

Power

Many Americans tend to equate hegemony with imperialism, but the two are different. Imperialism is an active effort by one state to force others into its sphere, whereas hegemony is more a condition than a purpose.

A militarily, economically, and culturally powerful country exerts influence on other states by its mere presence, the way a larger body in space affects the behavior of smaller bodies through its gravitational force. Even if the United States was not aggressively expanding its influence in Europe, and certainly not through its military, the collapse of Soviet power enhanced the attractive pull of the United States and its democratic allies.

**Robert Kagan,
Foreign Affairs, May/June 2022**