

*Globalization and the
Reproduction of U.S. Hegemony*

Saïda Bédar

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The United States today appears to enjoy an uncontested hegemonic position within a new global order that is far from being “multipolar.” However, the dynamics of competition among global power actors could eventually challenge this hegemony, particularly through what could be described as a race for “asymmetric superiority.” Across all domains, competition is marked by an adjustment of means and strategies based on preemptive postures, sometimes operating outside the established norms of international conduct — such as open diplomacy grounded in public international law, arms control regimes, and the principle of non-interference. The escalation effects of preemption have triggered a race for asymmetric capabilities, involving the pursuit of strategic and normative breakthroughs, as well as technological leaps, aimed at securing influence and access to critical domains (air, land, sea, exo-atmospheric space, and cyberspace), while simultaneously restricting access for competitors or adversaries. The asymmetrization of powerful states’ strategies is largely a consequence of globalization, which has transformed modes of production and socio-spatial control.¹

Indeed, globalization, as a new stage in the capitalist mode of production and accumulation, has generated a new international division of labor, encouraging technology transfers and catch-up effects in emerging nations benefiting from comparative advantages (such as low-cost semi-skilled labor, domestic and cross-border agglomerated spaces of production, natural resources, etc.). However, globalization also entails a political reconfiguration of the interstate system on foundations other than the traditional balance of power, the guarantee of international law for state territorial sovereignty, and the freedom of trade across political jurisdictions. By challenging the institutional structure of the interstate system and the geopolitical balances inherited from the industrial era, globalization is creating an emerging normative space — one that global power actors are now seeking to shape in line with their own interests.

It is now within this context of multidimensional (hyper)competition that the United States seeks to reproduce its global hegemony along three axes: influence and norms; dollar hegemony; and techno-military breakthroughs.

¹ These transformations in exchanges and social spaces are due to: the “information revolution,” which enables the rapid flow of capital, goods, ideas, and people, as well as greater flexibility in industrial and logistical management; the expansion of transnational corporate networks; the development of regional trade blocs; and the liberalization of international trade. As a new stage in the mode of capitalist production and accumulation, globalization has generated a new international division of labor, encouraging technology transfers and catch-up effects in emerging nations benefiting from comparative advantages (such as low-cost semi-skilled labor, domestic and cross-border agglomeration zones, natural resources, etc.).

From Bipolarity to Unipolarity ?

U.S. hegemony was established after the two World Wars, at a time when European powers were significantly weakened and the power of the communist Soviet Union was rising. The United States then undertook economic aid efforts (the Marshall Plan, and support for new Asian allies) and set up an international institutional architecture to regulate the global economic system (Bretton Woods, the IMF, the World Bank, the dollar-gold parity). The term hegemony (rather than imperialism or something else) refers to a state taking responsibility for regulating economic exchanges and international relations, ultimately to preserve its own power — maintaining free trade, legal norms and transparency, conflict management, and access to resources, thereby defending national interests.

While the Cold War and the containment of communism supported a strategy of defending the capitalist global economy and the system regulating interstate relations, the end of the Cold War did not change the nature of American hegemonic interventionism. In fact, even before the collapse of the USSR, during the 1970s and 1980s, the foundations of interaction with the world-system were renewed: the end of the dollar-gold parity; new grounds for interference and intervention were established (proliferation of weapons of mass destruction WMD, terrorism, drug trafficking, human rights violations). After the Cold War and in the context of emerging new powers — the BRICs and all the mid-powers beginning to protect their interests by limiting access to their sovereign spaces — the old instruments of control and influence have been reshaped and combined.

Norms and Influence

The normative power of the United States is ensured by its dominant position within intergovernmental organizations, particularly international financial institutions², but also through the weight of transnational corporations and American international non-governmental organizations. Alongside Western states, the United States is now working to reshape the international institutional field into a unified tri-sector system of influence and decision-making control, integrating state instruments and civil society actors, aiming for a comprehensive policy of standardization, influence, and intervention, including its military

² Thus, at the IMF, with 16.4% of the voting rights, the United States retains its veto power and determines the Fund's policy directions. It is followed by Japan (6.1% of voting rights), China (6%), Germany (5.3%), France (4.3%), and the United Kingdom (4%). Quotas are calculated based on GDP, the degree of economic openness, economic variability, and official foreign exchange reserves.

aspect.³

The tri-sector governance model combines the power and global reach of states and intergovernmental organizations (there are nearly 7,650 of these)⁴, transnational corporations (82,000 companies with 810,000 subsidiaries, accounting for 84% of global investment flows and 60% of world trade)⁵, and large international non-governmental organizations (61,000 NGOs, mostly American and European)⁶. This mode of governance and strategic praxis is particularly complex because it involves fluid and porous boundaries, sometimes grey areas—criminal networks, large-scale tax evasion, collusion with state intelligence services, covert political financing, etc. Thus, the financial arrangements and global value chains⁷ of transnational corporations have become so complex that their legal status becomes unclear, and their pursuit of tax optimization brings them to the edge of “malfeasance” (according to UNCTAD)⁸. Western states benefit more than they suffer from this “grey” status of transnational corporate structures, as 84% of these companies are directly owned by the United States and Europe (compared to 29% in Asia, 19% in Latin America, and 18% in Africa)⁹. Through their economic weight, influence on policymakers (class interests, financial power), technological innovation capabilities, and transnational preemptive positioning (anticipation and influence on political standardization, investment in crisis and conflict zones), transnational corporations effectively become strategic actors.

International NGOs, within the social fabric of target countries, have a greater and seemingly more neutral reach than states or corporations. They tend to be malleable by state (and inter-state) actors because they depend financially on donors, and in most cases, they are executors of projects they did not oversee the design of. The use of NGOs by states and intergovernmental organizations also allows a degree of transparency regarding direct

³ NGOs and transnational corporations are now included in the Pentagon's action plans, primarily during post-conflict control phases. See the doctrine document *Joint Publication 3-57, Civil-Military Operations*, 9 July, 2018. Extrait (p. VII): « United States Government (USG) policy initiatives, national security directives, joint strategies, and military doctrine reflect a growing appreciation of the need to leverage more nonmilitary tools and representative elements of the instruments of national power such as interagency partners (e.g., Department of State) and private sector, in order to build a more effective and balanced strategy. »

⁴ *Yearbook of International Organizations 2017 – 2018*, Vol. IV, Statistics, Union of International Associations, 2017, p. 31.

<https://eclass.unipi.gr/modules/document/file.php/DES237/Yearbook%20of%20international%20organizations.pdf>

⁵ UNCTAD *World Investment Report*, 2009, p. xxi http://unctad.org/en/docs/wir2009_en.pdf ; UNCTAD *World Investment Report*, 2013 p. x. http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2013_en.pdf

⁶ *Yearbook of International Organizations 2017 – 2018*, opus cité, p. 31

⁷ Global value chains (GVCs) : intermediate goods and services are traded through globally dispersed and fragmented production processes by transnational corporations (via hubs operated by their subsidiaries and local contractual partners). GVCs account for 80% of global trade. See, UNCTAD *World Investment Report*, 2013...work quoted p. x

⁸ idem

⁹ UNCTAD *World Investment Report*, 2016, p. 152, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2016_en.pdf

donations to local authorities (considering corruption) and thus improves the effectiveness of structural adjustment programs, social engineering, pacification, environmental control, and so on. Through these programs, NGOs contribute to the outsourcing of public policies in target countries. They are sometimes portrayed as institutions that could compensate for, or even replace, failing states in managing resources considered as “global heritage” — for example, the intention to divest Brazil and Congo of full sovereignty over their tropical forests, deemed the “lungs of the planet.”¹⁰

The Dollar is the quintessential Asymmetric Factor

The “tri-sectoral” reorganization of U.S. normative power will inevitably, in the medium to long term, raise the question of the hegemonic role of the dollar. Monetary hegemony is the term economists use to describe a state whose currency regulates the international monetary system, thus possessing: control over the means of international economic exchanges; mastery of the international unit of account and global reserve currency (68% of which are currently in dollars); control over access to international credit; no constraints on its balance of payments; and the ability to sustain a high debt level (U.S. government debt today stands at \$22.77 trillion, or 105% of GDP).¹¹

The United States implemented the Bretton Woods agreements after World War II to establish its monetary hegemony, notably by securing control over the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, then imposing, in 1973, the end of the dollar-gold parity, and since then preventing the emergence of a new regulated system. Proposals regularly put forward by Europeans, Russia, China (and Asian countries affected by the sudden appreciation of the dollar against their currencies and the consequent debt crisis of 1997) would involve a global reserve currency system managed by an international central body — similar to the supranational unit of account “bancor” that economist Keynes proposed at the first Bretton Woods conference in July 1944. Economist Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel laureate in Economics in 2001, has expressed support for such a system with IMF Special Drawing Rights possibly replacing a supranational unit of account, arguing that the

¹⁰ The “preservation of biodiversity” promoted by Western states and their private partners in reality implies the long-term “sustainable” exploitation of resources. Rather than allowing the concerned states to exploit these resources—potentially with short-term objectives and outdated, destructive methods—the exploitation by transnational corporations (under the supervision of UN agencies and NGOs) is presented as more appropriate. In truth, transnational corporations aim to exploit “green gold” for pharmaceutical, biogenetic/biochemical, and bioenergy purposes, using innovative processes that risk dispossessing indigenous populations—not only of their lands and ways of life, but also of their natural heritage. This can occur through the patents filed by these corporations, which may prevent local communities from freely using the resources. In the Amazon and the Congo Basin, some of the world’s largest deposits of “rare earths” (critical for electronic components) are also found.

¹¹ <https://www.usdebtclock.org>

dollar's hegemony only guarantees the United States a permanent rent, paid by countries that cannot always afford it (a sort of reverse development aid).¹² One could add that the hegemonic position of the dollar allows the United States to borrow even to finance wars and interventionism in those developing countries, at the periphery of powers considered as competitor or hostile to the United States.

The meaning of the current commercial standoff between the United States and China is much more about currency (and capital/access to innovative technologies¹³) than about trade itself. The Chinese critique, echoed by other emerging global powers, holds that the international trade system is in a permanent imbalance where the United States produces dollars and the rest of the world produces goods that can only be bought with dollars. Developing countries are particularly affected by this imbalance, condemned to export more and more to accumulate dollar reserves to maintain the value of their own currency and, in many cases, to ensure the payment (in dollars) of their national debt service. The strong dollar policy has been maintained by the successive U.S. administrations because it helps keep inflation as low as possible through cheap imports, while making American assets less accessible to foreign investors.

However, after investing its dollar reserves for decades in the purchase of U.S. Treasury bonds (thereby acquiring nearly 5% of U.S. debt, \$1.11 trillion), the Chinese state began to seek acquisitions (via state-owned enterprises and Chinese sovereign wealth funds) of U.S. transnational companies in key sectors such as energy, high technology, and telecommunications. The U.S. government (Congress and administration, with the establishment of a special foreign investment review body within the U.S. Treasury) strongly opposed this, and the Chinese began to divest from the United States — Chinese investments dropped from \$46.5 billion in 2016 to \$5.4 billion in 2018, with the Chinese state imposing strict capital controls. The U.S. administration notably accuses China of

¹² « New reserve currency could come quickly — Stiglitz », *Reuters*, March 26, 2009 : « Stiglitz said the effect of the dollar reserve system is that developing countries have been lending the United States trillions of dollars at almost zero interest rates when they themselves desperately need that money. "It's a net transfer, in a sense, to the United States of foreign aid," he said. » <https://www.reuters.com/article/financial-sdr-stiglitz/refile-new-reserve-currency-could-come-quickly-stiglitz-idUSN2650403720090326>

¹³ Technological innovation today is driven by globalized companies. What is called "technological globalization" or "technocapitalism" represents an evolution of capitalism through competition based on knowledge and anticipation, encouraging rapid innovation in management and technologies (digital, communications, logistics, information processing, nanotechnology, and biotechnology). Technological accumulation occurs through the shortening of R&D and prototyping cycle times, the concentration of firms, and the relocation/translocalization of R&D and production. Inter-companies network relationships amplify the effects of innovation and cost reduction through outsourcing arrangements (third-party logistics providers, 3PL; "infomediaries" providing real-time market and traffic data; administrative and accounting services in offshored hubs) and joint ventures, as well as through research alliances (unit-to-research unit, R2R).

manipulating its exchange rate to weaken the yuan against the dollar (in August 2019, the U.S. Treasury labeled China a “currency manipulator”)¹⁴. It is now being discussed that certain Chinese companies on Wall Street could be delisted if they do not fully disclose their commercial and financial practices. Congress members openly talk about the need to limit China’s access to the U.S. capital market and the accompanying technological innovations.¹⁵

In this capital war, the United States remains difficult to challenge today given the hegemonic role of the dollar. China can indeed use currency barter with its trading partners, but the yuan cannot serve as a reserve currency nor be freely traded on the global market. Moreover, the Chinese central bank is compelled to intervene to keep the yuan’s value low relative to the dollar in order to sustain export-driven growth. If it stopped “correcting” the yuan’s value, China would see its exports sharply decline, leading to mass unemployment and social crisis — and at the same time trigger an unprecedented global recession, since if China stopped exporting, it could no longer import either, and it currently accounts for one-third of global growth.

Yet in this capital war, China poses a risk to U.S. hegemony because it challenges a system that could be called the dollar-U.S. debt parity system (Treasury bonds) at near-zero interest rates. China has indicated that it wants to use its dollar reserves to buy U.S. goods other than the traditional real estate investments — specifically, companies producing high value-added goods with global reach. It faces the same U.S. position as in the mid-1970s when oil producers, having lost all guarantees with the end of the dollar-gold parity, wanted to invest their dollars in American companies; Washington vetoed this and, in return, allowed them to raise the price of oil and create a cartel (OPEC). In China’s current case, Washington offers the possibility to continue exporting (and maintain growth, avoid millions of unemployed/protestors, etc.). Thus, it is understood that as long as China is not able to have an economy based on growth of its domestic market, and on new markets “captured” by its transcontinental projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, and has not developed and rationalized its banking sector and globally-reaching companies, it will not be able to propose an alternative system, which in any case must be approved by the entire

¹⁴ «The U.S. Labeled China a Currency Manipulator. Here’s What It Means», *New York Times*, 6 August 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/06/business/economy/china-currency-manipulator.html>

¹⁵ There are 159 Chinese companies listed on the U.S. Stock Exchange for a global value of \$1100 billions, see, “Trump administration considers hitting China’s Wall Street connections”, *Politico*, 27 September 2019, <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/09/27/trump-china-wall-street-006459>

international community. Meanwhile, the United States uses its indebtedness to finance its techno-military lead, now in pursuit of asymmetric breakthrough.

The Quest for Asymmetric Techno-Military Breakthrough

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has been modernizing and reforming its force structures, reorienting doctrines, and extending the global reach of its combat capabilities across all domains (air, land, sea, exo-atmospheric space, cyberspace) in pursuit of the strategic "breakthrough" that would allow it to maintain its techno-military lead characterized by asymmetric superiority. Traditionally, during the Cold War, the concept of "asymmetric superiority" referred primarily to nuclear and aerospace capabilities. From the mid-1990s onward, it became the central concept defining U.S. military strategy. The codification of this transformation adopted several discourses and methodologies culminating in the RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs) model¹⁶ which by 2030 aims to establish an information and operational environment optimized through net-centric and effects-based operations¹⁷, with the possibility post-2035 of outpacing any peer competitor.

Asymmetric superiority, which was previously applied in a circumstantial and "grand tactical" manner, has now risen to a strategic level. Aiming to optimize freedom of maneuver and mastery of time and space, it depends on the development of a combined set of capabilities not limited to technology (referred to as DOTMLEPF), notably in the areas of: machine-to-machine interfacing, both piloted and autonomous, on surface and space platforms; data fusion and real-time shared operational situational awareness; offensive and defensive information warfare and protection of critical information and space systems; advanced logistics; and more. Various doctrine and foresight documents validate asymmetry as a concept qualifying American strategy, not only as a potential strategy of

¹⁶ RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs) is a concept that emerged in the 1980s in response to technological advances integrated into defense applications — such as digitization, miniaturization, precision, stand-off capabilities (striking from a safe distance), stealth, data fusion, human-machine interfacing, and so on — which enhance both force-multiplying capabilities and adversaries' anti-access potential. RMA highlights the need for deeper civil-military integration ("civilianization") because, on the one hand, the military is no longer the driving force behind technological dominance — it has lost its leading role in influencing civilian applications within the new industrial development hubs shaped by computing and telecommunications. On the other hand, the growing diversity of conflict types requires more rationalized decision-making through interagency governmental integration, collaboration with NGOs, outsourcing of logistical and surveillance functions to security companies, and the use of entrepreneurial methods in resource management, etc.

¹⁷ *Effects-based combat* rejects the model of accumulating tactical effects to achieve operational success (the so-called "grand tactics") and instead aims to generate *parallel and simultaneous effects* to disorient and disrupt the adversary's system. The condition for effective effects-based combat is the ability to manage and minimize frictions within one's own system.

peer, hybrid (combining conventional, irregular, and cyber capabilities), or irregular actors (resorting to terror, insurgency, organized crime, and WMD).¹⁸

This transformation is currently unfolding through a global capacity redeployment aimed at an operational posture that is globally integrated—via *globally integrated operations*¹⁹ — and at achieving breakthrough through the “3rd offset.” Introduced by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in November 2014, the 3rd offset strategy seeks to compensate (offset) the symmetric and asymmetric advances of peer competitors through an innovation effort, following the historical framework operating since the Cold War. In the 1950s, the U.S. compensated for its conventional inferiority vis-à-vis the Soviet Union by developing its nuclear arsenal; in the 1970s, as the USSR reached nuclear parity, the Pentagon implemented a program to create a 2nd offset based on new digital technologies and advanced capabilities such as precision-guided munitions, stealth aircraft, and ISR platforms (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance). Hagel proposed launching the U.S. into the 3rd offset with a capability innovation initiative, the Defense Innovation Initiative, focused on robotics, autonomous systems, miniaturization, big data, and advanced manufacturing technologies like 3D printing.²⁰ The then-Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Bob Work, described the 3rd offset strategy as “conventional deterrence” based on innovation.²¹

¹⁸ This is the case in doctrinal documents up until 2014, and since 2014, the notion of *asymmetric superiority* has appeared primarily in the future vision documents of the various branches of the armed forces. Excerpt from the document presenting the strategic doctrine, the *Quadrennial Defense Review*: « The most stressing interpretation of the strategy calls for defending the homeland while conducting simultaneous defeat and deny campaigns. When measured against high- to mid-intensity operational plans, executing this combination of contingencies simultaneously would be higher risk with the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review] force. To mitigate potential risks, we are currently reviewing our operational plans to ensure we have fully leveraged intelligence capabilities to see approaching threats early enough to ensure our asymmetric capabilities will be fully integrated into operational approaches, and that we have optimized our overseas posture to shorten response and logistics timelines. » *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, Department of Defense, 3/ 2014, p. 62.

¹⁹ Globally integrated operations involve optimized logistics capabilities, C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance), and inter-service and cross-domain synergies (air-land-sea-exo-atmospheric space-cyber), as well as the maintenance of: a modernized nuclear arsenal; missile defense and cyberwarfare protection — through a warning architecture based in space and on the ground, ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance), Ground-Based Interceptors, and the Cyber Mission Force; and a streamlined forward presence.

²⁰ Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, Nov. 15, 2014 <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/606635/>

²¹ Conventional deterrence is primarily based on five major innovative functions:

- learning machines: combining artificial intelligence and autonomy to enable instant responses to cyberattacks, electronic warfare, and attacks on space and missile architectures
- human-machine collaborative systems: integrating advanced computational systems and visualization tools to support decision-making
- assisted human operations: enabling optimal soldier connectivity to the combat network
- human-machine teaming in combat: creating new forms of interaction between manned and unmanned platforms
- network-integrated autonomous weapons: systems plugged into the C3 (command, control, communications) network

The Third U.S. Offset Strategy and its Implications for Partners and Allies, Speech Delivered by Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work, Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C., Jan. 28, 2015, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/606641/the-third-us-offset-strategy-and-its-implications-for-partners-and-allies/>

It is thus clear how the strategic field has become globalized across geophysical and social domains—air, land, sea, exo-atmospheric and cyber spaces; civil-military integration; and the driving role of innovation (and capital).²² The American strategic debate must now be examined beyond mere questions of new forms of warfare—peripheral hybrid wars and global/total war in the informational age, which take forms of permanent capability-based confrontation (deterrent-preemptive). Indeed, the question of the status and posture of permanent war within American strategy, and consequently within international relations, must be reconsidered. Many observers wonder if we are witnessing a renewed Cold War. It would be more accurate to ask whether it ever truly ended, taking preemptive forms when the U.S. lacked peer adversaries. One can also question whether the Cold War model (i.e., permanent contained war in the Center and explosive wars in the peripheries) is itself an aberration, an unsustainable risk factor in the long term. Certainly, war is inherent to politics and thus remains a permanent threat in interstate relations (and even intrastate in weak states)²³. However, the absence of political dialogue structures to regulate and control the development and deployment of weapons systems, to impose transparency regarding effective aims in interventions in peripheral conflicts, and to limit global Intelligence strategies (intelligence, surveillance, cyberwarfare, use of autonomous weapons, etc.) risks leading to uncontrolled escalation.

Towards a Recession of Hegemony?

The foundation of U.S. hegemony lies in acquiring capabilities for asymmetric superiority, ensuring its lead over any competitor within a global context that integrates all levels of power—economic, technological, financial, military, and geopolitical—through complex, adaptive, and preemptive modes. Historically, a hegemonic power does not establish itself as a juridical-political decision-making center governing the world-system (it is not global governance); rather, it emerges from a historical situation where the preservation of the world-system aligns with the hegemon's interests. However, one must question the nature of the “services” the United States currently provides to the world-system. The dollar, as the international currency of account, now functions—through the dollar-U.S. debt “parity”—as

²² Let us recall that the Pentagon has for decades funded numerous research projects at major American universities, and that increasingly partnerships are being formed with companies not dedicated to defense but to new technologies — notably the large GAFAM firms. For example, Amazon and Microsoft (Google withdrew from the project) are collaborating on Project Maven, which aims to “weaponize artificial intelligence” (i.e., create autonomous weapons)).

²³ According to Clausewitz: War can in no way replace politics, as it is “the continuation of politics by other means,” “a true political instrument, a continuation of political relations, a realization of them by other means.”, *De la guerre*, 1ère partie, Livre 1, Chapitre 1, les Éditions de Minuit, p. 67.

a mechanism for Washington to finance its foreign and military policy of preemptive intervention and its pursuit of techno-military breakthroughs. It has also become a tool to effectively coerce the entire world into enforcing sanctions regimes. For example, even China was unable to resist sanctions on Iran and was forced, as of October 2019, to abandon major investment projects in Iranian gas (South Pars, \$5 billion) and oil (Yadavaran, \$3 billion) sectors due to sanctions targeting Chinese banks and insurers.²⁴

Furthermore, one might ask whether the U.S.'s retrenchment into defending its narrow power interests—at the expense of a politically regulated world-system—signals the end of the historical model of global hegemony in favor of a system of hyper-competition among global powers. This post-hegemonic paradigm shift occurs within a broader framework in which Western power as a whole is experiencing a relative decline—not due to internal factors like loss of sociocultural cohesion or demographic collapse, but due to the rise of new powers amid globalization.

As the center of gravity of the world economy shifts toward Asia, it is legitimate to question whether the West, as a geopolitical entity, may fracture once again. For instance, the United Kingdom, by choosing to leave the European Union and liberate itself from EU juridical-economic norms (towards a “low tax, low regulation, low public spending” model, potentially becoming a global logistics and financial hub), is today moving closer to China through the development of a so-called “golden era” strategic partnership. This global geo-economic rebalancing could ultimately translate into increased geopolitical and normative power for China and other emerging powers, leading to an international power realignment. The United States clearly seeks to postpone this realignment as long as possible, betting on its ability to maintain an asymmetric lead within a hypercompetitive framework—a framework that evidently does not promote reorientation toward less environmental destruction, fewer unequal exchanges, or reduced violent interference in other states.

²⁴ Benoit Faucon, « China Pulls Out of Giant Iranian Gas Project », *Wall Street Journal*, October 6 2019. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-pulls-out-of-giant-iranian-gas-project-11570372087>

About the author: Saïda Bédar is a social scientist specialized in strategic studies, she is the director of the company *Géostratégie Analyses* and is the co-director of the company's associated think-tank *Forum on the Middle East*

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