



CHAPTER TWO

GLOBALIZATION AND THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF GLOBAL SECURITY

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What's bad for the hive is bad for the bee.

— Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 6.54

Abstract

In an era of unprecedented interconnectedness, traditional security threats are being eclipsed by transnational challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and cyberattacks. This chapter explores the intricate interplay between globalization and security, highlighting the dual nature of globalization as both a catalyst for these emerging threats and a potential source of solutions. By fostering international cooperation, economic interdependence, and technological innovation, globalization presents opportunities to address these challenges. A critical examination of the evolving security landscape highlights the need for a paradigm shift in our approach to security. This shift requires moving beyond traditional military dominance toward a more collaborative and inclusive model that prioritizes global solidarity, equitable economic development, and environmental sustainability. The Indo-Pacific region, with its diverse vulnerabilities and geopolitical complexities, serves as a microcosm of these global challenges, offering valuable insights into potential pathways for achieving collective security.

Introduction:

The Unstoppable Wave of Globalization

Globalization, once thought of as a distinct historical era, has rapidly become an all-encompassing force, permeating every aspect of modern life.¹ It encompasses economic integration, the

intensification of human migration, rapid technological advancements, and the rise of supranational institutions. However, this rapid and pervasive change has also triggered reactionary waves of nationalism across the globe.²

Yet, despite these reactionary forces, “neo-globalization” has organically woven itself into the fabric of our world, contrasting with the structured, top-down initiatives of the past, such as the post-World War II Bretton Woods system. This organic growth is undeniable: the World Bank’s data reveals a fourfold increase in global internet usage over the past two decades, driving unprecedented levels of information exchange and economic interdependence.³ Moreover, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development reports a steady five percent annual growth in international trade, further underscoring the depth of global integration.⁴ This unplanned and ad hoc process has outpaced our ability to systematically manage its complex economic, social, and political consequences,⁵ leaving reactionary forces struggling to mount a highly coherent – even logical - response.⁶

To understand the implications of this evolving landscape, this chapter adopts the theoretical framework of globalization-driven “complex interdependence.”⁷ This concept posits that the world is interconnected through a web of mutual dependencies, making traditional approaches to security—focused on military power and national interests—increasingly inadequate. Instead, we must grapple with a new reality where economic, social, and environmental factors are intertwined with traditional security concerns.

The security implications of globalization are particularly stark in the Indo-Pacific region, a dynamic and diverse area that is home to both rising powers and vulnerable nations.⁸ The region’s interconnected economies, exemplified by integrated supply chains and the digital revolution, mean that conflict between nations now inevitably harms both sides. Despite their rivalry, the United States

and China are deeply economically intertwined, highlighting the paradoxical nature of interdependence in the modern world.

This interdependence also creates new vulnerabilities. Disruptions in supply chains, cyberattacks, or economic sanctions can have cascading effects, underscoring the need for robust risk mitigation strategies and diversified economic relationships. In this context, the concept of security must be broadened to encompass not only military threats but also economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and social stability.

This chapter will explore how globalization is reshaping the security landscape, drawing on the framework of complex interdependence to analyze the challenges and opportunities presented by this interconnected world. By understanding the dynamics of globalization and its impact on security, we can develop more effective strategies for building a safer, more equitable, and more sustainable future for all.

The Evolution of Security: From Local Conflicts to Global Challenges

The evolution of security concerns throughout history reflects the ever-expanding scale of human interaction and interconnectedness. Early communities primarily focused on protecting tangible assets like land and possessions, often engaging in localized conflicts. While these concerns persist today, the nature of threats has evolved, shifting toward less tangible issues, including cybercrime, terrorism, and economic instability.

Globalization, coupled with the broader passage of time, has dramatically transformed the security landscape. It has ushered in a new era of challenges that transcend national borders and require collective action. These challenges, ranging from climate change and pandemics to cyber threats and resource scarcity, demand a paradigm shift in our approach to security, moving beyond the

traditional focus on localized conflicts to a more global and interconnected perspective.

This shift reflects a broader historical trend. Localized tribal conflicts gradually evolved into nation-state conflicts driven by economies of scale and security considerations.⁹ Just as inter-island warfare became unthinkable in 20th century Hawaii, so too has large-scale conflict between major powers like Germany and France become increasingly improbable in the 21st century. The cost of war in an interconnected world has become prohibitively high to potential adversaries, and the potential benefits are increasingly uncertain.

Security threats have also evolved beyond national borders, encompassing common external threats posed by supranational terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, climate change, pandemics, and other existential threats have outgrown the traditional Westphalian framework of nation-states. This trajectory toward globalized conflict is fueled by economic interdependence, cultural exchange, technological advancements, and increased mobility.¹⁰

However, this does not negate the persistence of traditional security concerns in many regions, particularly those grappling with historical conflicts, territorial disputes, or resource scarcity. The complex interplay between traditional and transnational threats demands a nuanced and adaptive approach to security: one that recognizes the interconnectedness of global challenges while also addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual regions and communities.

The 21st Century Security Landscape: Transnational Threats and the Need for Cooperation

The rise of transnational and non-traditional threats defines the 21st-century security landscape. While globalization has diminished the likelihood of traditional interstate wars, it has amplified new

challenges that transcend national borders and require collective action. Climate change, pandemics like COVID-19, maritime insecurity, and cyber threats exemplify these emerging dangers.

Unlike past geopolitical or ideological conflicts, these threats are inherently global and affect nations indiscriminately. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have demonstrated their rapid and far-reaching impacts, disrupting societies and economies worldwide on a scale rivaling World War II.

The consequences of these threats are interconnected and multifaceted, including infectious disease outbreaks, altered migration patterns, food and water insecurity, resource depletion, population displacement, and economic instability. These challenges disproportionately affect developing nations with limited resources and adaptive capacity, highlighting the need for equitable solutions and global solidarity.

Paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic also revealed the potential for global collaboration and innovation in the face of shared threats. The urgency of the crisis spurred rapid advancements in communication, scientific research, and vaccine development, showcasing humanity's ability to mobilize resources and knowledge on a global scale. Grassroots initiatives and international organizations played a crucial role in information sharing and resource mobilization, often outpacing national governments. This experience demonstrates the power of collective action and highlights the potential for harnessing global interconnectedness to address transnational challenges.

Given the interconnected and global nature of these threats, unified international efforts facilitated by empowered supranational institutions are equally essential. Regardless of its power or influence, no single nation can effectively combat climate change or pandemics alone. This necessitates a paradigm shift in our approach to security, prioritizing international cooperation, communication, and collaboration. We must explore new models of collective action,

strengthen existing institutions like the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organization (WHO), and foster a shared sense of responsibility for the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants.

The Economic Engine of Globalization: Opportunities, Challenges, and Policy Implications

The economic engine of globalization, characterized by the unprecedented mobility of labor and goods, has fundamentally reshaped the world. Once confined to theoretical models, the principles of comparative and absolute advantage are now optimized on a global scale, making national self-sufficiency an antiquated notion. Regional and national specialization within intricate supply chains has become the new norm, fostering a level of international interdependence previously unimaginable.¹¹

This interdependence is most evident in the international mobility of labor—a defining feature of the modern world driven by economic incentives,¹² technological advancements, and ease of global travel. While this phenomenon has fueled economic growth in many countries by providing access to diverse skill sets and reducing labor costs, it has also raised concerns about wage stagnation, increased job competition, and social disruption. However, it is essential to acknowledge that labor mobility fosters cultural exchange, promotes diversity, and can enhance international cooperation.

Like other market dynamics, the complexities of these economic forces present challenges for governance and control. Attempts to restrict labor and capital flows often result in unintended consequences, such as the rise of informal economies or increased social unrest. The erosion of traditional borders and national autonomy further complicates matters, forcing governments to adapt to a more interconnected and interdependent global landscape.

This new reality necessitates a reevaluation of economic policies and governance structures. To fully harness the benefits of

globalization while mitigating its downsides, nations are increasingly engaging in robust international economic collaboration. This involves establishing fair labor standards across borders, strengthening social safety nets to protect vulnerable workers, and ensuring a more equitable distribution of economic gains.

Furthermore, governments must proactively adapt their policies to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of an increasingly mobile and interconnected global workforce. Investing in education and skills training is paramount to enhancing workforce competitiveness while promoting inclusive labor market policies, ensuring that the benefits of globalization are shared widely. Additionally, fostering international cooperation on issues like taxation and regulation is essential to prevent a “race to the bottom” and create a level playing field for workers and businesses alike.

By addressing these challenges head-on and embracing a more cooperative and inclusive approach to economic globalization, the international community can create a more prosperous, equitable, and secure future for all.

Technology as an Accelerator and Disruptor of Global Security

Digital platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Amazon, and the internet itself have become powerful agents of globalization. They transcend national borders, empowering individuals to connect, communicate, and collaborate on a global scale, accelerating the pace of cultural exchange, economic integration, and social transformation.

However, this same interconnectedness also presents significant challenges to security. The ease with which information flows across borders can facilitate the spread of misinformation, enable cyberattacks, and undermine privacy and human rights. Balancing the benefits of technological progress with the need to safeguard security and human rights is a critical challenge of the 21st century.

These digital platforms operate as global entities, much like institutions such as the WHO, the UN, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. They transcend traditional national boundaries and regulations while shaping new economic, political, social, and cultural landscapes.¹³ The benefits of technological communication and interconnectedness are so deeply ingrained in our lives that sacrificing them to resist globalization seems inconceivable.

Attempts to restrict or control these digital platforms often prove futile. The cyber-globalization dynamic exemplifies a force that defies unilateral control. These platforms effortlessly bypass geographical and political borders, facilitating the exchange of ideas and fostering grassroots international collaboration, even in the face of opposition.¹⁴

This duality highlights the complex nature of technology in the context of globalization. It can be both an accelerator of progress and a disruptor of stability. Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach that involves:

- *DEVELOPING ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND REGULATORY MECHANISMS:* Policymakers and civil society must collaborate to develop ethical guidelines and regulatory mechanisms that harness technology's positive potential while mitigating risks.
- *PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY:* Empowering individuals with the skills to critically evaluate information and navigate the digital landscape safely is essential for combating misinformation and protecting privacy.
- *FOSTERING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:* Addressing cyber threats and ensuring equitable access to technology requires collaboration between nations, international organizations, and the private sector.

- **BALANCE INNOVATION AND SECURITY:** Encouraging technological innovation while safeguarding security and human rights is a delicate balancing act that requires ongoing dialogue and adaptation.

By addressing these challenges, we can ensure that technology continues to be a force for good in the globalized world, fostering connection, collaboration, and progress while mitigating its potential harm.

Neo-Nationalism: A Countercurrent in the Age of Globalization

Globalization has paradoxically fueled a resurgence of nationalism, a phenomenon known as neo-nationalism. This movement is driven by a complex interplay of factors, including fears of lost cultural identity, economic insecurity exacerbated by rapid technological change and automation, and a perceived erosion of national sovereignty. While neo-nationalism may offer a sense of belonging and practical, tangible security dividends, as with globalization, it poses significant threats to global stability and cooperation.

The rise of neo-nationalism is rooted in anxieties about the rapid pace of change brought about by globalization. Some perceive the erosion of traditional borders, the interconnectedness of economies, and the rise of supranational institutions as threats to national identity and autonomy. This perception fuels an intuitive and instinctive desire to retreat from global engagement and reassert national control, often manifesting in protectionist economic policies, anti-immigration sentiments, and diminished international engagement.

However, the neo-nationalist project faces inherent contradictions in an increasingly interconnected world. While it may temporarily galvanize support by appealing to nationalist sentiments, its long-term viability is questionable. The interconnectedness of modern economies, the reliance on global

supply chains, and the free flow of information and ideas make complete isolationism an impractical and ultimately self-defeating strategy.

Moreover, neo-nationalist movements can fail to address the root causes of the anxieties they exploit. Economic insecurity, for instance, is often a result of structural factors like automation and technological change rather than globalization itself. By focusing on external causes, neo-nationalist movements risk distracting from the need for domestic policies that address inequality, create economic opportunities, and provide social safety nets.

The resurgence of neo-nationalism is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, periods of rapid change and uncertainty have often triggered nationalist backlashes. However, these movements have typically waned over time as societies adapt to new realities and recognize the benefits of international cooperation. The current wave of neo-nationalism is likely to follow a similar trajectory as the forces of globalization continue to reshape the world and render isolationist, if not neo-nationalist, policies increasingly untenable.

While neo-nationalism may pose short-term challenges to the global order, its long-term impact will likely be limited. The modern world's interconnectedness demands a collaborative approach to addressing shared challenges like climate change, pandemics, and economic instability. Building bridges between nations and unity within countries and communities, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting equitable economic development can create a more inclusive and resilient global community that benefits all its members.

Beyond Borders: A Paradigm Shift in Global Security

The modern world's interconnectedness necessitates a paradigm shift in our approach to security. Traditional notions of military power and narrow national interests are insufficient to address the

complex, transnational challenges of the 21st century. Instead, a more collaborative and inclusive approach is required, one that prioritizes multilateralism, diplomacy, and shared responsibility.

This paradigm shift involves redefining security to encompass not only military threats but also environmental sustainability, public health, economic stability, and human rights. It also requires empowering international institutions, fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders, and investing in early warning systems and equitable resource sharing.

Globalization, while often cited as a source of conflict, may paradoxically hold the key to a more peaceful world. By reframing conflicts through the lens of their environmental and public health consequences, we can highlight the shared costs of war and the imperative of collective action. Conflicts in regions like Ukraine and Gaza, while rooted in complex historical and political grievances, also have devastating impacts on environmental and human well-being, affecting not only the warring parties but the entire planet.

Yet, while often blamed for exacerbating conflicts by enabling the rapid flow of weapons and resources, globalization's interconnectedness can also be a force for peace. The networks facilitating conflict can be leveraged to promote dialogue, build trust, and mobilize resources for humanitarian aid and conflict resolution. The protracted nature of modern conflicts, often fueled by external actors and globalized supply chains, highlights the need for collaborative solutions that address the root causes of conflict rather than simply containing the symptoms.

The communication channels, mobility, economic integration, and cultural exchange fostered by globalization can be powerful tools for building a more peaceful and resilient world. By promoting understanding, empathy, and shared interests, we can create a global community that values cooperation over conflict and recognizes that our collective security depends on our ability to address shared challenges.

Evolving Defense Forces: From Military Might to Global Guardians

The 21st century's complex challenges are reshaping the role and priorities of defense forces worldwide. While traditional military capabilities remain essential for deterrence and conflict resolution, their dominance in security agendas is waning. Investment in conventional weaponry offers limited solutions to transnational threats like climate change, pandemics, and cyberattacks.

Instead, a growing number of nations are recognizing the need to realign defense priorities. The post-war success of countries like Japan, Germany, and Costa Rica, which prioritized social and economic development over excessive military spending, underscores the potential benefits of this approach.

This realignment involves shifting military focus and resources toward climate change mitigation, disaster relief, and public health protection. Additionally, addressing globalization-induced challenges like mass migration and cyber threats necessitates transitioning from regional rivalry to collaborative international responses. This paradigm shift is challenging, as most security sectors remain structured around 20th-century threats. However, as the global economy becomes more integrated and attacks on other nations become economically self-defeating, defense departments must expand their focus to encompass non-military security dimensions, such as environmental sustainability, public health resilience, and economic stability. This evolution demands greater collaboration between military and civilian agencies and enhanced international cooperation to address shared challenges.

The Indo-Pacific Region: A Crucible for Global Security

The Indo-Pacific region, a dynamic and diverse landscape encompassing developed and developing nations, is a microcosm of the global security challenges and opportunities presented by

globalization. The region faces a unique set of interconnected risks, including climate change, economic disparities, and the rise of non-state actors, all necessitating a collaborative and multifaceted approach to security.

Climate change poses an existential threat to many island nations in the Indo-Pacific. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and resource scarcity threaten the livelihoods and survival of millions of people. These environmental pressures can also exacerbate social tensions, leading to displacement and migration and creating new flashpoints for conflict. Addressing climate change in the Indo-Pacific requires mitigation efforts and adaptation strategies that build resilience and protect vulnerable communities.

Economic disparities within and between nations in the region present another significant security challenge. Rapid economic growth has lifted millions out of poverty but also exacerbated inequality, creating pockets of social unrest and resentment. The growing influence of China and other emerging powers has further complicated the economic landscape, raising concerns about resource competition, debt traps, and unequal trade relationships. Addressing these economic disparities is crucial for ensuring stability and preventing conflict in the region.

The rise of non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, transnational criminal networks, and cyber hackers, adds another layer of complexity to the Indo-Pacific security environment. These actors operate across borders, exploiting vulnerabilities in governance and security infrastructure. Their activities range from terrorism and organized crime to cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns, which can destabilize societies and undermine regional security.

The interconnectedness of these security challenges demands a holistic and collaborative approach. The Indo-Pacific region cannot rely solely on traditional military power to address these complex threats. Instead, a new security paradigm is required, one that

prioritizes multilateral cooperation, diplomacy, and a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between economic, environmental, and political factors.

This paradigm shift involves moving beyond state-centric security models to embrace the concept of “complex interdependence,”¹⁵ which recognizes that security is no longer solely a matter of military might. Instead, it encompasses economic stability, environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and human rights. This requires fostering trust and cooperation among diverse actors, investing in regional institutions, and developing innovative solutions that address traditional and non-traditional security threats.

The Indo-Pacific’s future stability and prosperity depend on embracing this new paradigm. By prioritizing collective security, grounded in mutual interdependence and a shared understanding of interconnected risks, the region can harness the power of globalization to build a more resilient and equitable future for all its inhabitants. This journey toward collective security is essential for the Indo-Pacific and serves as a model for the rest of the world as we navigate the complexities of the 21st century.

The Globalization Solution: Navigating Challenges, Forging Solutions

Globalization, while offering unprecedented opportunities for progress, has also given rise to complex challenges that require coordinated and innovative solutions. The modern world’s interconnected nature amplifies the risks and potential rewards of global integration. A multifaceted approach is essential to harnessing the benefits of globalization while mitigating its downsides.

Key challenges that must be addressed include:

- *ECONOMIC DISPARITIES*: The uneven distribution of globalization's benefits has increased inequalities between and within nations. The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few threatens social stability and undermines the legitimacy of global economic systems. This can manifest in social unrest, political instability, and increased susceptibility to extremist ideologies.
- *ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION*: The relentless pursuit of economic growth has exacerbated environmental degradation, including climate change, deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion. These environmental challenges pose existential threats to human societies and ecosystems, requiring urgent global action to mitigate their impacts and transition toward sustainable practices. Developing nations, often disproportionately affected by climate change, need financial and technological assistance to adapt and build resilience.
- *SECURITY THREATS*: Globalization has facilitated the rise of transnational threats such as pandemics, cyberattacks, and terrorism, which can quickly spread across borders and destabilize entire regions. Additionally, the illicit trade of weapons, drugs, and human trafficking thrives in the interconnected global landscape. Traditional security approaches focused on state actors and military power are ill-equipped to address these complex and interconnected challenges, which require new forms of cooperation, information sharing, and capacity building.
- *EROSION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY*: The increasing power of supranational organizations and transnational corporations has raised concerns about the erosion of national sovereignty and the ability of governments to effectively regulate and control their economies and

societies. Balancing national interests with the need for global cooperation is a delicate task that requires careful negotiation, compromise, and mechanisms to ensure the accountability and transparency of international institutions.

- *CULTURAL HOMOGENIZATION*: While globalization has facilitated cultural exchange and understanding, it has also raised concerns about the erosion of cultural diversity and the dominance of Western values and norms. Protecting cultural heritage and promoting intercultural dialogue are essential for maintaining a vibrant and inclusive global community.

Pathways to Collective Security

Addressing these challenges requires a paradigm shift toward collective security, recognizing that our interconnectedness necessitates a collaborative approach to global problem-solving.

1. *STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION*: Enhancing the authority, funding, and coordination mechanisms of international institutions like the UN, WHO, and World Trade Organization is crucial for addressing transnational threats and promoting global cooperation. This includes reforming decision-making processes to ensure greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, especially for developing nations.
2. *PROMOTING ECONOMIC EQUITY*: Implementing policies that promote equitable wealth distribution, fair labor standards, and social safety nets can help mitigate the negative impacts of globalization and foster social stability. This involves investing in education, healthcare, and infrastructure and addressing issues like tax evasion and illicit financial flows perpetuating inequality.

3. *INVESTING IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION*: Transitioning to sustainable energy sources, promoting conservation efforts, and investing in climate change mitigation technologies are essential for protecting the planet and ensuring the well-being of future generations. This requires international collaboration on research and development and financial and technical assistance for developing nations to adopt green technologies and practices.
4. *ENHANCING CYBERSECURITY AND INFORMATION SHARING*: Developing robust cybersecurity frameworks, promoting digital literacy, and fostering international cooperation on cyber defense can help mitigate the risks of cyberattacks and disinformation. This involves establishing norms and protocols for responsible state behavior in cyberspace and investing in education and awareness campaigns to empower individuals to navigate the digital landscape safely.
5. *BALANCING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE*: Finding a balance between national autonomy and the need for global cooperation is essential. This involves empowering national governments to address local challenges while strengthening international institutions and fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders to address transnational issues. This includes developing new mechanisms for global governance that are more inclusive, transparent, and accountable to all nations.
6. *PRESERVING CULTURAL DIVERSITY*: Recognizing and valuing cultural diversity is essential for building a more inclusive and resilient global community. This involves promoting intercultural dialogue, supporting cultural preservation efforts, and fostering understanding and appreciation of different cultures and traditions. International organizations can play a vital role in facilitating cultural exchange

programs and supporting initiatives that protect indigenous cultures and languages.

Conclusion:

A Path Toward Collective Security

Globalization presents the international community with unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges. Its benefits are undeniable, but so are its risks. By acknowledging these challenges and embracing a collaborative approach to security, we can harness the power of globalization to build a more secure, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

The world is gradually but also inevitably and organically moving toward stronger, more inclusive global institutions, greater supranational authority over shared resources, and enhanced connections between local communities and international decision-making bodies. This shift toward greater “global security” is driven by the recognition that the challenges we face, such as climate change, pandemics, and economic instability, transcend national borders and require collective action.

The adage “united we stand, divided we fall” resonates more than ever in this interconnected world. The challenges we confront affect us all and can only be solved through cooperation. Resisting globalization is futile and detrimental to our collective well-being. History has shown that integration is a powerful force and our future security lies instead in embracing such forces and directing our collective resistance efforts toward combating the common external threats that endanger humanity. By recognizing our shared humanity and embracing the potential of globalization, we can build a more secure, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

Endnotes

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