

THE GEOPOLITICS AND VULNERABILITY: INTERDEPENDENCE, GLOBAL COMMONS AND THE REDEFINITION OF POWER

Scientific Rationale

Raymond Aron famously defined power in terms of the capacity of political units to impose their will on others, whether through the use or threat of force, within an anarchic international system (Aron, 1962). While this classical conception remains fundamental, it no longer fully captures the changing configuration of power relations in the twenty-first century. The seminal work of Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) on complex interdependence demonstrated that states' mutual sensitivity and vulnerability to transnational flows have themselves become sources and instruments of power. Issue 2 of the *Canadian Journal of Global Research – NEXUS* seeks to examine this transformation in the foundations and modalities of power politics. Power is no longer exercised solely through the capacity to project force; it is increasingly expressed through the ability to shape and exploit the vulnerabilities of others—whether these stem from control over economic and technological flows, dependence on shared spaces, or, in a more traditional yet increasingly salient form, exposure to military force.

The domain of economic and technological interdependence has undergone a significant theoretical renewal with the concept of *Weaponized Interdependence* proposed by Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman (2019). According to this approach, states that control central nodes of global economic networks—financial messaging systems, semiconductors, digital platforms—can transform a structural position into a coercive instrument through an informational panopticon effect or by choking the flow of resources. This thesis extends and reinforces Susan Strange's earlier insight (1988) regarding the structural, rather than merely relational, character of power in international political economy, as well as Edward Luttwak's (1990) formulation concerning the shift from a logic of geopolitical conflict to one of geoeconomic conflict, in which the grammar of trade is placed at the service of objectives previously associated with military power. The long history of this instrumentalization has recently been reconstructed by Nicholas Mulder (2022), who demonstrates how economic sanctions, conceived during the interwar period as a peaceful alternative to war, in reality reproduced the logic of siege and attrition. Hence the need not to dissociate the analysis of contemporary sanctions, such as those imposed on Russia, Iran or North Korea, from the logic of warfare. The Sino-American technological decoupling initiated by Washington stems from the United States' awareness of its strategic vulnerability resulting from its strong dependence on Chinese rare earths, which are essential to emerging technologies. Far from being a mere economic adjustment, this decoupling constitutes a new geoeconomic paradigm illustrating a struggle for technological leadership and control over global value flows (Dai, 2026).

The domain of global commons remains, paradoxically, the least mobilized by applied geopolitics, even though collective action theory has produced one of the strongest bodies of scholarship in the social sciences. Elinor Ostrom (1990) demonstrated that the sustainable management of common resources depends neither solely on markets nor on the state, but rather on situated institutional arrangements whose robustness depends on rules governing appropriation, mutual monitoring, and conflict-resolution mechanisms constructed by the actors themselves. Transposed to the global level, this framework sheds new light on the contested governance of the Arctic, where Klaus Dodds and Mark Nuttall (2019) show that the region is simultaneously a space for scientific cooperation, an object of competing sovereignty claims, and a strategic infrastructure of primary importance for major powers. Cyberspace exhibits a similar dynamic. Alexander Klimburg (2017) documents how a space originally conceived as an open common has become a theatre of competition between rival models of digital governance, in which the United States, Russia and China advocate incompatible visions of digital sovereignty.

Military coercion is the oldest domain, but also the one experiencing the most dramatic resurgence. John Mearsheimer's realist thesis (2001), according to which, in an anarchic system, great powers are compelled to seek maximum security by increasing their relative power, has regained a relevance that had seemed to diminish since the end of the Cold War. Graham Allison (2017), for his part, demonstrated through sixteen historical cases of power transition that the probability of armed conflict between an established power and an emerging power is structurally high, although not inevitable. Hal Brands and Michael Beckley (2022) challenge and refine this thesis by arguing that the greatest danger does not necessarily come from a self-confident rising power,

but rather from a power that, having reached its peak, perceives a closing window of vulnerability and chooses to act before it is too late.

This latter hypothesis offers a particularly revealing lens through which to examine the sequence of reciprocal strikes involving the United States, Israel, and Iran since 2024, and its escalation in 2026. The confrontation has involved strikes against Iranian civilian and military installations, Iranian ballistic retaliation against Israel and U.S. military bases in the Gulf monarchies—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates—as well as Jordan, recurrent disruptions affecting the Strait of Hormuz, and the failure of regional mediation initiatives involving Pakistan and Oman. This sequence illustrates a paradigmatic form of strategic and military vulnerability. Deterrence has proved increasingly difficult to sustain as a mechanism for containing escalation; preventive strikes have re-emerged as a declared instrument of action for both established and aspirant powers; and the international legal framework governing the use of force has come under direct pressure through state practice rather than merely through competing political narratives.

The interaction of these three dimensions calls for a common theoretical framework, which this issue approaches through the combined lenses of phenomenological constructivism and the Copenhagen School. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) demonstrated that social reality is not simply an objective given but is continuously produced through processes of institutionalization, whereby shared meanings become established and eventually acquire the appearance of objective reality. Applied to geopolitical vulnerability, this perspective directs attention not only to the material existence of energy, digital, or military dependencies, but also to the processes through which such dependencies are constructed, framed, politicized, and instrumentalized by situated actors. This is precisely the analytical contribution of the securitization theory developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998). From this perspective, an issue becomes a matter of security not necessarily because it constitutes an objectively identifiable threat, but because an actor succeeds in presenting it as such to a relevant audience, thereby legitimizing the adoption of exceptional measures. Vulnerability, therefore, is not merely an objective condition that actors passively experience; it is also articulated, framed, narrated, and, in some circumstances, actively produced in the pursuit of power. This applies as much to political narratives surrounding dependence on critical minerals as it does to representations of Iran or North Korea as existential threats.

Thematic Areas

1. **Economic and technological interdependence:** weapons, dependencies and decoupling (semiconductors, rare earths, energy).
2. **Contested global commons:** the Arctic, Antarctic, seabed, and outer space.
3. **Cyberspace and artificial intelligence:** as new contested commons.
4. **Military coercion and the return of interstate warfare:** preventive strikes, nuclear proliferation, deterrence in crisis, illustrated in particular by the Iran-Israel-United States sequence, but also open to other theatres (Russia-Ukraine, the South China Sea, the Sahel).
5. **International law and the governance of shared spaces:** law of the sea, space law, polar regimes.
6. **Middle powers:** strategies for securing the commons and managing vulnerability.
7. **Climate security and environmental commons:** as geopolitical issues.
8. **International criminal law, international criminal justice and crimes against humanity:** normative vulnerability in the face of the return of force.

Timeline

Deadline	stage
25 July 2026	Launch of the Call for Papers
20 August 2026	Deadline for submission of proposals (abstracts)
30 August 2026	Notification to authors and feedback from the Scientific Committee
1 October 2026	Deadline for submission of full-length articles
20 October 2026	Double-blind peer-review reports sent to authors
30 October 2026	Submission by authors of final versions incorporating requested corrections
1 November 2026	Closure of the editorial process for Issue 2

Submissions Guidelines

Proposals must be sent **simultaneously to both email addresses:** redaction@nexusrevue.org and nexusrevuecanadienne@gmail.com

NB: Manuscripts must comply with the editorial standards of the NEXUS Journal (APA 7th edition, 2019).

All proposals must be accompanied by the **selected thematic area**, **five keywords**, and a **brief biographical and bibliographical note on the author or authors**. Full-length articles must comply with the [NEXUS Journal Editorial Guidelines](#), particularly with regard to manuscript presentation, abstracts in both French and English, the academic citation system, and standardized bibliographic references. Each contribution will undergo **double-blind peer review** by the journal's Scientific Committee.

The languages of publication are **French** and **English**.

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