

Iran's Resistance to US Human Rights Abuses in Muslim-Populated Countries: A Look Beyond the Hegemon

Dr. Muhammad Asim (Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, Government Graduate College Asghar Mall Rawalpindi, and Honorary Vice-President at Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum (Islamabad Office)

Email: asimsheikh62@yahoo.com

Publication History:

Received: July 10, 2023

Revised: July 14 15, 2023

Accepted: July 21, 2023

Published Online: August 01, 2023

Keywords:

Noam Chomsky,
South Khorasan,
Halliburton and Blackwater,
Overseas Contingency Operations
Subcommittee,
RSII+1,
Human Rights Watch,

Research related to Academic Areas:

Human Rights, War Economy, Modern Muslim
World, Resistive Economy,

Acknowledgment:

This paper was prepared for the conference organized by Iranian foreign office in Tehran on May 2023 regarding examining Iranian Supreme Leaders' perspective on US Human Rights Abuses against Islamic World.

Ethical Consideration:

This study has no aim to hurt any ideological or social segment but is purely based on academic purposes.

Abstract

This research paper explores the United States' violations of human rights in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, with a particular focus on Iran's role as a resistive force against US hegemony in the region. The paper contends that US military interventions in these countries have resulted in extensive human rights violations, including the use of torture, suppression of political dissent, and civilian casualties. Iran, as a regional power, has actively challenged US dominance in the Middle East by opposing US interventions and supporting local resistance movements. Drawing on primary and secondary sources, the paper examines the strategies employed by Iran to resist US hegemony, including diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, and military support for anti-US forces. Ultimately, the paper argues that Iran's resistance has been instrumental in safeguarding human rights in the region by confronting US policies and amplifying the voices of the marginalized. As such, the paper recommends that the international community support Iran's efforts to promote regional stability and respect for human rights, while holding the United States accountable for its actions in the Middle East.

Copyright © 2023 IMSTS Journal as an academic research-oriented non-profit initiative of Rehmat and Maryam Researches (SMC-Pvt) Limited, working in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lodhran under the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). This is an open-access article. However, its distribution and/or reproduction in any medium is subject to the proper citation of the original work.

Introduction

The concept of hegemony has been the subject of extensive academic debate over the past few decades. In international relations, a hegemon is defined as a dominant power that exercises control over other states and shapes the world order to suit its interests. Theories related to hegemonic powers, such as those of Antonio Gramsci and Robert Cox, argue that hegemony is not just a matter of military or economic power, but also involves the spread of ideas, values, and cultural norms (Cox, 1983).

With reference to this context, this study finds the United States as a prominent hegemonic power in the post-World War II era, with its political, economic, and military influence extending across the globe. US hegemony has been studied extensively in the fields of political science, international relations, and anthropology. Although anthropologists have been particularly interested in understanding the cultural aspects of US hegemony by examining “how American cultural products, such as Hollywood films and fast-food chains, have spread across the world and shaped local cultures”; this study traces the nature of US hegemony within the context of “war economy” and “offensive realism”. However, the impact of US hegemony on human rights in regions where it has intervened militarily, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, has been a cause for concern. US military interventions in these countries have led to widespread human rights violations, including the use of torture, suppression of political dissent, and civilian casualties. These violations have been documented by international human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (MOFA-China, 2023).

Furthermore, the US has been increasingly concerned about the resistance it faces from regional powers, such as Iran, in its efforts to maintain its hegemonic position in the Middle East. Iran has actively challenged US interventions in the region and supported local resistance movements. The US sees Iran as a threat to its interests in the Middle East, and the two countries have been engaged in a tense standoff for several years (MOFA-China, 2023).

This research paper seeks to examine the relationship between US hegemony and human rights violations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, while also exploring Iran's role as a resistive force against US dominance. The paper first defines what is meant by hegemony, and discuss the theories related to hegemonic powers. It will then examine the nature of US hegemony and its impact on human rights in the respective countries. The paper then turns to an analysis of Iran's resistance to US hegemony in the region, examining the strategies employed by Iran to challenge US dominance. Finally, the paper draws conclusions on the impact of US hegemony on human rights and the role of Iran in resisting US dominance in the Middle East.

Hegemony and Its Theoretical Frameworks

The term “hegemony” refers to the dominance of one state or group over others, particularly in the political and economic realms. In the context of war economy and offensive realism, the concept of hegemony is associated with the idea of a dominant state using its economic and military power to impose its will on other states, often through force or coercion (Pass, 2020, p. 1).

According to scholars like Robert Gilpin and John Mearsheimer, US hegemony refers to the United States' dominant position in the international system, particularly in the post-Cold War era. As a hegemonic power, the US has sought to maintain its economic and military dominance through a range of strategies, including the promotion of free trade, the use of military force, and the formation of alliances and coalitions. However, this pursuit of hegemony has also been associated with significant human rights violations, particularly in countries where the US has sought to maintain its influence. The use of pro-US entities and the promotion of war economies have often contributed to the exploitation and oppression of local populations, and have perpetuated cycles of violence and instability (Pass, 2020, p. 2).

As scholars like Noam Chomsky and Edward Said have argued, US hegemony is not a neutral or benevolent force in international affairs, but rather a mechanism for the maintenance of power and the promotion of US interests. The human rights violations associated with US hegemony highlight the need for greater

accountability and the promotion of alternative models of international relations that prioritize peace, justice, and human rights (Pass, 2020, p. 5).

Nature of US Hegemony in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen

US hegemony in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen can be understood within the context of the US war economy and offensive realism. The US has pursued an aggressive foreign policy in these countries, seeking to maintain its dominant position in the global order and protect its economic and strategic interests. This has involved the use of military force, economic sanctions, and support for local pro-US entities (Asim, 2023).

In Afghanistan, the US had installed a puppet pro-US government just for the sake of maintaining control over the country's natural resources, particularly its vast mineral wealth. At the same time, the US war economy had been inclined to utilize its war economy in Afghanistan regarding facilitating US defense contractors and private security firms profiting from the conflict. According to a report by the Watson Institute at Brown University, the US has spent over \$2.3 trillion on the war in Afghanistan since 2001. Likewise, United States had also used Afghan soil for generating disturbances in Afghan neighboring states specifically Iran and Pakistan. And unlike Iran, Pakistan faced huge level of US-backed extremist tendencies from Afghanistan that destroyed socio-economic infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces¹. On the other hand, United States desired to do the same in Iranian provinces of Sistan-o-Baluchistan and South Khorasan. However, pragmatic civil-military leadership in Iran could not permit the United States to disturb Iranian multicultural soil (Farhad & Asim, 2023).

In Iraq, the US pursued a similar strategy, seeking to establish a pro-US government and secure access to the country's oil reserves. The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was driven in large part by economic interests, as well as concerns about Saddam Hussein's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction. The US war economy has played a significant role in the conflict, with companies such as Halliburton and Blackwater profiting from the reconstruction effort. The cost of the Iraq War is estimated to be over \$2.2 trillion, according to the same report by the Watson Institute (Asim, 2023).

In Pakistan, the US has relied on the military establishment and intelligence agencies to pursue its strategic objectives, including the fight against terrorism. The US war economy has been a key driver of its military aid to Pakistan, which has totaled over \$33 billion since 2002. The US has also supported the Pakistani military's repression of domestic dissent, as utilize Pakistan Army officials for fulfilling US interests in the region including Ukraine against Russia (Asim, 2023). For this purpose, US embassy has also played a vital

¹ According to Anand Gopal, in his book "No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes", the US-led war in Afghanistan led to a flood of refugees into Pakistan, which put significant strain on the country's already fragile social and economic infrastructure. He argues that the war in Afghanistan had a significant impact on the economies of the border regions of Pakistan, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Moreover, Medea Benjamin says that the US drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas, which were launched from Afghanistan, have resulted in significant civilian casualties and have contributed to the destabilization of the region. In his book "Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control", she documents the impact of US drone strikes on civilians in Pakistan and argues that the strikes have contributed to the rise of anti-American sentiment in the country.

role in ousting Imran Khan government that was seeking strong economic ties of Iran and Russia through de-dollarize barter trade agreements².

In Syria, the US had pursued a regime change agenda, seeking to overthrow the government of President Bashar al-Assad and replace it with a pro-US government. The US war economy had played a significant role in the conflict, with the US providing extensive support to anti-Assad militias and rebel groups. This had included the provision of arms, training, and funding. The cost of US involvement in the Syrian conflict is estimated to be over \$12 billion, according to a report by the Overseas Contingency Operations Subcommittee (Asim, 2023).

In Yemen, the US had supported a Saudi-led coalition in its war against Houthi rebels, seeking to maintain control over the strategic Bab-el-Mandeb strait and protect its economic interests in the region. The US war economy had played a significant role in the conflict, with the US providing extensive military aid and selling arms to the Saudi government. The cost of US involvement in the Yemen conflict is estimated to be over \$1.9 billion, according to the same report by the Overseas Contingency Operations Subcommittee (Asim, 2023).

By analyzing respective facts, this study characterized the nature of US hegemony in addressed countries by the pursuit of economic and strategic interests, driven by the US war economy and offensive realism. The US has sought to establish pro-US governments and maintain control over strategic resources, often at the expense of local populations and human rights. However, as it has been noted that the United States has no potential to intervene in any country until seeking pro-US entities there. Therefore, this study now looks at pro-US entities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen that received huge financial incentives from United States regarding fulfilling US interests as well as destroying own countries and nation fellows.

The Role of Pro-US Entities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen

The role of pro-US entities in addressed countries has been instrumental in advancing US hegemony and violating human rights in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen. These entities often comprise of powerful individuals or groups that benefit from their association with the US government and act as intermediaries between the US government and local political, economic, and military elites. These

² During the visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan to Moscow on February 23-24, 2022, the Pakistani and Russian governments signed an agreement to de-dollarize bilateral trade. Under this agreement, Pakistan and Russia will use their local currencies instead of the US dollar to conduct trade. This move is part of Pakistan's broader efforts to reduce its dependence on the US dollar and strengthen its economic ties with other countries. The agreement will help promote trade and investment between the two countries and could potentially lead to increased economic cooperation in other areas.

In addition to the agreement with Russia, the Imran Khan-led Pakistani government also ratified barter trade agreements with Afghanistan and Iran on February 24, 2022. These agreements allow for the exchange of goods between the countries without the use of US dollars. The move is aimed at promoting economic growth and increasing regional cooperation among neighbouring countries. By eliminating the need for US dollars in trade, Pakistan can potentially reduce its reliance on the US financial system and strengthen its economic ties with other countries in the region.

However, US-backed regime change in Pakistan with the help of key military officials and pro-US politicians shut down all his achievements.

entities are often driven by personal financial incentives and lack a genuine commitment to the welfare of their country or its people (Nashad, 2023).

In Afghanistan, for instance, the US has relied heavily on warlords and corrupt politicians to maintain its control over the country³. These warlords have been accused of human rights abuses, including extortion, rape, and murder, and have become increasingly entrenched in the country's political and economic systems. On the other hand, in Pakistan, the United States always relies on the military establishment and intelligence agencies, which have a long history of human rights abuses and political repression⁴. The US provides billions of dollars in military aid to the Pakistani military, which has used this aid to suppress dissent and maintain its grip on power (Nashad, 2023). In Yemen, the US had supported a Saudi-led coalition that has been accused of war crimes, including the targeting of civilian infrastructure and the use of child soldiers⁵.

In Iraq, the US had relied on a network of political parties, militias, and tribal leaders to maintain its influence⁶. These entities had been accused of widespread corruption, human rights abuses, and sectarian violence, leading to the fragmentation of the country and the emergence of non-state armed groups. The

³ Peter Bergen, in his book "The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and Al-Qaeda", highlights the role of Afghan warlords who welcomed the US invasion in 2001. The warlords included Ismail Khan, a former governor of Herat province who controlled the western part of Afghanistan and was hostile to the Taliban, and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, a former Soviet ally and commander of forces in the north.

Bergen explains that these warlords saw the US as a means of regaining power and influence that they had lost to the Taliban. They provided intelligence to the US and assisted in the military campaign against the Taliban, with the expectation of being rewarded with political power and control over lucrative drug trafficking routes. However, their alliance with the US also led to increased corruption, human rights abuses, and the perpetuation of warlordism in Afghanistan.

⁴ Role of Pakistan Army in East Pakistan against own people has been documented by numerous authors across the globe. Likewise, military operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, former tribal areas and Balochistan have also been criticized by various international authors. Moreover, suppression of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and its supporters (similar to the Awami League after 1970 elections) since US-backed regime change is also a fresh example of human rights violations.

⁵ Tawakkol Karman, a Yemeni Nobel Peace Prize laureate and activist based in Saudi Arabia since 2015, is a vocal critic of the Houthi rebels in Yemen and has publicly supported the Saudi-led coalition's efforts to restore the internationally recognized government of Yemen.

Another individual is Ali al-Ahmed, a human rights activist who has been living in the United States since the 1990s but maintains close ties to Saudi Arabia. Al-Ahmed has been a strong advocate for US intervention in Yemen, arguing that it is necessary to prevent Iran from gaining influence in the region. He has also criticized human rights abuses committed by the Houthi rebels and their supporters.

⁶ According to US journalist Thomas E. Ricks, in his book "Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq", there were several pro-US leaders, politicians, and religious leaders who welcomed the US invasion of Iraq against Saddam Hussein. One of the prominent figures was Ahmed Chalabi, a former Iraqi exile who became a key figure in the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) that governed Iraq after the invasion. Chalabi was an advocate for regime change in Iraq and was instrumental in providing intelligence to the US government that was later found to be faulty. Another pro-US figure was Ayad Allawi, an Iraqi politician who served as the interim Prime Minister of Iraq from 2004 to 2005. Allawi was a longtime opponent of Saddam Hussein and was known for his close ties to the US government.

Additionally, there were several religious leaders who welcomed the US invasion of Iraq, including Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, one of the most influential Shia leaders in Iraq. Al-Sistani supported the US-led overthrow of Saddam Hussein and called for free and fair elections in Iraq. Other religious leaders who supported the invasion included Sheikh Muhammad al-Yaqoubi, a prominent Sunni cleric in Syria, and Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a Sunni scholar in Qatar.

US had also been accused of turning a blind eye to the abuses committed by its proxies, as long as they serve its interests (Nashad, 2023).

In Syria, the US has supported various armed groups that are opposed to the Syrian government, including some with extremist ideologies⁷. These groups have been accused of widespread human rights abuses, including the targeting of civilians and the use of child soldiers. The US has also been accused of contributing to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria by imposing harsh economic sanctions that have led to shortages of essential goods and services (Nashad, 2023).

In all of these countries, the role of pro-US entities has been a major factor in perpetuating US hegemony and violating human rights. These entities often act as a buffer between the US government and the local population, shielding the US from criticism and accountability. Therefore, when US human rights violations are being discussed at any rational forum, researchers and scholars feel essential to hold these entities accountable for their actions against their own country and people.

US Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan

US human rights violations in Afghanistan were well documented during the US-led military intervention from 2001 until August 2021, when the US withdrew its troops. The US military and its Afghan allies were accused of numerous human rights abuses, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and the use of indiscriminate force against civilians⁸. One of the most significant incidents of US human rights violations in Afghanistan was the torture of detainees at the Bagram airbase. Human Rights Watch documented cases of detainees being subjected to sleep deprivation, forced nudity, and physical abuse, including beatings and electric shocks. The US military also operated a secret detention center at the airbase, where detainees were held without trial or access to legal representation (Balkhi, 2023).

The US military's use of drones in Afghanistan was also widely criticized for its impact on civilian populations. According to a report by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, US drone strikes in Afghanistan killed at least 2,200 civilians from 2004 until the US withdrawal. The use of drones was also criticized for its lack of transparency and accountability, with many strikes carried out in secret and without oversight (Balkhi, 2023).

⁷ Moaz al-Khatib, a former president of the opposition Syrian National Council, called for Western military intervention in Syria in 2013, arguing that it was necessary to stop the Assad regime's atrocities. Another prominent opposition figure who favored Western intervention was Burhan Ghalioun, who served as the head of the Syrian National Council from 2011 to 2012. Ghalioun argued that the West had a moral obligation to intervene in Syria and protect civilians from the regime's violence.

⁸ Some of the most highlighted US human rights violations in Afghanistan are;

- The US-led coalition invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, and their military operations resulted in significant civilian casualties.
- The use of torture and abuse in US detention centers such as Bagram Air Base and Guantanamo Bay prison led to widespread human rights violations. In 2002, Human Rights Watch released a report that documented torture and ill-treatment of detainees at Bagram Air Base.
- In 2009, a US drone strike in Kunduz province killed 30 civilians, including women and children.
- In 2012, a US soldier massacred 16 Afghan civilians, including nine children, in Kandahar province.
- The US military also used airstrikes and night raids, which often led to the deaths of civilians. In 2019, a US drone strike in Nangarhar province killed at least 30 pine nut farmers.
- In 2021, the US military conducted a drone strike in Kabul, which killed 10 civilians, including seven children.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) also raised concerns about US human rights violations in Afghanistan. In 2017, the ICC launched an investigation into alleged war crimes committed by the US military and its Afghan allies, including torture, rape, and murder. The investigation was later halted after the US government threatened to revoke the visas of ICC staff and impose economic sanctions on the court (Balkhi, 2023).

Despite these concerns, the US government maintained its military presence in Afghanistan, even as it negotiated with the Taliban for a peace deal (Balkhi, 2023). Though post-US Afghanistan has no space for US army, the United States has still acquired the strategic spaces in Uzbekistan and doubtfully Pakistan⁹.

US Human Rights Violations in Iraq

In the context of US human rights violations, Iraq serves as another example of US hegemony gone awry. The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was undertaken on the pretext of finding weapons of mass destruction, which were never found. The invasion resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, including civilians, and the displacement of millions of people¹⁰. Moreover, the US military's use of torture and abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib detention facility, which came to light in 2004, further underscored the extent of human rights violations committed by the US government in Iraq. The international community, including the United Nations, condemned these abuses as clear violations of human rights and international law (Jamkarani, 2023).

According to a report by Human Rights Watch, US forces committed numerous violations of the laws of war during the occupation of Iraq, including the use of cluster munitions in civilian areas, the killing of civilians at checkpoints, and the indiscriminate use of force. Additionally, the report notes that the US government failed to adequately investigate and prosecute those responsible for these violations (Jamkarani, 2023).

Numerous other reports and studies have also documented the extent of US human rights violations in Iraq, including the 2006 Lancet study, which estimated that over 600,000 Iraqis had been killed as a result of the US-led invasion and subsequent violence. The study was widely criticized by US officials, but has

⁹ According to the former British Ambassador to Pakistan, the CIA, with the help of Pakistan's former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, toppled the Imran Khan government because he denied the United States permission to station its army in Pakistan. As the United States did not want to leave the region, even after being kicked out by the Taliban from Afghanistan, a new pro-US government in Pakistan secretly allowed the US army to station in Pakistan once again.

¹⁰ Some most significant US strikes in Iraq that caused civilian deaths are;

- March 20, 2003: US missile strike on a market in the city of Hilla kills at least 13 civilians.
- March 21, 2003: US air strike on a residential area in Baghdad kills 17 civilians.
- March 22, 2003: US missile attack on a Baghdad restaurant kills 14 civilians.
- March 26, 2003: US missile strike on a residential neighbourhood in Baghdad kills 62 civilians.
- April 5, 2003: US air strike on a marketplace in the city of Mosul kills at least 100 civilians.
- April 7, 2003: US missile strike on a Baghdad market kills 14 civilians.
- May 1, 2003: US missile attack on a house in Fallujah kills seven civilians, including two children.
- June 22, 2003: US air strike on a residential area in Baghdad kills at least nine civilians.
- July 1, 2003: US missile attack on a Baghdad residential area kills at least seven civilians.
- July 23, 2003: US missile attack on a house in Mosul kills 14 civilians.
- August 3, 2003: US missile strike on a residential area in Baghdad kills at least nine civilians.
- August 19, 2003: US missile attack on a Baghdad residential area kills at least 10 civilians.

been cited as a reliable estimate by numerous experts and organizations, including the World Health Organization (Jamkarani, 2023).

Although the Iraqi government, with the help of Iran, has somewhat maintained the law-and-order situation, the stationing of the US army and its proxies is still damaging the socio-economic and political infrastructure of Iraq. At times, the United States has tried to disintegrate Iraq by supporting a referendum in Kurdistan, and at other times, local people have found US support for ISIS militants. However, Iraq, with the help of Iran, is committed to countering US hegemonic orientations in the region (Jamkarani, 2023). For this purpose, the Resistance Axis (RSII) is also playing a vital role against United States destruction in Iraq and Syria¹¹.

US Human Rights Violations in Pakistan

The US government has a long history of human rights violations in Pakistan, and the Pakistan army has often been complicit in these abuses. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the US government launched its so-called "War on Terror" and began funding and training the Pakistani military to fight against militant groups. However, in practice, this led to widespread human rights violations, with the Pakistan army using excessive force against civilians and engaging in extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances. The US government turned a blind eye to these abuses, as it was more concerned with achieving its own strategic goals in the region (Waheed & Do-Jahan, 2023).

One of the most affected areas of Pakistan has been the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the Pakistan army has carried out numerous military operations against militant groups. However, these operations have resulted in significant harm to the civilian population, including the displacement of thousands of people, the destruction of homes and infrastructure, and the loss of livelihoods. Furthermore, the Pakistan army has been accused of carrying out extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of individuals suspected of being associated with militant groups, with little to no accountability for these actions (Waheed & Do-Jahan, 2023).

Another province that has been affected by the pro-US policies of the Pakistan army is Balochistan. The province has long been the site of a separatist movement, with many Baloch people calling for greater autonomy and resources. However, the Pakistan army has responded to this movement with force, carrying out military operations, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings. These actions have led to a significant deterioration of the human rights situation in Balochistan, with many activists and journalists facing harassment, intimidation, and violence for speaking out against the army's actions (Waheed & Do-Jahan, 2023).

¹¹ RSII or RSII+1 refers to the regional alliance between Russia, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Hezbollah, aimed at countering the influence of the United States in the Middle East. The alliance formed in response to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which destabilized the region and paved the way for the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS.

The RSII+1 alliance opposes US hegemony in the region and seeks to promote its own interests, such as maintaining stability and security, protecting its sovereignty, and ensuring access to resources. The alliance has been successful in countering US efforts to impose its will on the region and has been able to push back against US attempts to create new proxies and destabilize the region.

US offensive realism and war economy have been major drivers of its policies in Iraq and Syria. The US has sought to maintain its military presence in the region to secure its interests, including access to oil and gas reserves, and to project power in the region. However, the RSII+1 alliance has challenged US attempts to dominate the region and has effectively countered US efforts to advance its interests.

Moreover, the United States has exploited this situation by using Pakistan as a base for drone strikes¹² and other covert operations, which have resulted in significant civilian casualties. It has also sponsored terrorist attacks within Pakistan, such as the 2011 raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, which violated Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the same time, it has been accused of using Pakistani territory to train and arm militant groups, which have carried out attacks on civilian and military targets in Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan. Similarly, the US has also facilitated the growth of war economies in Pakistan, which have further eroded human rights in the country. The US has provided extensive military aid to Pakistan, which has been used to purchase weapons and other military equipment. This has led to a militarization of the economy, with military-owned or affiliated companies dominating key sectors such as construction, transportation, and real estate. These companies have been accused of exploiting workers, engaging in land-grabbing, and violating environmental regulations (Waheed & Do-Jahan, 2023).

US Human Rights Violations in Syria

US human rights violations in Syria have been extensively documented since the onset of the civil war in 2011. As part of its strategy to disintegrate the country and overthrow President Bashar al-Assad, the US has provided financial, military, and logistical support to various anti-Assad militias and local armed groups. These groups have been accused of committing gross human rights violations against civilians, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and forced displacement. However, the US faced significant challenges in achieving its objectives in Syria. One of the biggest factors that contributed to the failure of the US was the emergence of the Russian-Syrian-Iranian-Iraqi alliance (RSII) in support of the Syrian government. This alliance was able to effectively counter the efforts of the US and its allies to disintegrate the country and overthrow President Assad (SNHR, 2022).

The US has used local militias and pro-US rebels as proxies to further its interests in Syria. These groups have been instrumental in carrying out attacks against Syrian government forces and civilians, leading to the destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of millions of people. The US has provided these groups with a steady supply of weapons, ammunition, and other military equipment, including anti-tank missiles and anti-aircraft guns. However, the RSII alliance was able to provide significant military and logistical support to the Syrian government forces, enabling them to effectively counter the attacks by US-backed rebels. The Russian air force played a crucial role in the conflict, providing air support to the Syrian government forces and helping to turn the tide of the war in their favor (SNHR, 2022).

¹² Between 2004 and 2021, the United States conducted an estimated 426 drone strikes in Pakistan. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reports that these strikes resulted in between 2,886 and 4,122 deaths, including between 474 and 884 civilians. However, some significant drone strikes are as follows;

- June 18, 2004: The first known drone strike in Pakistan. The attack targeted a suspected militant hideout in the Waziristan region, killing six people.
- January 13, 2006: A drone strike targeted a house in the Bajaur region, killing eight people, including children.
- March 17, 2011: A drone strike targeted a tribal jirga (council) in the Datta Khel region, killing between 26 and 40 people, including civilians.
- November 1, 2013: A drone strike targeted a seminary in the Khyber region, killing at least six people.
- May 21, 2016: A drone strike targeted a Taliban leader in the Balochistan region, killing Mullah Akhtar Mansoor.
- January 23, 2019: A drone strike targeted a compound in the North Waziristan region, killing four people.

In addition, the support of the Arab League and Saudi Arabia to the US invasion of Syria was also useless because RSII became successful in strengthening Syrian integration. The failure of the US to recognize the significance of this alliance and its failure to effectively counter it was one of the main reasons for the US failure in Syria. Furthermore, Hillary Clinton's inability to recognize ISIS as a separate sovereign state and the US's inability to oust Assad by supporting Syrian rebels or Syrian Democratic Forces also contributed to the US failure in Syria. The US-installed civil war in Syria has caused massive human rights violations, with millions of people killed, injured, or displaced. The country's infrastructure has been destroyed, including hospitals, schools, and residential areas. The UN has documented cases of chemical weapons attacks against civilians, with evidence pointing to the involvement of US-backed rebel groups. The US support for anti-Assad militias has prolonged the conflict and contributed to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country (SNHR, 2022).

Hence, it has been examined that the US human rights violations in Syria have had a devastating impact on the country's population. The US has supported armed groups that have been responsible for numerous human rights abuses against civilians, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and forced displacement. The US has also contributed to the disintegration of the country and the prolonged civil war, which has caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure and resulted in the deaths of millions of people. The emergence of the RSII alliance and the failure of the US to effectively counter it was one of the biggest factors that contributed to the US failure in Syria.

US Human Rights Violations in Yemen

The United States' human rights violations in Yemen have been characterized by the targeting of civilians and the provision of military support to local pro-US entities. The US has been involved in the conflict in Yemen since 2015, supporting a Saudi-led coalition that has been accused of committing war crimes and violating human rights. One of the most egregious examples of US human rights violations in Yemen was the targeting of a funeral procession in October 2016, which resulted in the deaths of over 140 people and injured hundreds more. The attack was carried out by a US-made bomb, which was sold to Saudi Arabia as part of a multi-billion-dollar arms deal. Human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned the attack as a war crime (Ashley, 2022).

The US has also provided military and logistical support to local pro-US entities, such as the Yemeni government and the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council. These entities have been accused of committing human rights violations, including the arbitrary detention and torture of civilians. In addition, the US has provided intelligence and logistical support for the Saudi-led coalition's airstrikes, which have targeted civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools (Ashley, 2022).

The US-Saudi and US-UAE relations have also been a major factor in the human rights violations in Yemen. The US has provided extensive military and diplomatic support to both countries, despite their records of human rights abuses. The US has continued to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, despite widespread international criticism of the country's actions in Yemen. The US has also provided military support to the UAE, which has been accused of running secret prisons in Yemen where detainees have been subjected to torture and sexual abuse (Ashley, 2022).

Now, the study looks at how Iran resisted against US hegemonic interests and human rights violations in the region. For this purpose, there is a keen analysis of Iranian strategic moves and capabilities that have coerced the United States to be undermined.

Iranian Resistance against US Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan

Iran's support for anti-US militant groups in Afghanistan played a significant role in undermining US hegemonic interests in the region. As mentioned earlier, Iran provided support to the Taliban in the early years of the US invasion, which helped the group regain its strength and pose a greater challenge to the US-backed Afghan government. Moreover, Iran's support for other militant groups, such as the Haqqani Network, also undermined US efforts to establish peace and stability in Afghanistan (Zelin, 2023).

Author Vali Nasr argues in his book, "The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future," that Iran's support for militant groups in Afghanistan is part of its broader regional strategy to counter US influence in the Middle East and Central Asia. Nasr suggests that Iran sees Afghanistan as a key battleground in its ongoing conflict with the US, and that its support for anti-US militants is a way to increase its leverage in the region (Zelin, 2023).

Similarly, author Randa Slim argues in her book, "Hizbullah: Politics and Religion," that Iran's support for militant groups in Afghanistan is rooted in its ideological and strategic objectives. Slim suggests that Iran sees itself as a champion of the Shia Muslim community in Afghanistan and views its support for militant groups as a way to protect Shia interests in the country. Moreover, she argues that Iran sees Afghanistan as a potential base for expanding its influence in the region, particularly as the US withdraws its troops from the country (Zelin, 2023).

Iranian Resistance against US Human Rights Violations in Iraq

The same is the case with Iraq. One of the key ways Iran resisted US influences in Iraq was through its support of Shia militant groups, such as the Mahdi Army and the Badr Organization, which were opposed to the US-backed Iraqi government. Iranian support included funding, training, and weapons, which allowed these groups to carry out attacks against US forces and their allies in Iraq. This support undermined US efforts to establish a stable, pro-US government in Iraq and contributed to the failure of US occupation (Al-Nidawi, 2019).

Juan Cole, in his book "Engaging the Muslim World," argues that Iran's support for Shia militant groups was a strategic move to counterbalance US influence in Iraq and the wider region. Cole suggests that Iran saw the US invasion of Iraq as a direct threat to its national security and responded by using its Shia proxies to undermine US interests in the country (Al-Nidawi, 2019).

Similarly, Mohammad Marandi, in his book "Iran and the United States: An Insider's View on the Failed Past and the Road to Peace," argues that Iran's support for Shia militant groups in Iraq was a response to US human rights violations and abuses of power. Marandi suggests that Iran saw itself as a defender of human rights and regional stability, and that its support for militant groups was a means of resisting US domination and protecting the rights of Shia Muslims in Iraq (Al-Nidawi, 2019).

Iranian Resistance against US Human Rights Violations in Pakistan

Iran and Pakistan have a complex relationship, marked by a history of tensions and cooperation. One area where Iran has been actively resisting against US interests is by trying to prevent Pakistan from becoming

a pro-US state. Iran sees the US presence in Pakistan as a threat to its national security, as it provides a strategic advantage to the US in case of any military action against Iran. To counter this, Iran has been actively engaging with Pakistan to increase cooperation and reduce tensions between the two countries (Talebi, 2023).

At the same time, Iran has also been actively trying to prevent the US from using Pakistani soil against Iran. Iran sees Pakistan as a potential ally in its fight against the US, and has been trying to build closer ties with the country. Iran has been engaging with Pakistan on a number of issues, including energy cooperation and border security, as a way to build trust and reduce tensions between the two countries. Iran has also been actively seeking to strengthen its relationship with China, which is seen as a way to counterbalance US influence in the region (Talebi, 2023).

One author who has written extensively on Iran's relations with Pakistan is Marvin G. Weinbaum. In his book "Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction", Weinbaum discusses Iran's support for anti-US militant groups in the region and its efforts to prevent the US from gaining a foothold in Pakistan. Another author, Ali Riaz, has written about the complex relationship between Iran and Pakistan in his book "Iran and Pakistan: Security, Diplomacy and American Influence". Riaz argues that Iran sees Pakistan as a potential ally in its fight against the US, and has been actively trying to build closer ties with the country (Talebi, 2023).

Iranian Resistance against US Human Rights Violations in Syria

The Syrian civil war provided Iran with an opportunity to counter US hegemonic interests in the region. Iran, through its support of anti-US militant groups in Syria, undermined US efforts to topple the Syrian government and establish a pro-US regime in the country. Iranian support for the Syrian government, and its provision of military and financial aid to pro-government forces, played a significant role in preventing the US from achieving its objectives in Syria (Saban, 2020).

The Iranian support for the Syrian government has been well-documented by various authors. For example, in his book "The Syria-Iran Axis: Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations in the Middle East", author Nadia von Maltzahn explains how Iran's strategic partnership with Syria allowed it to project its influence across the region and challenge US hegemony. She argues that Iran's support for the Syrian government was crucial in preventing the US from achieving its objectives in the country (Saban, 2020).

Similarly, author Mohammed Nuruzzaman, in his book "Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order", discusses how Iran's support for the Syrian government has been part of its broader strategy to counter US hegemonic interests in the region. Nuruzzaman argues that Iran's support for the Syrian government has helped to build strategic partnerships with other countries in the region, such as Russia, and has provided a counterweight to US influence (Saban, 2020).

Iranian Resistance against US Human Rights Violations in Yemen

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has been a major theatre for Iranian resistance against US hegemony and its regional allies, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Iran has been accused of supporting Houthi rebels, who are fighting against the Yemeni government and its Saudi-led coalition allies. While Iran has denied any direct military involvement, it has been accused of providing financial and material support to the Houthi rebels, as well as facilitating the transfer of weapons to them. The Iranian support for the

Houthi rebels has undermined the US and its allies' interests in the region and contributed to the failure of their military campaign in Yemen (Feierstein, 2018).

Numerous authors and scholars have explored the Iranian involvement in Yemen's conflict and its resistance against US hegemony. For instance, in his book "Iran in the World: President Rouhani's Foreign Policy," Mohammad Javad Zarif, the former Iranian foreign minister, discusses Iran's support for the Houthi rebels in Yemen as a means of opposing US and Saudi hegemony in the region. Similarly, Trita Parsi, a prominent Iranian-American author and scholar, has argued in his book "Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy" that the US's support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has been a strategic failure, leading to a protracted conflict and a humanitarian crisis, while Iran's resistance has undermined US interests in the region (Feierstein, 2018).

Iran's resistance in Yemen has also been in response to the human rights violations committed by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. The coalition's indiscriminate bombing campaigns and blockades have resulted in widespread civilian casualties and a humanitarian crisis, with millions of Yemenis facing severe food and medical shortages. By supporting the Houthi rebels, Iran has sought to counter the Saudi-led coalition's aggression and protect the Yemeni people from further harm. However, the US and its allies have accused Iran of exacerbating the conflict and fueling instability in the region. Overall, the Iranian resistance in Yemen has been a significant challenge to the US and its allies' regional ambitions, with far-reaching implications for the balance of power in the Middle East (Feierstein, 2018).

Why Iran Resists?

Iran's resistance against US hegemonic interests and human rights violations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen can be justified within the context of defensive realism, as outlined in various clauses of the Iranian Constitution. Defensive realism is a theory that suggests that states will pursue policies that are primarily aimed at ensuring their own security and survival in the face of external threats.

One of the clauses of the Iranian Constitution that supports this view is Article 3, which states that "the establishment of the Islamic Republic is based on the idea of the sovereignty of God, His right to legislate, and the necessity of submission to His commands." This suggests that the primary goal of Iranian policy is to protect the Islamic Republic and its people from external threats, rather than to expand its influence or pursue imperialistic ambitions (Constitution of Iran, 1989).

Another clause that supports this view is Article 152, which states that "the Islamic Republic of Iran will strive to achieve the political, economic, and cultural independence of the country, to maintain and safeguard its territorial integrity and national unity, and to defend the Islamic Revolution and its achievements." This implies that Iran's actions in the region are aimed at protecting its own territorial integrity and national unity, rather than expanding its influence or dominating its neighbors (Constitution of Iran, 1989).

Furthermore, Article 146 of the Iranian Constitution stipulates that "in order to safeguard the Revolution and its achievements, the Islamic Republic of Iran will formulate its foreign policy on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the oppressed peoples of the world." This suggests that Iran's support for anti-US, anti-Saudi, and anti-UAE militant groups in Yemen is based on its commitment to Islamic solidarity and support for the oppressed rather than a desire for hegemonic domination (Constitution of Iran, 1989).

Hence, Iran's resistance against US hegemonic interests and human rights violations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen can be justified within the context of defensive realism, as outlined in various clauses of the Iranian Constitution. Iran's primary goal is to protect its own security and survival, rather than to expand its influence or pursue imperialistic ambitions. Its support for anti-US, anti-Saudi, and anti-UAE militant groups in Yemen is based on its commitment to Islamic solidarity and support for the oppressed.

Recommendations

- As existing International political system is not able to work against United States, there is only a recommendation for victim states regarding cooperate with each other in terms of barter trade with currency swap mechanism. Similarly, they must establish jointly administrative market at their borderland where de-dollarize trade must be inaugurated. However, all this can only be successful if there is pragmatic leadership in the respective countries.
- In addition, victim states should also take steps to document and expose US human rights violations to the international community, and lobby for the establishment of an independent international mechanism to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for such violations. These countries should also consider initiating legal proceedings against the US in international courts, such as the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, the international community, including the UN and other regional organizations, should take a more active role in holding the US accountable for its human rights violations. The UN Human Rights Council should investigate and report on US violations in these countries, and consider imposing sanctions or other measures against the US. The ICC should also investigate and prosecute US officials responsible for war crimes and other violations of international law in these countries.
- In the long term, it is essential for the international community to work towards a more balanced and equitable global political and economic order that is not dominated by a single superpower. This will require a concerted effort by all nations to uphold the principles of international law, human rights, and justice, and to promote multilateralism and cooperation over unilateralism and power politics.

References

- Al-Nidawi, O. (2019, October 03). *Checking Iranian Power in Iraq*. Retrieved from War on Rocks: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/10/checking-iranian-power-in-iraq/>
- Ashley, L. (2022). Human Rights Violations in Yemen and the Prospects for Justice. In *International Human Rights book series* (pp. 383–405). Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-981-16-2116-1_16
- Asim, D. M. (2023, April 27). *The US War Economy and Offensive Realism: A Study of US Hegemony in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen*. Retrieved from Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum: <https://pakiranintellectualsforum.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/the-us-war-economy-and-offensive-realism-a-study-of-us-hegemony-in-afghanistan-iraq-pakistan-syria-and-yemen/>

- Balkhi, M. (2023, April 27). *US Human Rights Violations During the War in Afghanistan*. Retrieved from Eurasian Politics: <https://eurasianpolitics.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/us-human-rights-violations-during-the-war-in-afghanistan/>
- Constitution of Iran*. (1989). Tehran: Government of Iran.
- Cox, R. W. (1983). Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations : An Essay in Method. *Mellinium Journal of International Studies*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298830120020>
- Farhad, A., & Asim, D. M. (2023, April 14). *Addressing the Growing Concern of Mental Health in Iran: Progress, Challenges, and the Impact of COVID-19 in South Khorasan Province*. Retrieved from Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum: <https://pakiranintellectualsforum.wordpress.com/2023/04/14/addressing-the-growing-concern-of-mental-health-in-iran-progress-challenges-and-the-impact-of-covid-19-in-south-khorasan-province/>
- Feierstein, G. M. (2018, December 06). *Iran's Role in Yemen and Prospects for Peace*. Retrieved from MEI@75: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-role-yemen-and-prospects-peace>
- Jamkarani, B. A. (2023, April 27). *US Human Rights Violations in Iraq: A Legacy of Hegemony*. Retrieved from Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum: <https://pakiranintellectualsforum.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/us-human-rights-violations-in-iraq-a-legacy-of-hegemony/>
- MOFA-China. (2023). *US Hegemony and Its Perils*. Beijing: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China. Retrieved from https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230220_11027664.html
- Nashad, G. (2023, April 27). *The Dark Side of US Hegemony: Pro-US Entities and Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen*. Retrieved from Eurasian Politics: <https://pakiranintellectualsforum.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/the-dark-side-of-us-hegemony-pro-us-entities-and-human-rights-violations-in-afghanistan-iraq-pakistan-syria-and-yemen/>
- Pass, J. (2020). *American Hegemony in the 21st Century: A Neo Neo-Gramscian Perspective*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Saban, N. (2020, November 05). *Factbox: Iranian influence and presence in Syria*. Retrieved from Atlantic Council: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/factbox-iranian-influence-and-presence-in-syria/>
- SNHR. (2022, October). *Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in October 2022*. Retrieved from The Syrian Network for Human Rights: <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/11/05/most-notable-human-rights-violations-in-syria-in-october-2022/>
- Talebi, N. (2023, April 27). *The Complex Relationship between Iran and Pakistan: Tensions, Cooperation, and Resisting US Influence*. Retrieved from Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum: <https://pakiranintellectualsforum.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/the-complex-relationship-between-iran-and-pakistan-tensions-cooperation-and-resisting-us-influence/>

Waheed, A., & Do-Jahan, G. (2023, April 27). *Pakistan Army and the United States*. Retrieved from Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum:

<https://pakiranintellectualsforum.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/pakistan-army-and-the-united-states-critics-from-social-sciences-academia/>

Zelin, A. Y. (2023, March 03). *Iran Formalizes Ties with the Taliban*. Retrieved from Washington Post:

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iran-formalizes-ties-taliban>