

## HOW THEY RULE THE WORLD: THE 22 SECRET STRATEGIES OF GLOBAL POWERS

*Review by: Madina Ali Zamani\**

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**T**he skillful employment of geo-economy and geostrategy instruments as state-power translates into a geopolitical standing of a state to act and exert its influence. The book titled “How They Rule the World: The 22 Secret Strategies of Global Powers” expresses the same while pondering upon 25-year experience and research of the author in geopolitics, intelligence, defense, and international relations domains. The argument presented in the book gulfs into various facets of the nature of the world, the geopolitical power play, and the game of influence. The author has contextualized each strategy that influences the world, in classical and modern history – from Bismarck to Kissinger and present-day political leaders Trump, Putin, and Xi Jinping.

According to the author, the international arena is characterized by the game of influence where ambition, rivalry, and violence triumph, rendering it a geopolitical context. The powerful state employs all the means to weaken, subjugate, and control the weak; thus, the vicious cycle of violence prevails as powerful states impose their will. The second part of the book entails a detailed account of geopolitical values that shape the international political environment in which states interact. The contemporary geopolitical environment shadows four principles, the state is a living organism, money shapes geopolitics, the weight of history, and there are no permanent allies, only permanent interests. The author attempts to stress the pervasiveness of Realpolitik in all domains of geopolitics like economics and diplomacy.

The book introduces 22-strategies the great powers use to pursue their ultimate ends. These strategies range from most straightforward to the subtlest. Some are drifting away from the traditional notion of world dominance while others conform to the strict rules of power politics, such as deterrence, encirclement, deception, wearying

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the enemy, exploitation, divide and rule, indirect warfare, lawfare, psychological operations, disinformation, weaponization of religion, soft power, and public manipulation. The author identifies an elusive geopolitical aim behind every strategic move made to influence the world. Whether it is humanitarian intervention, religious freedom, or under the guise of democracy, there have always been ulterior geopolitical and geo-economic interests at play. States might be generous in rhetoric, but principally power politics predominates.

Post-truth has been ruling global politics, where Haves manipulate the dominant discourse, impacting choices made by the Have-nots. The pervasiveness of post-truth politics has swayed the discourse of knowledge, information, power, democracy, economy, law, religion, and geopolitics. While ideas like freedom of speech and human rights are part of public speeches, the game of influence is on under the guise of purported liberal norms. Nonetheless, among the dominated, those who do not conform to the status quo and attempt to challenge it through dissent are often silenced or delegitimized.

The book emphasizes the failure to learn from past mistakes that have led to chaos and conflict, elucidating the understanding of human weaknesses. The great powers' lust for more power often causes irreparable damage, where the public is the ultimate victim. While employing secret strategies, the scrutiny of culture, traditions, and value systems must be comprehended; because what worked once might not necessarily work in other circumstances. Therefore, these strategies need to be customized, flexible enough to meet the requirements of modern time, and yet proactive to cope with future challenges.

The author unveils the tactics and tools of socio-politico-economic hegemony exerted through the higher echelons of power. In a nutshell, the book is very dense in content since numerous examples from the past and contemporary era have been incorporated to substantiate the argument. The author has divulged the manipulation of 'ways, means and ends' by great powers' quest for global hegemony and dominance. He has established how powerful few attempts to influence the weak and vulnerable, employing strategies with the military as a last resort. The economic factor, however, emphasises its preeminence in geopolitical decision-making. As per the author, financial considerations are essentially the driver that prompts states to either go for war or pursue peace.

To conclude, the author did not investigate the overwhelming role of emerging cutting-edge technologies, lethal autonomous weapons, overarching Artificial Intelligence (AI), spatial weaponisation, and exploitation by great powers to pursue their geopolitical objectives. AI has revolutionized warfare, thereby posing grave challenges to the associated command and control structures. As an evolving field, the prospects of AI, however, are yet to be explored.