

The US Strategy to Contain and Suppress China

الاستراتيجية الأمريكية لاحتواء وقمع الصين

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Abstract:

The increasing global rise of China, resulting from the great and rapid economic development it is witnessing, has posed the greatest geopolitical challenge to the United States of America and its global hegemony, which has prompted the latter to attempt to contain China and suppress its growing influence, by adopting a comprehensive strategy based on three mechanisms, including: political and diplomatic mechanisms by building the strongest possible alliances and partnerships, and forming a strategic environment to restrict China, and economic and commercial mechanisms represented by the enactment of the Chips and Science and Trade War Act, as well as military and security mechanisms that included the AUKUS and Quad alliances, and it is working to implement this strategy in China's regional environment on the one hand and on the global level on the other.

Keywords: Chinese rise, US strategic mechanisms, containment and suppression of China.

الملخص:

شكل الصعود الصيني المتزايد عالميا، والناجم عن التطور الاقتصادي الكبير والمتسارع الذي تشهده، أكبر تحدي جيوسياسي للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وهيمنتها العالمية، الأمر الذي دفع هذه الأخيرة إلى محاولة احتواء الصين وقمع نفوذها المتزايد، وذلك بتبني استراتيجية شاملة قائمة على ثلاث آليات تشمل: الآليات السياسية والدبلوماسية من خلال بناء أقوى التحالفات والشراكات الممكنة، وتشكيل بيئة استراتيجية لتقييد الصين، والآليات الاقتصادية والتجارية ممثلة في سن قانون الرقائات والعلوم والحرب التجارية، وكذلك الآليات العسكرية والأمنية التي احتوت على تحالف أوكوس وكواد، كما تعمل على تنفيذ هذه الاستراتيجية في المحيط الإقليمي للصين من جهة وعلى المستوى العالمي من جهة أخرى.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الصعود الصيني، آليات الاستراتيجية الأمريكية، احتواء وقمع الصين.

Introduction:

Two centuries ago, Napoleon warned the world that China would wake up, but rather that it should be left asleep, because if it woke up, it would shake the world. This is a reality today. China has woken up and the world is shaking. Although everyone knows that the Chinese economy is growing, few have paid attention to the extent of this growth and its repercussions, to the point that Czech President Václav Havel said, "It happened so quickly that the world did not even have the opportunity to express its astonishment." What is more, China's development has transformed it from a developing country to a powerful country on the international stage. In other words, China's economic development has added geopolitical power to the country, which has been reflected in the global system.

On this basis, the United States of America sensed a strategic danger and threat to its global hegemony through two areas: the first is economic, represented by the fact that Chinese development undermined the American economy, as it surpassed it in many economic indicators. The second area is security, as Washington believes that China has exploited its economic development to increase its military power and exercise more influence at the global level, and that it has become extremely aggressive in its dealings with other countries and refuses to comply with the international system based on (American) rules. Rather, it has become aspiring to dominate the global balance of power, which threatens its hegemony and global interests, which made the latter realize its declining position and pushed it to adopt strategies through which it tries to contain China and suppress its growing influence.

Based on the above, the following problem can be raised: **What are the mechanisms of the United States' strategy to contain China and suppress its growing influence?** To address the problem, we study the following chapters:

Introduction

Chapter One: China, the America's greatest geopolitical challenge

Chapter Two: Mechanisms of the American strategy to contain and suppress China

Summary and conclusions

I. Chapter One: China, the biggest geopolitical challenge for the United States of America

First: The Chinese geo-economic challenge to the United States of America: China has become a geo-economic challenge to Washington as a result of its economic development, which has overcome the American economy, according to a set of indicators that we list as follows:

1/ The economic revolution: The world has never witnessed anything like the rapid tectonic change in the global balance of power that resulted from the rise of China. It is enough to look at these numbers to know the size of this change according to the following indicators:

A- Contribution rate to the global gross domestic product/ During the years following World War II, the United States of America's share of the total global economy reached 50%, then declined to 22% in 1980, and 16% in 2016. If things continue in this manner over the next three decades, this percentage will decrease to 11%. On the other hand, during the mentioned period, China's share of the global economy increased rapidly from 2% in 1980 to 18% in 2016 and is on its way to making up 30% of the global economy in 2040, which means that China's contribution to the global gross domestic product will exceed the United States' contribution to this indicator globally by more than double.

B- Foreign trade volume/ China's foreign trade volume in 1980 was less than forty (40) billion dollars, but it grew very significantly, reaching 4 trillion dollars in 2015, and 4.6 trillion dollars in 2020, meaning that it doubled more than one hundred (100) times.¹ On the other hand, the volume of US foreign trade reached 4.3 billion dollars in 2020. According to these figures, we find that China has surpassed the United States of America in this indicator as well.²

C- Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/ China's GDP in 1985 was less than \$300 billion, and in 2021 it reached \$18 trillion.³ In other words, since 2008, China's GDP growth every two years has been greater than the entire Indian economy, and even when China's growth fell to its lowest in 2015, China was producing every four months the equivalent of the entire Greek economy, while the United States' GDP achieved \$21 trillion. Despite the

¹ Graham Allison, **Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?**, (New York, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2017), PP. 12-20.

² United state bureau, "Trade in Goods with World, Seasonally Adjusted," <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c0004.html> (29/08/2024)

³ Graham Allison, **op. cit**, P.20.

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American superiority here, the problem does not lie in American superiority, but in China's ability to bridge the gap that existed between them.

D- Growth rate/ The average annual growth rate of the United States of America during its years of great growth between 1860-1913 was about 4% annually, while we find that the Chinese economy has been growing at an average rate of 10% annually since 1980, which means, according to economic experts, that the Chinese economy doubles every seven years, noting that the productivity of the Chinese worker compared to the productivity of the American worker is estimated at only a quarter, so if Chinese workers are able to match the productivity of their American counterparts, China will have an economy four times the size of the American economy, as most indicators indicate that China has already surpassed America, as it has become the main factory in the world (the largest shipbuilding factory, steel, aluminum, phones, computers and cars, and the largest e-commerce arena...and the largest energy consumer).¹

2/ The revolution of science and technology: According to most international classifications of education, science, technology, and innovation levels, we find China a strong competitor to the United States of America, and has even surpassed it according to some global indicators in this field, as follows:

A- Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests: In 2015, China ranked sixth in mathematics, while the United States of America ranked thirty-ninth, and even Massachusetts, which represents the top of the American education pyramid if it is considered an independent country, ranked twentieth after it was ranked ninth in 2012.

B- Critical thinking skills: According to the latest comparison conducted by Stanford University in the United States, it was found that Chinese high school graduates who are currently enrolled as students in engineering and computer science colleges, are about three years ahead of their American counterparts in terms of critical thinking skills.

C- Ranking of universities: In 2015, Tsinghua University in China surpassed the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to become the first university in engineering in the world. We also find that among the top ten engineering colleges in the world, four of them are Chinese, and the same number are American, after Chinese universities were very far from the top ranks in the world.

¹ Graham Allison, *op. cit*, P P.20-22.

D- The fields known as STEM: which are considered the core driving force in science and technology, and the fastest growing sectors of the modern economy, we find that the number of graduates from Chinese universities annually in this field is about 1.3 million Chinese students, in addition to 300 thousand Chinese students studying in American universities, and this is compared to 300 thousand American graduates. In other words, Chinese universities graduate annually the equivalent of four times those who graduate from American universities, which expresses the size of the scientific gap between China and America, and the direct repercussions it leaves on the economic development of both countries, as China's share of the total global added value in the field of advanced technology industries increased from 7% in 2003 to 27% in 2014, while America's share decreased from 36% to 29% during the same period.

E- Spending on scientific research and patents: China spends a huge amount on scientific research exceeding 553 billion dollars, while the United States of America spends 511 billion dollars. In terms of patents, China ranked first in 2015 in registering patents, with 1,441,086, which is double the number registered by the next country, the United States of America, with 496,123.

3/ Human development indicators: The progress achieved in the Chinese economy has been positively reflected in the human development of the Chinese. Just one generation ago, 90% of the Chinese lived on less than two dollars a day, and it fell to 3% in 2015. The per capita income of the Chinese rose from 193 dollars in 1980 to more than 12 thousand dollars today. China also succeeded in lifting more than 800 million Chinese out of extreme poverty between 1981 and 2004 and creating the largest middle class in the world. This is the biggest leap in the race to eliminate poverty throughout the ages, and an increase in human welfare for a greater number of individuals. On the other hand, we find that life expectancy at birth in China in 1949 was estimated at thirty-six years, but it improved to exceed seventy-six years in 2014, and 95% of the Chinese are now literate.¹ As for the United States of America, the average income of the American worker has not improved in the past thirty years. From 1979 to 2013, hourly wages rose by only 6%, which is less than 0.2% annually.² In general, in its annual report on the global economy in 2014, the World Bank acknowledged the shock, saying: "America is now number two." In a mild way, according to

¹ Graham Allison, *op. cit*, PP. 27-29.

² Kishore Mahbubani, *The Asian 21st Century, China and Globalization*, Center for China and Globalization, Beijing, China 2022, P.149.

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MarketWatch magazine, we are no longer number one. The size of the American economy has reached \$17.4 trillion, while the size of the Chinese economy has reached \$17.6 trillion, while the size of the Chinese economy was less than half the size of the American economy in 2005. On the other hand, during the period following the global economic recession in 2008, the Chinese economy was described between 2013 and 2016 by Western experts as slowing down, while the performance of the American economy was described as recovering. There are clear differences between the two terms, and many questions are raised about comparing the slowdown: Has the Chinese economy slowed down until its growth rate reached the rate of the American economy, or to a rate slightly or greatly exceeding the rate of the American economy? It is worth noting that the slowdown in numbers ranges from 10% before the crisis to about 7% in the period between 2015-2016, while the American recovering economy's growth rate was estimated at about 2%, and the European Union at 1.2%. Overall, since the global recession in 2008, 40% of the total economic growth of the entire world is in just one country, China.

As The Economist explained to its readers, “For the first time in modern history, Asia is richer than Europe in terms of individual wealth accumulation. Asia is expected to overtake North America around 2020, driven by China, the main driving force behind wealth accumulation. China surpassed the United States in the number of billionaires in 2015 and is now adding a new billionaire every week. This economic growth has given China great power and turned it into a powerful political and military competitor.”¹

In another indicator, the consumer market, we find that in 2009, the size of the retail goods market in China was \$1.8 trillion compared to about \$4 trillion for that market in the United States. However, ten years later, the figures reached \$6 trillion and \$5.5 trillion, respectively, and China's total imports in the next decade are likely to exceed \$22 trillion. This means, in part, that just as the huge American consumer market defeated the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, the huge and growing Chinese consumer market will be the ultimate decider in the great geopolitical game.²

As The United States sees this shift of the global economy toward China as not a partnership or a free market, but rather a pure dependence on China that gives it more influence, an imbalanced reality that must be corrected before it is too late by imposing clear rules and a level playing field for all,

¹ Graham Allison, *op. cit.* PP. 23-30

² Kishore Mahbubani, *op. cit.* PP.176, 177.

as Trump's Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made clear in his speech at the Nixon Library on July 23, 2020. He said: "We are seeing staggering statistics of Chinese trade abuses that are costing American jobs and dealing massive blows to economies across America, including here in Southern California. We are also watching a Chinese military that is growing stronger and stronger and even more threatening."¹

Second: The geopolitical challenge (the new distribution of power globally)

1- Towards a new concept of the balance of power/ The first to point out that the concept of the balance of power in the prevailing concept is no longer suitable for understanding international relations at the present time was former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who described it as an old and outdated concept that must be renewed. According to Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the balance of power in the old concept meant in most cases the balance of military power, while the modern vision of this concept refers to an overlapping group of economic and military elements, and that economic elements outweigh military elements in weight and importance. The balance of power in this modern vision has been given a new term: Geoeconomics, which means using all economic tools (from trade and investment policies to sanctions, cyber-attacks, foreign aid...) to achieve geopolitical goals. Here we find that China is the world's most influential and contributing country in the field of geoeconomics, and at the same time the effective force behind returning the process of estimating the possibilities that await the future of a local or regional power to the old method that relies on economic practices instead of relying on political and military practices.

2- China's rejection of the unipolar system (desire to fully participate in any regional or global arrangements) / In view of the above, we note that the economy is expanding and spreading around the world, changing the balance of power in a way that pushes even the closest and most connected allies of the United States of America to turn their backs towards China. The superiority it enjoys in terms of the balance of economic power leaves no realistic options for other countries except to submit to its desires, even if the major international systems stand with those countries. This new situation was outlined by Lee Kuan Yew in a brief and comprehensive phrase as follows: "China is sucking the countries of Southeast Asia into its economic system, and Japan and South Korea will certainly be sucked in as well. China is absorbing and digesting countries without the need to use

¹ Kishore Mahbubani, *op. cit.*, PP.142, 155.

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force. It will be very difficult to resist the influence of China's growing economy. Who owns the gold rules." This judgment was also supported by **Stephen Bosworth**, one of the most prominent American experts on Chinese affairs, who said, "When a crisis or problem erupted in this region, the first question Asian leaders asked was: What is America's opinion on this issue? But today, when something like this happens, they first ask: What is China's opinion on this issue?"¹

On the other hand, consulting with China and involving it in various dialogues has become a global and regional necessity. This means fully involving it in any regional or global arrangements. For example, a regional security system for the Asia-Pacific region cannot be established without China's participation, given the vital position that China occupies, as it has become an effective figure in discussing all global issues. Moreover, everyone is waiting for China's position on any issue of importance in the international system,² as is happening today in the Russian-Ukrainian war. All the major powers are pressuring China to change its position supporting Russia so that the war can be stopped and perhaps Russia loses strategically.

China has become strong enough in international relations to reject some rules and arrangements and even try to change those rules that the international system is based on. As expressed in the new US National Security Strategy document, China is the only country capable of and willing to change the international order. It increasingly possesses the economic, diplomatic, and military power, as well as the technological capacity to do so. The document described it as the greatest geopolitical challenge in history, which means, in its entirety, moving from unipolarity to multipolarity, so that the United States of America does not remain the sole dominant pole.³ Even the Chinese president had expressed his country's desire and goal to establish a new model for international relations and avoid falling into the Thucydides trap, which reflects the position that China has come to occupy in the global balance of power.⁴

3- China's rejection of the arrangements inherited from the Bretton Woods system (formulating new international arrangements) / With the steady growth of its economy, China expressed its rejection of the rules imposed by international institutions, especially the so-called destructive

¹ Graham Allison, *op. cit.*, PP. 32-36.

² Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*, trans. Ismail Baha' al-Din Suleiman, (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 2018), PP. 260, 261.

³ The White House, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, October 2022, PP.23-35.

⁴ Richard Haass, *op. cit.*, P. 87.

trinity represented by (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization), as China considers them tools of Western hegemony and a means for Washington to suppress China's ambition to become a global power. Because objection alone is not enough, China began formulating new international arrangements, including:

A- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as a competitor to the World Bank. Despite Washington's objection, more than 50 countries signed the agreement to establish the bank, including Washington's allies, which means that these countries said no to America and yes to China, and reflects in part the international community's rejection of Washington's policies in managing international relations, and even began searching for a new balance of power to manage international relations.

B- BRICS organization/ established by China with a group of countries with rapidly growing economies, which allows them to make decisions and take actions without supervision from Washington or the G7.

C- The Silk Road project, land and sea/ or what is known as One Belt One Road, its cost is twelve times more than the cost of the Marshall Plan, it is an economic project with geopolitical goals that can control the Eurasia region as the heart of the world, which enables China to achieve global hegemony.

4- Building a global military power/ Although China has not allocated more than 2% of its GDP to its defense budget since the late 1980s until now, unlike the United States of America during the same period with a budget estimated at about 4%, the great growth in the Chinese economy has been reflected in the military aspect, as three decades of double-digit economic growth provided the opportunity to expand military capabilities, until they reached eight times their size before the 1980s. It has exploited its economic development and growth to build and modernize its military arsenal,¹ so that its defense budget increased from 22 billion dollars in 2000 to 229 billion dollars in 2022, becoming the second largest budget after the United States of America, amounting to 770 billion dollars. In general, China spent only 1.7% of its GDP and did not reach the global average of 2% of GDP,² while the United States of America spent 3.5% of its GDP, which is higher than the global average.³

¹ Graham Allison, *op. cit.*, PP. 32- 36.

² China Military Spending/Defense Budget 1989-2023, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/CHN/china/military-spending-defense-budget> (03/09/2024)

³ U.S. Military Spending/Defense Budget 1960-2023, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/USA/united-states/military-spending-defense-budget> (15/08/2024)

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China also has many advantages and elements of superiority on the ground in this regard, according to a report issued by the Rand Corporation in 2015 regarding the change in the balance of power in the region, entitled **The Military Assessment Record of the United States and China**, which showed that China will soon surpass the United States or at least equal it in six of the nine main areas of traditional military capabilities (launching attacks on air bases or ground targets, possessing air superiority, the ability to prevent the enemy from using weapons based on bases in space). The report also concluded that Asia would witness a gradual decline in dominance in the late 2030s. It is also possible that, as is the case with the impact of the growth of the Chinese economy on the United States (it has become number two), the increase and development of Chinese military power will lead to a rapid undermining of Washington's position as a dominant global power and force its leaders to confront bitter facts about the limitations of American power,¹ as well as about the decline in its share of power in the world and the decline in its ability to translate the enormous power it possesses into influence, which was expressed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the introduction to his report on the new military strategy of the United States, saying, **"Today's global security environment is less predictable or analyzable than I have seen in my 40 years of military service... While some of our relative military advantage has begun to erode... Some of our relative military advantage has begun to erode."**²

As the moment approaches when the Chinese economy will surpass the U.S. economy as the world's largest (in about 15 years), a consensus has formed in Washington that China poses a major threat to American interests and well-being. In this context, General Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, considered that "China will likely pose the greatest threat to our nation by about 2025," which was summarized in the 2018 U.S. National Security Document, which considered China and Russia "revisionist powers" seeking to "shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model, and gain veto power over the economic, diplomatic, and security decisions of other countries." In this context, Christopher Wray, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said: **"One of the things we are trying to do is to look at the China threat as not just a threat to the whole of government, but a threat to the whole of society... And I think that will require a response from us and from society".**

¹ Graham Allison, *op. cit.* P. 32.

² Richard Haass, *op. cit.* P. 19.

The emergence of China as a great power raised fears in Washington that it could turn into an aggressive military power similar to what European powers have historically behaved with, which has not happened, but this has not prevented China from becoming more “assertive” with its emergence as a new great power, using non-military means to impose its power. When Norway awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo in 2010, Beijing severed diplomatic relations with it. When the Australian Prime Minister called for an independent investigation into the causes of Covid-19 in April 2020, China froze imports of Australian barley. China thus became able to use economic means to pressure smaller countries, which is normal behavior for great powers, and which disturbed Washington because it indicates a shift in power and influence as the only power that was able to impose sanctions.¹

We also find that China exercises influence by providing aid, which is also an important point in the field of power, which is embodied in the exercise of influence not by economic power per se (i.e. by what it possesses only) but through trade and the flow of aid. China outperforms America in these two elements. China’s foreign trade reached \$4.6 trillion and aid flow reached \$38 billion, while America reached \$4.3 billion and \$34 billion, respectively. We note China’s superiority in these two areas, as influence is determined by the transfer of weapons and technology rather than the size of Military spending.

II. The second Chapter/ Mechanisms of the American strategy to contain and suppress China

The American National Security Document confirmed that competition with China will make the next ten years the decisive decade, and that the United States is now at a turning point, and that the choices that the United States will make and the priorities that it will follow today will determine its competitive position for a long time in the future. The document also explained that competition with China will be more evident in the Indian and Pacific Oceans region, but this competition is also increasingly global, as the race revolves around the world to write the rules of the road and shape the relationships that govern global affairs. On this basis, the American National Security Document identified three aspects that the American administration must follow to contain and suppress China, which are as follows: investing in the foundations of national power (competitiveness, innovation, flexibility and democracy), aligning with the

¹ Kishore Mahbubani, *op. cit.*, PP. 131- 147.

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network of allies and partners, working together to achieve the common goal, and competing responsibly with China in the technological, economic, political, military, intelligence and global governance fields.¹ Based on the above and what was stated in the American National Security Document, the mechanisms of the American strategy to contain and suppress China can be classified into three mechanisms.

First/ Political and diplomatic mechanisms:

1- Using diplomacy to build the strongest possible alliances and partnerships/ Washington relies on a network of allies and partners who share the same values and goals to protect and promote its interests across the world, and based on this network, it works to contain China, slow its growth, and suppress its growing influence, which was confirmed by US President Biden in the 2022 US Security Document, saying, “The fundamental truth of the twenty-first century is that our success is linked to the success of others. To achieve our goals and secure our future, we must engage deeply with the rest of the world and work with our partners. Our security, prosperity, and freedoms are interconnected, so we must work with each other more than ever.” Washington's diplomacy in its quest to contain China has been based on achieving the following:

A- Strengthening the free and open Indo-Pacific region/ Washington considers this region to be the heart of the geopolitics of the twenty-first century, and therefore its global hegemony is dependent on dominating it. This requires containing China by working with allies and regional partners to keep this region open and ensure the freedom of countries to make their choices, by encouraging diplomacy between the countries of the two oceans and like-minded European countries.

B- Deepening the alliance with Europe/ Thanks to the relationship rooted in values, interests and historical relations, the transatlantic relationship constitutes a fundamental partnership in addressing global challenges, most notably those imposed by China's policies. For this reason, Washington strengthened its relationship with the European Union, to defend the existing system that enabled them to develop and dominate,² which resulted in the beginning of a shift in the European position to the point of open competition with China, especially with the European Union imposing sanctions against Chinese officials and suspending the ratification of the Comprehensive Investment Agreement with China. Some European

¹ The White House, *op. cit.*, PP. 6-13.

² The White House, *op. cit.*, PP.16-39.

countries also reduced their dependence on China in strategically important industries such as the production of semiconductors and rare earths.¹

C- Promoting democracy and shared prosperity in the Western Hemisphere/ Washington did not neglect the ideological aspect of containing and suppressing China as it is authoritarian and threatens the international system that it established with its democratic allies. Therefore, Washington is working today with countries that have the same democratic values, especially in the Western Hemisphere, to pressure China and try to obtain concessions from it.²

2- Using diplomacy to create a strategic environment to restrict China/ Washington believes that economic and diplomatic engagement with China has largely failed. This is why it formed alliances with other countries to limit China's global power, which Blinken confirmed by saying: "We cannot rely on Beijing to change its course, so we will work to shape the strategic environment around it to limit its aggressive actions and enhance our vision of an open and comprehensive international system."³ In general, Washington relied in its quest to shape this strategic environment on achieving two important points:

A- Forming the rules of the road/ The United States formulated the rules of the international system in line with its values and geopolitical interests, but today they are vulnerable to decline and change due to China's behavior, as well as its failure to keep pace with rapid changes, especially technological ones. Therefore, Washington is trying to update those rules of the road and establish new ones, especially in the technological, cyberspace, commercial and economic fields, in a way that preserves its economic and technological superiority and ensures its global hegemony. In this field, Washington worked to activate the Group of Seven to play a decisive role in supporting its vision of the international system and its rules, which China wants to amend, considering that in its view they are a copy of Western power policies, and do not constitute the basis for the global system.

B- Competition within international institutions/ Washington is trying to enhance the response of these institutions to its priorities. Including how to contain China,⁴ especially after the latter sought greater influence within

¹ Hannes Greve, "Joe Biden and a New Era of Multilateralism," **GIGA Focus Global**, N°:5, September 2021, <https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/joe-biden-and-a-new-era-of-multilateralism> (1/7/2024)

² The White House, **op. cit**, PP.40-41.

³ Ana Swanson, Edward Wong, "U.S. Aims to Constrain China by Shaping Its Environment, Blinken Says," **the new york times**, 26/05/2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/us/politics/china-policy-biden.html> (3/9/2024)

⁴ The White House, **op. cit**, PP.17-32

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these institutions. Accordingly, the US administration revitalized these institutions and played a renewed leadership role in its policy, as it sought to modernize and adapt them to the continued shift in the balance of power globally, and to avoid the worst-case scenario of their collapse to be replaced by competing institutions that reflect hostile camps. To win the competition with China within international institutions, Washington sought to reconcile American and European interests by achieving the following:

- **Balancing China** by coordinating policies within international institutions and standing up to Chinese policies and values.

- **Providing a like-minded approach in "cooperative" efforts against China:** The United States and Europe develop a common approach and cooperative measures to impose costs on China, including imposing reputational costs through naming and shaming.¹

Second: Economic and commercial mechanisms:

1- The Chips and Science Act: Stifling Chinese technological development: It is considered an important step in the United States of America's strategy to regain its leadership in the electronic chip industry, after facing challenges in maintaining its global hegemony, especially with the rise of geopolitical competitors, most notably China. On the other hand, it is a mechanism to contain and suppress China and deprive it of this strategic industry, which gives it a strategic advantage in its quest for global hegemony. This means that this law came in response to a set of concerns and challenges that Washington felt economically and security-wise, as a result of its excessive reliance on foreign production of these chips, and what it could pose as a danger and threat to its economy and national security, especially with China's progress in this field. Therefore, this law came to relocate the production of these chips within its territory and reduce reliance on the main supply lines and deprive China of this essential technology for progress and dominance.² This was confirmed by Republican Representative Tom Cole, who said, "The draft law is a step in the right direction towards keeping communist China under control and protecting the economic and security interests of our nation." In general, the basic objectives of the law are in two main dimensions as follows:

¹ Paul Gewirtz, "Working With Our (European) Allies," in **The Future of Us Policy Toward China Recommendations for the Biden administration**, John L. Thornton, Paul Tsai editors, November 2020, PP. 22-24.

² Jenna Kavar "The CHIPS and science act: the United States' race for semiconductor sovereignty," **Master of Political Science**, The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies The University of Western Ontario, 2023, PP. 1,2.

A- Enhancing national security/ Considering that the global supply chain for semiconductors is complex and increasingly vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and external shocks, and the fear that these chips will be sabotaged, manipulated and infiltrated in the manufacturing process, especially since America relies on excessive imports from Taiwan, which is considered a security weakness and potential security exposure, in case a country possessed the technological capability along with the desire to strike the United States as a dominant power.¹ Therefore, this law came to address two important issues:

- **Maintaining US hegemony/** Countries that gain the technological initiative, most notably China, pose a serious threat to the United States by obtaining vital information about it, and also a threat to its global hegemony, and thus local investment allows for increased local technological innovation for the United States of America, which enables it to maintain its progress and global hegemony, as well as completing hegemony efforts with strategies to prevent competitors from catching up, most notably China, as the law includes security barriers aimed at ensuring that technology and innovation funded for malicious purposes are not used by countries hostile to the United States or its allies. And also preventing access to those chips that give their owner a strategic advantage to excel and advance, which means that these protective barriers aim to contain production and expansion in the United States alone, and to ensure that other countries competing with it (China) do not receive any benefits from America's efforts and funding in these areas of strategic advantage for global dominance, which is what Commerce Secretary **Gina Raimondo** stated that "the Chips and Science Act is primarily a national security initiative... We hope it will advance our common goals, strengthen global supply chains, and enhance our collective security."

Reducing excessive dependence on foreign countries to produce these chips / Given that the chips supply chain is global in nature, this means that some countries have monopolies in some of their areas, which leads to interdependence, and ultimately this can lead to the creation of choke points that can lead to interruptions and opportunities for foreign adversaries to hinder the United States' access to reliable chips.

B- Enhancing economic superiority/ This law aims to reduce excessive reliance on foreign production and Taiwanese monopoly, and even increase local production to ensure economic competitiveness, and enhance the

¹ Ibid, PP.7-22.

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economic position and leadership of the United States globally, especially since Taiwan manufactures 65% of the world's semiconductors and about 90% of advanced chips, which means that Taiwan's monopoly in this field has significant effects on the American economy, which is considered behind in the economic benefits that this industry can bring, which generates about \$600 billion annually, of which Washington earns \$73 billion annually, compared to \$175 billion for Taiwan, which expresses a large disparity in revenues between the United States and the countries that depend on it heavily, on the one hand, and the economically leading United States don't having larger shares in an industry that plays a very large role in the global economy, on the other hand. The Covid pandemic revealed the extent of the threat that could befall the American economy as a result of the shortage of microchips (excessive reliance on foreign production), especially the automotive industry, which is one of the largest US exports, a scenario that Washington does not want to be repeated again, if disturbances of the same kind occur in the future, so the efforts of re-industrialization in the United States increase independence, and in the event of disturbances in other countries, it will still have the ability to produce and will not be completely excluded.¹

2- Trade war (tariff war): The United States of America justified its protectionist policy or tariff war against China by saying that the latter is pursuing unfair trade policies, exploiting the benefits of trade liberalization and membership in the World Trade Organization, and at the same time keeping its domestic market protected against foreign competition by providing subsidies and facilitating exports through devaluing the currency. The United States also accuses China of stealing scientific and technological knowledge and techniques from American companies, violating intellectual property rights, and neglecting environmental protection requirements.

On this basis, the US administration launched a trade war on China when Trump signed the "Presidential Memorandum Targeting Chinese Economic Aggression" in March 2018 and imposed customs duties on more than 800 Chinese products worth \$34 billion as a first stage, followed by the introduction of a new list of customs duties on imports from China worth more than \$200 billion after China was able to partially neutralize the effects of the first customs duties. It also imposed restrictions on Chinese investments in American technology, tightened export controls, expanded the list of dual-use products that cannot be exported to China, and identified a list of Chinese companies and institutions that American companies are

¹ Jenna Kavar, *op. cit.*, PP. 11-24.

prohibited from dealing with (ZTE and Huawei). The unilateral sanctions against both ZTE and Huawei have greatly reduced their competitiveness and hindered the development of high-tech industries in China. These tariffs have also made China express its willingness to compromise with Washington, reduce the imbalance in bilateral trade to \$200 billion, and liberalize its domestic market for American companies.

The United States seeks, through its trade war with China, to weaken the latter as its main competitor, capable and willing to challenge its global hegemony economically, politically and security-wise, and therefore the current US foreign trade policy aims to slow down China's rapid economic growth and its growing importance in the global economy, which means that the US protectionist attack on China has two dimensions, political and economic, and accordingly the various tariffs imposed on trade with the United States and other means to slow China's economic growth are also tools to slow the growth of China's political power.

In general, the trade war launched by Washington on Beijing aims to achieve a set of goals that all serve one main endeavor, which is to contain China's growth and suppress its growing influence, as follows:¹

A- Reducing the bilateral trade deficit and relocating American jobs: The trade deficit is the most important trade problem that the United States recognizes in its trade relations with China. Of the US trade deficit of \$796 billion in 2017, China accounted for \$376 billion, or 47%, which is almost half, which Washington considers unfair and necessary correcting it by imposing more customs duties on some imported goods, especially those that can be produced locally and provide a large workforce, most notably the iron and aluminum sector.

B- Reducing China's superior technological capabilities: The United States has become aware of China's success in implementing its strategy to modernize production and increase the production of robots, lithium batteries, network equipment, and others. Therefore, the United States increased customs duties on electronic imports from China, including communications and network equipment, by 25%, and limited Chinese companies' access to American technologies.

C- Preventing the growth of Chinese military power: According to Markov, it is absolutely unacceptable for the United States to allow China to have military superiority over it, even in the long term, which prompted it to take

¹ Larisa Kapustina and all, "US-China Trade War: Causes and Outcomes," **SHS Web of Conferences**, vol. 73, 2020, PP. 1, 11

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measures to ensure its competitive advantage in the national security sector and prevent China from using American dual-use technologies.

D- The trade war reduces the federal budget deficit: The US government faces a large budget deficit of about 4% of GDP, as the US government budget deficit has exceeded \$ 21 trillion and is set to rise in the next few years. To correct this, Washington needs additional sources of income such as tariffs in order to balance its budget. Tariffs on Chinese products are seen as a major source of such income.

Third: Security and military mechanisms: (AUKUS and Quad Alliance)

1/ AUKUS Alliance/ The establishment of the AUKUS Alliance represents a major shift in the American global strategy, which is based on two facts: the first is that China's rise cannot be stopped or reversed, and the second is that the United States no longer has confidence in keeping China in the Eurasia region, especially in light of the "comprehensive strategic partnership" between China and Russia.¹ Therefore, AUKUS has become a balance of power in the face of China. In addition to being a security cooperation, it is considered a political message from the United States of America to contain China as a country that enjoys power and dominance in this region, and to make it face new opponents in its surroundings to curb its military development and growing influence.² From a global perspective, the AUKUS Alliance sends three main signals:³

A/ The emergence of a new major naval alliance: covering a range of military, scientific, technological, industrial and training fields, which expresses a new model for the American alliance system, and it also serves as a bridge between two strategic regions, namely the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, where this "grand naval alliance" aims to contain China and Russia, which means establishing a naval balance in Europe and maintaining integrated deterrence in the Asia-Pacific region, as the AUKUS alliance adopts a policy of naval superiority over China, according to the traditional Mahan strategy based on the principle that whoever controls the sea rules the world. On the other hand, the AUKUS alliance is considered a division of labor to deter China. "Australia, which is

¹ M. Cheng, "AUKUS: The Changing Dynamic and Its Regional Implications," **European Journal of Development Studies**, Vol.2, n. 1, February 2022, P.3.

² Yusup Imannuridin, Aries Sudiarmo, Dohar Sianturi, "The impact of the aukus alliance on China's influence in the indo-pacific region," **International journal of humanities education and social sciences**, Vol.3, N.5, April 2024, P. 2476.

³ Xiaoqin Shi, "Beyond AUKUS: the emerging grand maritime alliance," **China international strategy review**, December 2022, PP. 249-263.

the gateway to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, enables the alliance to protect itself against China, while Britain, as the point of connection between the European continent and the Atlantic Ocean, will protect itself against Russia in the Atlantic region. The close relationship between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia can integrate the two strategic theaters into one comprehensive theater.”

B/ Transitioning from the military alliance system to the level of the military-scientific-industrial community: in which the military, technological, industrial and operational aspects are integrated in an integrated manner, which is the United States’ means of containing China on the one hand, and rebuilding its defense industry chain by removing China from its defense supply chain on the other hand, which was approved by the US Department of Defense roadmap in February 2022, stressing that the energy storage technology industry and the battery supply chain, as the second most important industry for US security, Washington’s dependence on Beijing poses a threat to US national security.

C/ Transition from “Extended Nuclear Deterrence” to “Integrated Deterrence”: The United States plans to implement a new strategy for its allies, which is “Integrated Deterrence” that requires organizing all allies, their positions, and their strategic resources to deter opponents from acting recklessly. Here we find the AUKUS alliance integrating nuclear deterrence, conventional deterrence, and global allied capabilities, by operating seamlessly across war domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, and other instruments of US national power and its unparalleled network of alliances and partnerships. On the other hand, the AUKUS alliance aims to make ASEAN countries face a difficult challenge through:¹

➤ **Putting ASEAN countries in a security dilemma:** represented by the arms race, since the association countries will face a neighbor with a growing military power, and since ASEAN countries do not rely on collective defense in their pursuit of “common security,” they will fall into the danger of a race to increase military power to balance the forces in light of this reality. The AUKUS alliance will also undermine ASEAN countries’ pursuit of maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free zone except for China, and thus the original balance of power distribution in the region will be disturbed.

➤ **Dividing ASEAN countries and the Obstruction of its Political and Security Integration Process:** Given the divergent positions of

¹ M. Cheng, *op. cit.*, PP.4,5.

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ASEAN members towards the AUKUS alliance, and their different perception of the Chinese threat, this will constitute an obstacle in its quest for political and security integration. Washington aims to force ASEAN countries to choose between it and China, which is rejected by ASEAN countries that realize that any attempt to "align" will be disastrous for their integration on the other hand. Moreover, this alliance will lead to an escalation of the arms race and confrontation between the major powers in the region, which undermines regional prosperity, peace and stability and thus hinders China's growth and growing influence.

In general, AUKUS poses a devastating triple threat to China's national security and global ambitions as follows:¹

✓ **Military:** The regional security dilemma is exacerbated by the increasing militarization in the region. Washington is trying to formulate "the equivalent of NATO in the Indian and Pacific Oceans region" and to encircle, contain and suppress China.

✓ **Strategic:** It is clear that the intention of the AUKUS alliance is to target the Chinese nuclear submarine, which would pose a threat to China's ability to respond nuclearly, undermine China's strategic deterrence, and thus disrupt the existing strategic balance.

✓ **Economic:** Washington is trying to exclude China from the Indian and Pacific Oceans region by surrounding it with hostile countries so that its trade in its regional neighborhood and then with the countries of the world decreases, and makes China direct its resources to the military aspect to maintain the existing balance of power instead of the economic aspect.

2/ Quad Alliance: The Quad has shown its aggressive intentions in confronting China, which it considers an expansionist power in the South and East China Seas, according to the 2018 US National Security Document, considering China to be engaged in a military modernization program and seeking to achieve hegemony in the Indian and Pacific Oceans region and globally instead of the United States.² For this reason, the Quad was formed and its level was raised since 2007 with the aim of containing China and preventing it from achieving global hegemony by achieving three main goals:

A- The first is to balance China: Japan views China as a security challenge and a competitor to its economic influence, and India seeks to

¹ M. Cheng, *op. cit.*, P.6.

² Sheharyar Khan, Dost Mohammad, "Quad: A Recipe For Confrontation Or Stability?," *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, Vol.XI, No.1 Summer 2022, P. 91.

prevent Asia from being subject to China's hegemony alone, while Australia sees China's power and influence in the Indian and Pacific Oceans region as an economic and security challenge to it. The United States, for its part, believes that the traditional alliance system in the Asia-Pacific region is not sufficient to deal with a rising China, and must be supplemented by adding more capable and "willing" partners by reviving the Quad, where it can pool the resources of India, the economic and technological power of Japan, and the culturally similar and geographically important Australia to better compete with China.¹ Based on the interpretation of neorealism, the changing power equation in the region has affected the behavior of states and regional powers. Since China has witnessed a growth in power, this structural change has affected the response of the United States and its allies, so it has resorted to external balancing by creating an alliance of like-minded countries. The Quad also embodies the theory of the balance of power in the region, where freedom of navigation and joint maritime operations within the Quad can deter China, thus achieving a balance that prevents China's superiority.²

B/ Strengthening practical cooperation: The four countries seek to enhance maritime security against China's expansionist demands in the region, develop infrastructure to provide an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, and secure technology and supply chains. Washington aims through these measures to achieve three elements in one fell swoop: enhancing policy coordination among the Quad countries and with regional countries, excluding Chinese technology companies from supply chains, and increasing the group's "attractiveness" as a regional provider of public goods, all with the aim of increasing its ability to compete with and outperform China, thus disrupting China's increasing growth.

C/ Strengthening the Quad's position in regional affairs: Washington seeks, through its Quad partners, to contribute to shaping a regional system that serves its interests in the region and confronts China,³ which is guaranteed by the existence of the Quad alliance by creating a multipolar system in the Indian and Pacific Oceans region, which works to reduce China's hegemony and allow smaller countries to manage regional security issues. Although some Quad countries individually do not match China's

¹ Zongyou Wei, "The evolution of the 'QUAD': driving forces, impacts, and prospects," *China International Strategy Review*, December, 2022, PP.291, 292.

² Sheharyar Khan, Dost Mohammad, *op. cit*, P. 86.

³ Zongyou Wei, *op. cit*, PP. 293- 295

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power, collectively they represent a more difficult challenge to China's growing influence in the Indian and Pacific Oceans region.¹

In parallel with these declared goals of establishing the Quad, the United States seeks to create:

- **political fault line between the countries of the region.** The Quad's competition with China through the ideological lens (democracy/authoritarianism) puts great pressure on the countries of the region by forcing them to choose one of the parties, which threatens to create a political fault line in the region, which leads to political instability, threatens regional integration, and slows down the process of Chinese growth, which was confirmed by Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** that the Quad seeks to establish an Asian NATO, to revive the Cold War mentality and enhance geopolitical conflict, which endangers the prospects of peace and development.² According to the theory of neorealism, China will try to achieve balance, but the Quad alliance could tip the balance in its favor, and China will have to achieve balance again, which would create a security dilemma and instability in the region.³
- **Economic fragmentation:** The United States sees China's rise as a strategic threat to reduce its influence that requires a collective response, so the Quad has presented alternatives to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, including: Quad infrastructure partnerships, and the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity", are designed to dilute China's regional centrality. While providing more options through these initiatives is better for the region and its well-being, excluding China from them would reduce the region's economic dependence on China, leading to fragmentation and stalling the momentum toward economic integration.
- **Bypass ASEAN centrality:** ASEAN is the driving force behind economic integration in East and Southeast Asia, and since many of its countries do not agree much with Washington's policies in the region and even agree with Beijing, which is not in Washington's interest, it has tried to upgrade the Quad to bypass ASEAN's centrality in regional arrangements in the region, which ASEAN countries see as a threat to them. As Jonathan Stromseth said, "Most ASEAN countries are still skeptical of the Quad and see it as a challenge to the 'centrality of ASEAN'"

¹ Hamail Tahir, Fouzia Amin, "Assessing the Effectiveness of Quad in Maritime Containment of China in the IndoPacific Region," **sir syed journal of education and social research**, Vol. 6, n. 4, 2023, P.2.

² Zongyou Wei, **op. cit**, PP. 296, 297

³ Sheharyar Khan, Dost Mohammad, **op. cit**, P.96.

- **The possibility of establishing an Asian NATO:** Washington has floated the idea of transforming the Quad into an Asian NATO, but the rejection of India and ASEAN countries has prompted Washington to freeze the idea. However, it is certain that military and security issues form a large part of the group's foundation and goals, especially what it calls maritime security in the region, which will further complicate it by escalating maritime competition between China and the Quad, encouraging an arms race, and disrupting the joint efforts of China and ASEAN countries to reach a practical code of conduct in the near future, and thus Re-igniting maritime tensions in the South China Sea, making it an area of instability, which serves the American goal of curbing Chinese development and containing its influence.¹

Washington's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) is based on building a regional group to contain and suppress China through three broad areas: regional economic cooperation, strategic expansion, and protecting vital regional interests. Through this strategy, the United States will create problems for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and confront Beijing in the South China Sea, to curb it economically, politically, and militarily. This American strategy is also supposed to lead to confrontation rather than stability and prepare the region for a new Cold War in which the United States mobilizes its allies, which China does not want, as it needs the stability required for growth and trade.²

Summary and conclusions:

China has become a geo-economic challenge to the United States of America, given its global economic spread resulting from its economic and technological development, where China has been able to bridge the economic gap with the United States of America and even surpass it in many economic and development indicators.

China's economic development and growth have led to the modernization and development of its military power, which has given it increasing influence regionally (in the Pacific and Indian Oceans) and globally, which has posed a geostrategic challenge that Washington has considered its greatest historically, which has forced it to adopt a strategy to contain Chinese growth and suppress its growing influence.

¹ Zongyou Wei, *op. cit*, PP. 297, 299

² Sheharyar Khan, Dost Mohammad, *op. cit*, PP.90, 91.

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The United States of America relied in its strategy to contain China and suppress its growing influence on a set of mechanisms that included various fields as follows:

First: Politics and diplomacy: where Washington used diplomacy to build the strongest possible alliances and partnerships by strengthening the free and open Indian and Pacific Oceans region and deepening the alliance with Europe to stand up to China. On the other hand, it used diplomacy to form a strategic environment to restrict China and limit its influence by shaping and formulating the rules of the international system in line with its geopolitical interests, and competing with China within international institutions by enhancing the response of these institutions to its priorities, including how to contain China and avoid the emergence of institutions competing with hostile camps.

Second: Economic and commercial mechanisms: Washington drafted the Chips and Science Act with the aim of stifling Chinese technological development as the locomotive of Chinese development and its growing influence, and thus containing and suppressing China and depriving it of this strategic industry necessary in the pursuit of hegemony. On the other hand, it launched a major trade war on China, known as the tariff war, with the aim of slowing down China's rapid economic growth and its growing political influence.

Third: Security and military mechanisms: The United States of America established two security alliances to contain China, namely the AUKUS Alliance and the Quad Alliance, as they are considered a balance of power in the face of China and curbing its military development and growing influence on the one hand, which puts pressure on China and its global ambition by creating a regional security dilemma in China's neighborhood and surrounding it with hostile countries to disrupt its global trade.

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