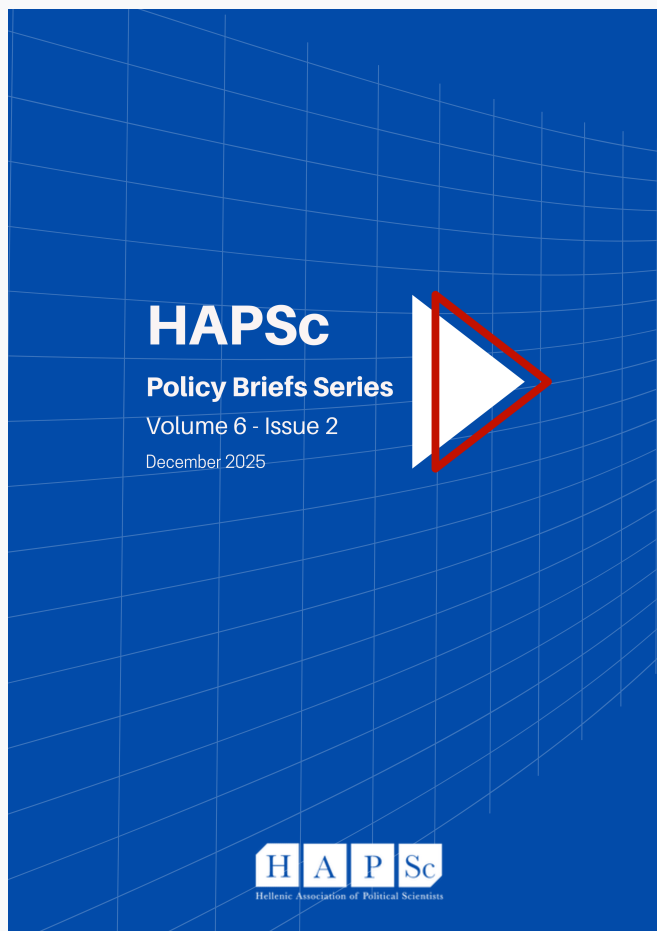


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Confirming the Geopolitical Theory of Hyperland: New Evidence from Grand Strategy Documents of the United Kingdom and France¹

Georgios Koukakis²

Abstract

Hyperland is an out-of-the-box theory of geopolitics that was coined in late-2024 in an attempt to explain the contemporary behaviour of major international actors. It claims that contemporary strategic competition is mainly focused on the new strategic domains of space, cyberspace and the information space, which constitute the imaginary geopolitical area of Hyperland. Its main argument is that major international actors aspire to achieve technological superiority in order to gain dominance in the aforementioned strategic domains, as this will allow them to control Hyperland and eventually command the World. The purpose of this article is to provide additional data (drawn from the 2025 National Strategic Review of France and the 2025 National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom) that confirm the main argument of Hyperland, in an effort to contribute to the on-going debate that has been initiated concerning the respective novel theory.

Keywords: Hyperland; Geopolitics; France; United Kingdom; National Strategic Review; National Security Strategy; Strategic Competition

Introduction

The geopolitical theory of *Hyperland* – an imaginary geopolitical area comprising space, cyberspace and the information space – was first introduced to academia via an article entitled ‘*From Heartland and Rimland, to Hyperland: Introducing a New Geopolitical Theory*’ that was published in the 5(2) issue of the ‘HAPSc Policy Briefs Series’ scientific journal (Koukakis, 2024). According to the aforementioned article, Hyperland provides a new conceptual framework that takes into consideration the emerging dynamics of geopolitics to explain the way leading international actors behave in the contemporary strategic environment because the existing geopolitical theories can no longer explain it sufficiently (Koukakis, 2024:81).

An extended version of Hyperland was published in mid-2025 (Koukakis, 2026) as part of Pietrzak’s (2026a) edited collective work entitled ‘*Strengthening International Relations Through Transformative Theory and Practice*’, presenting additional data which supported the main arguments of the theory. In the context of the academic debate that the novel geopolitical theory initiated,

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Pietrzak (2026b:7) criticised Hyperland in regard to the perspectives of classical geopolitics, in his new book entitled ‘*Geopolitical Rivalries and Strategic Competition Across Eurasia*’.

The purpose of this article is to further investigate if the main argument of Hyperland is confirmed by the behaviour of the United Kingdom (UK) and France, by conducting a brief case-study analysis of the French *National Strategic Review* (NSR) and the UK *National Security Strategy* (NSS) that were published in 2025. Its importance lies in the fact that it complements the existing literature related to geopolitics and strategic competition, contributes to the advancement of the Hyperland theory and the respective on-going academic debate that has been initiated, and identifies trends as well as emerging dynamics of the contemporary geopolitical arena, thus helps scholars and analysts interpret the behaviour of major international actors and policy-makers make more effective decisions.

The Concept of Hyperland & Its Confrontation with Classical Geopolitics

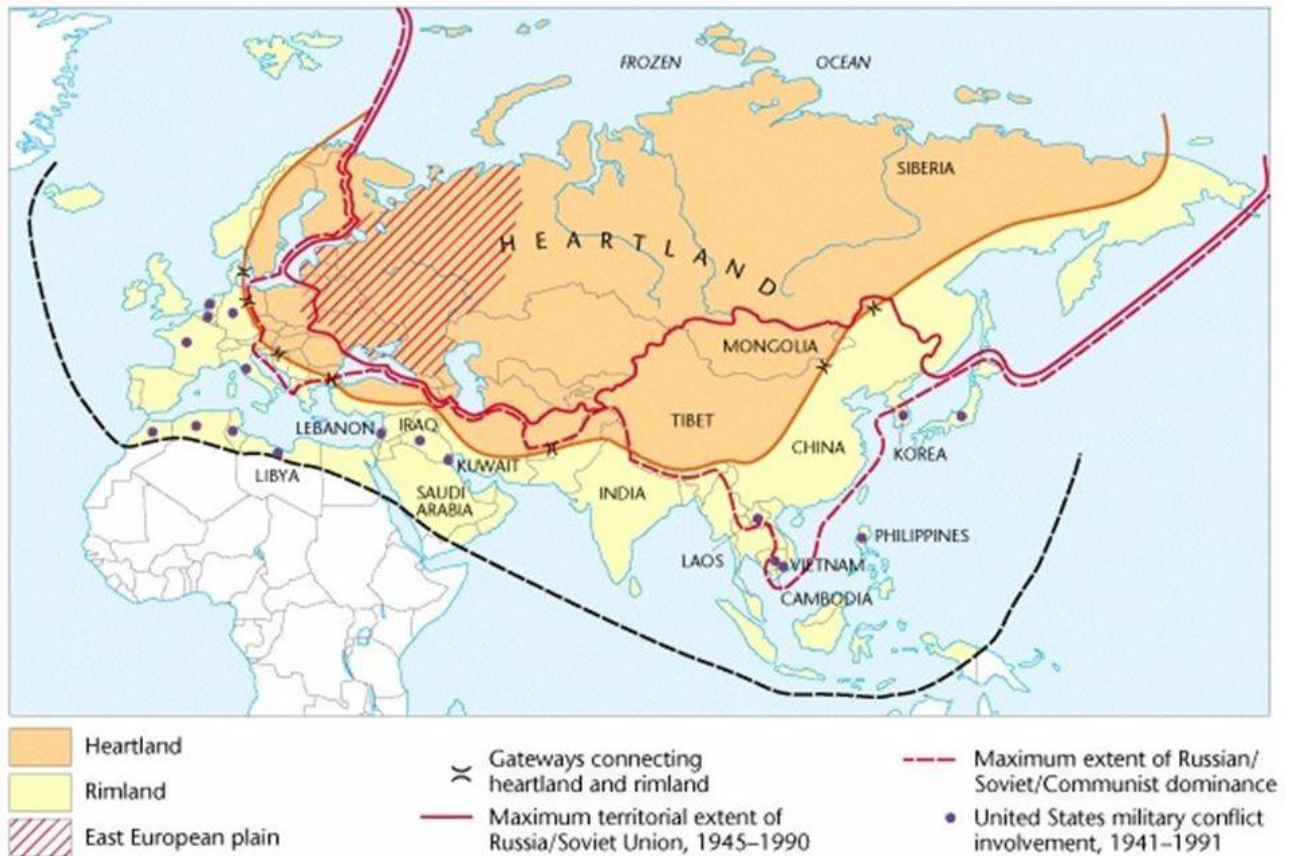
As noted in Hyperland, Mackinder’s geopolitical theory of *Heartland* (Figure 1) argued that strategic competition between major actors focuses on the land domain. It stressed that dominance can be achieved through land power and that whoever controls Central Eurasia commands the World (Koukakis, 2024:82). On the contrary, Spykman’s geopolitical theory of *Rimland* (Figure 1) argued that strategic competition between major actors focuses on the maritime domain, stressing that dominance can be achieved through sea power and that whoever controls Coastal South Eurasia commands the World (Koukakis, 2024:83).

Building upon these two classical geopolitics theories, the “out-of-the-box”³ theory of *Hyperland* (Figure 2) –acknowledging the vital connection between technology and (national) power, in conjunction with the enduring pursuit of most major international actors to gain dominance in the land, air and maritime domain– argues that contemporary strategic competition between major international actors focuses on the domains of space, cyberspace and the information space. The theory notes that these three strategic spaces constitute the imaginary multi-domain geopolitical area of Hyperland which surrounds the globe (Koukakis, 2024:85-87), also stressing that:

“Who controls the Hyperland rules both Heartland and Rimland, thus commands the World-Island: Who rules the World-Island commands the World.” (Koukakis, 2024:87)

³ The term “out-of-the-box” is used to describe something that does not comply with the traditional norms.

Figure 1. Graphic design of the theories of Heartland & Rimland



Source: Koukakis (2024)

In the context of the academic debate about Hyperland, Pietrzak (2026b:7) noted that most classical thinkers would indeed agree with Hyperland’s argument that major international actors seek technological supremacy and that dominance in space, cyberspace and the information space enables them to control the world. On the contrary, he stressed that Hyperland’s argument that the traditional geopolitical domains are neglected by major contemporary international actors is unacceptable from the perspectives of classical geopolitics, referring that:

“Most realist scholars would also agree that Eurasian politics, which is related to possessing the actual land, is crucial to world politics. Surely, geopolitics is not what it used to be; it does not involve global domination attained by military means, dominating the island, or exercising total control over the Rimland or Heartland. However, geopolitics’ founders’ recognition of Eurasia’s significance in the 1940s is still relevant in 2026. Eurasia is still the principal arena of geopolitical competition in world politics, understood in realistic terms, and this will not change anytime soon; we need to find a

way to approach it conceptually. I recommend making old geopolitics more inclusive with an innovative approach to Eurasian politics.” (Pietrzak, 2026:7-8)

Figure 2. Graphic design of the theory of Hyperland



Source: Koukakis (2024)

Driven by the adverse conditions of the modern security environment of *permacrises* and *polycrises* and the need to address a variety of security threats and risks (Koukakis, 2023b:61-62), many state and non-state actors have recently reviewed their grand strategies in an effort to enhance their (national) security. In this context, the United Kingdom published its *National Security Strategy* on 24 June 2025 (HM Government, 2025), while France published its *National Strategic Review* on 13 July 2025 (Republic of France, 2025). Analysing the aforementioned grand strategy documents can therefore provide useful information on whether the behaviour of these two major international actors complies with the basic principles of Hyperland.

The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom

The 2025 NSS of the UK is a 55 pages-long grand strategy document comprising a *Forward* by the UK's Prime Minister (Keir Starmer), an *Introduction*, a part referring to the *Strategic Context* –the conditions (threats, risks, challenges, and opportunities) of the security environment– as it is perceived by the government of the UK, a second part defining the *Strategic Framework* –the ends (goals) that need to be achieved in addition to the means and ways to do so– as planned by the government of the UK, and a *Conclusion*. In regard to the document's context, the references that are related to the concept of Hyperland and Eurasian politics are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

In its first main part entitled '*The Strategic Context: Navigating an era of radical uncertainty*', the document stresses inter alia that Russia and China attempt to gain dominance in *outer space* and *cyberspace*, characterising our times as an '*era of radical uncertainty*' (HM Government, 2025:17). Moreover, the 2025 NSS refers that:

“Authoritarian states are putting in place multi-year plans to out-compete liberal democracies in every domain, from military modernisation to science and technology development, from their economic models to the information space.” (HM Government, 2025:17)

As far as the second part (Strategic Framework) is concerned, *Pillar (i)* entitled '*Security at Home*' emphasises on addressing both physical and cyber threats, increasing cyber security defences and the vital role of intelligence agencies, protecting undersea infrastructure that carry information, addressing foreign influence, terrorism and tech-enabled cyber threats using several tools –e.g. the Online Safety Act of 2023 and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)– and via intelligence cooperation (both intrastate and interstate), and building resilience to future threats that inter alia derive from the development in the field of science and technology (HM Government, 2025:21-28).

Pillar (ii) entitled '*Strength Abroad*' refers to the importance of implementing an effective foreign policy using all the elements of the UK's national power, stressing inter alia the significance of intelligence, science and technology (S&T), the importance of enhancing collective security by pursuing a 'NATO First' approach, the need for deepening the UK's existing alliances and developing new ones focusing on emerging sectors –such as intelligence, S&T, and space– and new geographic areas such as the Indo-Pacific, also noting that the UK aims to enhance its relations with India, North Korea, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan (HM Government, 2025:29-40).

Finally, *Pillar (iii)* entitled ‘*Increase Sovereign and Asymmetric Capabilities*’ highlights the importance of enhancing the UK’s capabilities in critical sectors such as new and emerging technologies, rebuild the UK’s defence industrial base, maintain sovereign capabilities –including the ones of the intelligence agencies, the S&T sector, and the National Cyber Force (NCF)– and pursue asymmetric advantage through research & development (R&D), enhance Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum technology capabilities, and further develop the UK’s military space capabilities to enhance resilience and gain operational advantage (HM Government, 2025:41-49).

The National Strategic Review of France

The 2025 NSR of France is a 100 pages-long strategic document comprising a *Forward* by the French President (Emmanuel Macron), an *Introduction*, a part referring to the *Strategic Context* as it is perceived by the French Presidency, a second part referring to the *Updated Ambition* –meaning the strategic objectives (SO) that need to be achieved– as it is defined by the French Presidency, and a final part referring to the *Ways and Means* through which the SO are going to be achieved. In regard to the document’s context, the references that are related to the concept of Hyperland are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

In its first part entitled ‘*Evolution of the Strategic Context since 2022*’,⁴ the document notes that Russia has increased the use of non-conventional indirect ways –such as information manipulation, cyberattacks, espionage, electoral interference, and hostile demonstrations– to achieve its coercive and revisionist positions, and that China’s cyber operations, scientific and technological predation, and space activities have also increased significantly. Moreover, it notes that cybercrime and conflict in the information space has grown (Republic of France, 2025:10-15), also stressing that:

“Digital infrastructures and the data they carry have now become both a target, a battleground, and a tool of conflict. [...] Since 2022, space, both a theatre of strategic competition between major powers and a fully-fledged domain of operations, has seen a growing risk of uncontrolled escalation, driven by the increase in unfriendly, ambiguous, or even hostile behaviours, the development of offensive satellites, and sophisticated military satellite constellations. [...] Finally, the threat of hostile actions on the deep seabed

⁴ The 2025 NSR is a revised version of the 2022 NSR (Republic of France, 2022), maintaining some of the content of the latter.

has increased significantly, targeting energy and information infrastructure, some of which is considered critical.” (Republic of France, 2025:20)

As far as the second part (An updated 2030 ambition, backed by appropriate resources) is concerned, SO-4 entitled ‘*First-class cyber resilience*’ highlights the vital importance of cyberspace, also expressing inter alia France’s aspiration of becoming a leading global power in this sector (Republic of France, 2025:47-50). Moreover, SO-6 entitled ‘*France as a driving force behind European strategic autonomy*’ defines an action plan aiming at ensuring European technological superiority in critical areas (Republic of France, 2025:58), while SO-8 entitled ‘*Guaranteed autonomy of assessment and decision-making sovereignty*’ defines an action plan that stresses the vital role of both information and technology (Republic of France, 2025:58-66).

Furthermore, SO-10 entitled ‘*The ability to achieve decisive outcomes in military operations*’, stresses the importance of countering hostile information attacks and developing both decompartmentalised data management and high-performance information processing capabilities, also referring that space is a potential *area of confrontation* (Republic of France, 2025:73-76). Concerning SO-11 entitled ‘*Supporting French and European sovereignty through academic, scientific and technological excellence*’, it defines a long term action plan that aims inter alia to control key technological advances in AI and data management, space and quantum, and protect research and technological development (Republic of France, 2025:77-81).

Finally, the 2025 NSR contains several references related to Eurasian politics. Notably, it refers that the French overseas territories in the Indo-Pacific are exposed to the US-China strategic competition (Republic of France, 2025:21), the ability of France to act in the Indo-Pacific must be maintained in order for France’s national interests to be protected (Republic of France, 2025:25), France will support the EU’s defence relations with its Indo-Pacific partners (Republic of France, 2025:57), the French presence in the Indo-Pacific needs to be strengthened to ensure stability in the region (Republic of France, 2025:31;63), France has effectively implemented its 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy (Republic of France, 2025:61;63), and that the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs must inter alia focus on the Indo-Pacific (Republic of France, 2025:89).

Connecting Theory with Practice

Taking into consideration the data presented in this article, it is evident that the UK and France acknowledge that technological advancement –especially in quantum technology and AI– facilitates superiority over other actors in the non-traditional strategic domains of space, cyberspace and the

information space, which in turn leads to dominance in the context of the contemporary strategic competition. This is exactly why they are willing –as showcased by their set objectives– to commit significant resources and invest in R&D in order to enhance their capabilities in these three domains, mostly to build resilience –a vital capacity that has been highlighted by many major international actors (Koukakis, 2023a)– against modern security threats rather than use these capabilities in an aggressive manner against other actors.

The same applies for their military capabilities, the enhancement of which is conducted not for offensive reasons – e.g. to possess land or control the air/maritime domain – but purely in the context of their national defence. Besides, Hyperland’s key strategic domains are dual-use, as they are used not only for civilian but for military reasons as well, such as the conduction of cyber, information, psychological and/or electronic warfare. Therefore, the expressed focus of France and the UK on these strategic domains must be seen as a new way to achieve the old but lasting key (military and political) objective of coercion.

Moreover, despite that neither the UK nor France express any aspirations to conquer land, their overseas territories in the Indo-Pacific (Loft, 2023; Morcos, 2021) can be seen as cases that comply with the concept of Rimland. In addition to that, both states’ support towards Ukraine (HM Government, 2025:11; Republic of France, 2025:55) to prevent Russia from annexing more terrain can also be seen as a case that complies with the concept of Heartland revealing that classical geopolitics still apply in some cases. Besides, Hyperland does not reject classical geopolitics as it accepts that contemporary actors still fight over territory issues (Koukakis, 2024:85), also mentioning Rossiter’s position on ‘*bots on the ground*’ (Koukakis, 2024:90) which implies that the possession of territory in the future will be achieved by machines instead of humans.

Conclusions

To conclude, the content of the grand strategy documents of the UK and France seems to confirm the concept of Hyperland, which needs to be seen –exactly as Piort Pietrzak suggests– as an inclusive geopolitics theory that integrates the strategic domains of space, cyberspace and the information space into the past geopolitical theories. Concerning Pietrzak’s point to re-examine geopolitics through an innovative approach to Eurasian politics, it must be stressed that the enhanced contemporary interest of most Western actors concerning the Indo-Pacific region –making it the world’s center of gravity (Saxer, 2024)– indicates that focusing on Eurasian politics will indeed add value to the old geopolitics. Nevertheless, when considering contemporary geopolitics and the possession of land, someone needs to keep in mind Schelling’s (1996:34) remark that:

“Military strategy can no longer be thought of, as it could for some countries in some eras, as the science of military victory. It is now equally, if not more, the art of coercion, of intimidation and deterrence. The instruments of war are more punitive than acquisitive”.

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