when Chomsky visited the Latin American country . In a press conference to commence the meeting , Chávez made reference to the intellectual 's work , remarking " Hegemony or survival ; we opt for survival " , before comparing Chomsky 's thesis with the concept of " Socialism or Barbarism " advocated by German Marxist Rosa Luxemburg in the early 20th century . Speaking through an interpreter , Chomsky replied that " I write about peace and criticize the barriers to peace ; that 's easy . What 's harder is to create a better world ... and what 's

so exciting about at last visiting Venezuela is that I can see how a better world is being created . " He went on to Venezolana de Televisión , where he commented on the U.S. government 's role in orchestrating the 2009 Honduran coup d 'état to overthrow leftist President Manuel Zelaya . He also expressed cautious support for the leftist reforms being implemented by Chávez 's administration , remarking his opinion that their moves " toward the creation of another socio @-@ economic model could have a global impact if these projects are successfully carried out " .

In summer 2011 , Chomsky expressed criticism of Chávez 's government over the controversial imprisonment of judge María Lourdes Afiuni , who had been detained since December 2009 . He asserted that he was " convinced that she must be set free , not only due to her physical and psychological health conditions , but in conformance with the human dignity the Bolivarian revolution presents as a goal . " In December 2011 , Chomsky reiterated this position , sending a letter to Chávez asking him to include the judge in his " Christmas @-@ time pardons " . Afiuni was released on June 14 , 2013 .