

Outsourced Security and the Making of the “Third-State” Posture: Emergency, Securitization and Global North Burden-Shifting in Kenya-Haiti, Israel-US, EU-Turkey/Rwanda, and Australia-Nauru Relations

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE DETAILS
Contemporary International Relations scholarship offers extensive explanations of indirect security governance through tools such as alliances, proxy warfare, strategic partnerships, migration externalization, and international hierarchy. However, an increasingly common feature of contemporary international politics remains insufficiently conceptualized. Across diverse policy domains, states increasingly seek protection not through direct intervention alone, but through the positioning of other states between themselves and perceived sources of insecurity. Existing concepts illuminate aspects of this practice but do not adequately capture the broader strategic logic that connects them. This article develops the concept of the <i>Third-State Posture</i> to address this gap. The Third-State Posture refers to a strategic configuration in which a state seeks protection from actual or anticipated adverse consequences originating elsewhere through the utilization, support, or empowerment of another state that assumes responsibility for managing, containing, absorbing, redirecting, or mitigating those consequences before they directly affect the protected state. Drawing upon comparative analysis of contemporary cases including Kenya’s leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, United States–Israel security relations, European migration externalization arrangements, Australia’s offshore processing regime, and United States–Mexico migration cooperation, the study identifies a recurring but under-theorized pattern of intermediary security governance. It argues that the defining feature of the Third-State Posture is the protective intermediary function performed by the third state rather than alliance, dependence, proxy intervention, or hierarchy. The concept contributes to International Relations theory by providing a unifying framework for understanding how states increasingly externalize security responsibilities, relocate risk management across political space, and pursue protection through intermediary actors in an era characterized by transnational insecurity and preventive governance. KEYWORDS: Third-State Posture, Security Governance, Intermediary States, Migration Externalization, Proxy Politics, International Relations Theory.	Published On: 31 August 2026 Available on: https://ijiissh.com/

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary international system is increasingly characterized by the globalization of insecurity. Unlike earlier periods in which threats to state survival were primarily territorial and military in nature, contemporary states confront a growing range of transnational risks whose origins frequently lie beyond their borders but whose consequences are felt domestically. Terrorism, irregular migration, pandemics, organized crime, cyber threats, environmental disasters, political instability, state collapse, and regional conflicts, just to mention a few, now possess unprecedented capacities for cross-border diffusion (Buzan et al., 1998; Huysmans, 2006; Acharya, 2014). The intensification of globalization has accelerated the movement of people, goods, capital, information, technologies, and ideas across national boundaries, simultaneously creating new opportunities for cooperation and new vulnerabilities for states seeking to preserve security and political order (Keohane & Nye, 1977; Ikenberry, 2011; Cooley & Nexon, 2020). Consequently, security is no longer understood solely in terms of defending territorial boundaries against direct military

aggression. Increasingly, states perceive threats emerging elsewhere as possessing the potential to generate domestic consequences long before they physically reach their borders.

The growing recognition of transnational vulnerability has profoundly transformed the ways states understand and practice security. Traditional conceptions of sovereignty assumed that states responded to threats once they appeared within or immediately adjacent to national territory. Contemporary security governance, however, increasingly operates through anticipatory logics in which perceived dangers are addressed at their points of origin or along their projected trajectories before they materialize within the territory of the threatened state (Bigo, 2002; Balzacq, 2011; McDonald, 2008). The result has been the emergence of preventive security architectures characterized by surveillance, intelligence cooperation, pre-emptive interventions, offshore processing mechanisms, migration externalization arrangements, counterterrorism partnerships, security assistance programs, and military support relationships extending far beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the initiating state (Williams, 2003; Kirk & McDonald, 2021). In this environment, security is increasingly projected outward, transforming distant geographical spaces into sites of domestic security management.

Such developments have generated substantial scholarly interest within the fields of securitization, emergency governance, international security, migration governance, and foreign policy analysis. Securitization scholars have demonstrated how political actors construct particular phenomena as existential threats requiring extraordinary responses beyond the boundaries of ordinary politics (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998; Balzacq, 2011). Studies of emergency governance have similarly illustrated how states increasingly normalize exceptional measures in response to perceived crises, often blurring the distinction between routine governance and emergency rule (Schmitt, 1922; Agamben, 2005; Humphreys, 2006). Parallel scholarship on migration externalization has revealed how states relocate migration control responsibilities beyond their territorial borders through agreements with transit and origin countries (Üstübcici, 2019; Saenz Perez, 2023). Meanwhile, studies of proxy warfare, strategic partnerships, and alliance politics have explored how states pursue security objectives through intermediaries rather than direct intervention (Mumford, 2013; Fox, 2020; Rauta, 2021).

Although these literatures provide valuable insights, they remain fragmented and largely issue-specific. Existing concepts explain particular manifestations of externalized security governance without adequately capturing the broader strategic logic connecting them. Proxy warfare scholarship primarily focuses on indirect military relationships and surrogate forms of intervention (Mumford, 2013; Hughes, 2014; Groh, 2019; Fox, 2020; Rauta, 2021; Salehyan, 2010). Migration externalization literature concentrates largely on border governance, asylum management, offshore processing, and safe-third-country arrangements (Lavenex, 2006; Boswell, 2007; Üstübcici, 2019; Mlambo, 2020; Saenz Perez, 2023; Pariat, 2025). Alliance and security partnership scholarship examines formal and informal arrangements through which states coordinate responses to common threats (Keohane, 1984; Walt, 1987; Snyder, 1997; Morrow, 2000; Lake, 2009; Cooley & Nexon, 2020). Client-state, satellite-state, dependency, and hierarchical-order frameworks emphasize asymmetrical relationships between stronger and weaker states within international political structures (Waltz, 1979; Krasner, 1999; Lake, 2009; Nexon & Wright, 2007; Barnett & Duvall, 2005). Securitization theory explains how political actors construct and legitimize particular issues as security threats requiring exceptional responses (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998; Bigo, 2002; Williams, 2003; Huysmans, 2006; McDonald, 2008; Balzacq, 2011). Consequently, while scholars have identified numerous instances in which states seek to manage external threats through other states, the broader phenomenon itself remains insufficiently conceptualized within International Relations theory.

This paper argues that an important but under-theorized dimension of contemporary international politics lies in what may be termed the “third-state posture.” The concept is used to refer to a strategic arrangement through which a state seeks to protect itself from actual or anticipated adverse consequences originating elsewhere by positioning another state between itself and the perceived source of insecurity. The third-state posture involves the transfer, delegation, externalization, management, containment, or absorption of security burdens through another state's territory, institutions, military forces, legal systems, diplomatic standing, or governance structures. Unlike the traditional international-law understanding of a third state as a non-party to a legal relationship, the concept developed here identifies a distinct political and strategic function performed by states that become instruments through which powerful actors seek to prevent, redirect, manage, or contain external threats.

The analytical utility of this concept becomes evident across a growing range of contemporary cases. The United States' support for Kenya's leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) in Haiti reflects an arrangement in which a regional partner assumes operational responsibilities that a major power is politically reluctant or strategically unwilling to undertake directly (United Nations Security Council, 2023; Government of Kenya, 2023; United States Mission to the United Nations, 2024; International Peace Institute, 2024; Stimson Center, 2025; Security Council Report, 2024). The United States' longstanding strategic relationship with Israel similarly demonstrates how security partnerships can position particular states as forward security actors within broader geopolitical contests involving Iran, regional security, and Middle Eastern power balances (Walt, 1987; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007; Congressional Research Service, 2025; Council on Foreign Relations, 2025; SIPRI, 2025; Atlantic Council, 2025). European migration agreements involving Turkey, Rwanda, Albania, and other partner states illustrate efforts to prevent migration pressures

from reaching European territory by relocating migration management beyond European borders through externalization, safe-third-country arrangements, and offshore processing mechanisms (Lavenex, 2006; Boswell, 2007; Üstübcici, 2019; Mlambo, 2020; Saenz Perez, 2023; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024; Pariat, 2025). Australia's offshore processing arrangements in Nauru reveal comparable attempts to externalize legal, political, and humanitarian responsibilities associated with migration governance beyond the territorial boundaries of the Australian state (UNHCR, 2025; Kaldor Centre, 2024; Refugee Council of Australia, 2025; Tubakovic, 2024; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2024). Although these cases differ substantially in their specific objectives, geographical settings, and policy instruments, they share a common underlying logic: the management of insecurity through another state positioned between the perceived threat and the state seeking protection.

The paper therefore advances two interrelated arguments. First, the increasing reliance upon third-state postures represents a significant transformation in contemporary security governance that cannot be fully understood through existing concepts such as proxy warfare, alliance politics, migration externalization, client-state relations, or securitization when considered independently. Second, the growing use of third-state arrangements reflects a hybrid form of statecraft in which realist concerns regarding security, survival, risk management, and burden shifting are frequently articulated and legitimized through liberal and humanitarian narratives emphasizing collective security, international responsibility, peacebuilding, stabilization, democracy promotion, and human protection. The result is a complex political practice in which realist objectives and idealist justifications become increasingly intertwined.

Against this background, the study pursues three objectives. First, it develops and conceptualizes the Third-State Posture as an analytical framework for understanding how states seek protection from actual or anticipated threats through intermediary states. Second, it explores how insights from securitization, emergency governance, proxy-state, migration-externalization, and hierarchy literatures help illuminate the emergence of third-state arrangements in contemporary international politics. Third, it examines whether the growing reliance on third-state postures is more convincingly understood through realist security imperatives, idealist claims of international responsibility, or a hybrid perspective that combines elements of both traditions. Through these objectives, the paper contributes to ongoing debates concerning security governance, indirect intervention, international responsibility, and the evolving organization of power and protection in an increasingly interconnected world.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative library-based research design grounded in conceptual analysis and comparative case illustration. The approach is particularly suitable for studies seeking to refine, extend, or develop new concepts within International Relations and Security Studies because it enables the systematic examination of existing theoretical traditions, empirical evidence, policy documents, and scholarly debates in order to identify conceptual gaps and generate new analytical frameworks (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Rather than testing a predetermined hypothesis through statistical methods, the study seeks to interrogate how states increasingly manage external threats through intermediary states and whether existing concepts adequately explain this phenomenon.

Data for the study were obtained from a wide range of secondary sources. These included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, policy reports, government publications, United Nations documents, security council resolutions, think-tank analyses, official speeches, and selected media reports addressing securitization, emergency governance, proxy warfare, migration externalization, alliance politics, international security cooperation, and contemporary crisis management. Particular attention was given to both classical and contemporary works in order to capture the historical evolution of relevant concepts while incorporating recent developments in global security governance.

The analytical strategy combined conceptual analysis with comparative case illustration. Conceptual analysis was employed to examine the strengths and limitations of existing concepts including proxy states, client states, satellite states, migration externalization, security partnerships, and securitization. The purpose was not merely to review these concepts but to assess their explanatory capacity in relation to a broader pattern of security governance increasingly observable across contemporary international politics. Through this process, the study develops the notion of the "third-state posture" as a distinct analytical category intended to capture situations in which states seek protection from actual or anticipated threats by positioning another state between themselves and the perceived source of insecurity.

To demonstrate the empirical relevance of the proposed concept, four illustrative cases were purposively selected. The first is the United States' support for Kenya's leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti. The second is the strategic security relationship between the United States and Israel, particularly within the context of regional security competition involving Iran and the Palestinian question. The third comprises European migration externalization arrangements involving states such as Turkey, Rwanda, and Albania. The fourth is Australia's offshore processing regime in Nauru. These cases were selected because they represent diverse policy domains which include peace operations, military security, migration governance, and humanitarian management, while exhibiting a common tendency toward the delegation, externalization, or displacement of security

responsibilities through intermediary states. The cases are therefore not treated as equivalent empirical units but as illustrative manifestations of a broader strategic logic.

The study employs thematic interpretation to identify recurring patterns across the selected cases. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which securitization narratives, emergency discourses, and preventive security logics are mobilized to justify the use of intermediary states in managing external threats. The analysis further examines whether such arrangements are more consistent with realist assumptions concerning state survival and national interest or with idealist claims relating to international responsibility, collective security, and global governance. Through this approach, the study seeks to contribute both a conceptual innovation and a more integrated understanding of contemporary security practices within an increasingly interconnected international system.

3.0. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE THIRD-STATE POSTURE

3.1 Securitization and the Externalization of Threats

The emergence of securitization theory represented one of the most significant intellectual departures from traditional approaches to security within International Relations. Prior to the Copenhagen School, dominant realist and strategic studies traditions largely treated threats as objective phenomena whose existence could be determined independently of political interpretation. Security scholarship therefore focused primarily on the material capabilities of states, military balances, deterrence, territorial defence, and the distribution of power within the international system (Waltz, 1979; Jervis, 1978; Mearsheimer, 2001). Threats were generally assumed to exist independently of political discourse, and security policy was understood principally as a response to objectively identifiable dangers. Securitization theory challenged this assumption by arguing that security is not merely a condition that exists objectively in the external environment but is also a political and social construction produced through processes of representation, narration, and legitimation (Wæver, 1995; Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998).

At its core, securitization theory argues that issues become security concerns not simply because they pose material dangers but because political actors successfully frame them as existential threats requiring extraordinary measures beyond the routines of normal politics (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998). Security, from this perspective, is less a condition than a “speech act” through which political elites seek to mobilize audiences around particular understandings of danger. Once accepted by relevant audiences, the securitized issue is elevated above ordinary political contestation and becomes subject to exceptional forms of intervention, surveillance, regulation, and control (Williams, 2003; McDonald, 2008; Balzacq, 2011). Consequently, securitization theory shifted scholarly attention away from asking whether threats objectively exist and toward examining how threats are politically produced, communicated, institutionalized, and acted upon.

The explanatory power of this perspective has been demonstrated across a remarkably diverse range of issue areas. Terrorism, migration, pandemics, climate change, organized crime, cyber insecurity, and religious extremism have all been analyzed as phenomena whose political significance depends substantially on processes of securitizing representation rather than on material characteristics alone (Huysmans, 2006; Bigo, 2002; Balzacq, 2011; Kirk & McDonald, 2021). Following the September 11 attacks, for example, terrorism was transformed from one among many security concerns into the defining organizing principle of global security governance, legitimizing unprecedented expansions of surveillance, military intervention, intelligence cooperation, border control, and emergency legislation across much of the world (Buzan et al., 1998; Huysmans, 2006; Williams, 2003). Similarly, migration has increasingly been represented not merely as a demographic or economic phenomenon but as a threat to national identity, public order, welfare systems, cultural cohesion, and national security itself (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; Boswell, 2007). More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how public health crises could be rapidly transformed into matters of national security, thereby justifying extraordinary restrictions on movement, commerce, assembly, and civil liberties (Kirk & McDonald, 2021).

Importantly, securitization theory has also contributed significantly to understanding how contemporary security governance increasingly operates through anticipatory and preventive logics. Unlike traditional conceptions of security that focused on responding to realized threats, securitized governance often targets risks that have not yet materialized but are portrayed as possessing the potential to do so in the future (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; McDonald, 2008). The result is a shift from reactive security to preventive security. States increasingly justify interventions not because harm has already occurred but because future harm is imagined, anticipated, projected, or feared. In this sense, securitization has become deeply intertwined with broader transformations in risk governance, precautionary politics, and preventive security practices that seek to intervene before threats fully emerge (Balzacq, 2011; Huysmans, 2006).

Nonetheless, it is precisely at this point that important analytical limitations begin to emerge. While securitization theory offers a sophisticated account of how threats are socially constructed and politically legitimized, it provides considerably less analytical attention to what happens after securitization succeeds. The literature is exceptionally effective at explaining how migration becomes a security issue, how terrorism becomes an existential threat, or how political actors persuade audiences to accept exceptional measures. However, it is less effective at explaining the institutional, geographical, and strategic mechanisms through which those

threats are subsequently managed. In other words, securitization theory explains why actors perceive danger and why extraordinary responses become politically acceptable (Wæver, 1995; Balzacq, 2011; McDonald, 2008), but it offers fewer conceptual tools for understanding where those responses are implemented and through whom they are operationalized.

This limitation becomes particularly visible when examining contemporary practices of externalized security governance. Across numerous policy domains, securitized threats are increasingly managed not within the territory of the securitizing state itself but through arrangements involving other states. Migration pressures are addressed through transit countries and safe-third-country agreements. Terrorism is countered through regional security partners and proxy forces. State fragility is managed through externally supported peace operations. Maritime insecurity is addressed through delegated enforcement mechanisms. Public health threats are contained through offshore surveillance and internationalized monitoring systems. In each case, securitization remains central because it legitimizes extraordinary action. Nonetheless, securitization alone cannot explain why the implementation of that action is increasingly displaced beyond the territory of the securitizing state itself.

Indeed, the growing tendency to externalize security responses reveals a gap between the identification of threats and the location of security management. Securitization theory successfully explains how threats are constructed. What it does not fully explain is why states increasingly seek to manage those threats through geographically and politically intermediary actors. Why, for example, are migration threats increasingly addressed through Turkey, Rwanda, Albania, Libya, or Mexico rather than solely at the borders of the states claiming vulnerability? Why are stabilization missions increasingly delegated to regional partners? Why do major powers frequently seek indirect rather than direct operational involvement in managing distant crises? These questions point toward a dimension of contemporary security governance that remains underdeveloped within existing securitization scholarship.

Consequently, while securitization theory remains indispensable for understanding how threats are constructed, amplified, and legitimized, it captures only part of the broader phenomenon under examination in this study. It explains the discursive production of insecurity but not the strategic relocation of its management. It reveals how exceptional measures become politically acceptable but offers limited explanation for why those measures are increasingly implemented through other states. To understand that process, it becomes necessary to move beyond threat construction and examine the wider architectures of preventive security and emergency governance through which contemporary states seek to manage anticipated dangers before they reach their own territories. It is to this broader logic of emergency governance and preventive security that the discussion now turns.

3.2 Emergency Governance and Preventive Security

If securitization theory explains how threats are socially and politically constructed, the literature on emergency governance explains how states respond once those threats have been recognized as sufficiently serious to warrant exceptional action. The intellectual foundations of emergency governance are commonly traced to the work of Carl Schmitt, who argued that sovereignty ultimately reveals itself in the capacity to decide on the exception. For Schmitt (1922/2005), the defining characteristic of sovereign authority is not the routine administration of law but rather the ability to suspend normal legal and political arrangements when confronted by extraordinary circumstances threatening the existence of the political community. Emergencies therefore occupy a unique position within political life because they simultaneously challenge and reaffirm sovereign power. The emergency becomes the moment in which the state asserts its authority most forcefully by claiming the necessity to act beyond ordinary procedural constraints.

Although Schmitt's formulation emerged within the context of debates concerning constitutional order and state authority, contemporary scholars have significantly expanded the concept to explain broader transformations in modern governance. Agamben (2005) famously argued that the state of exception has increasingly shifted from being a temporary response to extraordinary crises into a normalized technique of governance. In this view, emergency measures no longer constitute rare departures from normal politics but have become embedded within everyday governmental practices. Humphreys (2006) similarly observes that modern states increasingly blur the distinction between ordinary administration and exceptional intervention, thereby producing political environments in which extraordinary powers become routine instruments of governance. Rather than existing at the margins of political life, emergency logics increasingly shape the centre of contemporary security governance.

The significance of these developments becomes particularly apparent when examined alongside broader transformations in global risk politics. Contemporary threats are rarely understood as immediate dangers requiring reactive responses. Instead, governments increasingly operate within environments characterized by uncertainty, anticipation, and future-oriented risk calculation. Terrorist attacks, irregular migration flows, pandemics, cyber threats, environmental disasters, and geopolitical instability are frequently represented not as present realities but as potential futures whose consequences must be prevented before they materialize (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; Balzacq, 2011). Security governance therefore becomes increasingly pre-emptive. Intervention is justified not because harm has already occurred but because future harm is imagined to be possible, probable, or even inevitable if preventive action is not undertaken.

This transformation from reactive to preventive security constitutes one of the most significant shifts in contemporary international politics. During much of the twentieth century, security policy largely focused on responding to identifiable threats after their

emergence. By contrast, contemporary governance increasingly seeks to anticipate and neutralize threats at earlier stages of their development. The objective is no longer merely to defend territory once danger arrives but to intervene before danger reaches national borders. Prevention, anticipation, resilience, preparedness, and risk management have consequently become central organizing principles of modern security policy (Kirk & McDonald, 2021; Huysmans, 2006; Bigo, 2002). Security is thus progressively detached from immediate territorial defence and reoriented toward managing uncertain futures.

Importantly, this preventive turn has also transformed the spatial dimensions of security governance. If threats are understood as emerging beyond national territory yet possessing the potential to generate domestic consequences, then the logical location of intervention increasingly shifts outward. Security management becomes geographically displaced from the territory of the threatened state toward the spaces where risks are believed to originate, transit, accumulate, or intensify. Migration control moves into transit countries. Counterterrorism operations extend into fragile states. Pandemic surveillance expands into global monitoring networks. Maritime security is projected into distant regions. Peace operations increasingly seek to stabilize crises before they generate broader regional consequences. In each instance, states attempt to manage insecurity at a distance rather than waiting for threats to arrive within their borders.

However, despite its considerable explanatory power, the emergency governance literature encounters limitations similar to those identified within securitization scholarship. Emergency governance explains why states increasingly embrace preventive action. It explains the normalization of exceptional measures. It explains how future risks become objects of present intervention. However, it pays comparatively limited attention to the institutional architecture through which preventive security is operationalized. More specifically, while emergency governance explains why states seek to intervene beyond their borders, it offers fewer conceptual tools for understanding why such interventions are increasingly delegated, outsourced, externalized, or channelled through other states.

This limitation is particularly striking because many contemporary preventive-security arrangements rely fundamentally upon intermediary states. Regional partners conduct stabilization operations. Transit countries manage migration flows. Allied states absorb military responsibilities. Peripheral states host offshore processing facilities. Strategic partners perform security functions that powerful states regard as politically costly, legally contentious, financially burdensome, or diplomatically risky to undertake directly. Yet these intermediary roles remain largely peripheral within existing theories of emergency governance. The literature explains the logic of prevention but provides less insight into the growing reliance on other states as vehicles through which preventive security is enacted.

Consequently, both securitization theory and emergency governance scholarship illuminate important dimensions of contemporary security practice while leaving a crucial question unresolved. Securitization explains how threats become politically meaningful. Emergency governance explains why exceptional and preventive responses emerge. Neither fully explains why contemporary security increasingly operates through intermediary states positioned between the perceived source of danger and the state seeking protection. To understand that phenomenon, it becomes necessary to examine a body of scholarship that explicitly addresses indirect relationships between states. It is therefore to the literatures on proxy states, client states, satellite states, and strategic intermediaries that the discussion now turns.

3.3 Proxy States, Client States, Satellite States and Strategic Intermediaries

If securitization theory explains the construction of threats and emergency governance explains the normalization of preventive intervention, the literature on proxy relationships, client states, satellite states, strategic partnerships, and international hierarchy moves closer to explaining how security objectives are operationalized through other political actors. Indeed, among the various bodies of scholarship examined in this study, this literature comes closest to identifying the phenomenon that the concept of the Third-State Posture seeks to capture. Unlike securitization and emergency governance, which focus primarily on the production and management of insecurity, proxy and hierarchical-state literatures explicitly recognize that states frequently pursue political and security objectives indirectly through other states and actors rather than through direct intervention (Mumford, 2013; Hughes, 2014; Fox, 2020; Rauta, 2021; Lake, 2009). Nonetheless, as this section argues, these concepts remain only partial explanations of a broader and increasingly pervasive phenomenon.

The modern literature on proxy warfare emerged primarily from attempts to explain indirect intervention during the Cold War. Faced with the risks of direct confrontation between nuclear powers, the United States and the Soviet Union frequently pursued strategic objectives through local allies, insurgent movements, client governments, and surrogate military forces operating in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East (Loveman, 2002; Mumford, 2013; Hughes, 2014). Proxy relationships enabled major powers to influence conflicts, alter regional balances of power, and pursue geopolitical objectives while avoiding the political, financial, military, and diplomatic costs associated with direct intervention. Contemporary scholarship has demonstrated that proxy warfare has not diminished with the end of the Cold War but has instead become an increasingly attractive instrument of statecraft in an era characterized by rising intervention costs, domestic political constraints, and heightened international scrutiny (Groh, 2019; Fox, 2020; Rauta, 2021).

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At the centre of proxy-war scholarship lies the assumption that states frequently seek to influence outcomes indirectly through intermediaries. Fox (2020), for example, argues that proxy warfare has evolved into a multipurpose strategic instrument allowing states to project power while minimizing exposure to direct confrontation. Similarly, Rauta (2021) demonstrates that proxy relationships increasingly involve complex networks of delegation, influence, and strategic coordination extending beyond traditional military support arrangements. Hughes (2014) and Mumford (2013) likewise show that proxy actors frequently perform functions that principal states either cannot or prefer not to perform directly. The core insight emerging from this literature is therefore that indirect action is often strategically preferable to direct intervention.

Closely related to proxy-war scholarship are broader theories of clientelism, hierarchy, and dependence within international relations. Classical realist approaches often assumed that formal sovereignty concealed significant inequalities of power among states, resulting in relationships characterized by varying degrees of dependence, influence, and control (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). Subsequent scholarship on international hierarchy challenged the notion that the international system is purely anarchic by demonstrating that many interstate relationships exhibit hierarchical characteristics resembling authority structures found within domestic political systems (Lake, 2009). According to Lake (2009), powerful states frequently provide security, economic assistance, and political support in exchange for varying degrees of compliance from weaker states. Similar arguments emerge in studies of client states, dependent allies, and strategic partnerships, all of which emphasize asymmetrical exchanges between stronger and weaker actors (Krasner, 1999; Walt, 1987; Cooley & Nexon, 2020).

Satellite-state frameworks similarly draw attention to relationships in which weaker states function within the strategic orbit of more powerful actors. Historically associated with Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, the concept of the satellite state highlights how geopolitical objectives are often pursued through subordinate or dependent partners rather than through direct territorial control (Waltz, 1979; Krasner, 1999). More recent scholarship has expanded this insight beyond Cold War contexts to examine how contemporary great powers maintain influence through security assistance, military cooperation, economic incentives, diplomatic support, and institutional integration rather than through formal colonial arrangements (Nexon & Wright, 2007; Cooley & Nexon, 2020).

These literatures collectively make an important contribution by demonstrating that indirect governance is neither exceptional nor historically novel. States have long relied upon intermediaries to project influence, extend power, and manage distant political environments. The existence of strategic intermediaries therefore does not itself constitute a new phenomenon. Rather, what appears increasingly significant is the expanding range of functions that intermediaries now perform. Whereas classical proxy and client-state arrangements were primarily concerned with military influence, regime support, or geopolitical competition, contemporary intermediaries are increasingly involved in migration management, counterterrorism operations, humanitarian containment, offshore detention, pandemic surveillance, peace operations, sanctions enforcement, and other forms of transnational risk management. In other words, the functions delegated through intermediaries have expanded significantly beyond the military domain.

It is precisely at this point that existing concepts begin to encounter analytical limitations. Proxy warfare remains fundamentally rooted in military and conflict environments. Client-state and satellite-state frameworks focus primarily on relationships of dependence and influence. Hierarchy theories explain asymmetrical authority structures. Alliance theories explain security cooperation and burden sharing. Collectively, these approaches illuminate important aspects of indirect governance but tend to conceptualize intermediary actors primarily as instruments through which stronger states pursue power, influence, or strategic advantage (Walt, 1987; Lake, 2009; Fox, 2020; Rauta, 2021). They devote comparatively less attention to the growing tendency of states to position other states between themselves and perceived sources of insecurity for purposes of risk absorption, threat containment, liability displacement, and preventive protection.

This distinction is subtle but important. A proxy state is not necessarily performing a buffering function. A client state is not necessarily absorbing risks on behalf of a patron. A satellite state may serve geopolitical purposes without being positioned between a threat and a protected state. Similarly, alliance relationships may facilitate collective defence without requiring one partner to function as an intermediary barrier against external insecurity. Consequently, while these concepts explain relationships among states, they do not fully explain a recurring pattern visible across contemporary security governance: the deliberate positioning of another state as an operational, political, legal, humanitarian, or strategic intermediary between a perceived threat and the state seeking protection.

The empirical examples increasingly visible within contemporary international politics illustrate this distinction. Kenya's leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti cannot be adequately explained as a conventional proxy-war arrangement because the mission is not principally designed to advance Kenyan geopolitical ambitions. Similarly, European agreements with Turkey, Rwanda, and Albania involve more than hierarchical dependence or alliance politics; they seek to prevent migration-related pressures from reaching European territory. Australia's offshore processing arrangements in Nauru likewise extend beyond traditional client-state relationships because they involve the displacement of legal, humanitarian, and political responsibilities

associated with migration management. In each case, the intermediary state performs a protective function by absorbing, containing, managing, or redirecting risks that might otherwise affect another state more directly.

Consequently, the literature on proxy states, client states, satellite states, strategic partnerships, and international hierarchy brings us significantly closer to understanding the phenomenon under investigation than either securitization theory or emergency governance alone. But, even this body of scholarship remains incomplete. It explains indirect action, asymmetrical relationships, and delegated authority, but it does not fully conceptualize the increasingly common practice whereby states seek security through the positioning of another state between themselves and a perceived source of insecurity. To identify that logic more clearly, it is necessary to examine perhaps the closest existing analogue within contemporary scholarship: the literature on migration externalization and offshore governance.

3.4 Migration Externalization and Offshore Governance

Among the various strands of scholarship examined in this study, the literature on migration externalization and offshore governance arguably comes closest to identifying the empirical logic underlying the Third-State Posture. Unlike securitization theory, which concentrates on the construction of threats, or proxy-war scholarship, which focuses primarily on indirect military relationships, migration-externalization scholars have explicitly documented how states seek to manage perceived threats by relocating responsibility beyond their territorial boundaries. Indeed, over the last two decades, a substantial body of scholarship has emerged examining how states increasingly attempt to prevent migration-related pressures from reaching their territories through arrangements involving transit countries, offshore processing centres, safe-third-country agreements, and extraterritorial asylum systems (Lavenex, 2006; Boswell, 2007; Üstübcici, 2019; Mlambo, 2020; Saenz Perez, 2023).

At the centre of this literature lies the concept of externalization. Broadly understood, externalization refers to the displacement of migration-control functions beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the receiving state (Boswell, 2007; Lavenex, 2006). Rather than managing asylum claims, refugee reception, border screening, detention, or deportation within their own territories, states increasingly seek to relocate these functions to other political spaces. Migration governance consequently becomes geographically dispersed, institutionally fragmented, and politically delegated. Control is exercised not merely at the border but far beyond it, often through agreements with third countries that assume operational responsibilities for interception, containment, processing, surveillance, or return.

European migration governance provides some of the clearest examples of this trend. The European Union's agreements with Turkey, Libya, Tunisia, Albania, and other neighbouring states have increasingly sought to prevent migrants from reaching European territory by strengthening migration controls beyond European borders (Üstübcici, 2019; Mlambo, 2020; EPRS, 2024). The logic underlying these arrangements is fundamentally preventive. Migration is not managed once migrants arrive in Europe; rather, it is addressed before arrival becomes possible. Transit countries become sites of containment. Border control is relocated geographically outward. Security management thus occurs at a distance from the territory of the state claiming vulnerability.

The United Kingdom's Rwanda Partnership provides a particularly revealing illustration. Although justified publicly in terms of deterrence, orderly migration management, and the protection of asylum systems, the arrangement effectively sought to relocate significant responsibilities associated with asylum processing from British territory to Rwanda (Saenz Perez, 2023; EU Migration Law Blog, 2024). Similarly, contemporary debates concerning return hubs, safe-third-country arrangements, and extraterritorial asylum mechanisms reveal a growing willingness among states to transfer legal, political, administrative, and humanitarian responsibilities to external actors (Jacques Delors Institute, 2025; Externalizing Asylum, 2025). In these cases, the third country functions not merely as a partner but as a protective intermediary positioned between the migrant population and the destination state.

Australia's offshore processing regime in Nauru and Papua New Guinea extends this logic even further. Since the early 2000s, Australian governments have increasingly relied upon offshore processing centres to prevent asylum seekers arriving by sea from accessing the Australian mainland and its domestic legal protections (Kaldor Centre, 2024; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2024). Scholars have noted that these arrangements effectively relocate legal responsibility, humanitarian obligations, political accountability, and public scrutiny beyond Australia's territorial borders (Tubakovic, 2024; Refugee Council of Australia, 2025). Although formally justified in terms of deterrence and border integrity, offshore processing simultaneously functions as a mechanism through which risks associated with migration management are displaced geographically and politically.

The significance of this literature extends beyond migration itself. What migration-externalization scholars have identified is not merely a migration policy but a broader governing logic. States increasingly seek protection not solely through exclusion but through displacement. Rather than confronting perceived threats directly within their territories, they attempt to relocate the management of those threats to external spaces. Security becomes less a matter of territorial defence and more a matter of geographical reconfiguration. The border is no longer fixed at the territorial edge of the state; it becomes mobile, flexible, and exportable. Governance increasingly occurs through distant actors, external territories, and intermediary states.

Nonetheless, despite these important insights, migration-externalization scholarship remains largely confined to the migration domain. The literature has produced sophisticated analyses of asylum governance, border externalization, refugee management, and offshore detention, but it has generally treated these developments as migration-specific phenomena rather than manifestations of a broader transformation in international security governance (Boswell, 2007; Üstübeci, 2019; Saenz Perez, 2023). Consequently, while scholars have documented how migration pressures are managed through third countries, less attention has been devoted to the possibility that similar logics operate across other issue areas including counterterrorism, peace operations, military stabilization, pandemic containment, sanctions enforcement, and geopolitical competition.

This limitation becomes increasingly apparent when migration externalization is placed alongside other contemporary security practices. The European Union's reliance on Turkey to manage migration flows exhibits structural similarities to Australia's use of Nauru, to American reliance on Mexico for migration management, and arguably even to broader arrangements in which powerful states seek to address instability, conflict, or insecurity through regional partners rather than through direct intervention (Ortega Velázquez, 2020; Migration Policy Institute, 2024; Baker Institute, 2025). In each case, another state assumes responsibilities that would otherwise fall more directly upon the state seeking protection. The issue domains differ, but the underlying logic remains strikingly similar.

Consequently, migration-externalization scholarship provides perhaps the strongest empirical foundation upon which a broader theory can be constructed. It reveals that contemporary states increasingly manage insecurity through geographical displacement, delegated governance, and intermediary actors. However, the literature stops short of generalizing this observation beyond migration governance. What remains missing is a concept capable of integrating these insights with parallel developments observed in proxy warfare, security partnerships, peace operations, offshore governance, and preventive security arrangements. It is precisely this gap that motivates the development of the Third-State Posture as a more encompassing analytical framework.

Having examined securitization, emergency governance, proxy relationships, hierarchy, and migration externalization, the discussion now possesses the necessary foundations to move beyond critique and toward conceptual construction. The task that follows is therefore not merely to identify the limitations of existing concepts but to develop a more comprehensive framework capable of explaining why states increasingly seek protection through intermediary states positioned between themselves and perceived sources of insecurity.

3.5 Towards a Theory of the Third-State Posture

The preceding discussion has demonstrated that contemporary International Relations scholarship possesses a rich array of concepts capable of explaining particular dimensions of indirect security governance. Securitization theory explains how issues become framed as existential threats. Emergency governance scholarship explains the normalization of exceptional and preventive interventions. Proxy-war literature explains indirect military action. Hierarchy, alliance, and client-state theories explain asymmetrical relationships between stronger and weaker states. Migration-externalization scholarship reveals how governance functions are increasingly displaced beyond territorial borders. Each of these literatures illuminates an important component of contemporary security practice. Yet none fully captures a recurring pattern increasingly visible across diverse issue domains: the tendency of states to seek protection from actual or anticipated threats through the strategic positioning of another state between themselves and the perceived source of insecurity.

Viewed individually, the cases examined in contemporary scholarship often appear distinct. Migration agreements between Europe and Turkey are typically analyzed as migration governance. Australia's offshore processing arrangements are treated as asylum policy. Kenya's leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti is discussed within the literature on peace operations and international stabilization. The strategic relationship between the United States and Israel is usually examined through the lenses of alliance politics, regional security, or Middle Eastern geopolitics. Yet when examined collectively, these apparently unrelated cases reveal a strikingly similar underlying logic. In each instance, one state assumes responsibilities that contribute to protecting another state from perceived risks, threats, liabilities, pressures, or insecurities originating elsewhere. The issue areas differ, the institutional arrangements vary, and the political justifications change, but the underlying strategic architecture remains remarkably consistent.

This observation suggests the existence of a broader phenomenon that remains only partially visible within existing conceptual frameworks. Contemporary states increasingly seek security not solely through direct defence, deterrence, exclusion, or intervention, but through the strategic utilization of intermediary states that absorb, contain, redirect, manage, or prevent threats before those threats reach the territory, institutions, populations, or political systems of the state seeking protection. The intermediary state therefore performs a distinct political function. It becomes neither the source of the threat nor the primary beneficiary of protection. Rather, it occupies a position between the two, functioning as a strategic buffer through which insecurity is managed at a distance. This study conceptualizes this arrangement as the Third-State Posture. The Third-State Posture refers to a strategic configuration in which a state seeks protection from actual or anticipated adverse consequences originating elsewhere through the positioning, utilization, support, or empowerment of another state that assumes responsibility for managing, containing, absorbing, redirecting,

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or mitigating those consequences before they directly affect the protected state. Unlike traditional notions of alliance, proxy warfare, clientelism, or externalization, the defining feature of the Third-State Posture is not dependence, military cooperation, territorial proximity, or institutional hierarchy. Rather, its defining characteristic is the protective intermediary function performed by the third state.

Under this framework, the central analytical question shifts from asking whether states cooperate to asking how security responsibilities are spatially and politically distributed. The Third-State Posture directs attention toward the relocation of risk management across political space. Security is no longer understood exclusively as a relationship between a threatened state and a threatening actor. Instead, a third actor enters the relationship and becomes a critical component of the security architecture. The resulting arrangement transforms what would otherwise be a dyadic security relationship into a triangular one. Threats originating from one location are managed through another location before reaching their intended or perceived target.

The concept also differs from several closely related notions frequently employed within International Relations. Unlike proxy states, third states are not necessarily instruments for projecting military force. Unlike client states, they need not be politically subordinate to a patron. Unlike satellite states, they need not exist within a sphere of influence. Unlike allies, they need not enjoy reciprocal security guarantees. Unlike migration-externalization arrangements, they are not confined to border governance. Rather, the Third-State Posture identifies a broader strategic function that may manifest across multiple policy domains including migration management, military stabilization, counterterrorism, humanitarian containment, sanctions enforcement, pandemic response, maritime security, and geopolitical competition.

Importantly, the Third-State Posture should not be understood as a fixed institutional category. It is more accurately conceived as a strategic posture that states adopt under particular conditions. The same state may function as a third state in one context while acting as a protected state or even a threat source in another. Kenya, for example, may function as a third state within the context of the Haiti mission while simultaneously acting as a protected state within broader regional security arrangements in East Africa. Similarly, Turkey may operate as a third state in relation to European migration governance while pursuing its own independent security objectives in other policy domains. The concept therefore refers not to the inherent nature of states but to the strategic roles they perform within particular security configurations.

From the foregoing discussion, four defining attributes of the Third-State Posture can be identified.

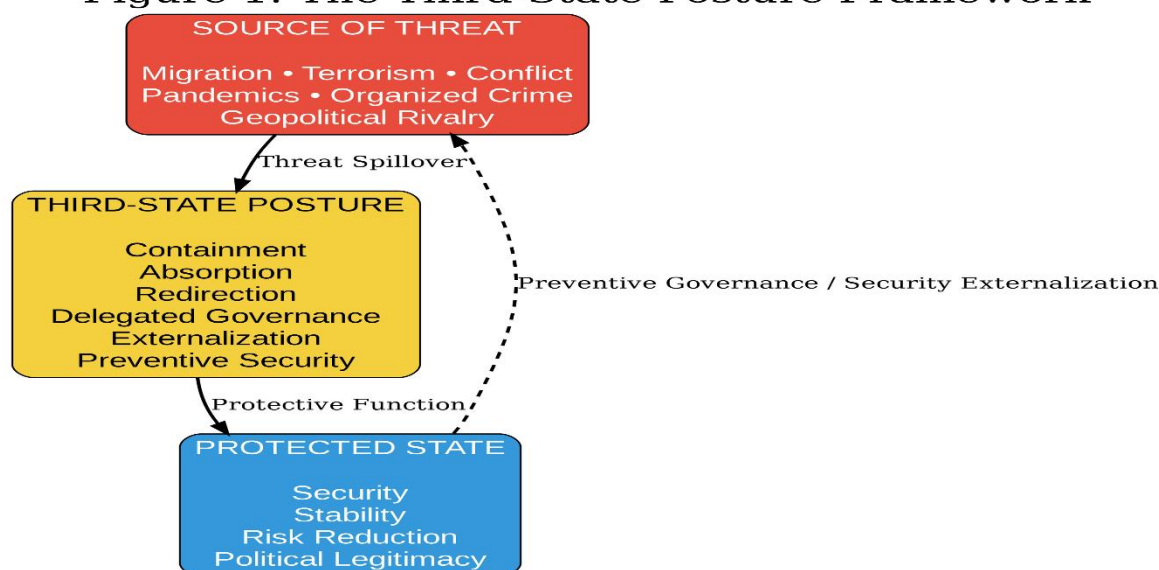
- First, there must exist a perceived threat, risk, pressure, or insecurity whose anticipated consequences extend beyond its immediate geographical origin. Without a perceived threat, there is no basis for the protective arrangement.
- Second, a state seeking protection must identify that threat as sufficiently significant to justify preventive action beyond its own territory. This element links the concept directly to securitization and emergency governance.
- Third, another state must assume a substantive role in managing, absorbing, containing, redirecting, or mitigating the perceived threat. This intermediary role constitutes the defining characteristic of the posture.
- Fourth, the arrangement must produce protective effects, whether military, political, legal, humanitarian, economic, or reputational, for the state seeking protection.

Taken together, these four attributes distinguish the Third-State Posture from existing concepts while preserving important insights from the broader literature.

More broadly, the concept contributes to International Relations theory in three ways. First, it provides a unifying framework capable of integrating insights currently dispersed across securitization studies, emergency governance, proxy-war scholarship, alliance theory, migration-externalization literature, and studies of international hierarchy. Second, it draws attention to the growing spatial reorganization of security governance in which risks are increasingly managed beyond the territories of states claiming vulnerability. Third, it offers a conceptual vocabulary for understanding emerging forms of indirect protection that are becoming increasingly central to contemporary international politics but remain inadequately captured by existing theoretical frameworks.

The concept of the Third-State Posture therefore does not seek to replace existing theories. Rather, it seeks to reveal a broader strategic logic connecting phenomena that have traditionally been examined separately. By identifying the intermediary protective function as the common denominator linking diverse contemporary security practices, the concept provides a foundation for understanding how states increasingly pursue security through others in an era characterized by transnational threats, preventive governance, and the growing externalization of responsibility. The figure 1 below summarizes this concept.

Figure 1: The Third-State Posture Framework



Source: Authors (2026).

4. DISCUSSION

The analysis undertaken in this study suggests that contemporary international politics is witnessing a subtle but significant transformation in the organization of security governance. While scholars have long documented the importance of alliances, security partnerships, and balancing arrangements in the management of international insecurity (Keohane, 1984; Walt, 1987; Snyder, 1997; Morrow, 2000; Lake, 2009), as well as the growing significance of proxy warfare, indirect intervention, and hierarchical security relationships (Mumford, 2013; Hughes, 2014; Groh, 2019; Fox, 2020; Rauta, 2021; Cooley & Nexon, 2020), these phenomena have generally been examined within distinct analytical traditions. Similarly, migration scholars have increasingly demonstrated how border controls, asylum governance, and refugee management are being externalized beyond territorial borders through arrangements involving transit countries, offshore detention centres, and safe-third-country agreements (Lavenex, 2006; Boswell, 2007; Üstübeci, 2019; Mlambo, 2020; Saenz Perez, 2023; EPRS, 2024), while studies of emergency governance and securitization have highlighted the normalization of exceptional measures and preventive interventions in response to perceived threats (Wæver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998; Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; McDonald, 2008; Balzacq, 2011; Kirk & McDonald, 2021). The concept of the Third-State Posture suggests that these seemingly disparate developments may in fact be manifestations of a broader strategic logic centred upon intermediary security governance. Viewed through this lens, Kenya's leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, the strategic role of Israel within wider United States security calculations, European migration externalization arrangements involving Turkey and Rwanda, Australia's offshore processing regime in Nauru, and migration-management cooperation between the United States and Mexico appear less as isolated policy innovations and more as different expressions of a common governance architecture. The typologies identified in this study further reveal the adaptability of this architecture across multiple issue domains. Military-stabilization variants emerge where intermediary states assume operational security functions on behalf of wider international interests. Strategic-geopolitical variants position intermediary states as forward actors within broader regional contests. Migration-containment variants seek to intercept, process, or deter population movements before they reach destination states. Offshore-humanitarian variants relocate legal, administrative, and humanitarian responsibilities beyond national territory, while border-buffer variants rely upon neighbouring states to absorb pressures before they reach the state seeking protection. Although these variants differ substantially in their institutional arrangements and policy instruments, they collectively demonstrate that intermediary protection has become an increasingly important organizing principle of contemporary security governance.

Beyond demonstrating empirical diversity, the findings point toward a broader transformation in the meaning of sovereignty and security under conditions of globalization. Traditional realist and neorealist approaches generally conceived security in territorial terms, emphasizing military capabilities, deterrence, balance-of-power politics, and the defence of sovereign borders (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979; Jervis, 1978; Mearsheimer, 2001). However, a growing body of scholarship has argued that globalization, technological interconnectedness, transnational mobility, and complex interdependence have progressively blurred the distinction between internal and external security (Keohane & Nye, 1977; Beck, 1992; Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; Acharya, 2014; Cooley & Nexon, 2020). Security threats increasingly originate beyond territorial borders yet generate consequences within them, thereby

encouraging governments to extend security practices outward into distant political spaces. The cases examined in this study reinforce these observations but also suggest an important refinement. Contemporary states are not merely extending security beyond their borders; they are increasingly doing so through other states. In this sense, the Third-State Posture resonates with emerging scholarship on deterritorialized governance, offshore regulation, migration externalization, and transnational risk management (Boswell, 2007; Lavenex, 2006; Üstübeci, 2019; Tubakovic, 2024; Jacques Delors Institute, 2025). Security is no longer exercised solely through territorial control but increasingly through the capacity to influence political, military, legal, and humanitarian processes occurring elsewhere. The result is a growing spatial reorganization of security governance in which external spaces become integral components of domestic security architectures.

The findings further suggest that neither realism nor idealism independently provides a fully satisfactory explanation of this development. Realism offers considerable explanatory power because Third-State Postures frequently emerge from concerns relating to state survival, risk minimization, burden shifting, domestic political constraints, strategic flexibility, and the avoidance of direct military, financial, legal, or diplomatic costs associated with intervention (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001; Walt, 1987). The attraction of intermediary arrangements lies precisely in their capacity to provide protection while limiting exposure. Powerful states are often able to preserve strategic influence without assuming the full consequences of direct involvement. Yet purely realist explanations struggle to account for the extent to which such arrangements are routinely justified through narratives of humanitarian protection, international responsibility, stabilization, democracy promotion, peacebuilding, collective security, and global governance (Doyle, 1986; Finnemore, 2003; Ikenberry, 2011). The Kenya-led mission in Haiti, for example, has been framed not merely as a security intervention but also as a contribution to international peace and stability. European migration agreements are frequently justified through appeals to orderly migration governance and humanitarian protection, while strategic partnerships are often embedded within broader narratives of regional stability and international cooperation. Conversely, idealist explanations help illuminate the normative language through which such arrangements are legitimized but often underestimate the strategic calculations and national interests that underpin them. The Third-State Posture therefore appears to occupy a hybrid space in which realist objectives are frequently pursued through idealist justifications, enabling states simultaneously to advance security interests and maintain normative legitimacy.

The concept also carries important implications for understanding contemporary inequalities within the international system. Although intermediary arrangements are often presented as mutually beneficial partnerships, the distribution of responsibilities, risks, and consequences frequently remains asymmetrical. Scholarship on international hierarchy, dependence, and global governance has long emphasized how unequal power relations shape the allocation of authority and responsibility within international politics (Krasner, 1999; Lake, 2009; Barnett & Duvall, 2005; Nexon & Wright, 2007). The cases examined in this study suggest that such asymmetries increasingly extend into the management of insecurity itself. States occupying third-state positions often absorb substantial operational, humanitarian, political, legal, and reputational burdens while the primary beneficiaries remain insulated from many of the direct consequences associated with insecurity. Transit countries may manage migration flows. Regional actors may undertake stabilization missions. Offshore jurisdictions may host detention facilities. Strategic partners may assume frontline security responsibilities. This does not imply that intermediary states are passive instruments of more powerful actors. Indeed, many derive diplomatic prestige, economic resources, security assistance, or geopolitical influence from these arrangements. Nevertheless, the Third-State Posture highlights the uneven geography of contemporary security governance and reveals how global risks are increasingly managed through differentiated distributions of responsibility across states possessing unequal capacities and bargaining power.

More broadly, the concept developed in this study points toward an emerging mode of international order characterized by the externalization of responsibility and the displacement of security management across political space. The growing prominence of intermediary actors suggests that contemporary security governance is becoming increasingly networked, preventive, and geographically dispersed. As transnational threats continue to evolve, states are likely to rely even more heavily on arrangements that relocate responsibility outward while preserving protection inward. Future manifestations of the Third-State Posture may emerge in areas such as cyber security, climate adaptation, pandemic preparedness, sanctions enforcement, maritime governance, artificial intelligence regulation, and critical infrastructure protection. The concept therefore provides more than a framework for understanding current developments. It offers a lens through which future transformations in international politics may be interpreted, particularly as states confront growing pressures to manage increasingly transnational forms of insecurity without assuming the full costs of direct intervention. In this respect, the Third-State Posture contributes not only to debates concerning securitization, emergency governance, externalization, and international hierarchy but also to broader discussions regarding the evolving relationship between sovereignty, security, and responsibility in the twenty-first century.

Table 1: Typologies of Third State Posture

Typologies of Third-State Posture	Primary Function	Illustrative Example
Military-Stabilization	Security intervention	Kenya–Haiti MSS
Strategic-Geopolitical	Regional security projection	US–Israel
Migration-Containment	Migration interception	EU–Turkey/Rwanda
Offshore-Humanitarian	Asylum externalization	Australia–Nauru
Border-Buffer	Transit-state management	US–Mexico

Source: Authors (2026).

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