

# Adapting Military Doctrines to Shifting Power Dynamics in the International System: Looking beyond Unipolarity through the Analyses of Charles Kupchan

Uluslararası Sistemin Değişen Güç Dinamikleri Karşısında  
Askerî Doktrinleri Adapte Etmek: Charles Kupchan'ın Analizleri  
Çerçevesinde Tek Kutupluluğun Ötesine Bakışlar

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## Abstract

With the end of the bipolar system at the end of the Cold War, the world order shifted to a unipolar era led by the United States (US). However, with the increase in asymmetric threats and diversity of actors in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks, this stabilization process has given way to uncertainties and multi-vector debates. Charles Kupchan's work analyses different system transformations from a more structuralist perspective. This article aims to analyze how states determine their military doctrines and strategies in the face of constantly transforming system balances. Within the analytical framework discussed by Kupchan, it is possible to discuss how military doctrines are adapted to the variables of the international system. Many factors are at play here, from regionalism to alliance formations and threat perceptions to actors' diversity. Kupchan's "No One's World" argument leads us to the problem of the opportunities and contradictions that states face in determining their strategic priorities within the framework of the complex structure of the multipolar order, which is this article's main starting point.

**Keywords:** Charles Kupchan, Military Doctrines, International System, Multipolarity, Balance of Power

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## Öz

Soğuk Savaş dönemi sonunda iki kutuplu sistemin sona ermesiyle dünya düzeni ABD'nin öncülüğündeki tek kutuplu bir döneme geçmişti, ancak 11 Eylül saldırıları sonrasında asimetrik tehditlerin ve aktör çeşitliliğinin artmasıyla bu istikrar süreci yerini belirsizliklere ve çok vektörlü tartışmalara bırakmıştır. Charles Kupchan'ın çalışmaları farklı sistem dönüşümlerini daha yapısal bakış açılarıyla incelemektedir. Bu çalışmamızda devletlerin sürekli dönüşen sistem dengeleri karşısında askerî doktrinlerini ve stratejilerini nasıl belirlediklerini analiz etmek istiyoruz. Kupchan'ın tartıştığı analitik çerçeve kapsamında askerî doktrinlerin uluslararası sistem değişkenlerine nasıl uyarlandığını ele almak çabamızdır. Bölgeselcilikten ittifak oluşumlarına, tehdit algılamalarından aktör çeşitliliğine değin birçok faktör burada söz konusudur. Kupchan'ın ileri sürdüğü "Hiç Kimsenin Dünyası" savı çok kutuplu düzenin karmaşık yapısı çerçevesinde devletlerin stratejik önceliklerinin belirlerken hangi fırsatlar ve çelişkiler karşısında kaldıkları sorunsalını tartışmaktadır ve bu da makalemizin ana çıkış noktasını oluşturmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Charles Kupchan, Askerî Doktrinler, Uluslararası Sistem, Çok Kutupluluk, Güçler Dengesi

## Introduction

As the Cold War era came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a unipolar world order dominated the international system, guided by the United States of America's strategic interests and priorities. However, after the 11 September 2001 attacks, this new order was replaced by a deep transformation process in which unipolarity was radically eroded. Beyond the diplomatic and economic spheres, this structural change had consequences that would fundamentally affect the strategic thinking of all nation-states. As the unipolar order disintegrated, a diversity of different power centers emerged, and a more complex era began with the increasing influence of multiple actors. In this process, a new topic of debate emerged: How would states design and operationalize their military strategies beyond their diplomatic maneuvers?

In the evolving international system balances following the unipolar era, states have had to reassess their strategic positions in an emerging multipolar and multi-actor world. Scholars and theorists have argued that in this process of radical change, states have had to revise their military doctrines to adapt to the new global conditions, which are characterized by a more complex and uneven distribution of power. The theoretical implications of this paradigm shift have been discussed by scholars such as Charles A. Kupchan, who explores the implications of a multipolar world order. Kupchan's works provide an important conceptual framework for understanding the decentralized nature of the new power structure that emerged after unipolarity. Following the collapse of unipolarity, states faced a series of structural security challenges that required a departure from traditional doctrines. In the new order, which Kupchan describes as "No One's world", in a multi-actor and threatening environment characterized by the fragmentation of the balance of power, it has been an important challenge to discuss how states will deal with the complexities involved in determining their military doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

One of the leading hypotheses to be discussed here is that the end of unipolarity has pushed states to diversify their strategic postures. No longer centered around a single superpower, states have had to recalibrate their military doctrines to a more complex and multipolar reality and constantly update them according to changing conjunctures. This diversification has manifested itself in a range of responses, from cooperative security initiatives to the development of more rapid and adaptable military capabilities. The fluidity of power dynamics requires constantly updating geostrategic strategies and military doctrines. Adopting multipolarity has necessitated more flexible and adaptive approaches for states to ensure their security and global influence rather than traditional alliances.

On the other hand, with the dissolution of unipolarity, non-traditional threats such as cyber warfare, asymmetric conflicts, and transnational challenges have become prevalent in the international system. The changing global order requires military strategies that are not only capable of traditional state-centric defense but also adapt to the conditions of hybrid warfare and the complexities of non-state actors. Therefore, the main problem we want to discuss in this study is to identify the links between systemic transformation and preparation of military strategies and doctrines. In this framework, by analyzing Kupchan's views on

1 In this article, we will largely use Charles Kupchan's main works that affected the related literature for two decades: Charles Kupchan, Emanuel Adler, and al., *Power in Transition: The Peaceful Change of International Order*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2001; Charles Kupchan, *The End of the American Era*, Vintage/Knopf, New York, 2002; Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace*, Princeton Uni. Press, NY, 2010; Charles Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn* Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2012; Charles Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2020.

the transformation of the international system in conjunction with other relevant literature, we want to address the debates on the intersection of global power shifts and strategic imperatives that shape the military doctrines of states from different angles. In addition, it will be important to discuss how states are using this transition to forge new alliances, improve their defense capabilities, and provide strategic vision. We aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between geopolitical shifts and national military doctrines in the post-unipolar international system.

## 1. Renegotiating Military Doctrines Beyond a Unipolar World: Limits and Critics

Understanding the transformation of the military doctrines of the dominant powers in the unipolar world order of the post-Cold War era, defined by the central dominance of the United States (US), is crucial because the strategic conditions in the global order are deeply intertwined with American strategic interests. As the dominant power at the time, the US shaped its military doctrines following its global strategic priorities. While the existence of the unipolar system provided the US with a leadership position in the international order, this new conjuncture oriented many states to revise their military doctrines. Taking Posen's comments at this point, it is possible to emphasize here the need to make structural adjustments to make US military doctrines more sustainable and adapt them to the "grand strategy" and, therefore, to develop more measured and selective approaches in military engagements.<sup>2</sup>

During this period, the US administration adopted a new approach with the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. The unipolar system further consolidated the international position of the United States and emphasized its military presence at the global level. In the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, the declaration of the Bush Doctrine and the subsequent strategic behaviors and multilateral diplomacy initiatives of the Obama administration were new steps in American military doctrines. At this stage, these doctrinal adjustments should be considered as new responses to emerging global threats, technological advances, and shifting strategic priorities in the international order.<sup>3</sup>

In the unipolar era, the strategic interests of the United States and its recalibrated military doctrines directly impacted global security dynamics. At this point, Kupchan describes the hierarchical power structures that existed during the unipolar era and discusses how the singular dominance of the United States in the system affected global politics.<sup>4</sup> During this period, the military doctrines of many states were influenced by the United States' global primacy due to the nature of the system. In this framework, the US administration revised its national security strategy frameworks and operational structures almost every year (between 1989 and 2002) within the framework of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.<sup>5</sup>

2 Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, NY, 2014, pp. 16-23.

3 For detailed information on the US military doctrines, see Bert Chapman, *Military Doctrine: A Reference Handbook*, Praeger Security International, Santa Barbara, 2009, pp. 6-74.

4 Charles Kupchan, "The Rise of Europe, America's Changing Internationalism, and the End of U.S. Primacy", *Political Science Quarterly*, 118:2, 2003, pp. 235-231.

5 The *National Security Strategy*, the *National Defense Strategy*, which is determined by the Department of Defense, and the *National Military Strategy*, which has operational importance for the command level, are the basic documents framing the US military doctrines. B. Chapman, *Military Doctrine*, pp. 42, 48, 169. Reference to these authoritative texts and the guidance provided in the *Joint Vision Series* provides a comprehensive understanding of the principles guiding US military strategy in the unipolar era. US Government, Direction for Strategic Plans and Policy, *Joint Vision 2020*, Washington, 2000. [https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/CE5F5937-49EC-44EF-83F3-FC25CB0CB942-1274110898250/alecd\\_ref/joint\\_vision\\_2020.pdf](https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/CE5F5937-49EC-44EF-83F3-FC25CB0CB942-1274110898250/alecd_ref/joint_vision_2020.pdf), accessed 10.05.2024.

Although unipolarity provided a degree of stability, it also provoked many challenges that required strategic revisions. In *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer discusses how unipolarity has provoked security dilemmas and caused power shifts for the leading international powers. In this context, the US administration had to significantly revise its military doctrines to respond to new threat sources and maintain its strategic advantage.<sup>6</sup> However, the US military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11 were the main historical examples to show how the nature of military doctrines has changed and evolved in a unipolar world. This new era marked a shift from conventional to counterinsurgency strategies in response to asymmetric threats, as evidenced by works like Petraeus' "Counterinsurgency Field Manual" and Ricks' "Fiasco".<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, technological advancements played a critical role in shaping military doctrines, influencing strategic thinking and force structures, as analyzed by scholars such as van Creveld and Biddle.<sup>8</sup> Unipolarity aligned with the technological superiority debates, shaping military doctrines around advanced capabilities. Horowitz emphasizes how technology diffusion can directly affect the strategic landscape.<sup>9</sup> As a parallel study, Mahnken sheds light on how technological developments have influenced military doctrines.<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, doctrines were geared toward maintaining technological superiority and anticipating emerging capabilities in a unipolar world where the US led in military technology. However, many technological capabilities and threats would emerge in the new multipolar era, from cyber warfare to precision-guided munitions and unmanned systems.<sup>11</sup>

On the other side, the rise of competitors like China and Russia at the beginning of the 21st century signaled challenges to unipolarity's sustainability, prompting debates highlighted by theorists such as Layne. His theoretical perspectives, starting from the idea that unipolarity is, in fact, a "temporary illusion", emphasize the necessity for military doctrines and strategies adapted accordingly to be able to move quickly to more significant revisions while trying to read the changing geopolitical constraints.<sup>12</sup> Looking at post-Cold War conflicts, the Gulf War, and the interventions in the Balkans and Africa, we see how US military strategic priorities and directions provided quick solutions in the international arena, and, in this context, the role and participation of the international community and its institutions in US-centered interventions is also important. Specific analyses of these cases will help to understand the effectiveness and limits of US military strategies.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the US intervention in Afghanistan after the 11 September attacks can be interpreted in a similar framework.

6 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2001, pp. 29-54.

7 These works provide relevant discussions on the difficulty of dynamic adjustments in response to changing geopolitical challenges. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The Petraeus Doctrine: The Field Manual on Counterinsurgency Operations*, Joint Publication No. 3-24, 2009; Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2003 to 2005*, Penguin Books, New York, 2007, pp. 430-439.

8 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, The Free Press, New York, 1991; Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, Princeton University Press, New York, 2004.

9 Michael C. Horowitz, *Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences*, Princeton University Press, New York, 2010, pp. 18-63.

10 Thomas Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War Since 1945*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010, pp. 2-14.

11 Thomas Rid, *Cyber War Will Not Take Place*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012; Martin C. Libicki, *Cyberdeterrence and Cyberwar*, RAND Corporation, Washington, 2009.

12 Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise", *International Security*, 17:4, 1993, pp. 5-51.

13 Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Defense Policy Choices for the Bush Administration*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 1997; Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to save Kosovo*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2000.

The unipolar era witnessed the US as the sole global hegemon, not only influencing the political and economic spheres but also shaping the military doctrines of the dominant countries of the international system. Traditional US military strategies, often based on the concepts of power projection and deterrence, were adapted to maintain dominance in a unipolar system.<sup>14</sup> Scholars like Mearsheimer and Huntington have criticized the sustainability of unipolarity and predicted that systemic pressures could lead to sharp adjustments in American military strategies, emphasizing the historically changing nature of military doctrines.<sup>15</sup>

In order to adapt to the new geopolitical realities emerging in the international system, many countries, especially the US, have had to make sharp structural revisions in their military doctrines. Transiting from unipolarity to an era of strategic competition and cooperation required a nuanced approach. The theoretical frameworks of “grand strategy” proposed by Gray and Posen offer insights into the “adaptive nature” of military doctrines.<sup>16</sup> The post-9/11 landscape and the emergence of new global power dynamics compelled strategic recalibrations and doctrinal adaptations across all challenging and defied nations.

### ***1.1. Understanding the Correlation between System Transformation and Adjustment of Military Doctrines***

In the dynamic realm of international relations, the evolution of military doctrines plays a pivotal role in shaping nation-states’ security and defense strategies, adapting to shifting geopolitical realities and power transitions. Unavoidably flexible and responsive, military doctrines require continuous reassessment as states adjust their strategic priorities, force structures, and operational concepts in light of changing capabilities and global power shifts. Kupchan’s insights highlight the significance of adapting military doctrines to evolving power dynamics in the international system. Initially describing unipolarity as a period dominated by a single superpower,<sup>17</sup> notably the United States, Kupchan acknowledges the subsequent emergence of a more pluralistic global order. This transformation includes the ascent of non-Western powers and shifts in the roles of Western states, marking a departure from the unipolar framework.<sup>18</sup>

In response to these changes, states, as rational actors, recalibrate their military doctrines to safeguard their interests amidst a multipolar and multi-actor environment. Military doctrines, thus, serve as strategic instruments for projecting power and influence in a complex international landscape characterized by diverse geopolitical forces and shifting power structures.

At the center of this debate lies the theoretical foundations of multipolarity and its implications for international relations. Kupchan’s ideas overlap with the principles of Waltz’s structural realism. Waltz’s paradigm provides a basis for understanding transitions in systemic orders by arguing that the power distribution within the international system directly shapes the strategic behavior of states. At this stage, it is important for states to

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14 Charles Kupchan, *The End of American Era*; Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, Basic Books, NYC, 1990.

15 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power*; Samuel P. Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs*, 78:2, March/April 1999, p. 36; William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World”, *International Security*, 24:1, 1999, pp. 5-41.

16 Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000; Barry Posen, *Restraint*, pp. 162-164.

17 For Ikenberry, unipolarity could have created many problems for the integrity of US diplomacy. For this discussion, see John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambitions”, in Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force*, Rowman and Littlefield, Oxford, 2004, pp. 321-332.

18 Charles Kupchan, “Introduction: Explaining Peaceful Power Transition,” Charles. Kupchan et.al. (eds.), *Power in Transition*, pp. 1-2.; Kupchan, *No One’s World*, pp. 74-85.

maintain their balance of power within the system as they formulate military strategies.<sup>19</sup> When elaborating their new strategies, they emphasize the instruments that can have a direct impact on the balance of power: first, in response to security dilemma situations, states may consider strategic cooperation to avoid the risk of mistrusting each other and thus engaging in the potential arms race, and by this way, they formulate their military strategies in order to improve their balance of power-based relations. Secondly, while relations between nuclear powers are shaped based on deterrence strategies, states may focus on specific armament for defense purposes and to ensure their national security by abandoning aggressive actions. Thirdly, in response to changing regional power shifts, states should form spontaneous alliances to prevent potential conflicts and ensure national security through more defensive means. Finally, all the states should constantly seek to balance their power and achieve their strategic objectives through multilateral relations and international institutions.<sup>20</sup>

Explaining the relationship between power distribution and state behavior is crucial to deciphering how military doctrines become strategic responses to ensure national security. The intersection of power transitions and military doctrines is a complex area for debate. Considering the impact of the power transition theories in forming Kupchan's approaches will guide us in understanding the importance of recognizing the direct relationship between systems and power cycles. Within the framework of the "Power transitions" approach, it is emphasized that, in the face of the rise of new challenger powers, adjustments in military strategies are imperative for the defender powers to manage the changing system dynamics properly and avoid potential conflicts.<sup>21</sup>

Based on the approaches of Gilpin, Organski, and Modelski, it is possible to discuss how states revise their military doctrines in the face of the changing power dynamics of the international system. According to Gilpin, in the event of a structural change in the distribution of power at the global level, all sovereign actors face the need for revisionism and adaptation in their defense policies and thus have to adapt their strategic thinking to the new conjuncture by developing or changing their military doctrines. At this stage, Gilpin emphasizes the inevitability of the need for all the states to be flexible in military doctrines in situations of uncertainty caused by periods of power transition. While rising challenger powers may increase their military capacities and develop more ambitious goals to reflect the power shift, defender powers (in decline) may strategically retreat and adopt more deterrent or more aggressive positions to deal with these new competitors. In Gilpin's "hegemonic stability" approach, rising powers challenge the established order, while periods of power transition are fraught with uncertainty and potential conflict. Here, it will be inevitable for both rising and defensive states to make strategic adjustments to protect or advance their national interests in the face of changing power dynamics at the international level. On the other hand, Gilpin's concept of "hegemonic war" speaks of the significant risks of conflict during periods of power transition. As new rising powers challenge the established hegemonic structures in the system, the potential for military conflict will increase. Therefore, states may revise their military doctrines to improve their strategic flexibility, deter rivals, or maintain regional dominance. Power transition dynamics act as a catalyst for strategic reassessment, and this is where the transformation of military doctrines can offer us many clues to the possibilities of hegemonic war.<sup>22</sup>

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19 Posen discusses the relationship between the balance-of-power theory and military doctrines in detail. Barry Posen, "The Sources of Military Doctrine", Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force*, Rowman and Littlefield, Oxford, UK, 2004, pp. 32-42.

20 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Waveland Press, Long Grove, Illinois, 2010.

21 Charles A. Kupchan, Emanuel Adler, *Power in Transition*; Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*.

22 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

Organski's "Power Transitions Theory" proposes that power transitions occur as new powers rise and challenge the existing hegemon, which leads to international conflicts. This theoretical framework serves as a starting point for understanding how great nations adjust their military strategies during periods of power shifts in global or regional leadership. The theory suggests that power imbalances motivate states to recalibrate their military approaches to maintain or gain influence. Organski's broader theoretical relationship with "Hegemonic Stability Theory" emphasizes that a stable international system requires a single dominant power to maintain order. However, when power transitions occur, they create instability and affect how nations formulate military strategies to navigate a changing security environment.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, Modelski's "Long Cycles Theory" suggests that the international system experiences recurring cycles of the rise and fall of global powers and extends the temporal dimension of power transitions, highlighting recurring cycles of global power dynamics. These cycles influence geopolitical landscapes and compel nations to adjust their military doctrines in response to shifting systemic leadership. Modelski's emphasis on systemic leadership suggests that a dominant power leads the global system during each long cycle, but as systemic leadership changes, it leads to adjustments in military strategies as nations seek to secure their interests within shifting power dynamics. States may exhibit cyclical adjustments in military doctrine by aligning their strategic posture with the dominant phase of the long cycle.<sup>24</sup>

Theoretical debates on power transitions present different perspectives on adapting military doctrines according to systemic conditions; firstly, power cycles necessitate "strategic realignment" as states seek to adapt to a changing international order. According to Gilpin, rising powers will challenge the existing systemic norms with aggressive policies, while the dominant powers will have to reassess their military strategies to counter these new potential threats or maintain their influence. On the other hand, transformations in power dynamics often occur in parallel with "advances in military technology". By recognizing the strategic importance of technological superiority, as Modelski emphasizes, states need to adjust their military doctrines to incorporate technical innovations. Finally, power shifts in the system force states to reconsider their existing alliance structures, and thus, the changing balance of power may lead to new models of partnership and cooperation, affecting the cooperative or competitive aspects of military doctrines. Modelski's approach to long cycles approach argues that alliances are more influential in shaping the trajectory of rising powers.

Another focal point of Kupchan's approach is the rise of non-Western powers that challenge the traditional narrative of Western exceptionalism, especially after 9/11. Since the early 21st century, there has been a transformative new geopolitical landscape marked by the erosion of Western dominance and the rise of emerging powers from various regions. By presenting the "No One's world" approach, Kupchan argues for a complex fabric emerging from the decline of the West and the rise of "the rest"; here is finally a world characterized by the declining influence of traditional Western powers and the rise of new global actors.<sup>25</sup> In this context, it is possible to focus on Buzan and Wæver's discussion of how multipolarity has developed through the diversification of global influence. Kupchan's views on the rise of

23 Roahl Tammen et al., *Power Transitions*, CQ Press, 2000; Abramo F. K. Organski, *World Politics*, Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 1968; Abramo F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.

24 George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1987.

25 Charles Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to Pax Americana," *Security Studies*, 23:2, 2014, pp. 219-257.

China, India, Russia, and other regional actors overlap with Buzan and Wæver's emphasis on different power centers and regional dynamics.<sup>26</sup>

Buzan and Wæver have made significant contributions to the field of security studies with their "Regional Security Complex Theory". This theoretical framework provides a unique lens through which we can understand the complex relationship between security dynamics and national military strategies, especially in the context of power shifts in regional systems. According to them, the security perceptions of nations are not only fueled by international dynamics but also depend on regional developments. At this point, Buzan and Wæver put forward the concept of "security complexes", arguing that security problems often develop at the regional level and that regional systems are, therefore, crucial in shaping state behaviors and security priorities. In such a strategic vision in which regional dynamics will be more determinant than global realities, the interactions between states in a given region will constitute a special security complex, and the security of a state will be directly interlinked with that of other states in the region in which it is located.

On the other hand, by introducing the concept of "securitization", Buzan and Wæver emphasize the importance of threat perceptions at the level of specific actors and the associated need for strategic behaviors; in this respect, the process of securitization is important for understanding how national military strategies develop. Defining a problem as a security concern not only frames threat perceptions but also requires channeling military resources. National military strategies never remain static; they have to adapt to changing security conditions. In the context of regional security complexes, Buzan and Wæver's approach is essential to make the military strategies of states dynamic during power shifts. For example, when a region undergoes a power shift, states in that region reassess their security priorities, alliances, and force postures. This adaptation is not only a response to external threats but is also influenced by evolving regional power relations. To illustrate, the post-Cold War period witnessed a power shift in Eastern Europe, characterized by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. With the Eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the former Soviet bloc countries aligned their military doctrines with the changing power dynamics and created new counterbalances to regional security complexities.<sup>27</sup>

## ***1.2. Challenges to Offensive Realism***

In Mearsheimer's realist approach, states primarily act to maximize their power and ensure security within an anarchic international system. According to offensive realism, power struggles, competition, and conflict are inevitable in shaping the international order, driven by security concerns and the pursuit of dominance among great powers. This perspective explains the perpetual quest for security and survival underpinned by the balance of power dynamics.<sup>28</sup> However, Kupchan criticizes the defensive realist framework, arguing that it oversimplifies power dynamics in international relations and neglects the complexities of power distribution in the contemporary world. According to Kupchan, the neo-realist perspective ignores the cultural, historical, and intellectual factors that shape global politics.<sup>29</sup> Arguing that focusing on power dynamics alone disregards the changing nature of international relations, Kupchan

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26 Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

27 Charles Kupchan, "The origins and future of NATO enlargement", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 21:2, 2000, pp. 127-148.

28 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

29 Charles Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, "The Promise of Collective Security", *International Security*, 20:1, 1995, pp. 52-61.



emphasizes that, in order to avoid a minimalist treatment of cultural and historical factors in international relations, ignoring these elements obscures the nuances of state behaviors and prevents a comprehensive understanding of why states behave as they do.

Kupchan also discusses how shared values, norms, and identity in the system can promote cooperation between states. Thus, states do not act solely out of survival concerns, and alliances or cooperation policies inevitably gain importance in this framework, as collective actions are likely to have effective outcomes.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, offensive realism underestimates the effectiveness of international institutions and sees them as the sole instruments powerful states use to pursue their interests. According to Kupchan, institutions directly contribute to cooperation and alleviate the security dilemma.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to Mearsheimer's arguably pessimistic view of state behaviors and his focus on material capabilities and power politics, Kupchan argues that, at the international level, shared values, normative frameworks, and cooperative ideas play a crucial role in maintaining stability among states. In the same vein, in today's globalized world, entities beyond traditional nation-states, such as transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and sub-state entities, are now taking important roles in adjusting international security dynamics.<sup>32</sup> Kupchan underlines how the shift from bipolarity to multipolarity in the post-Cold War period led states to adapt their strategies beyond mere power politics. He argues that, in a multipolar world, states balance power with other strategic considerations such as coalition-building, diplomacy, and managing diverse global challenges.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, Kupchan argues that neo-realism neglects the influence of regional powers, emerging states, and non-state actors in great power politics in the context of emerging multipolarity. By analyzing Russia's resurgence, China's rise, and India's potential, a broader understanding of international relations should consider regional dynamics, economic interdependence, and cultural factors that play an important role in shaping the international order. On the other hand, Kupchan disagrees with Mearsheimer's skepticism towards global governance and multilateralism in relation to the liberal order, and he underlines the relevance of international institutions and cooperation in addressing global challenges. In today's globalized world, entities beyond traditional nation-states, such as transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and sub-state actors, significantly impact international dynamics.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. From Multiplicity of Actors to Diversity of Threats

### 2.1. *Adaptation of Military Doctrines to Multipolarity: Geopolitical Transformations*

In the context of reassessing military strategies and doctrines in a multipolar world, Kupchan emphasizes the importance of understanding the changing power structures and making the necessary adjustments to ensure the survival and effectiveness of dominant structures. In today's multipolar world, the traditional concepts of alliance and inter-state rivalry have changed their content. Therefore, the dominant actors of the system are forced to adopt strategies that are more adaptable to the international conjuncture. Here, it is imperative to

30 Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*.

31 Charles Kupchan, *The End of the American Era*.

32 Charles Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, "The Promise of Collective...", pp. 52-61.

33 Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*.

34 Charles. Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, "The Promise of Collective...", pp. 52-61; Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*.

depart from dualist security thinking and recognize the inherent complexity and constant variability inherent in multipolarity as fundamental strategic needs. Therefore, states may be forced to leave their traditional power structures or revise their relations with them while trying to adapt to the irregularity of the new system. In this structural change, military strategies are the most important tool for both ensuring national security and developing global power.<sup>35</sup>

The unipolarity that developed after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new power centers after the September 11 attacks have profoundly affected the existing military doctrines of the dominant countries of the international system. Beyond unipolarity, states such as China, India, and Brazil came to the fore and changed the traditional dynamics of international relations. This period necessitates shaping power structures with spontaneous realities and the need for strategic flexibility. In this way, the rise of challenging powers and new power structures with pluralistic elements has prompted Western states to revise their military positions.<sup>36</sup>

For instance, to respond to China's rise as both an economic and strategic actor and to maintain its influence in the Asia-Indo-Pacific region, the US administration has had to adjust its regional military strategies and multilateral cooperation structures over the last decade. In this context, the multilateral organization of the AUKUS (trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) is an important initiative for developing regional security cooperation. On the other hand, China's military modernization, its vast territorial claims in the South China Sea, and its Belt and Road Initiative have made Beijing a very important player in the multipolar order, which has shifted from a defensive policy to a more offensive approach against the disorder of the international system. The transformation of China's military doctrines shows its desire to consolidate its position as a regional hegemon within the confines of a complex global power structure, and thus, its rise as a major global player will develop gradually.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, Russia's revisionist initiatives in recent years (military intervention in Syria, its annexation of Crimea, and the Ukrainian War) can be seen as a response to the global order through the continuous adjustment of military doctrines during the Putin era. Russia's overly aggressive strategic behavior and its interventions in frozen conflict zones reflect an effort to protect its interests in the face of the shifting dynamics of the multipolar system. These developments across regions like Eastern Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East signify a process of doctrinal adaptation aligned with Kupchan's vision of a multipolar world where regional powers play pivotal roles amidst structural flexibility and evolving circumstances.<sup>38</sup>

As a collective entity, the European Union (EU) has endeavored to reassess its defense and security policies in light of the evolving international landscape. Efforts to enhance defense integration among EU member states reflect a recognition of the imperative for cooperation and coordinated military strategies within a multipolar context. Challenges such as increased refugee flows post-Arab Spring, ongoing political instability in Africa,

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35 Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*.

36 Charles Kupchan, *No One's World*, pp. 74-85.

37 For further discussions on Chinese military doctrines, see M. Taylor Fravel, *Active Defense: China's Military Strategy Since 1949*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019; Timothy A. Ornelas, "China's Active Defense Military Strategy: Competition considerations for U.S. forces operating in the Indo-Pacific region", *Marine Corps Gazette*, October, 2021, pp. 57-62.

38 Charles Kupchan, *No One's World*, pp. 125-126.

fundamentalist terrorism, Russia's military actions in Crimea and Ukraine, and the proliferation of instability near Europe's borders have compelled European countries and the EU to adopt more multifaceted military doctrines.<sup>39</sup>

In the context of EU-NATO relations, there is an erosion of the founding principles of both the EU and NATO in the face of the strategic priorities of the member states, as conflicting tactics and strategies are determined among the allied states. This situation leads to a loss of solidarity between the member and allied states, the prominence of extra-institutional or extra-alliance relations, and the spontaneous emergence of more competitive behavioral patterns.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, in the Middle East, traditional powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, and Israel (with its opaque nuclear power status), alongside emerging medium-sized powers such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar, continually reassess their military doctrines amidst evolving geopolitical landscapes.<sup>41</sup> The strategic balances created by the changes of political powers in the Middle East after the Arab Spring and the new bilateral relationship grounds like the Abraham Accords can be considered as the results of the multipolar reality, and in this respect, they require strategic calculations that need to be constantly renewed, involving regional and extra-regional actors and power centers. Furthermore, sources of instability and disorder can be defined as the weakening and fragility of the internal structures of states and their reflection and reaction as a threat to regional sub-system balances with the effects of contagion and diffusion to neighboring geographies.

## ***2.2. Diversifying Threat Perceptions: Navigating Uncertainty through Adaptability and Fluidity***

In response to a complex and multipolar world, military doctrines must diversify their threat perceptions in order not only to achieve effective results but also to create strategies that can adapt to the uncertainties of the 21st century. The ability of states to anticipate and respond to potential threats has become crucial for global security and stability, driving the pivotal role of military doctrines in this recalibration process. Traditional doctrines, formulated during periods of unipolarity or bipolarity, are inadequate in today's multipolar context, necessitating a re-evaluation informed by classical military theorists such as Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, interpreted through the lens of contemporary multipolarity. As states adjust their military approaches to navigate shifting power dynamics in a multipolar arena, concepts like "fluidity of strategy", "comprehensive deterrence", and "fog of war" gain heightened importance.<sup>42</sup> Discussions within this framework, incorporating insights from Kupchan, recognize that states engage in diverse forms of competition and cooperation. The complexity inherent in multipolarity demands military doctrines that balance traditional considerations with emerging challenges such as cyber threats, terrorism, counterinsurgency operations, regional conflicts, and non-traditional security risks.

39 GLOBE – The European Union and the Future of Global Governance, *Case study of the European Security Architecture: NATO and OSCE*, European Union, Brussels, 2020, 109 pages. [https://www.globe-project.eu/case-study-of-the-european-security-architecture-nato-and-osce\\_11317.pdf](https://www.globe-project.eu/case-study-of-the-european-security-architecture-nato-and-osce_11317.pdf), accessed 02.05.24.

40 European Defence Agency, *Enhancing EU Military Capabilities beyond 2040: Main findings from the 2023 Long-Term Assessment of the Capability Development Plan*, Brussels, 2023; Daniel Keohane, "EU Military Cooperation and National Defense", *German Marshall Fund of US Policy Brief* - 004, 2018, p. 8.

41 Amr Yossef, "Changes of Military Doctrines in the Middle East", Paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) 52nd Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, 2018. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329656279\\_Changes\\_of\\_Military\\_Doctrines\\_in\\_the\\_Middle\\_East](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329656279_Changes_of_Military_Doctrines_in_the_Middle_East), accessed 10.05.24

42 Carl von Clausewitz, *De la Guerre*, Le Monde En, Paris, 1955.

Military theorists like Gray and Arquilla underscore the importance of strategic foresight and adaptability in combating multifaceted threats. The unpredictability of modern security challenges emphasizes the need for flexible and adaptive military doctrines capable of navigating an ever-evolving threat landscape.<sup>43</sup> Arquilla's concept of "netwar" expands this theoretical framework, advocating doctrines that transcend traditional military boundaries to counter decentralized and networked adversaries.<sup>44</sup>

Historical case studies from the post-9/11 and Arab Spring periods are particularly considered, as they demonstrate the changing nature of threats. The transition from a unipolar to a multipolar security environment has exposed the inadequacies of state-centered warfare against autonomous non-state actors, transnational terrorism, and cyber threats. US responses, outlined in the post-9/11 *National Security Strategy*, exemplify the imperative of diversified military doctrines to address emerging threats effectively. The shift from deterrence to preventive war doctrine, the emphasis on counterinsurgency and counterinsurgency strategies following the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq,<sup>45</sup> and the adoption of temporary alliance policies with both international coalitions and local forces in the context of many civil wars in the Middle East following the Arab Spring illustrate the unavoidable fluidity of US military strategies.

China's ascendancy as a global power presents challenges for Western powers, compelling adaptations in military doctrines to address areas like power projection, naval capabilities, artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, and hybrid tactics. This challenge has prompted the US and the United Kingdom to forge enhanced alliances and security arrangements in the Indo-Pacific region. Similarly, Russia's military doctrines reflect efforts to assert influence through hybrid warfare, cyber capabilities, and regional dominance strategies, aligning with Kupchan's observations on the complexities of multipolar power distribution.

Likewise, there is a simultaneous or gradual introduction of both conventional and hybrid tools in the transition from frozen to active conflict models, and the emphasis on nuclear deterrence is also prominent in military doctrines.<sup>46</sup> Russia's multidimensional operational perspective, ranging from comprehensive deterrence to strategic flexibility, and a mix of conventional and hybrid tools, as well as strategic behavior in very different geographies and with very different tools, from the annexation of Crimea in 2014 to the Ukrainian War which started in 2022, from the initiatives of private military companies in Africa to their cooperation with North Korea, support the unpredictability of the multipolar system and lead other relevant actors to similarly asymmetric strategies and hybrid tools.

The asymmetric diversification of threat perceptions across geographical, actor, and methodological dimensions necessitates a paradigm shift in military planning. States must move beyond conventional warfare concepts and adopt hybrid warfare strategies integrating diplomatic, economic, and informational elements. NATO's "Comprehensive Approach"

43 Colin Gray, *Strategy for Chaos: Revolutions in Military Affairs and the Evidence of History*, Routledge, London, 2004.

44 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar*, RAND Corporation, Washington, 1996; John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, RAND Corporation, Washington, 2000.

45 David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009; John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*. Praeger, 2002.

46 William Alberque, "Russian Military Thought and Doctrine Related to Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons: Change and Continuity," *IISS Research Papers*, 2024. <https://www.iiss.org/research-paper/2024/01/russian-military-thought-and-doctrine-related-to-nonstrategic-nuclear-weapons/>, accessed 02.04.24.

exemplifies this shift, advocating a holistic response to contemporary threats that integrates military and civilian instruments of power.<sup>47</sup>

In alignment with Kupchan's analytical perspectives, Buzan and Wæver advocate for an expanded understanding of security beyond traditional military threats. They propose the concept of "comprehensive security," which aligns strategic priorities with economic, environmental, and social dimensions, reflecting the interconnected nature of contemporary challenges. This theoretical framework guides states in restructuring military doctrines to address a broader array of security issues that transcend national borders.<sup>48</sup> The post-unipolar era has witnessed the rise of non-traditional threats such as terrorism, cyber warfare, and pandemics, alongside increased civil wars and conflicts that provoke refugee flows and necessitate widespread international interventions.

Historically, the adaptive nature of military doctrines, inspired by von Clausewitz's emphasis on evolving military theory ("chameleon metaphor"), underscores the relevance of the "fog of war" and strategic flexibility in confronting multifaceted challenges. The emergence of "hybrid warfare", integrating conventional and unconventional tactics, necessitates effective preparation against diverse threats, including cyber and information warfare. As states broaden their threat perceptions, they face the imperative of developing comprehensive, resilient, and continually evolving military doctrines. Such doctrines must adeptly address contextual, operational, and instrumental dimensions. Today, a holistic approach goes beyond traditional state-centered security paradigms, encompassing military, economic, environmental, and social considerations. The concept of "security complexes", developed by Buzan and Wæver, provides insights into navigating blurred distinctions between domestic and international threats.<sup>49</sup> The inclusion of climate change as a security issue in the 2022 *US National Security Strategy*<sup>50</sup> underscores the evolving nature of threats, prompting the adaptation of military doctrines to address a broader spectrum of security challenges across borders.

When we analyze historical case studies, it is possible to see how unpredictable threats have influenced military doctrines. Following the 11 September attacks, the emergence of terrorism as a powerful and non-traditional threat led to a reassessment of security priorities, including the incorporation of counterterrorism strategies into military doctrine to confront non-state actors using asymmetric tactics, and the further technological development of intelligence capabilities and tailoring them to the resources of non-state actors.

Similarly, the changing nature of cyber threats has prompted states to rethink their national security approaches. Traditional military doctrines and tools designed for conventional warfare are ill-equipped to counter the complexity of cyber warfare. For example, the *Stuxnet* incident, a cyber-attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, demonstrated the vulnerability of critical infrastructure to unconventional threats and showed that doctrines need to be developed according to defensive and offensive objectives along with technological advances.<sup>51</sup>

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47 Kathleen J. McInnis and Clementine G. Starling, *The Case for a Comprehensive Approach 2.0: How NATO Can Combat Chinese and Russian Political Warfare*, Atlantic Council, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Washington, 2021.

48 Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jacob de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, UK, 1998; Dritero Arifi, "The concept of "Comprehensive security" as a draft for reconstructing security in a system of international relations," *Iliria International Review*, 1:1, 2011, pp 19-32.

49 Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers*, p. 40-70.

50 Jessica O. Yllemo, "Climate and the 2022 National Defense Strategy," *American Security Project*, 2022. <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/climate-and-the-2022-national-defense-strategy/>, accessed 05.05.24.

51 Lukas Milevski, "Stuxnet and Strategy: A Special Operation in Cyberspace?", *JPO*, 63:4, 2011, pp. 64-69.

### 3. Alliance Dynamics and Collective Security: International System and Regions

#### 3.1. Revisiting the Evolution of Military Doctrines in Collective Defense Mechanisms for Adaptation to Multipolarity

In response to the paradigm shift towards multipolarity, states are compelled to reassess traditional power dynamics by embracing collaborative security arrangements. In this complex global environment characterized by diverse and dynamic threats, military doctrines must adaptively reflect the necessity for cooperative strategies and alliance-building to ensure global stability in the 21st century. Walt's theoretical framework on alliance politics and cooperative security is particularly pertinent amidst the decline of unipolarity.<sup>52</sup> During the unipolar era dominated by the US, powerful states enjoyed strategic autonomy; however, the shift to multipolarity necessitated a reconsideration of collective defense mechanisms and a pivot towards new and shifting alliances in response to evolving circumstances.

The multipolar system constantly leads states to new behaviors in alliance-building policies and cooperative security arrangements within the framework of reconsidering collective defense mechanisms. According to Walt, states form or develop alliances against perceived threats. Walt's "balance of threat theory" suggests that states enter alliances with other stakeholders with whom they share common concerns about potential threats and enemies. Walt's views have become particularly important in a multipolar world where threats come from many different sources and power is fragmented. At this stage, alliance-building can be considered as a rational response to rapidly evolving security challenges. States adopt collective deterrence strategies by mobilizing their internal and external resources, structuring their intelligence capabilities, and forming alliances against potential adversaries.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, as power becomes more distributed among multiple major actors in a multipolar system, traditional alliances transform. Walt argues that states enter alliances to enhance their security capabilities and deter aggressors, necessitating recalibrated strategic partnerships in response to changing power dynamics. The flexibility and adaptability of military doctrines are crucial at this juncture, moving away from Cold War-era rigidity to embrace fluid approaches that facilitate ad hoc coalitions and cooperative responses to emerging threats.

The increasing emphasis in military doctrines on building flexible alliances indicates a shift away from unilateral approaches to security. Today, military strategists are not only assessing the different capabilities of multiple actors but also producing doctrines that include the ability to work together with actors at many different levels, including joint operations. As Walt emphasizes, addressing common threats in cooperative security approaches is important for both identifying common interests and collective responsibilities. States recognize the limits of their infrastructure in cyber areas and form many cyber alliances to combine resources and technical expertise.<sup>54</sup> This situation shows a shift towards non-traditional cooperative approaches to transnational security challenges.

The reorganization of military doctrines is not only a theoretical debate but has concrete indicators at the global level. The evolving security strategies of European states

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52 Stephen Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse", *Survival*, 39:1, 1997, pp. 156-179.

53 Stephen Walt, "Keeping the World Off Balance: Self Restraint and US Foreign Policy", John Ikenberry (ed.), *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, Cornell University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 121-154.

54 The Tallinn Handbook on International Law Applicable to Cyber Operations reflects the joint efforts of legal experts from various states to establish norms and guidelines for cyber warfare. Michael N. Schmitt, *The Tallinn Manual 2.0 Handbook on International Law Applicable to Cyber Operations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.

in the post-Cold War era are among the most important examples that can be considered here. Likewise, NATO, as the cornerstone of European security and the primary institution of transatlantic cooperation, is the most important example of the adaptability of military alliances in response to the changing global order. A structural product of the Cold War era, NATO was the cornerstone of collective defense in both bipolar and unipolar periods. However, with multipolarity, the organization faced the challenge of adapting to new system dynamics. The expansion of the alliance's mandate and membership due to international instabilities and conflicts, as well as its engagement with non-traditional security issues such as cyber threats and terrorism, demonstrate its efforts to maintain its relevance in the face of changing conjunctural dynamics. Moreover, the "Partnership for Peace" program can be considered a cooperative approach that involves non-member states to promote regional stability through cooperation.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an important example of a new security cooperation arrangement in Eurasia. Initially established to address regional security concerns among its members, the SCO has evolved to cover various issues, including economic cooperation, border security, and counterterrorism. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) can be taken as an example of how member states are increasingly engaged in cooperative security mechanisms to address common challenges. Walt's propositions on the functions and limits of collective security arrangements well justify the reasons for these regional shifts in the face of system transformation.

The emphasis on alliance-building and cooperative security in post-unipolar military doctrines is not only a response to external threats but is also shaped by a nuanced understanding of common interests and the interdependence of states. As Walt suggests, alliances are not static structures but dynamic networks of relationships that respond to the evolving strategic environment. Since they recognize the limitations of unilateral approaches, states tend to develop cooperative frameworks to enhance their security. Consequently, the post-unipolar world points to the necessity of a paradigm shift in military doctrines. The evolution towards multipolarity emphasizes the importance of alliances and cooperative security arrangements, prompting states to constantly reevaluate their defense strategies.

### ***3.2. Formulation of Military Doctrines in the Context of Regional Security Architectures***

With the end of unipolarity, states have had to reassess not only their global strategies but also their regional engagements. Kupchan's analysis of regional dynamics supports understanding how states construct their military doctrines to contribute to or to deftly navigate regional security architectures. As states seek to adapt to the realities of multipolarity, crafting military doctrines responsive to the regional conjuncture emerges as a strategic necessity. The complex balance between global and regional interests requires recalibrating military doctrines to consider the unique challenges and opportunities in specific geographic regions. Kupchan's perspective that the world has become a concert of regions encourages us to think about how states can develop military doctrines likely to contribute to regional stability or navigate the complexity of regional dynamics and emphasize cooperative mechanisms; hence, multidimensional cooperation and structures. This perspective should not be seen as a rejection of globalist thinking but rather a recognition that regional dynamics play an important role in shaping a state's security environment as global balances.

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<sup>55</sup> For various discussions on NATO's role in the new world order, see Janne H. Matlary and Robert Johnson (eds.), *Military Strategy in the 21st Century: The Challenge for NATO*, Hurst, London, UK, 2021.

The theoretical insights of scholars such as Art and Waltz can be utilized to discuss the regional dynamics shaping military doctrines. Art's concept of regional power structures explains that regional dynamics significantly influence a state's security perceptions and, thus, its military doctrines.<sup>56</sup> Waltz's neorealism provides a framework through which we can analyze how the distribution of power in regions shapes states' behaviors and informs their strategic thinking. Regional dynamics frequently present main security challenges, from historical disputes to contemporary rivalries. In an era marked by fluidity and uncertainty due to multipolarity, states crafting military doctrines must adopt a comprehensive and tailored approach to security.

Regionalism, marked by diplomatic, economic, and security interactions among neighboring states, compels states to reassess their military doctrines, recognizing the region-specific manifestations of security challenges. Strategic thinking must acknowledge the significance of regional security architectures, as military doctrine formulation increasingly intertwines with and is influenced by regional dynamics emphasized by scholars like Buzan and Acharya.<sup>57</sup> As states navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world, the strategic thinking behind military doctrines will foreground the influence of regional dynamics and emphasize the need for adaptive and cooperative approaches to security in specific geographical contexts. Buzan argues that regional security complexes play an important role in shaping the security agendas of states in a given geographical area. The concept of security complex highlights shared security concerns and the resulting interdependence among states in a region, emphasizing the need for region-specific military doctrines due to the recognition that security threats often originate from specific geographical areas. Likewise, Acharya discusses how regional institutions like ASEAN in Asia serve as forums for dialogue and cooperation, influencing the formulation of military doctrine and shaping the security strategies of member states.<sup>58</sup>

The existence of a complex web of interdependence between neighboring countries can be discussed as a regional dimension. Keohane and Nye's work on complex interdependence provides a theoretical basis for understanding the interdependent relationships that characterize regional dynamics.<sup>59</sup> As states increasingly interconnect and interdepend at regional levels, military doctrines must evolve to encompass the multifaceted nature of these relationships, emphasizing cooperative approaches that extend beyond traditional national security paradigms, including prioritizing confidence-building mechanisms and regional security institutions.

The rise of hybrid threats like cyber warfare and transnational terrorism further underscores the imperative for regional cooperation in military doctrines. As articulated by scholars such as Holmes and Yoshihara, contemporary security challenges necessitate military doctrines that transcend traditional military threats to encompass cross-border, non-traditional challenges endemic to regional dynamics.<sup>60</sup> The regionalism argument

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56 For various discussions on military doctrines for different regions, see Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force*, Rowman and Littlefield, Oxford, UK, 2004.

57 Barry Buzan and Amitav Acharya, *The Making of Global International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019; Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2015.

58 Amitav Acharya, *ASEAN and Regional Order: Revisiting Security Community in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, UK, 2021.

59 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Longman, Little Brown, 1977.

60 Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age: Power, Ambition, and the Ultimate Weapon*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2012.



is increasingly recognized as an important factor in new strategic thinking on military doctrines. States now recognize that global considerations alone are insufficient to consider problems in specific geographical contexts. The recognition that regional security is linked to its internal actors is evident in the shift towards cooperative security arrangements, as seen in the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union. Moreover, the rise of China as a major power in the Asia-Pacific region and the South China Sea dispute has led neighboring and extra-regional states, particularly the United States, to reassess their military doctrines. The concept of the Asia-Indo-Pacific security region, which has come to the fore today, is important for discussing how states such as Japan and India have adapted their military strategies to balance China's rising influence in the region. Similarly, regional organizations such as the ASEAN demonstrate the importance of regionalism in shaping military doctrines through different instruments.

Military doctrines tailored to regional dynamics involve strategic adaptations to address specific threats and opportunities. The outbreak of the Ukraine War radically affected the military doctrines and strategies of Eastern and Northern European countries in the face of changing relationship dynamics with Russia. States in the region have not only revised their strategies based on global power shifts (e.g., joining NATO) but have also emphasized cooperative defense initiatives in a regional context. In the Middle East, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in particular has direct implications for the military doctrines of its member states; with their common security concerns and strategic partnership, the GCC member states have developed many collective solutions based on military cooperation, including joint military exercises and the establishment of a unified military command. This new regional approach in the Middle East demonstrates how the Gulf states recognize the interdependent nature of their security challenges and, accordingly, are developing cooperation with extra-regional powers and coordinating the military doctrines of states within the GCC. The establishment of the *Peninsula Shield Force* demonstrates how regional security concerns can lead to the creation of collective defense mechanisms.<sup>61</sup> In parallel, the rapprochement between Israel and the Gulf states through the Abraham Accords should be seen in the context of changing regional balances. Complex regional dynamics, characterized by multiple actors with divergent interests, significantly influence the development of military strategies, often complicated by regional conflicts and historical enmities that hinder the coherence of military doctrines. Effective regional security architectures, such as the Organization of American States (OAS) in the Americas, offer platforms for conflict resolution and confidence-building measures that inform military strategies. However, rivalries between countries in the region occasionally detract from efforts to establish cohesive security policies. Formun ÜstüFormun Altı<sup>62</sup>

### **Conclusion: Challenges from the New Actors to Global Governance and Military Doctrines: Discussing Normative Responsibilities**

In the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world, there is an increasing need for nuanced and inclusive assessments of strategic approaches. Kupchan argues that deficits in global governance within this multipolar framework compel states to continuously redefine their strategies for projecting power and intervening in foreign affairs, seeking new balances.

61 Julian Reder, "The Peninsula Shield Force: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Vestigial Organ", *International Policy Digest*, 2017. <https://intpolicydigest.org/peninsula-shield-force-gulf-cooperation-council-s-vestigial-organ/>, accessed 03.05.2024; Wojciech Grabowski, "Application of the Regional Security Complex Theory for Security Analysis in the Persian Gulf", *Athenaeum, Polish Political Science Review*, 68:4, 2020, pp. 18-31.

62 Brigitte Weiffen, "Persistence and Change in Regional Security Institutions: Does the OAS Still Have a Project?," *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33:2, 2012, pp. 360-383.

Concurrently, stakeholders exhibit more individualistic and self-interested behaviors.<sup>63</sup> Global governance deficits pose significant challenges in addressing humanitarian and non-traditional security issues. Military doctrines must now include human security challenges such as epidemics, climate change, and mass migration. Moreover, the multiplicity and complexity of non-state actors undermine traditional hierarchical structures, necessitating adaptations in military strategies to engage with these diverse entities effectively.

Non-state actors present a broad spectrum, including transnational corporations, NGOs, terrorist groups, religious institutions, and cybercriminal networks. Their expanding influence challenges the conventional state-centered view of international relations. It is possible to argue that non-state actors can be both disruptors and contributors to global stability, which necessitates a closer examination of their role. This requires a basis for cooperation between sovereign actors at the global level, both normatively and operationally.<sup>64</sup>

Non-state actors, ranging from transnational corporations to rebel groups, have the capacity to challenge state-centered norms, and such disruptions have negative implications for global stability.<sup>65</sup> We can examine different case studies to discuss this argumentation. Cybersecurity threats from hacktivist groups and transnational criminal organizations challenge state sovereignty and global security.<sup>66</sup> Hacktivist groups like *Anonymous* challenge national security and sovereignty by disrupting state-controlled digital spaces. In the case of *Anonymous and Operation Payback* (2010), the distributed denial-of-service attacks against companies perceived as enemies of internet freedom proved how non-state entities could challenge state and corporate norms in the digital space.<sup>67</sup> Transnational criminal organizations, such as drug cartels, human trafficking networks, and organized crime groups, provoke serious threats against state authority and international governance structures by operating illegally across borders and benefiting from jurisdictional gaps. For example, drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia not only challenge state authority but also contribute to regional destabilization through pervasive violence and corruption, which undermine traditional state-centered norms.<sup>68</sup>

On the other hand, non-state armed groups challenge state-centered norms by engaging in conflicts independently of recognized state authorities. These groups, ranging from militias to insurgent forces, can destabilize by employing unconventional warfare strategies. For example, the rise of the *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant* has challenged state-centered norms, as the group effectively controls territory, challenging established international borders and governance structures and reshaping conflict dynamics in the

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63 Charles Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations ...", pp. 219-257; Charles Kupchan, *Isolationism*.

64 Robert D. Kaplan et al., *The Return of Marco Polo's World: War, Strategy, and American Interests in the Twenty-First Century*, Random House, New York, 2018; Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*.

65 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)," *Foreign Policy*, 118, 2000, pp. 104-119; Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, et al. (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 169-191.

66 Thomas Rid and Ben Buchanan, "Attributing Cyber Attacks," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:1-2, 2015, pp. 4-37.

67 Gabriella Coleman, *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy: The Many Faces of Anonymous*, Verso, New York, 2014.

68 Ginette L. Gautreau, "To Rid the World of the Drug Scourge: A Human Security Perspective on the War on Drugs in Colombia and Mexico", *Paterson Review of International Affairs*, 12:1, 2012, pp. 61-83, Ioan Grillo, *El Narco: Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency*, Bloomsbury Press, London, UK, 2011; Jeremy McDermott, "The Changing Face of Colombian Organized Crime", *Perspectivas*, 9, 2014, pp. 1-9.

Near East.<sup>69</sup> Addressing these threats requires states to explore normative and operational cooperation to combat transnational challenges, often necessitating interventions in domestic law and national security contexts.

Contrary to destructive roles, non-state actors have contributed to global stability through cooperative efforts. Here, it is possible to examine examples of organizations, such as non-governmental organizations and transnational corporations, that have engaged in activities that promote peace and stability.<sup>70</sup> Many NGOs have demonstrated their vital roles in humanitarian efforts, conflict resolution, and development projects. They support peace and stability, actively participating in humanitarian work globally and contributing to stability by addressing critical issues such as health, education, and disaster response. In particular, the *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF's) global operations providing medical assistance in crisis zones, conflict areas, and areas affected by natural disasters exemplify the significant impact that NGOs can have in promoting stability through health and humanitarian efforts.<sup>71</sup> NGOs such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) also contribute to peacebuilding initiatives and reconciliation by acting as mediators and facilitators in conflict zones. The ICG has played a vital role in conflict resolution through its research and advocacy, advising policymakers, and actively engaging in dialogue to prevent and resolve conflicts in various regions.<sup>72</sup>

However, the relationship between NGOs and states should not always be seen in a cooperative framework. In many cases, NGOs challenge governments and demonstrate their willingness to act more independently. In particular, humanitarian NGOs often seek to bypass state sovereignty structures for aid and intervention when engaging in cross-border activities. For example, the MSF sometimes challenges or conflicts with traditional state administration in its autonomous activities and health service delivery in many conflict and disaster zones around the world. This quest for autonomy contributes to the fragmentation of local authority, making it more difficult for national governments to maintain control over their territory. At the international level, the actions of certain economic interest-based non-state entities influence regional power dynamics and challenge the traditional hierarchy of state authority by gaining influence. These challenges have direct implications for global governance and stability. Finally, the involvement of non-state actors in local and regional conflicts means that state-centered approaches are inadequate to address unconventional warfare tactics and asymmetric threats.

The dual nature of non-state actors, both cooperative and disruptive, has different implications for global governance, often differing on a case-by-case basis.<sup>73</sup> The new roles of non-state actors have changed traditional power dynamics. The case of rebel groups in the Syrian Civil War illustrates how non-state actors can initially be destabilizing but transform

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69 Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, Ecco Press, New York, 2015; A.Vincent Elemanya, "Terrorism and Global Security: A Study of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)", *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11:6, 2023, pp. 63-78.

70 Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*. Cornell University Press, New York, 2004; Thomas G. Weiss, "NGOization of the World Politics," *World Development*, 28:12, 2000, pp. 2225-2242.

71 Médecins Sans Frontières, "International Activity Report 2021", 2022. <https://www.msf.org/international-activity-report-2021>, accessed 10.04.24.

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73 Robert D. Kaplan *The Return of Marco Polo.*; Ann M. Slaughter, *A New World Order*, Princeton University Press, NJ, 2004; Thomas Risse, *Governance without a State? Policies and Politics in Areas of Limited Statehood*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012; Jessica T. Mathews, "Power Shift," *Foreign Affairs*, 76:1, 1997, pp. 50-66; Ann Peters, Lucy Koehlin, et al., *Non-State Actors as Standard Setters*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009.

into contributing stakeholders during peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, this dual nature of non-state actors also poses challenges for global governance structures. The Paris Agreement on climate change brought to the fore the role of both state and non-state actors in addressing a common global challenge.<sup>75</sup>

Military doctrines to guide armed forces have traditionally focused primarily on state-centered threats. However, in a multipolar context, including the complexities posed by non-state actors has become imperative. The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks accelerated this evolution, prompting adaptations to counter unconventional threats. Examples include counterterrorism operations against groups like Al-Qaeda, cyber defense strategies against hacktivist organizations, and collaborative humanitarian relief efforts involving NGOs.<sup>76</sup>

There is a pressing need for enhanced international cooperation, surveillance technologies and response capabilities advancements, and the integration of soft power strategies alongside traditional military approaches. Moreover, opportunities for cooperation between state and non-state entities are increasingly crucial for bolstering global security.<sup>77</sup> This new strategic framework advocates increased international collaboration, technological innovation, and the strategic integration of soft power tools.<sup>78</sup>

As military strategies adapt to accommodate the influence of emerging powers and non-state entities in the geopolitical landscape, adjustments are imperative due to evolving multilateral dynamics and shifting alliance roles. Contemporary perspectives emphasize cooperative security endeavors aimed at addressing spontaneous rather than protracted crises while also considering the recalibration of Western dominance in global security dynamics.<sup>79</sup> Examining NATO's role in post-Cold War security challenges, ranging from refugee crises to counterpiracy operations and interventions in conflicts like Afghanistan and Libya, provides practical insights into the evolution of military doctrines among the allies.<sup>80</sup>

When the adaptation of military doctrines to the roles of humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping missions became a matter of debate, normative debates against new threat sources came to the fore in international platforms. The intersection of human rights and military doctrines in the post-Cold War humanitarian interventions has led to a complex interplay between ethical imperatives, strategic considerations, and the changing nature of conflicts. The strategic considerations of political leaders regarding the incorporation of

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74 Steven Heydemann, "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World," *Comparative Politics*, 45:3, 2013, pp. 253-272; United Nations. (2021). "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2254", <https://undocs.org/en/S/2021/1030>, accessed 05.04.2024.

75 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "Paris Agreement," 2015. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf), accessed 05.04.24; Harriett Bulkeley et al., "Governing climate change transnationally: assessing the evidence from a database of sixty initiatives," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 32:2, 2014, pp. 341-362.

76 Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006; Bruce Hoffman, "A Counterterrorism Strategy for the Obama Administration," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21:3, 2009, p. 359-377; Thomas Rid and Ben Buchanan, "Attributing...," pp. 4-37.

77 Thomas G. Weiss, *Global Governance and Non-State Actors: A Comparative Analysis*, Routledge, London, UK, 2014.

78 Barry Buzan and Lena Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009; Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs Books, New York, 2009.

79 Charles Kupchan, "The Democratic Malaise: Globalization and the Threat to the West," *Foreign Affairs*, 91(1), 2012, pp. 61-67.

80 Ali B. Varlık, "NATO's Military Structure: Change and Continuity," *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, 13:26, 2020, pp. 113-134; A. Žotkevičiūtė-Banevičienė, "The Cultural Element in NATO Military Doctrines: Important, but a Declarative Issue?," *Politologija*, 108:4, 2022, pp. 85-105.

human rights into military doctrines vary from country to country. However, adherence to human rights norms can enhance international legitimacy, encourage cooperation with civil society, and contribute to long-term stability in post-conflict scenarios. Moreover, the rule of law approach in Western states nowadays requires the protection of not only civilians but also military personnel in terms of human rights-based domestic laws and the avoidance of debate on human casualties —an aspect underscored by the concept of “post-heroic warfare” as introduced by Luttwak.<sup>81</sup>

Returning to traditionalist approaches, however, Clausewitz’s conventional approach emphasizes that war is a continuation of politics by other means. This view of the instrumental use of military power to achieve political objectives has implications for the integration of military doctrines into humanitarian interventions.<sup>82</sup> Ethical considerations are now pivotal in shaping military doctrines aligned with national interests, particularly in balancing strategic goals with the imperative to minimize civilian casualties and maintain political legitimacy.<sup>83</sup> Here, Gray emphasizes that balancing strategic objectives and ethical considerations in addressing humanitarian crises in the new era is politically necessary but has practical limits. In the context of military doctrines in the service of national interests, a certain degree of ethical sensitivity becomes important for the successful coordination of civil-military relations, both in terms of political legitimacy and casualty avoidance, and this sensitivity is particularly critical in the context of counterinsurgency efforts, even posing moral dilemmas.<sup>84</sup> Kilcullen underlines the need for holistic approaches to addressing complex conflicts and integrating military doctrine with humanitarian endeavors, including counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare strategies.<sup>85</sup> According to Howard, to harmonize military doctrines with humanitarian principles, the role of liberal conscience should be integrated as the ethical dimensions of war.<sup>86</sup> The 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo after the massive casualties in the Bosnian War clearly demonstrated the complexity of transforming military strategies to protect civilians and alleviate their suffering during the conflict. While the concept of the responsibility to protect has evolved into a strategy generally accepted by the international community, it has faced major obstacles, particularly with the civil wars in Syria and Libya. Subsequently, we can interpret that the states involved in these conflicts ignored this ethical debate through proxy instruments or direct military interventions. As a matter of fact, the war in Ukraine has shown that normative principles have been completely excluded from military strategies for both warring parties.

### ***Conflict of Interest Statement:***

*The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.*

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