

HANS KÖCHLER

**« SEIN UND SCHEIN DER WELTORDNUNG »
BEMERKUNGEN ZUR ANARCHIE DER ÜBERGANGSZEIT
Rede zum Jahresbeginn**

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**« BEING AND APPEARANCE OF THE WORLD ORDER »
OBSERVATIONS ON THE ANARCHY OF THE TRANSITIONAL ERA
NEW YEAR'S SPEECH, 2 JANUARY 2026**

English Summary, 12 March 2026

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KÖCHLER'S CRITIQUE OF GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS

Hans Köchler's publication, *Sein und Schein der Weltordnung* ("Being and Appearance of the World Order"), based on a speech delivered on January 2, 2026, argues that the current international system is defined by a deceptive gap between idealistic rhetoric and the raw exercise of power.

His main arguments are structured around the "anarchy of transition" and the structural failure of global institutions:

1. The Anarchy of Transition Periods

- **The "Fog of War" and Peace:** Köchler posits that periods following major conflicts are characterized by a "fog" where no clear rules exist, allowing powerful actors to fill the vacuum and "reshuffle the cards" to their advantage.
- **Deceptive Idealism:** He argues that victors often use "potemkin villages" of noble ideals—such as self-determination or human rights—as a "smoke screen" to mask hegemonial interests and realpolitik.

2. Historical Dialectic of "Being" vs. "Appearance"

Köchler illustrates this deceptive pattern through historical examples:

- **First World War:** President Wilson's promise of "self-determination" was selectively applied (the "double standard"), serving the interests of the victors while ignoring regions like Tyrol or Palestine.
- **Second World War:** The promise of an "international rule of law" was undermined by "smuggling" privileges (the veto power) for the five permanent members into the UN Charter.
- **Post-Cold War:** The "New World Order" of democracy and peace acted as a "fig leaf" for unilateral interventions by the sole remaining superpower.

3. Structural Failures of the UN and International Justice

- **Institutionalized Inequality:** He asserts the UN Charter is internally contradictory because it proclaims "sovereign equality" while institutionalizing the "primacy of power" through the Security Council's voting procedures.
- **"Fake" International Justice:** Köchler argues that international criminal justice (e.g., the ICC) is compromised by political influence, where the strongest powers are effectively immune from prosecution for crimes like aggression.

4. The Shift to a "Pluriversum" of Spheres of Influence

- **Universalism vs. Multipolarity:** He contrasts the "universalism" of the UN with a developing "pluriversum"—a world divided into "Großräume" (large spaces or spheres of influence).
- **The "Donroe Doctrine":** Köchler criticizes what he terms the "Donroe Doctrine" (President Trump's updated Monroe Doctrine), which asserts American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere through raw power rather than international law.

- **Triple Hegemony:** He suggests the world is currently moving toward a "tripolarity" (USA, China, Russia) where these powers grant each other dominance in their respective regions based on "*do ut des*" (reciprocity) rather than legal norms.

Conclusion: A Choice of Paths

Köchler concludes that the world must choose between a "global [world] war" and a stable "multipolarity" based on genuine cooperation between regional organizations (like the EU, AU, or ASEAN) where member states can participate as equals, rather than being mere "vassals" to a hegemon.

KÖCHLER'S SPECIFIC CRITIQUE OF THE "TRUMP COROLLARY" TO THE MONROE DOCTRINE

Trump's "Donroe Doctrine" and the "Trump Corollary"

Hans Köchler analyzes the **National Security Strategy of the USA (2025)** to argue that President Trump has radically reinterpreted the **Monroe Doctrine** into what Köchler calls the "**Donroe Doctrine**."

The core of this critique centers on the "**Trump Corollary**," which moves from a defensive posture to an assertive, imperial one.

1. From Defense to Preeminence

- **Monroe vs. Trump:** While the original 1823 Monroe Doctrine officially focused on defending the Americas from foreign (European) intervention, Köchler argues that the "Trump Corollary" focuses on **enforcing American preeminence**.
- **Exclusion of Competitors:** The strategy explicitly states that the U.S. will deny any non-hemispheric competitors the ability to own strategically vital assets or position forces anywhere in the "Western Hemisphere."

2. The Logic of "Enlist and Expand"

- **Strategic Assets:** Köchler highlights the phrase "**Enlist and Expand**" as the operative motto for this era. This includes seeking control over military installations, ports, and critical infrastructure across the region.
- **Territorial Claims:** He points to Trump's rhetoric regarding **Greenland** and **Canada** (e.g., floating the idea of Canada joining the U.S. as the 51st state) as proof of a new, expansionist voluntarism that ignores traditional state sovereignty.

3. "Großraum" (Large Space) Theory

- **Hierarchical Order:** Following the legal philosophy of **Carl Schmitt**, Köchler views the "Donroe Doctrine" as the creation of a "**Großraum**"—a large geographic sphere where a regional hegemon dictates terms.

- **Vassalage over Equality:** In this model, smaller or weaker states (like those in the Caribbean or South America) lose their "sovereign equality" and instead pay "Tribut" (tribute) to the hegemon in exchange for protection.

4. The "Peace Through Strength" Justification

- **Realpolitik over Law:** Trump justifies these claims not through international law, but through **national security and prosperity**.
- **The "Deal" Mentality:** This creates a world of "**mutual deterrence**" and "deals" between a few great powers (USA, China, Russia), where the interests of small nations are sacrificed for a "gentlemen's agreement" between the giants.

KÖCHLER'S SPECIFIC COMPARISON BETWEEN TRUMP'S POLICIES AND THE LEGAL THEORIES OF CARL SCHMITT

Hans Köchler views the "Donroe Doctrine" as a modern-day realization of **Carl Schmitt's** geopolitical theories, particularly those found in *The Nomos of the Earth*. He argues that President Trump's actions represent a shift from a universal legal order to a "pluriversum" of competing empires.

1. The "Großraum" (Large Space) Concept

- **Definition:** Schmitt defined a "Großraum" as a political sphere where a dominant power exerts authority and excludes foreign intervention.
- **Trump's Application:** Köchler argues the "Trump Corollary" effectively claims the entire Western Hemisphere as a U.S. "Großraum," asserting that the U.S. must be preeminent for its own "security and prosperity."
- **Control over Sovereignty:** Just as Schmitt described a hierarchy within these spaces, Köchler notes that under Trump, smaller states become "vassals" that must follow the hegemon's conditions.

2. "Pluriversum" vs. "Universum"

- **Schmitt's Theory:** Schmitt critiqued the "false universalism" of international organizations, preferring a "pluriversum" of ordered large spaces.
- **Trump's "Deal" Diplomacy:** Köchler notes that Trump prefers bilateral "deals" and mutual deterrence over universal international law.
- **End of Equality:** This shift replaces the UN principle of "sovereign equality" with a system where only the great powers (the "P3" or similar) are truly sovereign, while others are relegated to interest spheres.

3. The Rejection of "Fake Universalism"

- **The UN Critique:** Both Schmitt and Köchler (via his analysis of Trump) view the UN's "Peace through Law" motto as an illusion.
- **Power over Norms:** Köchler argues that Trump's blunt use of power (e.g., in Venezuela or regarding Greenland) strips away the "Schaufensterdekoration" (window dressing) of

international norms, revealing the raw "will to power" that Schmitt identified as the true driver of geopolitics.

4. Justification through "Biological" Necessity

- **Ratzel and Schmitt:** Köchler links Trump's rhetoric to Friedrich Ratzel's "law of growing spaces," which suggests that "wide space maintains life."
- **Utilitarian Expansion:** He argues that Trump's claims—such as those on Greenland—are purely utilitarian and voluntaristic, echoing the "biogeographical" justifications used by historical expansionist powers.

KÖCHLER'S SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (LIKE THE EU OR AU) COULD PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THIS "GREAT GAME" OF SUPERPOWERS

Köchler suggests that instead of a world dominated by three global hegemonies (USA, China, Russia), the international community should aim for a **multipolarity based on regional cooperation**. He argues that the "anarchy of transition" can only be overcome if regional organizations serve as the building blocks for a new collective security system.

Here are his specific suggestions for how these organizations could provide an alternative:

1. Regional Organizations as Sovereign Equals

- **Decentralized Power:** Köchler advocates for a system where regions—represented by organizations such as the **European Union**, the **African Union**, **ASEAN**, or the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization**—act as the primary administrative units of world order.
- **Internal Equality:** Within these regional structures, every member state (regardless of size) should be able to contribute on an equal footing, preventing the "vassalage" seen in Trump's "Großraum" model.

2. Reform of the UN Security Council

- **Regional Representation:** Köchler's long-standing proposal (originally from 1991) involves a fundamental shift in how the Security Council is structured.
- **Ending the Veto:** He argues that the current veto power of the "P5" is a "normative contradiction" that must be replaced by a system where regional blocs have a collective voice, effectively democratizing international decision-making.

3. A "Pluriversum" of Cooperation, Not Conflict

- **Regional Arrangements (Chapter VIII):** He points to **Chapter VIII of the UN Charter** ("Regional Arrangements") as the legal basis for this vision. He believes that if regions handle their own security, it reduces the need for "humanitarian interventions" by global superpowers.
- **Counteracting Globalization:** Köchler argues that the "visible consequences of unchecked globalization" make regionalism a more stable and sustainable path toward peace.

4. Strategic Balance to Avoid World War

- **Mutual Recognition:** Unlike the "Donroe Doctrine," which seeks to exclude rivals from its sphere, Köchler's model envisions regions recognizing each other's legitimacy and cooperating on global issues like nuclear survival.
 - **Taming "Heißsporne" (Hotheads):** He emphasizes that responsible statesmen must use these regional frameworks to "bridle" the aggressive impulses of leaders who might otherwise lead the world into a global conflict.
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KÖCHLER FREQUENTLY REFERENCES THE "INTERREGNUM" OR TRANSITION PERIOD WE ARE CURRENTLY IN. HE ILLUSTRATES THIS THROUGH THE SPECIFIC "SHOCKS" OR EVENTS (LIKE THE 2026 INVASION OF VENEZUELA MENTIONED IN THE EDITORIAL NOTE OF THE TEXT) THAT DEFINE THIS CURRENT TRANSITION.

Hans Köchler describes the current era as an **interregnum**—a volatile transition period between the old bipolar world and a still-undefined new configuration. He argues that this transition is punctuated by several "shocks" and "reality checks" that reveal the true, anarchic nature of the world order beneath its idealistic surface.

According to the text, the specific events defining this transition include:

1. The Gaza/Palestine "Reality Check" (Late 2025)

- **The Trump Peace Plan:** In September 2025, President Trump presented a "comprehensive peace plan" for Gaza, claiming it would bring peace "for the first time in 3,000 years."
- **The Security Council Surrender:** Köchler highlights **Security Council Resolution 2803 (2025)**, which authorized a "Board of Peace" under Trump's leadership.
- **The "Offenbarungseid" (Admission of Bankruptcy):** Köchler views the unanimous approval of this resolution as a "reality check" showing that the "multipolar world" many hoped for does not yet effectively exist, as even Russia and China deferred to U.S. hegemony in this instance.

2. The Invasion of Venezuela (January 3, 2026)

- **The Timing:** This event occurred just one day after Köchler delivered the speech contained in the publication.
- **The Violation of Sovereignty:** The invasion involved the **abduction (kidnapping) of Venezuela's head of state**.
- **The Narrative Shift:** For Köchler, this is a prime example of "kinetische Gewalt" (kinetic violence) being used under the "Donroe Doctrine" to enforce regional preeminence.

3. Expansionist Claims and Regional Conflicts

- **The "Trump Corollary" in Action:** The text mentions U.S. "warmongering" and interventionist rhetoric regarding **Panama, the Caribbean, and the Arctic (specifically Greenland)**.
- **The Ukraine War (2022–present):** Köchler notes that despite the conflict, the U.S. remains the only "power broker" capable of brokering even a Machiavellian peace, further cementing its role as a unilateral actor.

- **The 51st State Suggestion:** Trump's proposal on September 30, 2025, for **Canada to join the Union as the 51st state** is cited as evidence of the total abandonment of the "Westphalian" principle of sovereign equality.

4. 2026: The "Fateful Year"

- **The Climax of Anarchy:** Köchler concludes that 2026 could be a "Schicksalsjahr" (fateful year) for the world.
- **The Choice:** He believes the "unavoidable anarchy" of this transition will either lead to a global conflict in the nuclear age or a total reconfiguration of the UN system based on regional cooperation.

KÖCHLER'S SPECIFIC PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF "DOUBLE STANDARDS" IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE 2025-2026 EVENTS

Hans Köchler argues that "double standards" (*Messen mit zweierlei Maß*) are not just accidental errors but a **calculated instrument of power politics** used to maintain the "Schein" (appearance) of morality while pursuing the "Sein" (reality) of hegemony.

His critique, applied to the events of 2025–2026, focuses on the following philosophical and structural points:

1. The Morality as a Weapon

- **The Wilsonian Legacy:** Köchler traces the "moralization" of world politics back to Woodrow Wilson, arguing that framing interests in terms of "good vs. evil" allows powers to selectively apply principles like self-determination.
- **Humanitarian Intervention as a "Feigenblatt":** He asserts that the "humanitarian argument" serves as a "fig leaf" for raw power, where "kinetic violence" is rebranded as a moral necessity.
- **The Emotional Shield:** By "instrumentalizing feelings" (such as the euphoria of peace), leaders distract the public from the fact that a peace plan might actually be a mechanism for subjection.

2. Structural Inequality in the UN

- **The "Veto" Contradiction:** Köchler highlights the ultimate double standard embedded in the UN Charter: Article 2(1) promises "sovereign equality," yet Article 27(3) grants five states the power to block any action against themselves, even if they are the aggressors.
- **Post-factum Legitimation:** He points out that when the U.S. or other permanent members create "new facts" through illegal force (as in Iraq or potentially the 2026 Venezuela invasion), the Security Council often legitimizes these acts after the fact, a luxury not afforded to weaker states.

3. Judicial Exceptionalism

- **The ICC and the "P3":** Köchler critiques the International Criminal Court for being a "duty exercise in justice" that cannot touch the leaders of the most powerful nuclear states.

- **Targeted Prosecutions:** He cites the case of Prosecutor Karim Ahmad Khan, who in 2025/2026 allegedly focused on the Taliban or ISIS while ignoring U.S. actions in Afghanistan due to "financial reasons" and political pressure. This, to Köchler, proves that international justice is often a tool for "global revenge" rather than "global justice."

4. The "Donroe Doctrine" vs. Sovereignty

- **Selective Territorial Integrity:** Köchler finds it highly hypocritical that the U.S. condemns violations of sovereignty in some regions (like Ukraine) while simultaneously asserting a "Trump Corollary" that justifies the abduction of foreign leaders and the acquisition of strategic assets in the Western Hemisphere.
- **The "Peace through Strength" Myth:** He argues that the phrase "Peace through Strength" is simply a modern euphemism for the ancient Roman maxim *si vis pacem, para bellum*, used to justify an arms race while preaching peace to others.

SUMMARY OF KÖCHLER'S FINAL "VAGUE HOPE" FOR HOW A GLOBAL "GREAT GAME" MIGHT BE AVOIDED THROUGH HIS 1991 REFORM PROPOSALS

Hans Köchler concludes his speech with a "vague hope" that the current period of anarchy will eventually lead to a global reconfiguration. He believes that a catastrophic global conflict can only be avoided if the world moves away from a "Great Game" played by superpowers and toward a system of **collective security based on regional cooperation**.

His vision for this alternative order, based on proposals he first formulated in 1991, includes the following key elements:

1. Decentralization through Regional Blocs

- **Administrative Units:** Köchler suggests that world order should be administered through established regional organizations such as the **European Union, African Union, ASEAN, or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization**.
- **Democratic Participation:** Unlike the "Großraum" (large space) model, where a hegemon dictates to its neighbors, these regional structures would allow every member state to participate as a **sovereign equal**.
- **Countering Globalization:** He views this regional multipolarity as a necessary response to the destabilizing effects of unchecked globalization.

2. Reform of the Security Council

- **A New Concept of Security:** Köchler advocates for a reform of the UN system to align with the principles outlined in **Chapter VIII of the UN Charter** ("Regional Arrangements"), complementing the collective security provisions of Chapter VII.
- **Ending the Veto:** His 1991 proposal suggests that the **sacrifice of the veto power** is the only real alternative to traditional, power-based politics.
- **Regional Representation:** He envisions a Security Council where regional blocs—rather than a few privileged nuclear powers—hold the authority to maintain international peace.

3. Balance of Interests over "Will to Power"

- **A Global Social Contract:** He hopes that as global actors realize that an uninhibited power struggle in the **nuclear age** threatens the survival of everyone, they will be forced to cooperate.
- **Bridling the "Heißsporne":** Köchler emphasizes that responsible statesmen must use these regional frameworks to restrain "hotheads" who might otherwise escalate local conflicts into global wars.

4. The Path Forward

Köchler warns that if the world remains stuck in a "fake universalism" that hides raw power, the "being" ("Sein") (reality) of world order will remain one of **anarchy and subjection**. His "vague hope" is that 2026 will serve as the turning point where the international community finally chooses **law over force**.

KÖCHLER'S SPECIFIC LIST OF "TEXTE ZUR WELTORDNUNG" AT THE END OF THE DOCUMENT TO SEE HOW HIS IDEAS HAVE EVOLVED SINCE 1991

Hans Köchler's bibliography, titled *Texte zur Weltordnung* ("Texts on World Order"), reveals a consistent 35-year intellectual journey. His work has evolved from diagnosing the "New World Order" of the early 1990s to critiquing the current "anarchy of transition."

1. The 1990s: Analyzing the "New World Order"

Immediately following the Cold War, Köchler focused on the gap between the ideological promises of a "democratic UN" and the reality of power politics.

- **Democratic Reform:** In 1991, he explored building a more democratic UN and began questioning the role of the Security Council in this new era.
- **The "New World Order" Critique:** Works from 1992 and 1993, such as *Demokratie und Neue Weltordnung*, examined the "ideological claim vs. power-political reality" of the post-Cold War discourse.
- **Alternative Visions:** By 1995, he was already proposing "Propositions for an Alternative World Order" based on the international rule of law rather than unilateral hegemony.

2. The 2000s: The Dialectic of Power and Law

Following 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, Köchler's focus shifted toward the "clash of civilizations" and the "Global War on Terror".

- **Terrorism and Justice:** In 2002 and 2008, he addressed the quest for a just world order amidst global terrorism, emphasizing that civilization should not be used as an *instrument* of order.
- **Antagonism:** His 2006 work in the *Chinese Journal of International Law* explicitly mapped the "antagonism between power and law," a theme that remains central to his 2026 speech.
- **Global Governance:** He began criticizing "neoliberal globalization" and its collapse as a failed path toward a just world order.

3. The 2010s to 2020s: Unipolarity and Multipolarity

In the last decade, Köchler's work became increasingly focused on the structural failure of the UN to adapt to a changing power balance .

- **UN as "Administrator of Justice":** In 2011, he questioned the Security Council's legitimacy in judicial matters, a critique he expands upon regarding the ICC in 2026.
- **The Pivot Year (2022):** His work *MMXXII – War or Peace* analyzes 2022 as a "pivotal year," marking the return of major conflict to Europe and the definitive end of the post-Cold War stability.
- **Current Synthesis (2025-2026):** His most recent lectures, *Des Kaisers neue Kleider* ("The Emperor's New Clothes") and *Sein und Schein der Weltordnung*, represent a synthesis of his life's work—concluding that the "myth of power" is now being nakedly asserted through regional hegemonies like the "Donroe Doctrine."

SPECIFIC HISTORICAL CONFLICTS KÖCHLER MENTIONS—SUCH AS THE 1999 KOSOVO WAR OR THE 2011 LIBYA INTERVENTION—DEMONSTRATING HOW HE APPLIES THESE THEORIES TO "REAL-WORLD" EVENTS

Hans Köchler views the **1999 Kosovo War** as a definitive case study in the "dialectic of power and law," where the "appearance" of humanitarian concern masked the "reality" of unilateral geopolitical expansion.

According to the text, the Kosovo conflict illustrates three major failures of the current world order:

1. "Post Factum" Legitimation

- **Creating "New Facts":** Köchler argues that the US-dominated NATO used armed force to create "new facts" on the ground without prior authorization from the UN Security Council.
- **Instrumentalizing the UN:** After these facts were established, the Security Council was effectively forced to legitimize the illegal situation *post factum*.
- **Erosion of the Veto:** This process demonstrates how a permanent member can bypass the UN's legal structure and then use that same structure to rubber-stamp the results.

2. Political Influence on International Justice

- **The ICTY and NATO:** Köchler cites the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as an example of "fake" justice.
- **Blocked Investigations:** He points to admissions by former Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, who revealed that NATO exerted illegal influence to prevent the tribunal from investigating potential crimes committed by NATO personnel.
- **Double Standards:** For Köchler, this proves that such tribunals are often tools for the victors rather than impartial legal bodies.

3. Kosovo as a Precedent

- **Sui Generis vs. Precedent:** Köchler questions whether Kosovo was truly a unique (*sui generis*) case or a dangerous precedent for future unilateral interventions.
- **The Logic of the "Großraum":** He suggests that the war was part of an effort by the US to establish a "sphere of influence" in Europe, bypassing the "sovereign equality" of states promised by the UN Charter.

Summary of the "Appearance" (Schein) vs. "Reality" (Sein) in Kosovo:

Appearance (Schein)

Reality (Sein)

Humanitarian intervention to protect civilians.

"Kinetische Gewalt" (kinetic violence) used for regime change and regional dominance.

Universal justice via the ICTY.

"Double standards" and political shielding of NATO personnel.

Action within the "rules-based order."

Circumvention of Article 2(4) (prohibition of force) followed by power-based legitimation.

HANS KÖCHLER DRAWS A DIRECT LINE BETWEEN THE 1999 KOSOVO WAR AND THE 2026 INVASION OF VENEZUELA BY IDENTIFYING A RECURRING GEOPOLITICAL PATTERN WHERE POWERFUL STATES BYPASS INTERNATIONAL LAW TO ENFORCE THEIR OWN REGIONAL DOMINANCE.

He justifies this comparison through several key conceptual links within his "Donroe Doctrine" critique:

1. The Precedent of "Legitimacy through Power"

- **Creating "New Facts":** Köchler argues that just as the U.S.-led NATO used force in Kosovo to create a "new reality" that the UN was later forced to accept, the 2026 invasion of Venezuela and the abduction of its president represent the ultimate application of this strategy.
- **The Death of Sovereign Equality:** In both cases, the "Westphalian" principle of sovereign equality is abandoned in favor of a "Großraum" (large space) logic, where a regional hegemon dictates the political status of neighboring states.

2. The Evolution of the "Trump Corollary"

- **From Intervention to Annexation:** While Kosovo was framed as a "humanitarian intervention" to protect civilians, Köchler views the "Trump Corollary" (the "Donroe Doctrine") as a more nakedly imperial evolution.
- **Strategic Assets:** He points out that the U.S. now explicitly claims the right to control "military installations, ports, and key infrastructure" throughout the Western Hemisphere, treating the entire region as a "zone of self-defense."
- **The Abduction of Leaders:** The kidnapping of the Venezuelan head of state on January 3, 2026, is presented as the modern equivalent of the "regime change" practiced in Kosovo and Libya, but stripped of its earlier "humanitarian" justifications.

3. The Structural Failure of the UN

- **The "Reality Check" of 2025:** Köchler argues that the world's silent acceptance of the U.S. "Peace Plan" for Gaza in 2025 paved the legal and psychological way for the Venezuela invasion.
- **Unchallenged Unilateralism:** Because the UN Security Council remains blocked by the veto power of the same states carrying out these interventions, it serves merely as a "window dressing" for the "will to power."

4. Summary: The Shift in Paradigms

Köchler uses these two events to show the shift from a **Universalist** world (where all states are equal under law) to a **Pluriversal** world (where a few "Great Powers" divide the earth into their own private spheres of interest).

Feature	Kosovo (1999)	Venezuela (2026)
Legal Justification	Humanitarian Intervention	"Trump Corollary" / National Security
Method	Aerial Bombing / NATO Action	Invasion / Abduction of Head of State
Underlying Goal	Establishing U.S. Influence in Europe	Restoring American Preeminence in the Americas
UN Response	<i>Post Factum</i> Legitimation	"Offenbarungseid" (Admission of Bankruptcy)

KÖCHLER'S SPECIFIC WARNING ABOUT HOW THESE ACTIONS MIGHT TRIGGER A "GLOBAL WAR" IF THE INTERESTS OF OTHER "GROßMÄCHTE" (LIKE RUSSIA OR CHINA) ARE NOT BALANCED?

Köchler's warning regarding a "Global War" is rooted in the transition from a universal legal order to a **Pluriversum** of competing "Großräume" (large spaces). He argues that the current "Great Game" between the United States, Russia, and China is an unstable "Tripolarity" that carries extreme risks in the nuclear age.

The Mechanism of Escalation

- **The Breakdown of Non-interference:** The logic of a "Großraum" depends on the principle of non-interference—where each power respects the other's "sphere of influence."
- **Voluntarism over Legality:** Köchler warns that when "blank voluntarism" and territorial claims (like those in the South China Sea, Ukraine, or Venezuela) replace international law, any miscalculation can lead to direct confrontation.
- **The Trap of "Peace through Strength":** He critiques the Trumpian maxim "peace through strength" as a modern version of *si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war), which historically leads to an arms race and heightened tensions.

The Choice of Path

Köchler presents a stark dichotomy for the future of world order:

- **Path A: Hegemonial Conflict:** If the major powers do not find a way to recognize and limit their respective spheres, the "unresolved question of spatial development" will force a transformation of current conflicts into a **global war**.
- **Path B: Balanced Multipolarity:** The alternative is an "Interessenausgleich" (balancing of interests) between the great actors, managed by responsible statesmen who can "bridle the hotheads" in regions like Europe and the Middle East.

The Nuclear Dimension

- **Mutual Deterrence is Unstable:** Unlike the Cold War's relatively static bipolarity, today's "Great Game" is played in a "nebulous" atmosphere where intentions are masked by "Friedensnebel" (peace fog).
- **Risk of Total Annihilation:** Köchler warns that an uninhibited power struggle in the nuclear age endangers the survival of all humanity.
- **The "Vague Hope":** He hopes that the realization of this existential threat will finally drive leaders toward a global reconfiguration based on regional cooperation rather than imperial expansion.

THE SPECIFIC "STATUS MUNDI" AS OF JANUARY 2, 2026, WHICH KÖCHLER IDENTIFIES AS THE THRESHOLD FOR THIS POTENTIAL GLOBAL CONFLICT

As of **January 2, 2026**, Hans Köchler describes the *status mundi* (the state of the world) as a precarious "interregnum"—a period of systemic anarchy where the old international order has collapsed, but a new one has not yet stabilized.

1. The Collapse of Universalism

- **The UN's "Offenbarungseid":** The unanimous approval of the U.S. "Gaza Peace Plan" by the Security Council in late 2025 is seen as a total "admission of bankruptcy" for the UN's role as an independent arbiter.
- **De Facto Unilateralism:** Despite the rhetoric of multipolarity, Köchler notes that the U.S. remains the effectively sole "power broker" in major global conflicts, such as Ukraine and Palestine, leading to a "fake universalism."
- **Institutionalized Impunity:** The international legal system (ICC and UN) is viewed as dysfunctional, as it cannot hold the most powerful states accountable for aggression or war crimes.

2. The Emergence of "Tripolarity"

- **The Three Great Powers:** The world has shifted into a "Tripolarity" consisting of the **United States, China, and Russia**.
- **"Do ut des" Diplomacy:** These powers are beginning a "New Great Game," where they grant each other dominance within their respective regional "Großräume" (large spaces) based on reciprocity rather than international law.
- **Spheres of Influence:** The "status mundi" is defined by clear territorial claims: Russia in the Ukraine/Krim region, China in the South China Sea and Taiwan, and the U.S. in the "Western Hemisphere."

3. The Brink of Regional and Global Conflict

- **The "Donroe Doctrine":** The U.S. has explicitly adopted an expansionist policy in the Americas, claiming control over "strategic assets" and "critical infrastructure" from Greenland to Panama.
- **Heightened Tensions:** At the time of the speech, the air is thick with "warmongering" regarding Venezuela, the Caribbean, and the Arctic.
- **The Eve of Aggression:** Crucially, this snapshot of the world was taken just **one day before** the invasion of Venezuela and the abduction of its president (January 3, 2026), an event Köchler identifies as a final confirmation of this new era of "kinetic violence" and anarchy.

4. Summary: A World in "Fog"

Köchler concludes that as of early 2026, the world is shrouded in a "peace fog" (*Friedensnebel*)—a state where noble ideals are used to mask an uninhibited struggle for space and resources in the nuclear age.

SPECIFIC PASSAGES WHERE KÖCHLER WARNS THAT THIS "TRIPOLARITY" COULD FAIL AND LEAD TO A DIRECT "GLOBAL WAR"

Köchler's warning of a potential "global war" is most explicit in his analysis of Carl Schmitt's theories, where he argues that the current "Tripolarity" (USA, China, Russia) is a fragile arrangement that could easily collapse into total conflict.

Here are the specific passages and themes where he articulates this danger:

1. The Dilemma of "Spatial Development"

Köchler cites Schmitt to argue that the world faces a binary choice between recognizing stable regional spheres or descending into total war:

- He quotes Schmitt's observation that the dilemma lies in the "unresolved question of spatial development."
- The choice is either to find "the transition to limitable Großräume that recognize other Großräume alongside them" or to "transform the war of previous international law into a **global war**."
- Köchler asserts that this exact choice "is what is playing out *hic et nunc* [here and now] in the power competition between the United States, China, and Russia."

2. The Failure of "Mutual Deterrence"

He warns that relying on raw power rather than law creates an inherently unstable peace:

- In the "Pluriversum" of the Great Powers, peace is not secured by universal principles but by "mutual deterrence."
- This forces a return to the late Roman maxim *si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war).
- He warns that an "uninhibited power struggle in the nuclear age endangers the survival of all."

3. The Danger of "Hotheads" and Voluntarism

Köchler highlights that the shift from legal norms to "blank voluntarism" makes the world susceptible to the whims of individual actors:

- He warns that territorial claims, when "accompanied by threats," are entirely incompatible with the UN Charter.
- The outcome of this "Great Game" is "completely open" and depends on whether responsible statesmen can "bridle the hotheads" (*Heißsporne*) in Europe and the Middle East .
- Without this restraint, the "real power dynamics" could prove that the idea of equal partnership is "mere appearance" (*bloßer Schein*), leading to a "year of fate."

4. Summary: The 2026 Threshold

Köchler frames the beginning of 2026 as a tipping point where the "real power dynamics" between the Great Powers may finally shatter the illusion of a rules-based order, potentially triggering a global catastrophe if a "balancing of interests" is not achieved.

KÖCHLER'S CONCLUDING REMARKS ON HOW "UNCHECKED GLOBALIZATION" CONTRIBUTED TO THIS DANGEROUS RETURN TO 19TH-CENTURY POWER POLITICS

Hans Köchler argues that "unchecked globalization" has reached a tipping point, paradoxically fueling a return to the aggressive, territorial power politics of the 19th century.

His concluding remarks outline how the failure of the globalist project created the vacuum currently being filled by "Großraum" (large space) hegemonies:

1. The Backlash Against Globalism

- **Erosion of Stability:** Köchler suggests that the "visible consequences of unchecked globalization" have destabilized national and regional identities, leading states to seek security in exclusive, power-based blocs rather than universal cooperation.
- **Failure of the "Universum":** The globalist promise of a "world community" bound by universal values has proven to be an illusion, or "fake universalism," that masked the interests of the strongest actors.

2. Regionalism as the Only "Safe" Exit

- **A New Multipolarity:** Köchler proposes that the only way to avoid a global conflict is to transform the "unavoidable anarchy" of globalization into a structured multipolarity based on regional cooperation .
- **Sustainable Administrative Units:** He views organizations like the **European Union**, **African Union**, and **ASEAN** as the necessary successors to a failed globalist model, provided they operate on the basis of equal membership rather than imperial diktat.

3. The Return of the "Great Game"

- **19th-Century Renaissance:** Because the globalized order lacks a true balance of power, the world is experiencing a "renaissance of 19th-century power politics," now updated with a nuclear dimension.
- **Control of Assets:** This new era is defined by a struggle for "strategic assets," "critical infrastructure," and "key geographies"—a tangible, territorial competition that directly contradicts the "borderless" ideals of early globalization.

4. Summary: The Final Warning

Köchler warns that the "real power dynamics"—the **Sein** (Being)—of the world are currently winning over the **Schein** (Appearance) of a cooperative global order. He concludes that 2026 is a "year of fate" because the world must decide whether to continue down the path of imperial "Great Games" or to formalize a new system of regional security before a global miscalculation occurs.

FINAL SUMMARY OF KÖCHLER'S 2026 PREDICTIONS VERSUS THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS HE CITED

Hans Köchler's 2026 publication, *Sein und Schein der Weltordnung*, draws a sharp contrast between the "Schein" (appearance) of a legalistic international order and the "Sein" (reality) of raw power politics. He argues that the world has entered a "Schicksalsjahr" (year of fate) where historical cycles of deception are repeating with higher stakes.

Historical Precedents of Deception

Köchler uses the last century to illustrate how "peace fog" is used to mask imperial interests:

- **1918 (Post-WWI):** The "appearance" was Woodrow Wilson's promise of universal self-determination. The "reality" was the selective application of this right (double standards) to serve the victors.
- **1945 (Post-WWII):** The "appearance" was an international rule of law under the UN. The "reality" was a system that institutionalized the primacy of power by granting veto rights to the "P5," effectively making them immune to the law they supposedly enforce.
- **1990 (Post-Cold War):** The "appearance" was a "New World Order" of democracy and human rights. The "reality" was the era of unipolarity, where these ideals served as "fig leaves" for unilateral U.S. interventions in Iraq, Kosovo, and Libya.

2026: THE NEW "STATUS MUNDI"

By early 2026, Köchler posits that the transition from unipolarity to a new "Tripolarity" (USA, Russia, China) has reached a critical and dangerous threshold:

- **The "Donroe Doctrine":** President Trump's 2025 National Security Strategy is identified as a definitive break from universalism. By asserting U.S. preeminence and the right to control strategic assets across the entire "Western Hemisphere," it treats neighbors as vassals rather than equals.
- **The Venezuela Precedent:** The January 3, 2026, invasion and abduction of Venezuela's head of state is cited as the ultimate "reality check." It signifies the total abandonment of sovereign equality in favor of "kinetic violence."
- **Tripolar Hegemony:** Köchler warns of a world divided into "Großräume" (large spheres of influence) where the three giants grant each other dominance in their respective regions based on "*do ut des*" (reciprocity) rather than law.

Summary Comparison: Then vs. Now

Era	Idealistic "Appearance" (Schein)	Power "Reality" (Sein)	Global Risk
Early 20th C.	Self-Determination	Colonial Mandates / Secret Pacts	Regional Instability
Late 20th C.	Collective Security	Veto-based Immunity / Unipolarity	Unilateral Wars
2025–2026	"Peace through Strength"	"Donroe Doctrine" / Abduction of Leaders	Global War

THE CONCLUDING WARNING

Köchler's final prediction is that the current anarchy of transition cannot last. He mentions, *inter alia*, two possible outcomes: either a **Global War** triggered by miscalculation between the Tripolar powers, or a **Global Reconfiguration**. His "vague hope" lies in the latter—a reform where regional organizations (like the EU, AU, or ASEAN) act as equal administrative pillars of security, finally replacing the "Great Game" of superpowers with a true multipolarity.

Post scriptum

Hans Köchler refers to **Rudyard Kipling** in the context of the "**Great Game**."

He highlights Kipling as the figure who coined the term in the struggle for supremacy in Central Asia during the colonial era. Köchler provides the following specific details regarding Kipling's contribution to this geopolitical concept:

- **Literary Origin:** He identifies Kipling's 1901 novel, *Kim*, as a masterpiece of world history that delivers an implicit description of the struggle for spheres of influence between the British and Russian Empires
- **The "Great Game" Quote:** Köchler cites a specific line from the novel where the protagonist, Kimball O'Hara, declares, "Now I shall go far and far into the North playing the Great Game."
- **Historical Parallel:** He uses Kipling's term to bridge the gap between 19th-century colonial struggles and the current "New Great Game" involving the United States, Russia, and China.

Köchler uses this reference to emphasize that current world politics is witnessing a "renaissance" of the very imperial power dynamics Kipling once described.
