

Editorial Introduction: War and International System

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Throughout history, humanity has strived to understand the underlying reasons for the occurrence of war. The initial focus of this inquiry was predominantly on systemic war. Despite enduring the challenges presented by two world wars, we find ourselves once again confronted with similar concerns after many years. Observers argue that various factors may serve as indicators of the likelihood of conflict within the international system. A consensus exists that we are witnessing a shift in power dynamics and a transformation in the polarization of the system. As such, a range of elements must be examined and assessed in detail.

At the outset of this special issue, we aim to provide a preliminary theoretical review in order to establish a framework. What factors contribute to a system's vulnerability to war? What are the origins of these power shifts? What elements foster international rivalries among nations? While these inquiries extend beyond the scope of this special issue, empirical evidence from the existing literature that enhances our understanding of the international system's propensity for conflict may aid in developing a framework to explain the current state of international relations and its association with wartime behavior.

After the end of the Cold War, scholars argued that unipolarity emerged, and humanity upgraded its level by committing to the value of democracy. Because the polar defending democratic values, the West, was the winner of the Cold War, unipolarity meant that the new world order would be liberal under the auspices of the United States, representing the "free world." According to the democratic peace theory, countries with liberal values did not fight each other.¹ Scholars contended that the "end of history"² is anticipated due to the unprecedented potential for governments to shift to democracy, which will soon usher in a period of "pax" under US hegemony. After a short period of World History, once again, the power shifts started as a result of the nature of "power." Structural conditions create a

1 Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (Norton, 1997); Michael W. Doyle, *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays* (Routledge, 2011); Z. Mao ve B. Russett, "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946–1986", *American Political Science Review* 87 (1993): 624-38, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2938740>; Bruce Russett, "The Democratic Peace", içinde *Conflicts and New Departures in World Society* (Routledge, 1994).

2 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Hamish Hamilton, 1992).

shift in power distribution by confirming the authors of systemic change.³ Power is inherently dynamic rather than static, which means there will always be an increasing number of actors seeking to reshape the dynamics of international order to serve their own interests. Disparities in economic development among various actors, heightened investments in both defensive and offensive weaponry, and the formation of new alliances are all natural consequences of a polarized system, driven by divergent perspectives. This results in discourses, actions, and preparations that are prone to conflict. At this juncture, we find ourselves examining the interplay between satisfied and dissatisfied parties, revisionist versus status quo defenders, and the contrast between democracies and autocracies, ultimately leading to the potential for conflict among these opposing entities.

In light of the importance of discussing these scholarly and intellectual topics, we have published a special issue titled “War and the International System.” With the valuable contributions from various authors across multiple universities in Türkiye, we have completed this issue and are pleased to present it to our readers. Therefore, I would like to overview and present each article featured in our special issue briefly.

From the positivist viewpoint, history serves as a laboratory for our scientific inquiry. We comprehend current power dynamics through an examination of historical systemic transformations. Bilgehan Emeklier and Nihal Emeklier explore historical systemic transition conflicts in “*Envisioning Systemic Transition Period Wars through the Thirty Years’ War and the First and Second World Wars*” They recognize the transformative impacts of such wars on global power dynamics and structural frameworks. The aforementioned shifts in power have instigated significant developments that precipitated the outbreak of war. The Russo-Ukrainian War stands as a paramount instance of interstate conflict in contemporary history. Murat Jane and Hazar Vural Jane discuss the causes of the Russian Federation-Ukraine War through the lens of Richard Ned Lebow’s methodology in their paper, “*Why Nations Fight?*” They offer an in-depth analysis of the tensions among Russia, Ukraine, and the West via the lens of Lebow’s position. Moreover, power transitions in international relations literature primarily emphasize international rivalry, encompassing great power competition, dissatisfaction or any form of status disparity. In this sense, Organski is considered one of the most quoted authors who elucidates the dissatisfaction that led to a transformation in the worldwide power hierarchy. This alteration in power hierarchy may manifest its impacts in specific regions such as the Balkans, Asia, or Africa. Kaan Devocioğlu investigates the US-China rivalry in the Horn of Africa from 2012 to 2022 in “*The Competition of Dominant Powers in the International System and the US-China Encounter in the Horn of Africa.*” He utilizes Organski’s Power Transition Theory to examine how geopolitical and geoeconomic dynamics influence competition in this region. There is a prevailing consensus regarding the transition to multipolarity among both satisfied and dissatisfied nations within the international system. It is evident in the White Papers (National Security, Defense, Military Doctrines) of both major and middle powers. Consequently, governments are recalibrating their national security strategy to align with the current distribution of power. Erhan Büyükkakıncı analyzes the adaptation of military strategy in response to systemic changes in “*Adapting Military Doctrines to Shifting Power Dynamics in the International System: Looking Beyond Unipolarity through the Analyses of Charles Kupchan*”. He emphasizes the challenges and opportunities governments face in defining their strategic priorities within the

3 George Modelski ve William R. Thompson, “The Long Cycle of World Leadership”, içinde *Seapower in Global Politics, 1494–1993* (Springer, 1988), 97-132; A. F. K. Organski ve Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (University of Chicago Press, 1981); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1981). {\Ni} {The War Ledger} (University of Chicago Press, 1981

changing multipolar context. Additionally, power vacuums represent a significant issue of our era as the Great Powers undergo transformation. Tolga Öztürk examines Germany's strategic modifications after the Cold War in "*Germany's Strategic Contraction Following American Hegemony in the Context of Offensive Realist Theory.*" He explores Germany's role in the international system in light of shifting power dynamics and increasing multipolarity.

In addition to understanding and explaining systemic development, specific challenges are evidently significant for emerging countries as well as middle and smaller ones. The actions of certain actors within the international system are crucial for comprehending warfare and the dynamics of the international system. In this context, Esra Merve Çalışkan examines the ramifications of AI-enhanced cyber-attacks on global security in "*The Threat of Tomorrow: Impacts of Artificial Intelligence-Enhanced Cyber-attacks on International Relations.*" She emphasized the necessity for legislative frameworks and international cooperation to mitigate the risks associated with AI-driven cyber threats. Another study question pertains to the efficacy of China's cyber power inside the international system, as discussed in the article "*Is a Theory of Cyberspace Dominance Feasible?*" Aybala Lale Kahraman analyzes China's cybersecurity policies and stance on cyber sovereignty. She examines the theoretical aspects of cyberspace as a novel realm of authority and investigates how cyber sovereignty influences global power dynamics and cybersecurity approaches. The final article in our special issue is about intelligence, which holds greater significance in contemporary warfare. Intelligence is increasingly becoming a crucial factor for success in the current battlefield. Tolga Ökten analyzes the militarization of intelligence operations in "*Technology, Organization, and the Militarization of Intelligence: The Turkish Experience.*" He emphasizes how technology innovations and organizational transformations have positioned MİT at the front of unconventional conflicts, especially in counterterrorism.

All papers featured in this issue reflect the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not binding for the Turkish National Defence University. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the contributors and peer reviewers for this special issue. Their rigorous peer reviews enhanced our articles, while our contributors exhibited great dedication. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Turkish National Defence University members: Prof. Gültekin Yıldız (Ph.D) who is the chief editor of our journal, Assoc. Prof. Barış Ateş (Ph.D.) oversaw the evaluation processes; Lecturer Esra Ecem Şahin, who coordinated the entire process; Translator and Lecturer Dilek Karabacak, who managed proofreading and grammar checks; and Graphic Designer Serap Derman, responsible for the layout and page formatting.

We hope this issue contributes meaningfully to the academic discourse surrounding war and the international system.