



APRIL 18-19, 2024

BRIEFINGS

What the TrustZone-M Doesn't See, the MCU Does Grieve Over

Lessons Learned from Assessing a Microcontroller TEE

Cristiano Rodrigues | Sandro Pinto, PhD

(Centro ALGORITMI / LASI, Universidade do Minho)

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Lessons Learned from Assessing a Microcontroller TEE

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AGENDA

01

02

03

04

05

Introduction

Background and Motivation

A Bumpy but Revealing Journey

Weak Protections, TEE Assessment and our Responsible Disclosure Journey

What Can Go Wrong

Attack Examples and “Live” Demo

Lessons Learned

Advices for HW & SW providers and System Designers

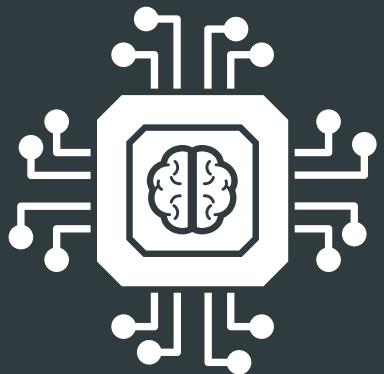
Summary

Final Thoughts and BH Sound Bytes

Introduction

Background and Motivation

AI-ENABLED
EDGE DEVICES



SMART
AGRICULTURE



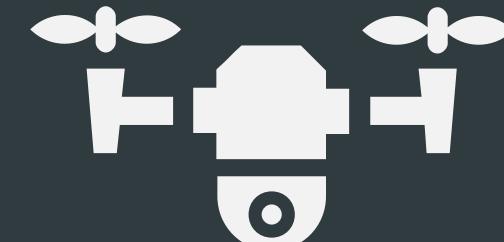
SMART
FACTORIES



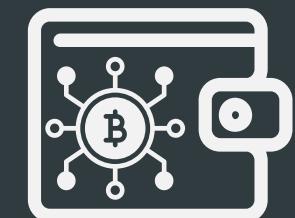
SMART
CITIES



DRONES



HARDWARE
WALLETS

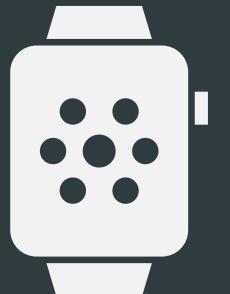


INTERNET OF THINGS

MEDICAL
DEVICES



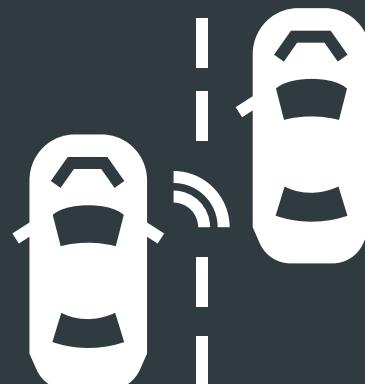
WEARABLES



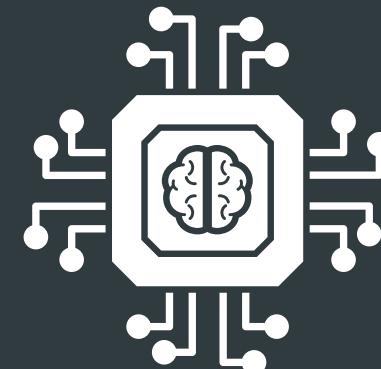
HOME
APPLIANCES



AUTONOMOUS
VEHICLES

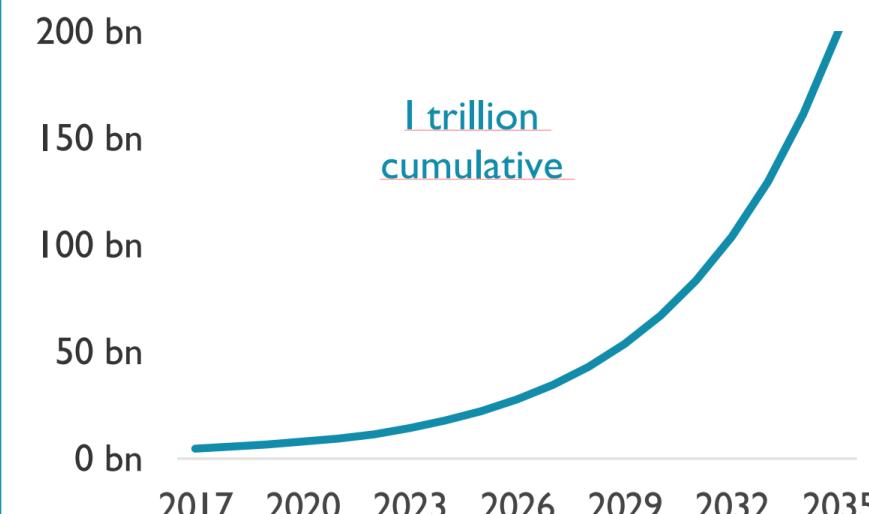


AI-ENABLED EDGE DEVICES



SMART AGRICULTURE

Annual Production of IoT devices



1 trillion
cumulative

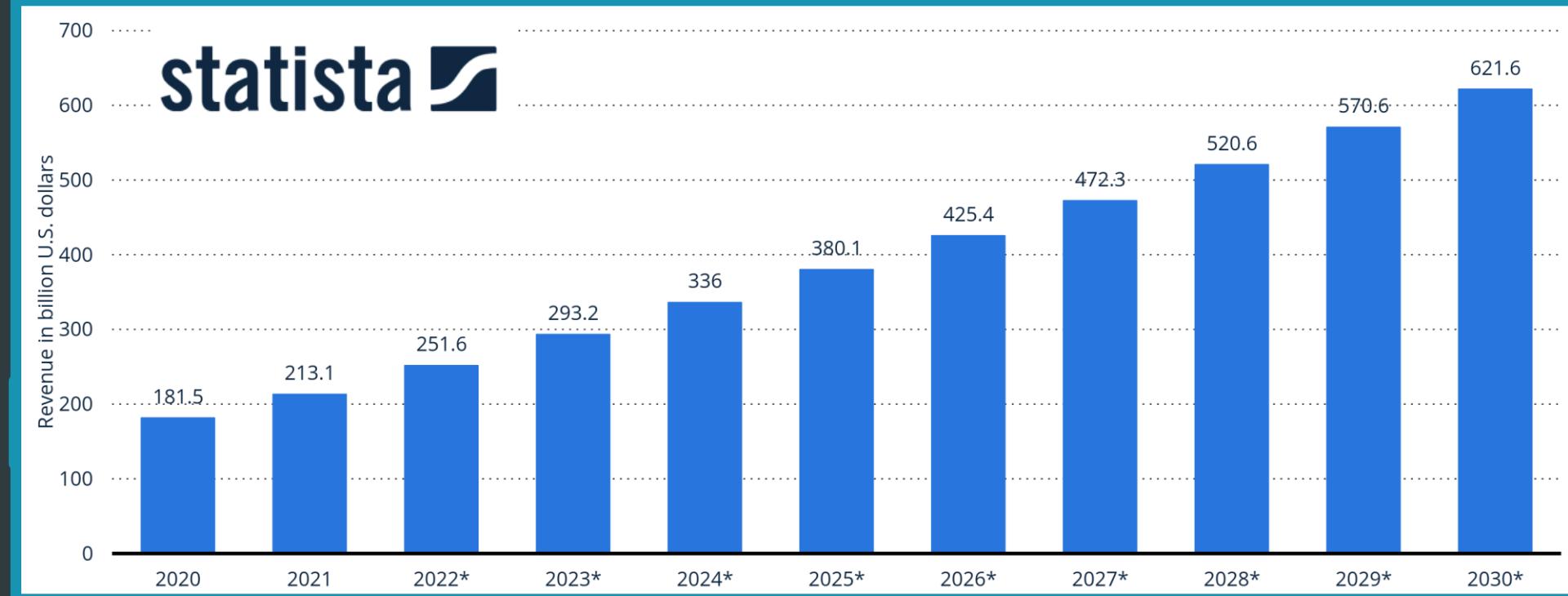
Source: SoftBank and ARM estimates

MEDICAL DEVICES

SMART FACTORIES

SMART CITIES

DRONES



The route to a trillion devices

The outlook for IoT investment to 2035

WEARABLES

VEHICLES

Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

Pacemakers, defibrillators are potentially hackable

By Lisa Rapaport

February 21, 2018 3:55 PM GMT · Updated 6 years ago

News This Week: An IoT Teddy Millions of Parent and Child Findings



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Hackers Remotely Control Highway-V

THE AGE OF CYBERWARFARE

PRIVACY

Uber Takes FTC's Heat Over Self-Things Security

By Richard Adhikari • September 5, 2013 3:56 PM PT • Email Article



BrickerBot Malware En Bricks IoT Devices

Flaw in Home Security Cameras Exposes Live Feeds to Hackers

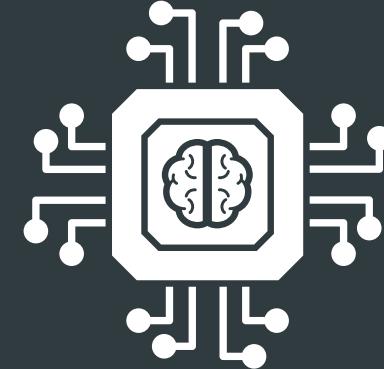
INTERNET OF THINGS



SMART
AGRICULTURE

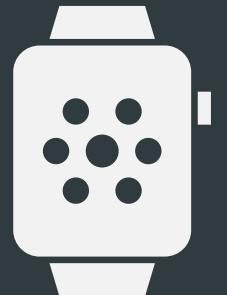


MEDICAL
DEVICES



AI-ENABLED
EDGE DEVICES

WEARABLES



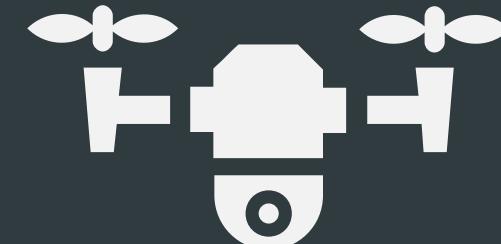
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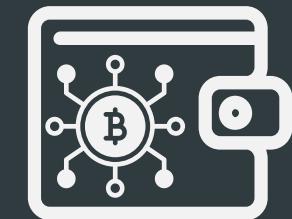
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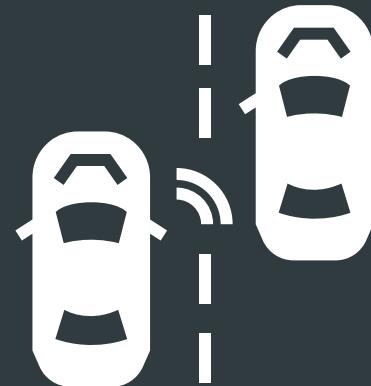
DRONES



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WALLETS

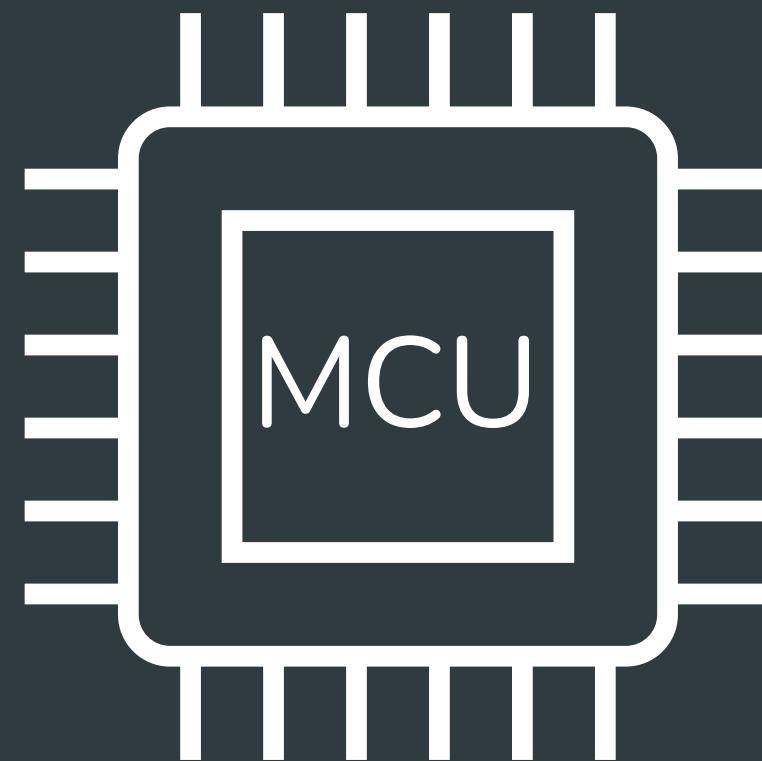


HOME
APPLIANCES

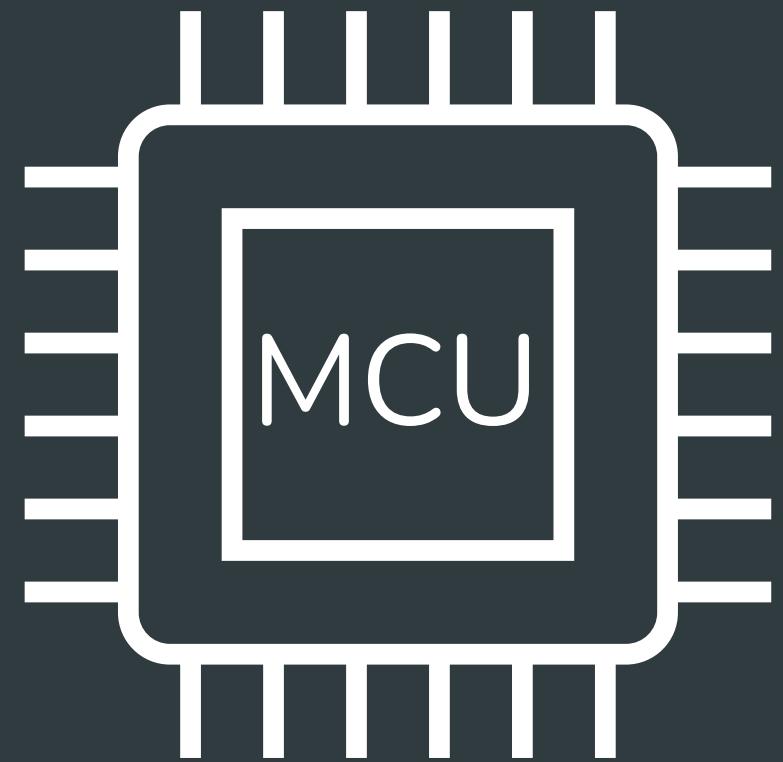


AUTONOMOUS
VEHICLES

INTERNET OF THINGS



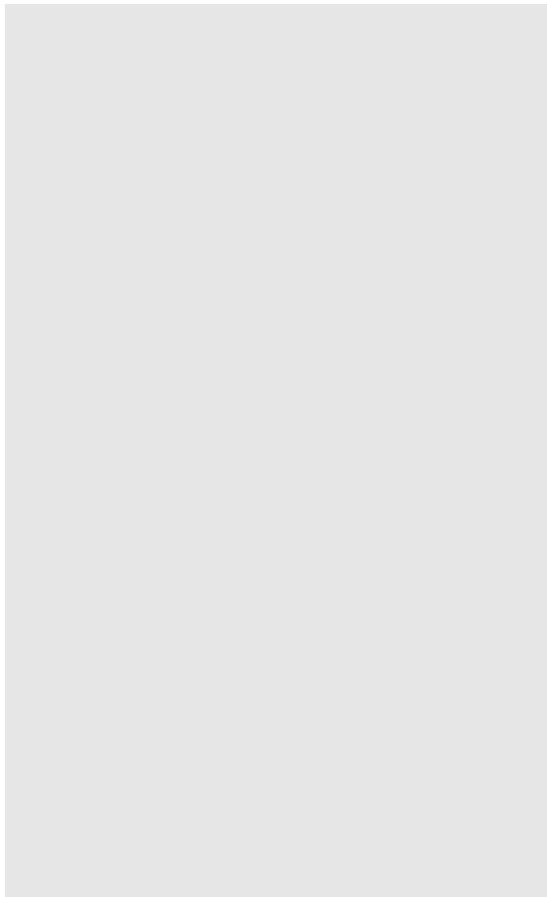
INTERNET OF THINGS



arm
TRUSTZONE

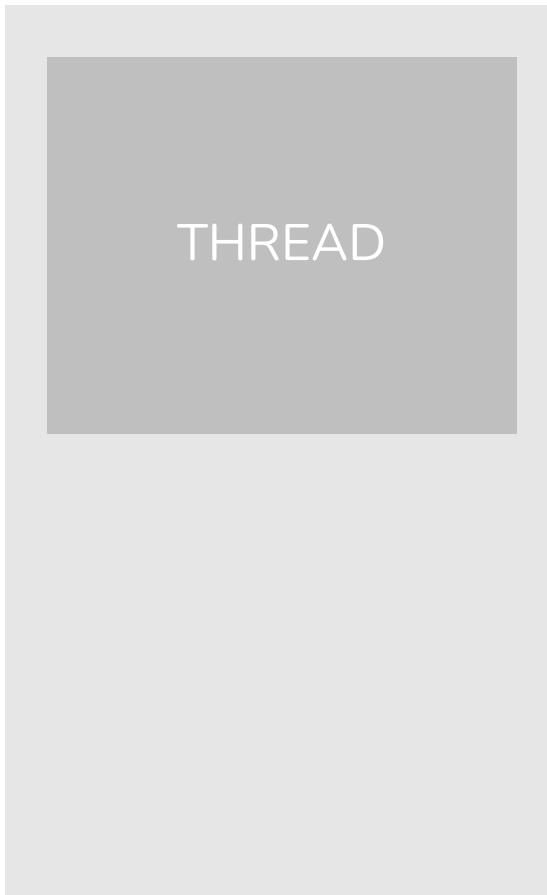
Armv8-M TrustZone

Armv6/7-M Processor Modes



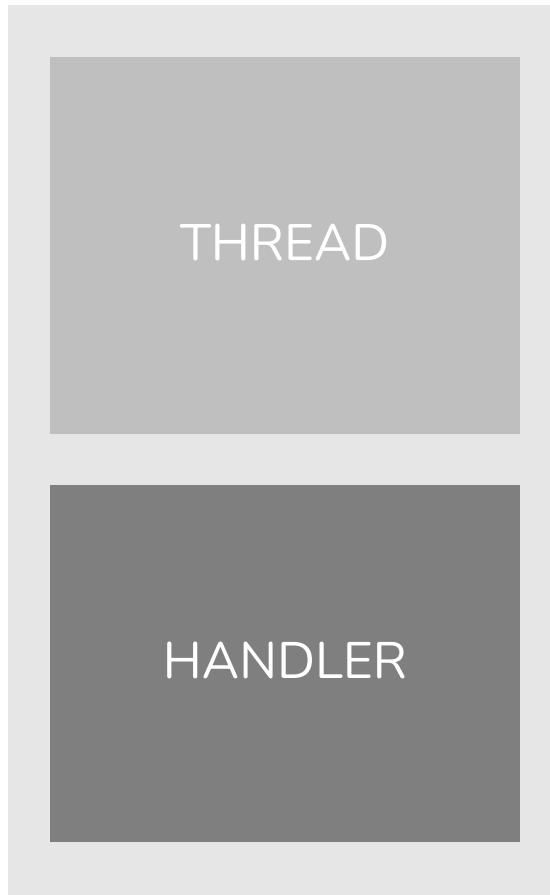
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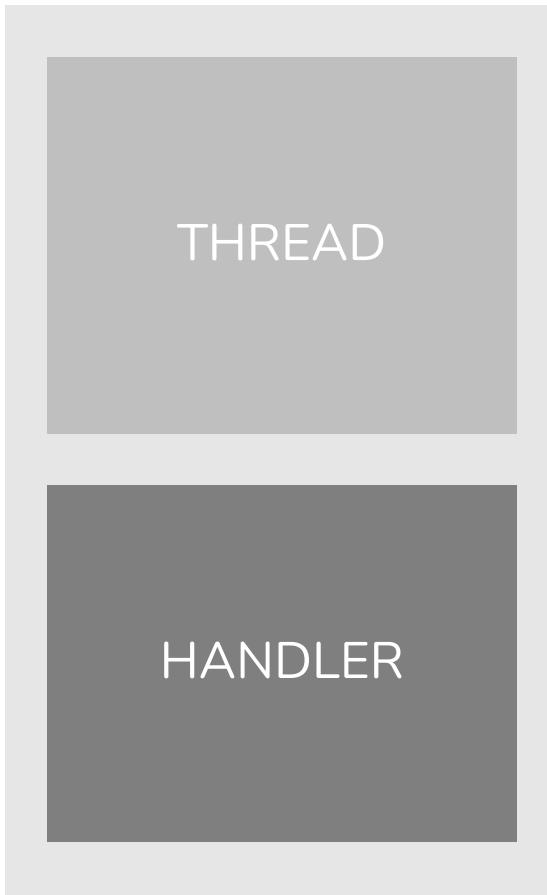
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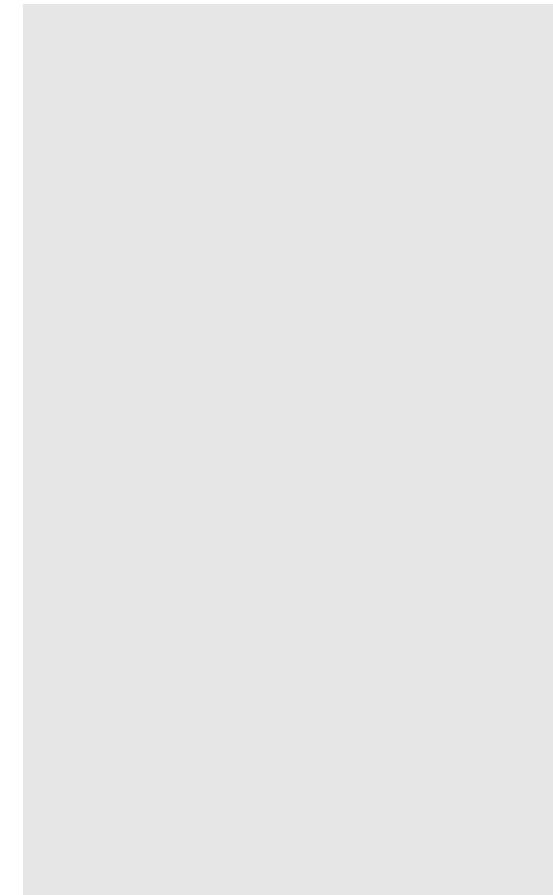


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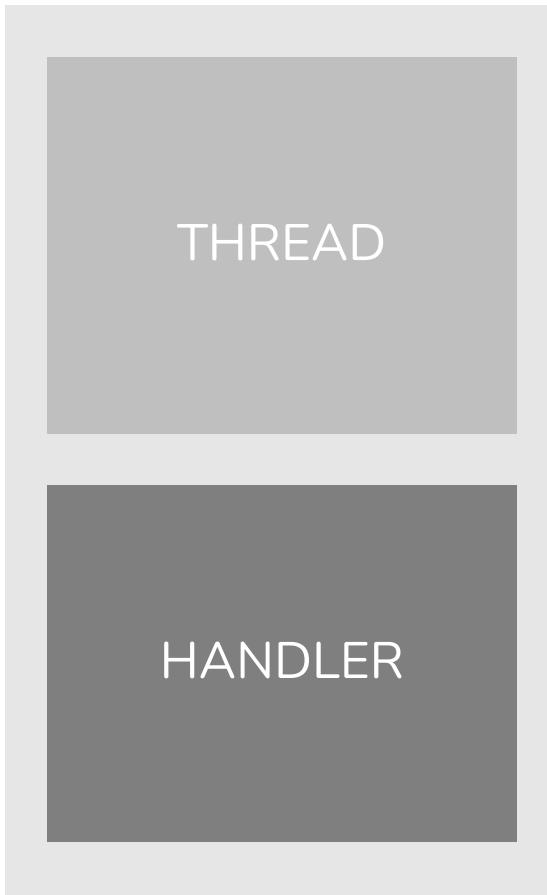


Armv6/7-M Privileges Levels

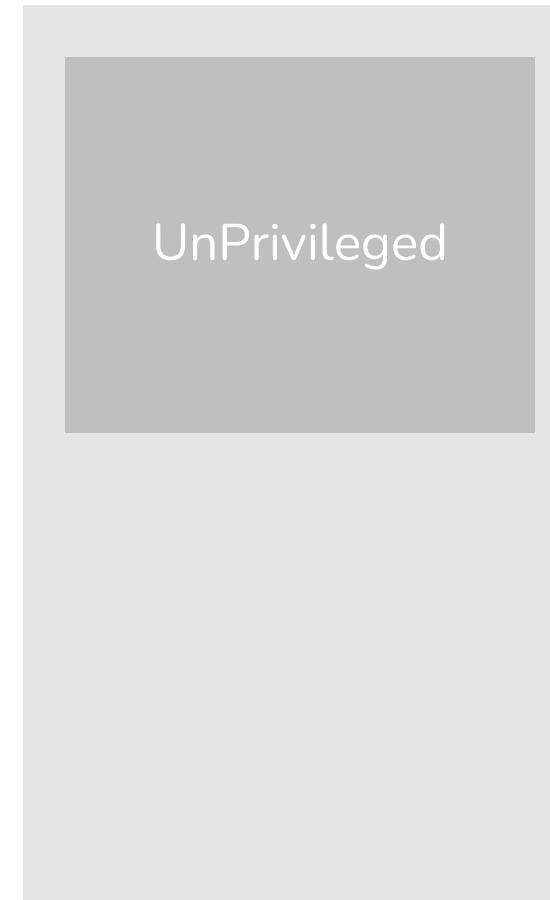


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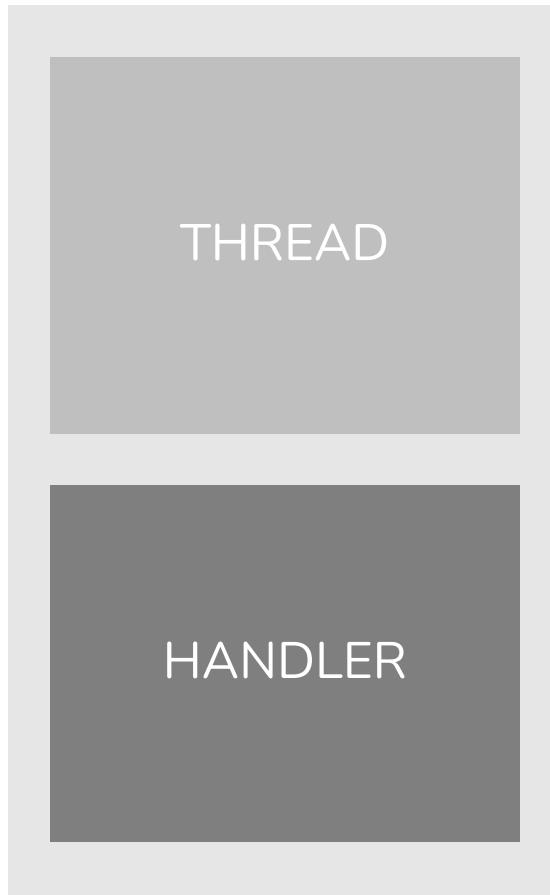


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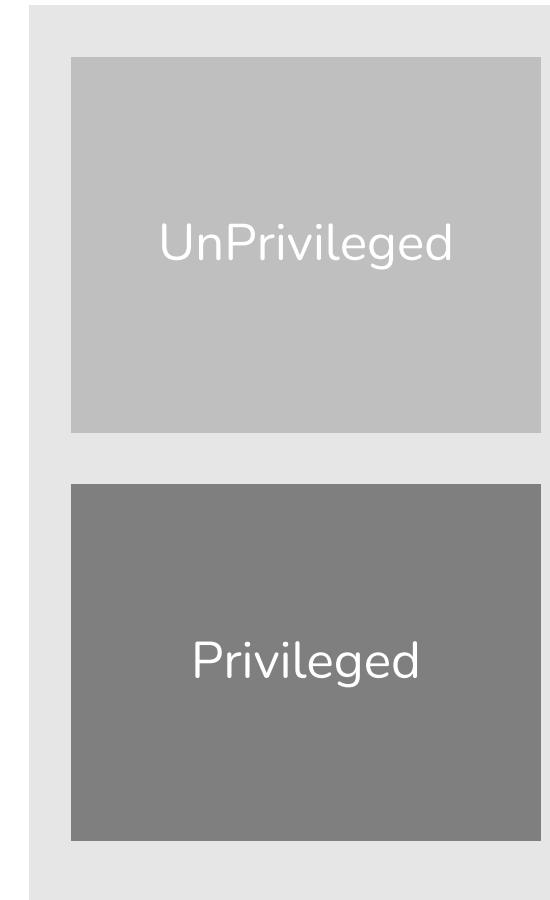


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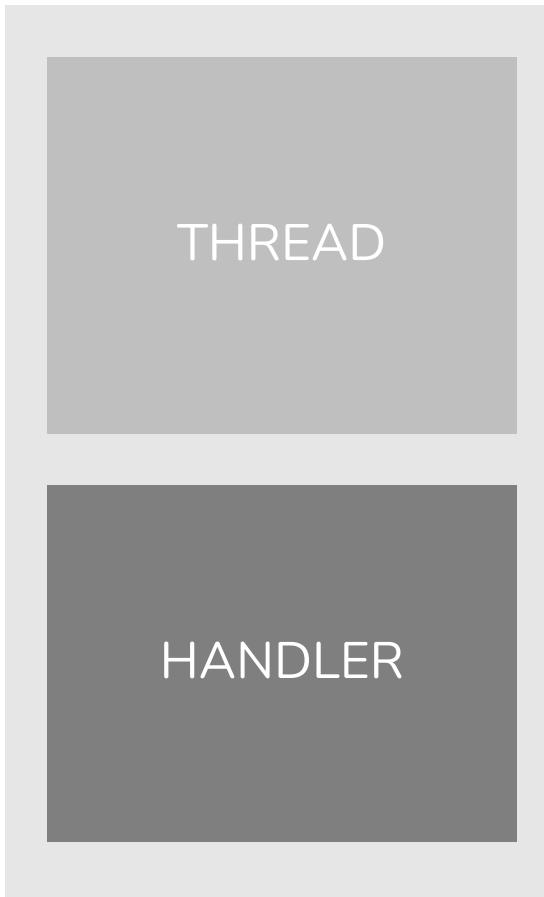


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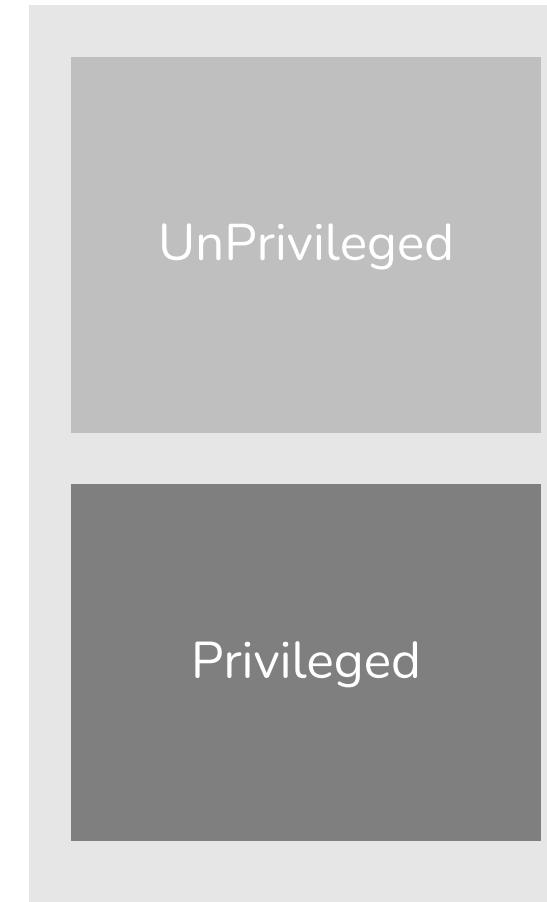


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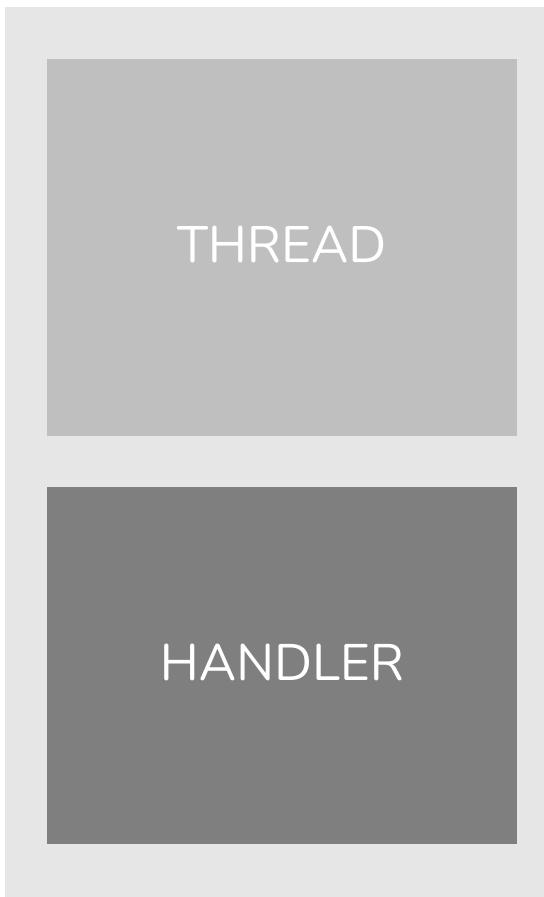


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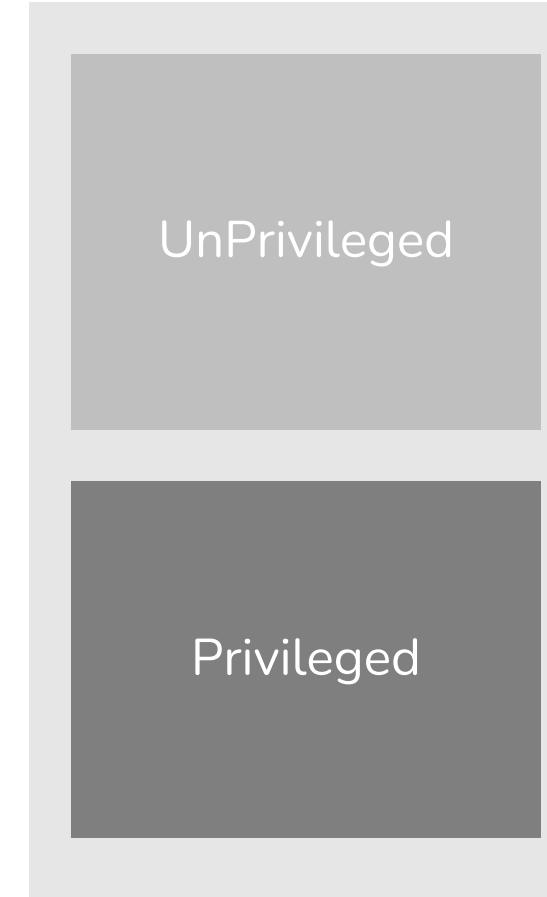


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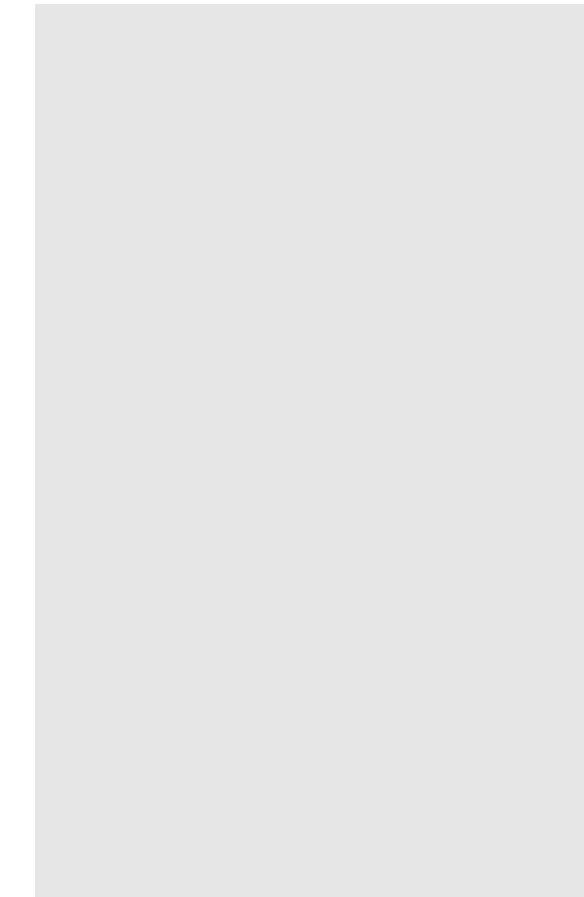
Armv6/7-M Processor Modes



Armv6/7-M Privileges Levels

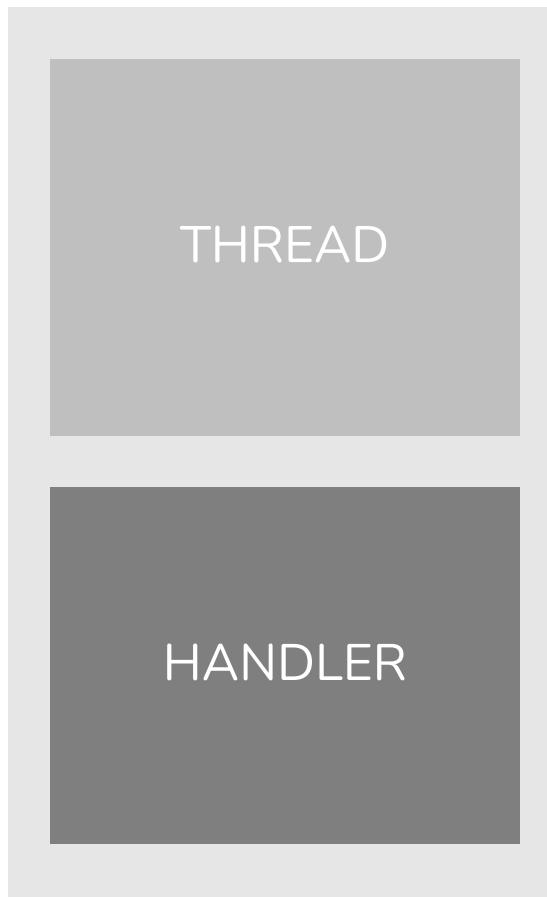


Armv6/7-M Base Architecture

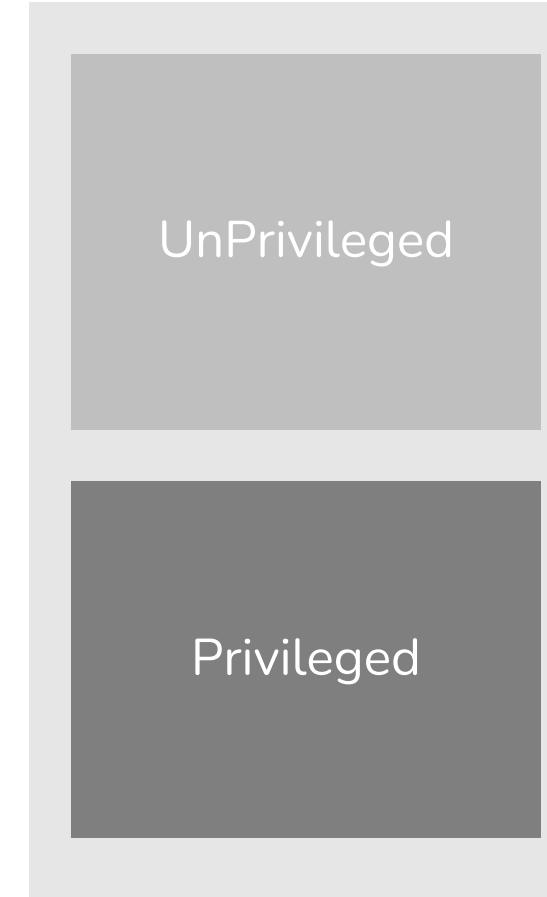


Armv8-M TrustZone

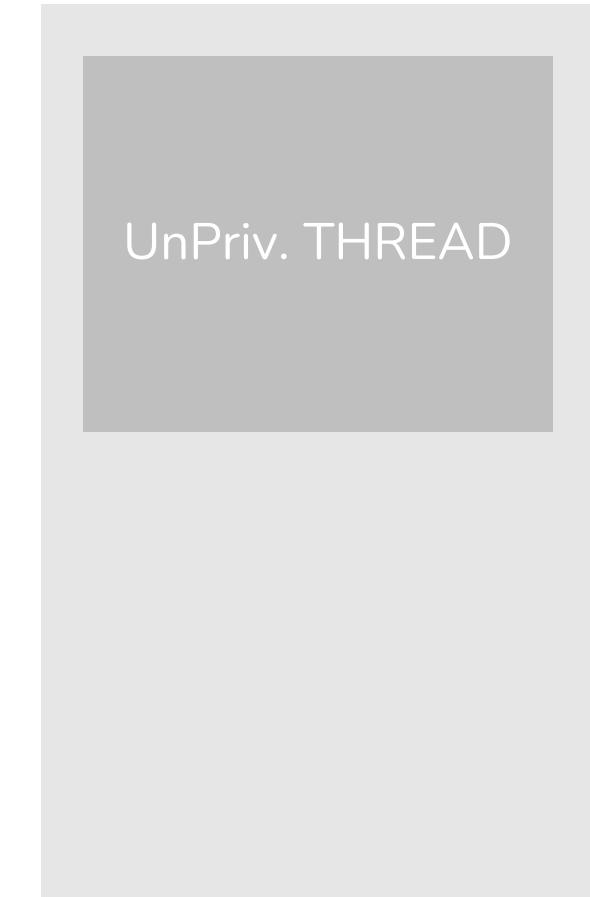
Armv6/7-M Processor Modes



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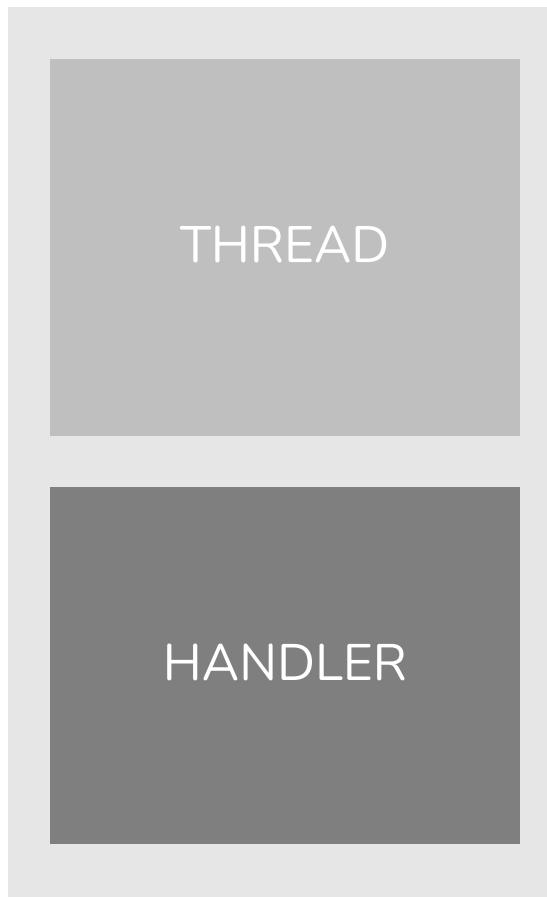


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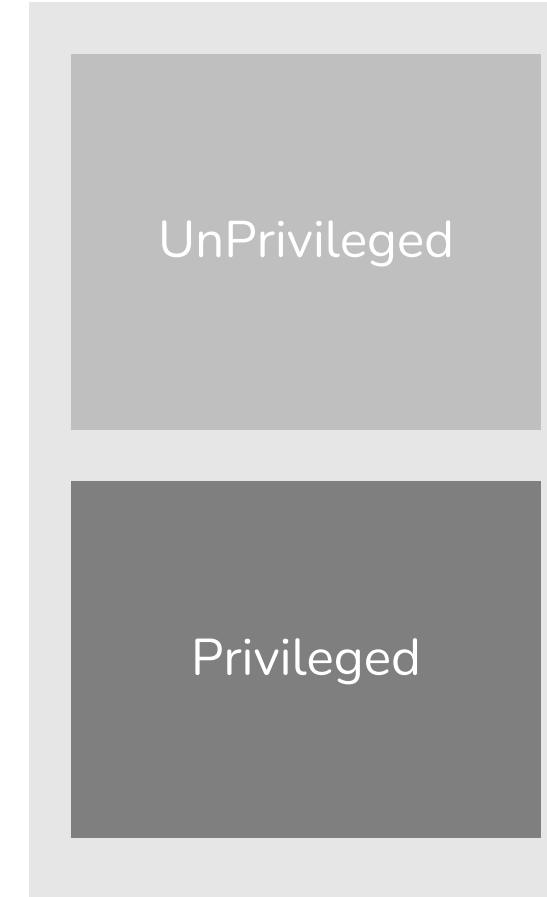


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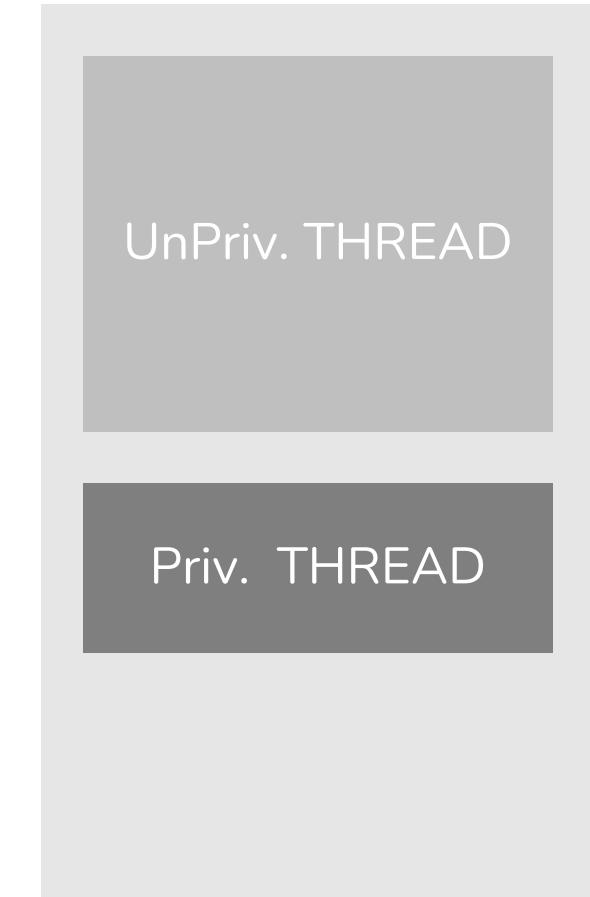
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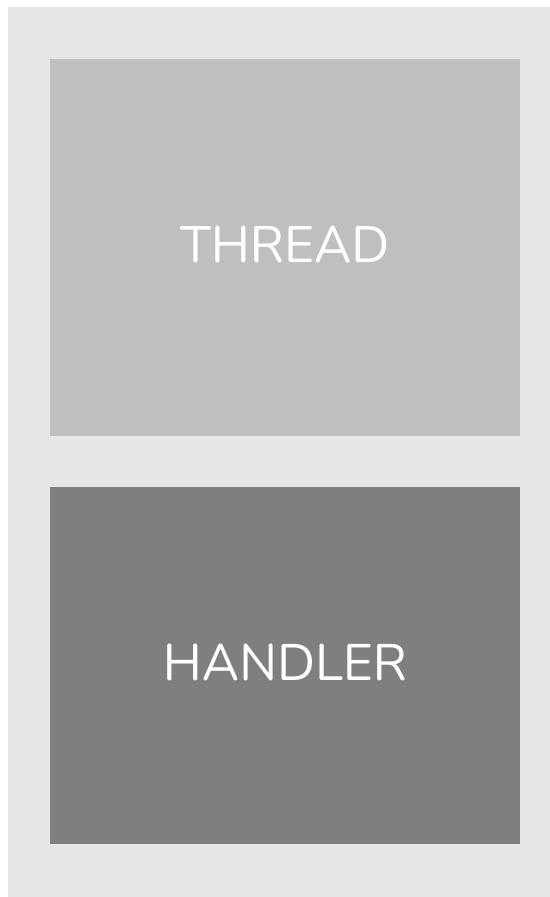


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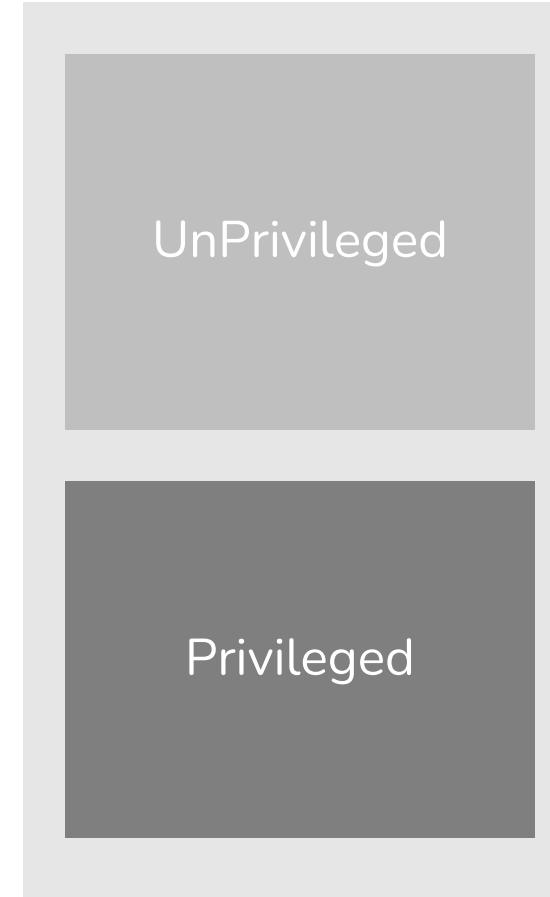


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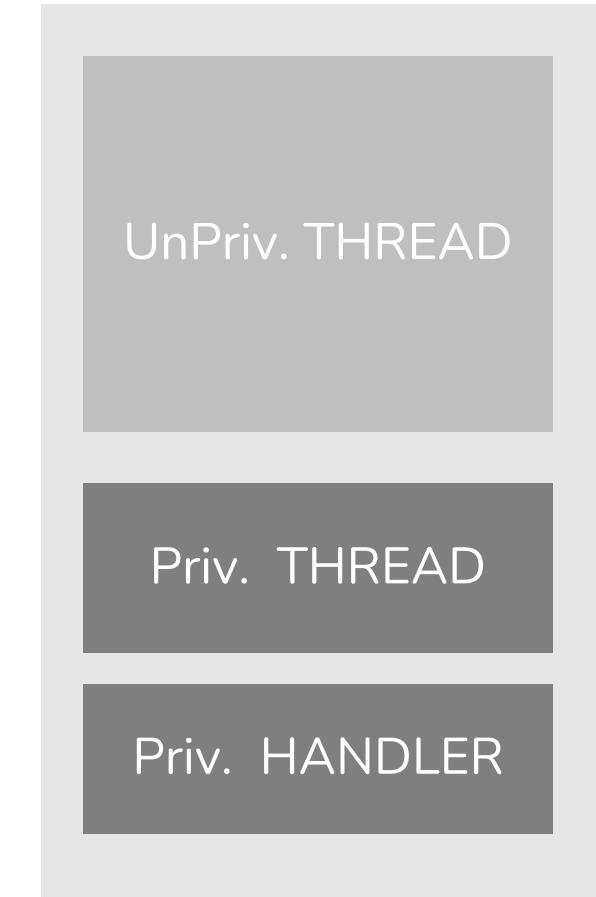
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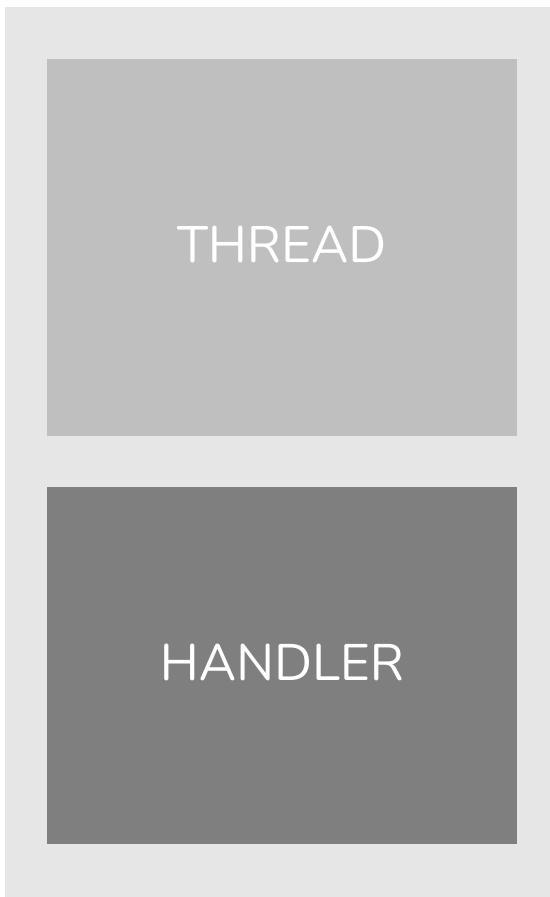


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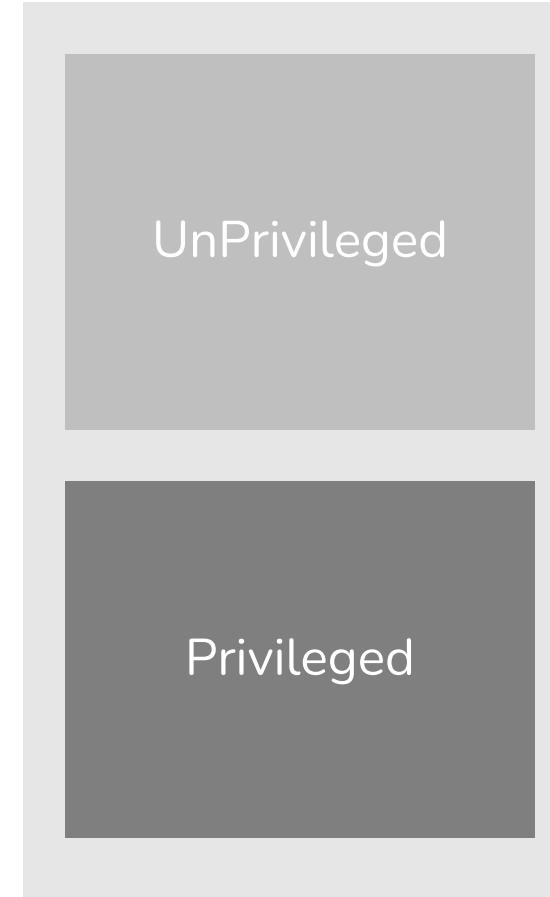


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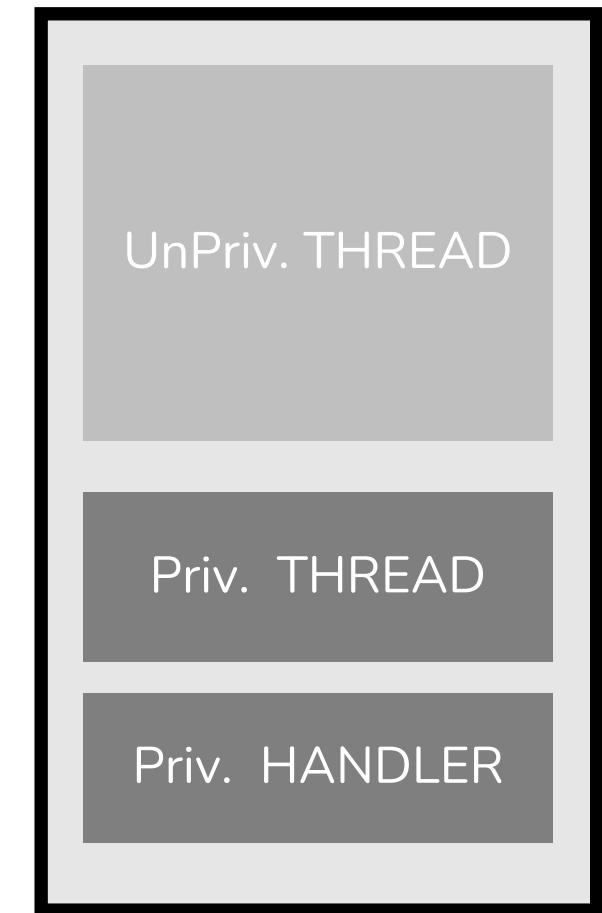
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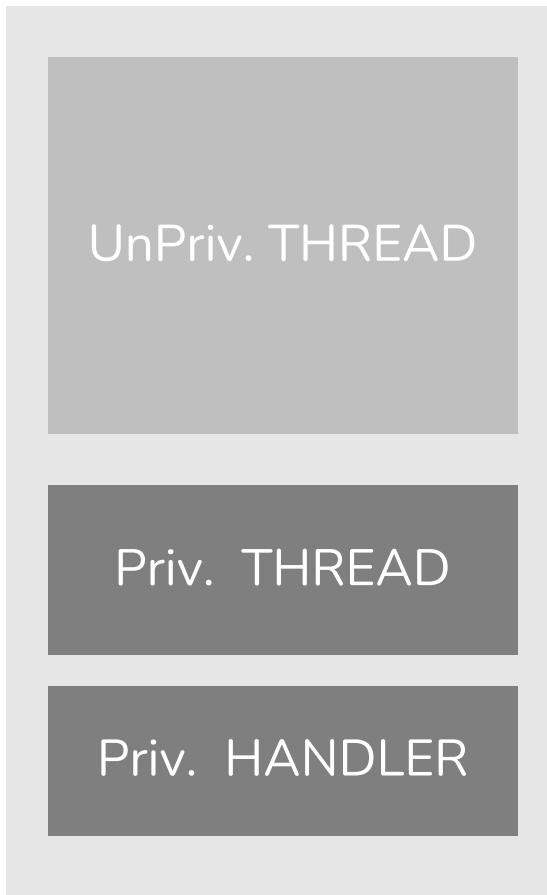


Armv6/7-M Base Architecture



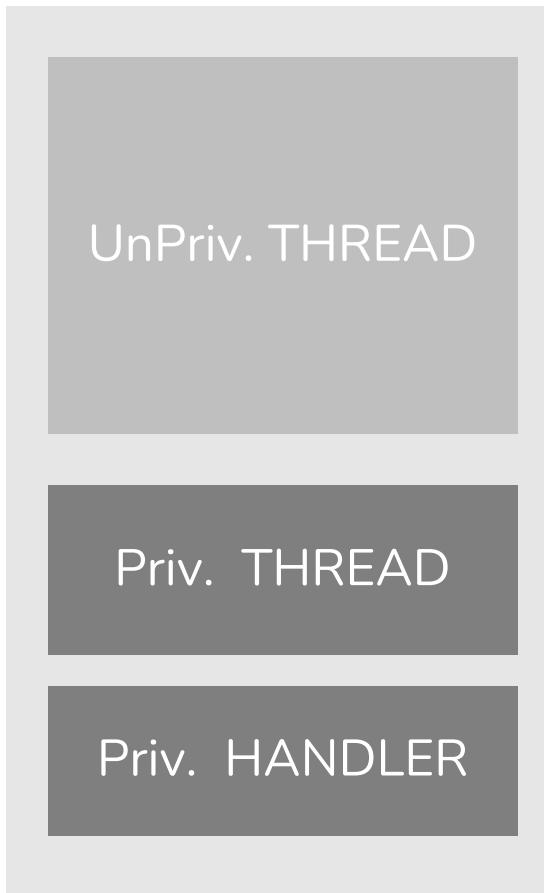
Armv8-M TrustZone

Armv6/7-M Base Architecture



Armv8-M TrustZone

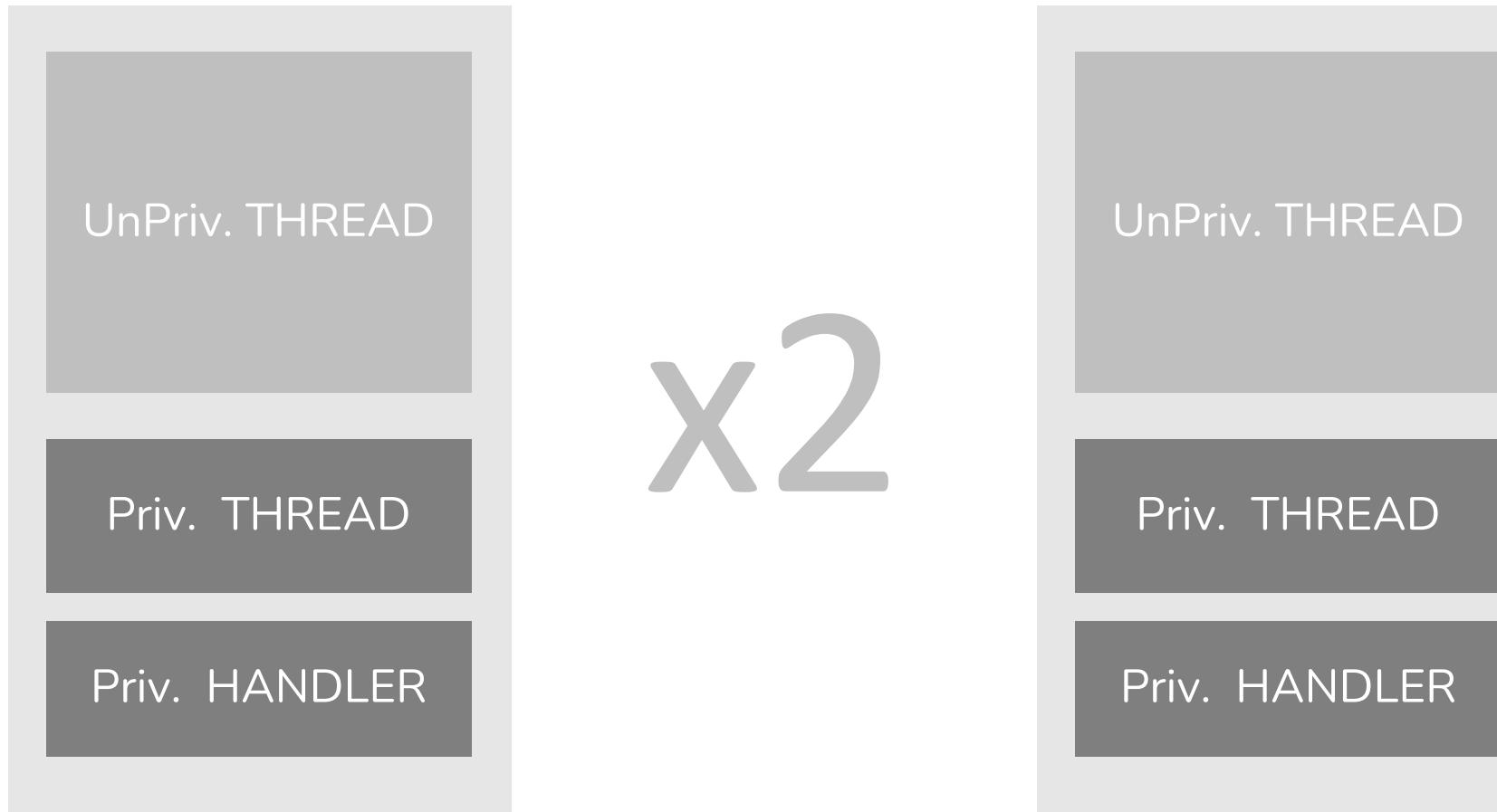
Armv6/7-M Base Architecture



x2

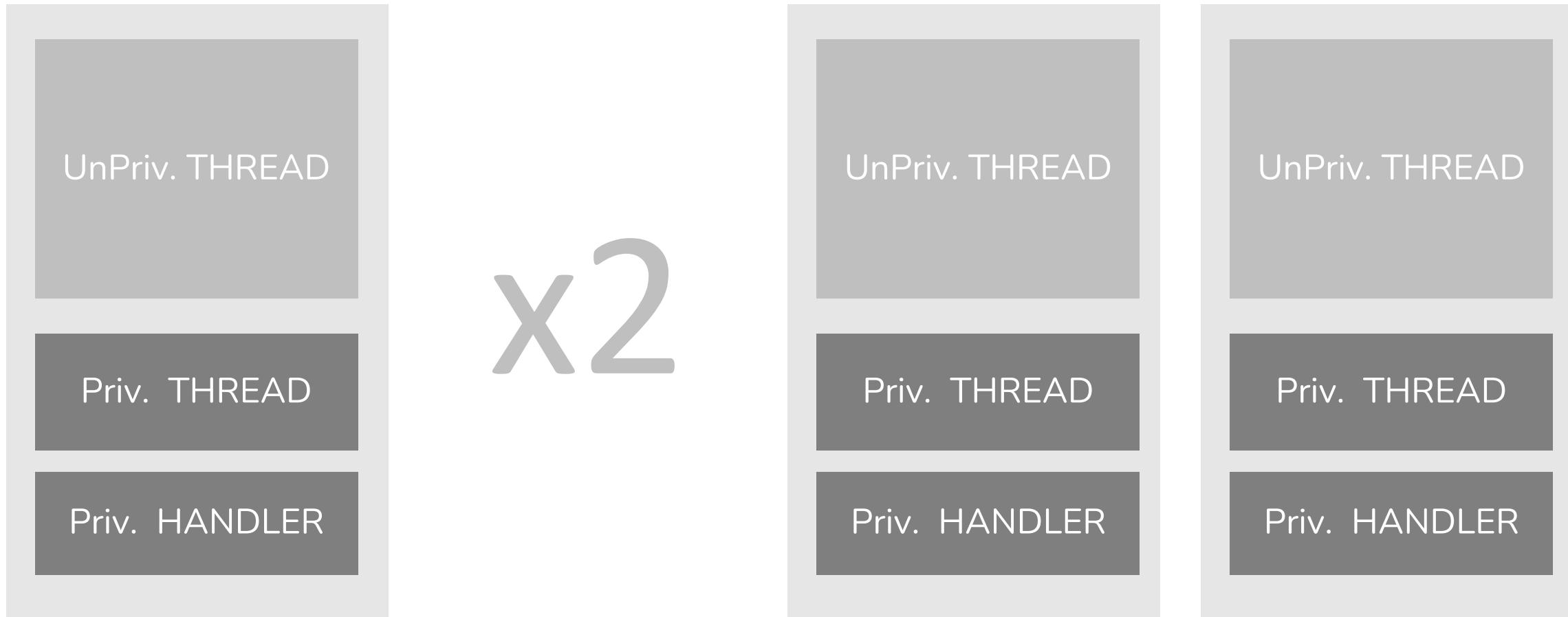
Armv8-M TrustZone

Armv6/7-M Base Architecture



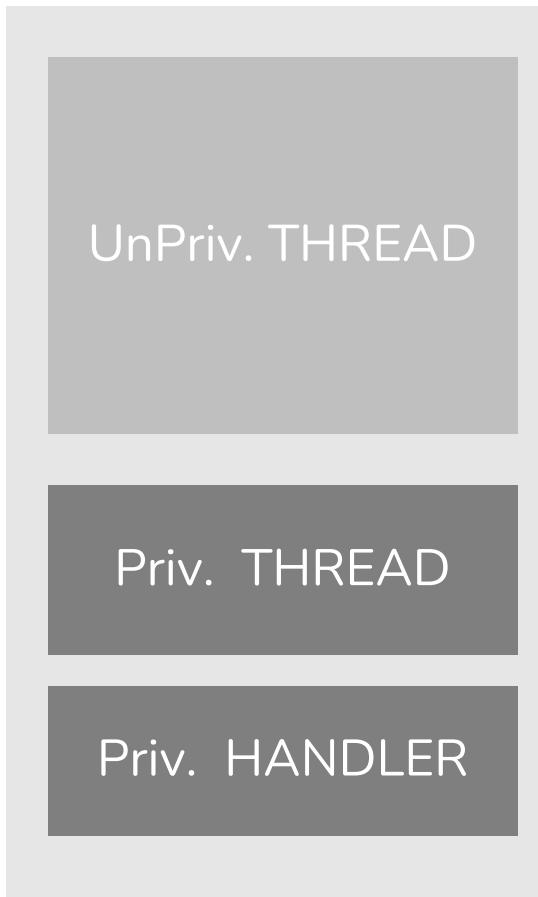
Armv8-M TrustZone

Armv6/7-M Base Architecture

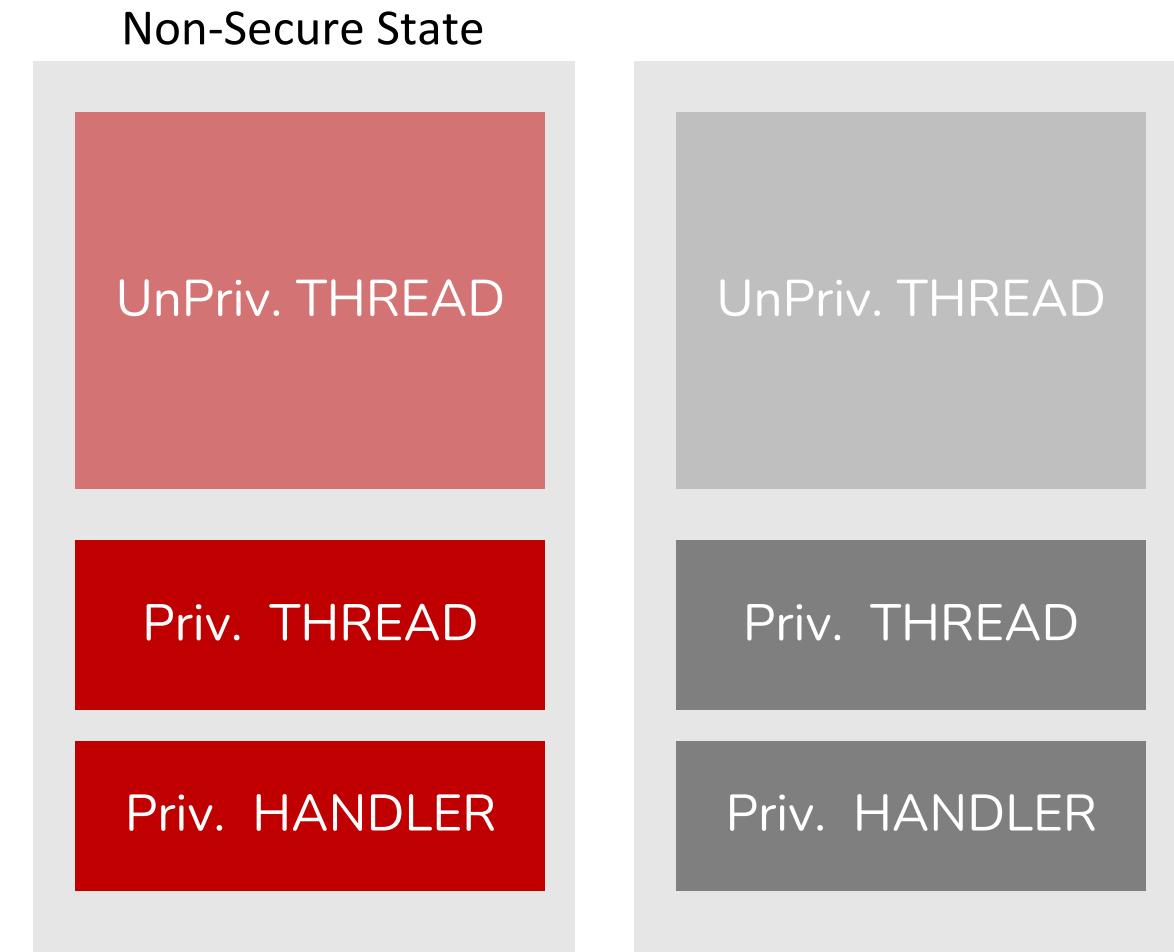


Armv8-M TrustZone

Armv6/7-M Base Architecture

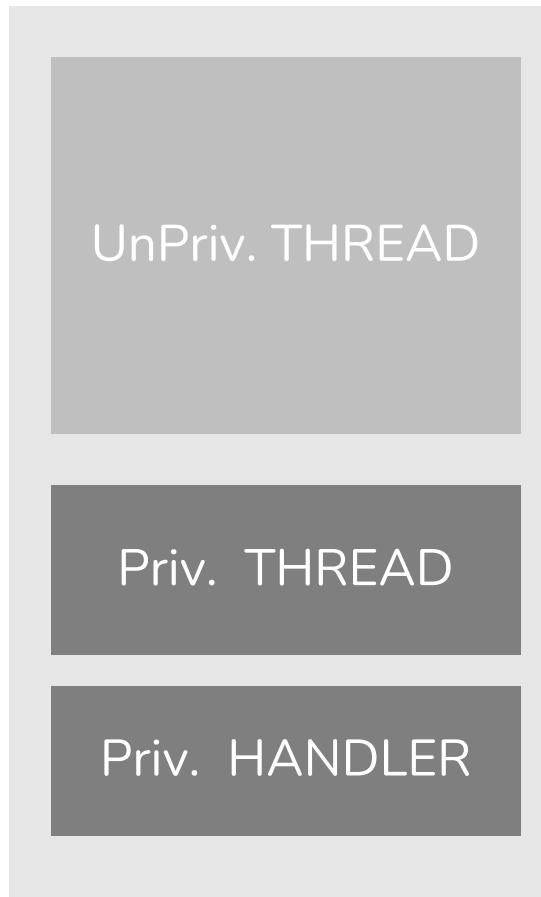


x2

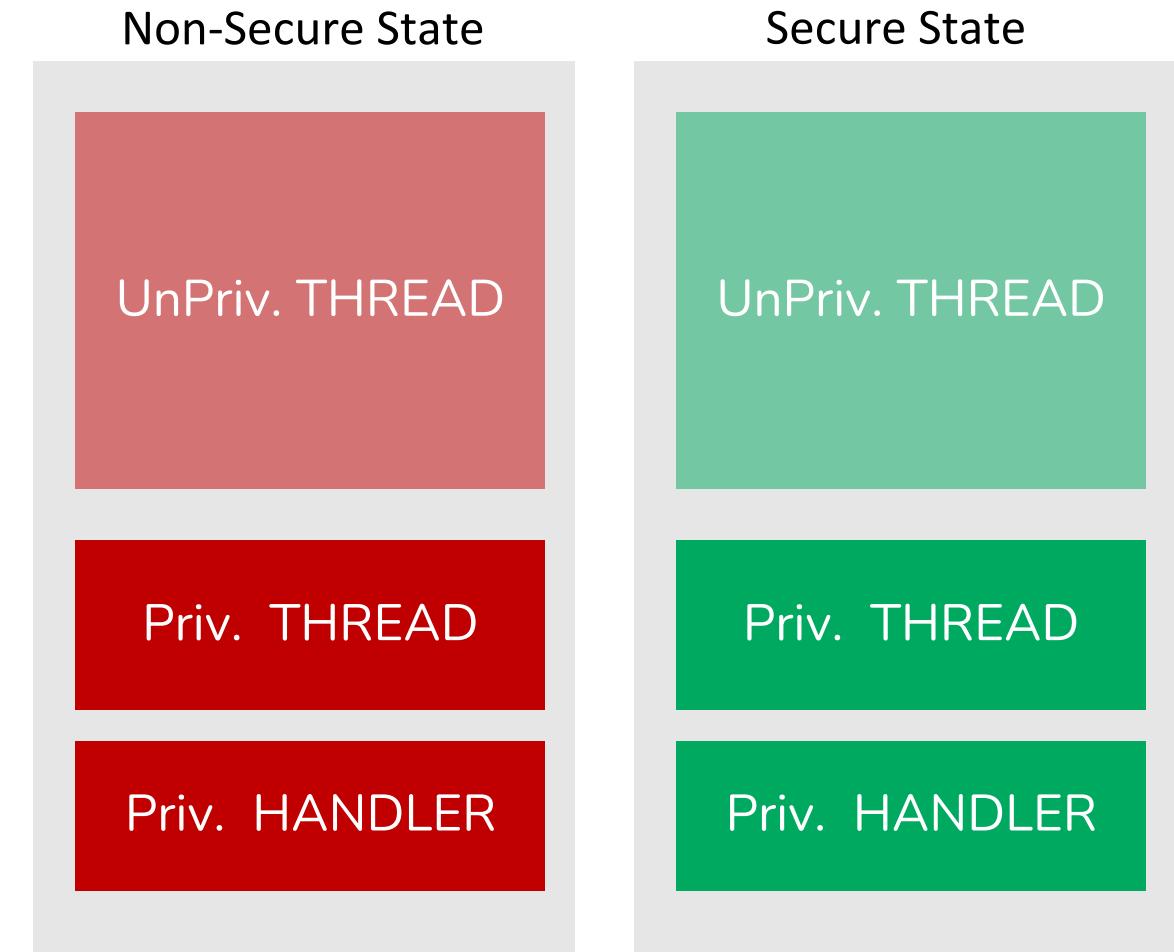


Armv8-M TrustZone

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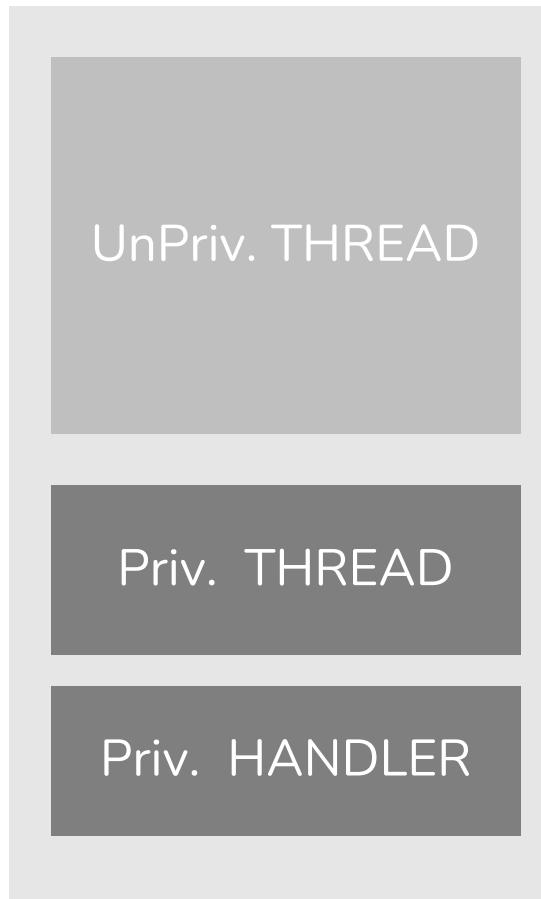


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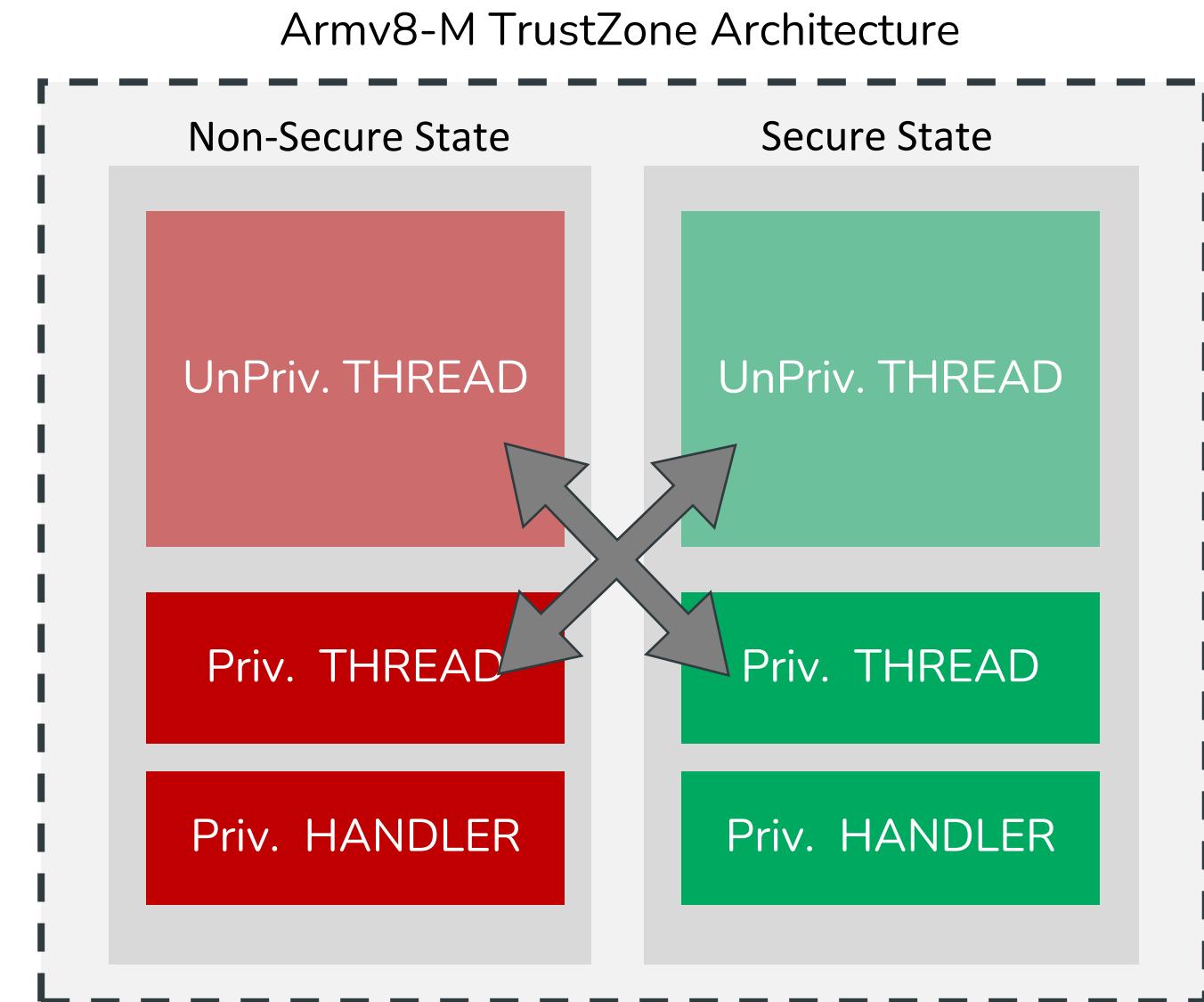


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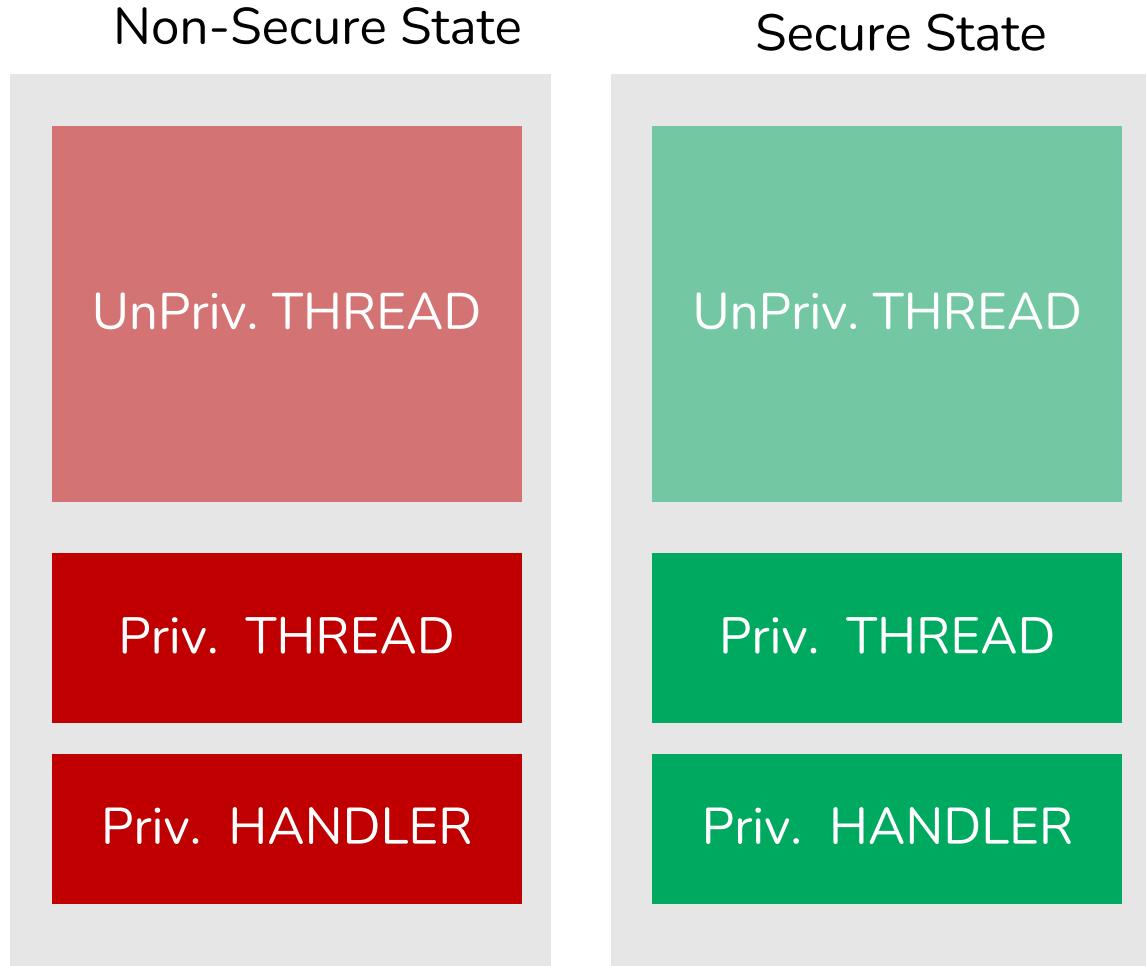
Armv6/7-M Base Architecture



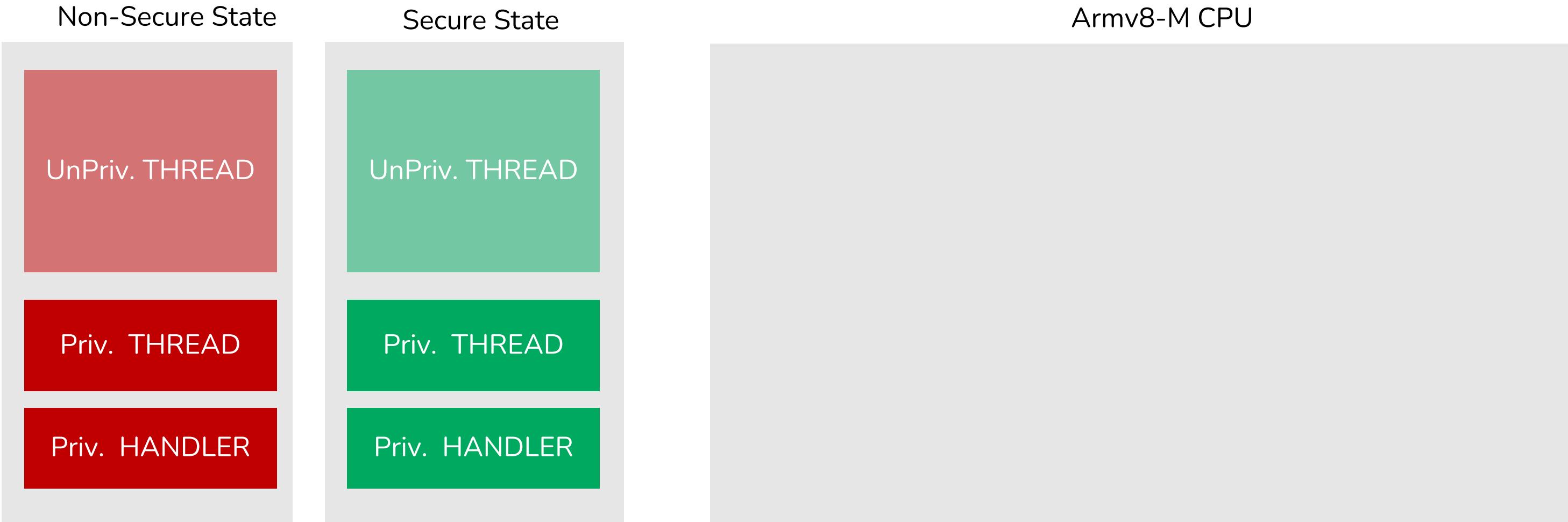
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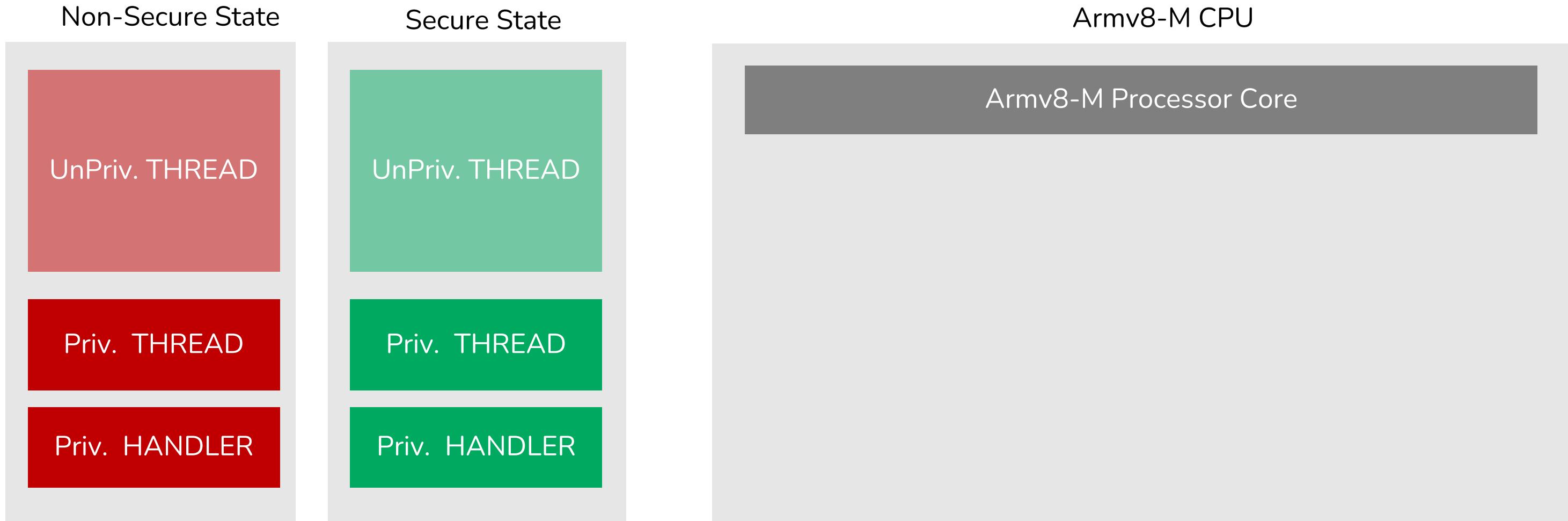
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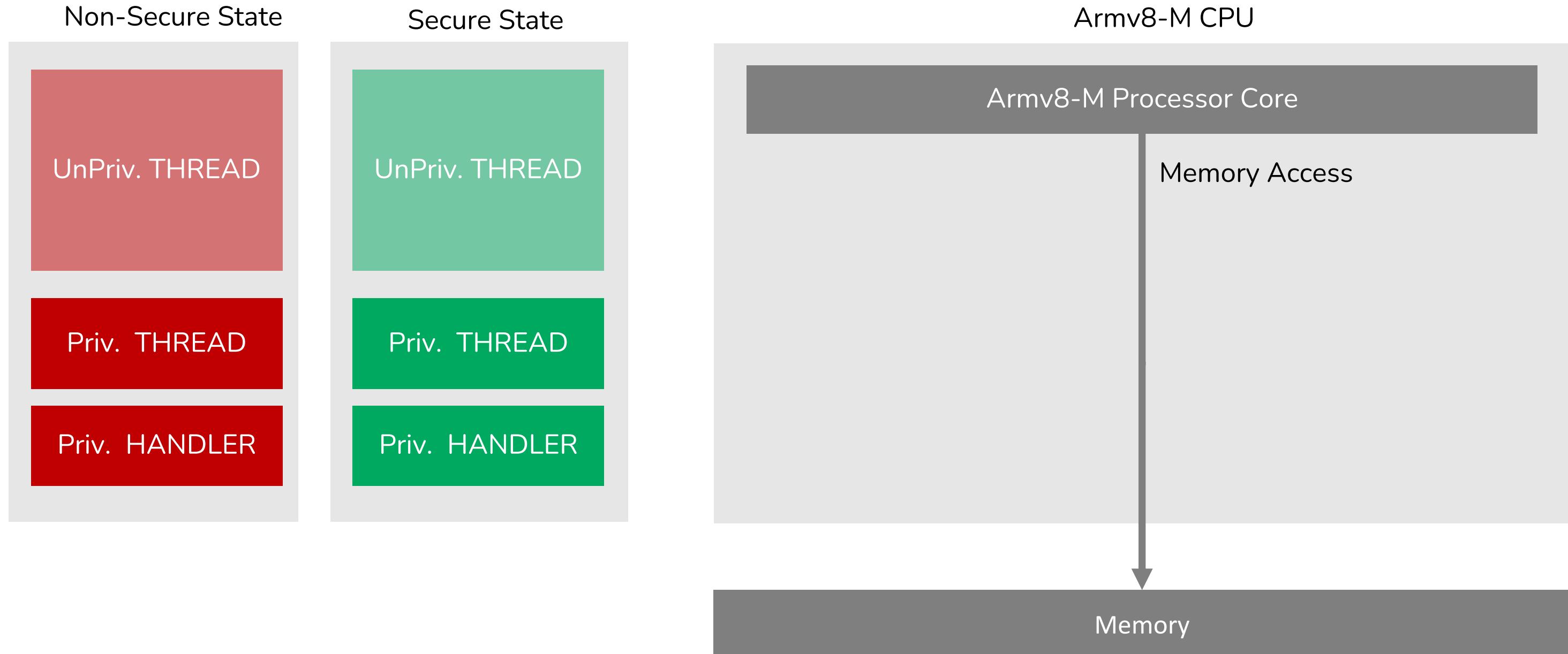
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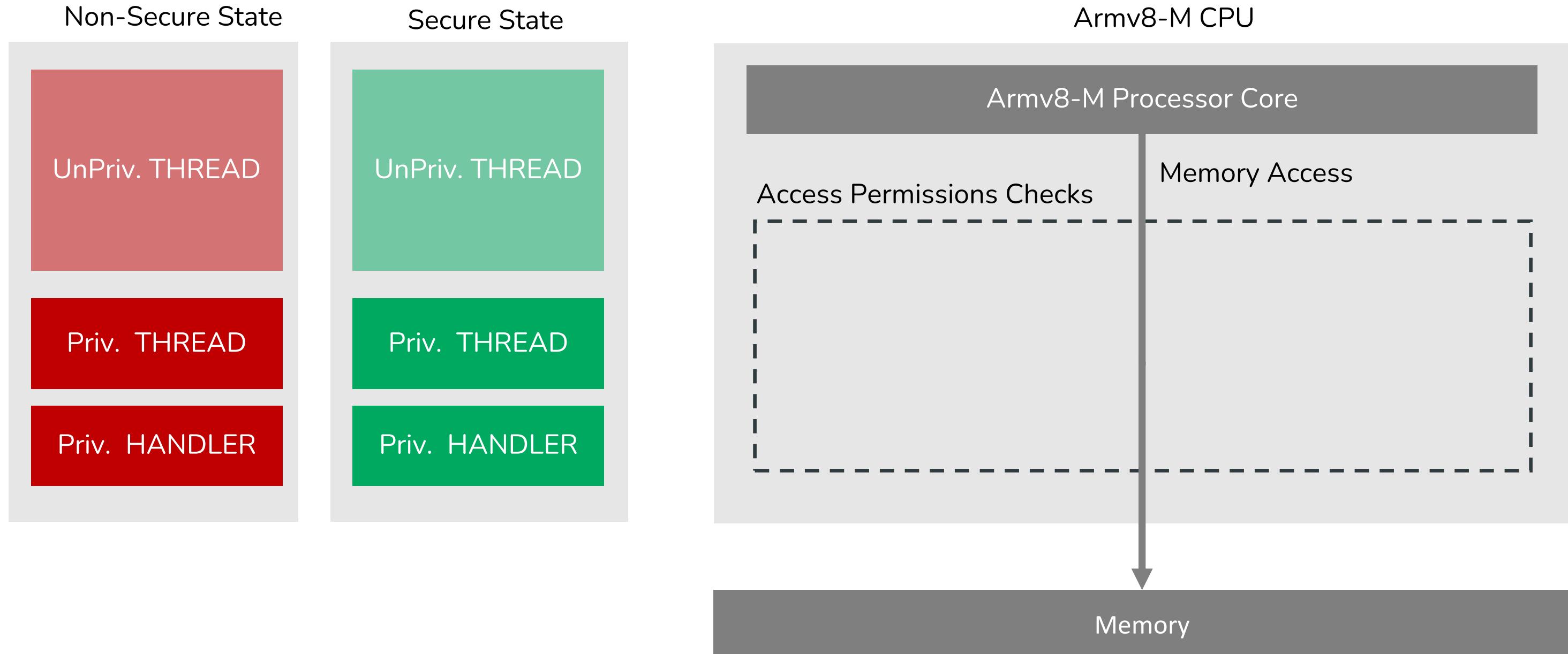
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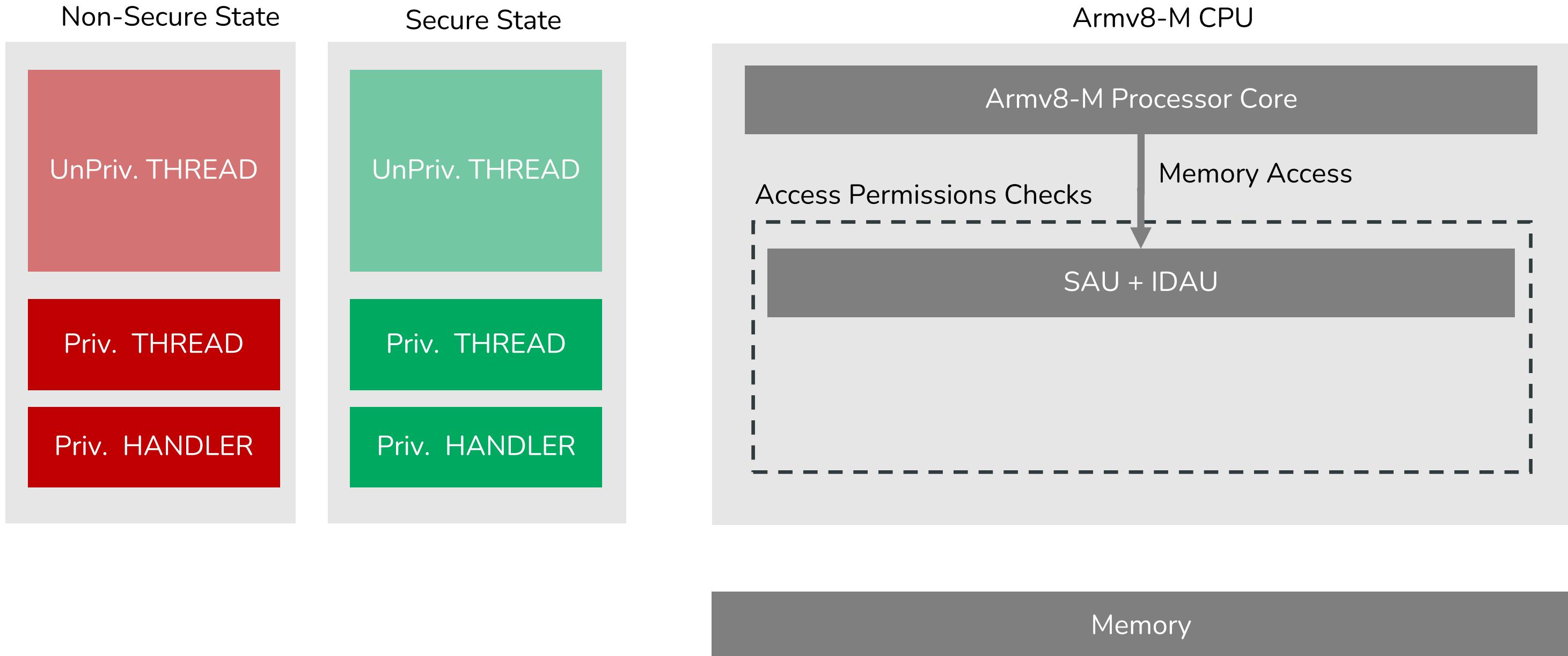
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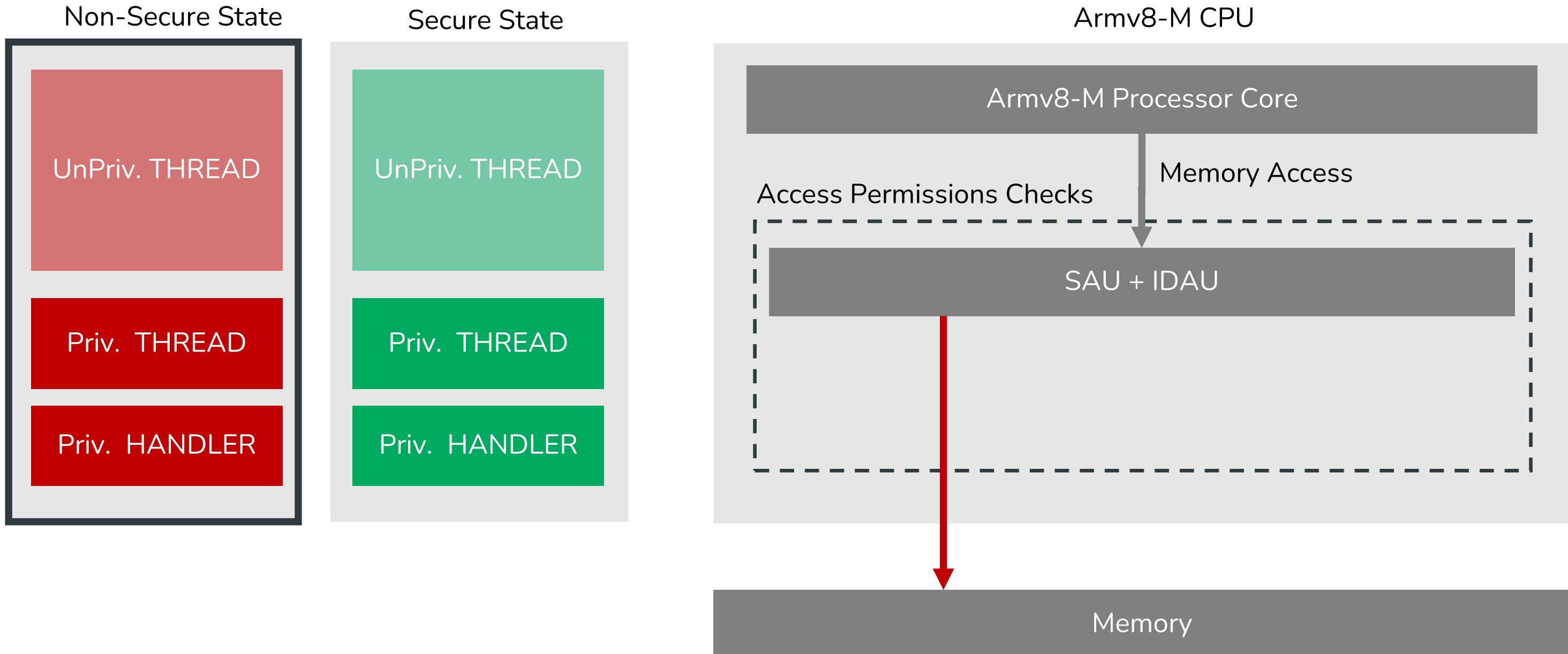
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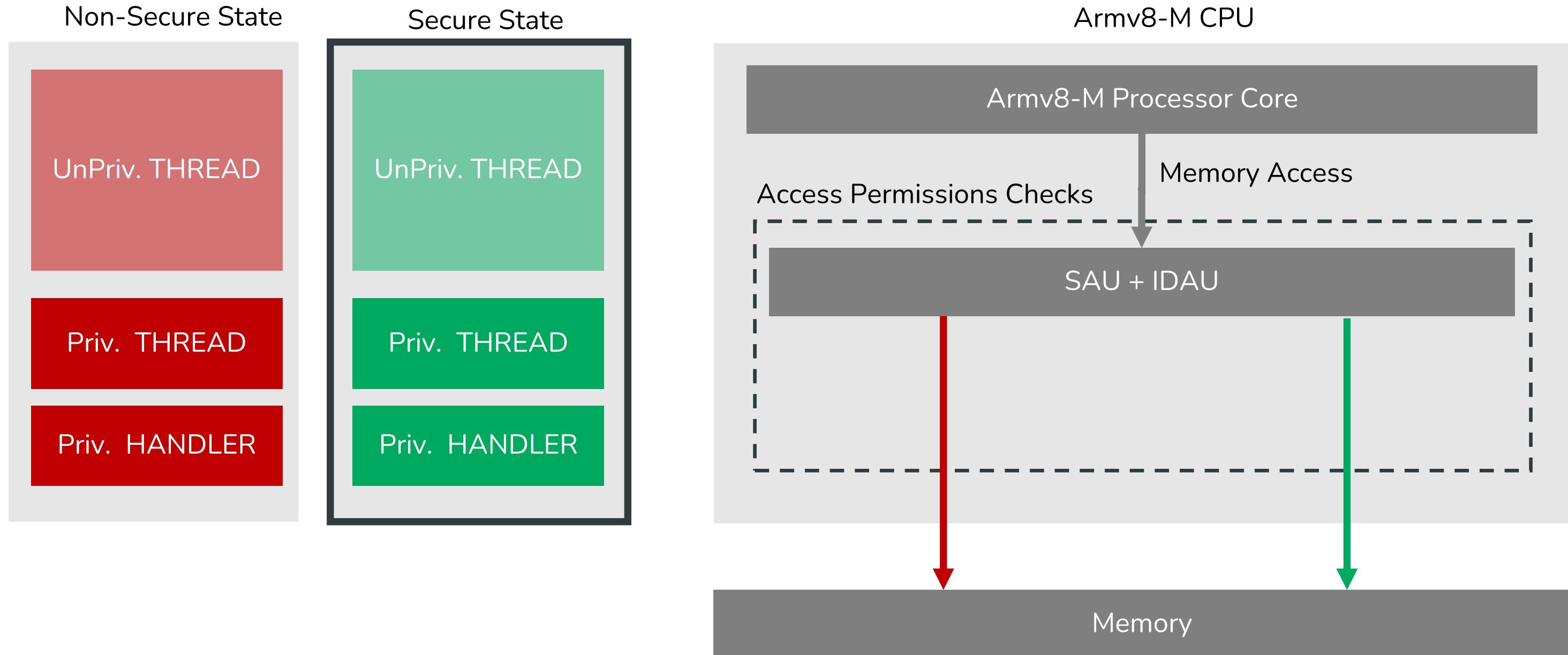
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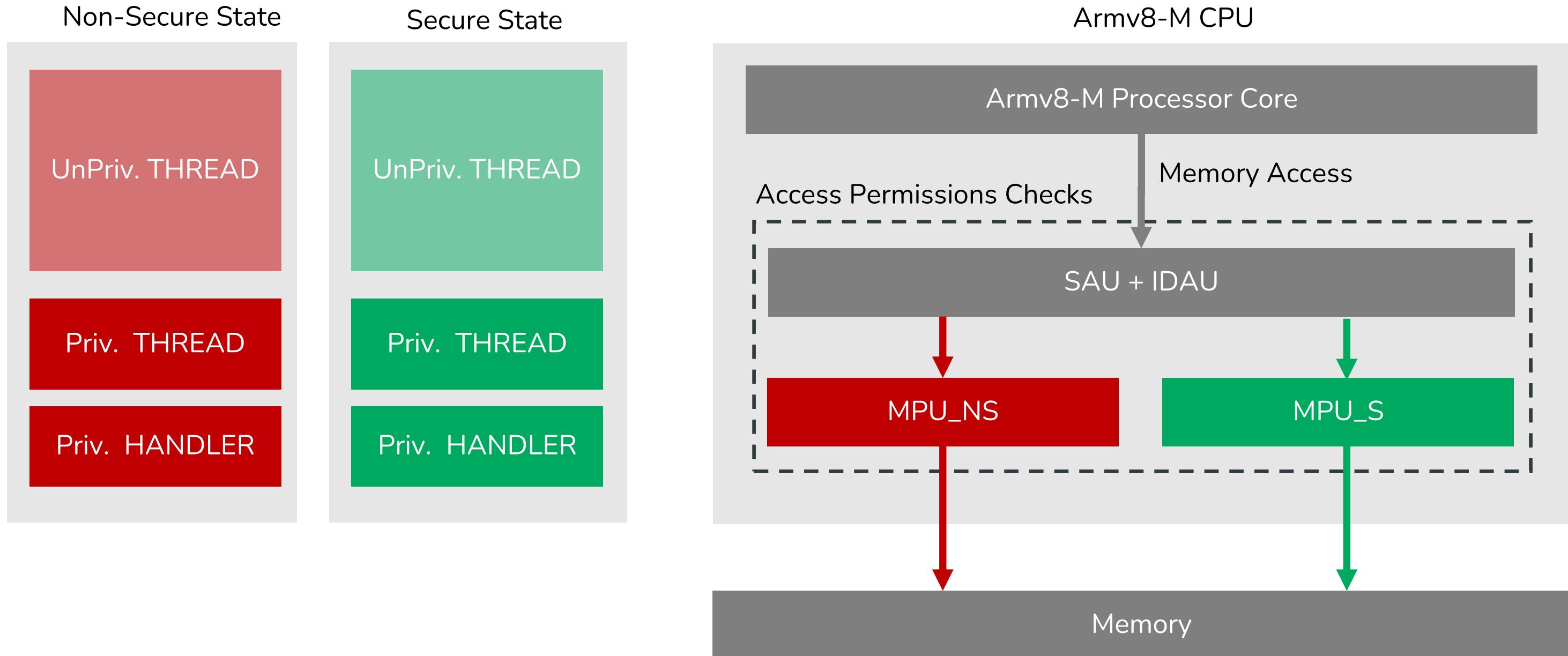
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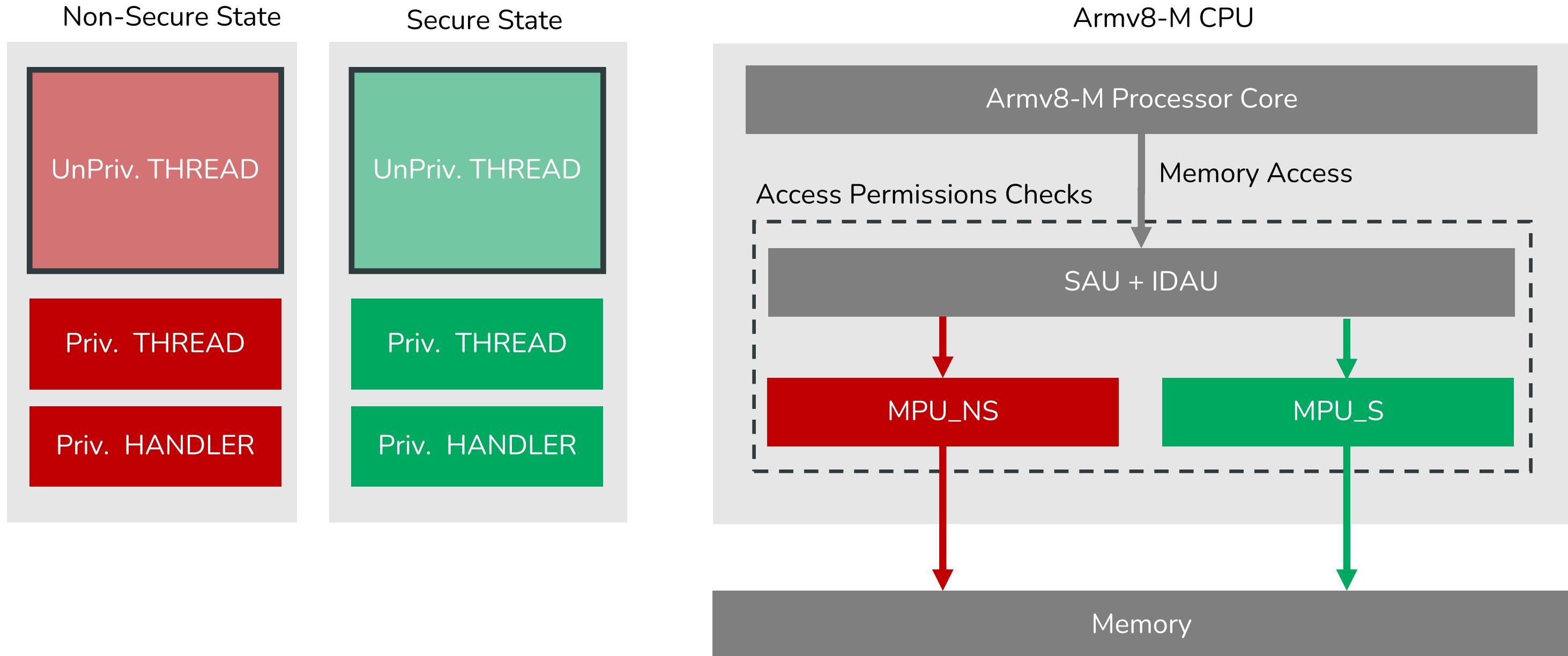
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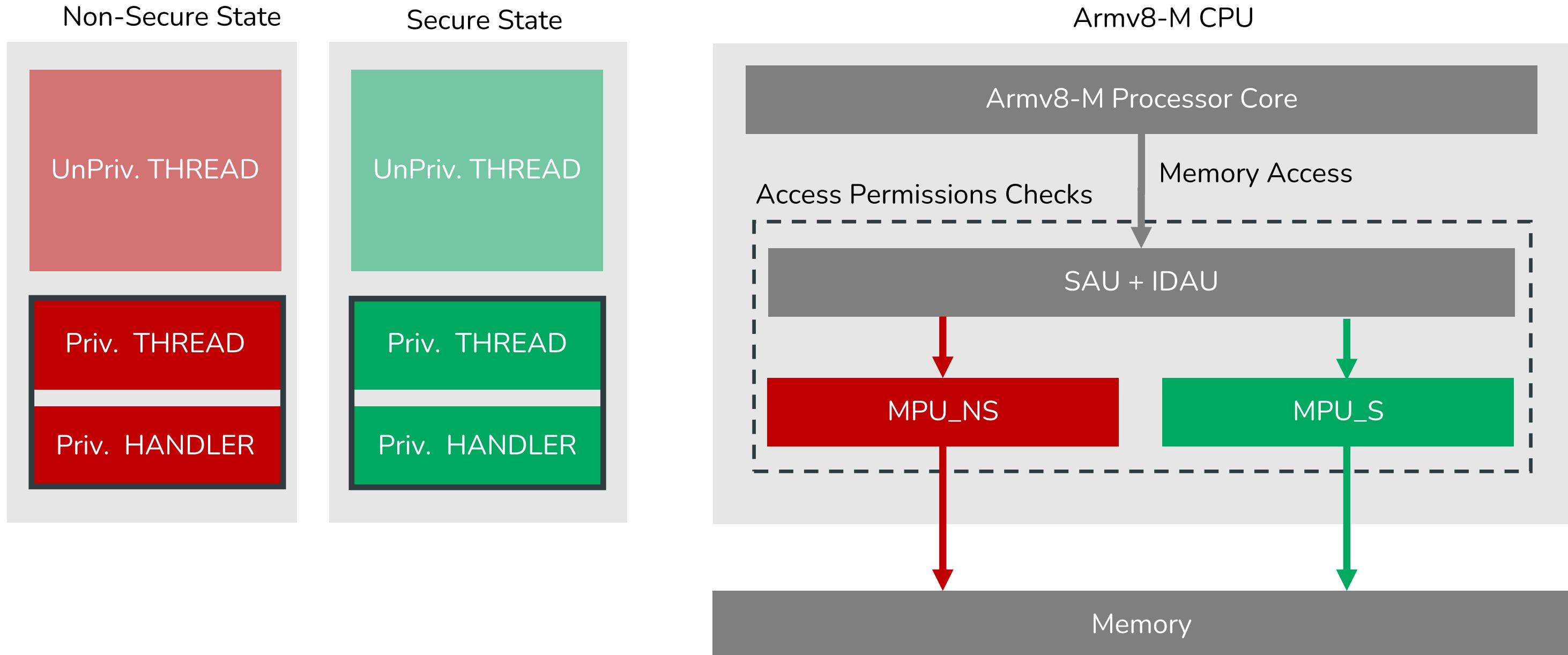
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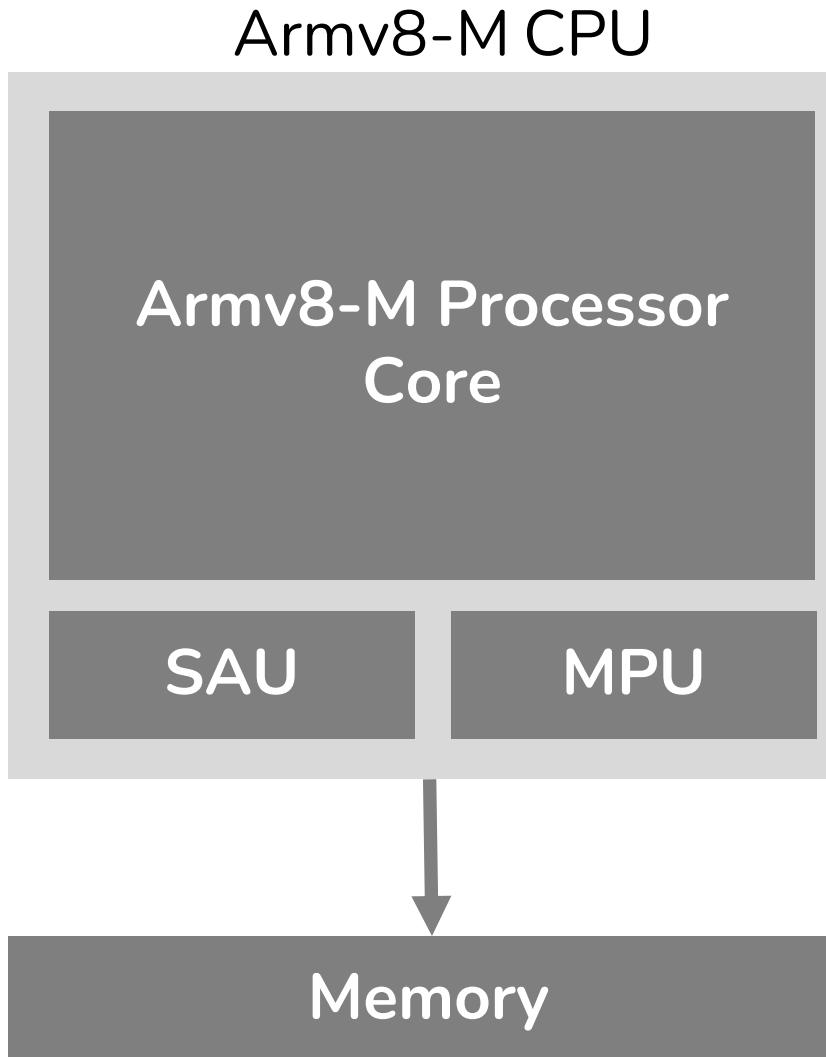
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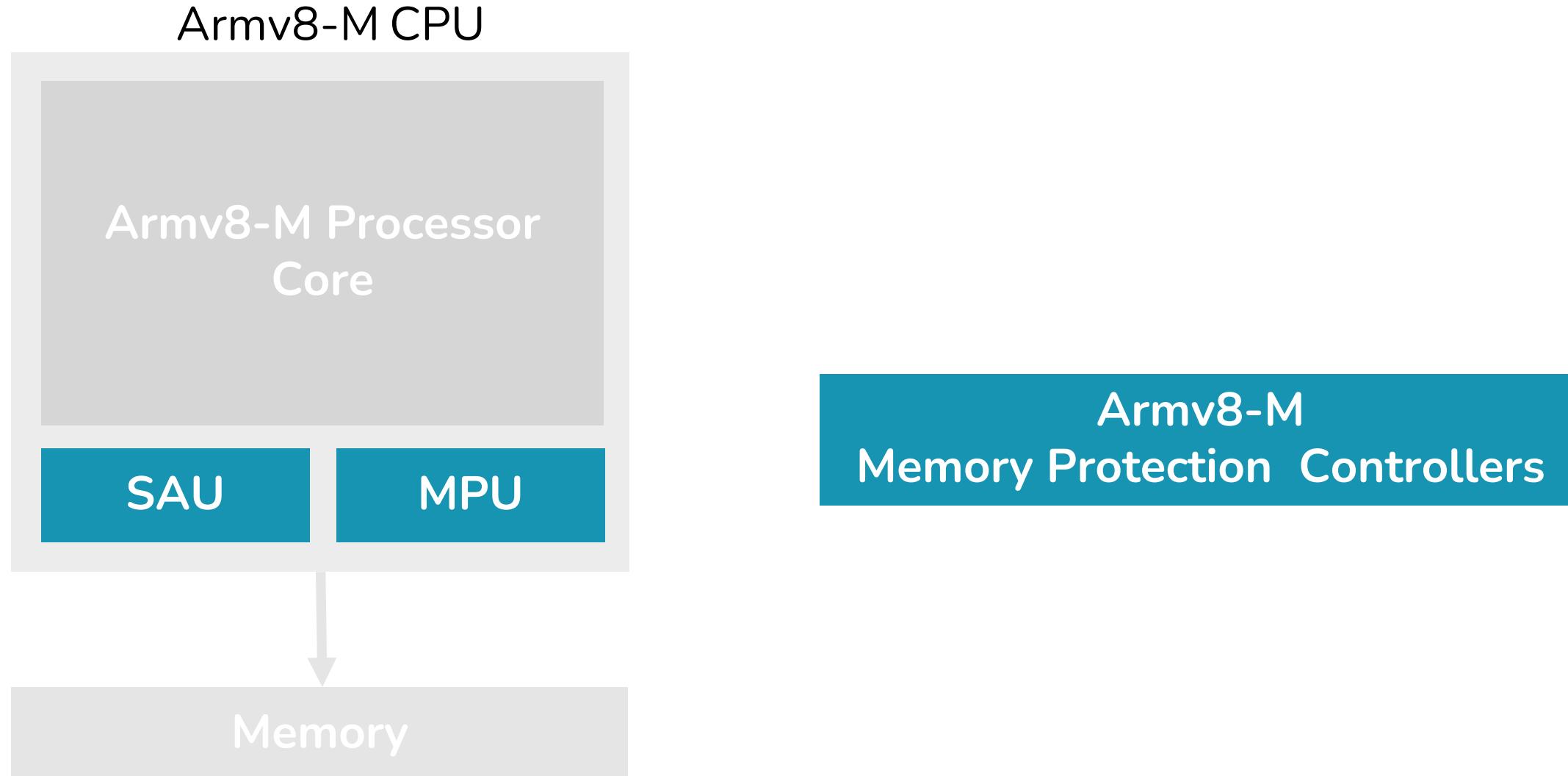
CPU Protection vs System Protection

CPU Protection vs System Protection

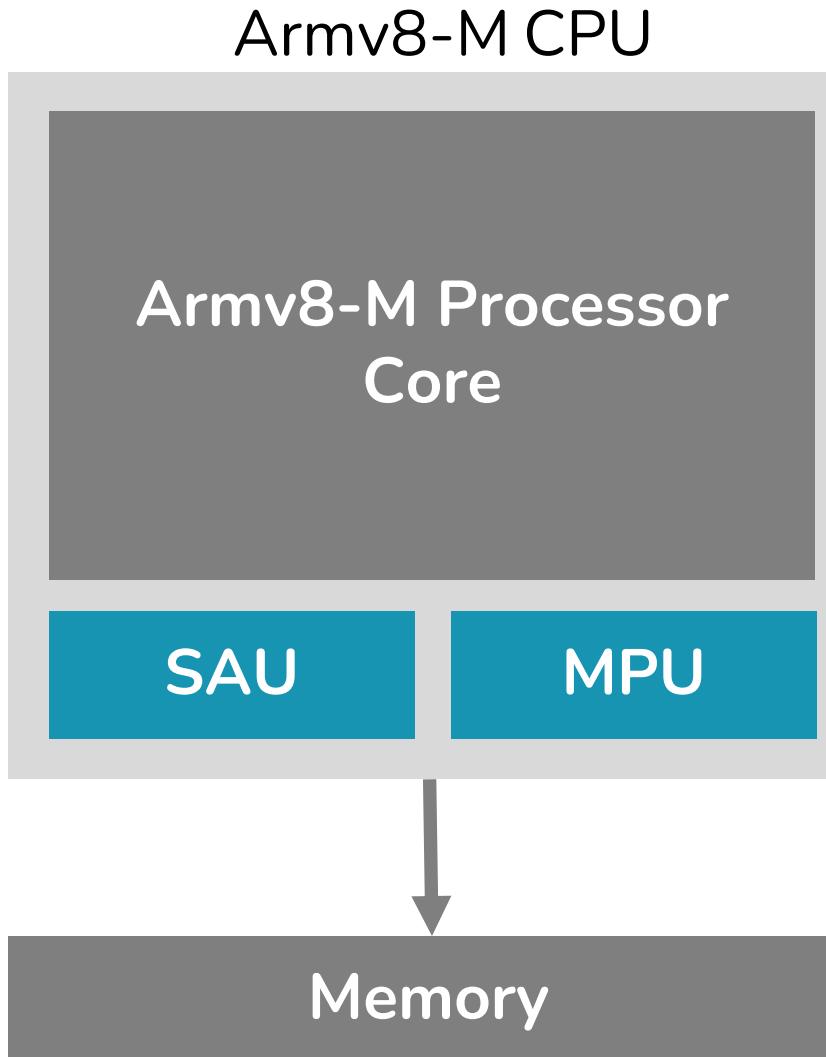
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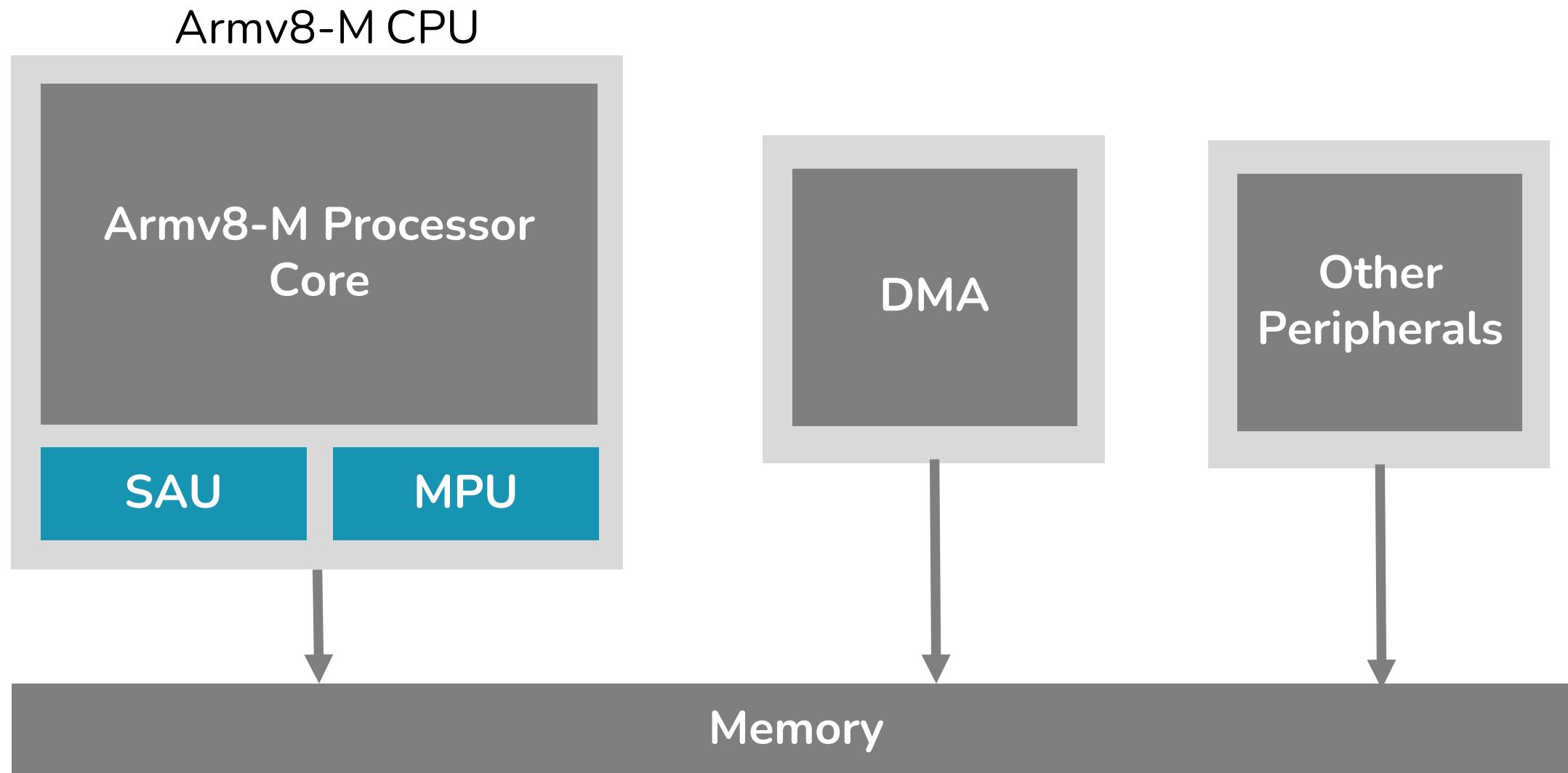
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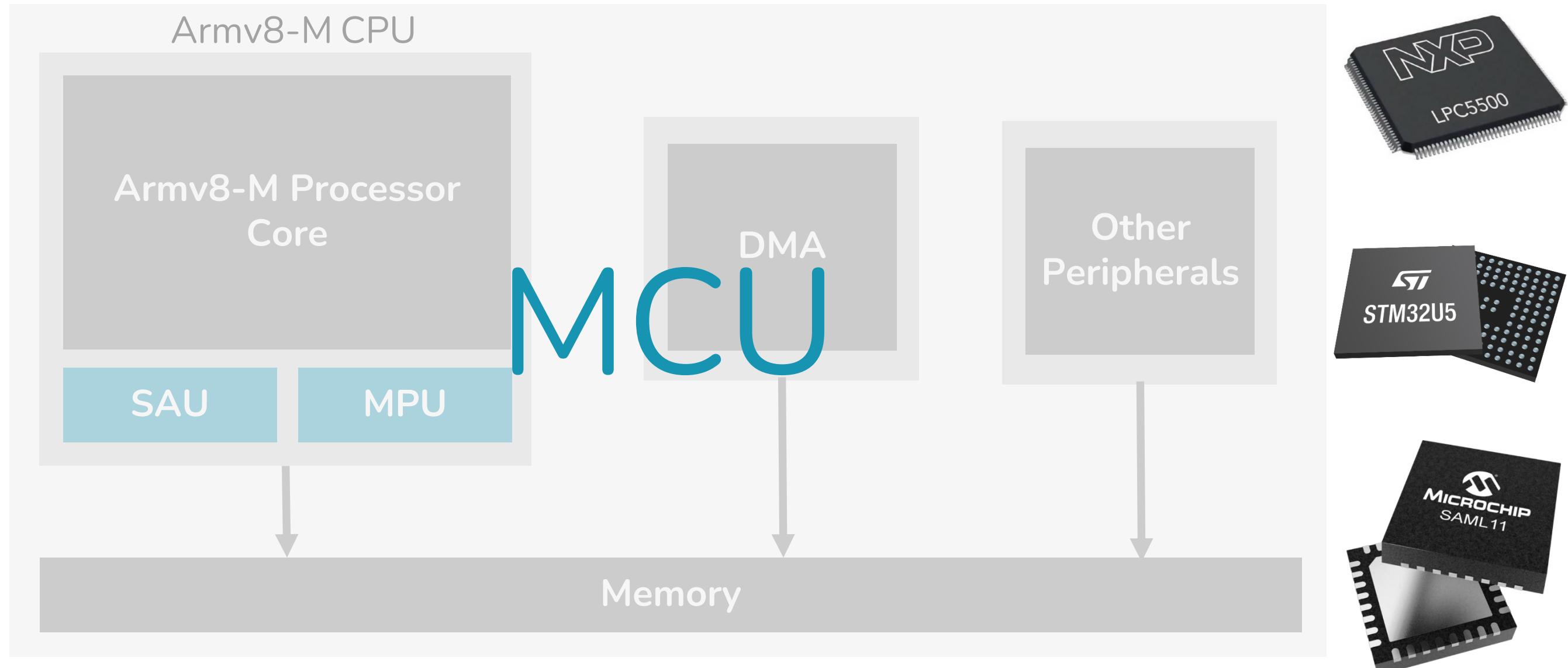
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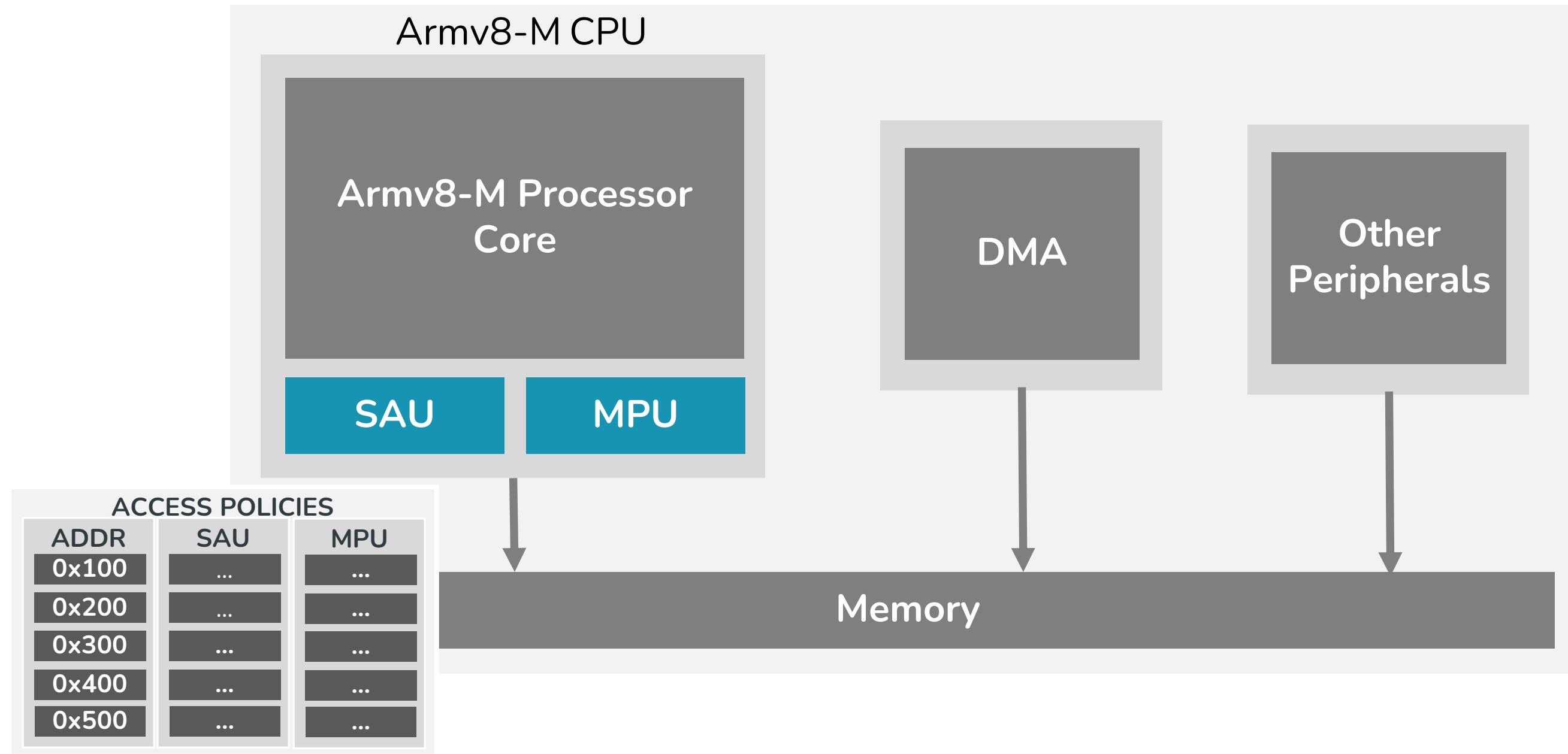
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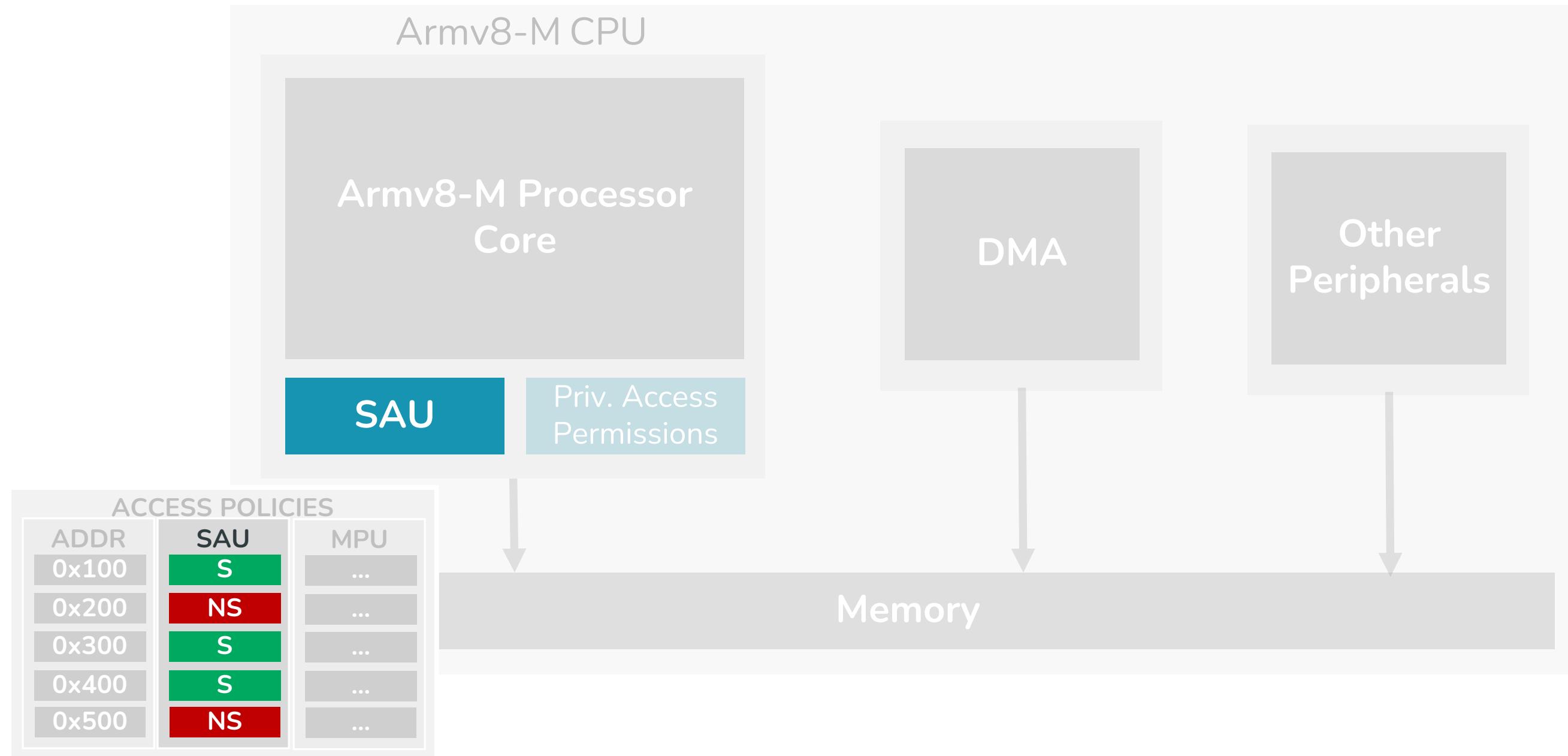
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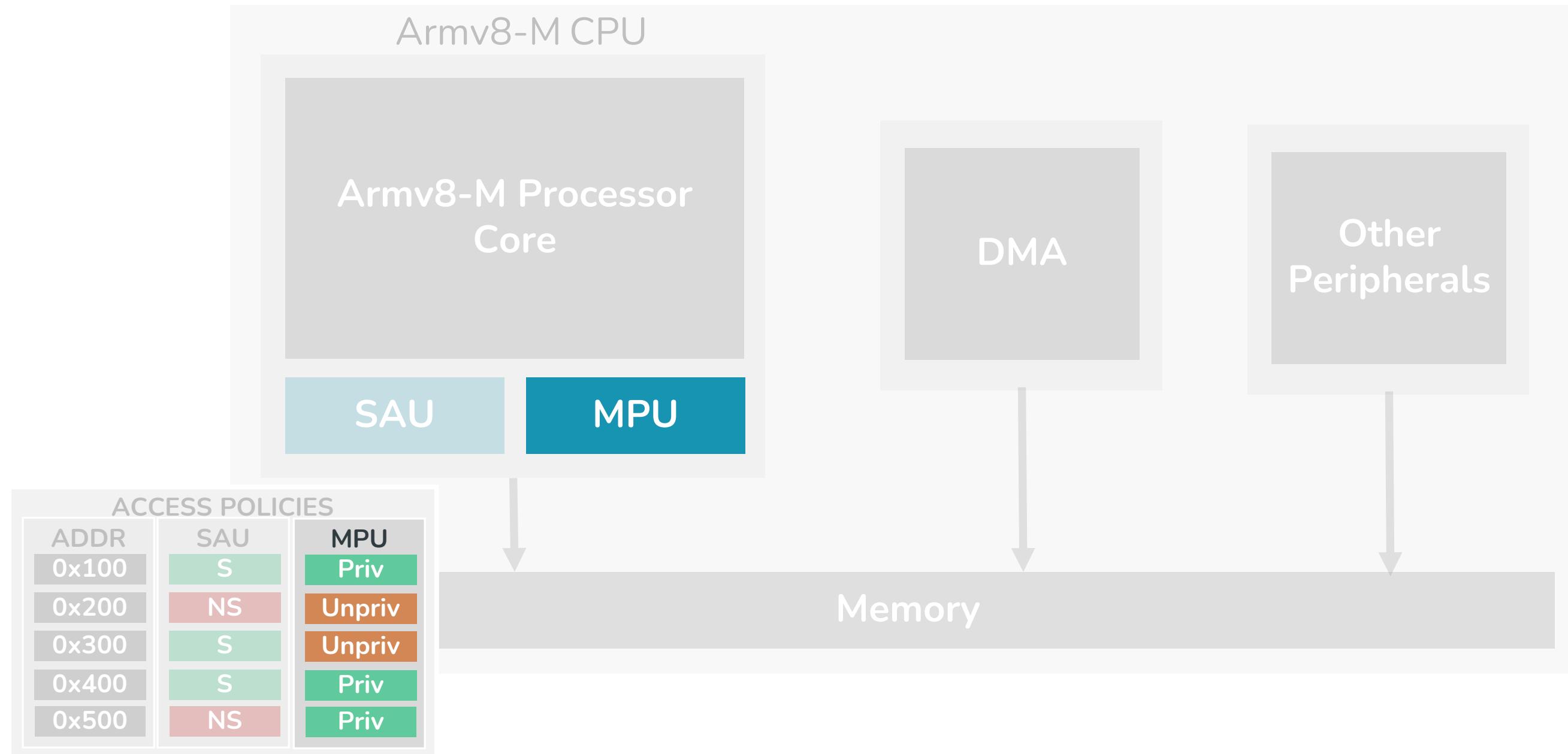
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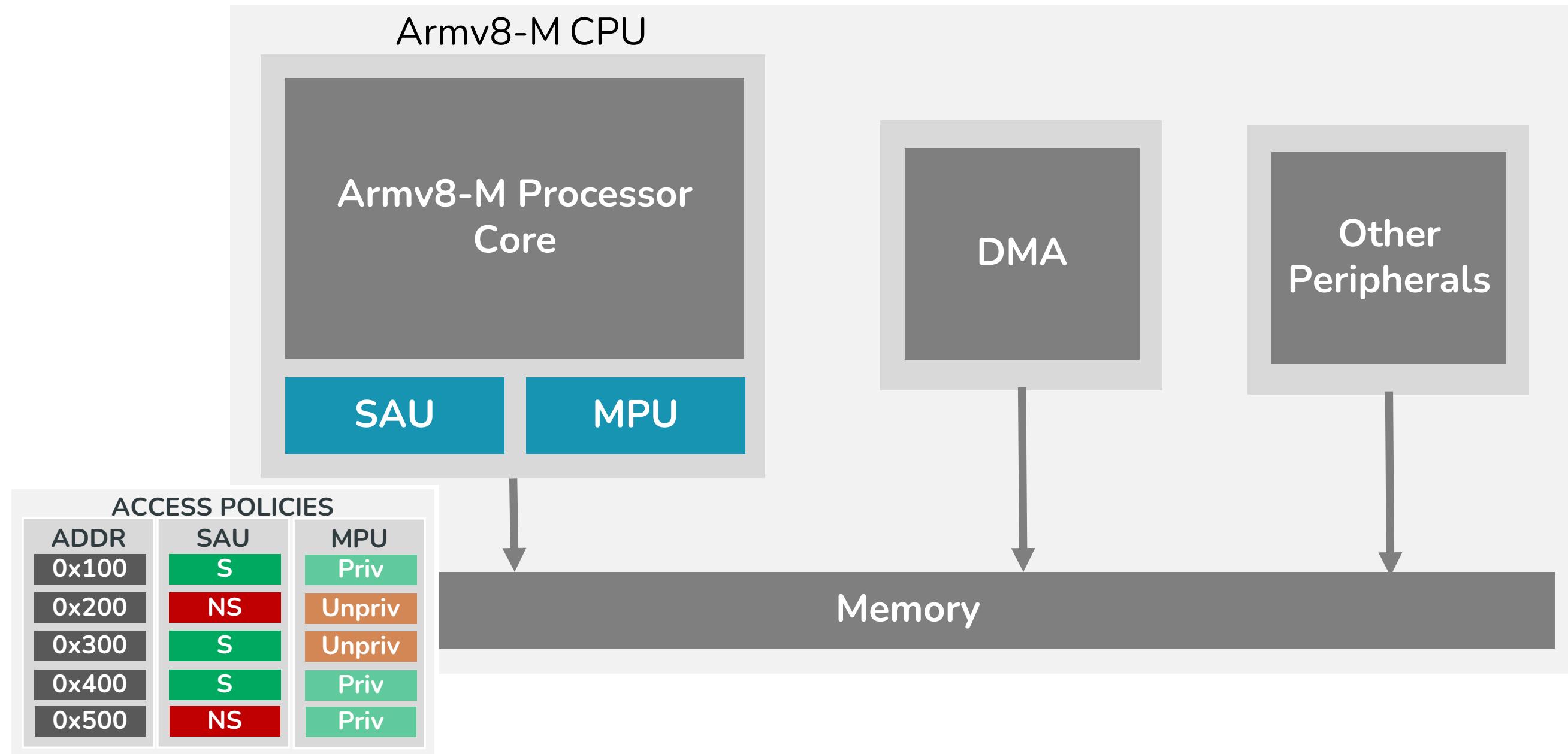
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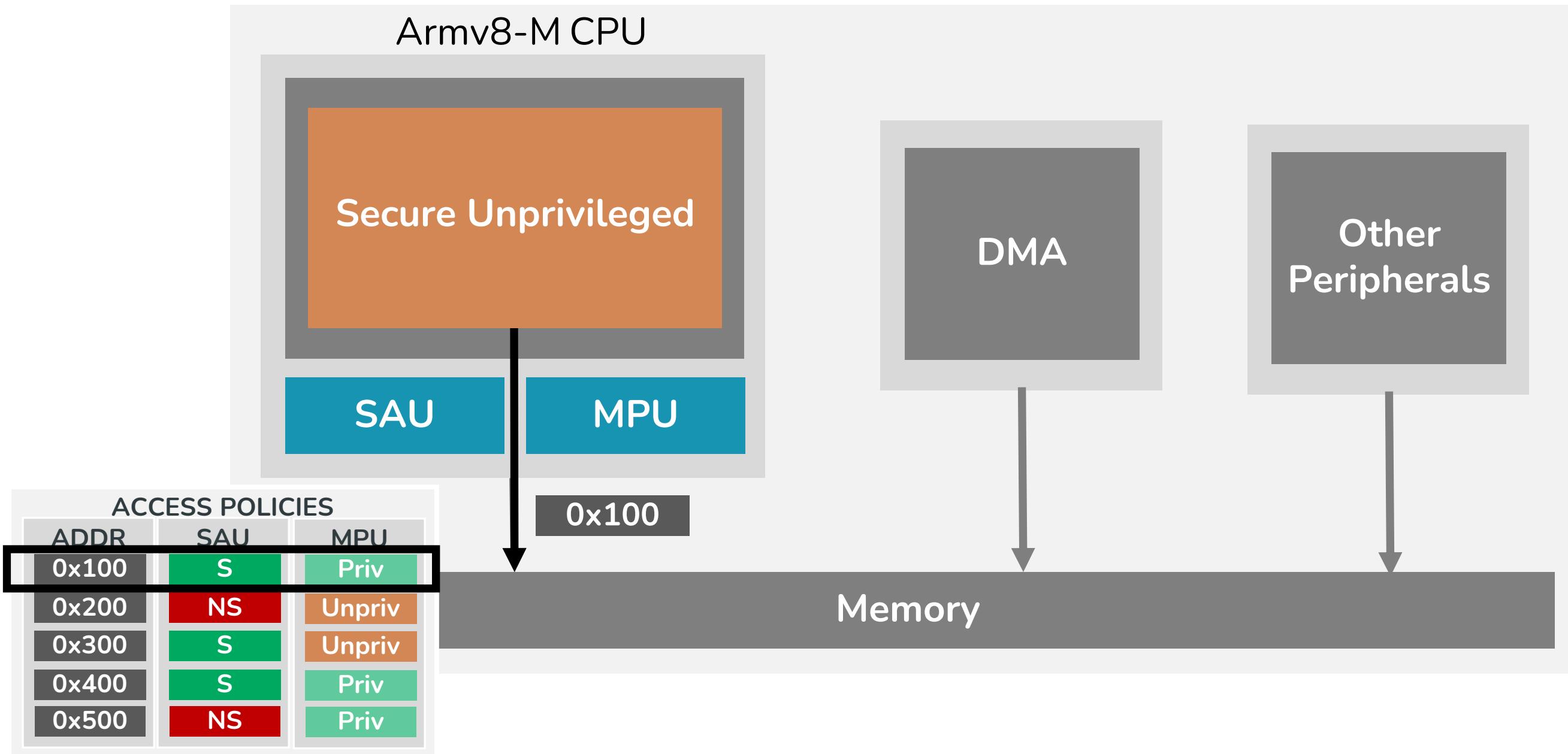
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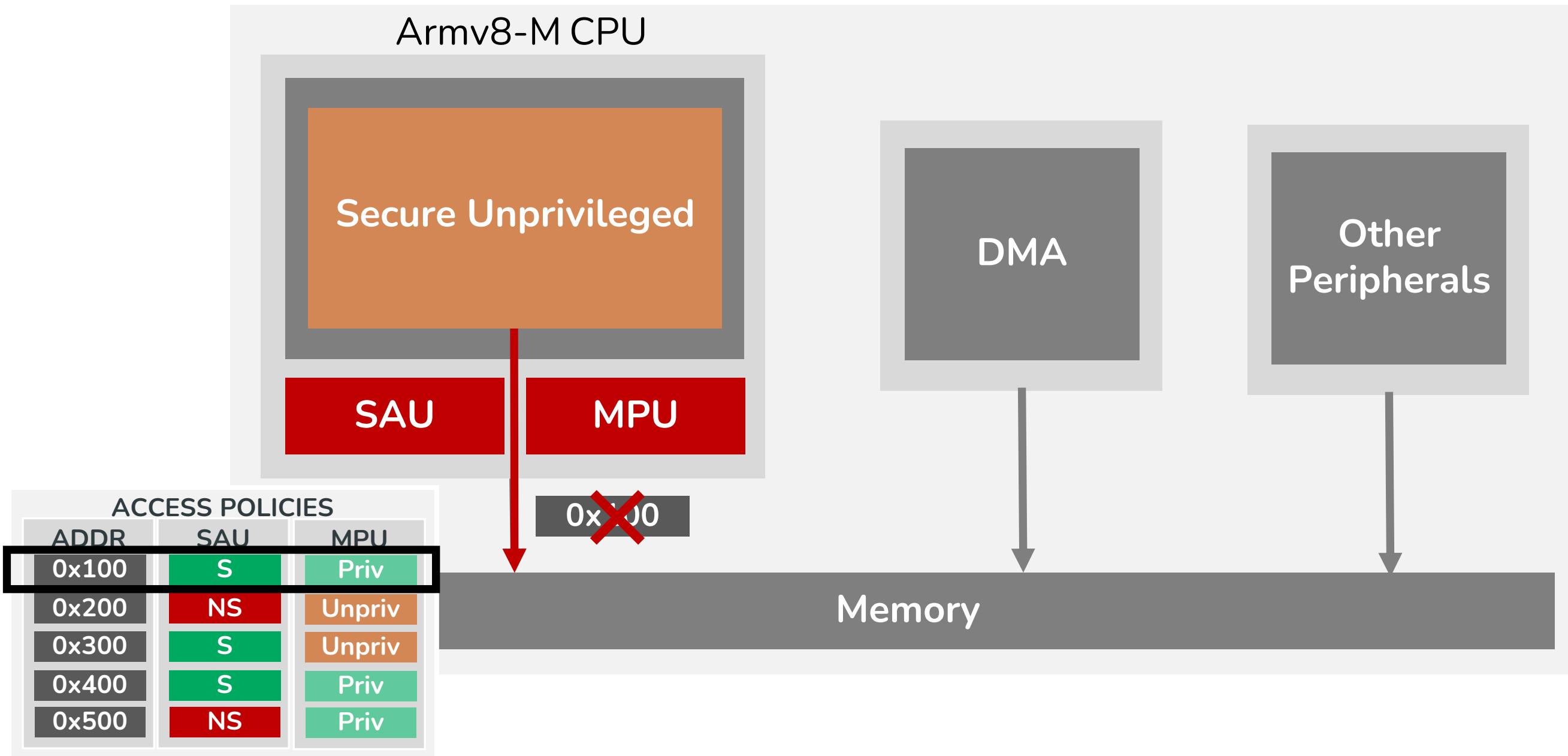
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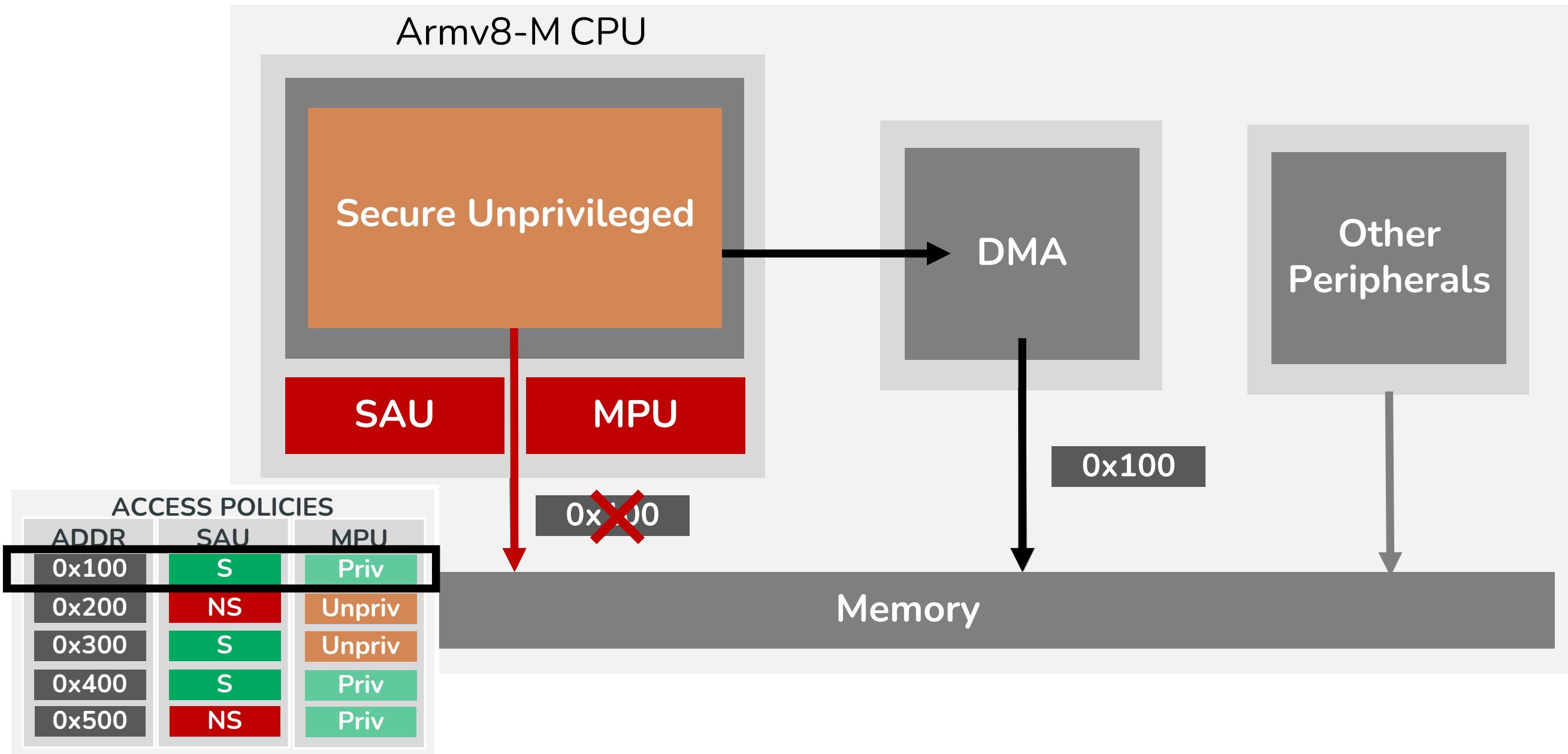
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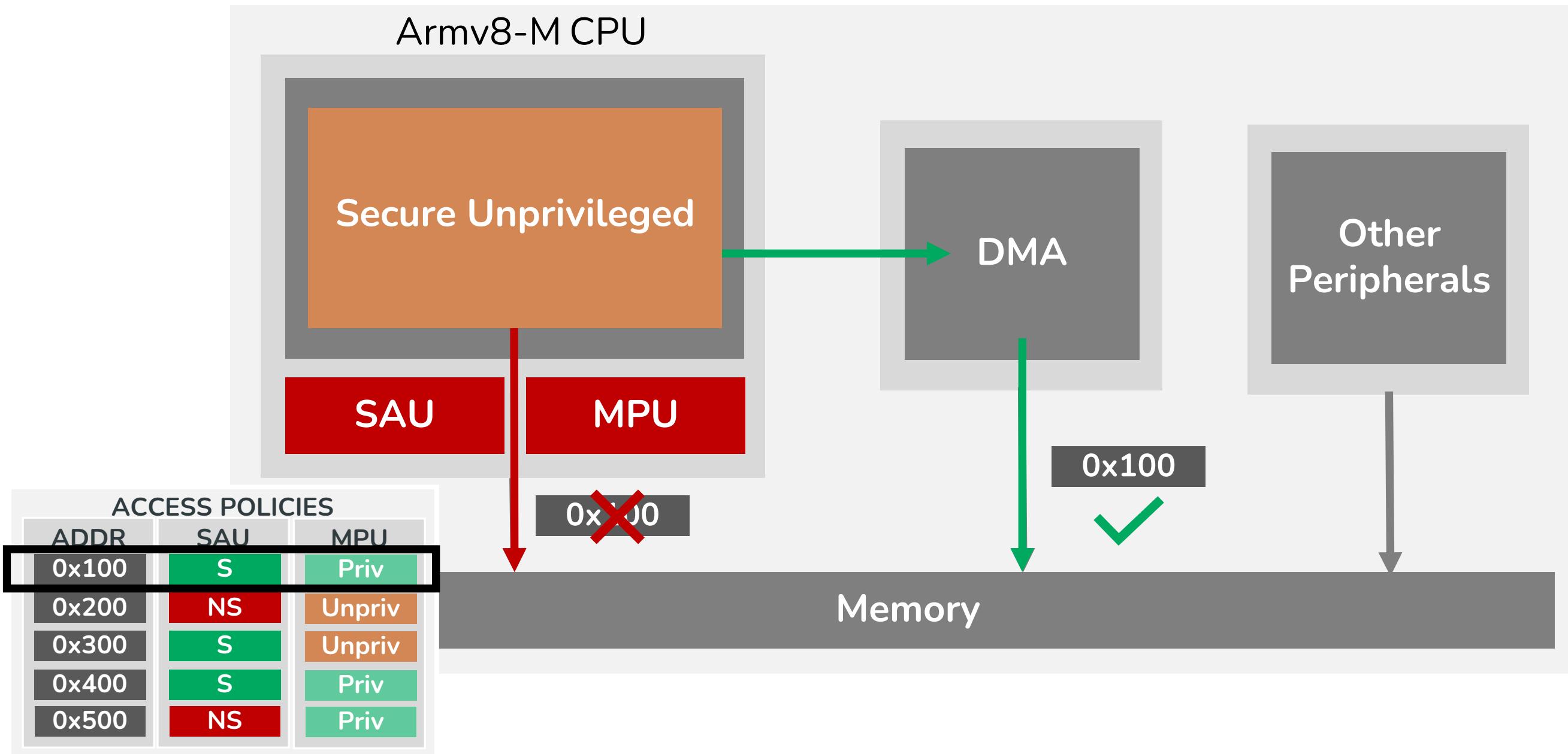
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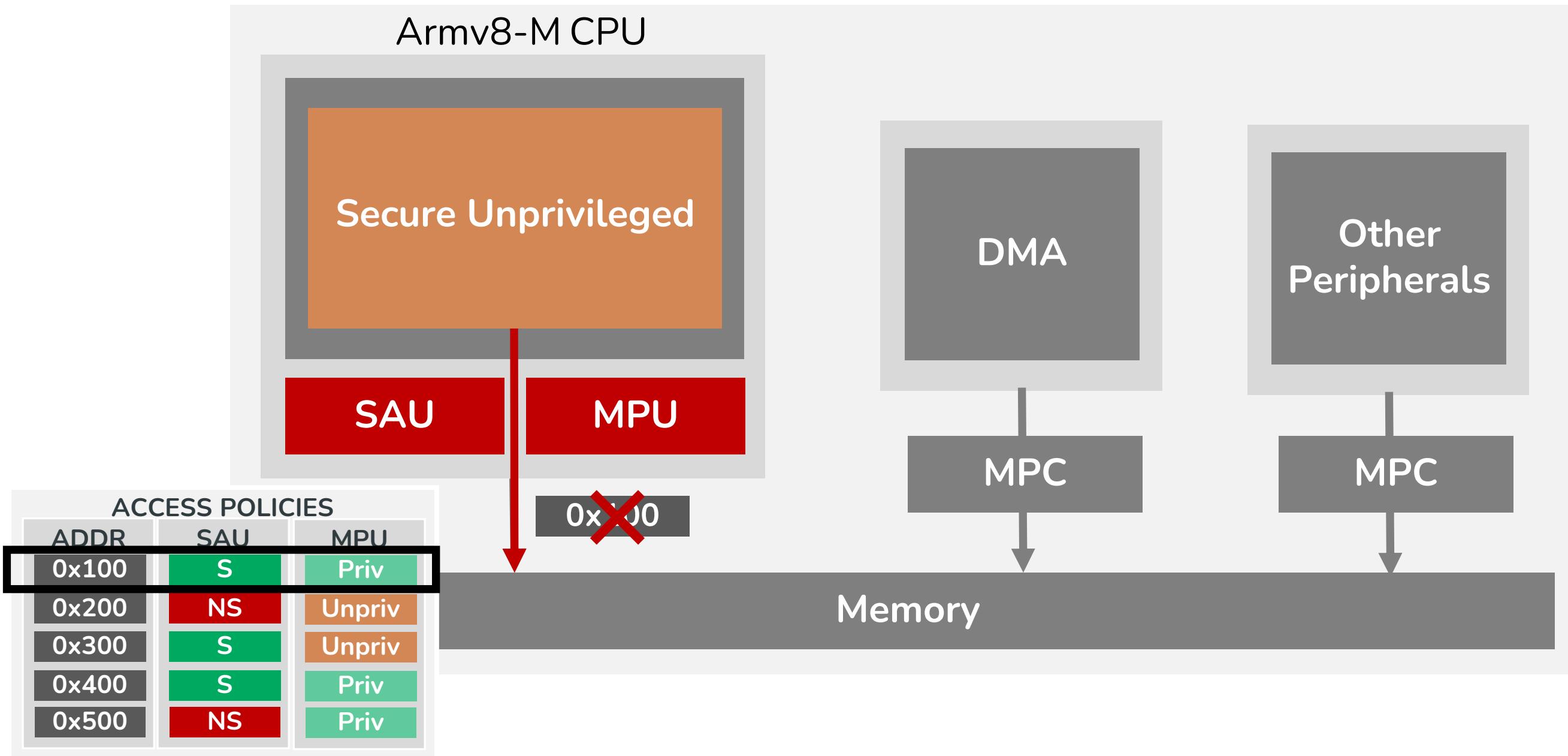
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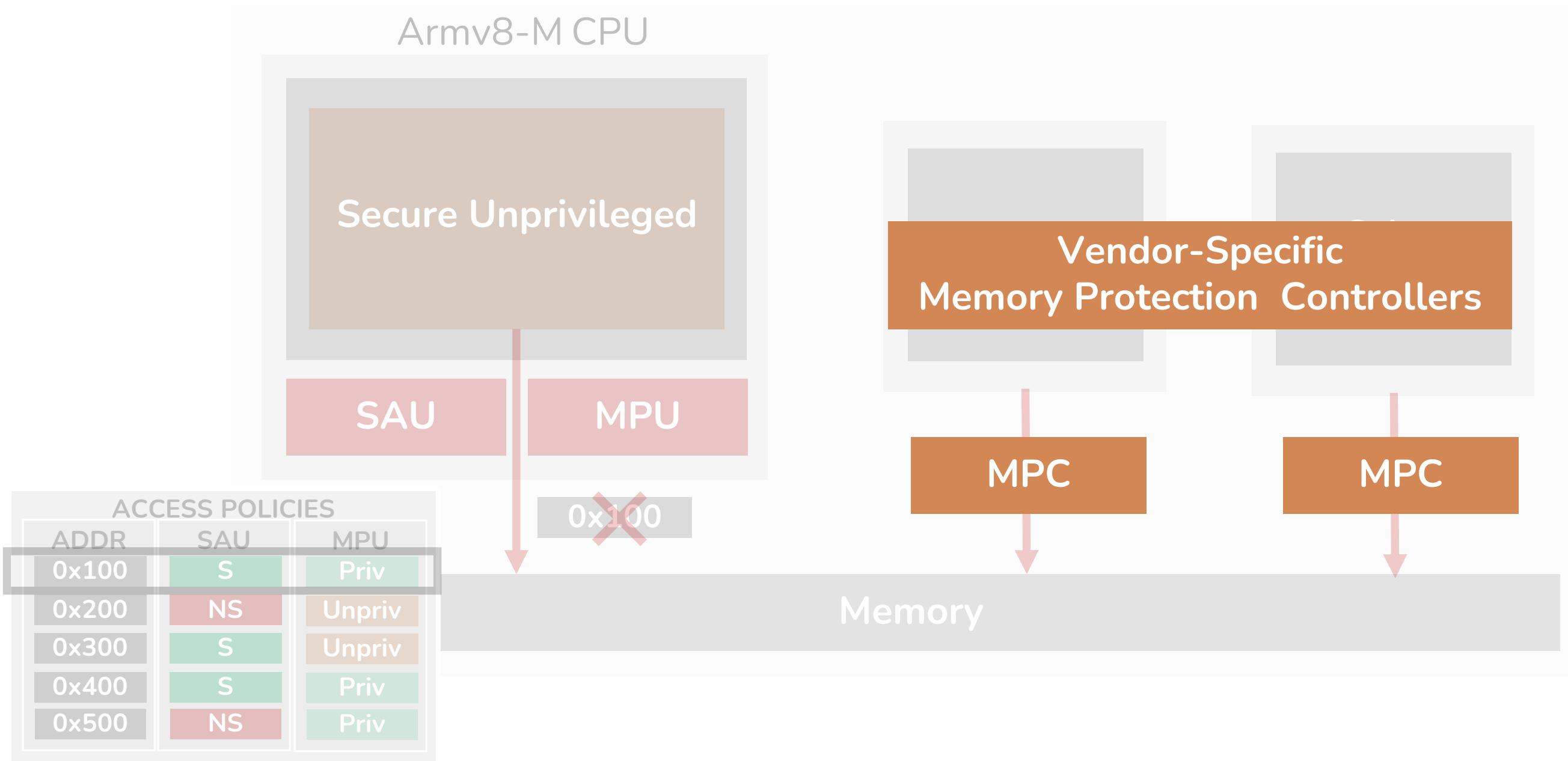
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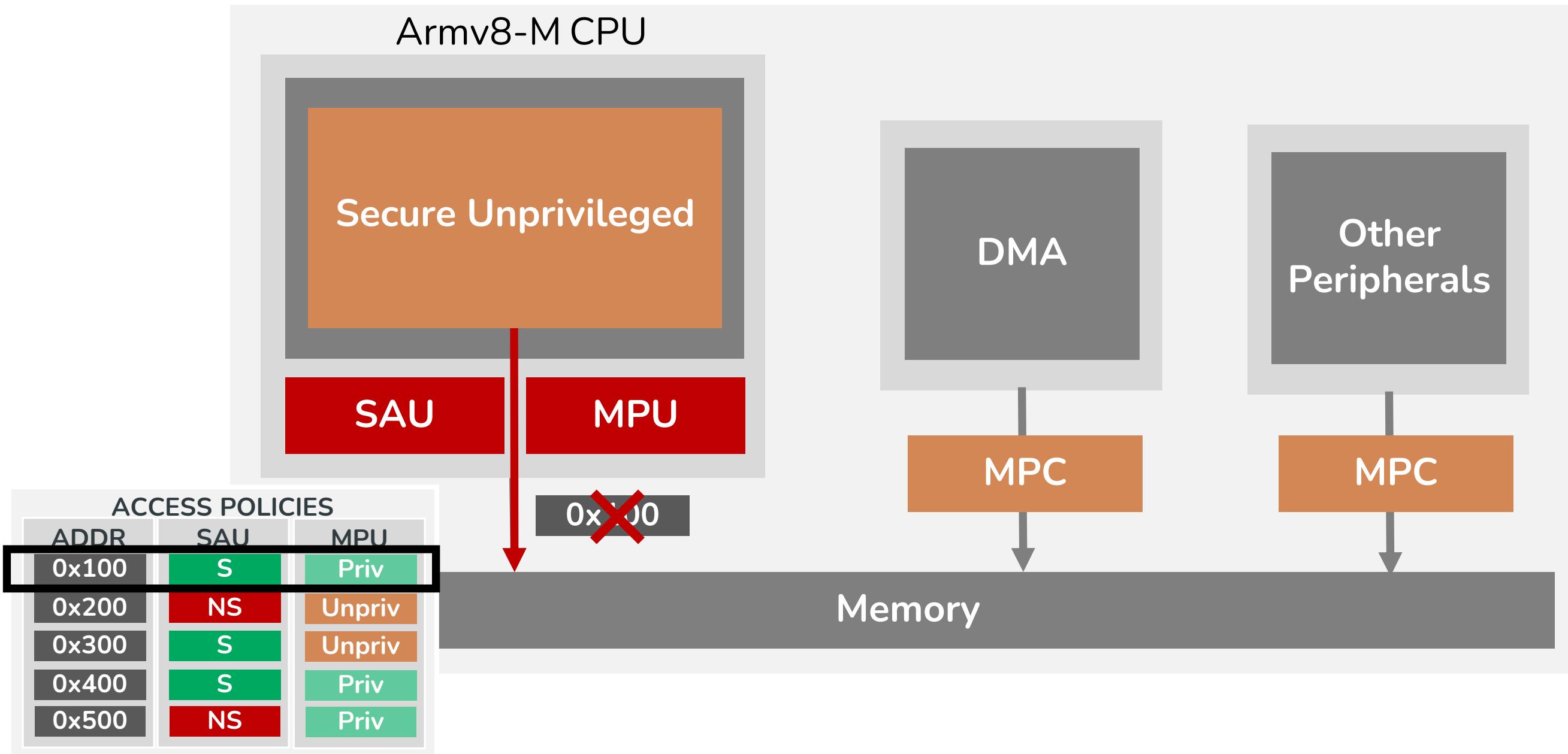
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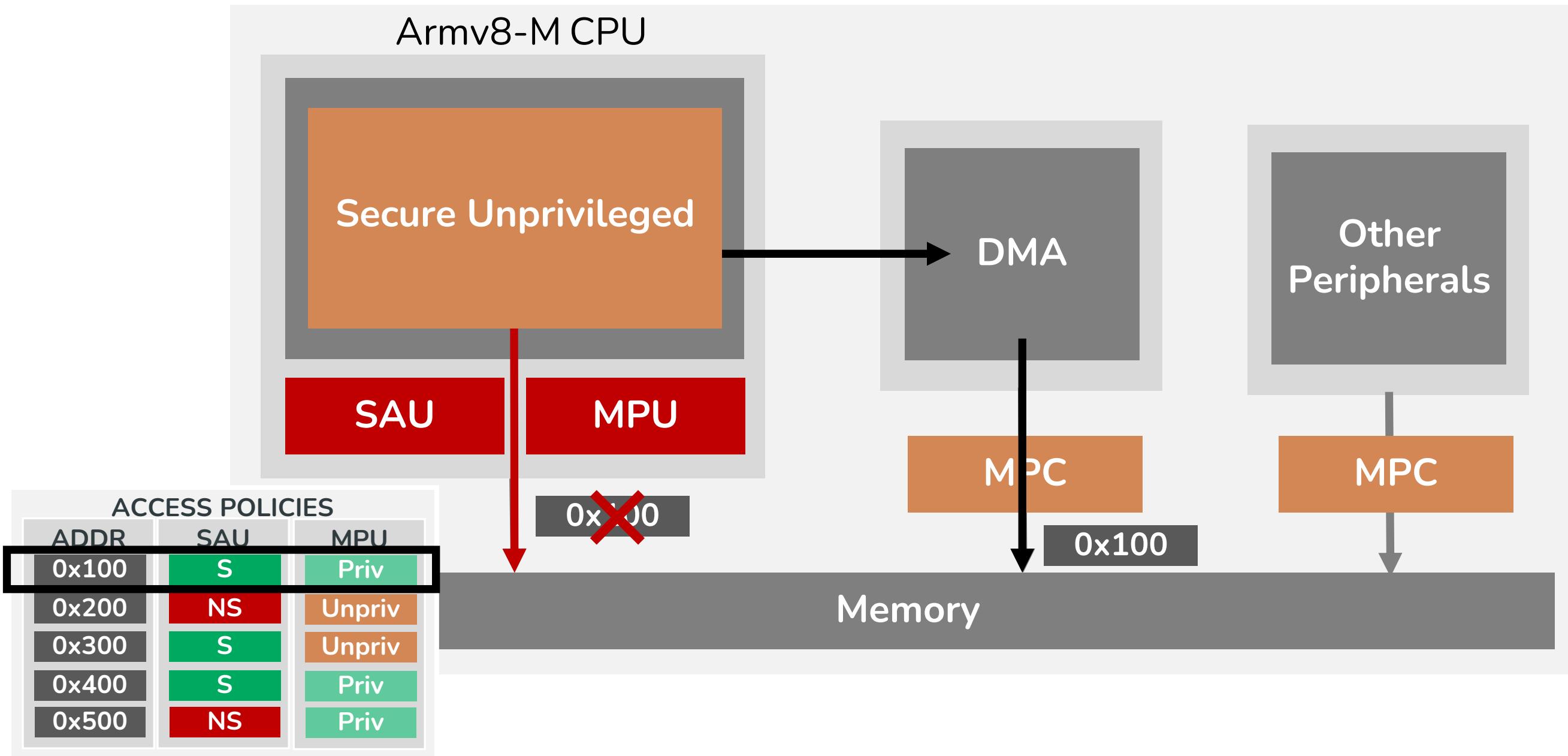
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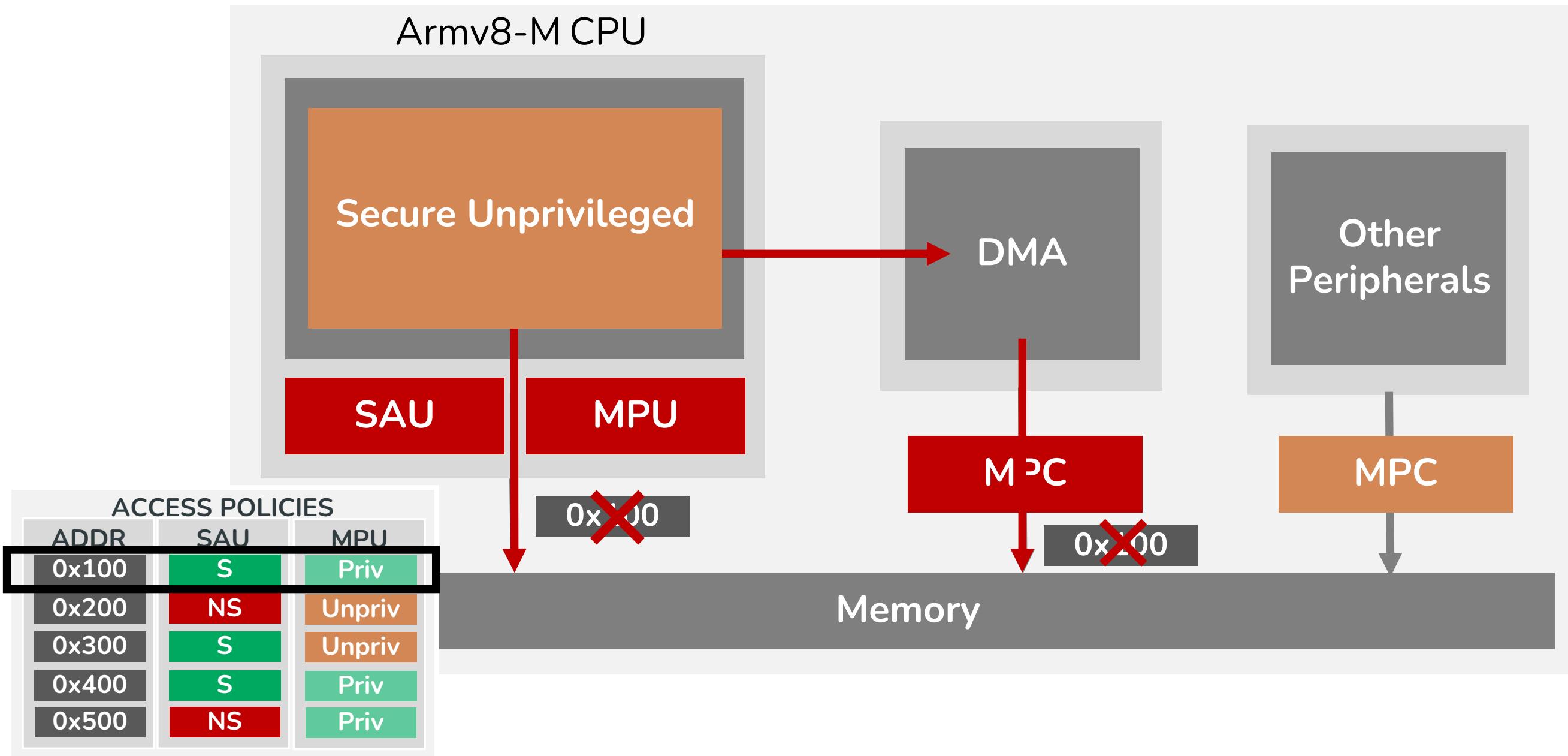
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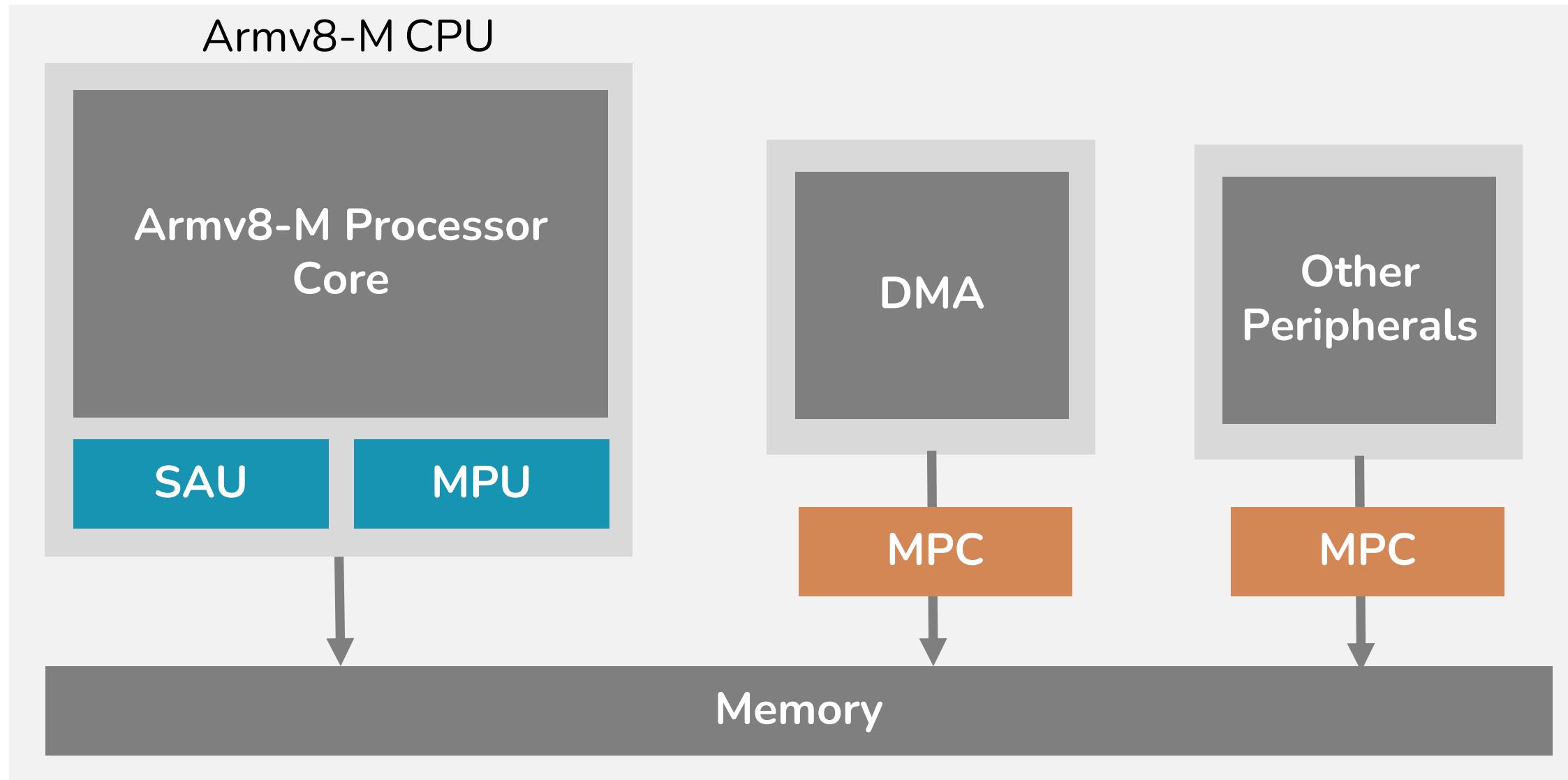
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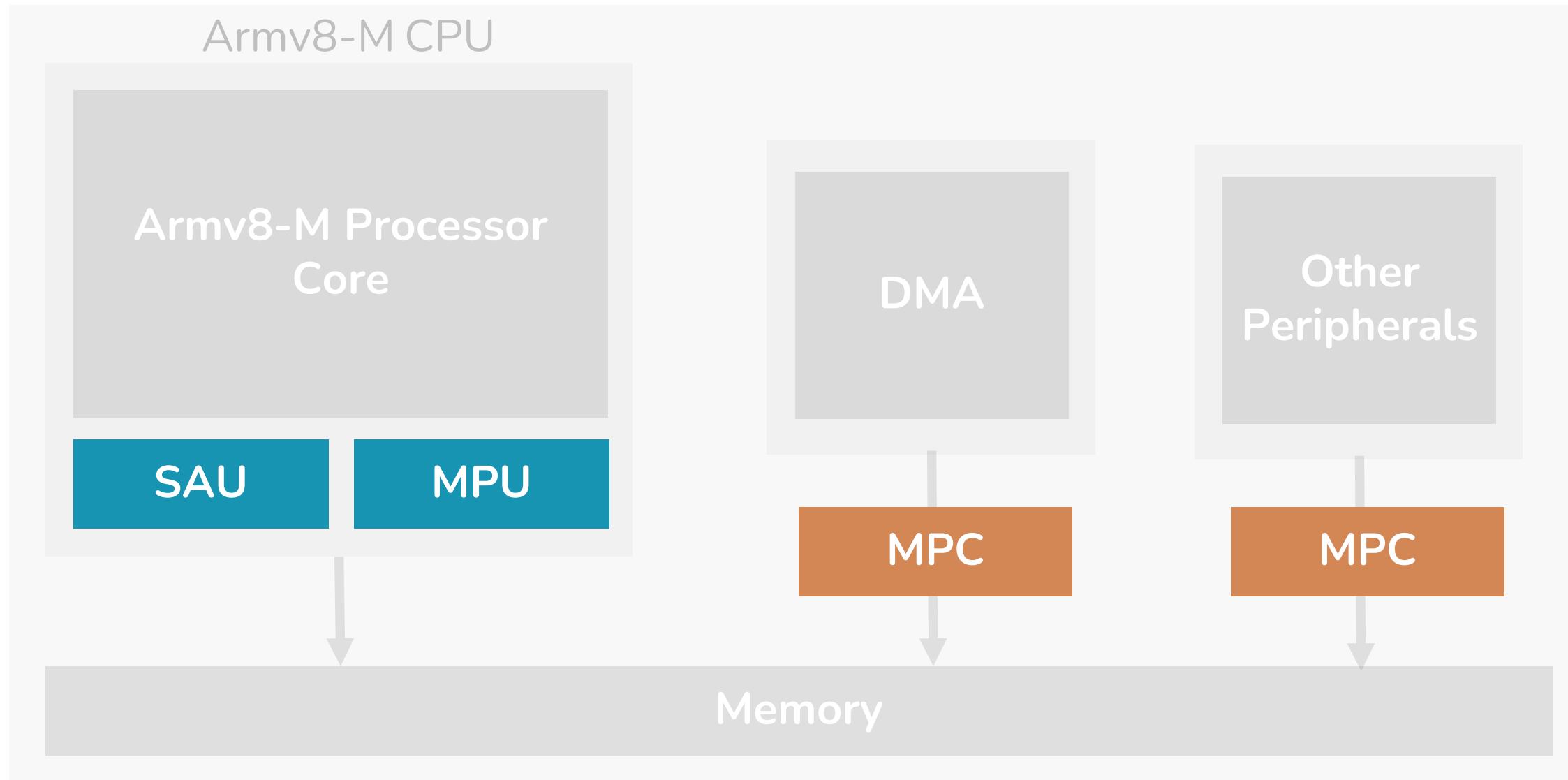
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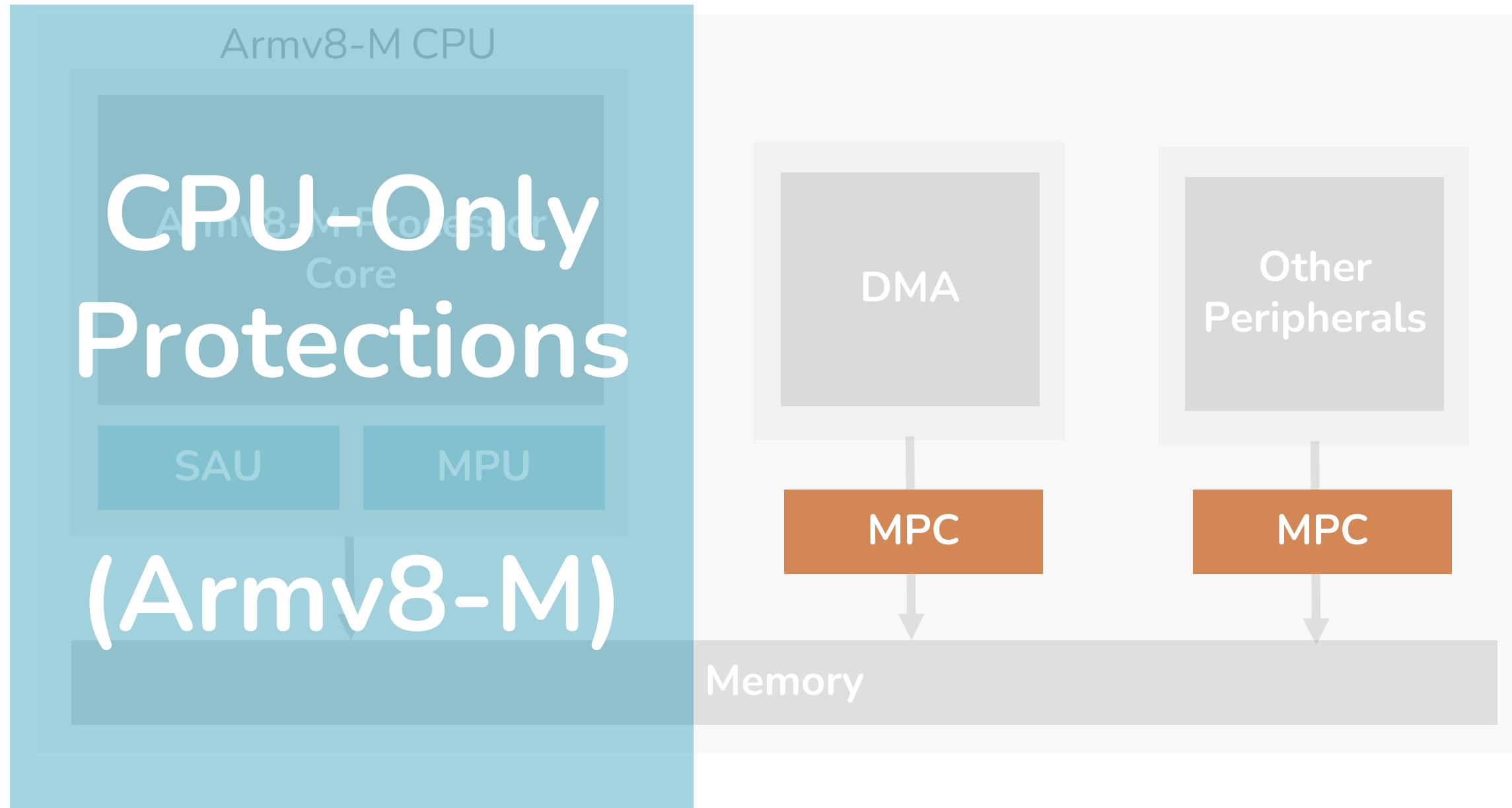
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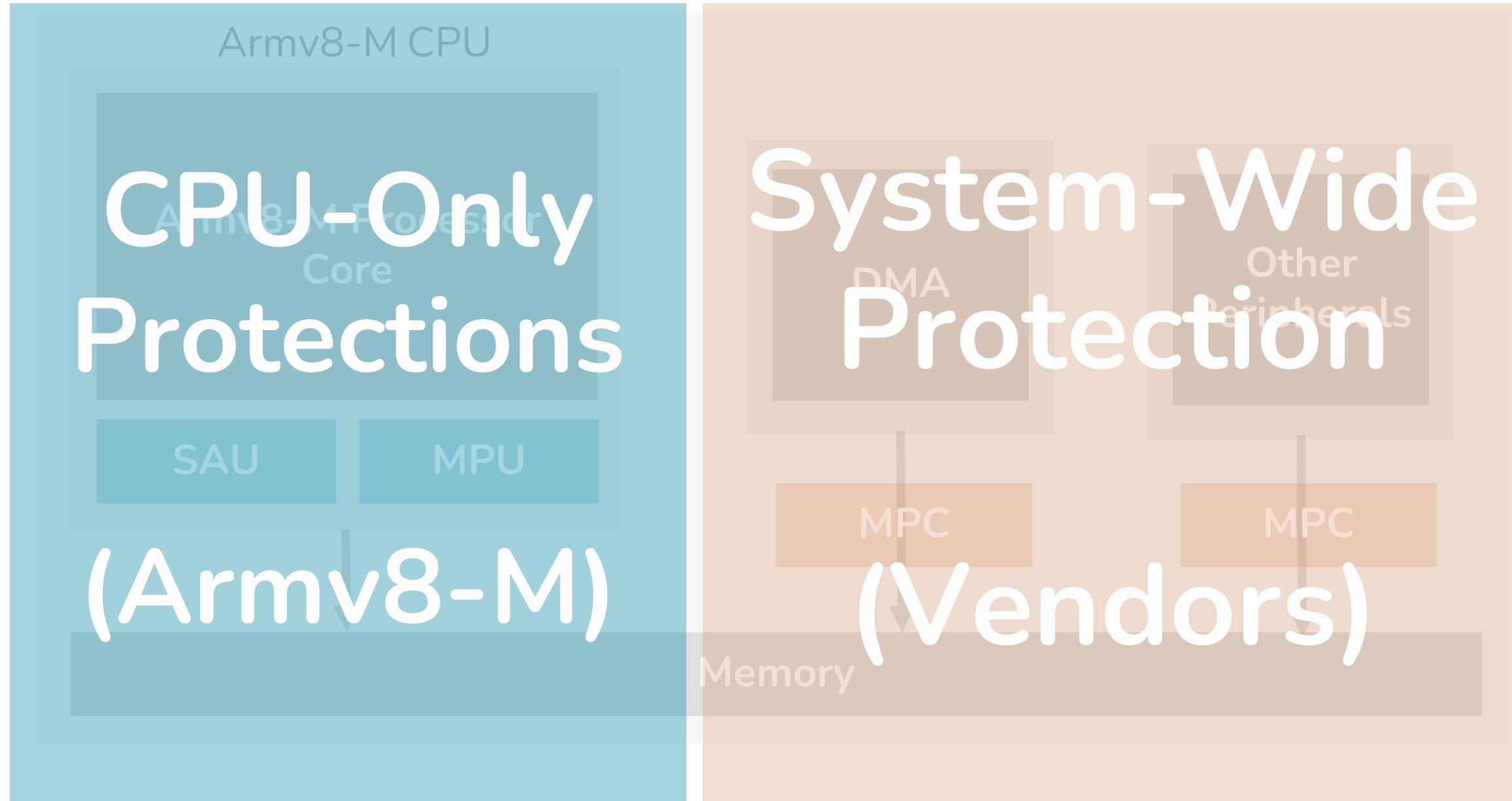
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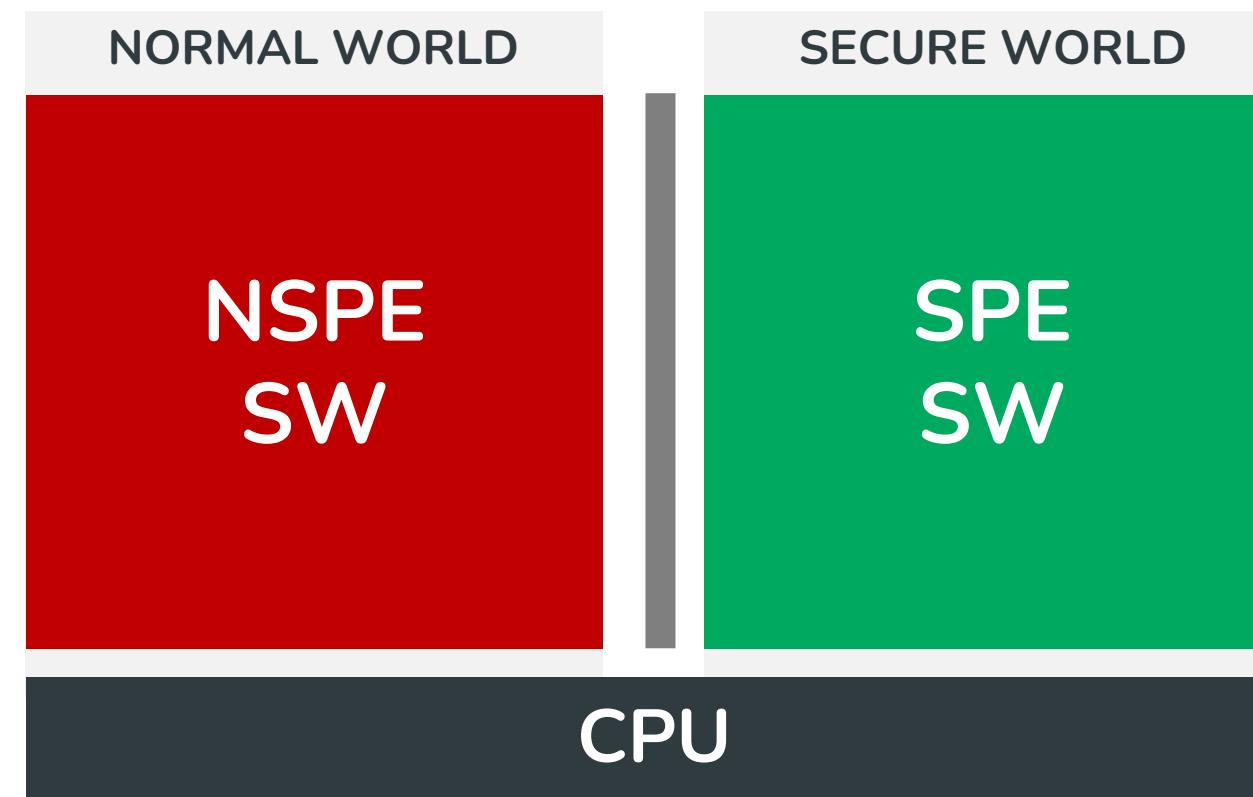


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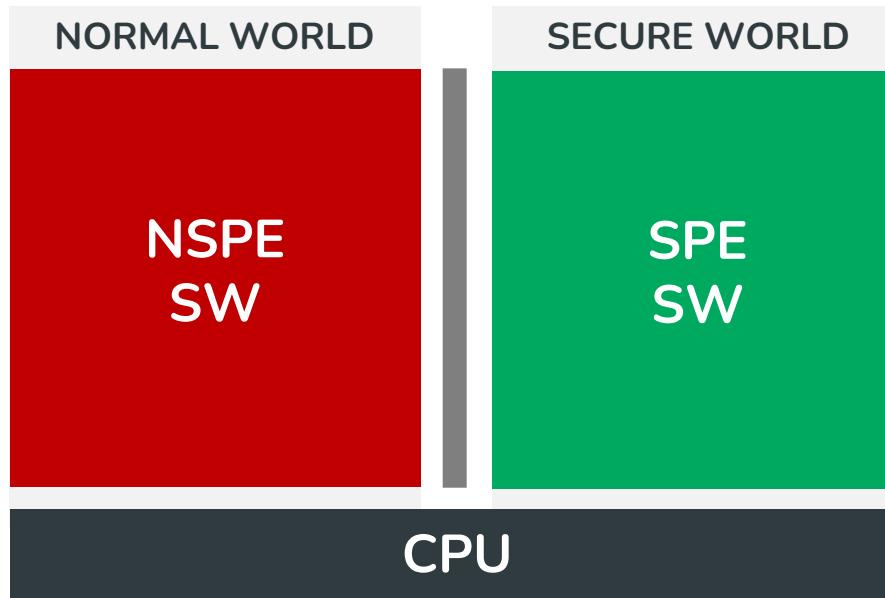


Platform Security Architecture (PSA)

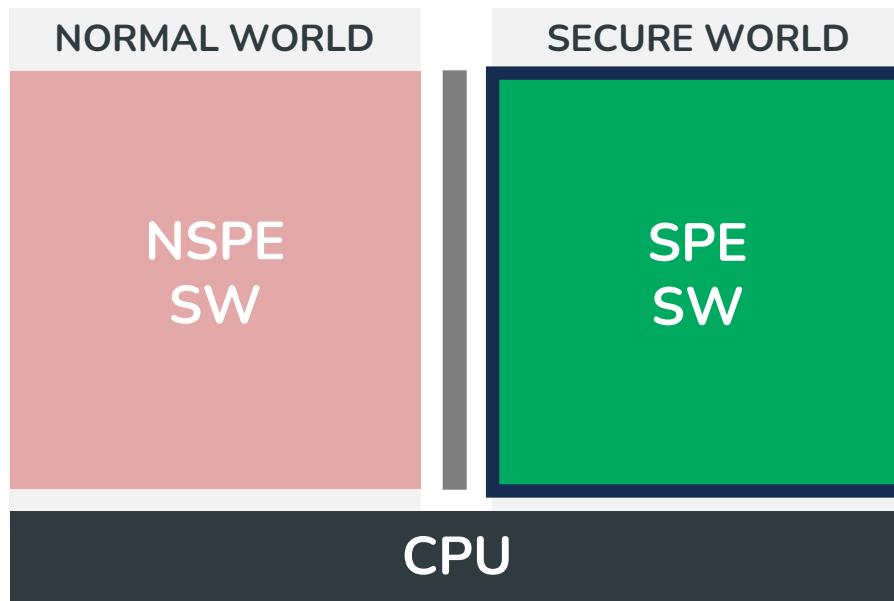
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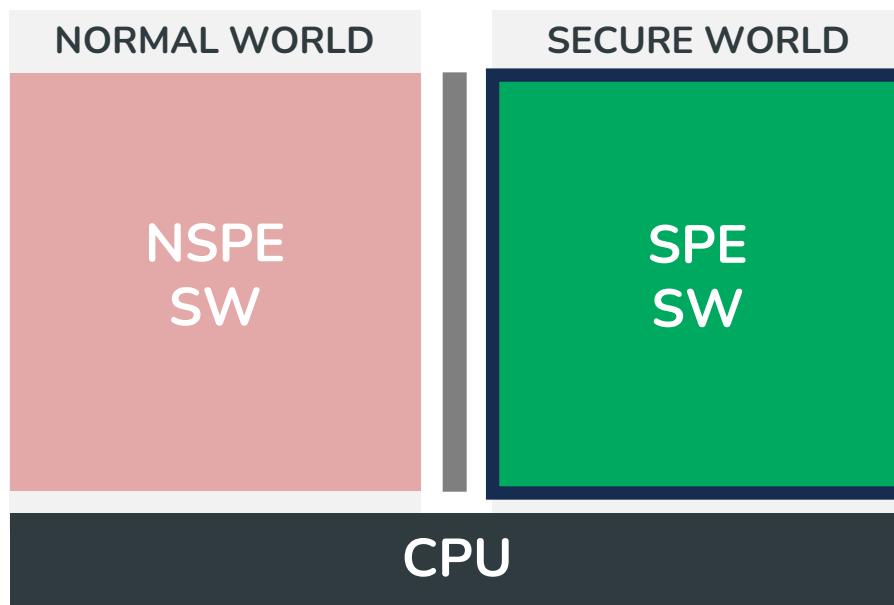
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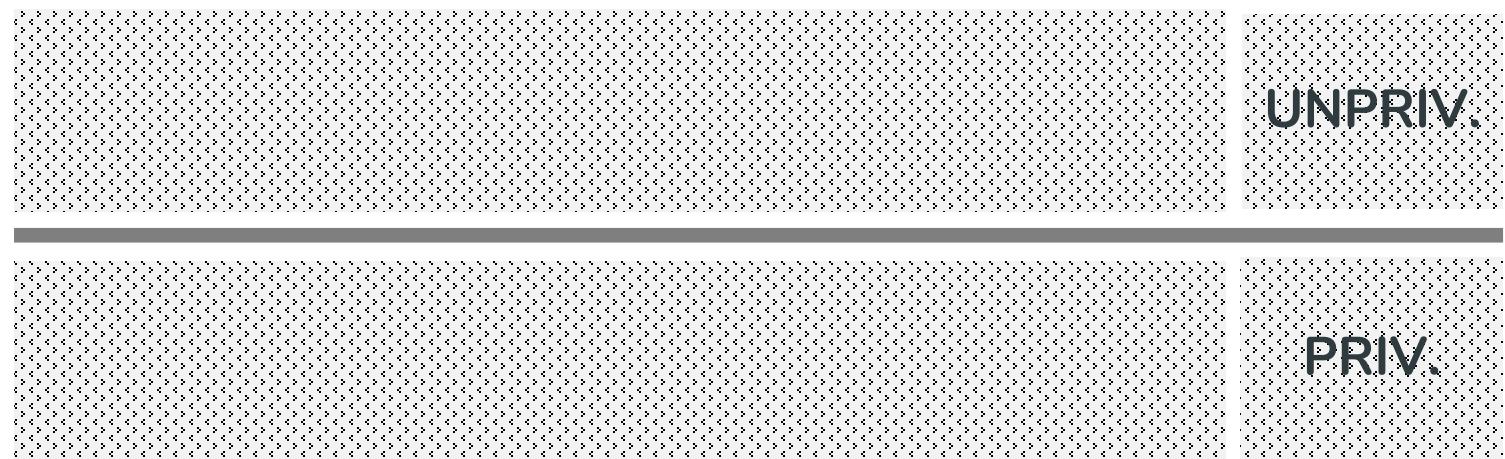
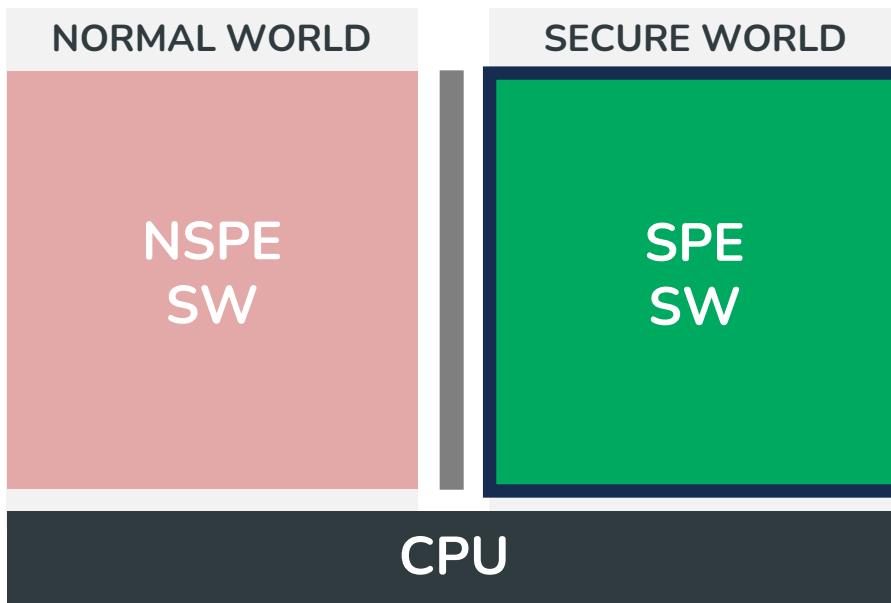
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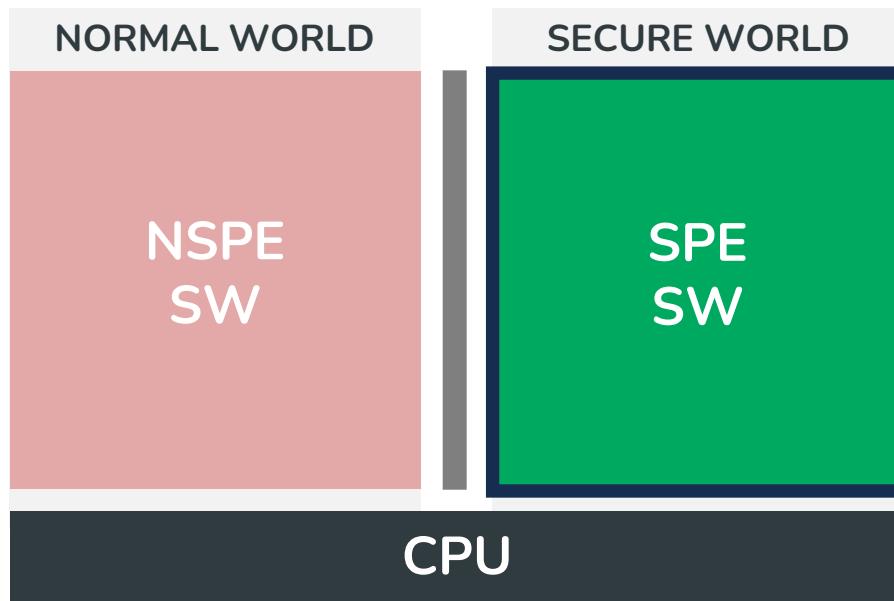
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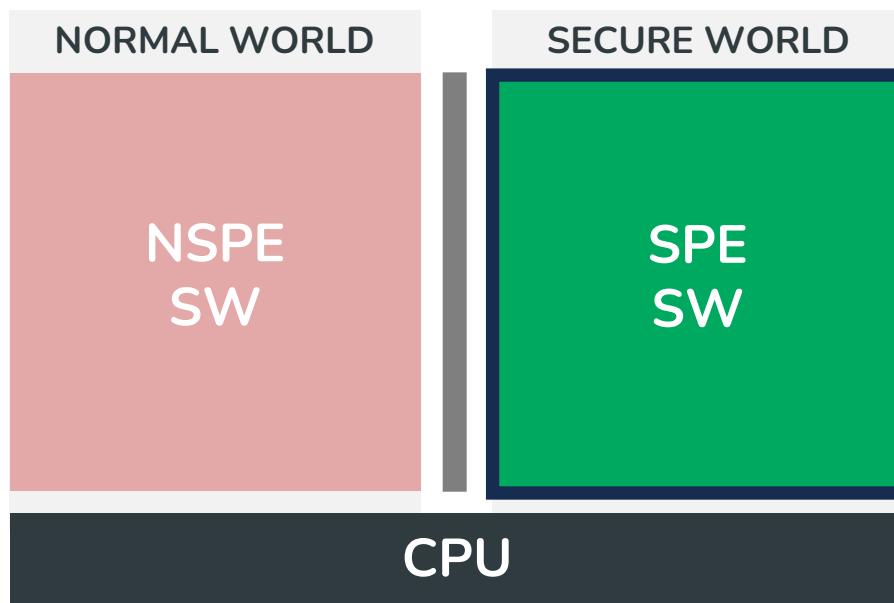
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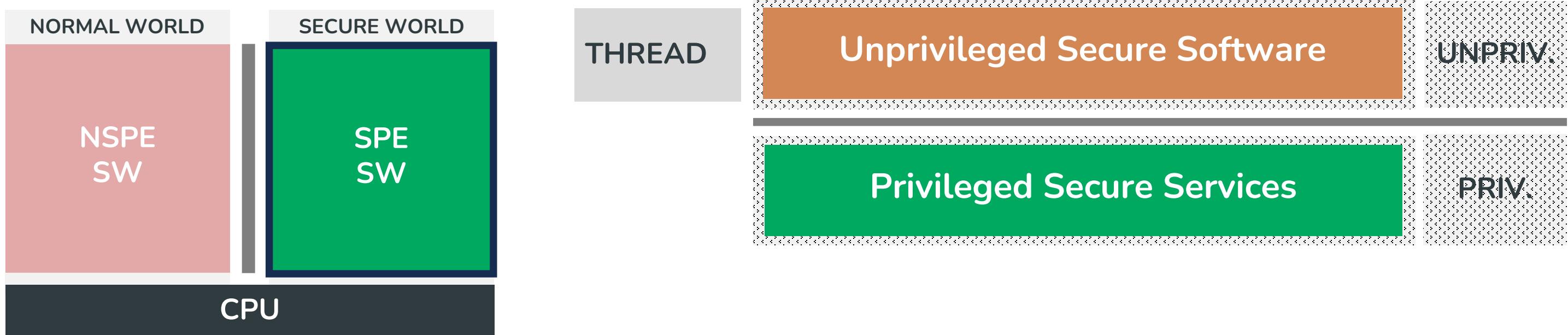
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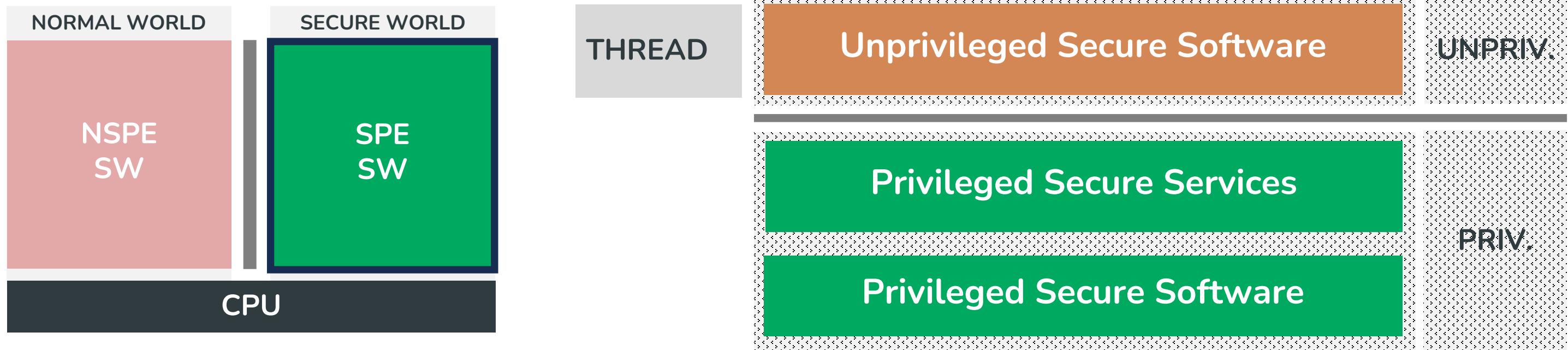
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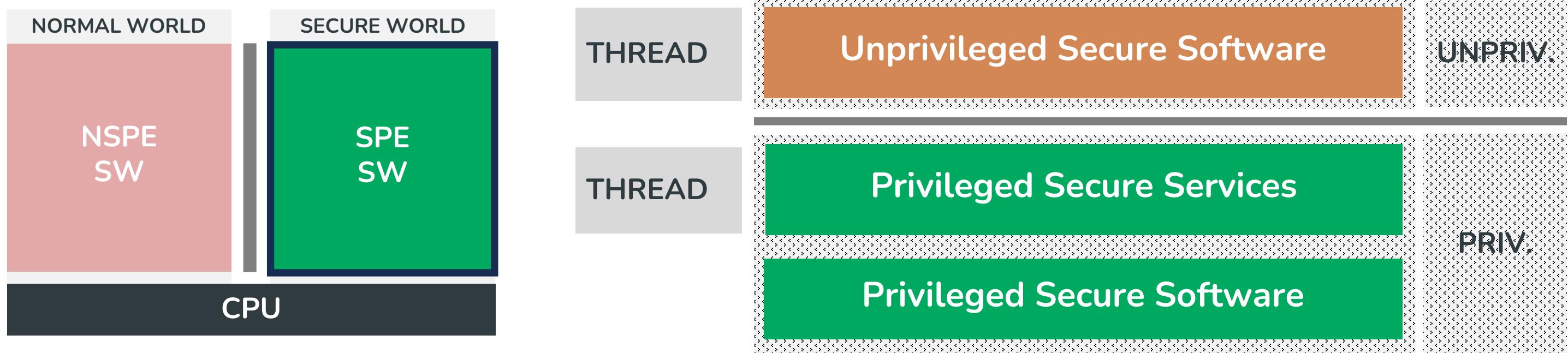
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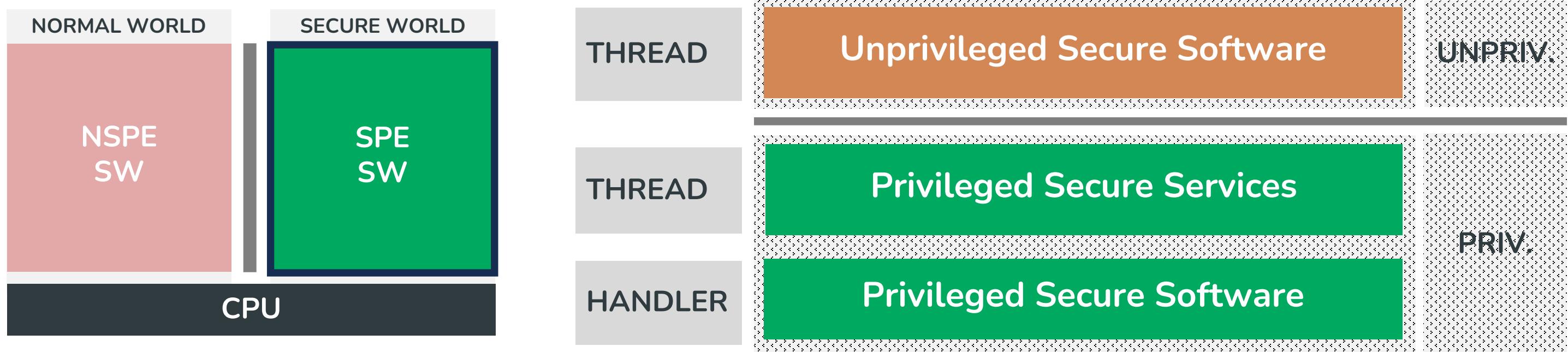
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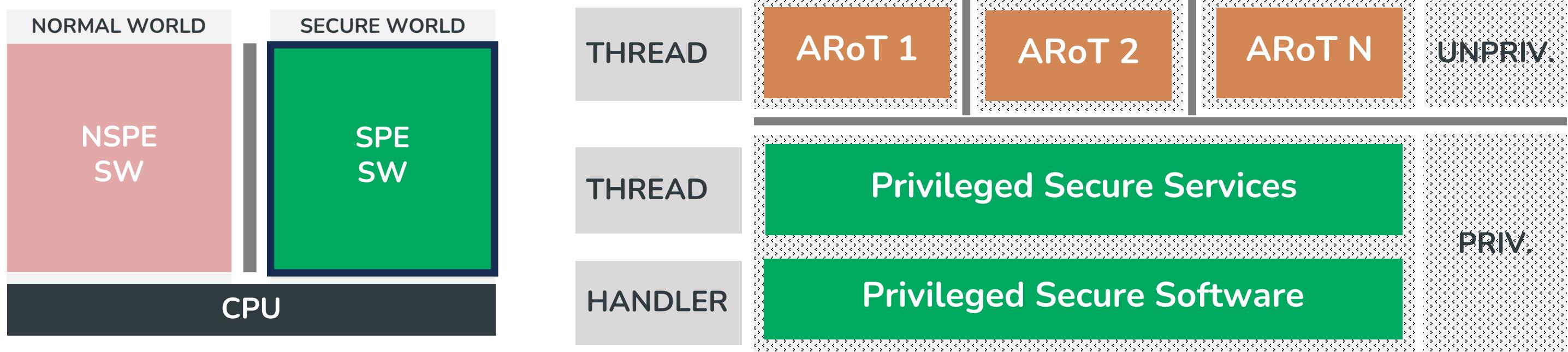
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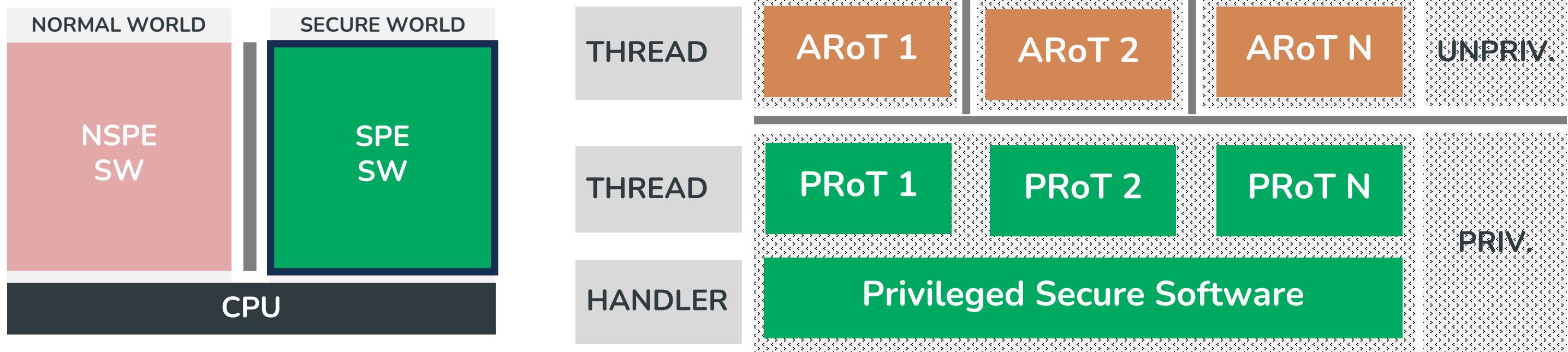
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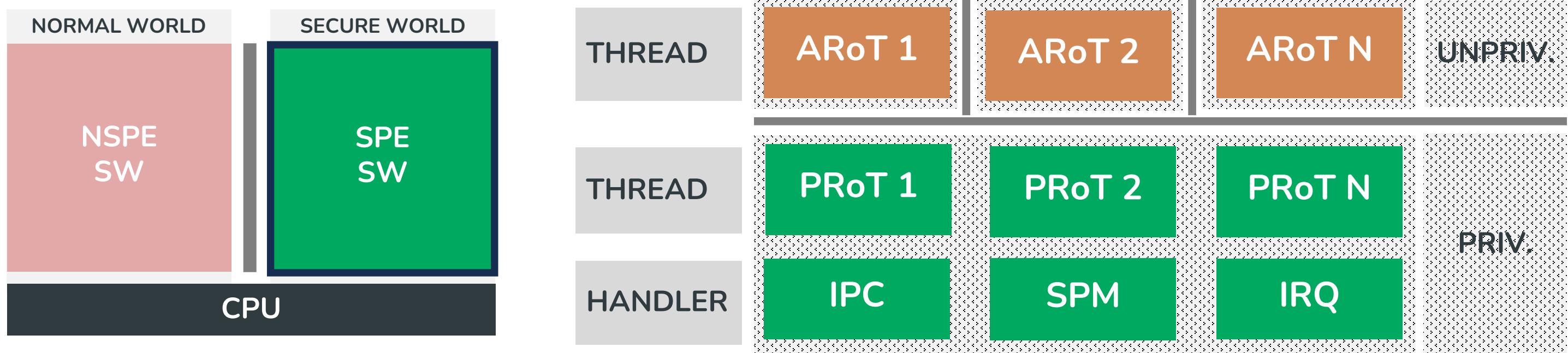
Platform Security Architecture (PSA)



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Platform Security Architecture (PSA)

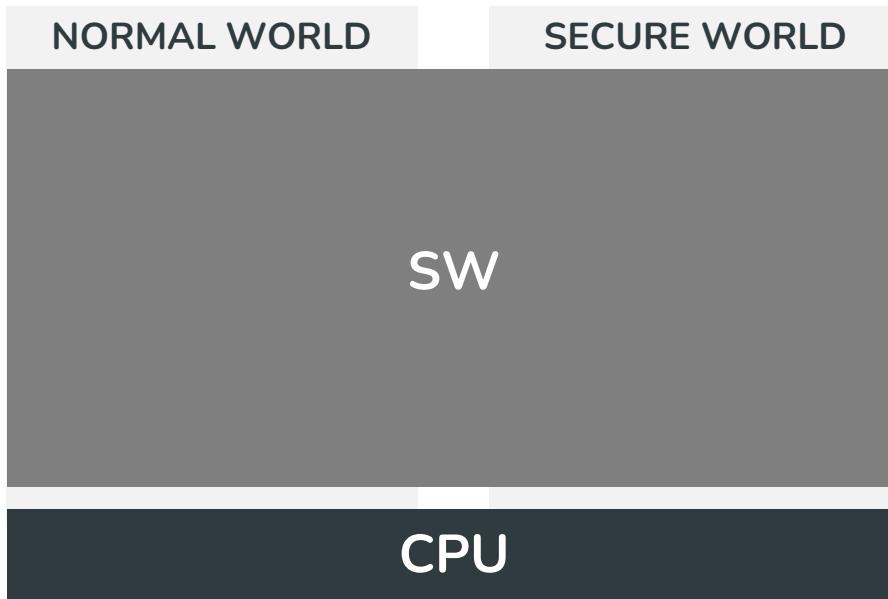


Platform Security Architecture (PSA)

PSA Level 1

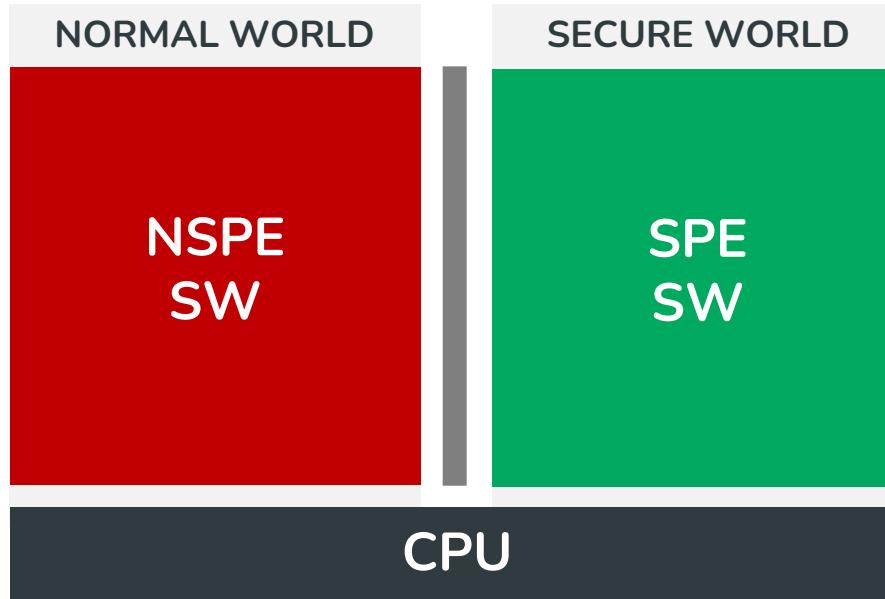
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PSA Level 1



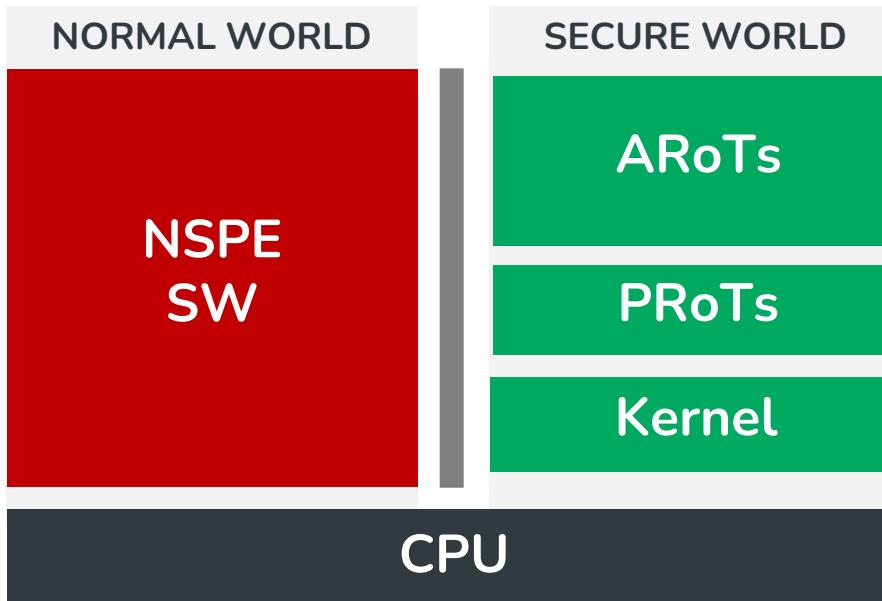
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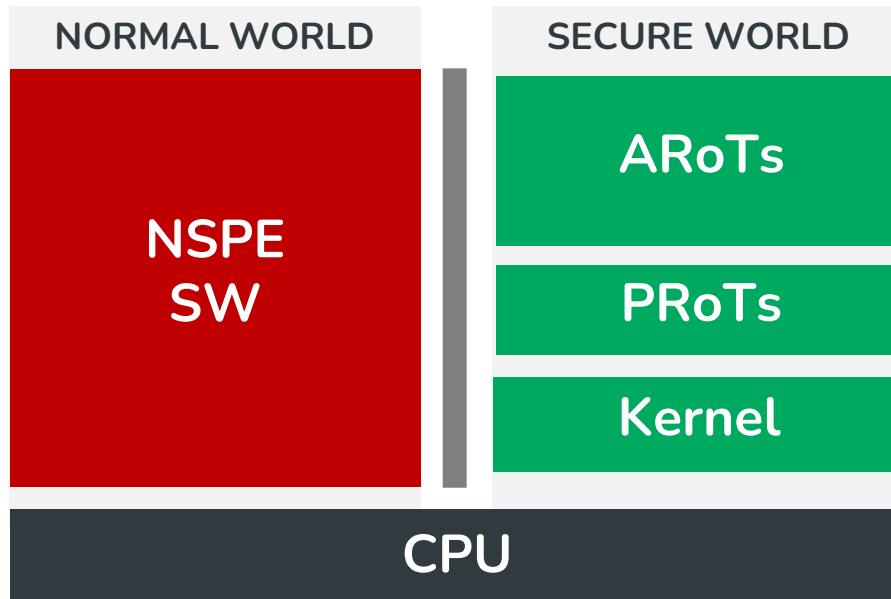
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PSA Level 1



Platform Security Architecture (PSA)

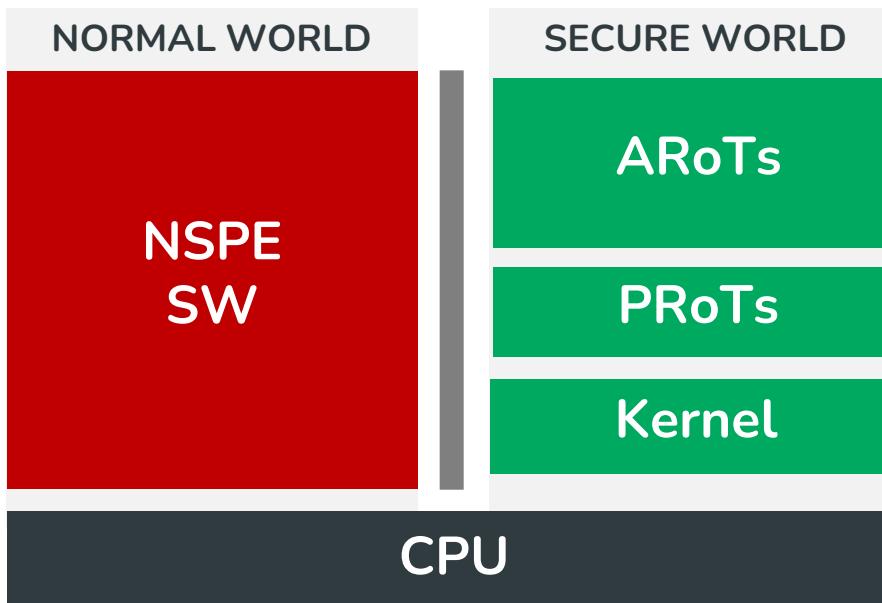
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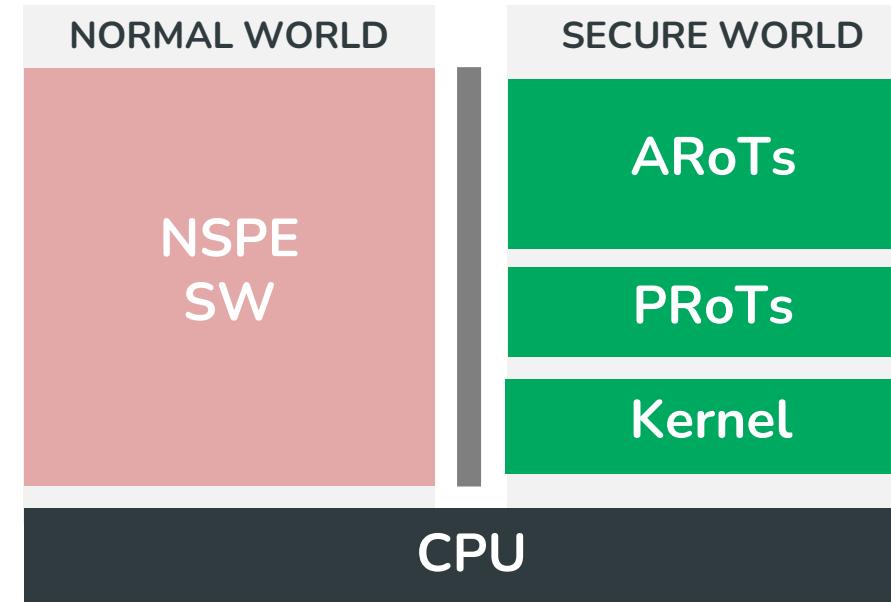
PSA Level 2

Platform Security Architecture (PSA)

PSA Level 1

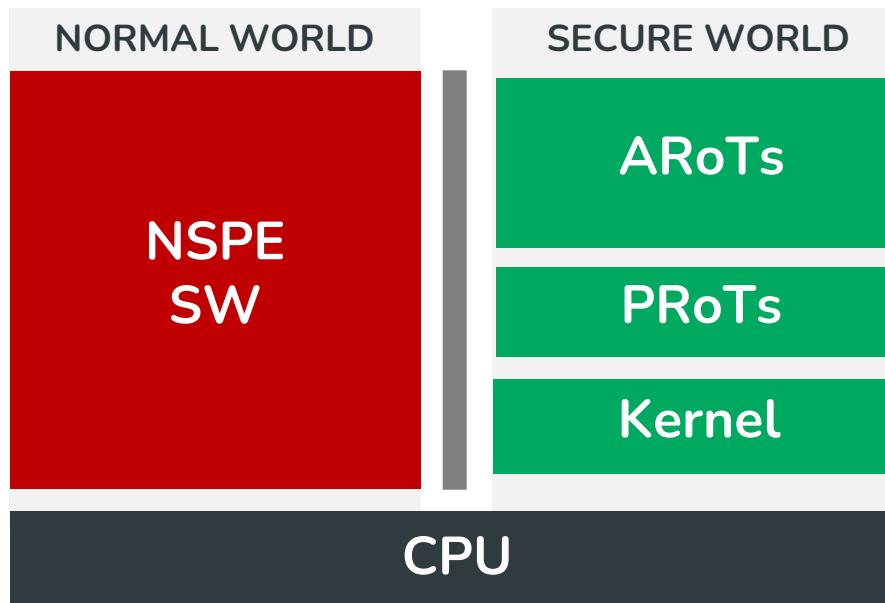


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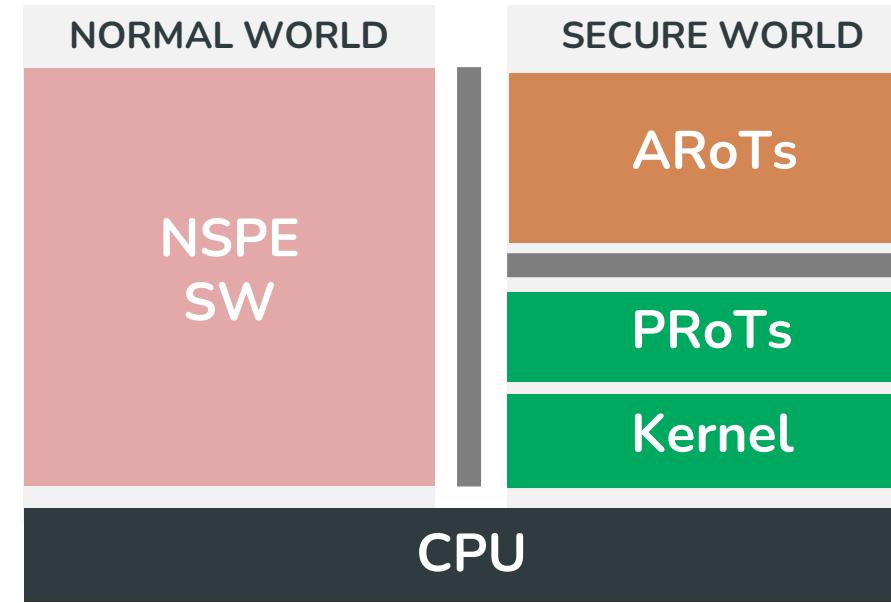


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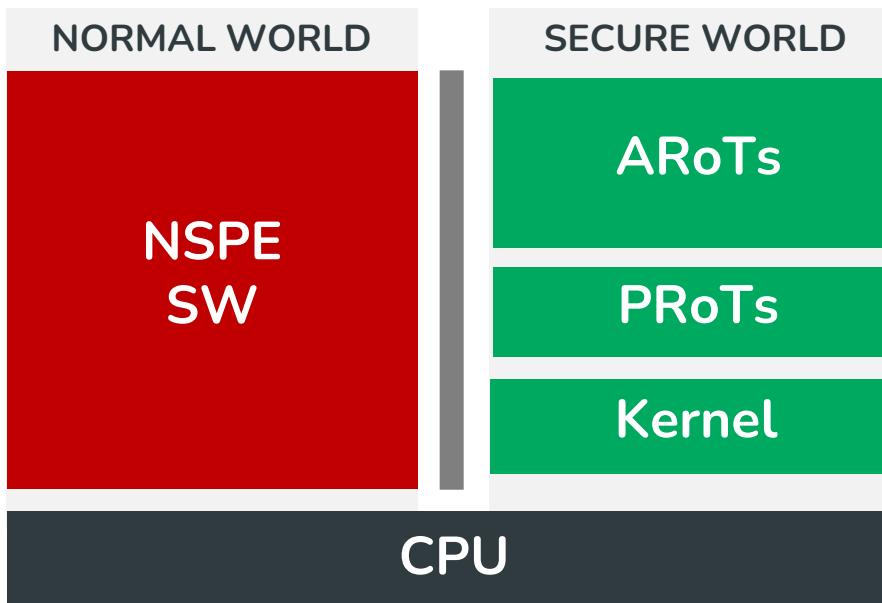


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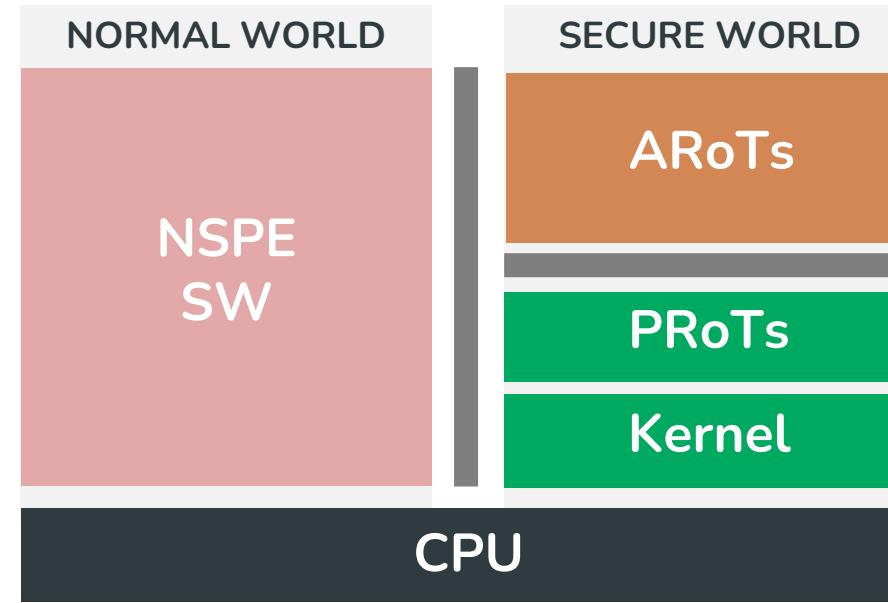


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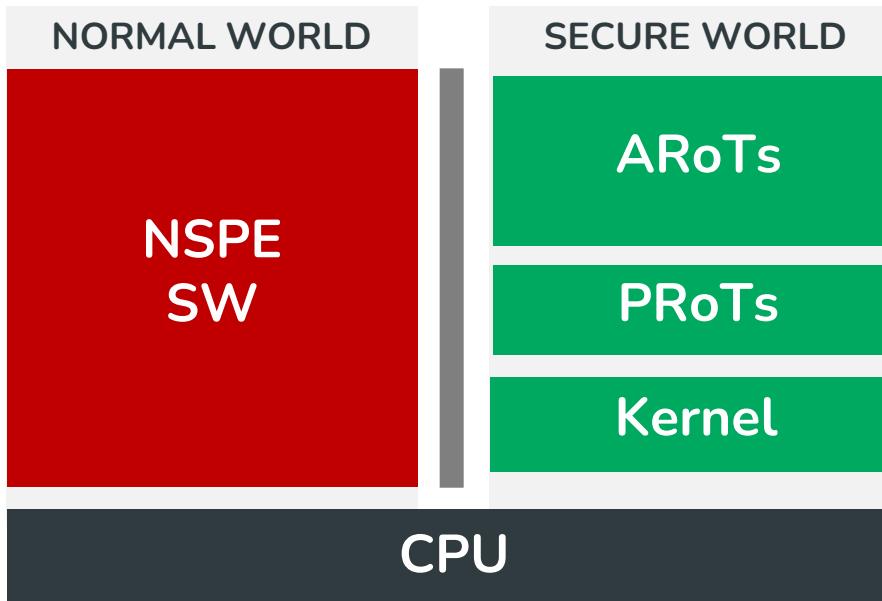
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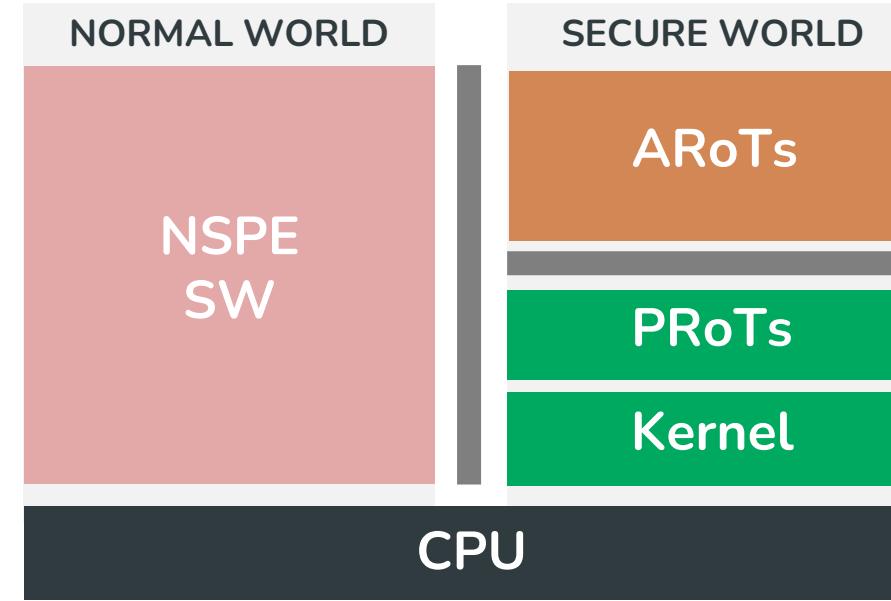
PSA Level 3

Platform Security Architecture (PSA)

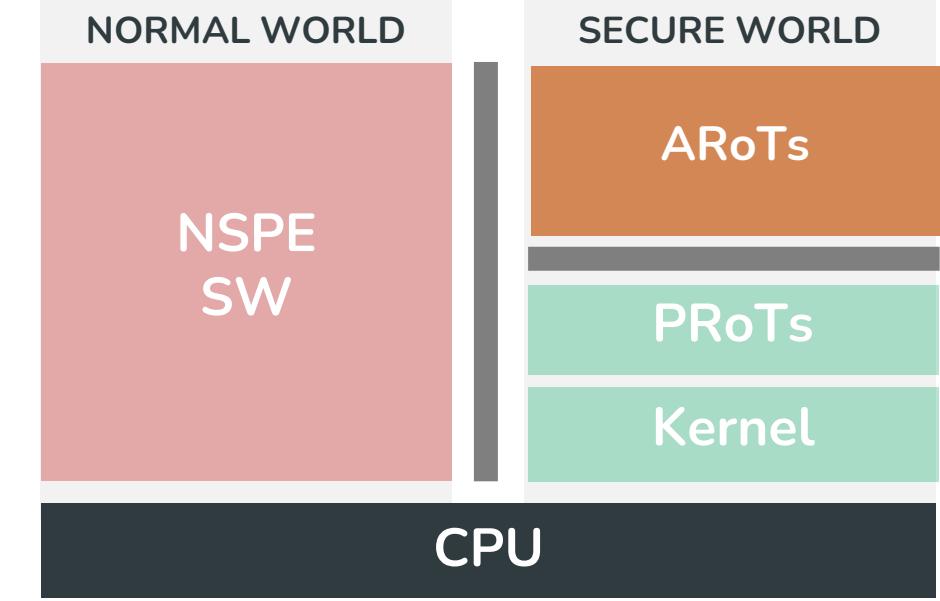
PSA Level 1



PSA Level 2

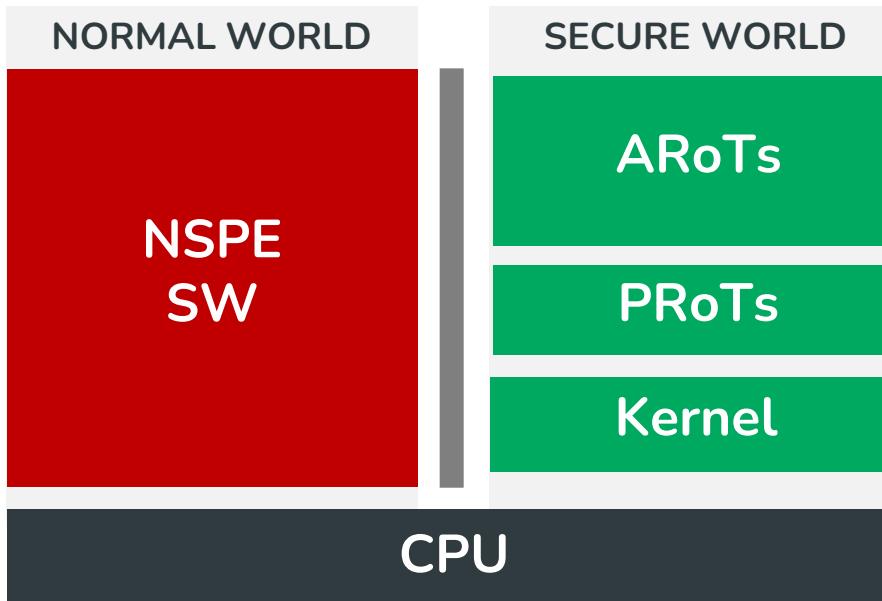


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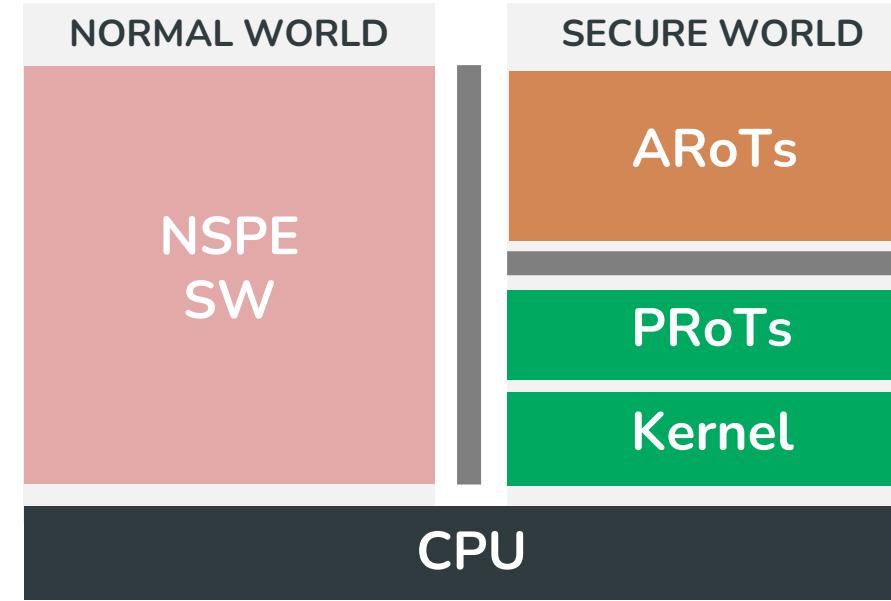


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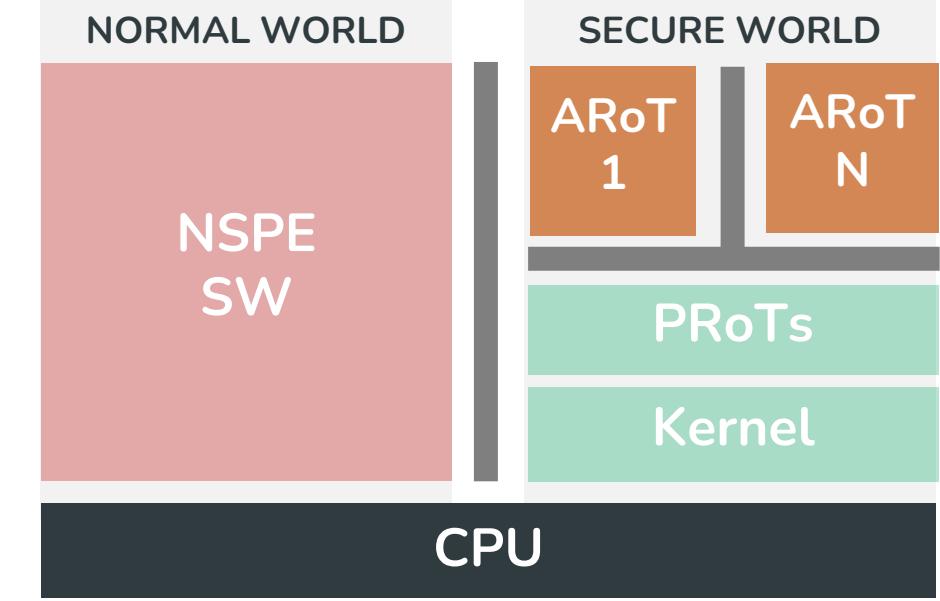
PSA Level 1



PSA Level 2



PSA Level 3



PARADOXAL OBSERVATIONS

01

TRUSTZONE-M HAS A CPU-CENTRIC VIEW

Armv8-M Only Defines Protection Controllers at The CPU-level (MPU, SAU, IDAU)

02

SYSTEM-WIDE PROTECTIONS ARE PROPRIETARY

Vendors Are Forced to Develop System Protection Controllers (PPCs, MPCs)

03

MISSMATCH BETWEEN TZ-M AND PSA LEVELS

PSA Level 2/3 Need CPU- and System-level Memory Protection Controllers (the latter isn't defined by Armv8-M)

While System-Wide protections are a must, Armv8-M only defines CPU-level memory protections. We hypothesize that this dichotomy (together with a lack of understanding of the PSA isolation levels) may open security holes in modern TrustZone-M systems

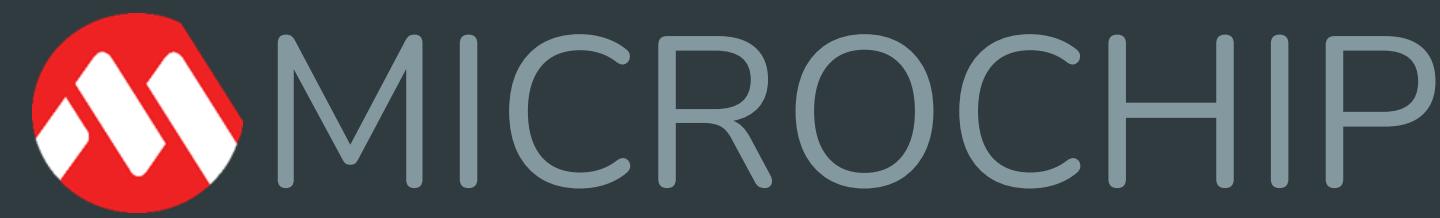
Hypothesis

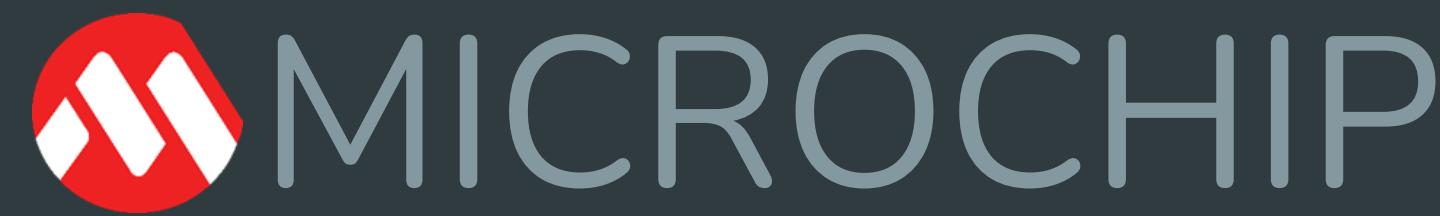
A Bumpy but Revealing Journey

Weak Protections, TEE Assessment and our Responsible Disclosure Journey



MICROCHIP



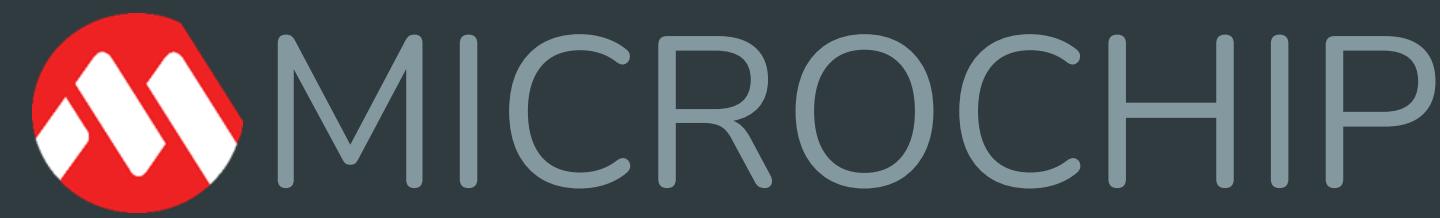


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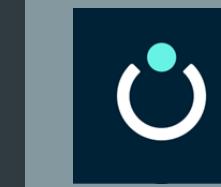
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TRUSTONIC



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TRUSTONIC

Kinibi-M

Mircocchip First To Use Turstonic Revolutionary Kinibi-M Platform For Microcontrollers



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Kinibi-M

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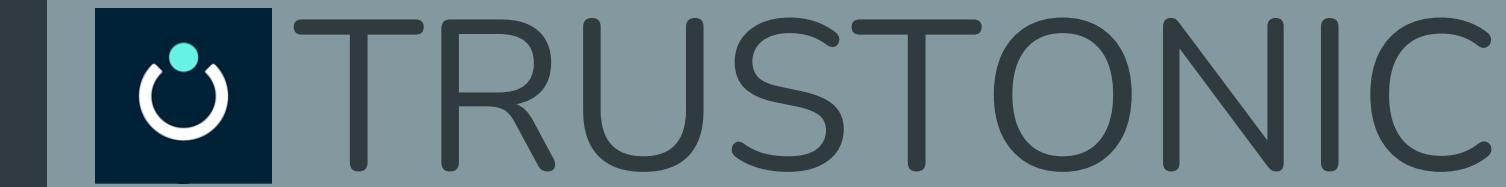
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Microchip Debuts Cortex-M23 MCUs

June 25, 2018 

Two of the first Cortex-M23 microcontrollers have arrived—developed by Microchip—and advanced security is among the features.

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Kinibi-M

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Trustonic Embeds IoT Security Technology in Microchip MCU

The IoT security technology will be embedded at the chip level using Trustonic's Kinibi-M software.

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Trustonic launches IoT device security solution

Blockchain-based Digital Holograms, trusted device provisioning and a modular, secure OS combine to bring trust to constrained IoT devices.

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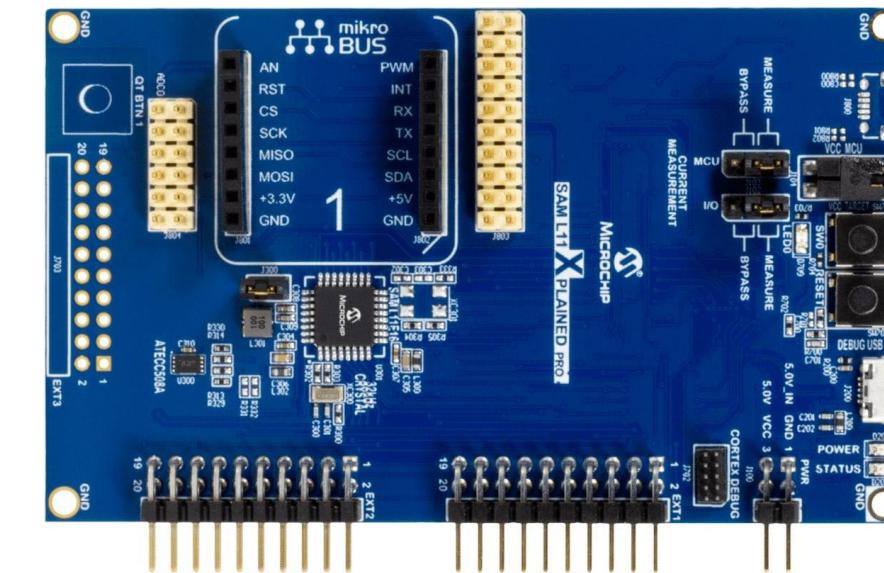
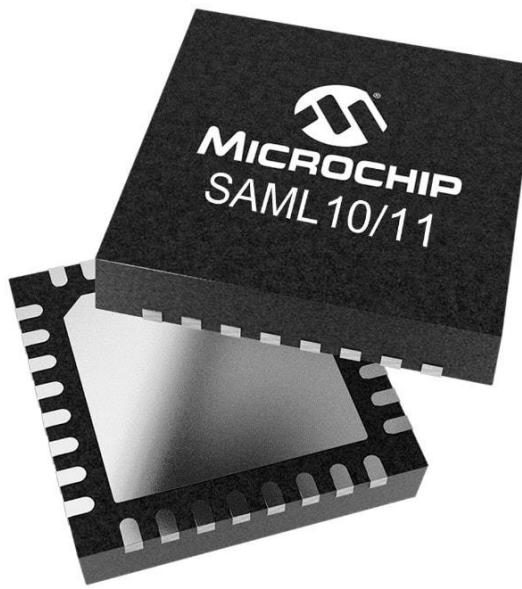
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Microchip introduces SAM L10/L11 MCUs

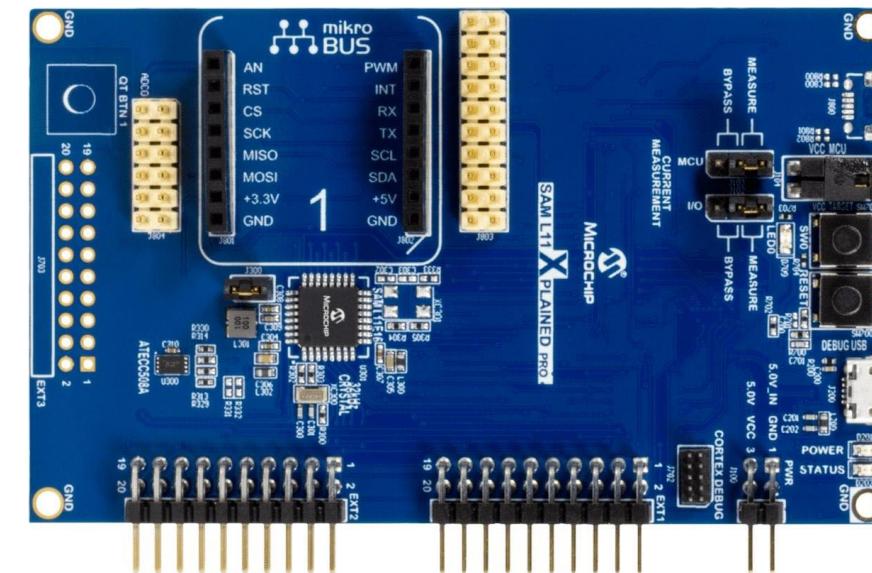
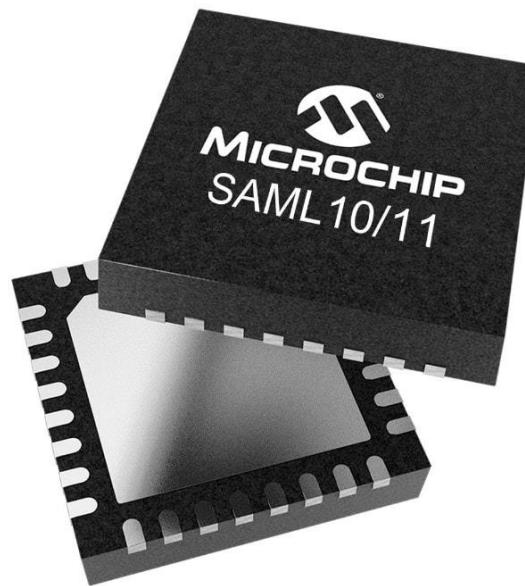
arm Cortex-M23 plus on-chip security for the IoT

June 25, 2018, 12:30 am | Frank Riemenschneider

MICROCHIP SAM L11



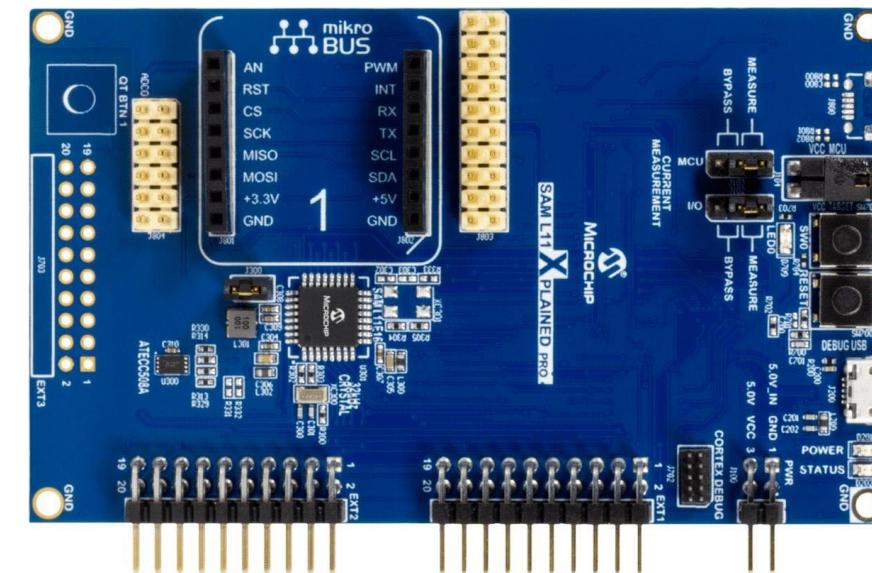
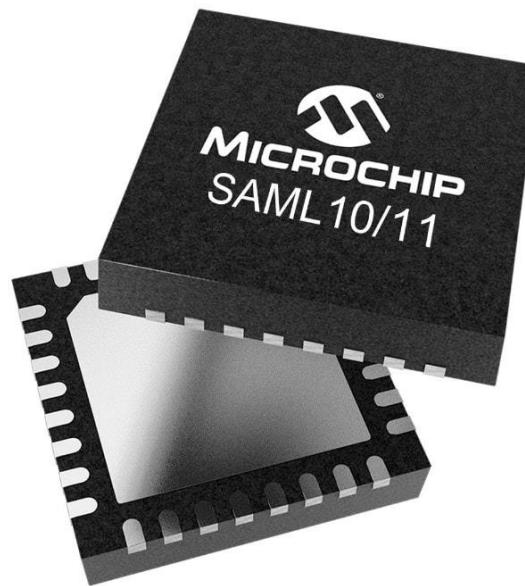
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Overview

The SAML11 Xplained Pro evaluation kit is ideal for evaluating and prototyping with the ultra low power SAML11 ARM® Cortex®-M23 based microcontrollers integrating robust security which includes ARM® TrustZone®, secure boot, crypto acceleration, secure key storage and chip-level tamper detection. In addition to security the SAM L11 MCU features general purpose embedded control capabilities with enhanced peripheral touch controller and advanced analog.

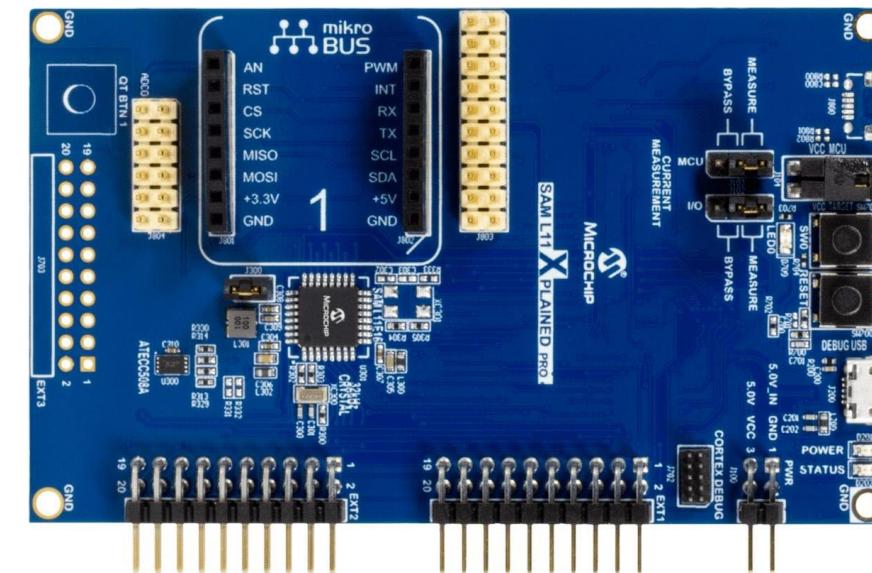
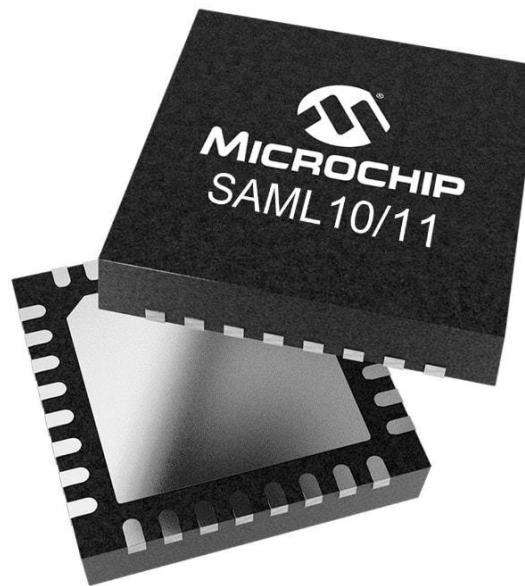
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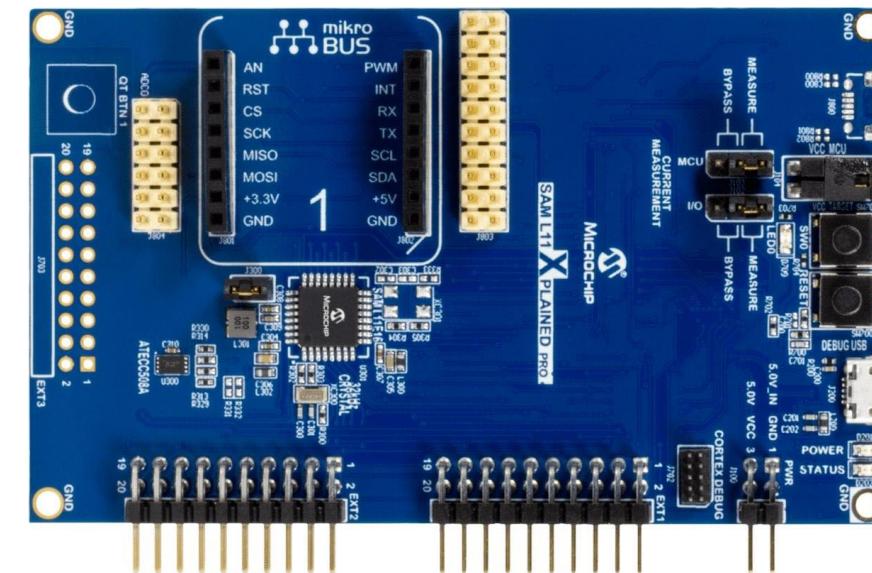
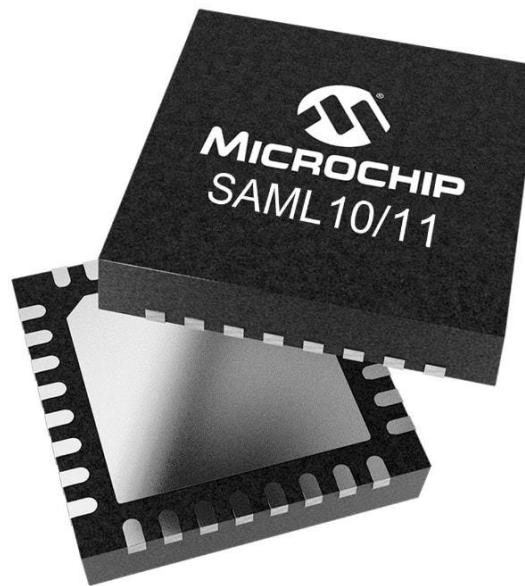
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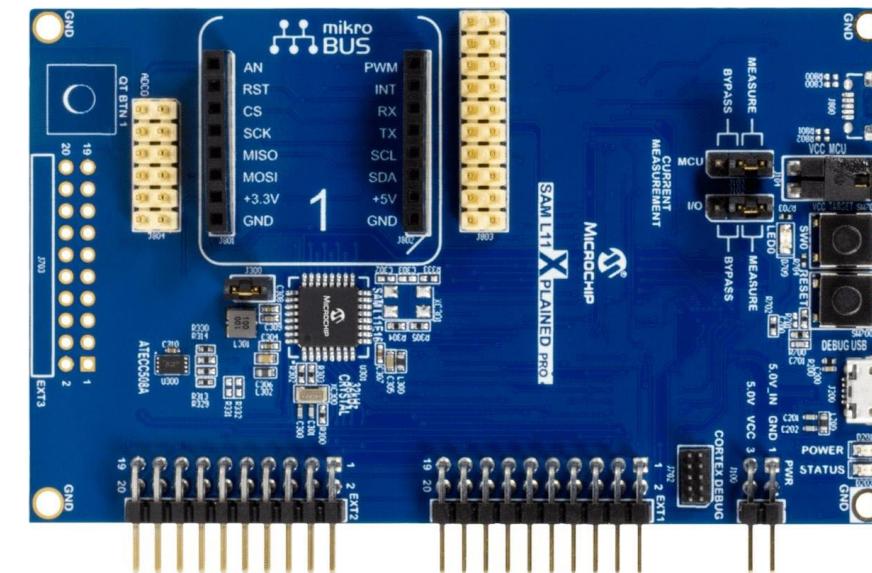
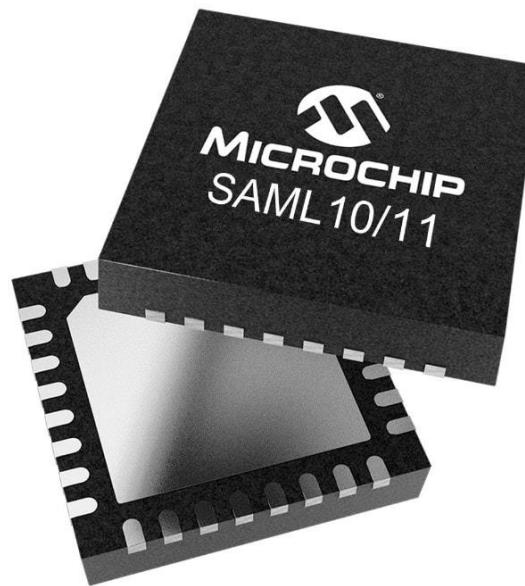
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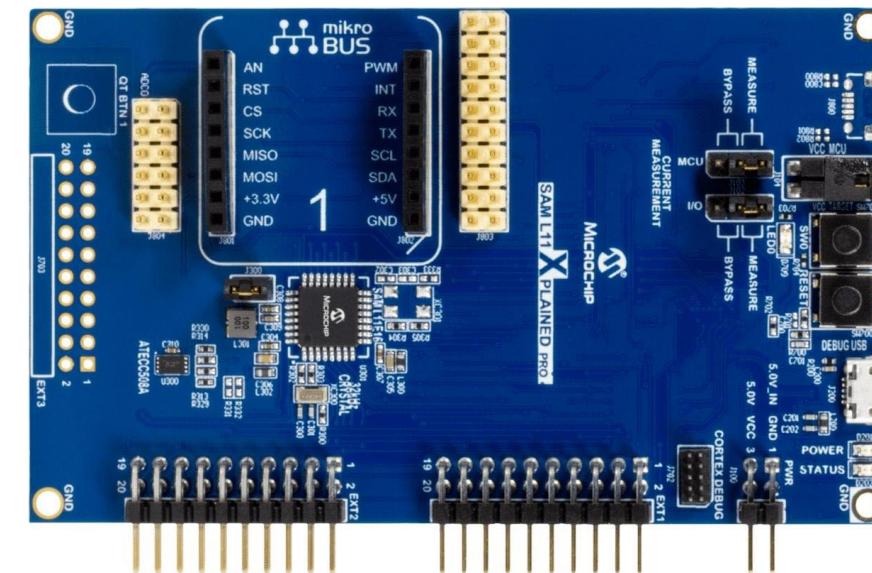
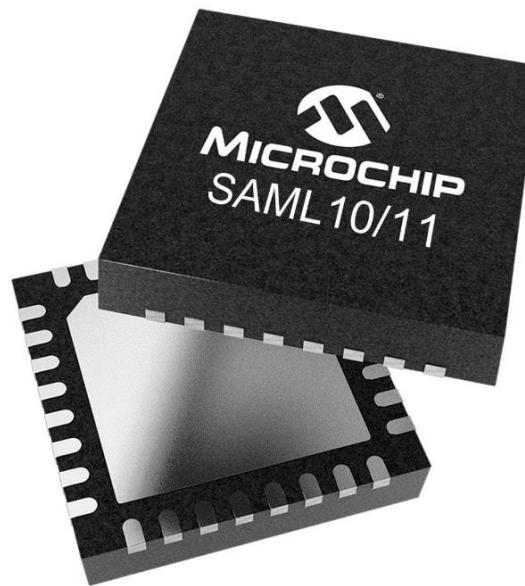
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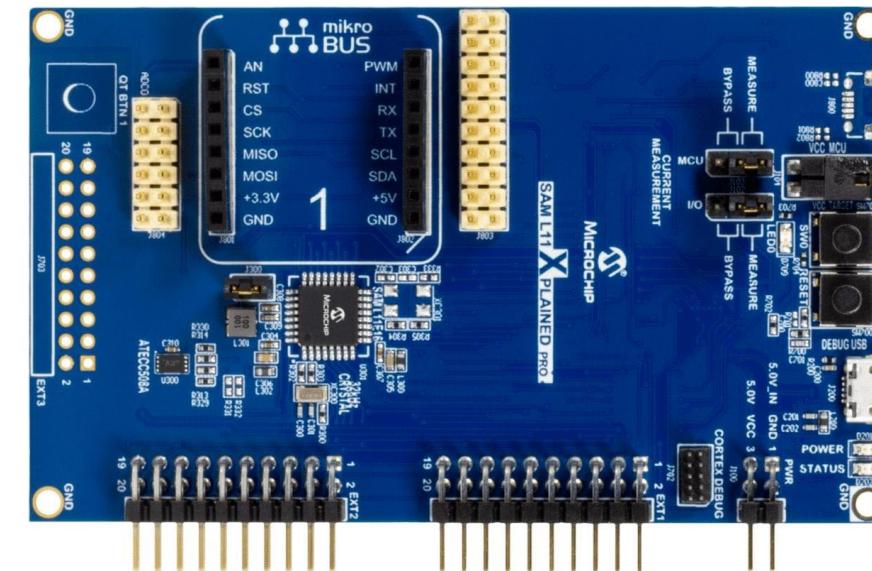
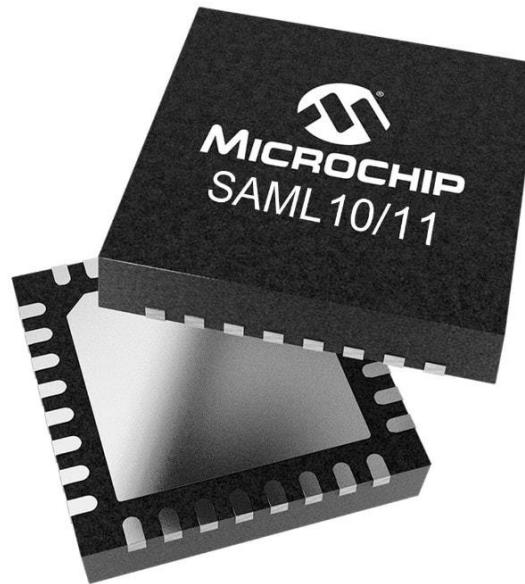
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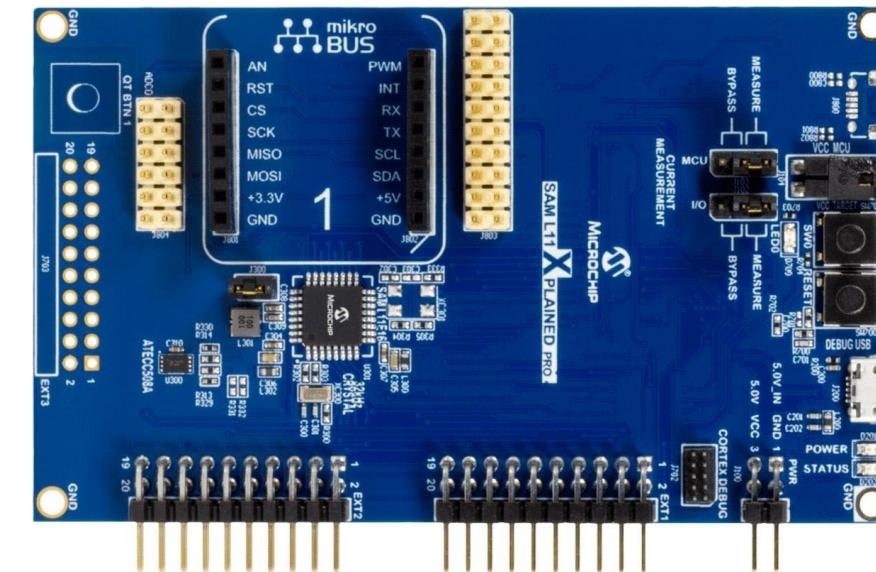
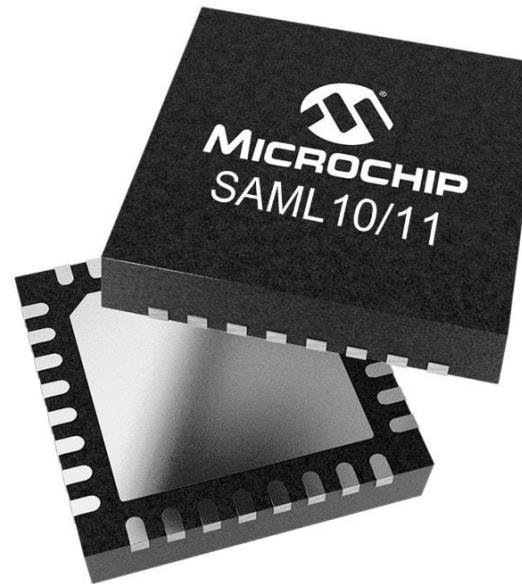
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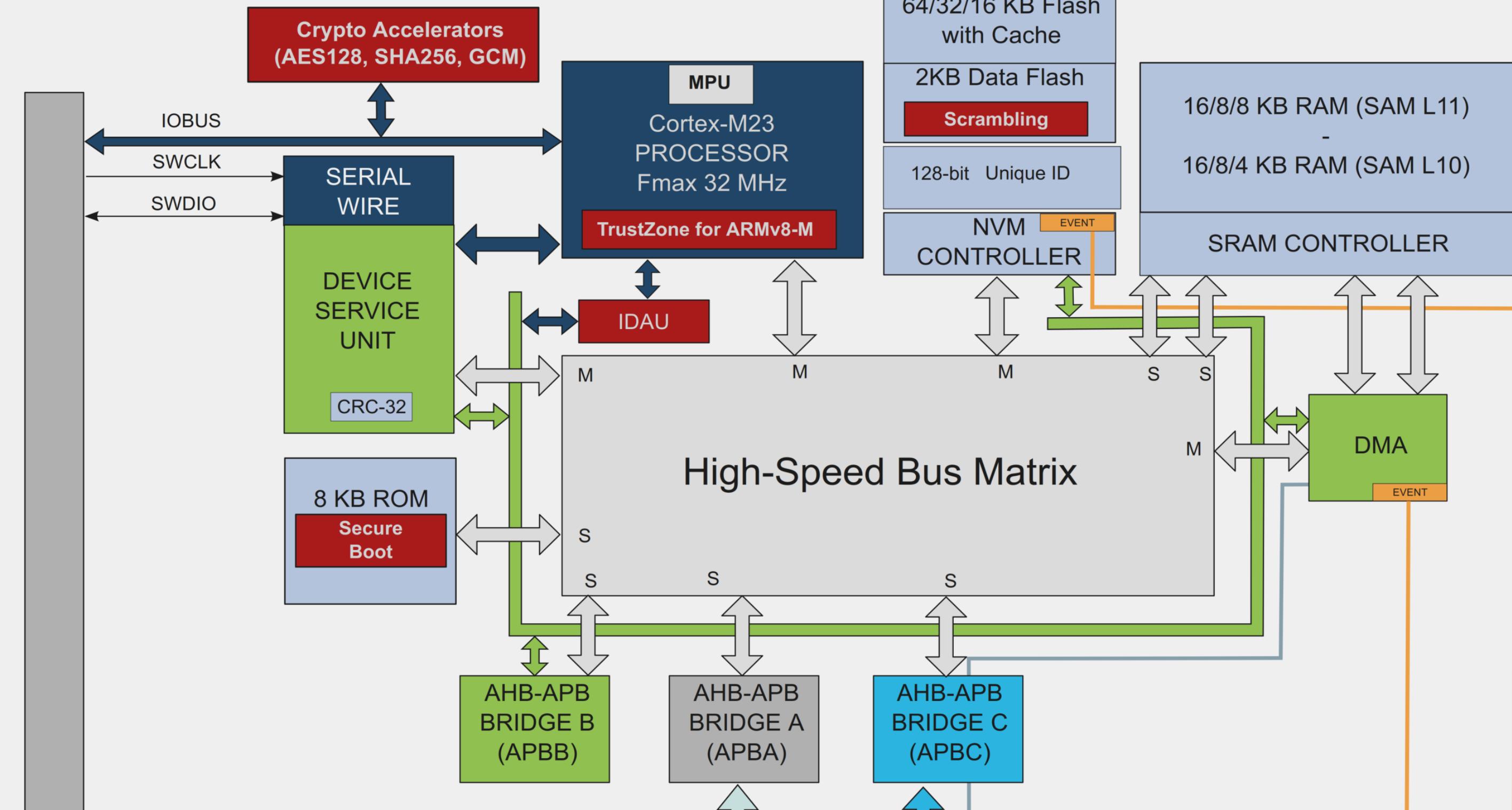
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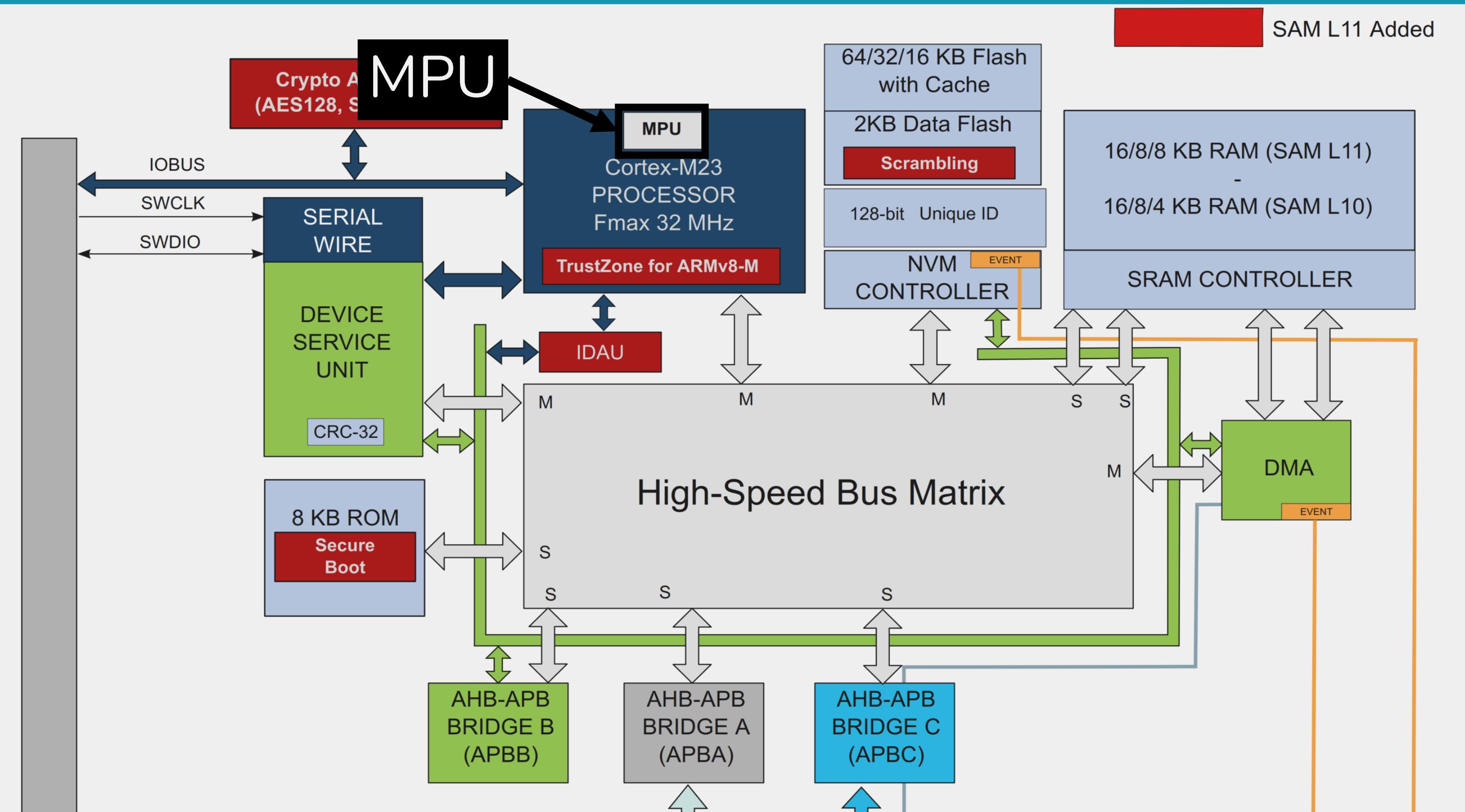


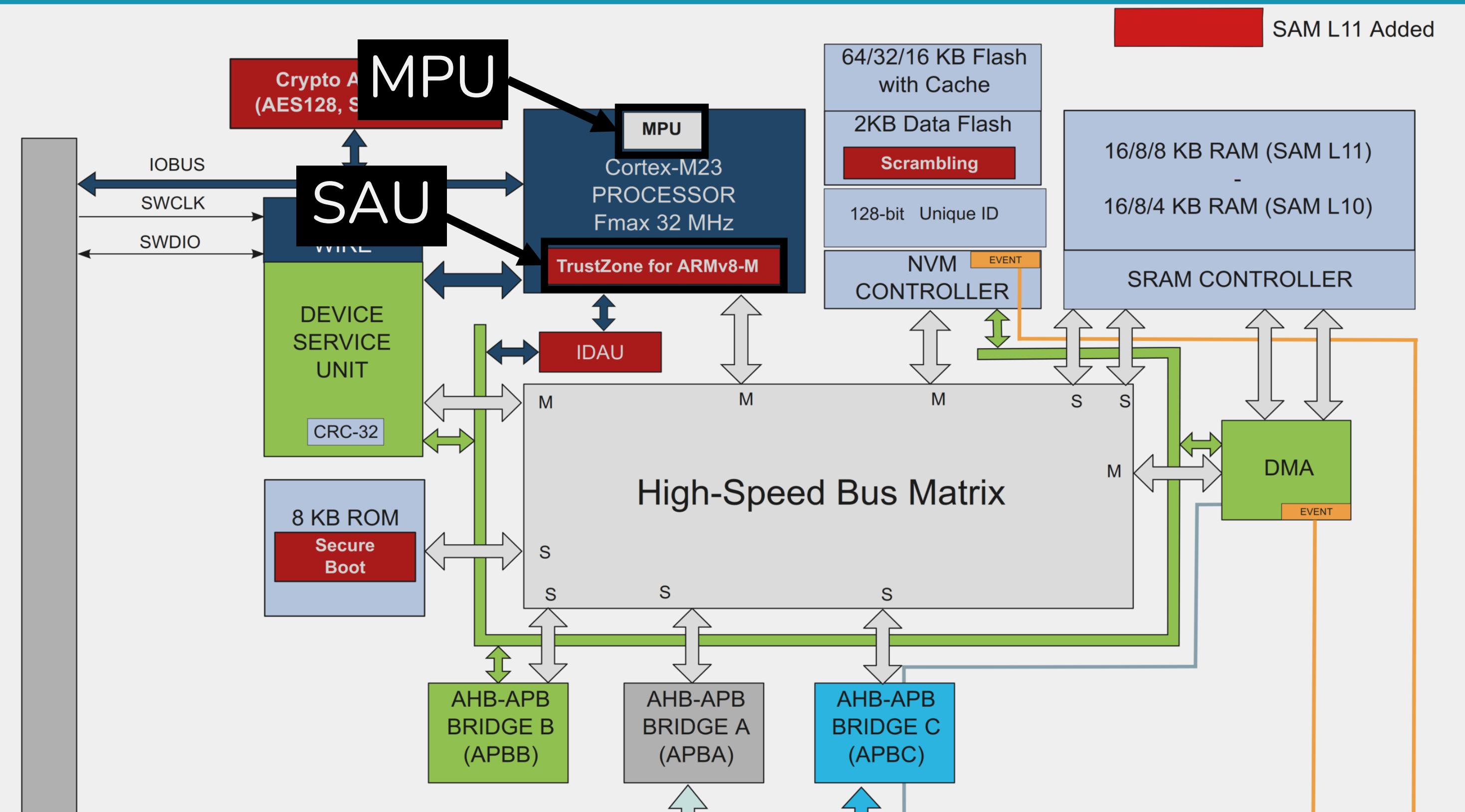
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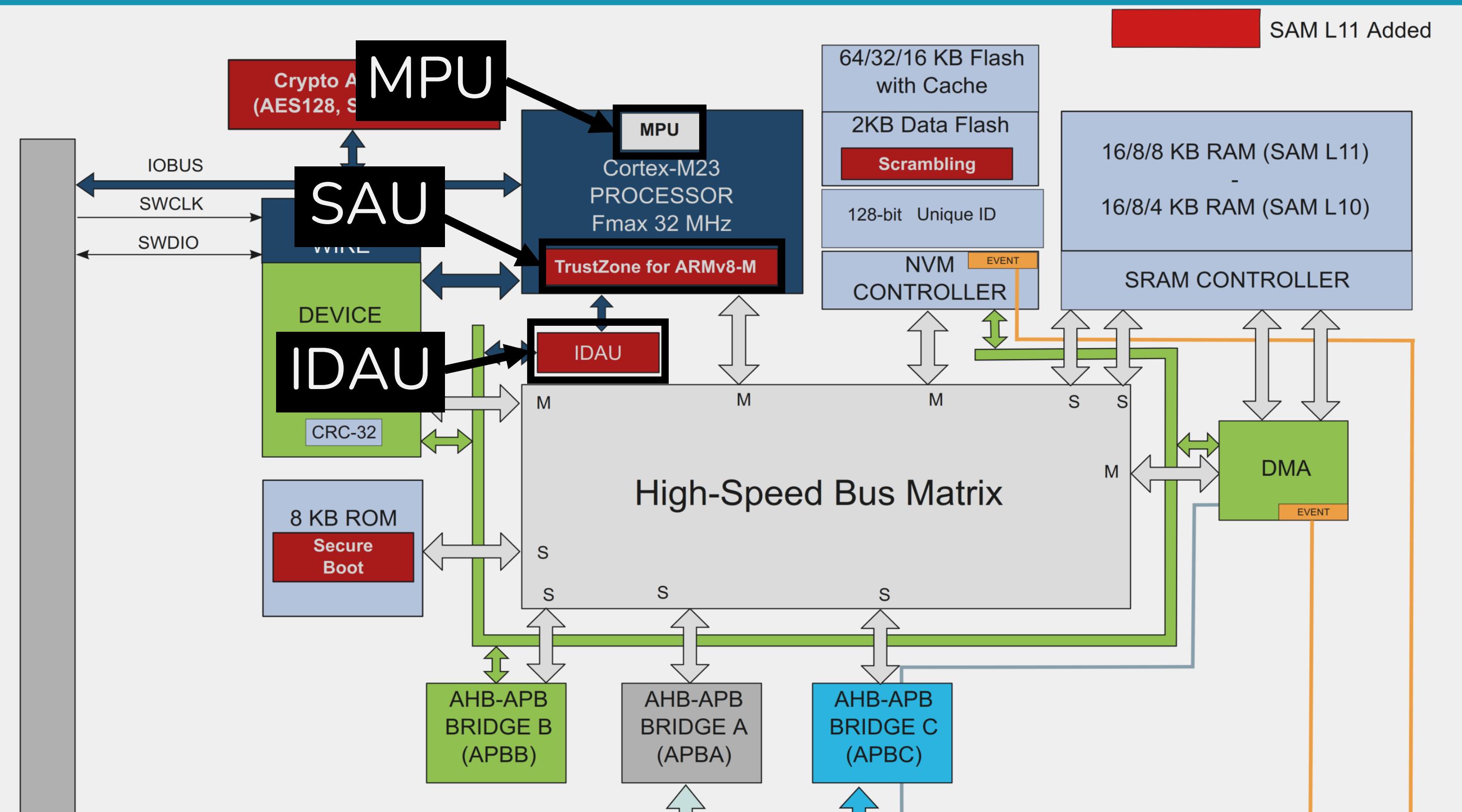
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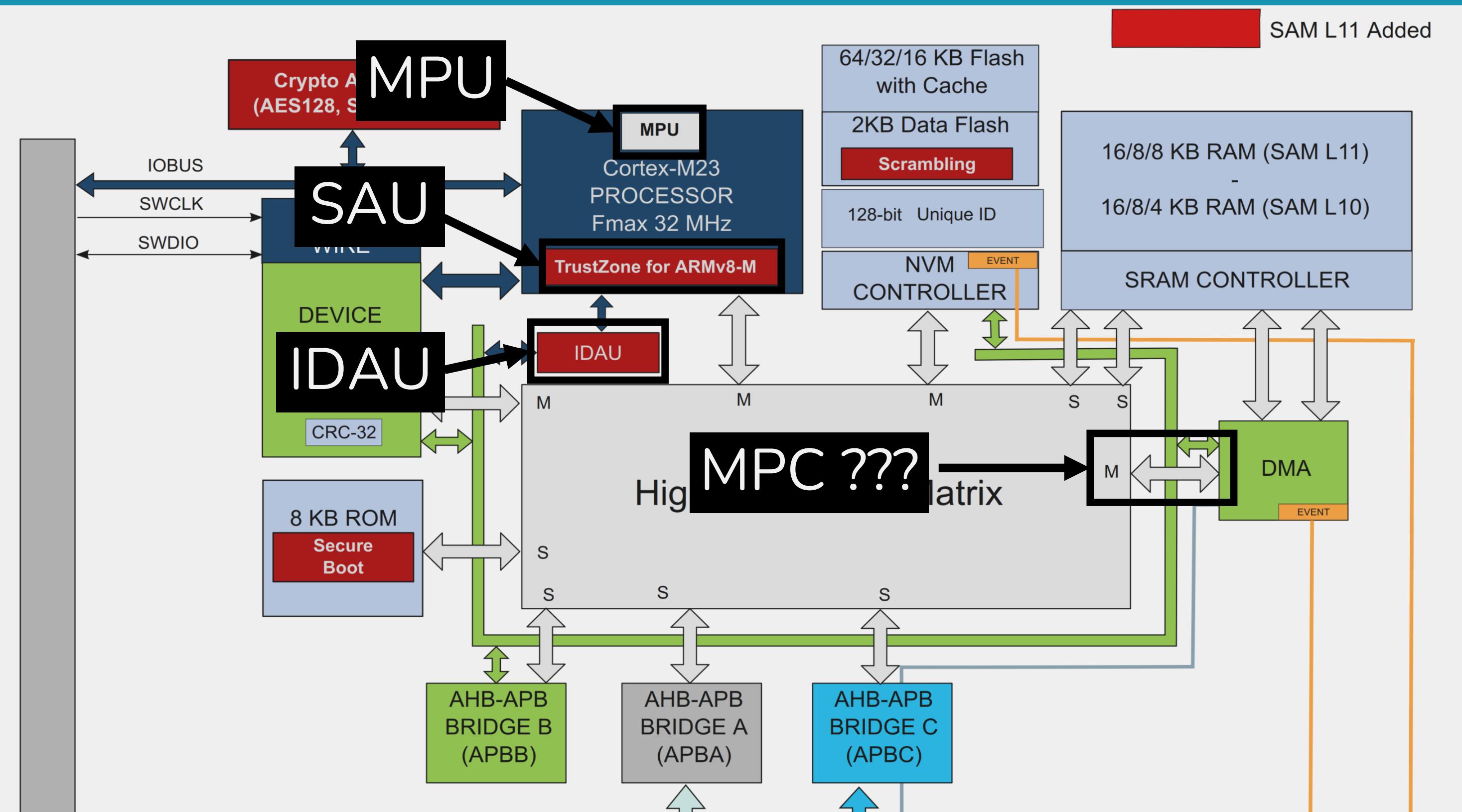
SAM L11 Added

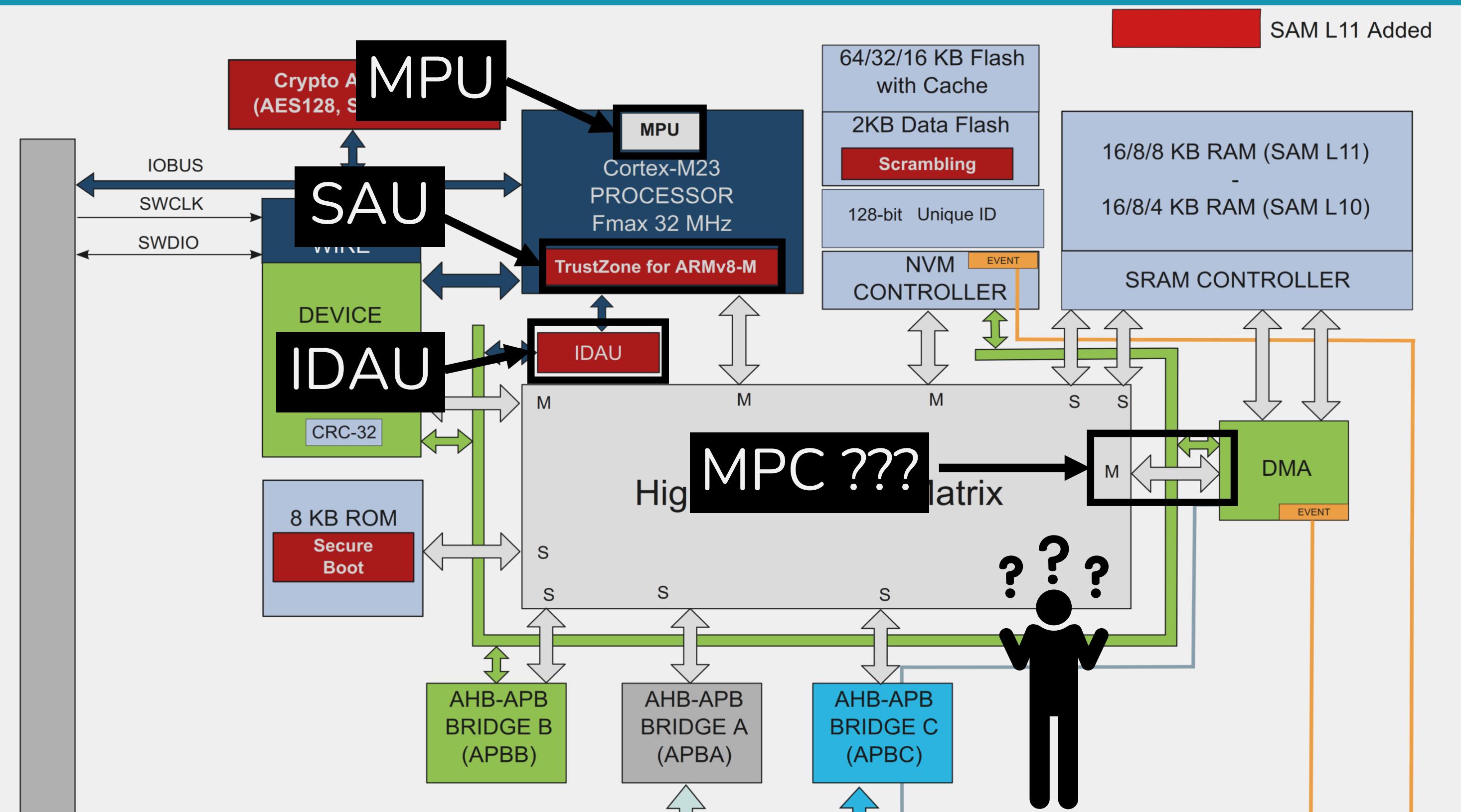












13. SAM L11 Specific Security Features

This chapter provides an overview of the security features which are specific to the SAM L11.

13.1 Features

SAM L11-specific security features can be divided into two main categories.

The first category relates to the ARM TrustZone for Cortex-M technology features:

- Flexible hardware isolation of memories and peripherals:
 - Up to six regions for the Flash
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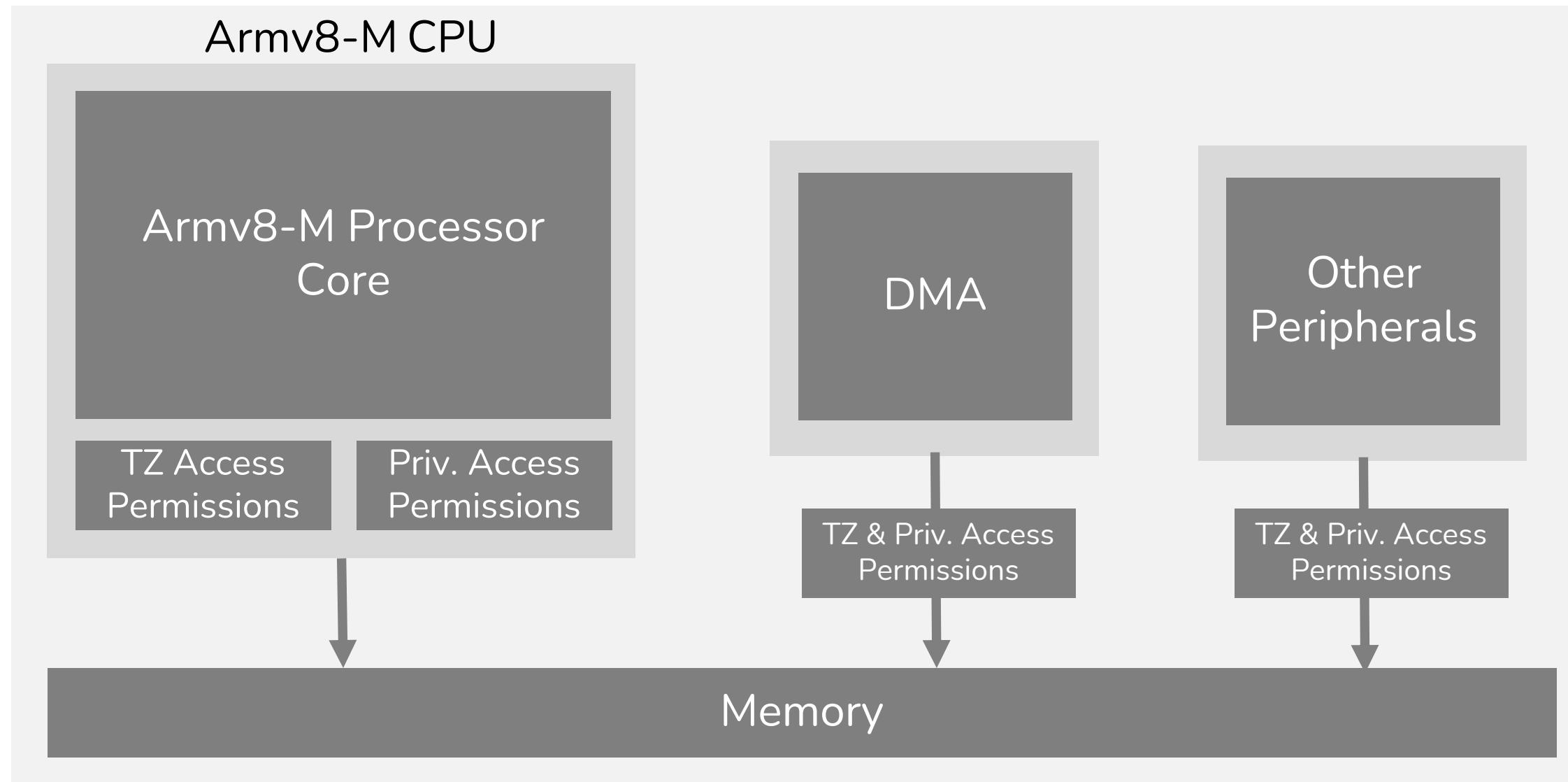
- Flexible hardware isolation of:
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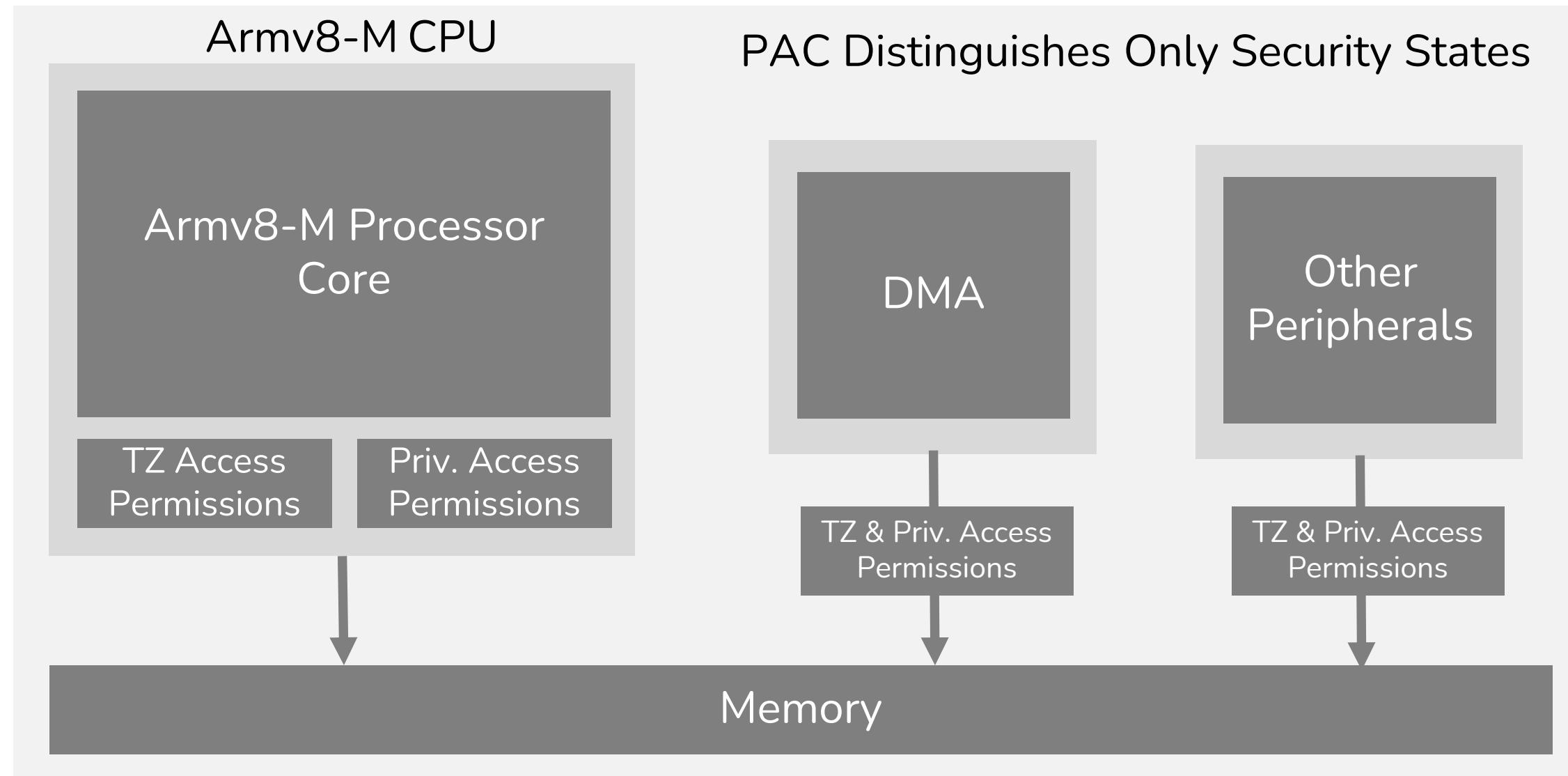
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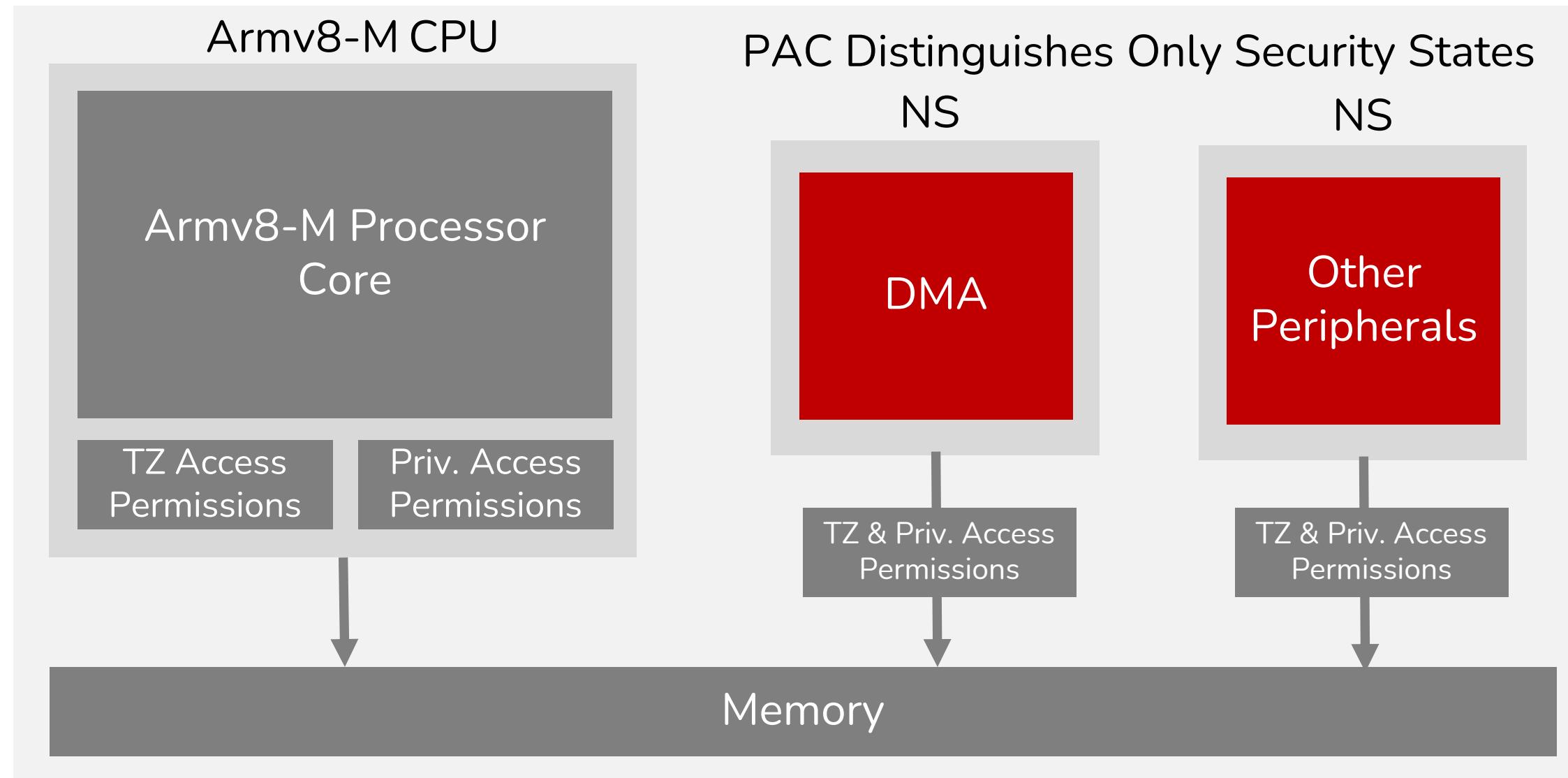
SAML11 WEAK PROTECTIONS



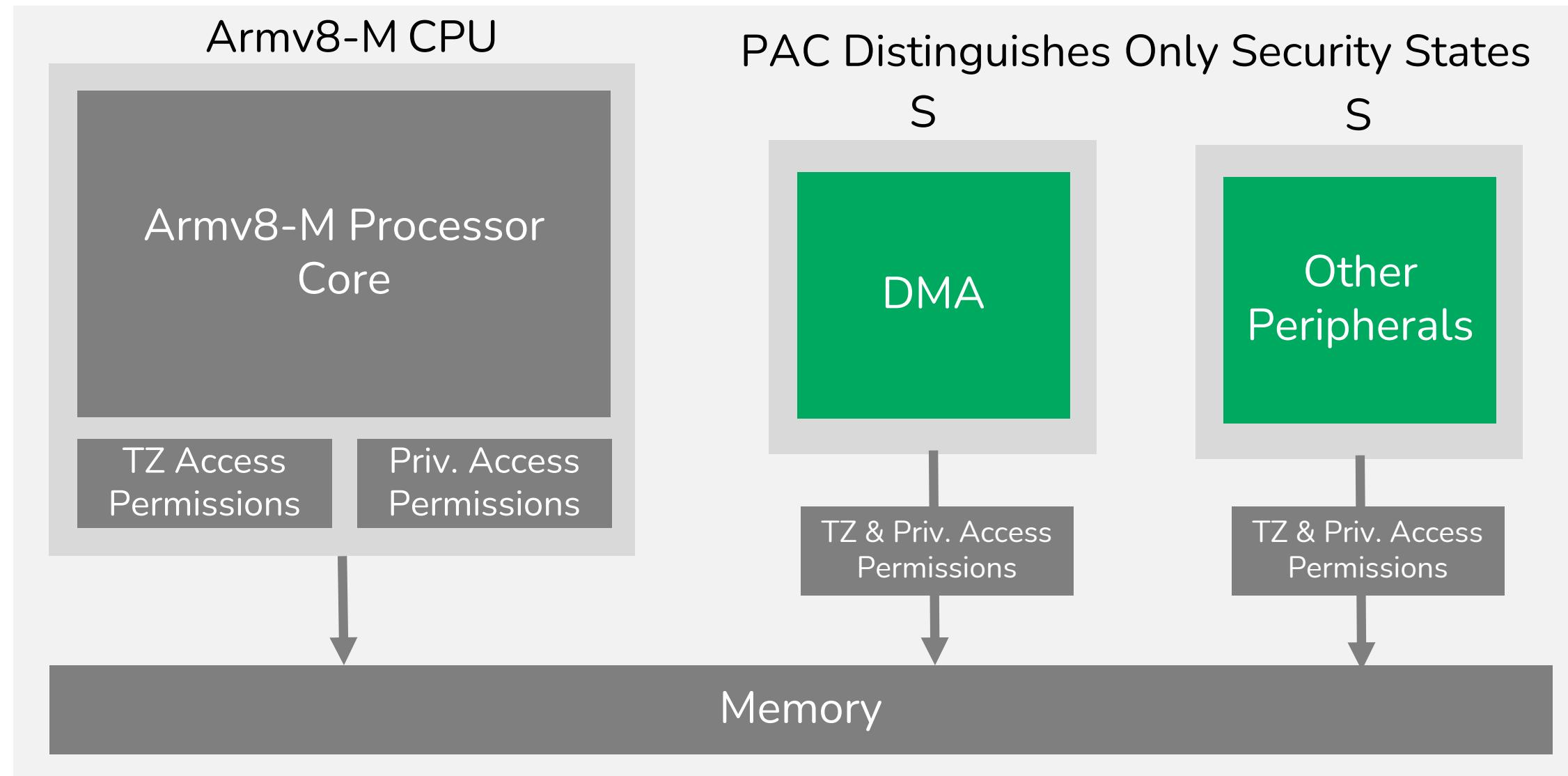
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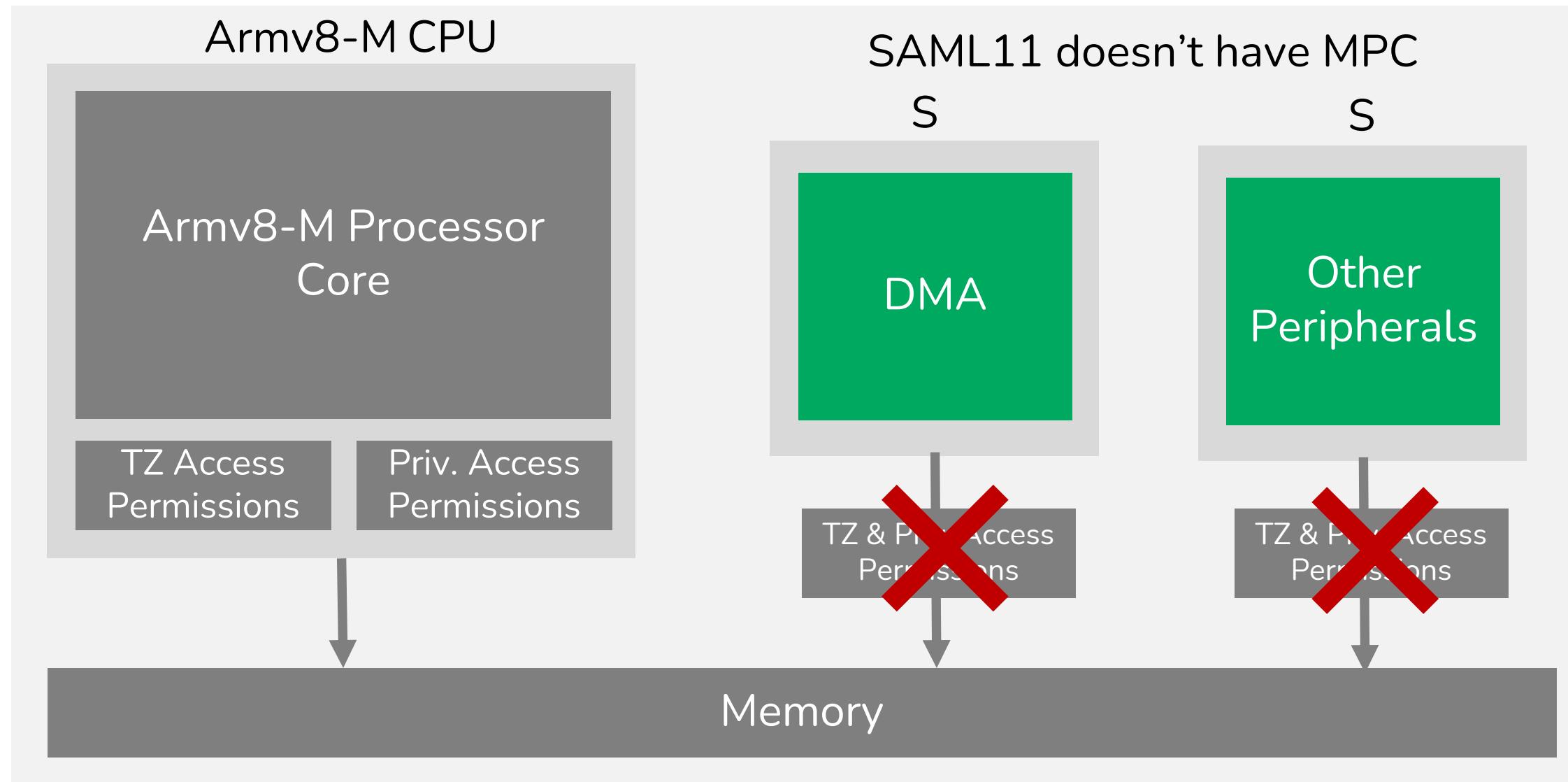
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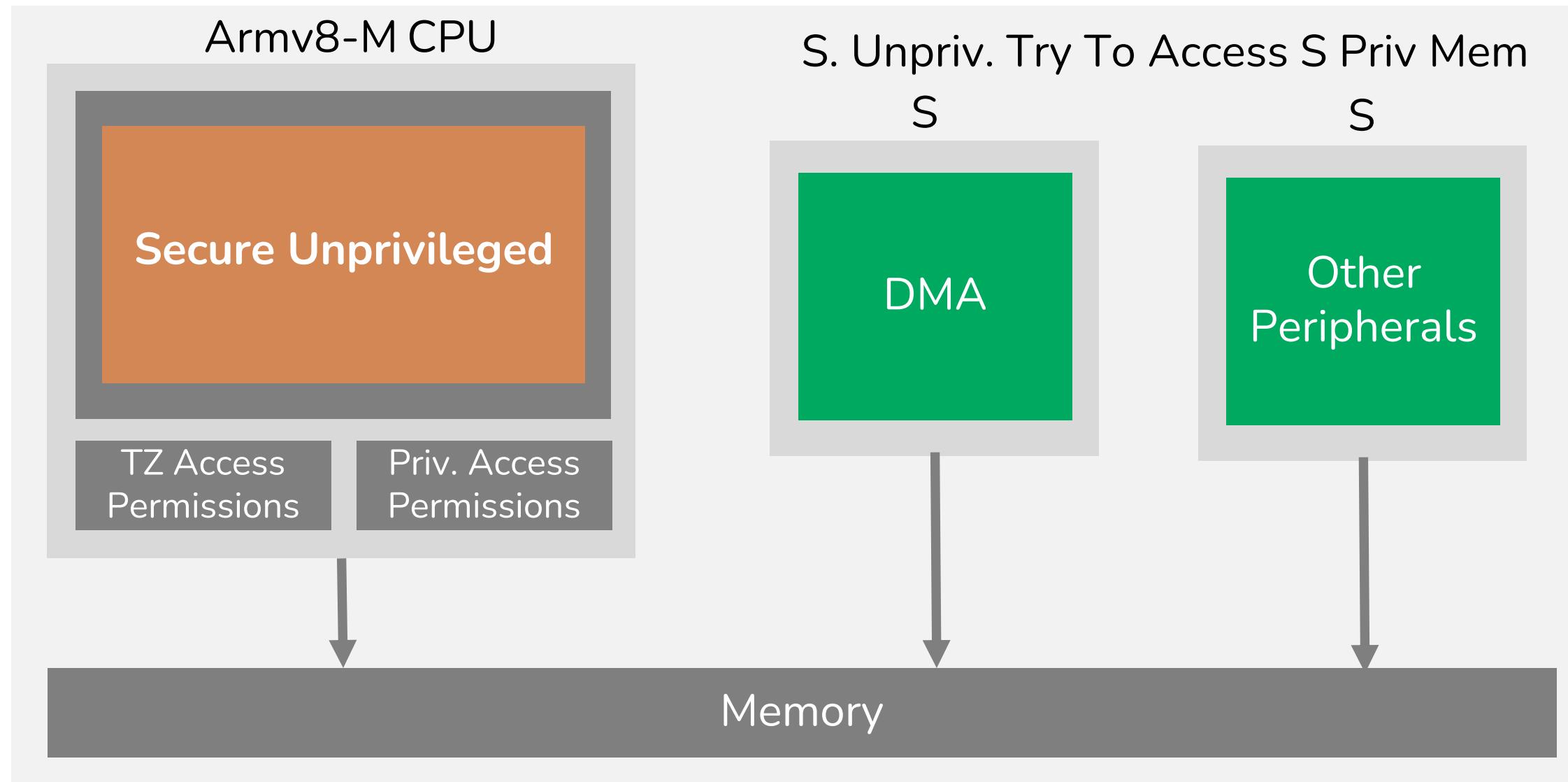
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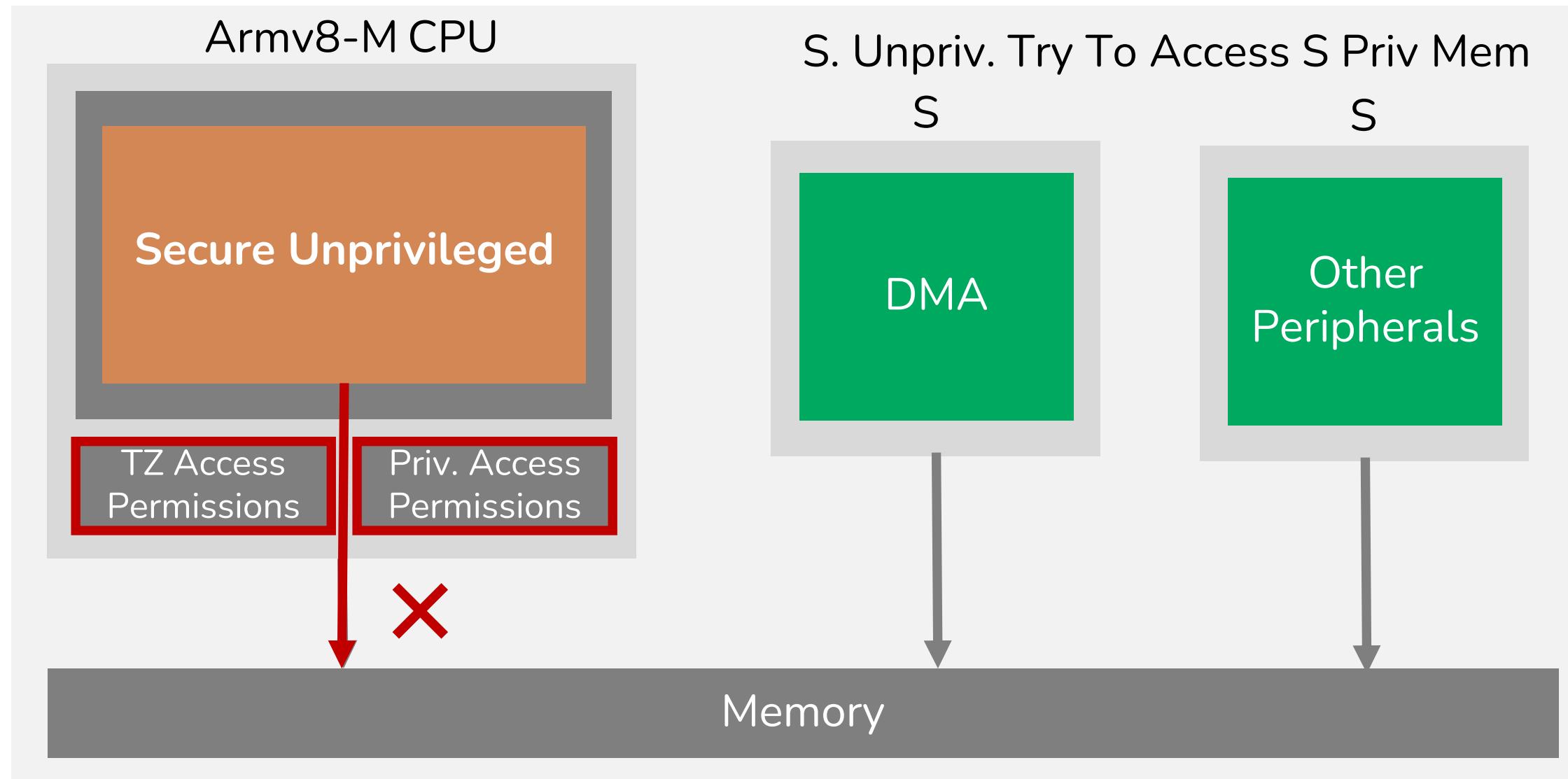
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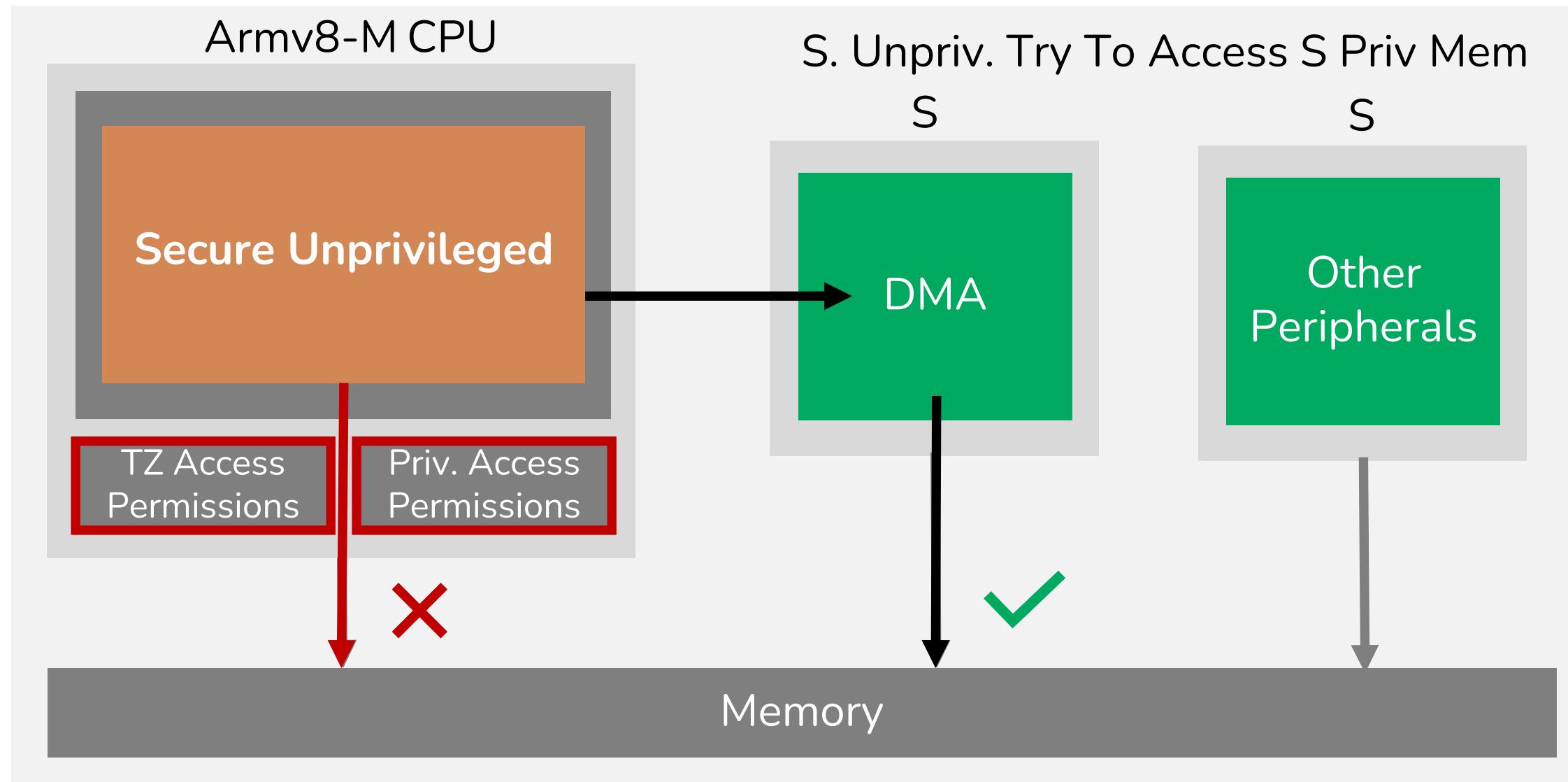
SAML11 WEAK PROTECTIONS



SAML11 WEAK PROTECTIONS



SAML11 WEAK PROTECTIONS



PSA Certification

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SILICON

SAML11-KPH



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SILICON

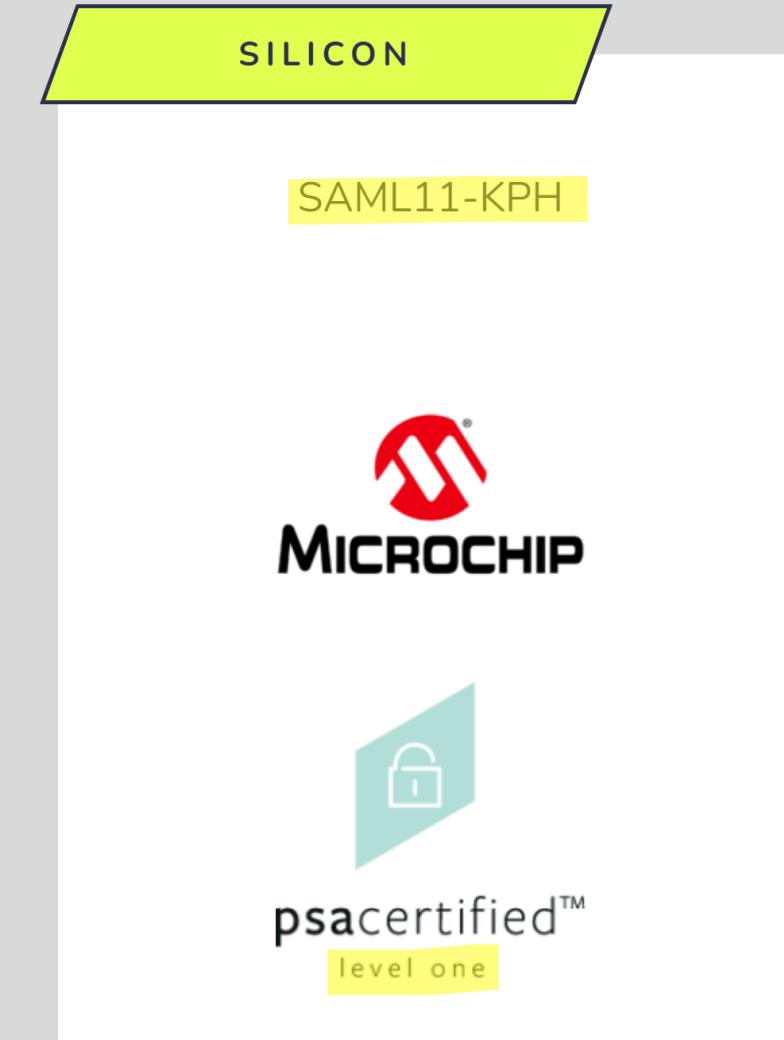
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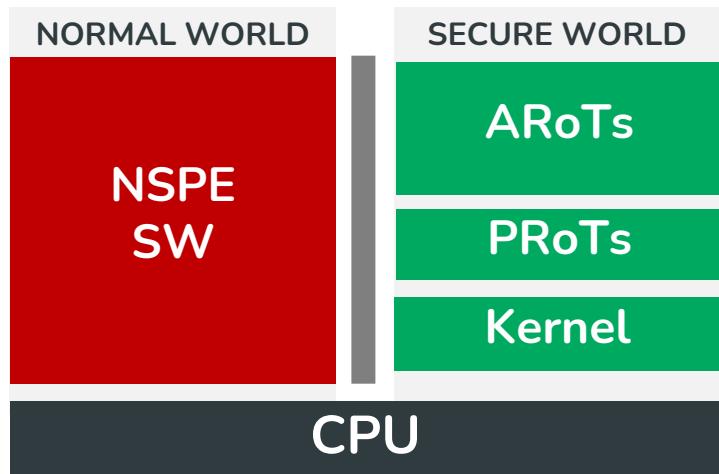
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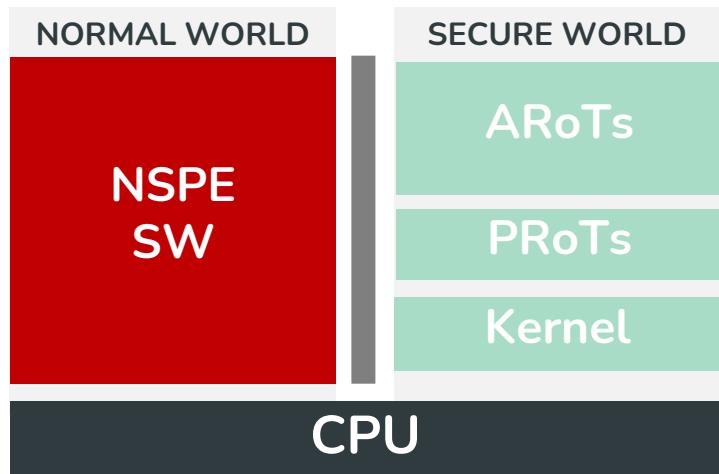
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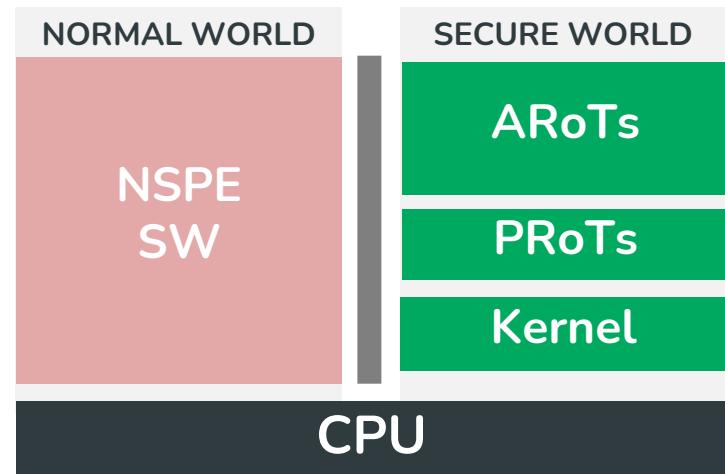
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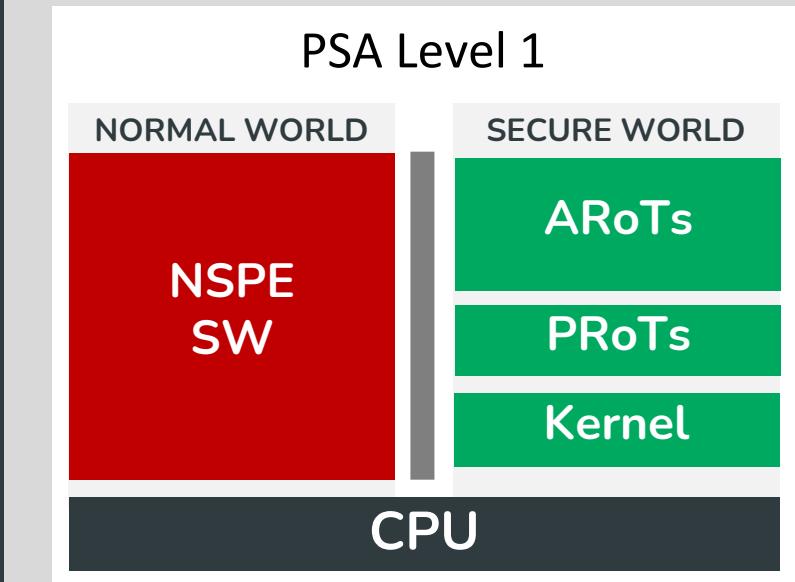
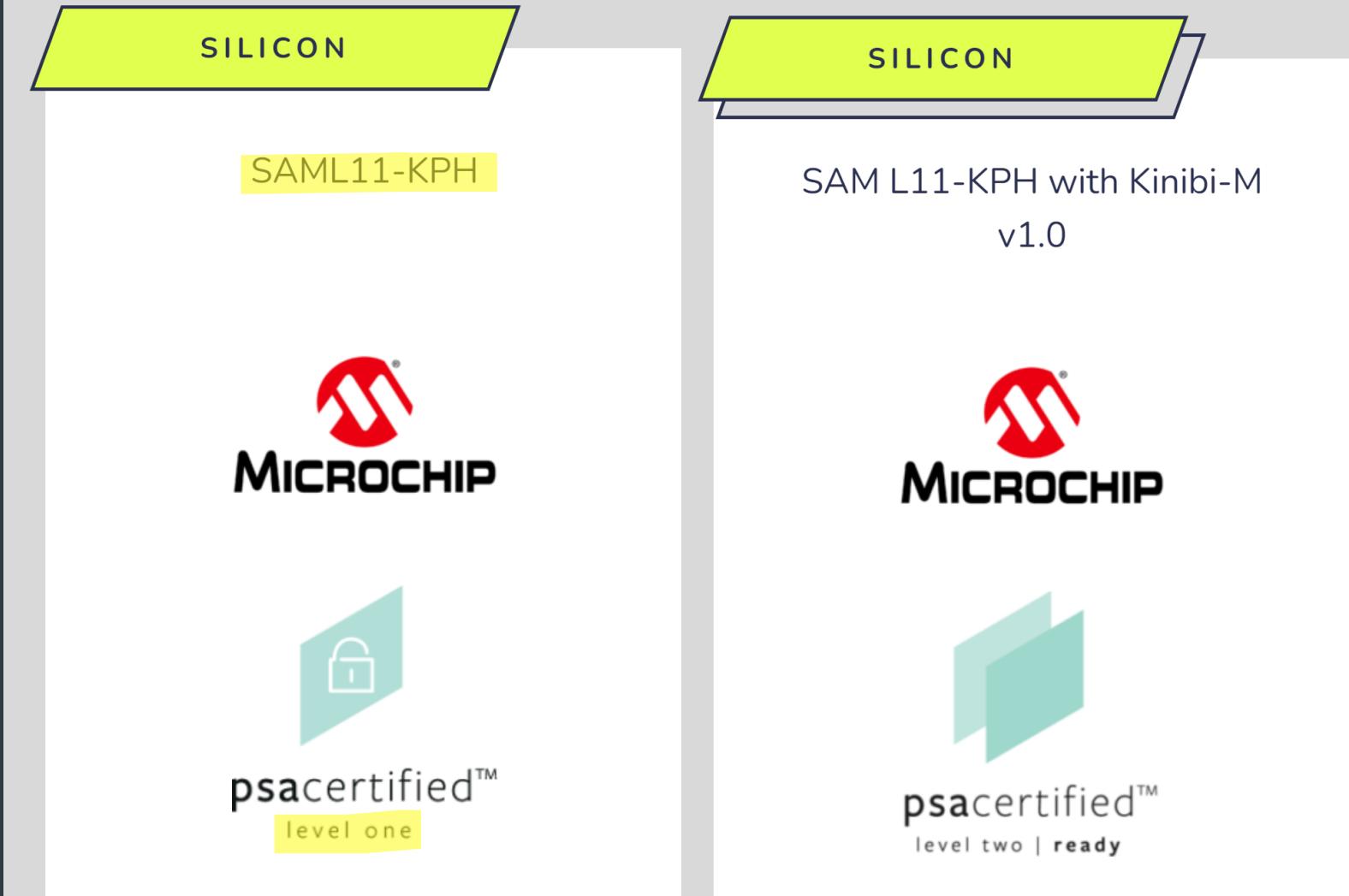
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PSA Level 1



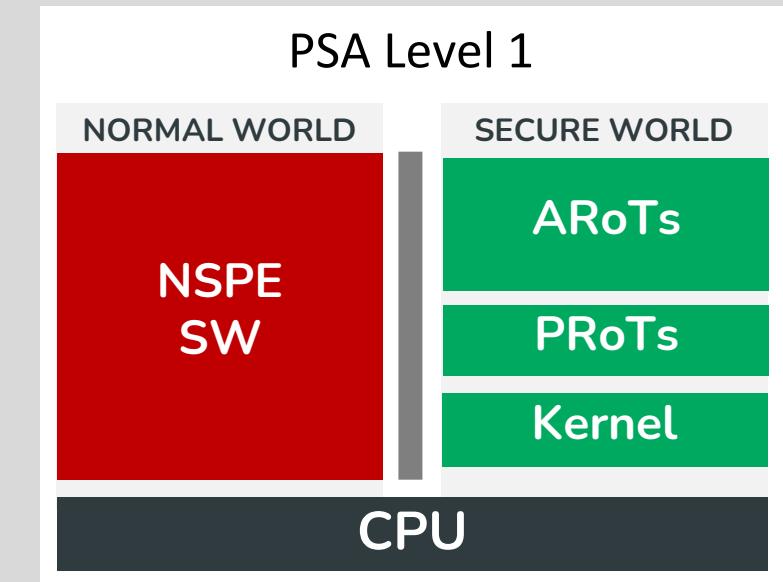
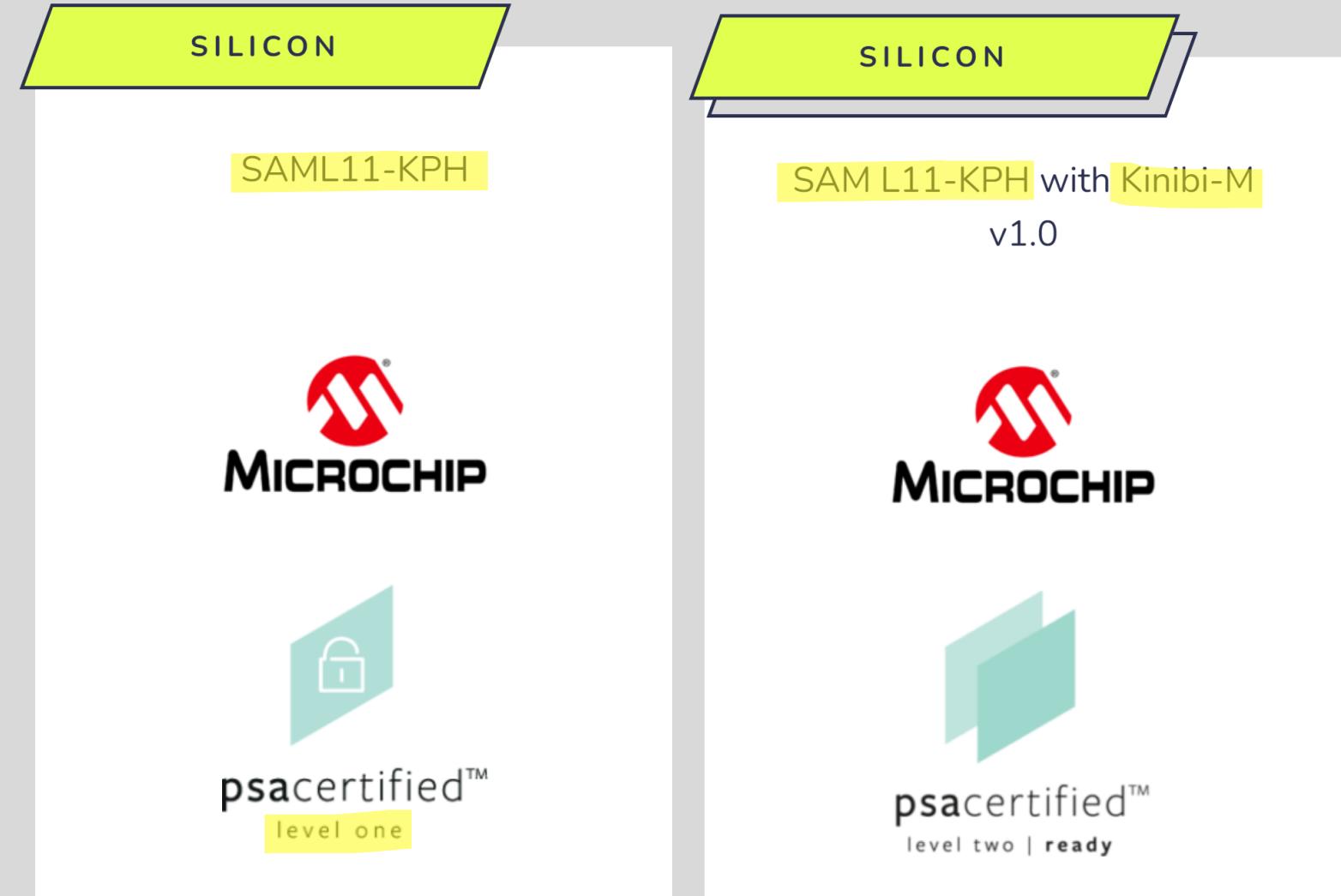
PSA Certification

SAML11 + Kinibi-M



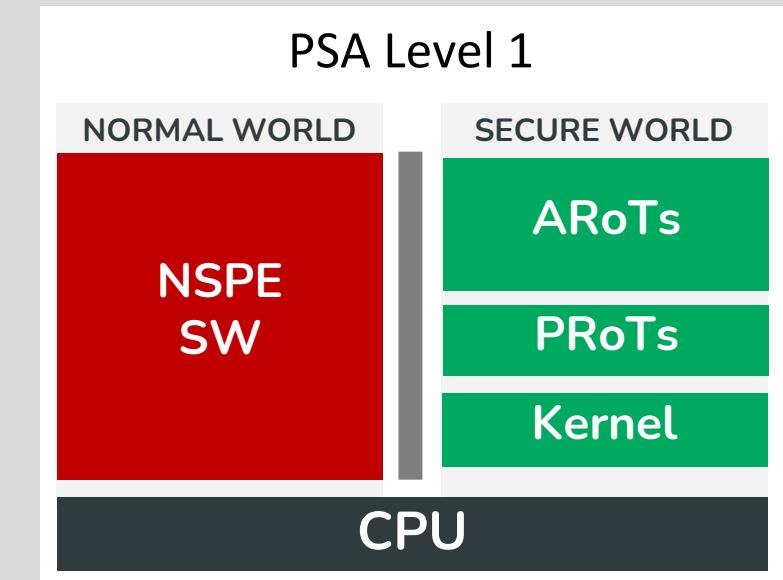
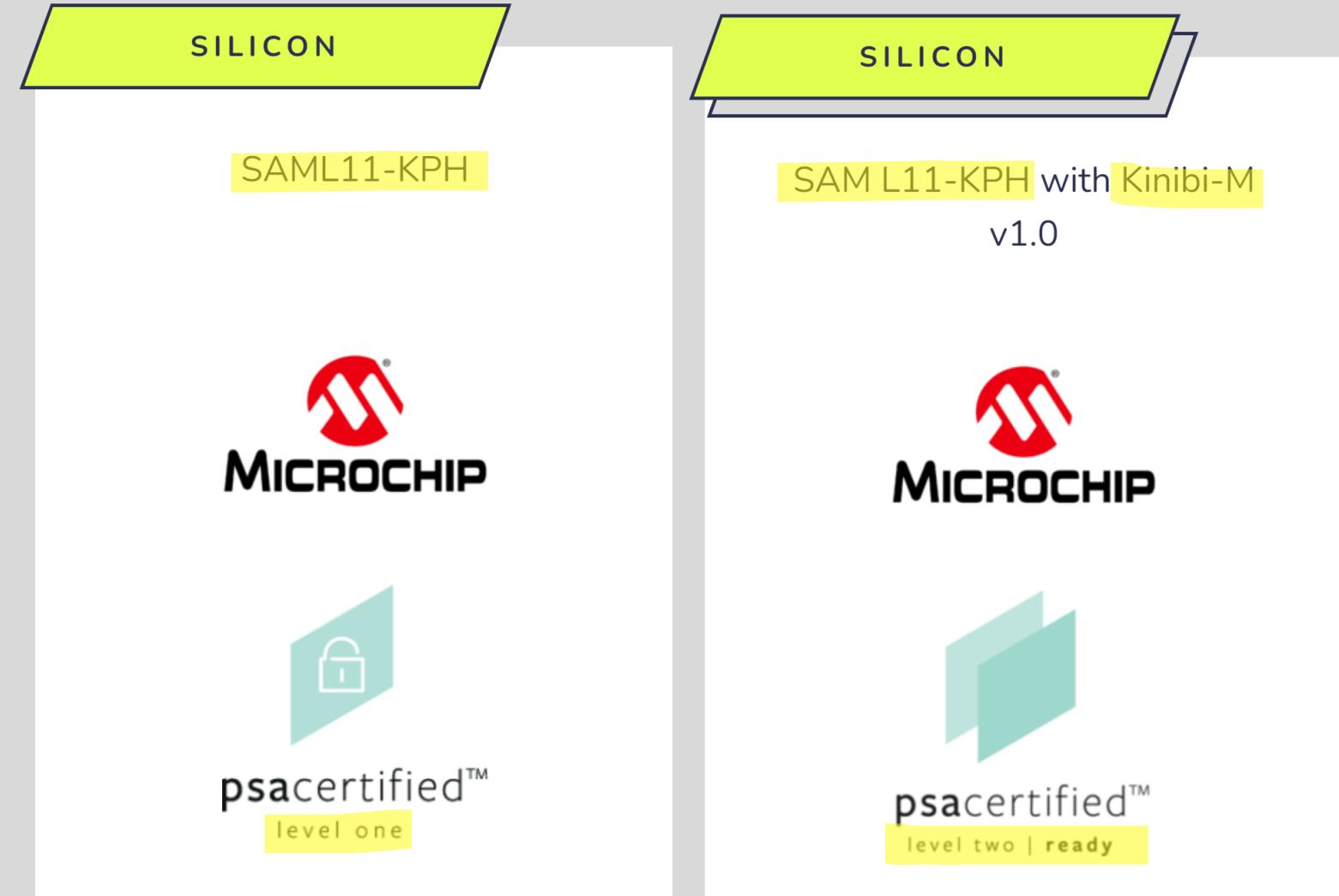
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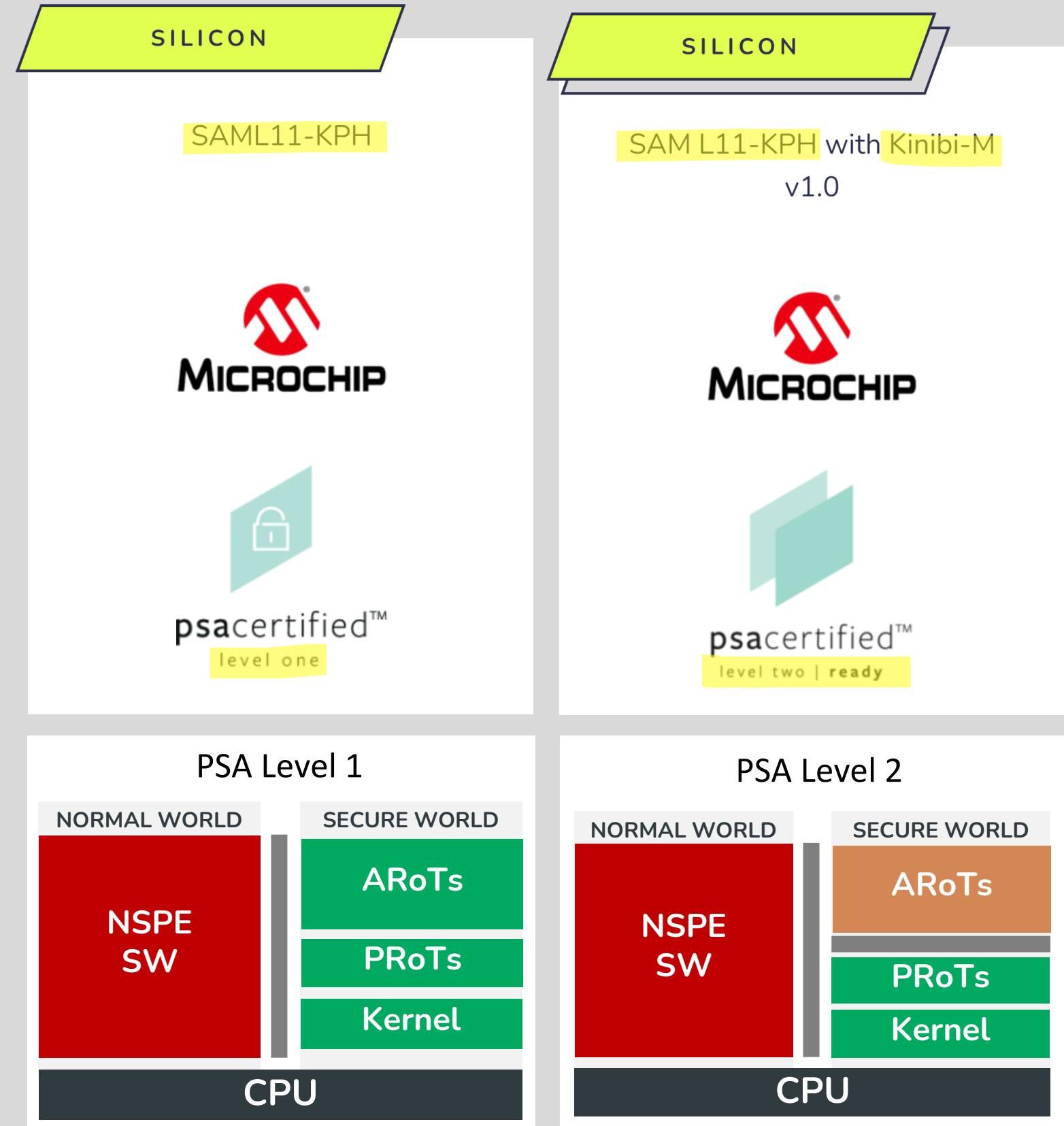
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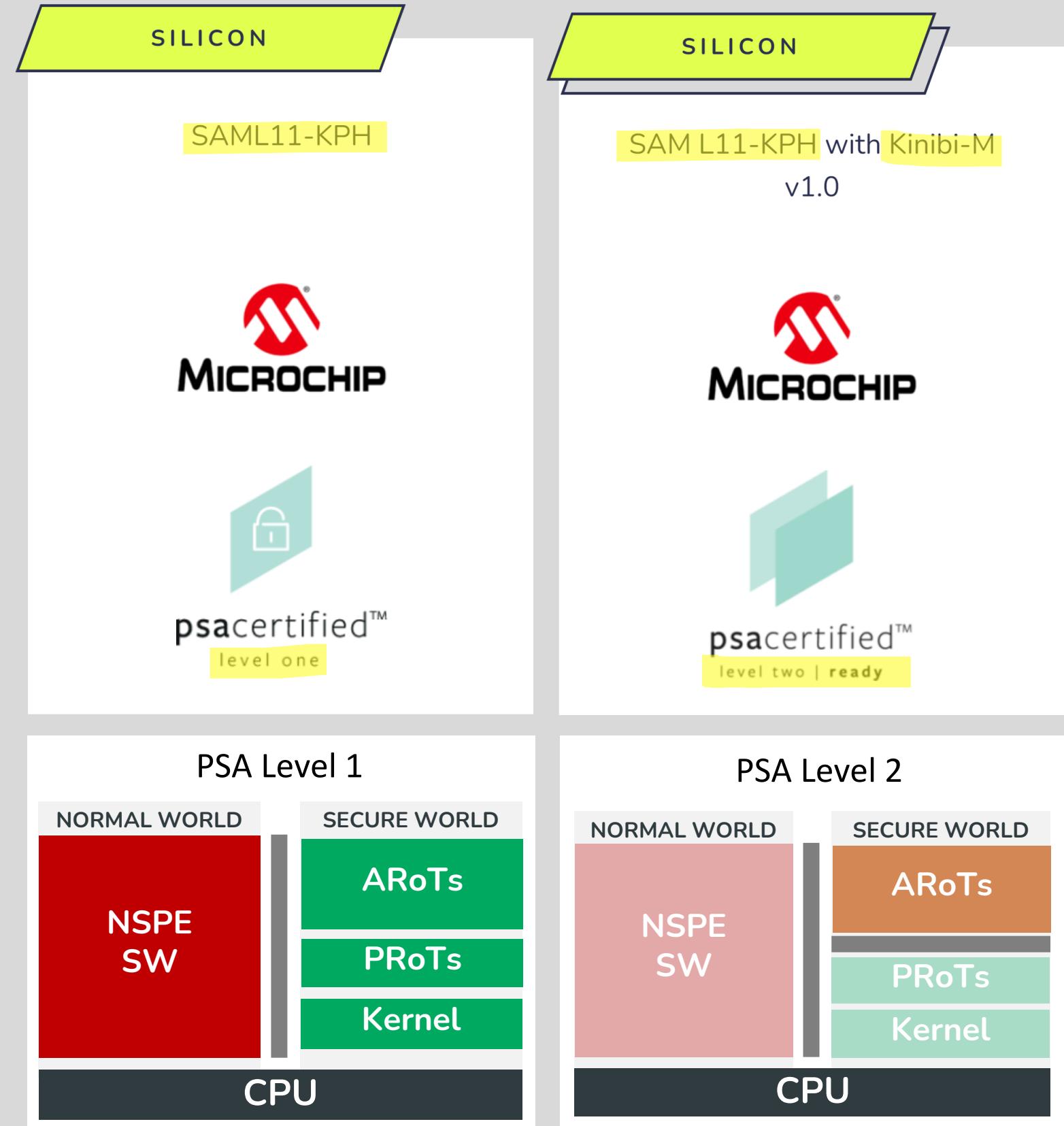
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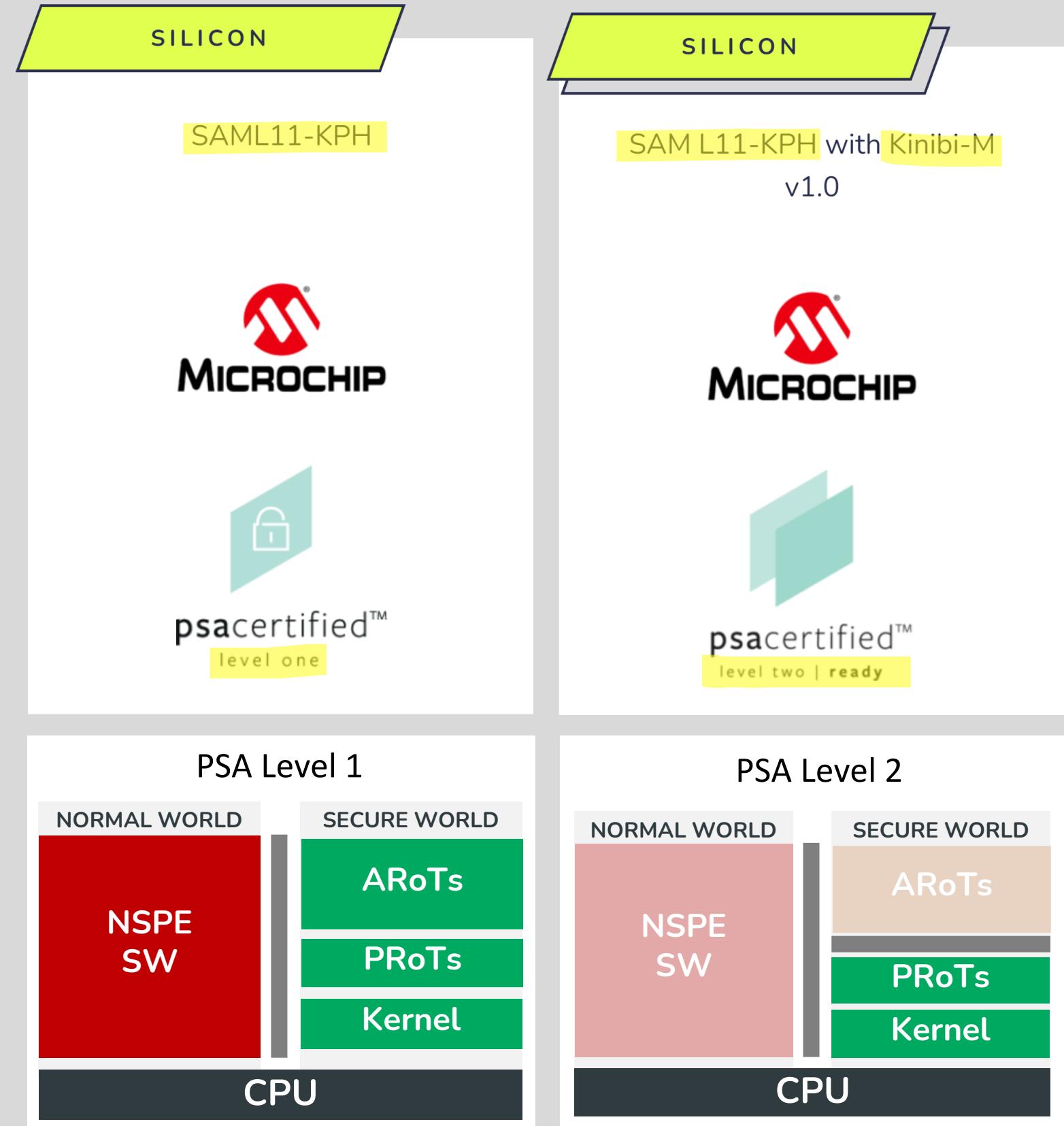
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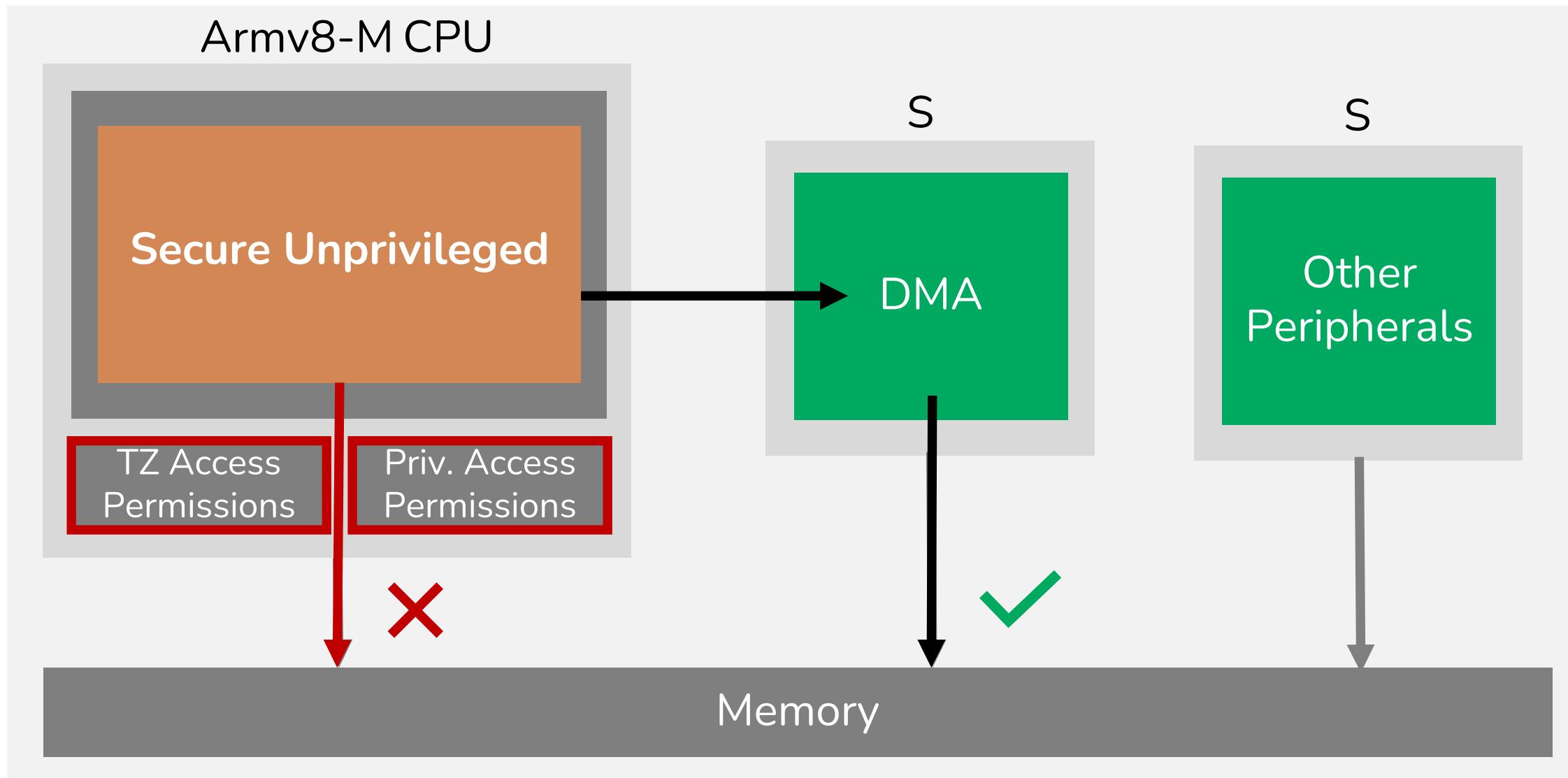


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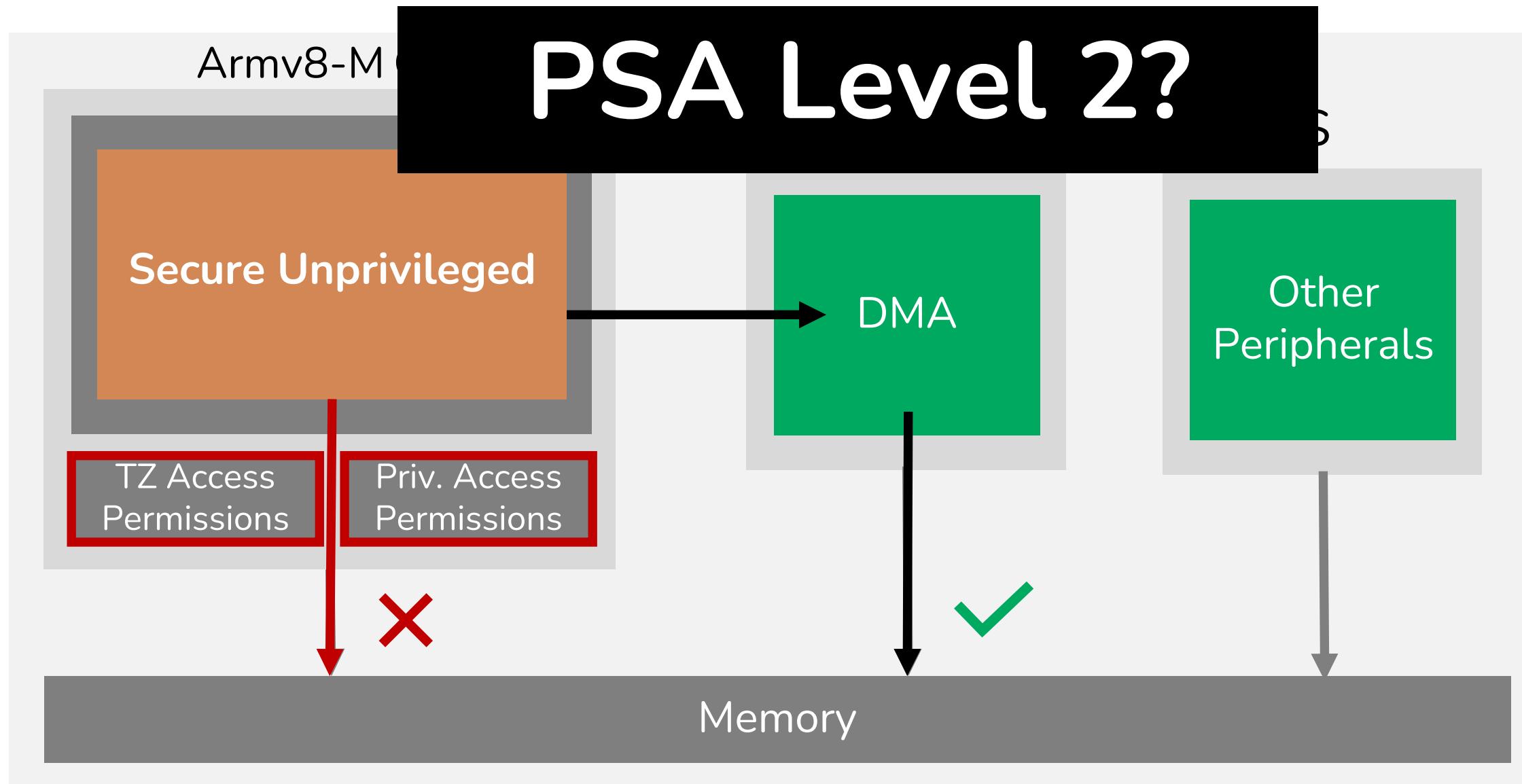
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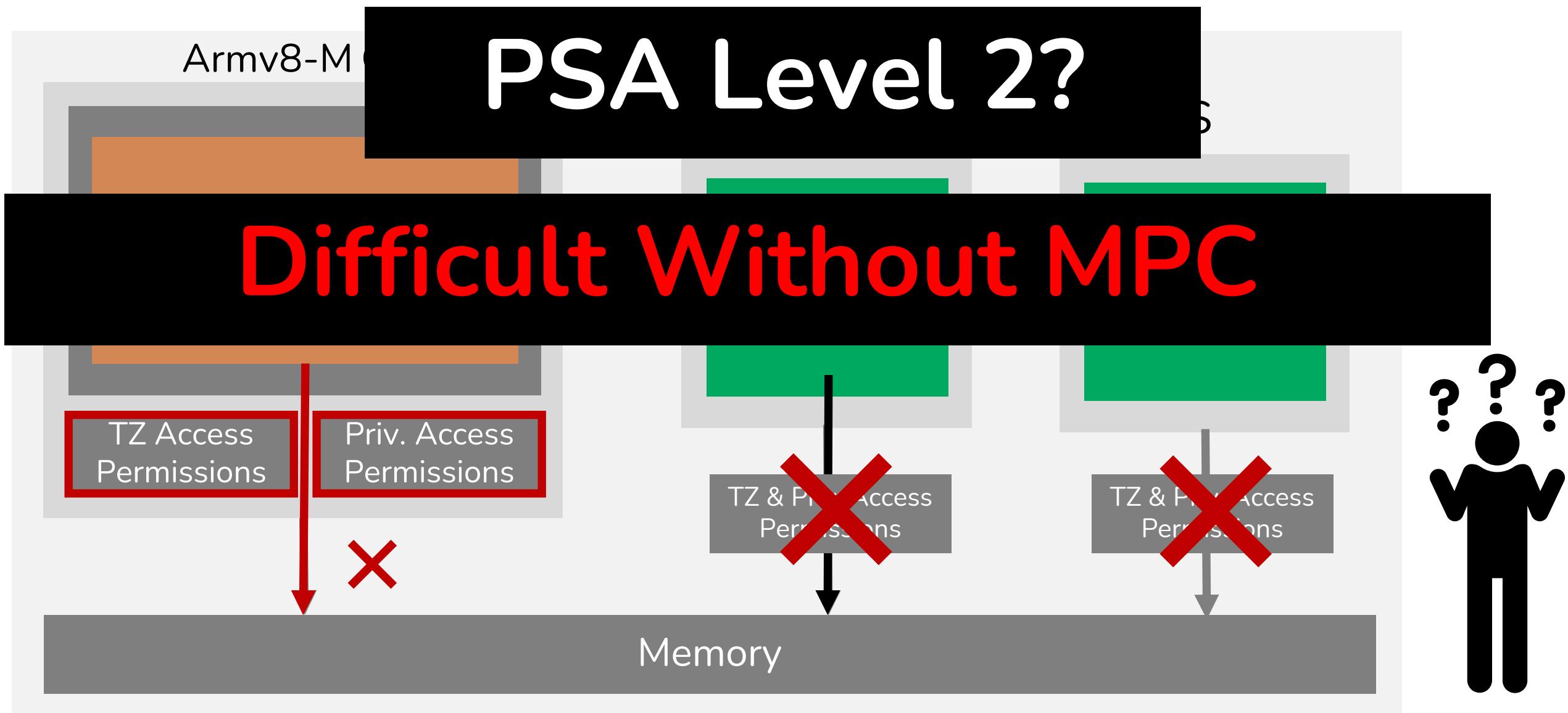
SAML11 WEAK PROTECTIONS



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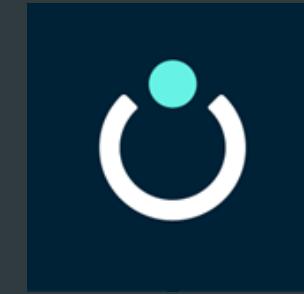


SAML11 WEAK PROTECTIONS



We report to Microchip that the lack of a MPC may create security issues, special in PSA level 2/3, Microchip didn't take any actions!

Responsible Disclosure: Microchip



Trustonic
Kinibi-M

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

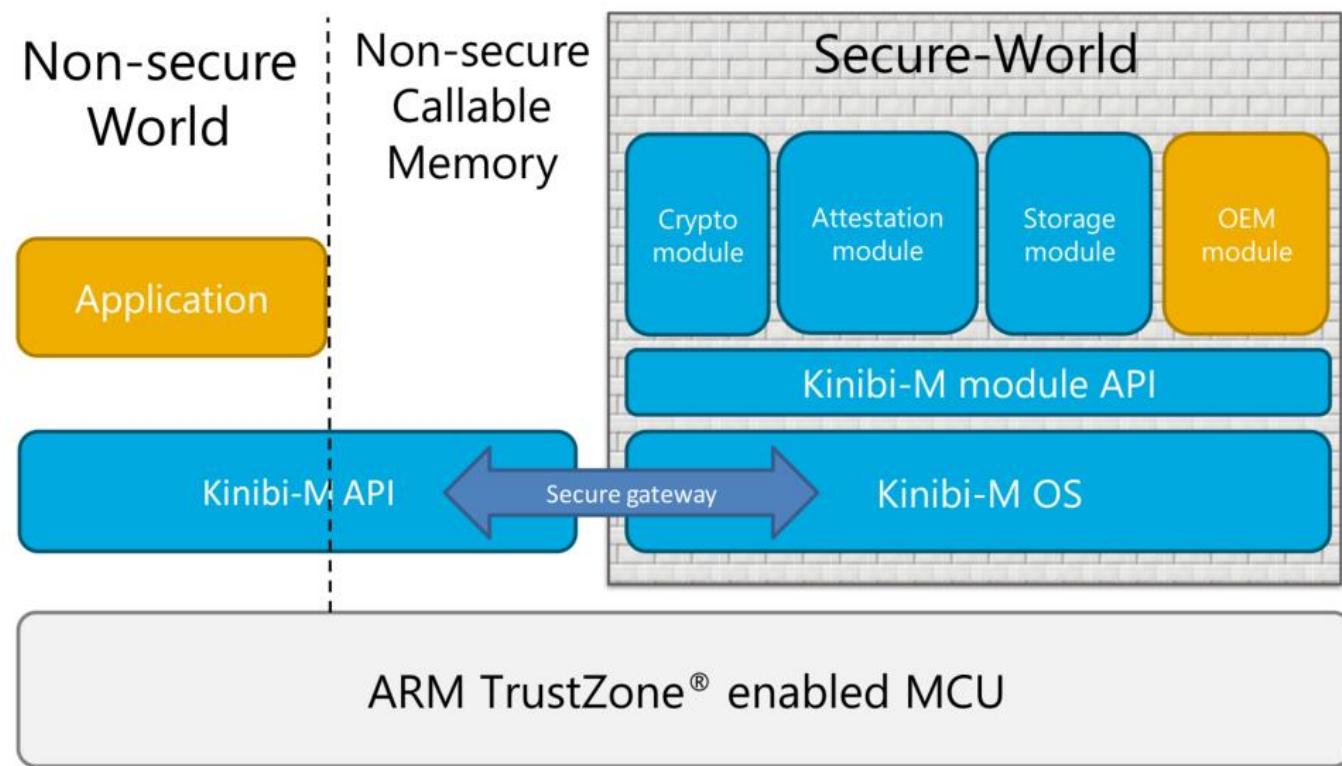


Figure 1: Kinibi-M Architecture Overview.

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

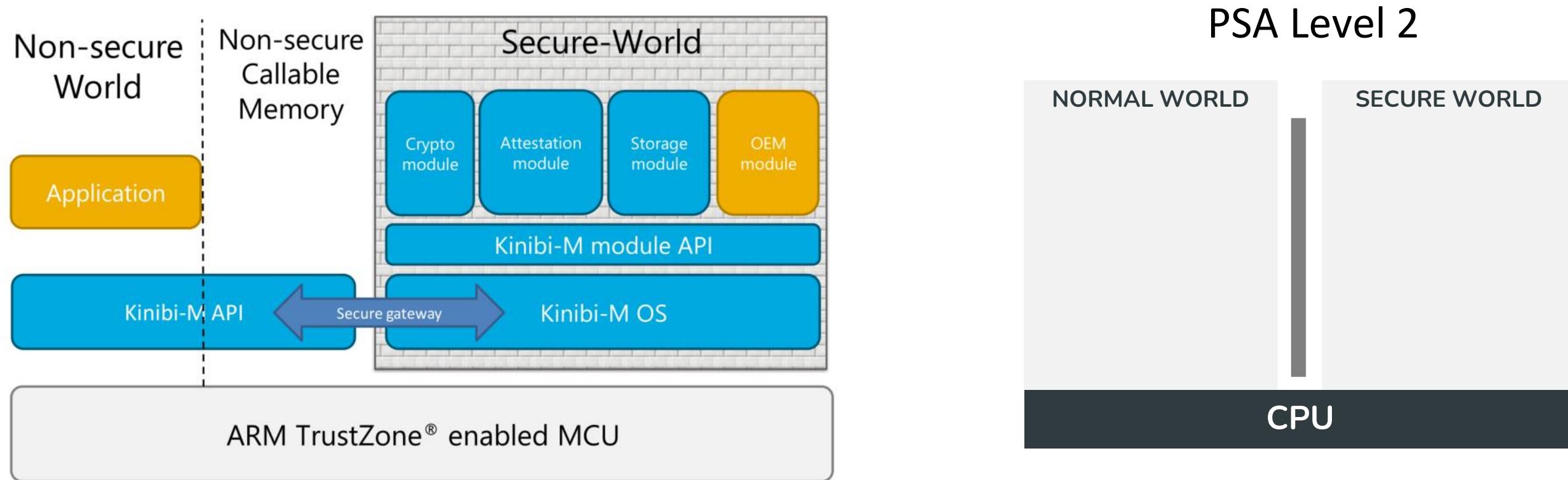


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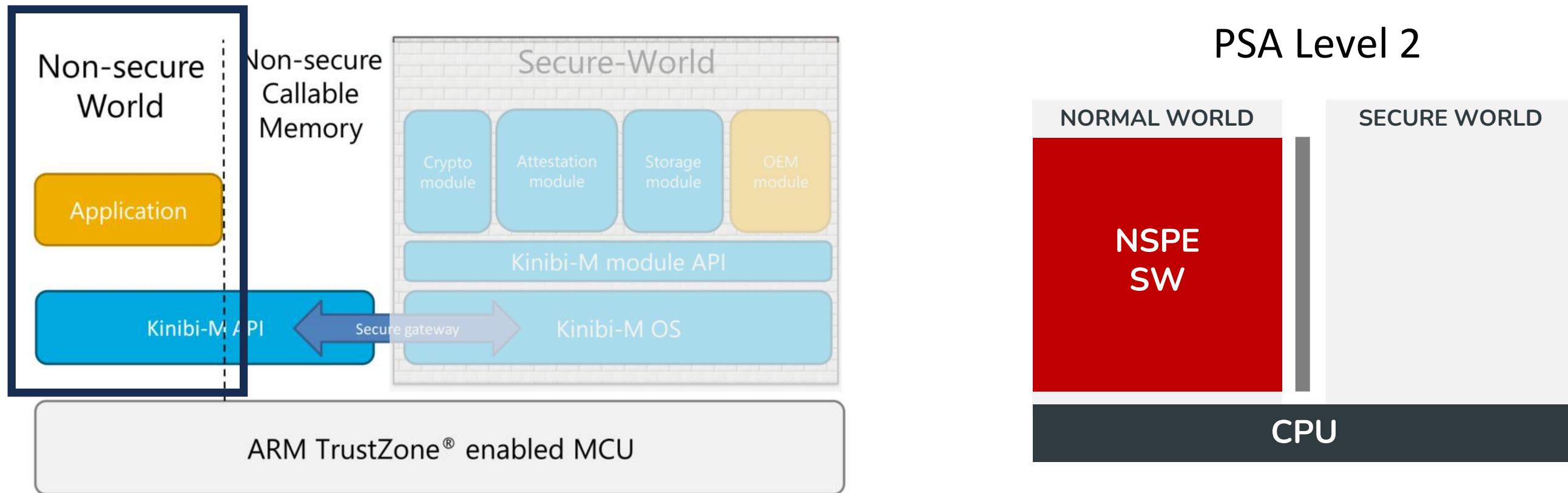


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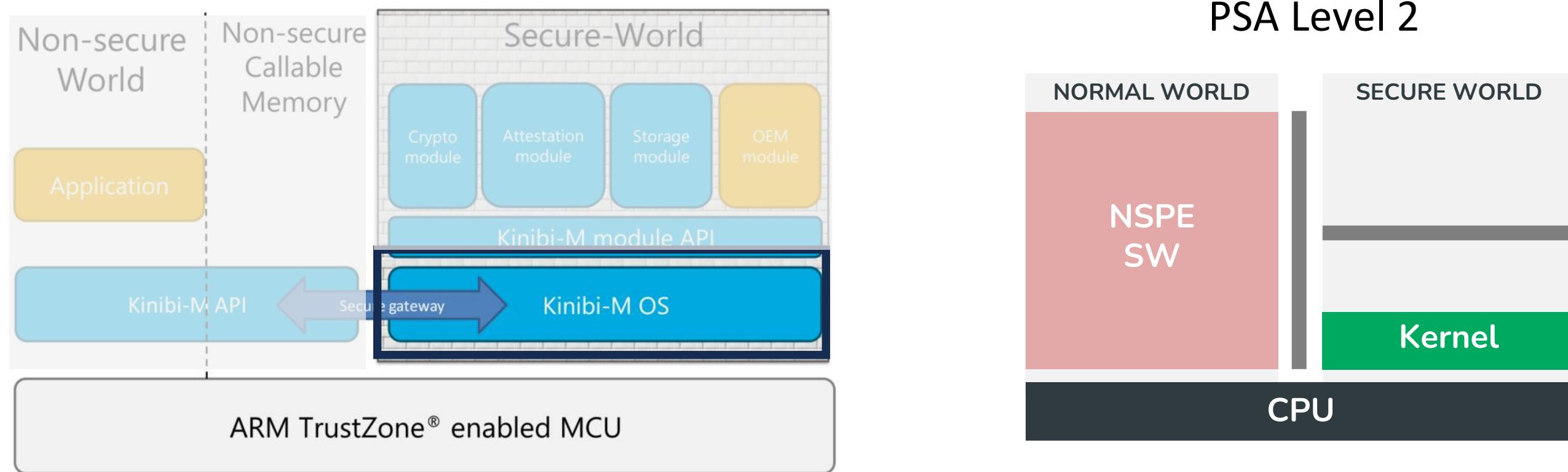


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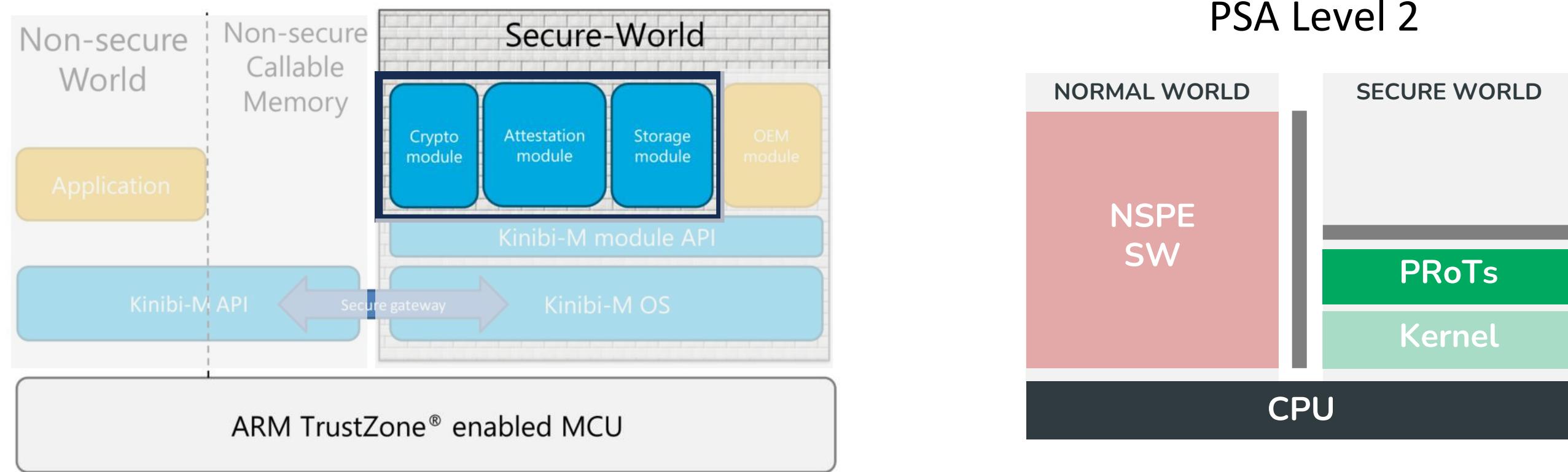


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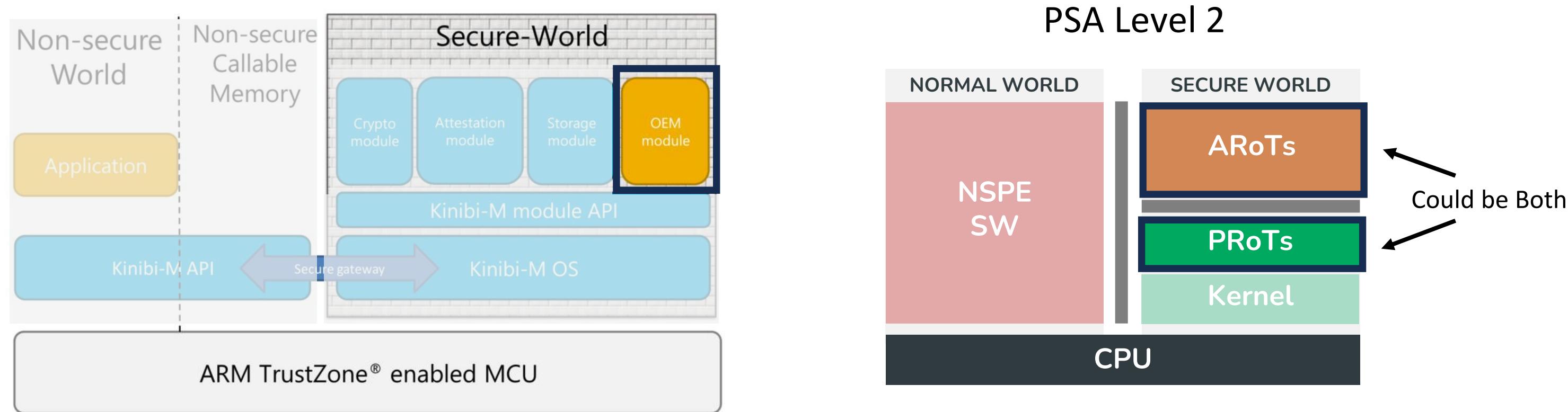


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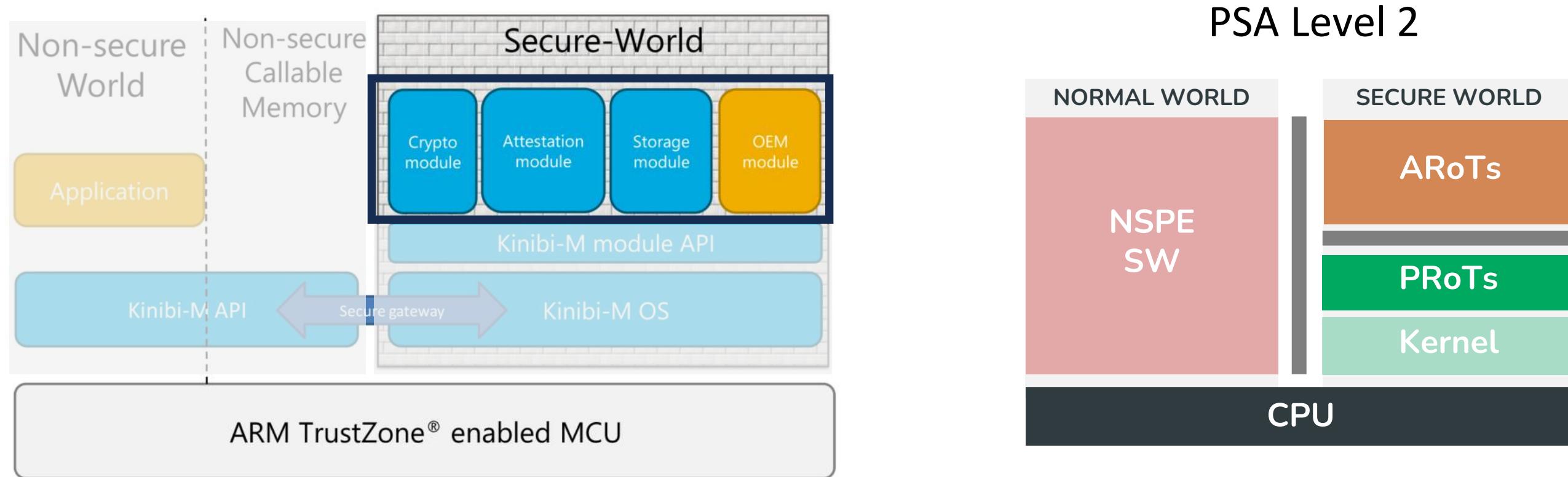


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Kinibi-M Refers to PRoT and ARoT as a Secure Module

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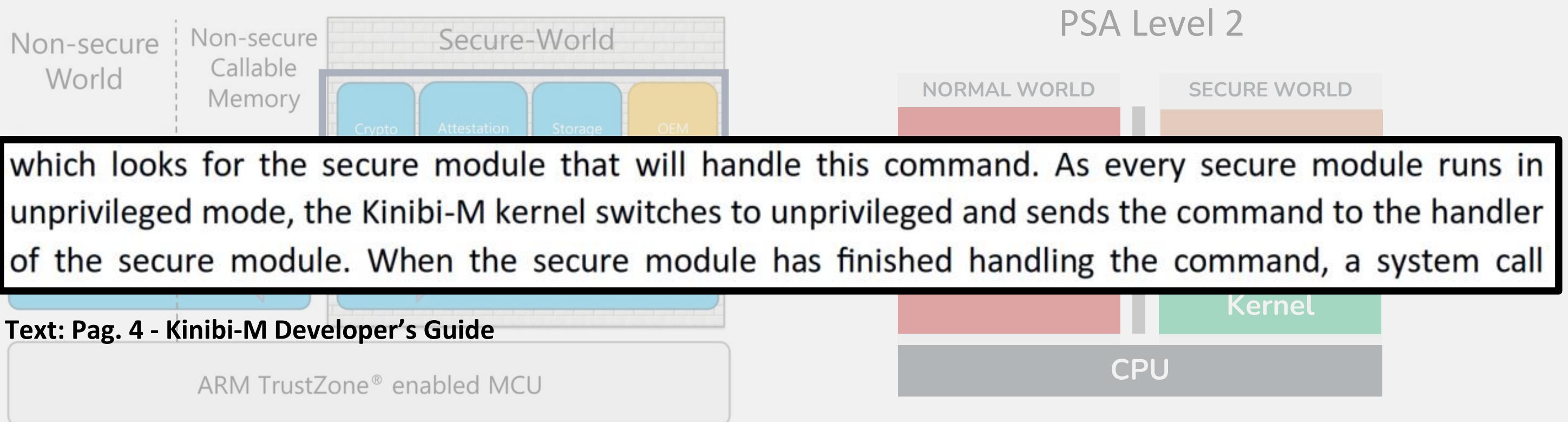


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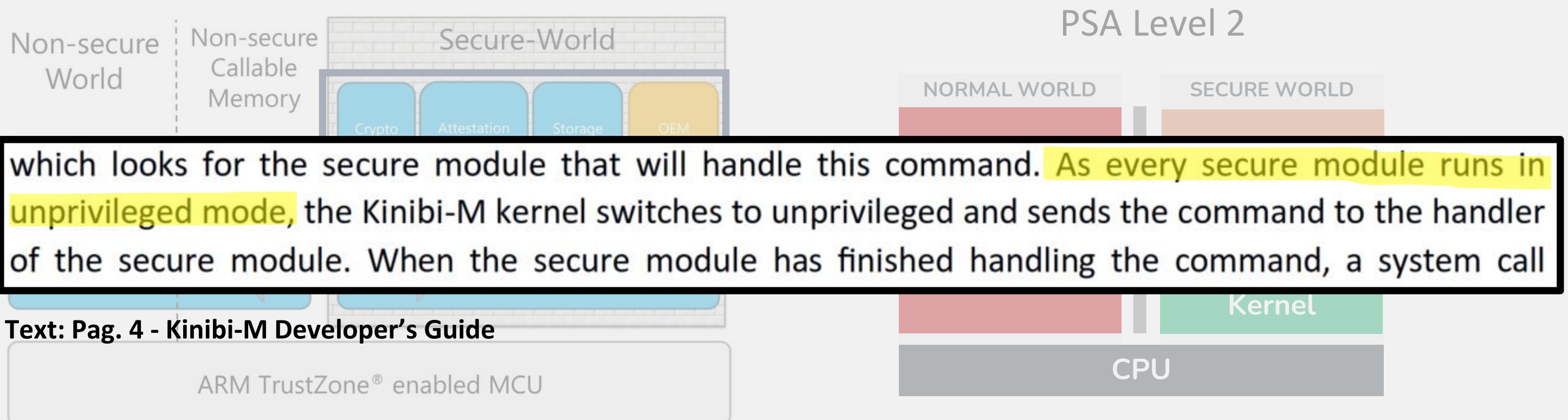


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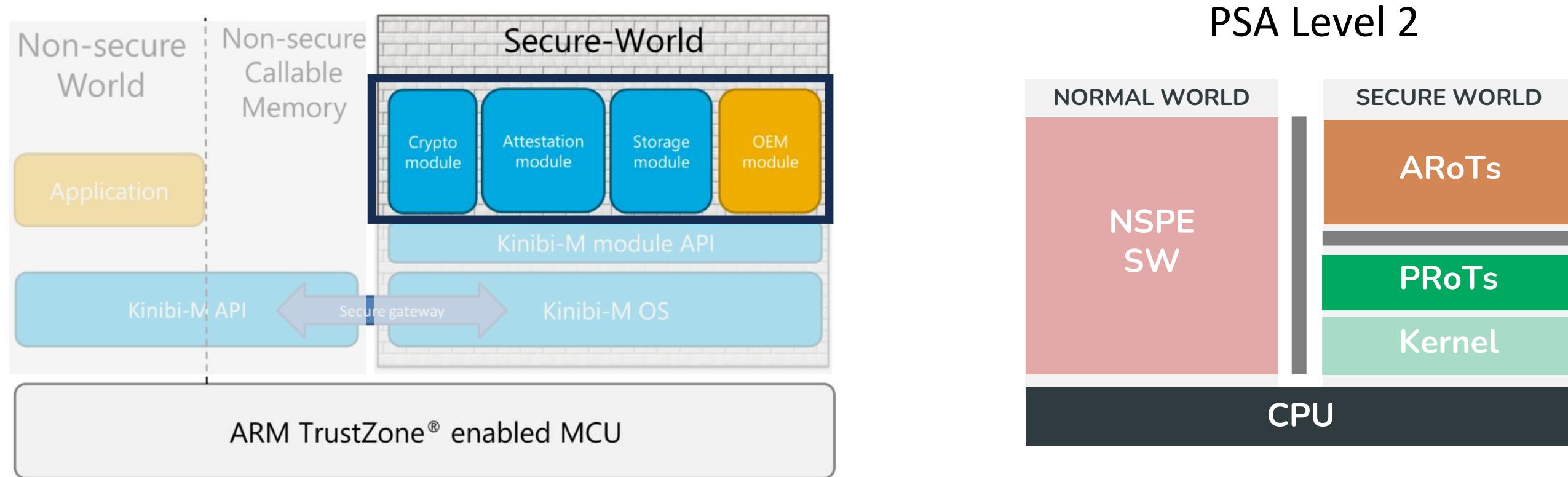
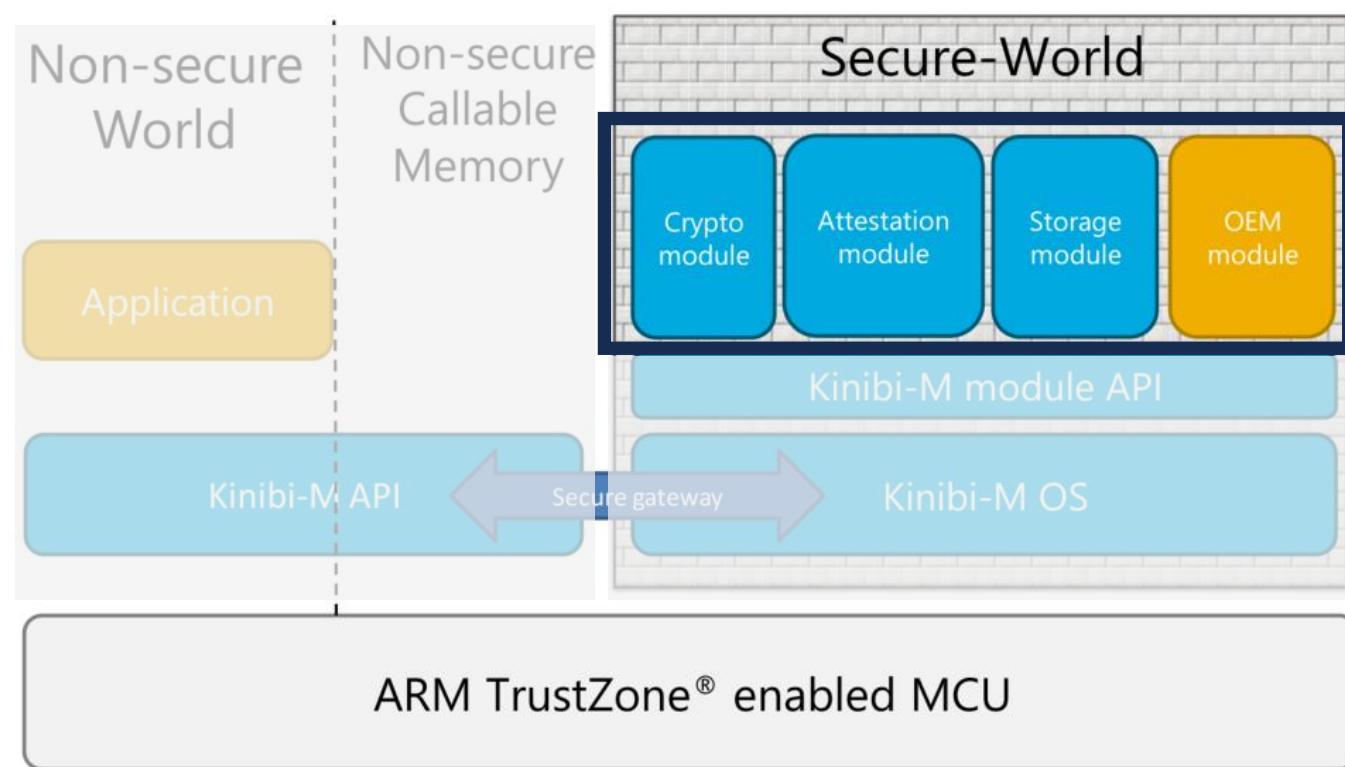


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TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



PSA Level 2

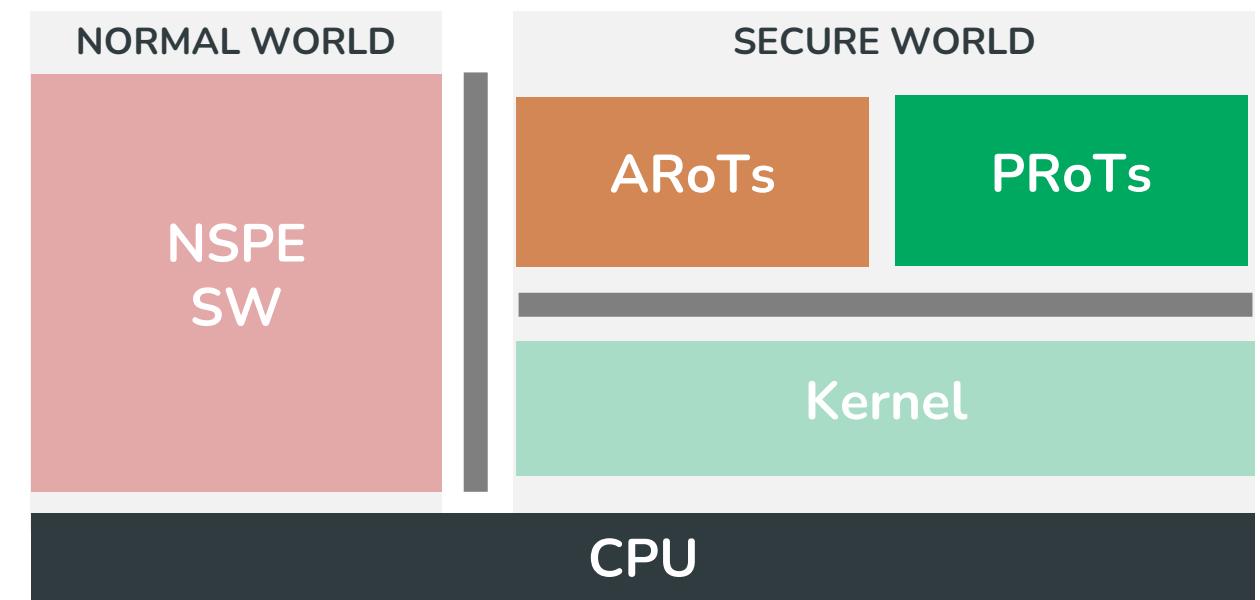
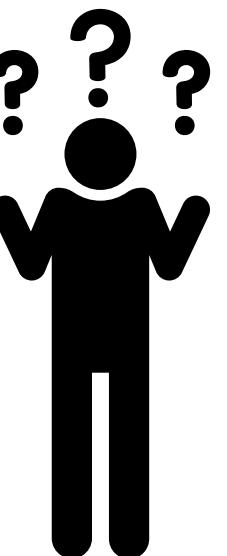


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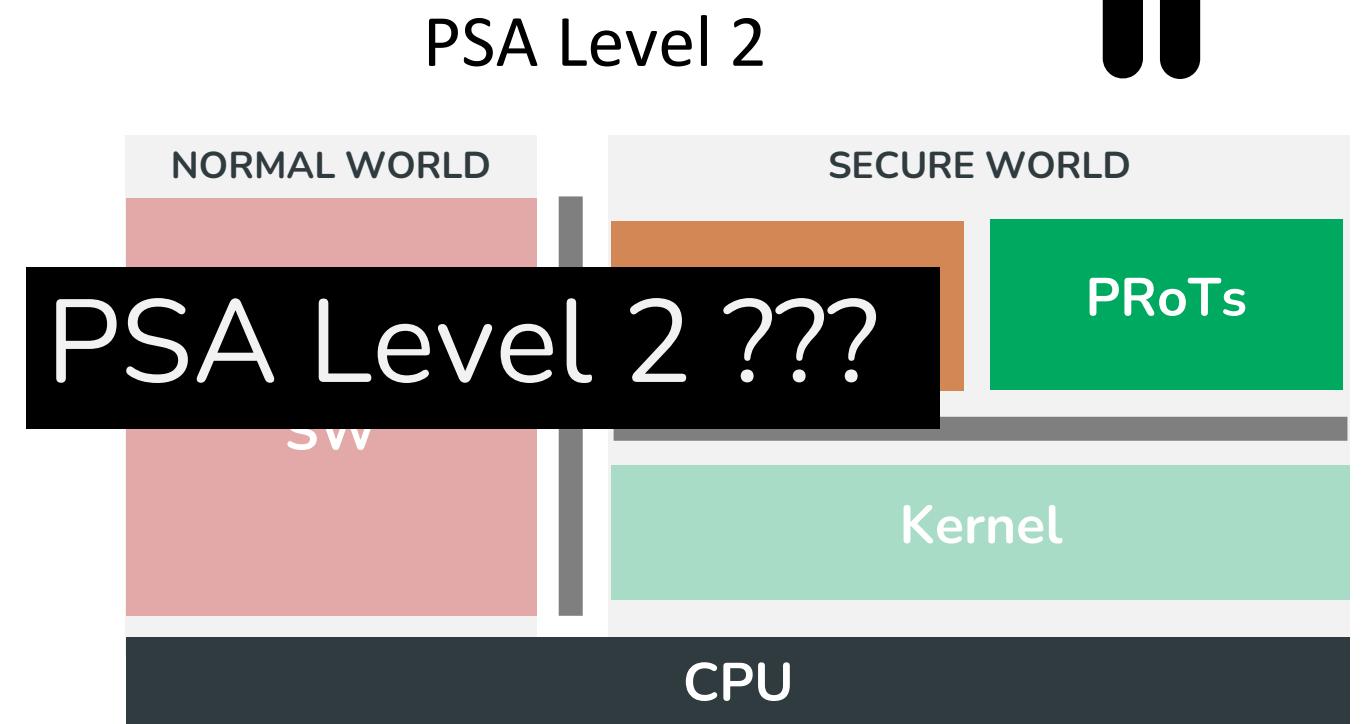
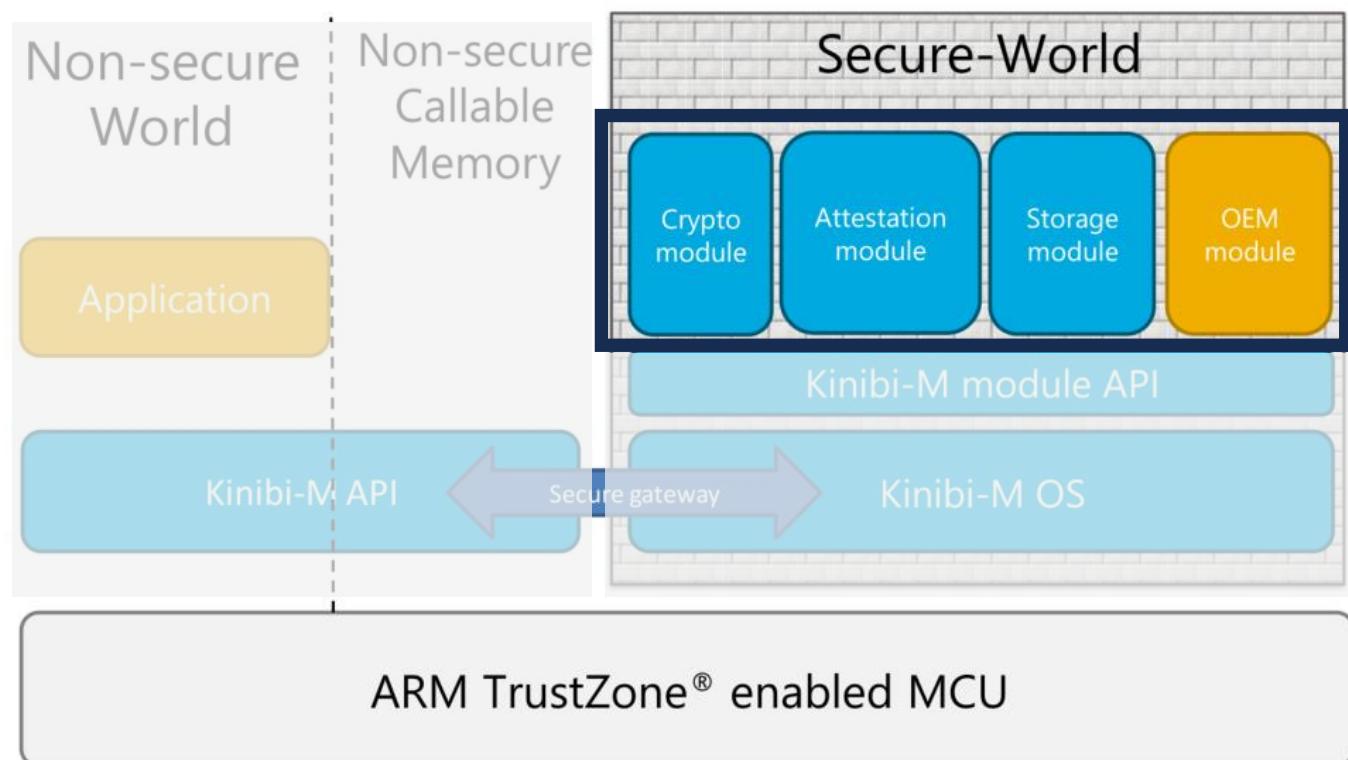
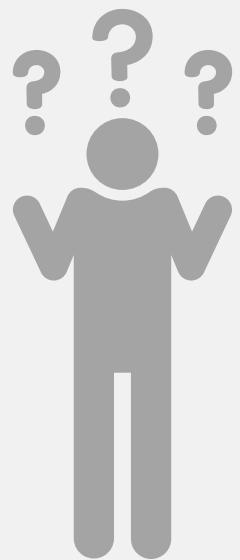


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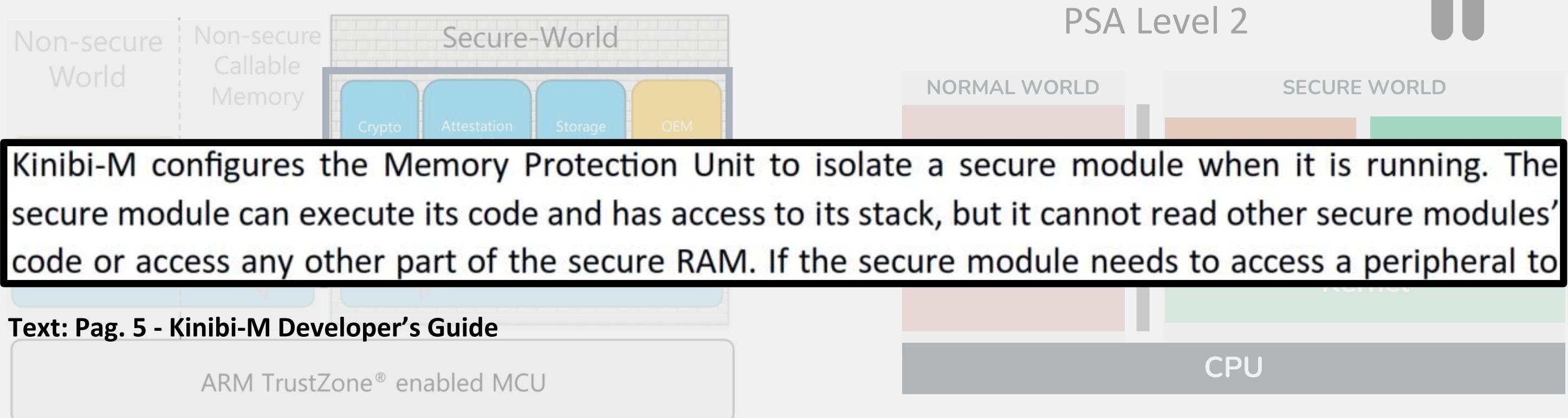


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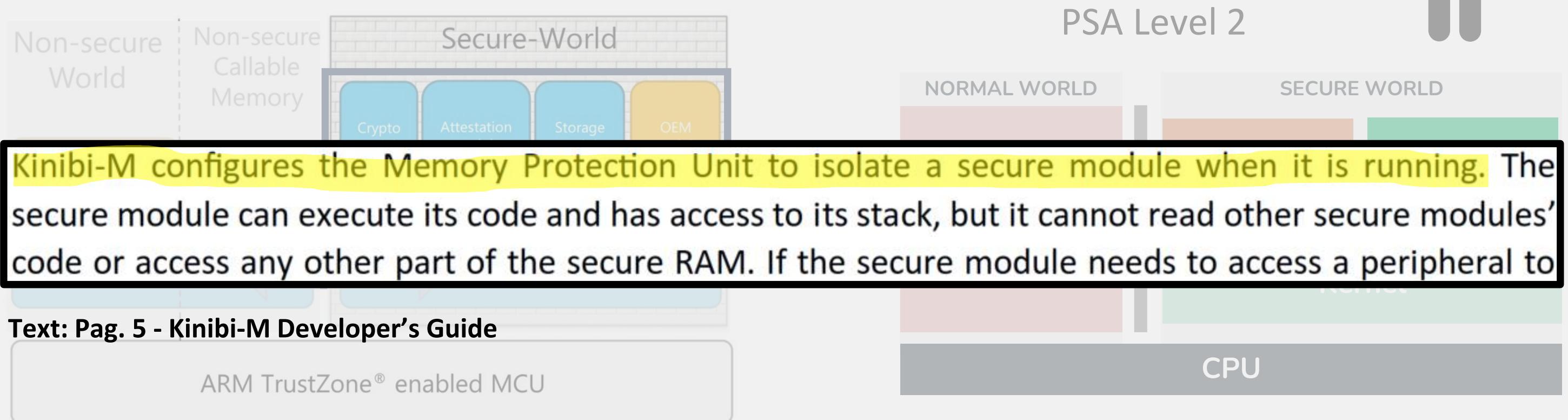


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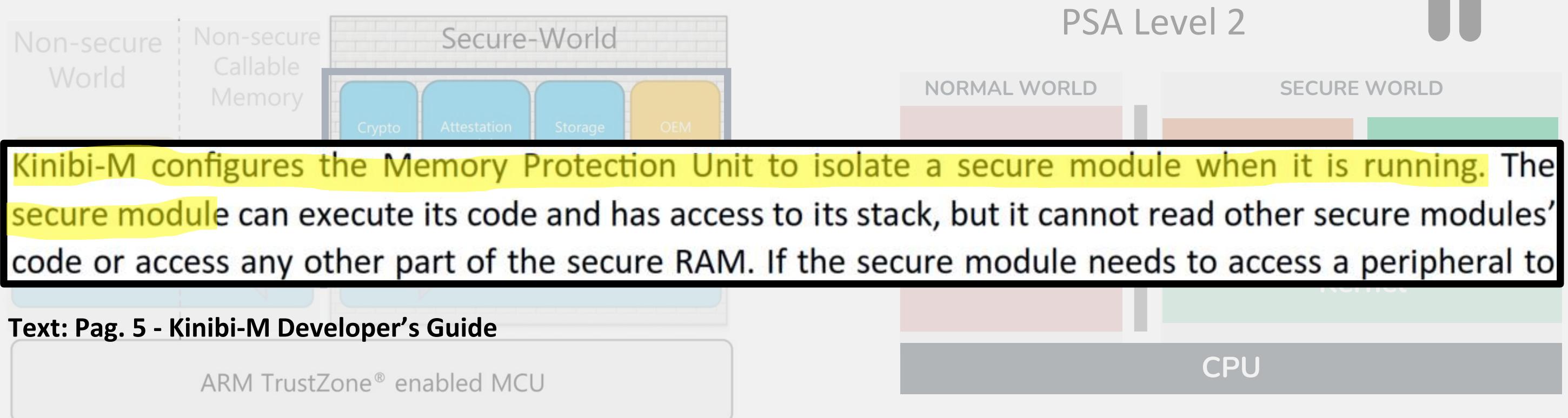
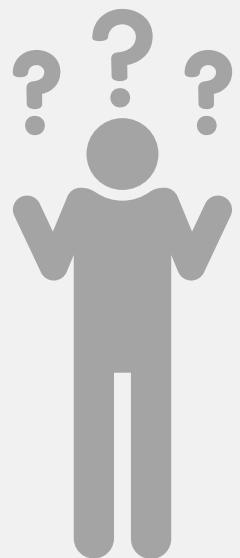


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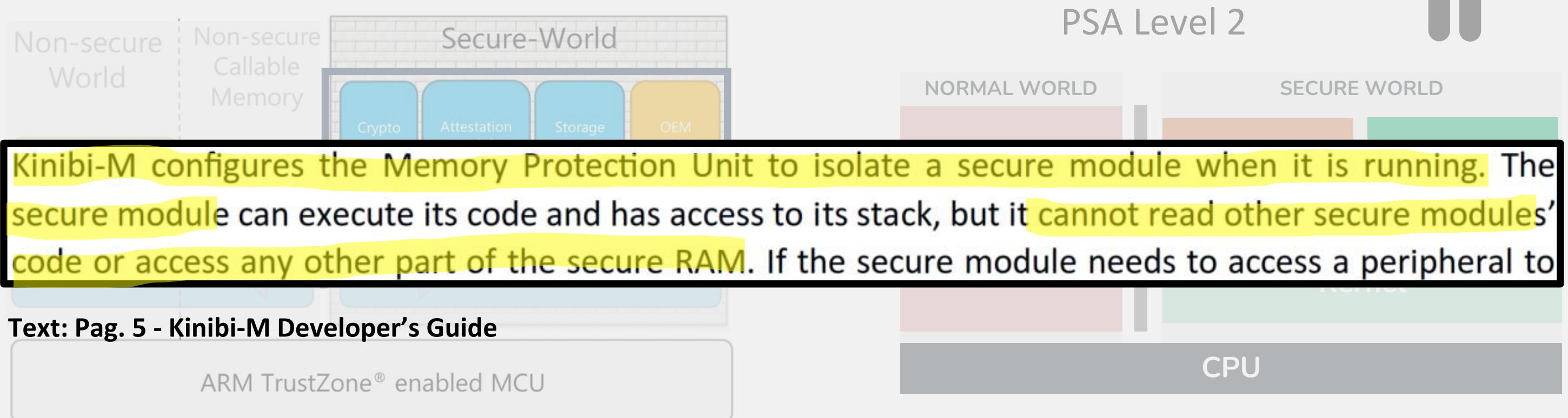
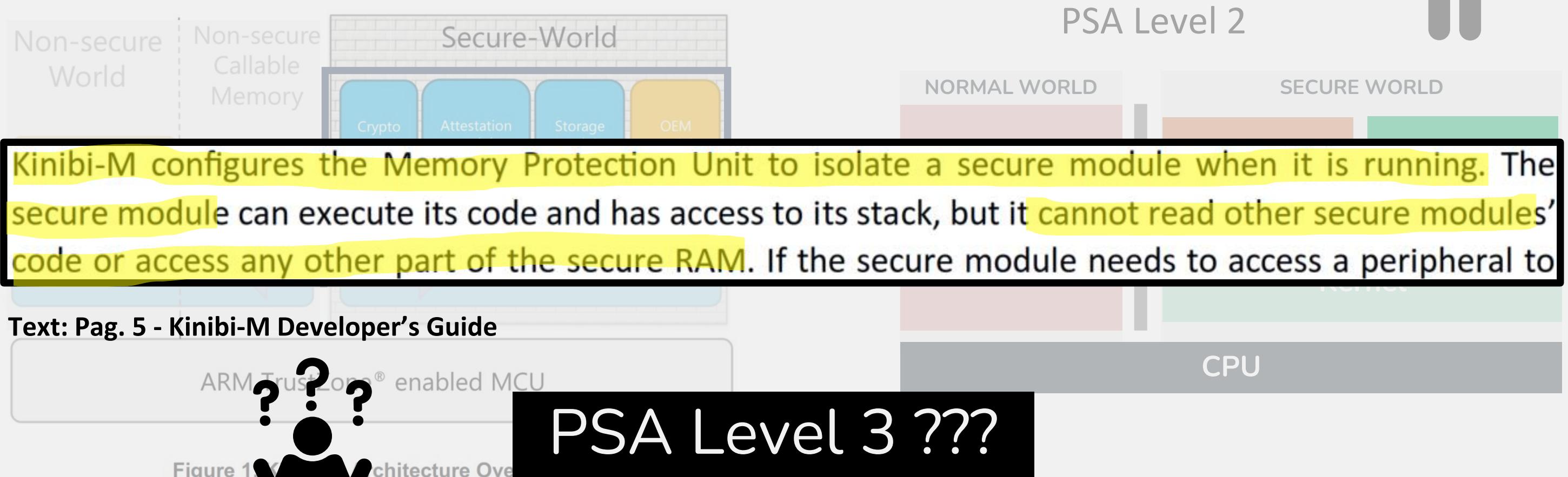


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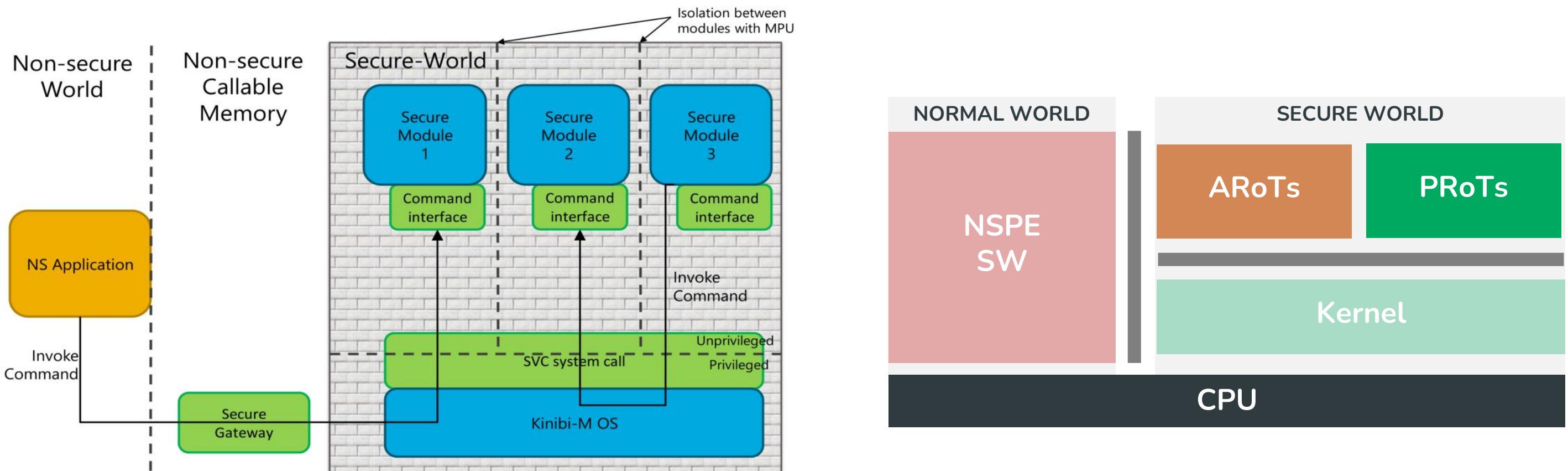
Kinibi-M Refers to PRoT and ARoT as a Secure Module

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

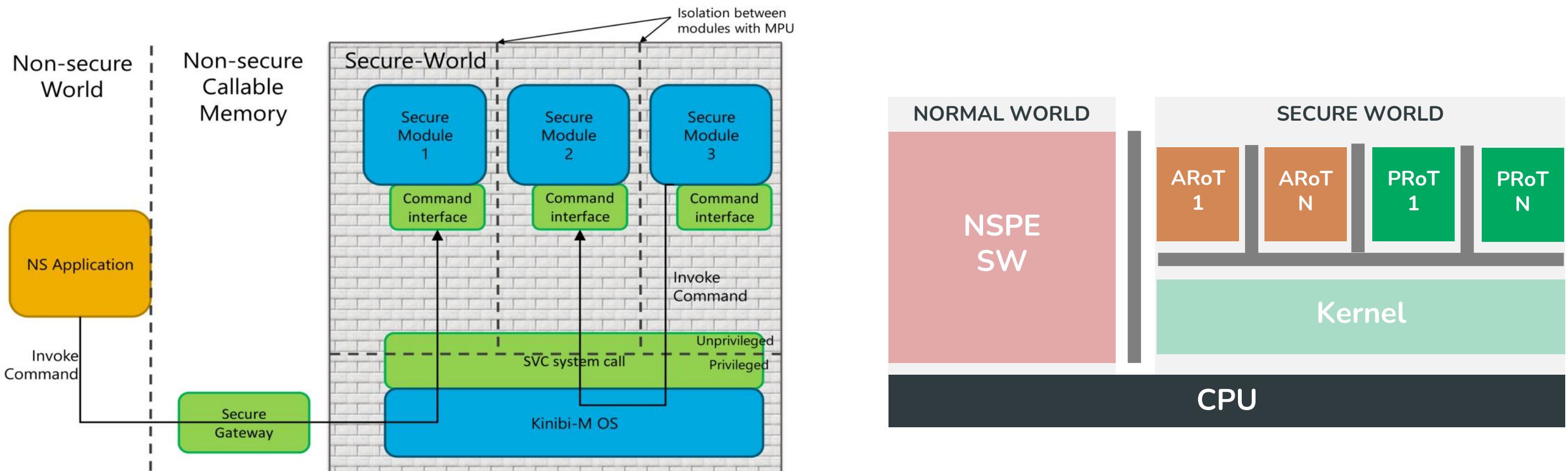


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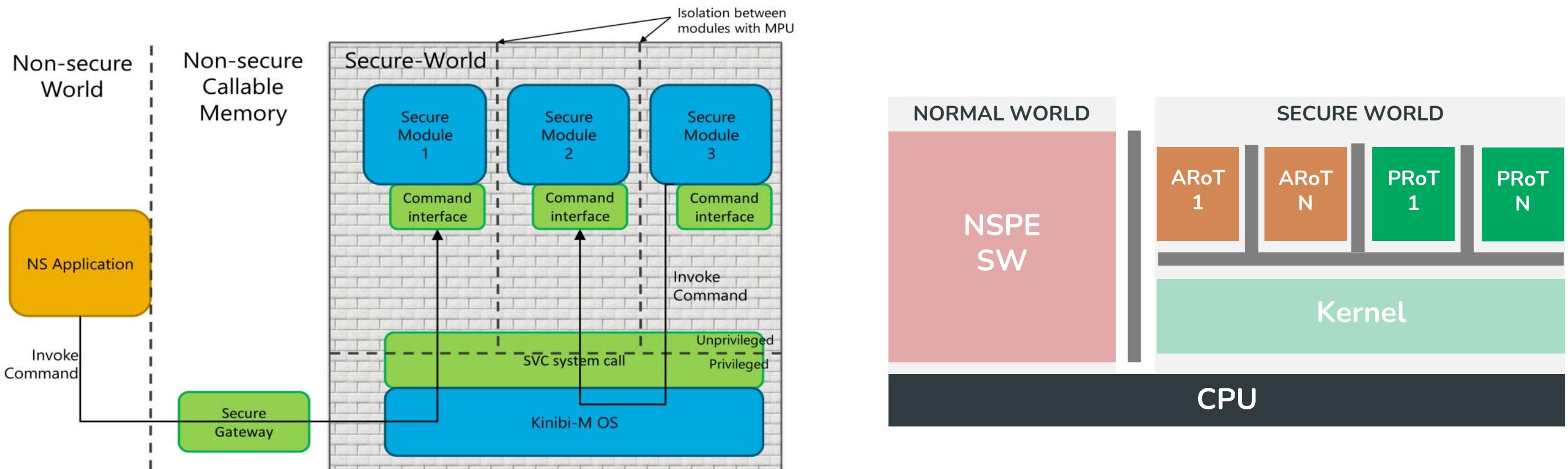
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

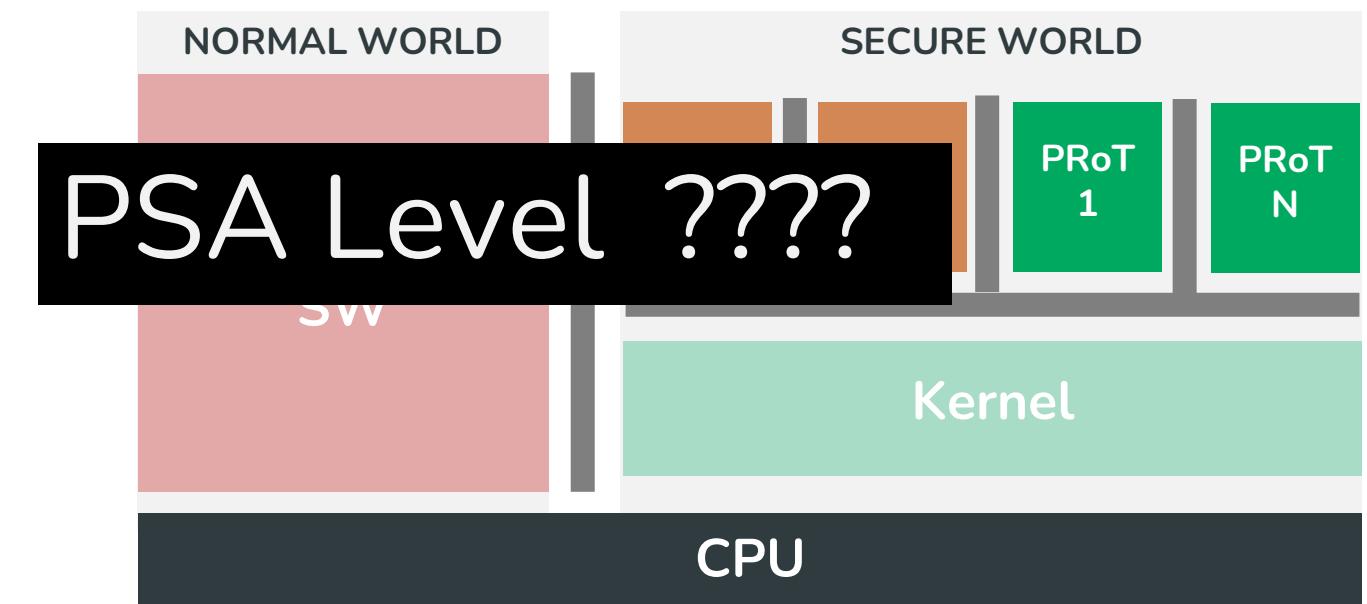
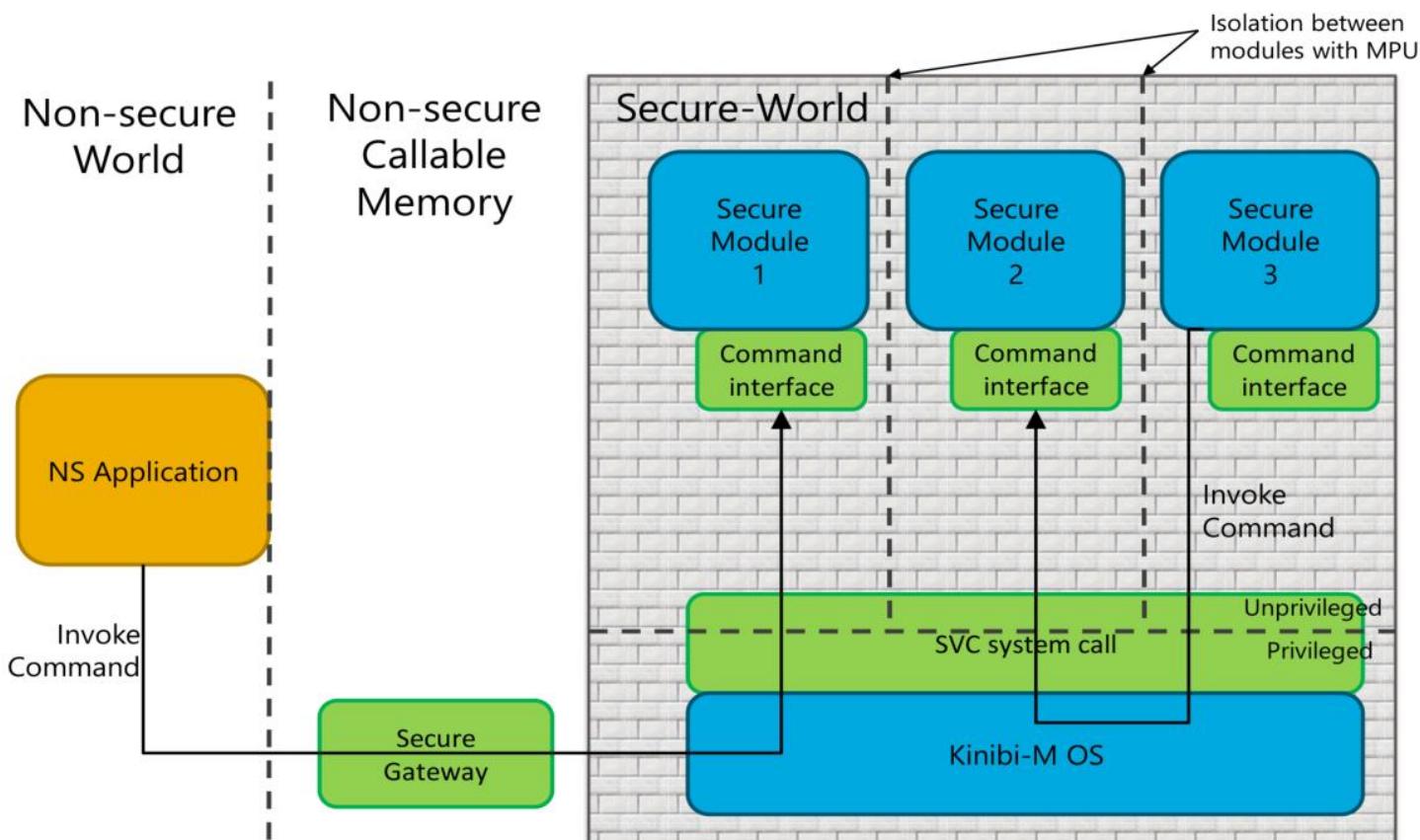
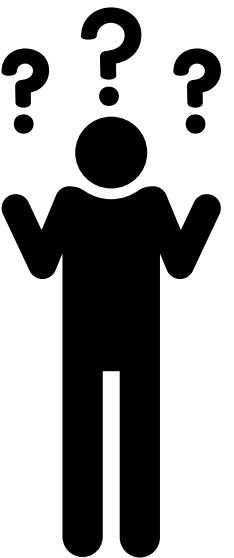


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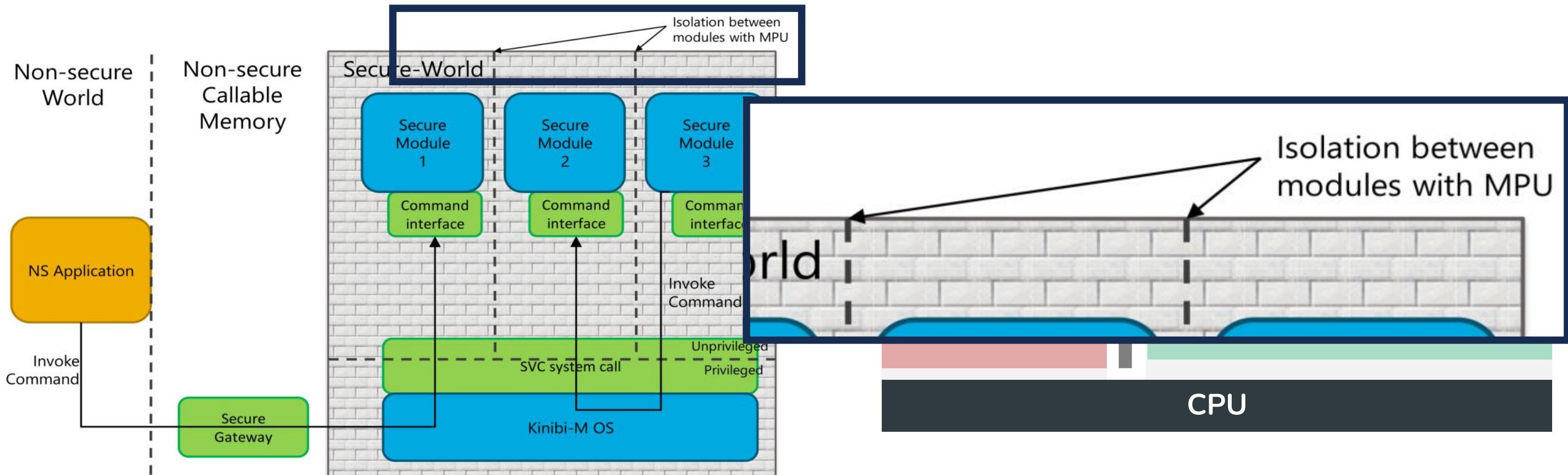
Microkernel-like Architecture

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

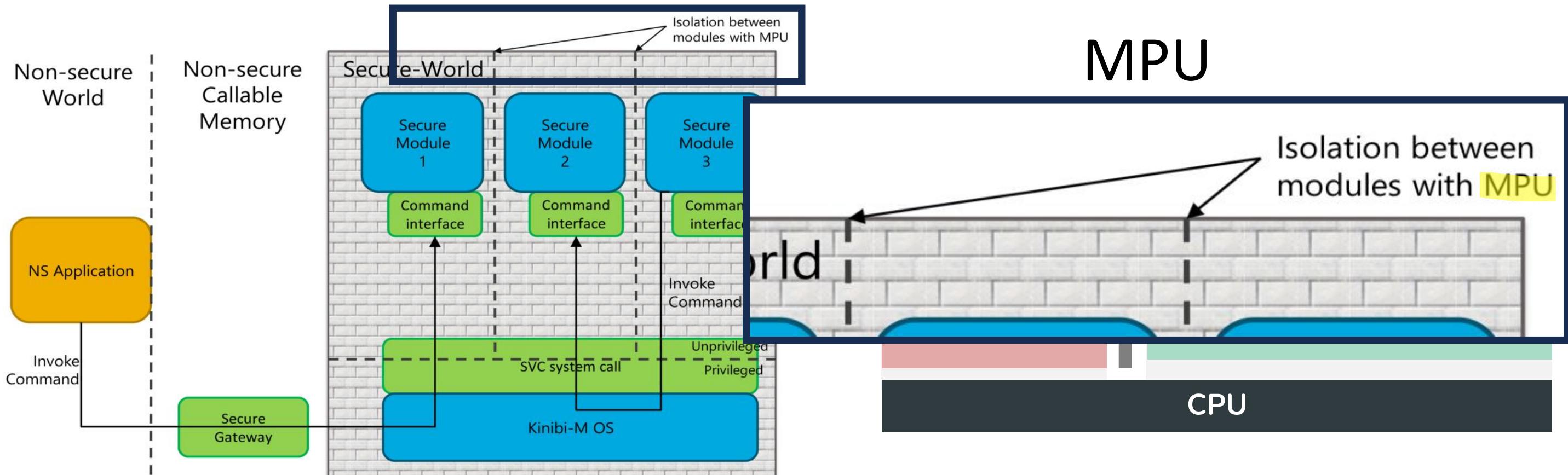


Microkernel-like Architecture

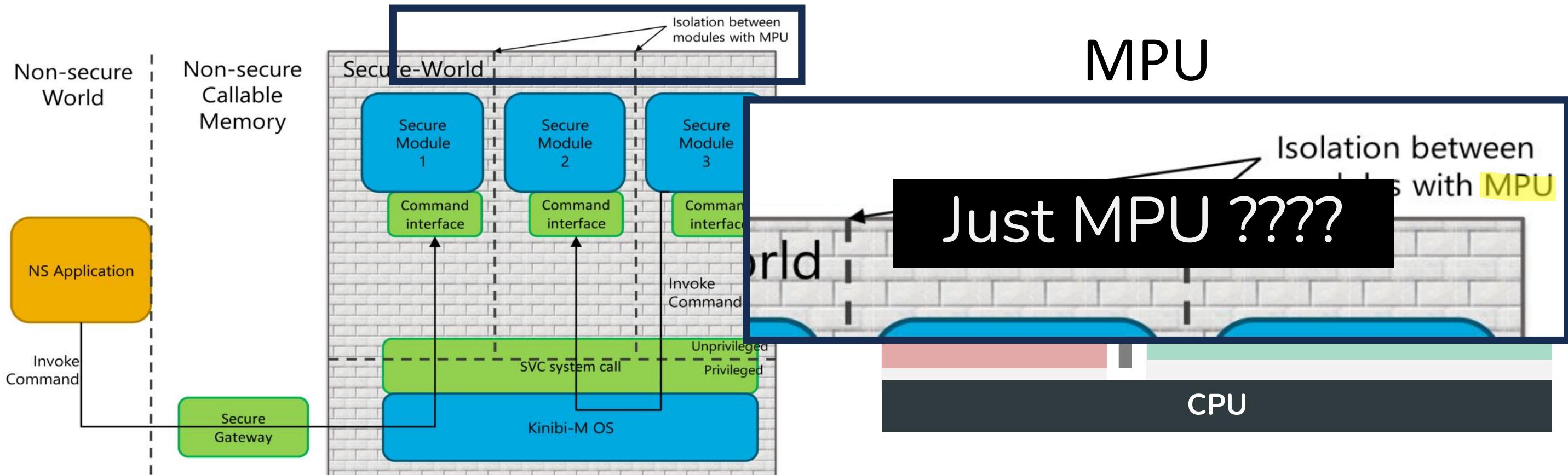
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



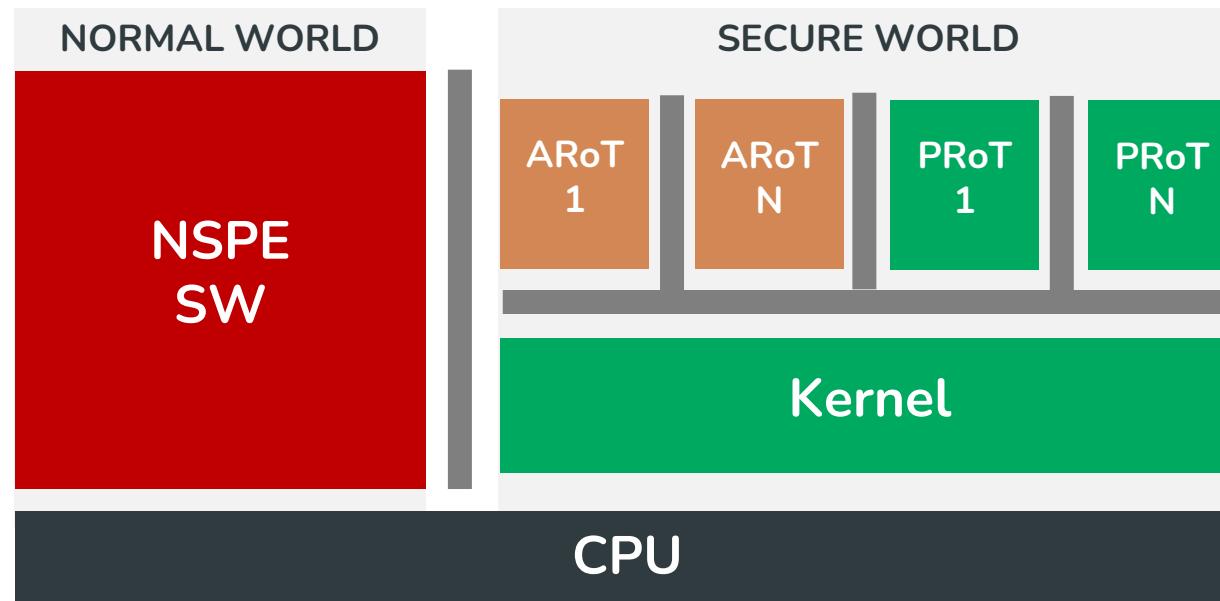
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

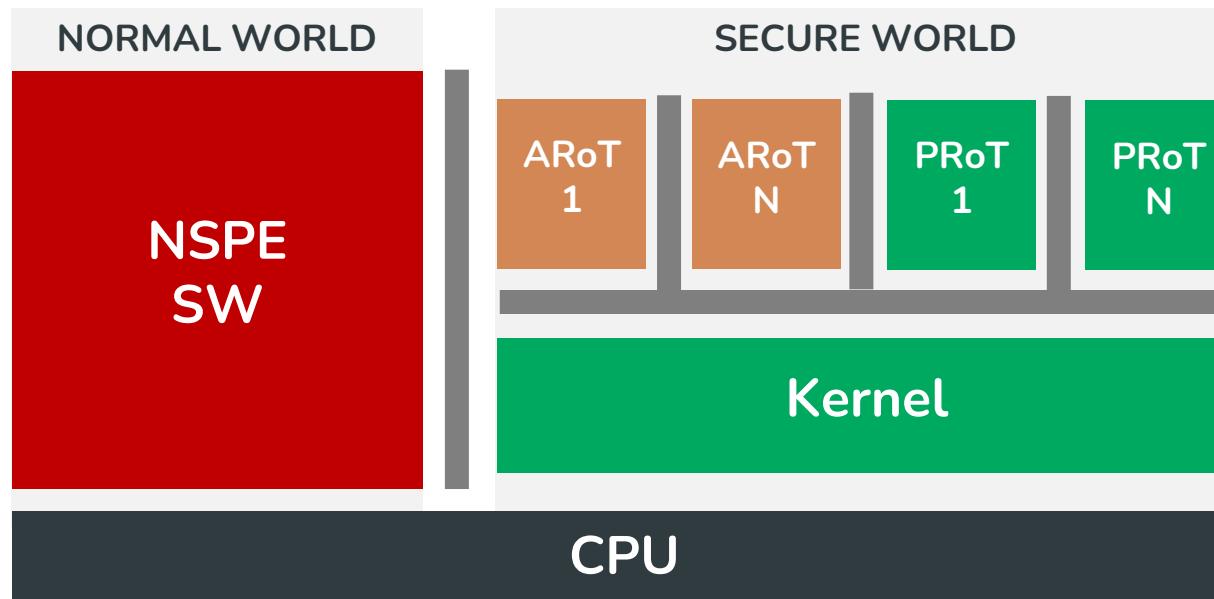


TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



Kinibi-M Architecture

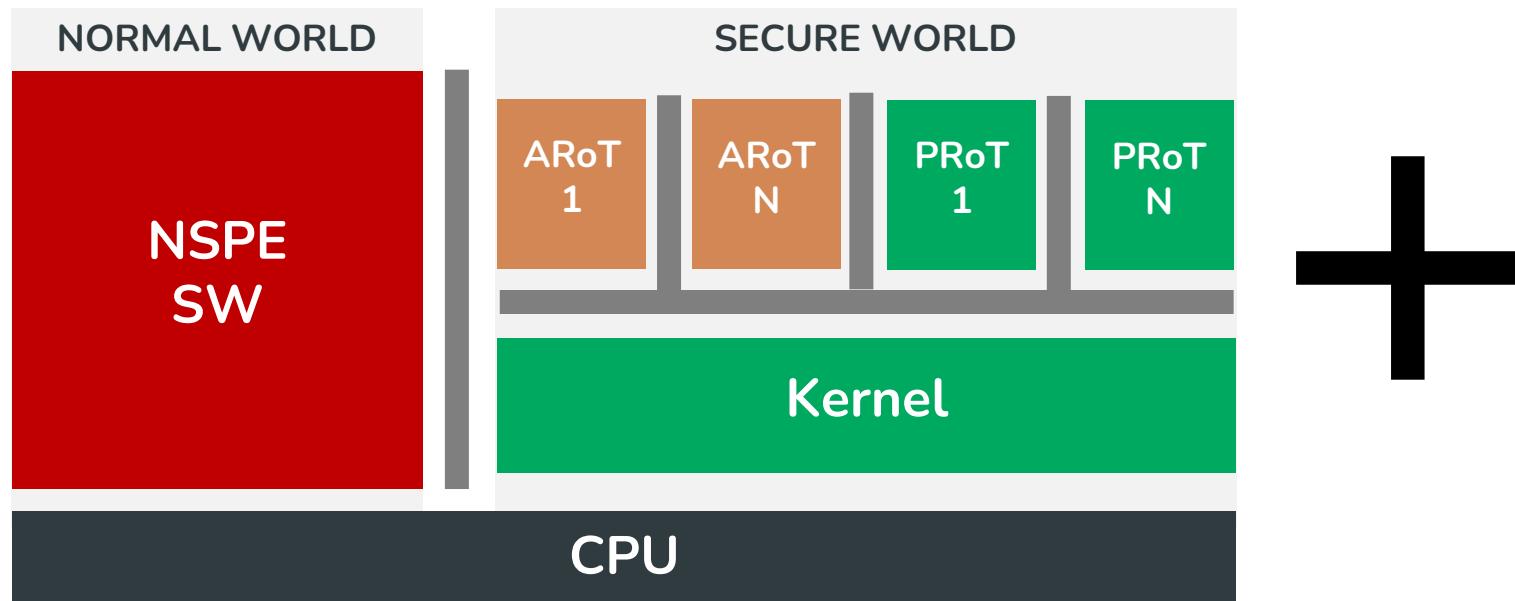
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



Kinibi-M Architecture

Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3

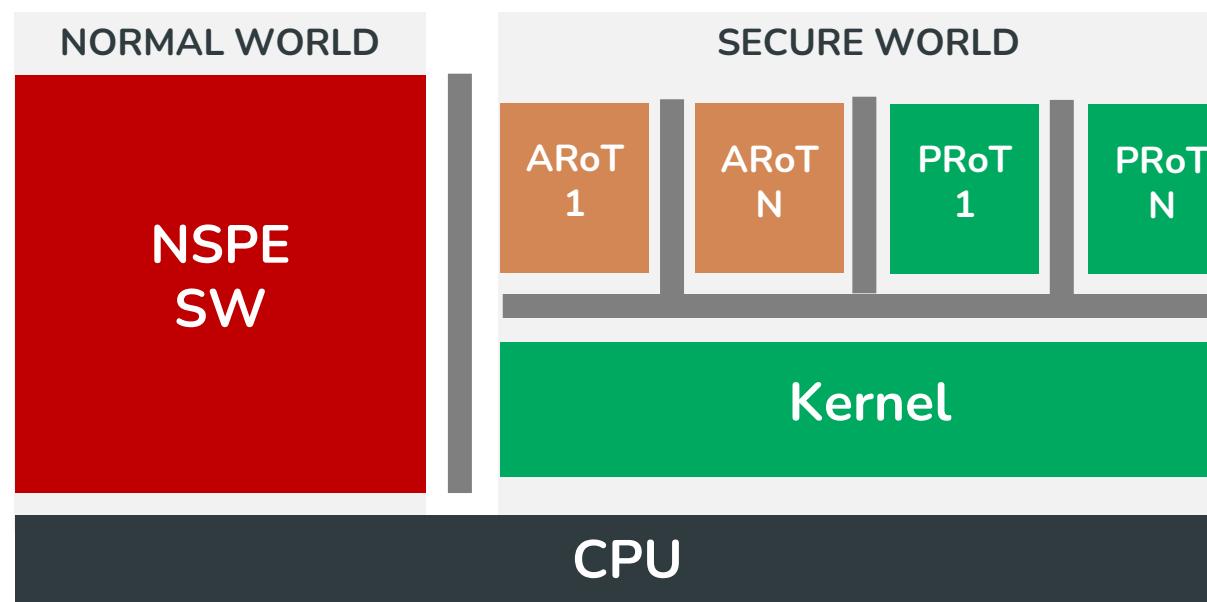
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



Kinibi-M Architecture

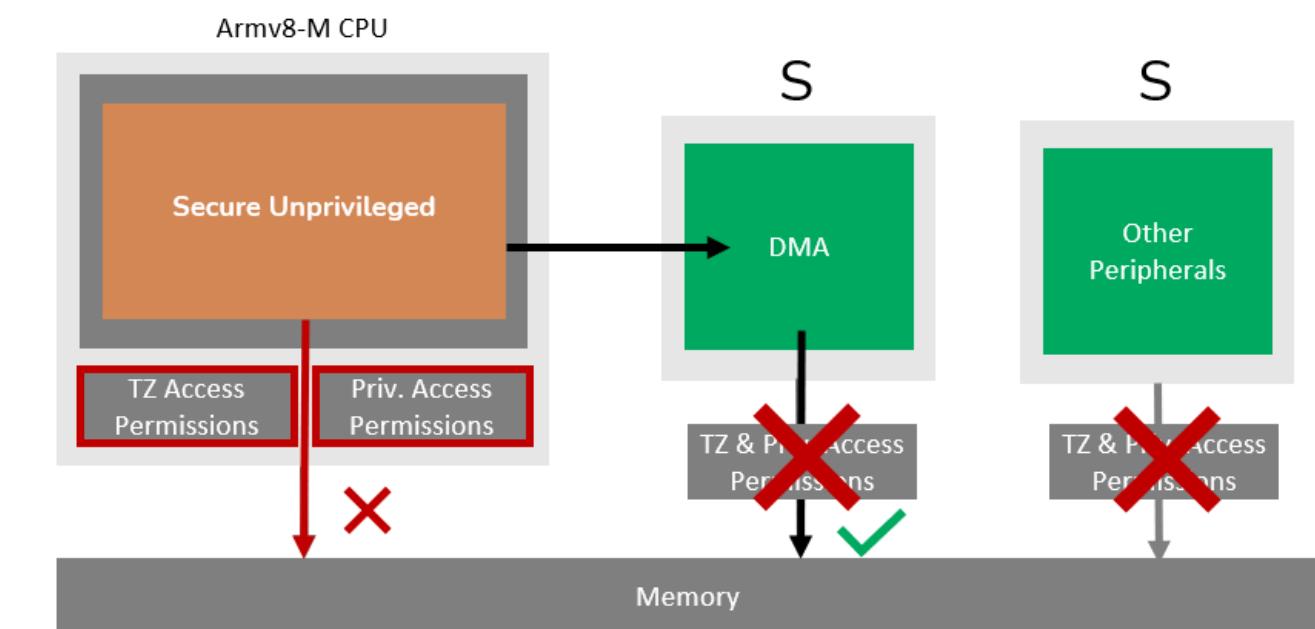
Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



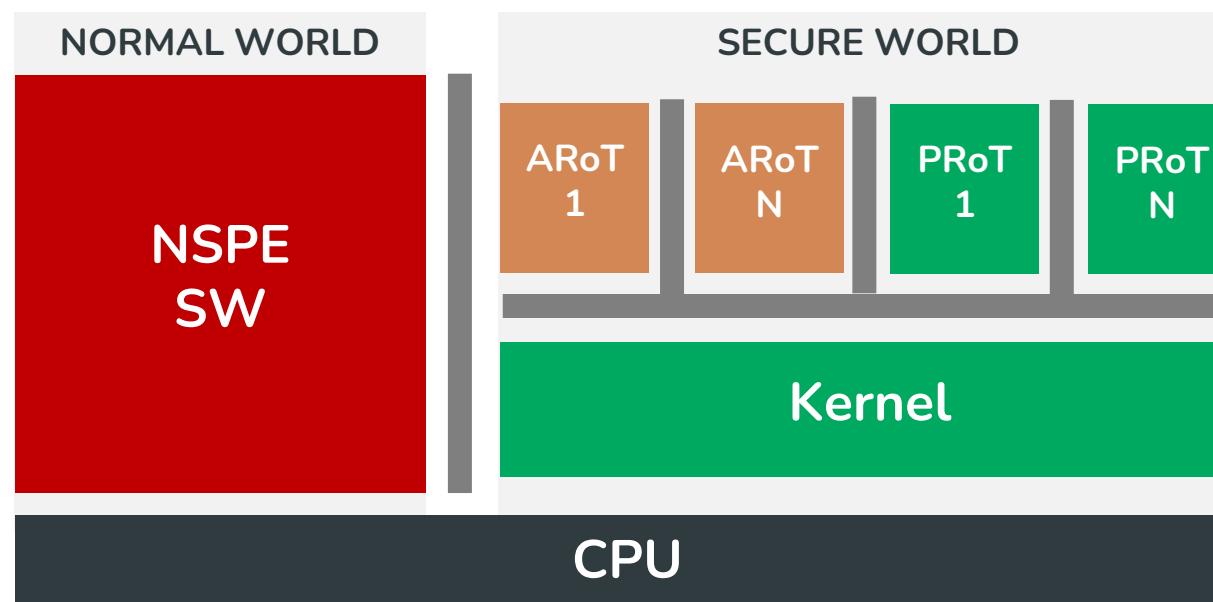
Kinibi-M Architecture

Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3



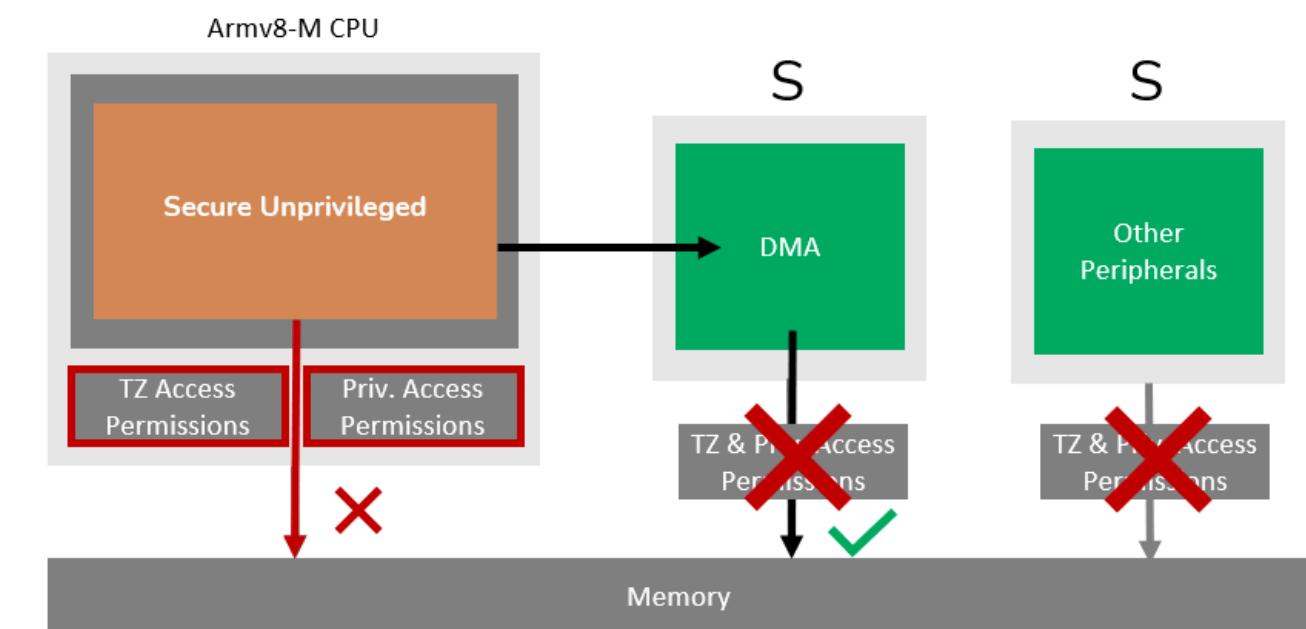
Microchip SAML11

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



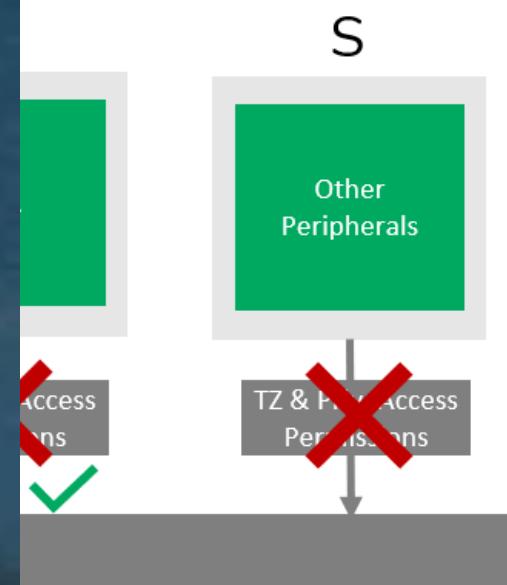
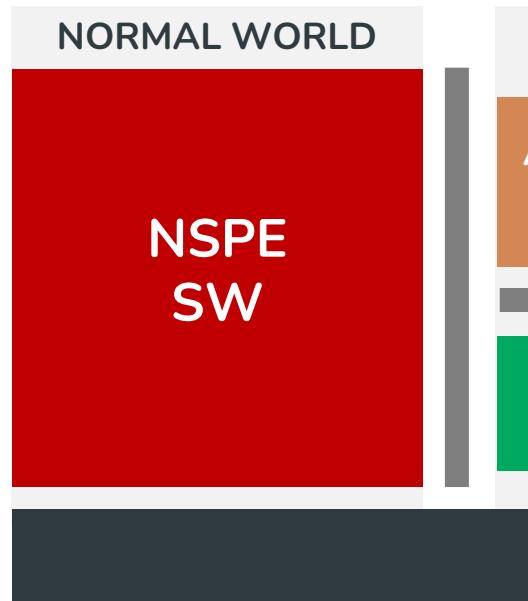
Kinibi-M Architecture

Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3



Microchip SAML11

Only PSA Level 1 & No MPC



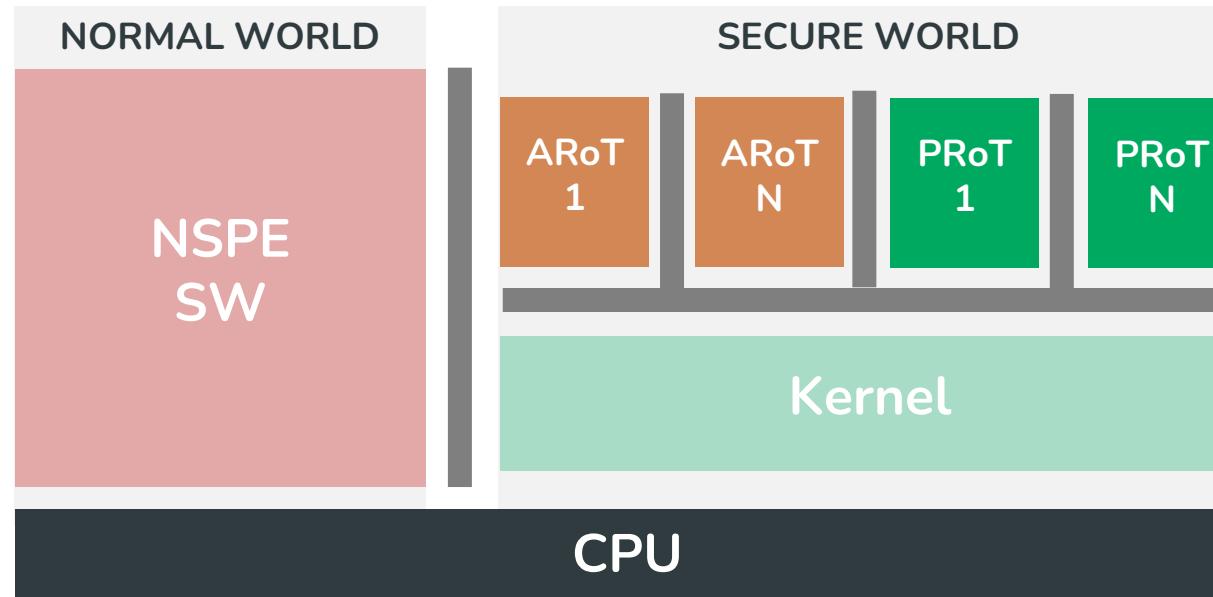
Kinibi-M
Seems Probably

ML11
& No MPC

BLACKHAT24

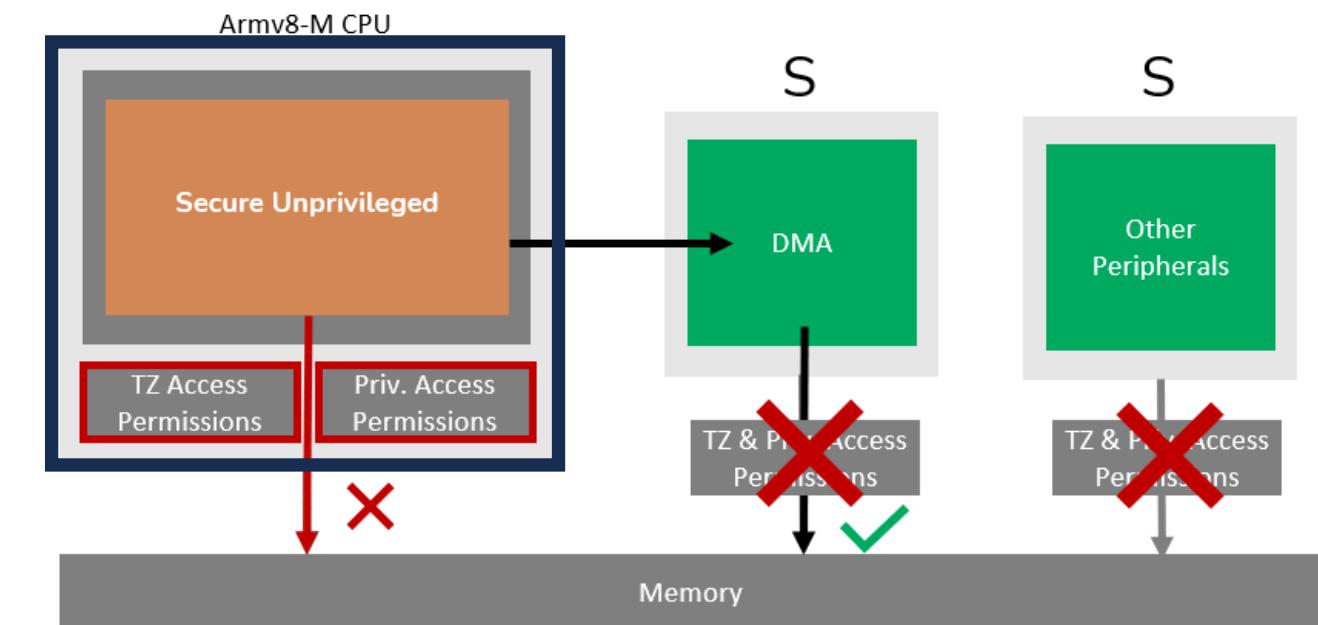
ESRGv3

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



Kinibi-M Architecture

Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3

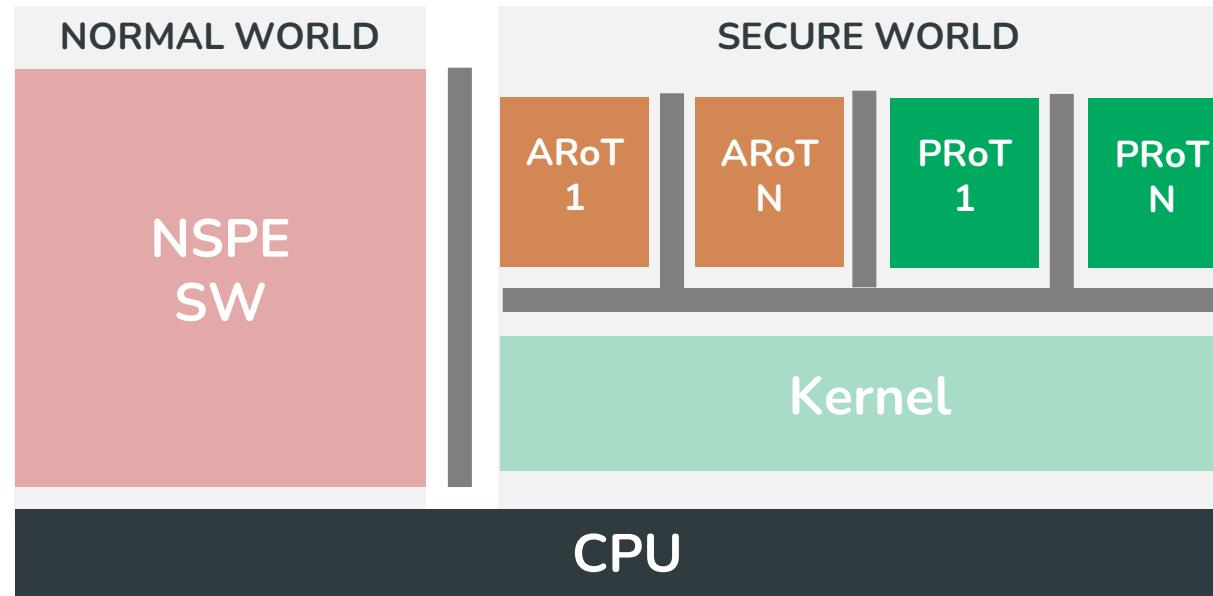


Microchip SAML11

Only PSA Level 1 & No MPC

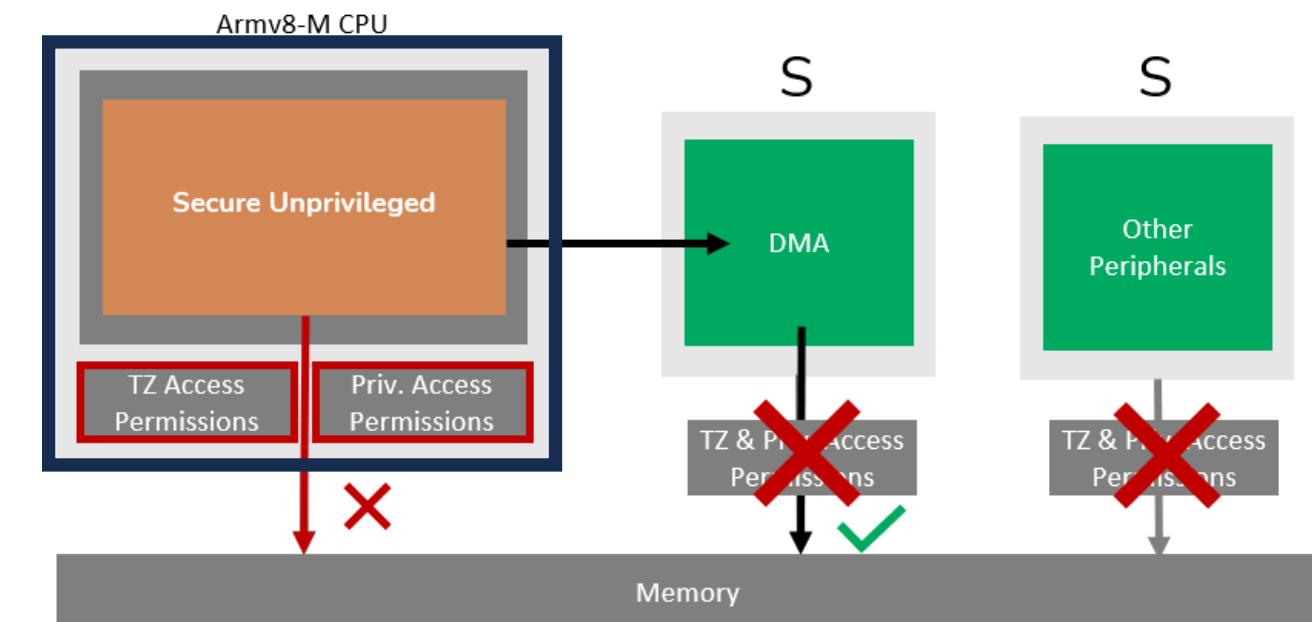
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M

✓ SAU+IDAU



Kinibi-M Architecture

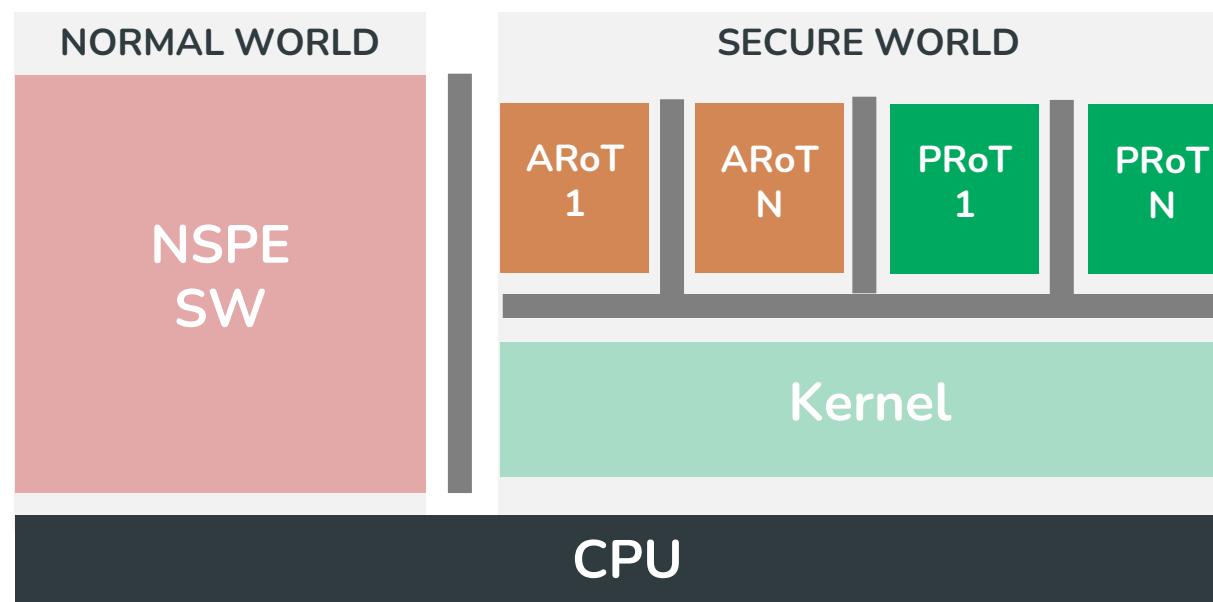
Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3



Microchip SAML11

Only PSA Level 1 & No MPC

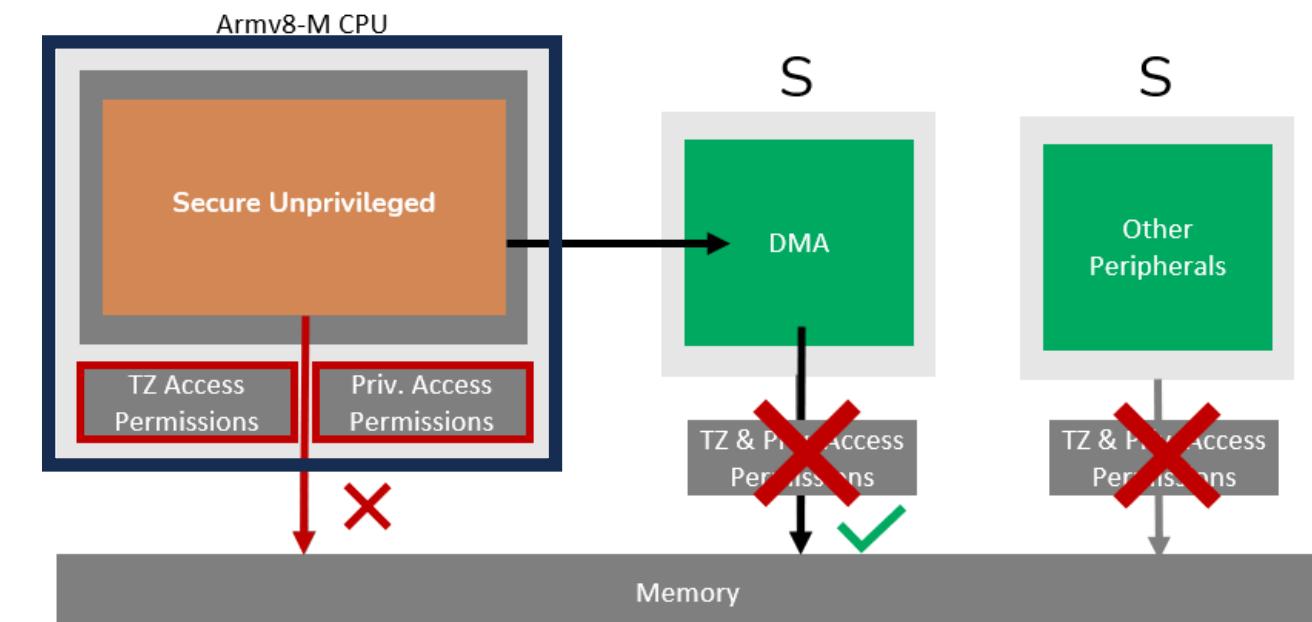
TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



Kinibi-M Architecture

Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3

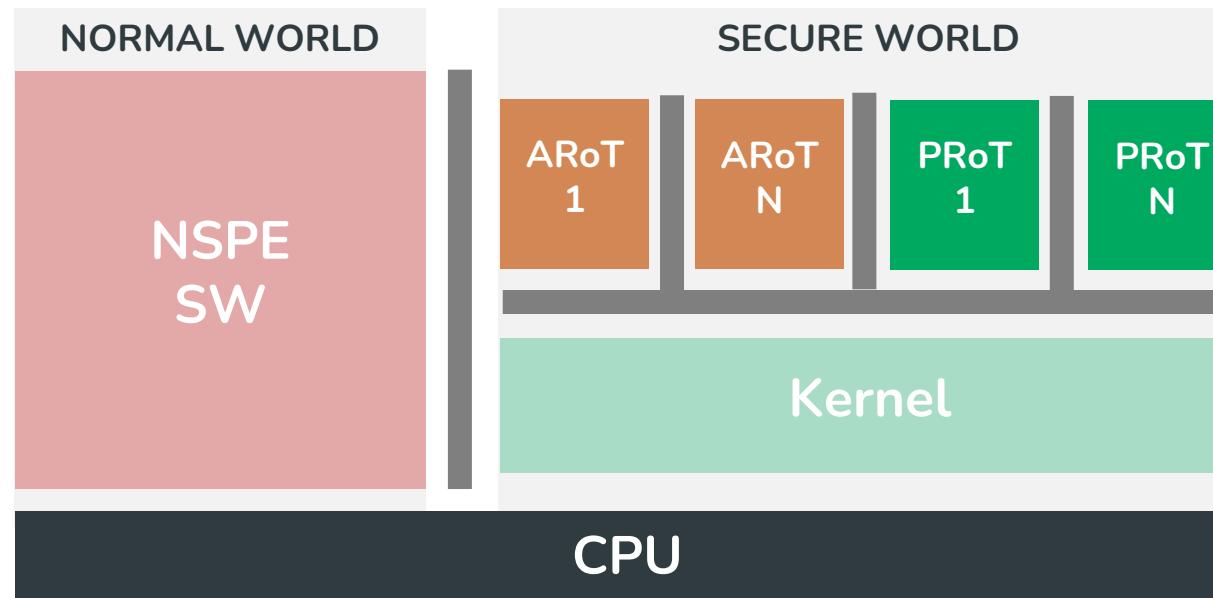
- ✓ SAU+IDAU
- ✓ MPU



Microchip SAML11

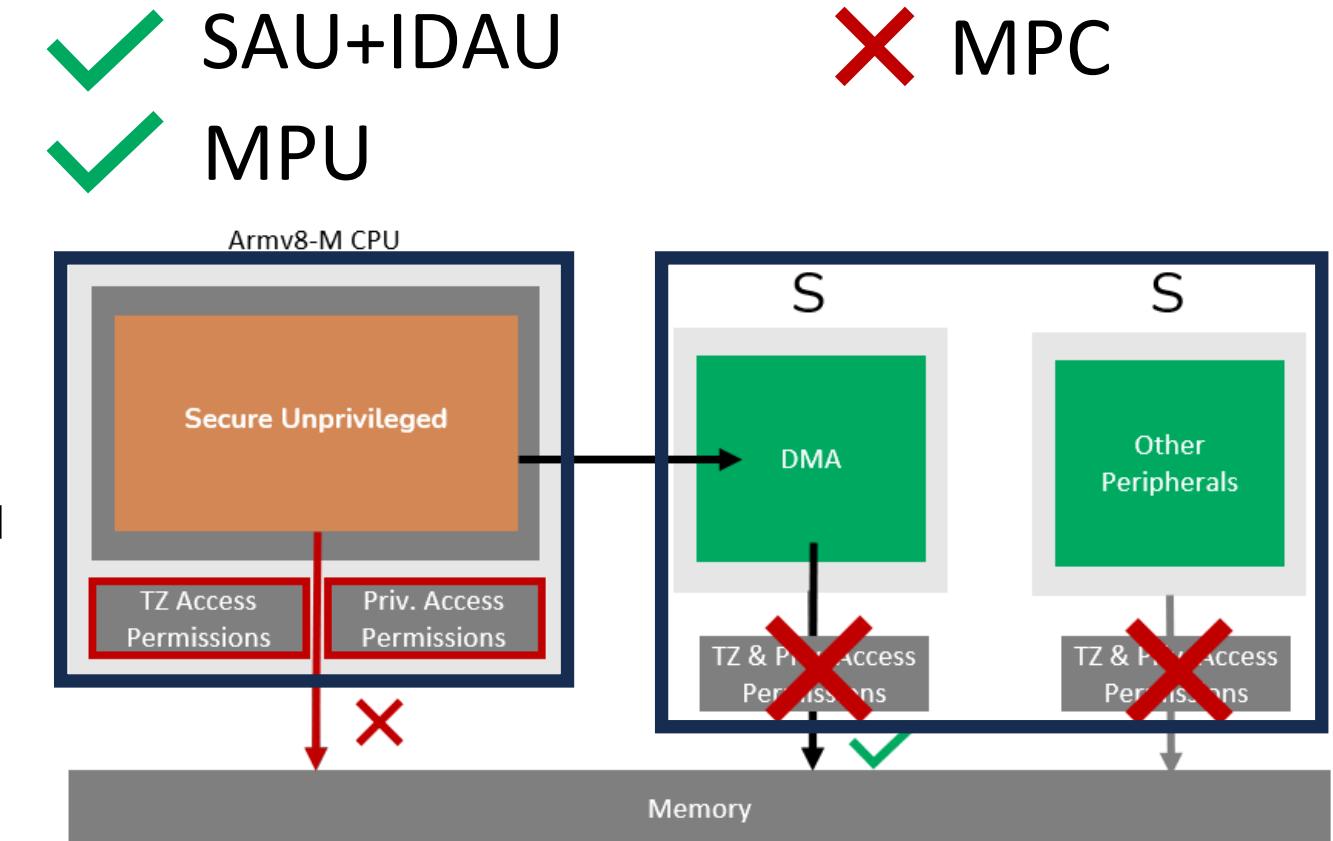
Only PSA Level 1 & No MPC

TRUSTONIC KINIBI-M



Kinibi-M Architecture

Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3



Microchip SAML11

Only PSA Level 1 & No MPC

With this gap of protection, a Secure Unprivileged application that has been granted a DMA can bypass all Kinibi-M security mechanism and achieve arbitrary read, write or execute capabilities

Observation

Responsible Disclosure Trustonic

A Journey



We Contact Trustonic Reporting our Findings

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



Trustonic Security Team Acknowledged the Reception of Our Report

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



Trustonic Security Team Provided 1st Feedback

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



We Respond to 1st Feedback

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



Trustonic Security Team Provided 2nd Feedback

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



We Respond to 2nd Feedback

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



Trustonic Security Team Provided 3rd and last Feedback

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



We Sent a Last Response Wrapping up the Responsible Disclosure

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

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Mar 10th



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Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK

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Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

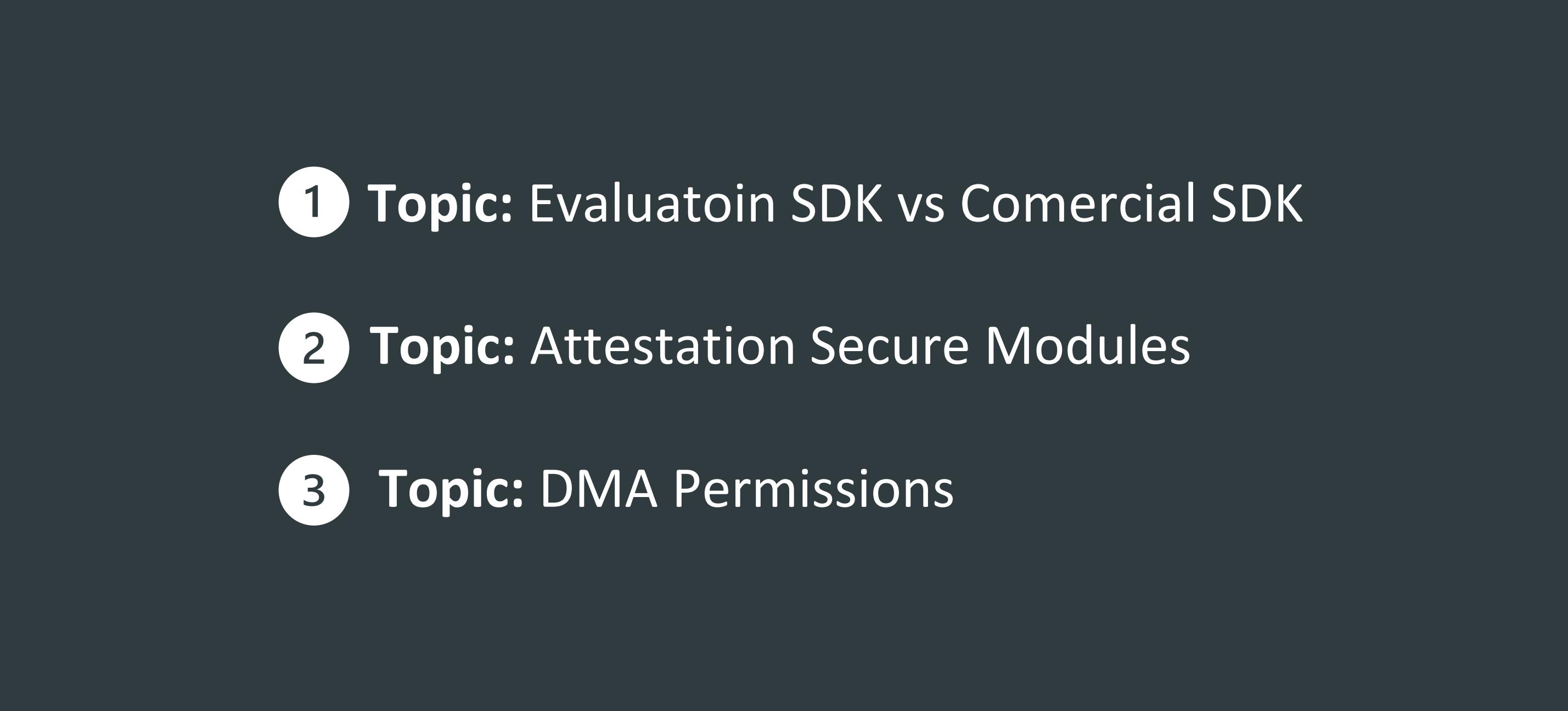
Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

- 1 Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK
- 2 Topic: Attestation Secure Modules



- 
- 1 Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK
 - 2 Topic: Attestation Secure Modules
 - 3 Topic: DMA Permissions



1 Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK

2 Topic: Attestation Secure Modules

3 Topic: DMA Permissions

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK



“We note that you are **using the Kinibi-M evaluation SDK, not the full (commercial) production SDK.** (...) Kinibi-M evaluation (...) is deliberately more flexible than a commercial (...) production SDK”

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Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

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Feb 16th

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Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK



"We note that you are using the Kinibi-M evaluation SDK, not the full (commercial) production SDK.
(...) Kinibi-M evaluation (...) is deliberately more flexible than a commercial (...) production SDK"

DISCLAIMER

We were only granted access to the **evaluation SDK**, thus all assessments and conclusions presented on this talk are derived from documentation and artifacts from the Evaluation SDK.

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK



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(...) Kinibi-M evaluation (...) is deliberately more flexible than a commercial (...) production SDK"

DISCLAIMER

We were only granted access to the **evaluation SDK**, thus all assessments and conclusions presented on this talk are derived from documentation and artifacts from the Evaluation SDK.

We still think commercial version may suffer from the same problem (the underlying architecture problem is the same, weak hardware protections on SAML11)



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

1 Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK

2 Topic: Attestation Secure Modules

3 Topic: DMA Permissions

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

1 Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK

2 Topic: Attestation Secure Modules

3 Topic: DMA Permissions

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: Attestation Secure Modules



You cannot install malicious modules because, “all modules must be signed, and are validated at install time against a protected list of signing keys” (attestation).

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

Topic: Attestation Secure Modules



You cannot install malicious modules because, “all modules must be signed, and are validated at install time against a protected list of signing keys” (attestation).

DISCLAIMER

The Evaluation SDK doesn't support attestation of secure modules so we could freely instantiate secure modules, but in the Commercial SDK only OEMs can instantiate modules and they are all signed and validated.

Jan 10th

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Topic: Attestation Secure Modules



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Attesting OEMs' Secure Modules offers no guarantees that the Secure Module has no defects.



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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

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Feb 16th

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Topic: Attestation Secure Modules



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The Evaluation SDK doesn’t support attestation of secure modules so we could freely instantiate secure modules, but in the Commercial SDK only OEMs can instantiate modules and they are all signed and validated.

Attesting OEMs’ Secure Modules offers no guarantees that the Secure Module has no defects.



Unless OEMs code is formally verified (which, as far as we know, is not the industry standard) we should (by probability) expect bugs and vulnerabilities.



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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We argue that there is a **naive trust in OEM developers**. Even if there is **no malicious intent**, unintended bugs may be introduced in the code which may lead to a vulnerability, e.g., privileged escalation.

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

1 Topic: Evaluation SDK vs Commercial SDK

2 Topic: Attestation Secure Modules

3 Topic: DMA Permissions

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3 Topic: DMA Permissions

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Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: DMA Permissions



It's true that a **Secure Module** with access to a DMA "can effectively access any part of the system", it is "**a common limitation** of low-cost hardware, however it is **far from an open door**"

Jan 10th

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Topic: DMA Permissions



It's true that a **Secure Module** with access to a DMA "can effectively access any part of the system", it is "**a common limitation** of low-cost hardware, however it is **far from an open door**"



"Access to the **DMA controller** needs to be granted, and the best practice guidance in the **production SDK** (which we acknowledge you do not have) **explains how to lock down** access to **devices** from less trusted developers"

Jan 10th

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Feb 16th

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Topic: DMA Permissions



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"Access to the DMA controller **needs to be granted**, and the best practice guidance in the **production SDK** (which we acknowledge you do not have) **explains how to lock down** access to **devices** from less trusted developers"

Contradictory ideas, on one side, Trustonic admits that a **Secure Module with DMA access has full access to the system**, and, on the other side, Trustonic claims that it **is not an open door**.



Jan 10th

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Feb 9th

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Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: DMA Permissions



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Contradictory ideas, on one side, Trustonic admits that a **Secure Module with DMA access has full access to the system**, and, on the other side, Trustonic claims that it **is not an open door**.



DMA access **should not need to be granted but MEDIATED** (because lack of hardware mechanisms). **Kinibi-B should mediate access from ALL Secure Modules** via DMA interposer.



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: DMA Permissions



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DMA access **should not need to be granted but MEDIATED** (because lack of hardware mechanisms). **Kinibi-B should mediate** access from **ALL Secure Modules** via DMA interposer.



We proposed to share the **DMA interposer mechanism** to fix the DMA issue.



Jan 10th

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Feb 9th

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Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

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Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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We argue that there is a **lack of understanding of the limitations of the underlying hardware** (where Kinibi-M runs) and the necessary **Software mechanisms needed to enforce claimed protections**.

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



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Topic: No Native DMA Support

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

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Mar 10th

1 Topic: No Native DMA Support

2 Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

- 1 Topic: No Native DMA Support
- 2 Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions
- 3 Topic: Native FLASH Access Mediation but not Native DMA mediation.



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: No Native DMA Support



“Kinibi-M for SAML11 does not ship with a Secure World DMA module, and it is left up to customers to source one or do without.”

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: No Native DMA Support



“Kinibi-M for SAML11 does not ship with a Secure World DMA module, and it is left up to customers to source one or do without.”



“In our architecture it would be up to the OEM provided DMA module to provide that mediation”

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: No Native DMA Support



"Kinibi-M for SAML11 does not ship with a Secure World DMA module, and it is left up to customers to source one or do without."



"In our architecture it would be up to the OEM provided DMA module to provide that mediation"

OEMs have to source one DMA module if they want to use a DMA. **We don't think is a good approach**, because this **forces OEMs to trust each other** (which they don't).



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: No Native DMA Support



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"In our architecture it **would be up to the OEM** provided DMA module to provide that mediation"



OEMs have to source one DMA module if they want to use a DMA. **We don't think is a good approach**, because this **forces OEMs to trust each other** (which they don't).



It also **increases the probability of a bug/vulnerability**.

Jan 10th Jan 12th Jan 30th Jan 31st Feb 9th Feb 14th Feb 16th Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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We argue that there is a **lack of understanding of multi-OEM threat model**. In a multistakeholder scenario (i.e., multiple OEMs) **OEMs don't trust each other**.

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

- 1 Topic: No Native DMA Support
- 2 Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions
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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions



“You have at most revealed that this device has **no system MMU** (covered in the data sheet), and that DMA permissions should not be granted to untrusted application modules”

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

1 2 3

Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions



"You have at most revealed that this device has **no system MMU** (covered in the data sheet), and that DMA permissions should not be granted to untrusted application modules"

System MMU is an access control IP used in **platforms with virtual memory**, In **Cortex-M (MCU)** platforms, there are no SMMU, but **MPC** (Memory Protection Controller) and **PPC** (Peripheral Protection Controller)



Jan 10th Jan 12th Jan 30th Jan 31st Feb 9th Feb 14th Feb 16th Mar 10th

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Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions



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The **PPC/MPC** in **SAML11** cannot enforce access control in terms of **privilege levels**. If you directly assign a DMA device to an OEM you are basically **granting them full control of the system**



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions



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The **PPC/MPC** in **SAML11** cannot enforce access control in terms of **privilege levels**. If you directly assign a DMA device to an OEM you are basically **granting them full control of the system**



Kinibi-M should provide native DMA support once it is a critical piece of infrastructure for Microcontrollers, due to the power and resource-constrained nature of this devices.



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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We argue there is a **lack of understanding about the memory protection controllers of Microcontrollers** (system wide protection mechanisms).

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

- 1 Topic: No Native DMA Support
- 2 Topic: No System MMU & DMA permissions
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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: Native FLASH Access Mediation but not Native DMA mediation.



“Kinibi-M fully supports secure identification of module-to-module caller identity precisely to support this sort of use case. For example this is the pattern we use to **mediated access to flash storage provided by our secure storage module.**”

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Topic: Native FLASH Access Mediation but not Native DMA mediation.



“Kinibi-M fully supports secure identification of module-to-module caller identity precisely to support this sort of use case. For example this is the pattern we use to **mediated access to flash storage provided by our secure storage module**.”

Kinibi-M provides mediation for flash storage, but why doesn't it offer similar mediation for DMA?
DMA is also a critical service, arguably even more.



Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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We argue that there is a **lack of understanding** regarding the **criticality of a core service such as the DMA**. If mismanaged, it can grant full access to all system memory.

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th



1

Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

- 1 Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels
- 2 Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator



- 1 Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels
- 2 Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator
- 3 Topic: Requests to Trustonic



- 1 Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels
- 2 Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator
- 3 Topic: Requests to Trustonic



Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels



“Kinibi-M pre-dates Arm PSA and was not built on the PSA architecture. (...) In some areas we do more than PSA (any level) in others we do less. That is why we do not claim PSA Level 3 and have not certified against it.”

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

TAKEAWAY

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We argue there is **lack of awareness and mapping** regarding the **PSA isolation levels** on Kinibi-M.

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

- 1 Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels
- 2 Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator
- 3 Topic: Requests to Trustonic

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

1

Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels

2

Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator

3

Topic: Requests to Trustonic

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

1

2

3

Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator



"This **device has only** (at most) **64kb of flash** and a **16kb of ram**. There are very few use cases for secure world DMA. In practice **most customers simply disable the use of DMA in the secure world**, preventing any potential abuse."

Jan 10th

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Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator



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"If needed, **DMA access should be provided and mediated by a “system” module**. That is what we have said all along. **However**, that module needs to be **provided by an OEM**. It is not provided by Trustonic."

Jan 10th

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Feb 16th

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Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator



"This **device has only** (at most) **64kb of flash** and a **16kb of ram**. There are very few use cases for secure world DMA. In practice **most customers simply disable the use of DMA in the secure world**, preventing any potential abuse."



"If needed, **DMA access should be provided and mediated by a “system” module**. That is what we have said all along. **However**, that module needs to be **provided by an OEM**. It is not provided by Trustonic."

We strongly believe that **not providing DMA mediation is not a good security practice.**

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Topic: Clarification of who should provide DMA mediator



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We strongly believe that **not providing DMA mediation is not a good security practice.**



DMAs are **key components** in **MCUs** (but bus masters!!). **Not providing DMA module** is limiting the system's capabilities from one side and leaving an open threat vector on the other side.

Jan 10thJan 12thJan 30thJan 31stFeb 9thFeb 14thFeb 16thMar 10th

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Topic: Clarification of Kinibi-M isolation levels

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- 1
- 2
- 3

Requests to Trustonic

To issue a **Security Advisory**.



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1 2 3

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To issue a **Security Advisory**.



Clarify the documentation clearly communicating the limitations of **Evaluation SDK** vs **Commercial SDK**.



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Provide us **access** to the **Commercial SDK** for internal assessment.



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NO RESPONSE TO OUR REQUESTS!

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

SUMMING UP

1

2

3

4

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Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

Jan 31st

Feb 9th

Feb 14th

Feb 16th

Mar 10th

SUMMING UP

1

We could only validate our claims on **Evaluation SDK** (the only SDK we were granted permissions);

2

3

4

5

Jan 10th

Jan 12th

Jan 30th

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SUMMING UP

1

We **could only validate** our claims on **Evaluation SDK** (the only SDK we were granted permissions);

2

Secure Modules (from OEMs) are **signed and validated** on the **Commercial Version**;

3

4

5

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Secure Modules (from OEMs) are **signed and validated** on the **Commercial Version**;

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Official Kinibi-m claims only **PSA Level 2** ready, but its **secure architecture claims higher protections levels** (not backed by any hardware or software mechanism);

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Official Kinibi-m claims only **PSA Level 2** ready, but its **secure architecture claims higher protections levels** (not backed by any hardware or software mechanism);

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There is **no DMA mediator**, the responsibility is **left to the OEMs**, and by default Kinibi-M has no control of such an import core service, able to disrupt all system;

Jan 10th

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Jan 31st

Feb 9th

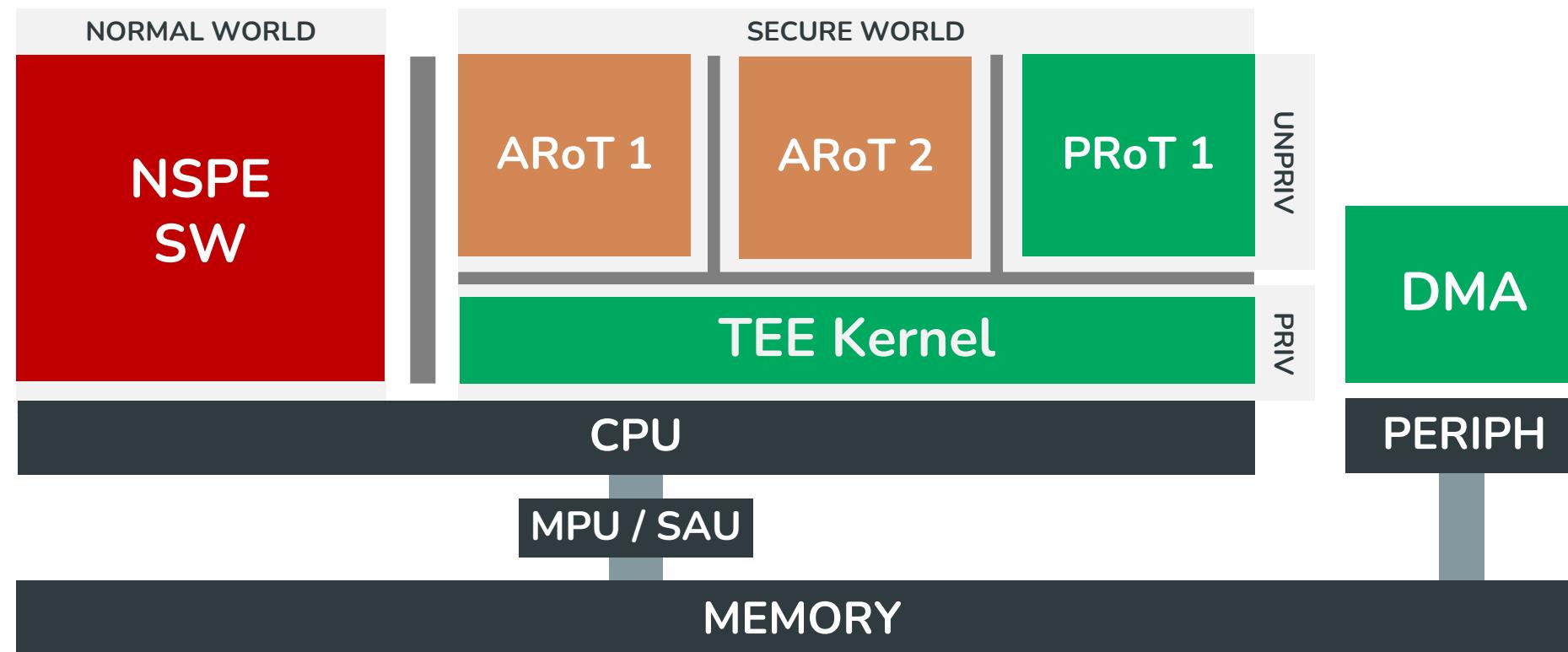
Feb 14th

Feb 16th

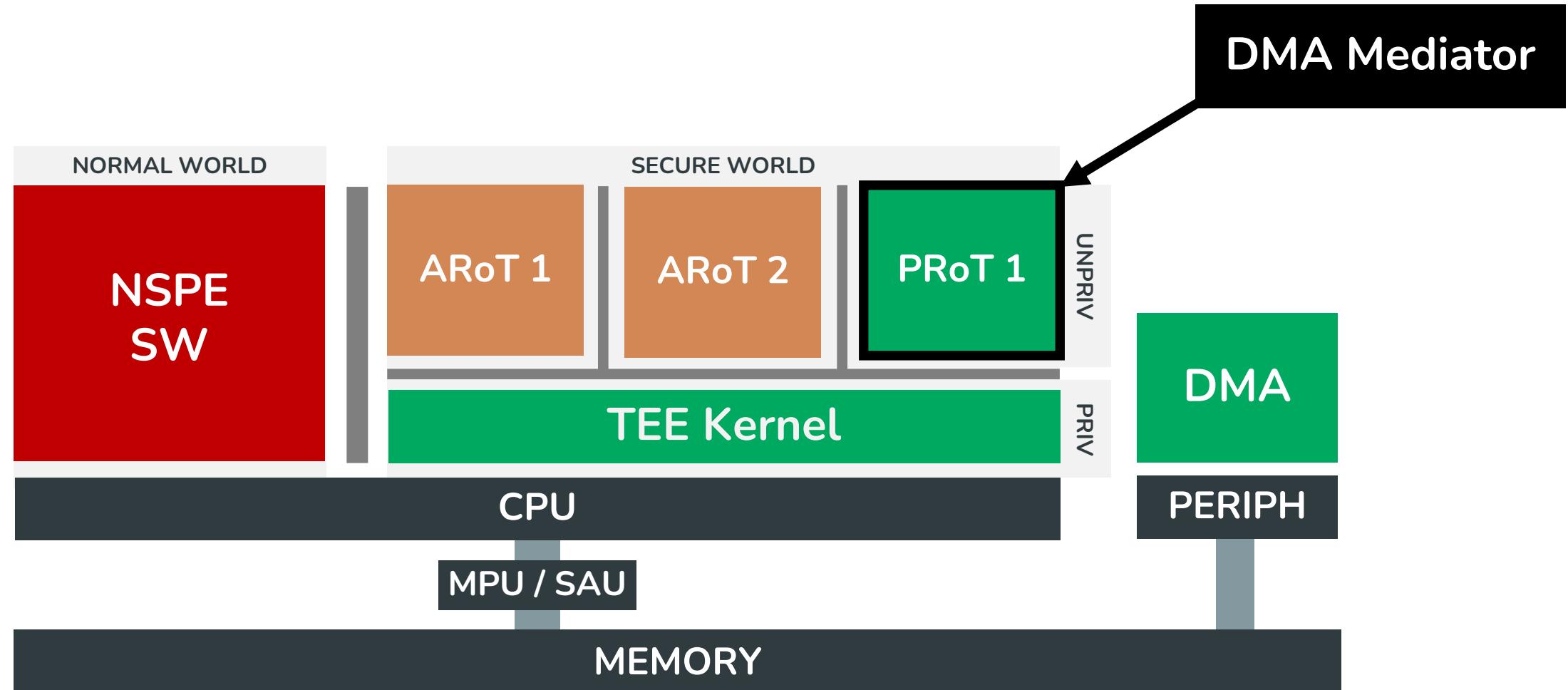
Mar 10th

DMA Mediation

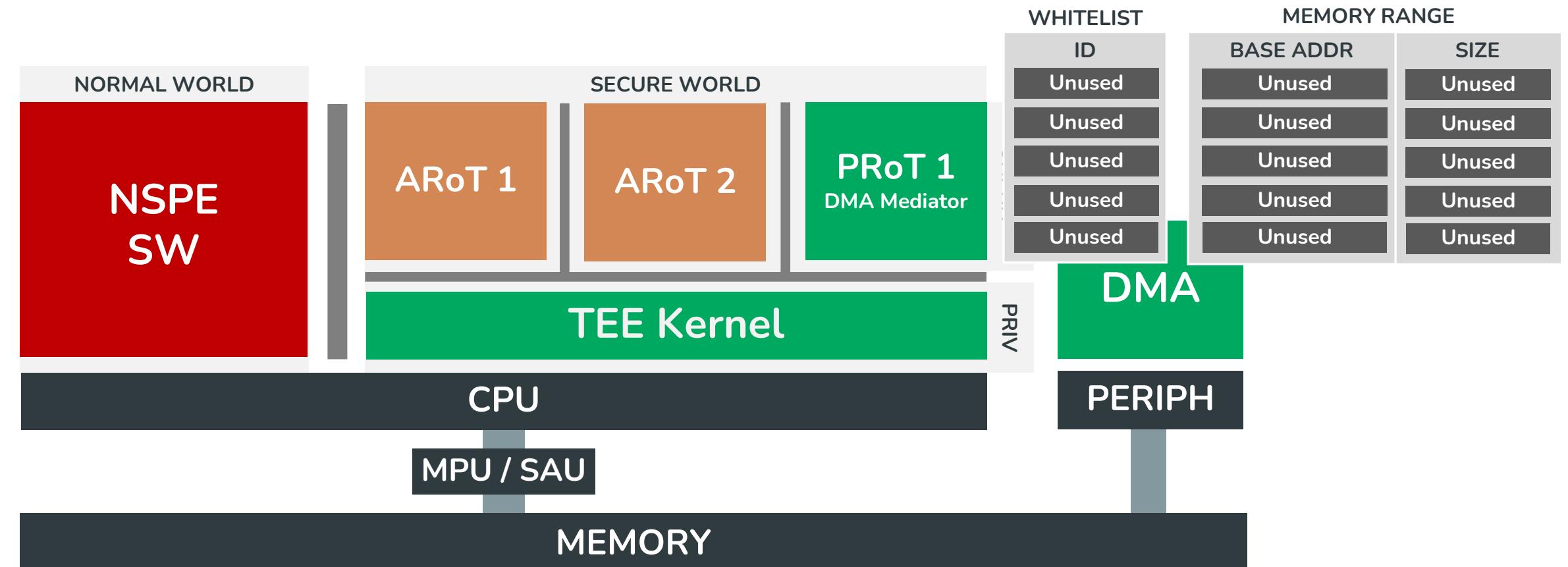
DMA MEDIATION



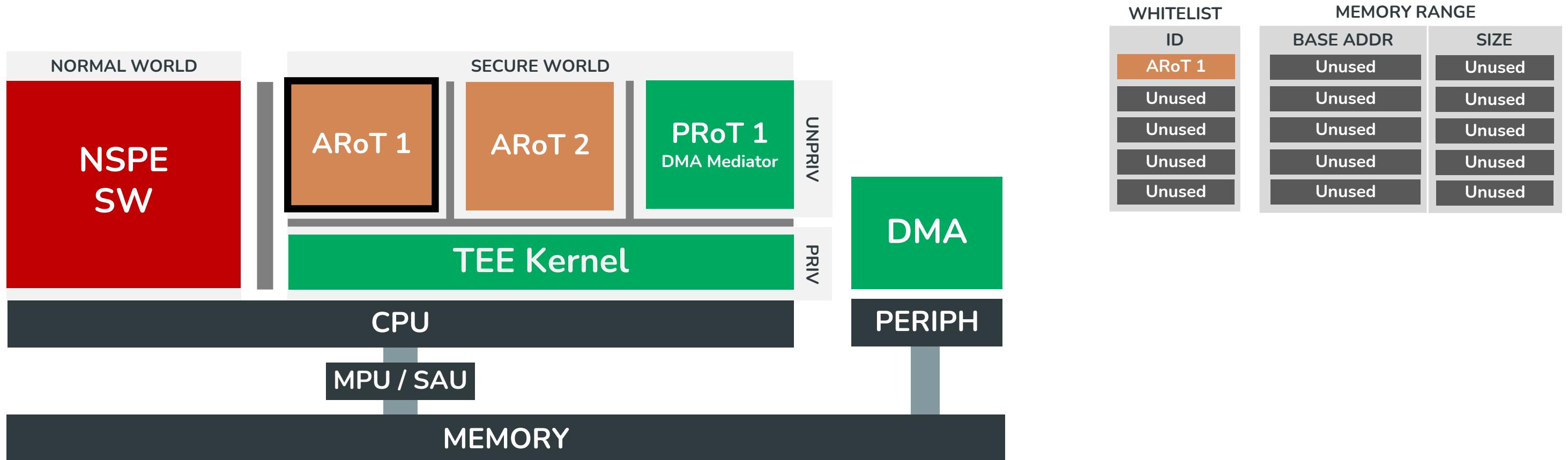
DMA MEDIATION



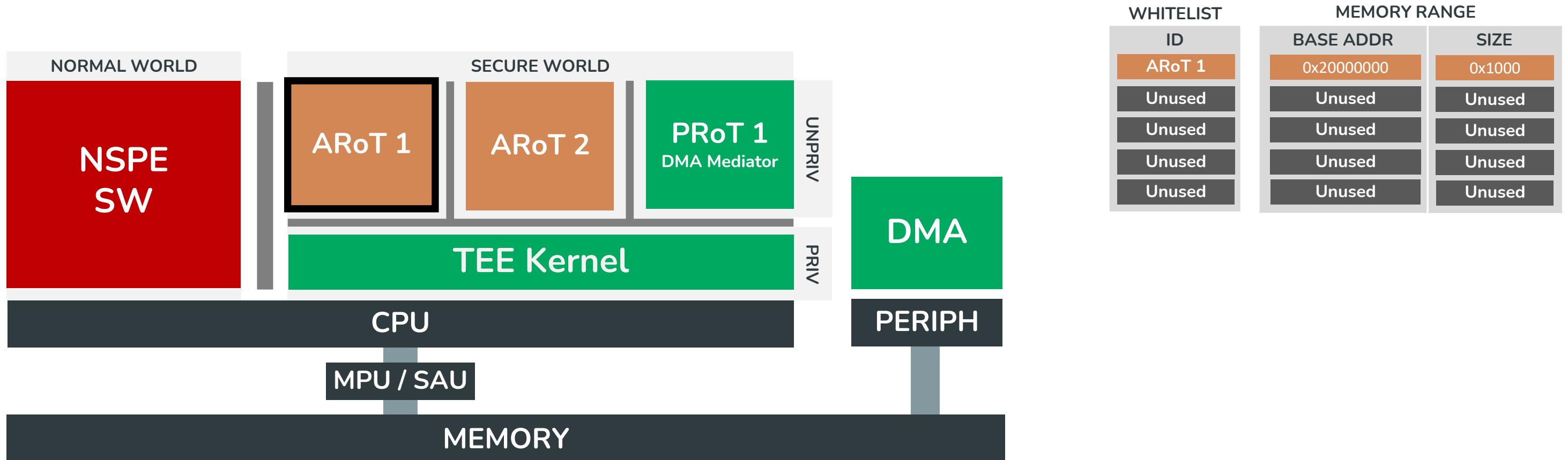
DMA MEDIATION



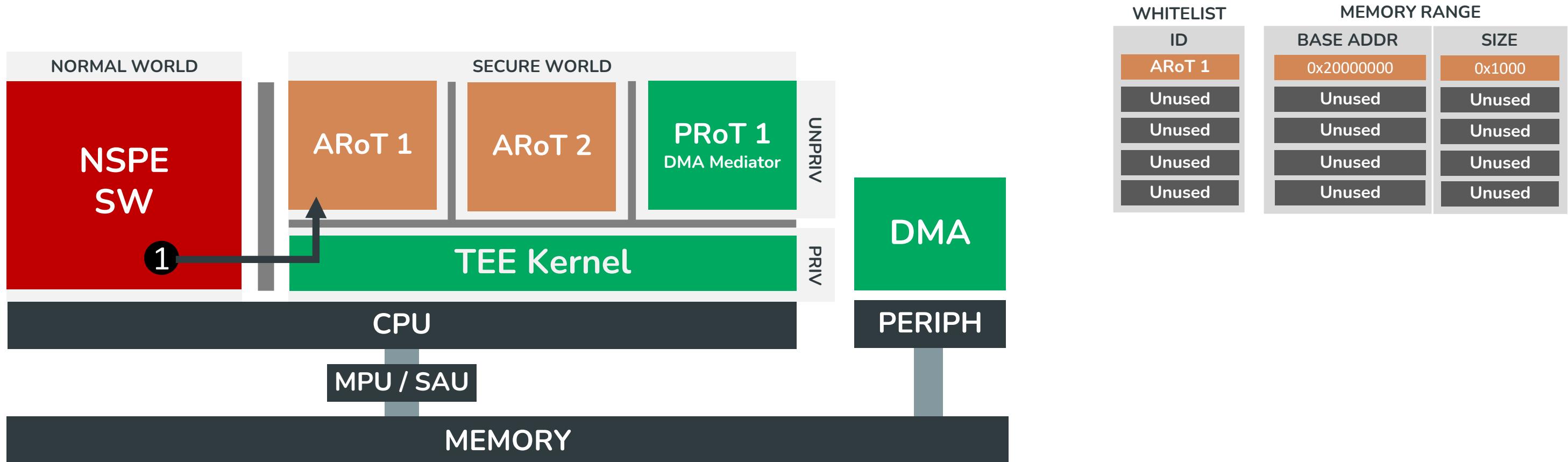
DMA MEDIATION



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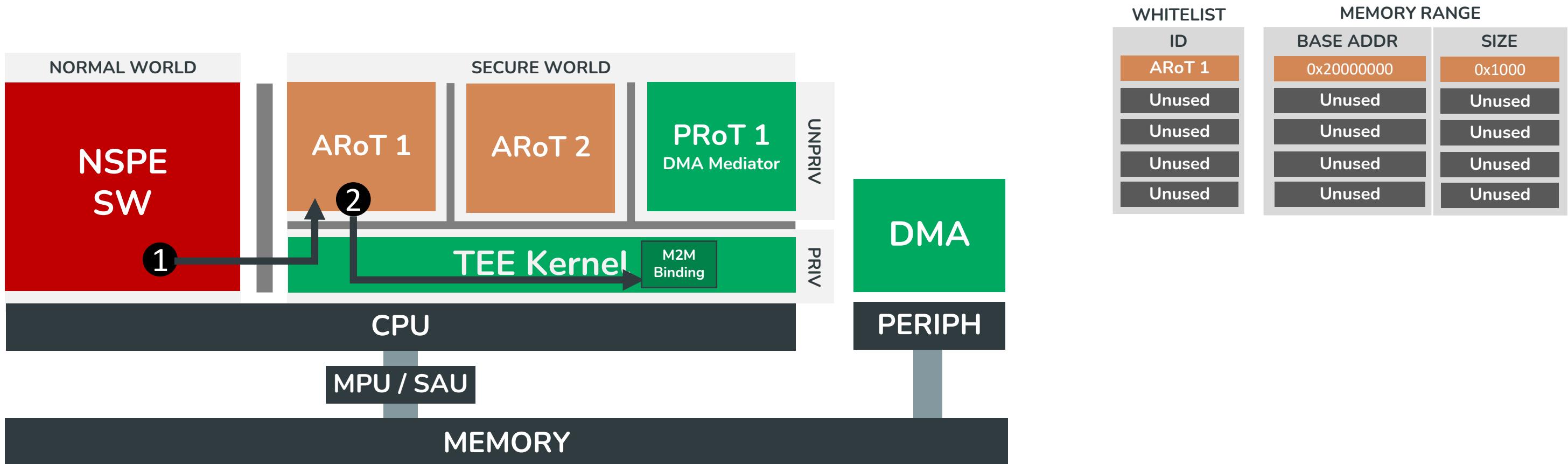


DMA MEDIATION



① NS calls ARoT 1

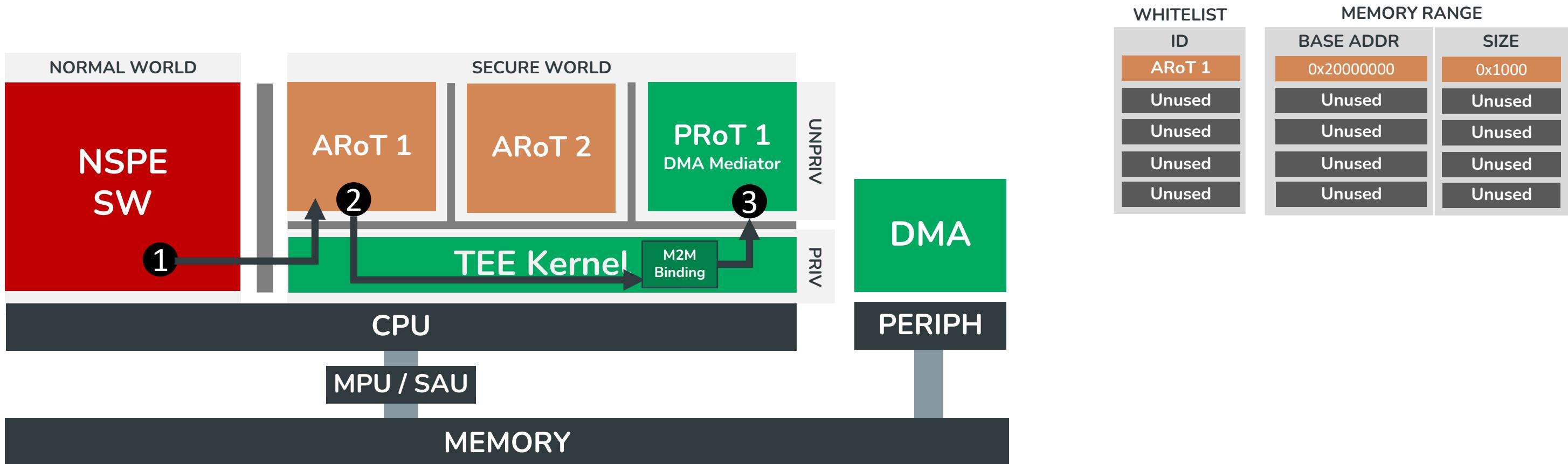
DMA MEDIATION



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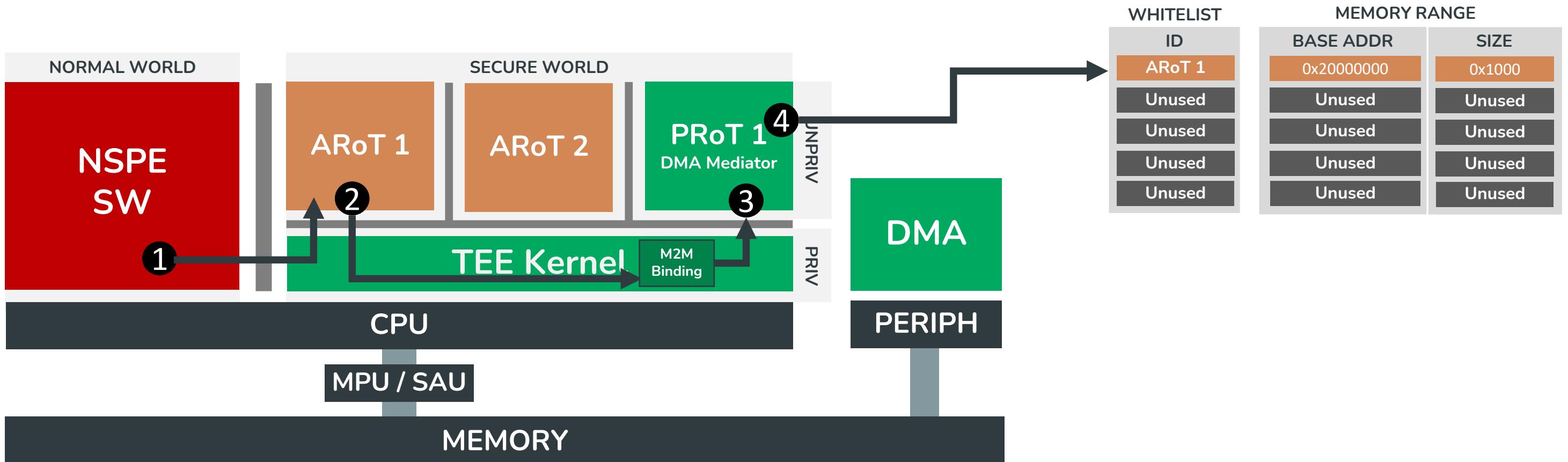
② ARoT 1 requests access to DMA mediator

DMA MEDIATION



- ① NS calls ARoT 1
- ② ARoT 1 requests access to DMA mediator
- ③ TEE Kernel Invokes DMA Mediator

DMA MEDIATION



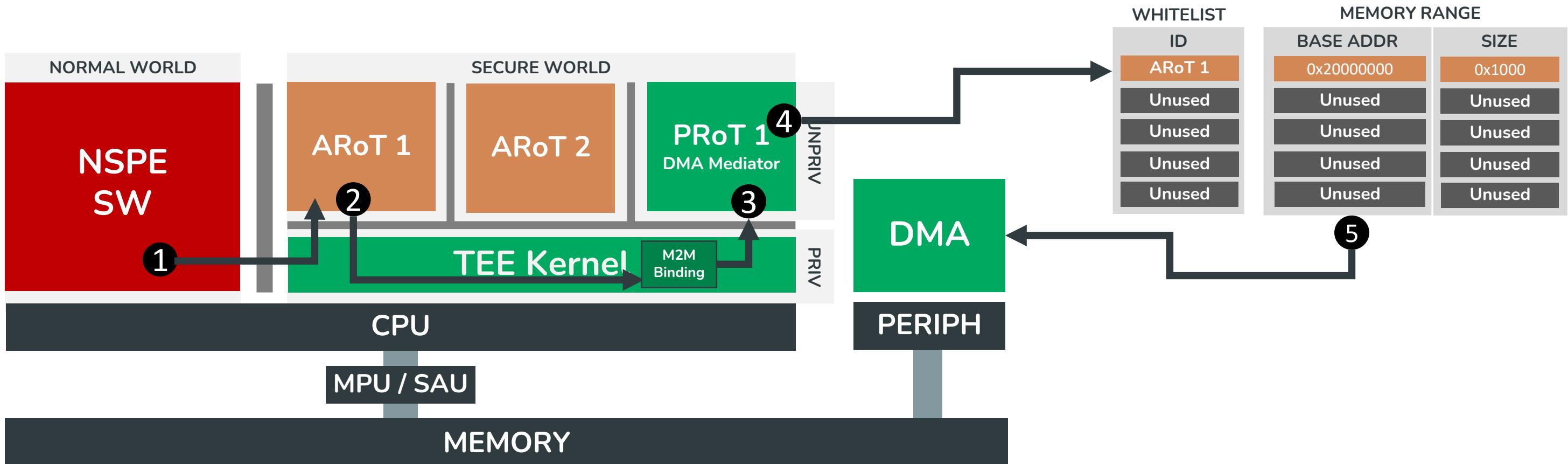
① NS calls ARoT 1

② ARoT 1 requests access to DMA mediator

③ TEE Kernel Invokes DMA Mediator

④ DMA Mediator Checks Access Permissions and Memory Range

DMA MEDIATION



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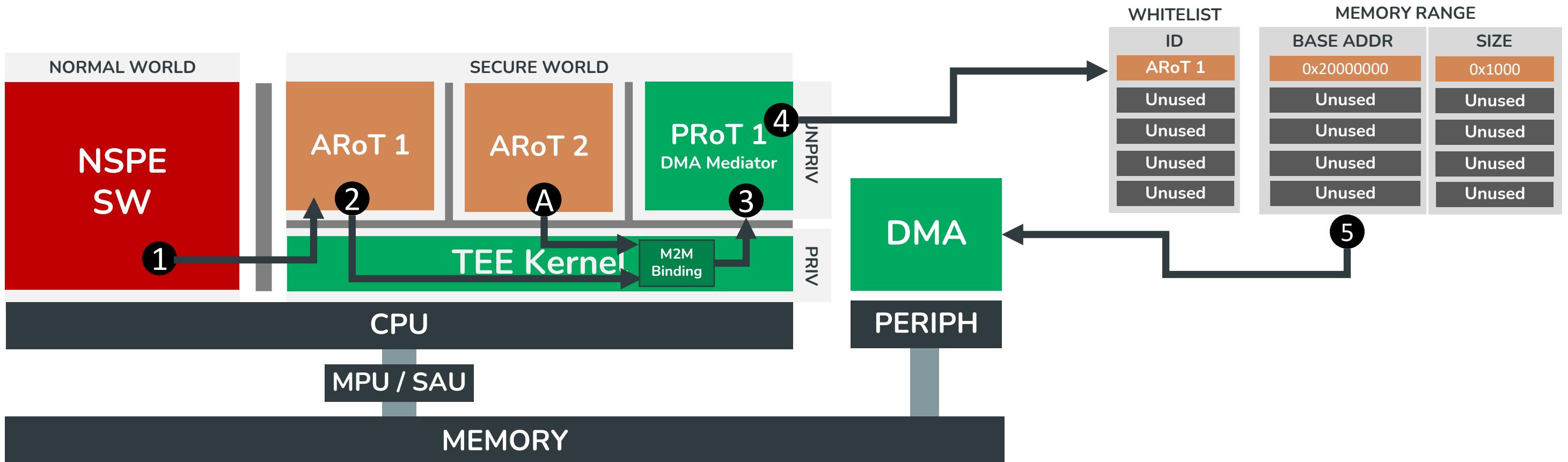
② ARoT 1 requests access to DMA mediator

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DMA MEDIATION



① NS calls ARoT 1

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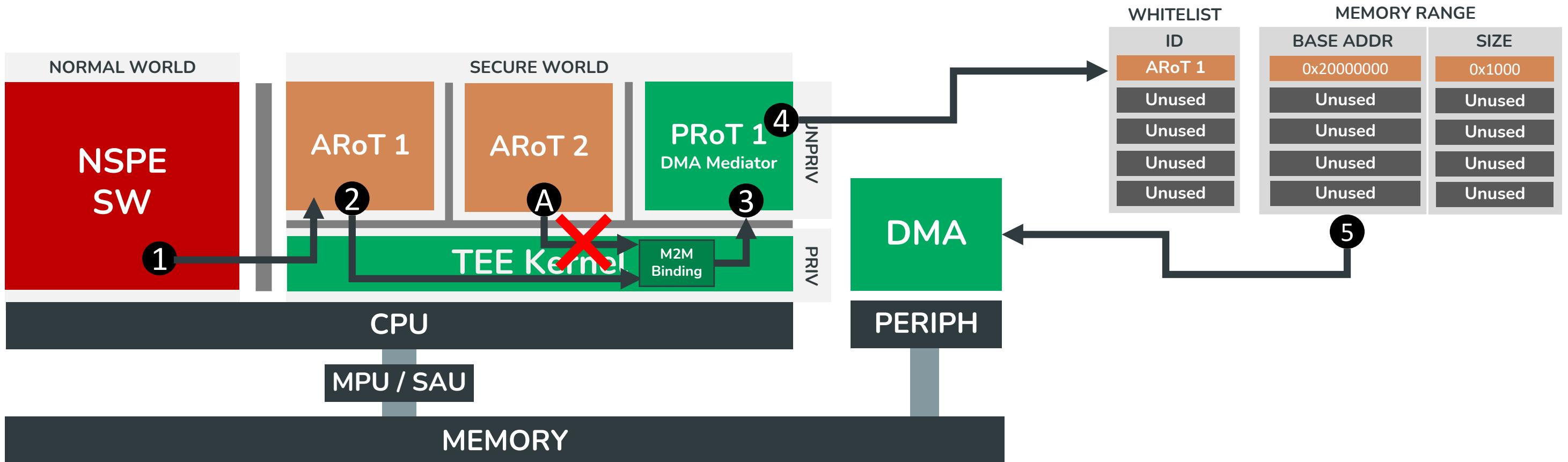
③ TEE Kernel Invokes DMA Mediator

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A ARoT 2 requests access to DMA mediator

DMA MEDIATION

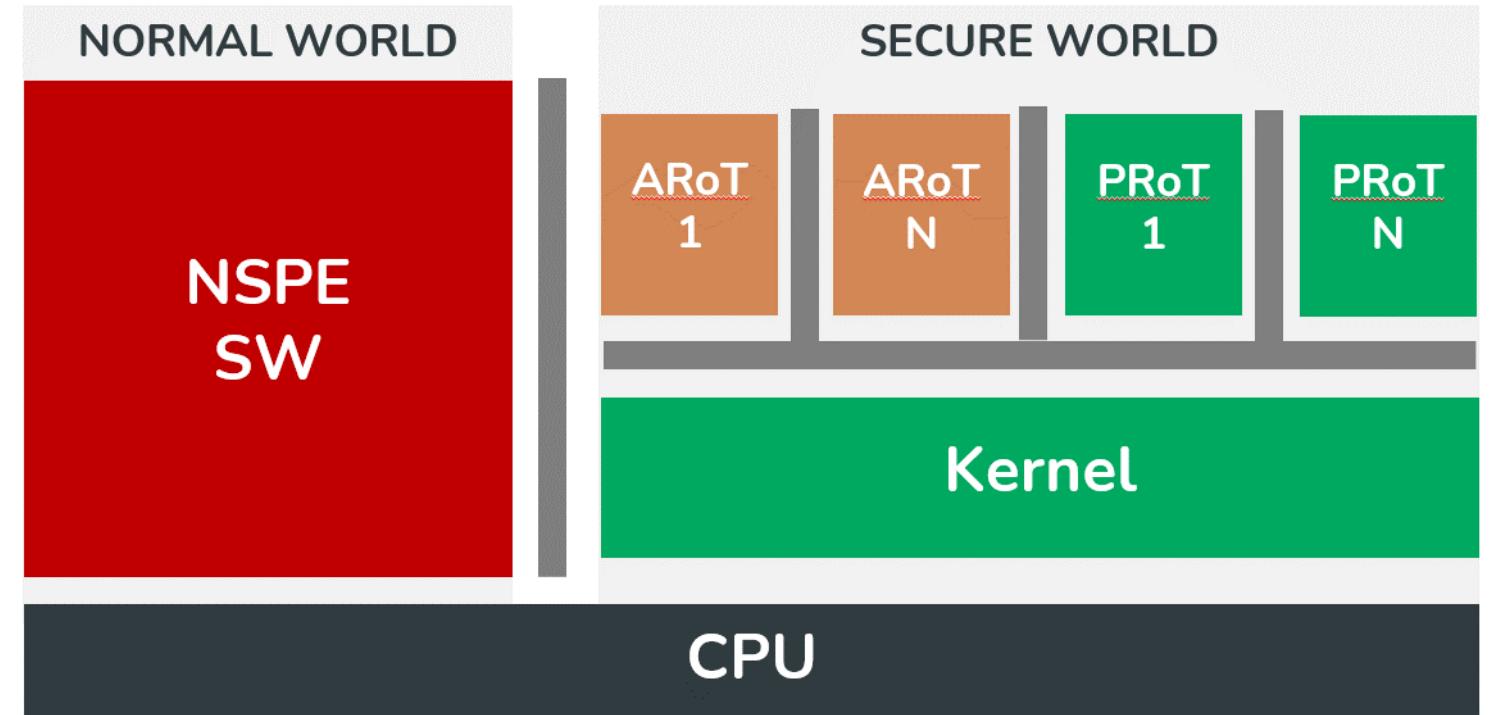


- ① NS calls ARoT 1
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 - ③ TEE Kernel Invokes DMA Mediator
 - ④ DMA Mediator Checks Access Permissions and Memory Range
 - ⑤ DMA Memory Access Granted to ARoT 1
 - A ARoT 2 requests access to DMA mediator
- Red X:** ARoT 2 is not on the DMA Mediator Whitelist, requested is rejected

What Can Go Wrong

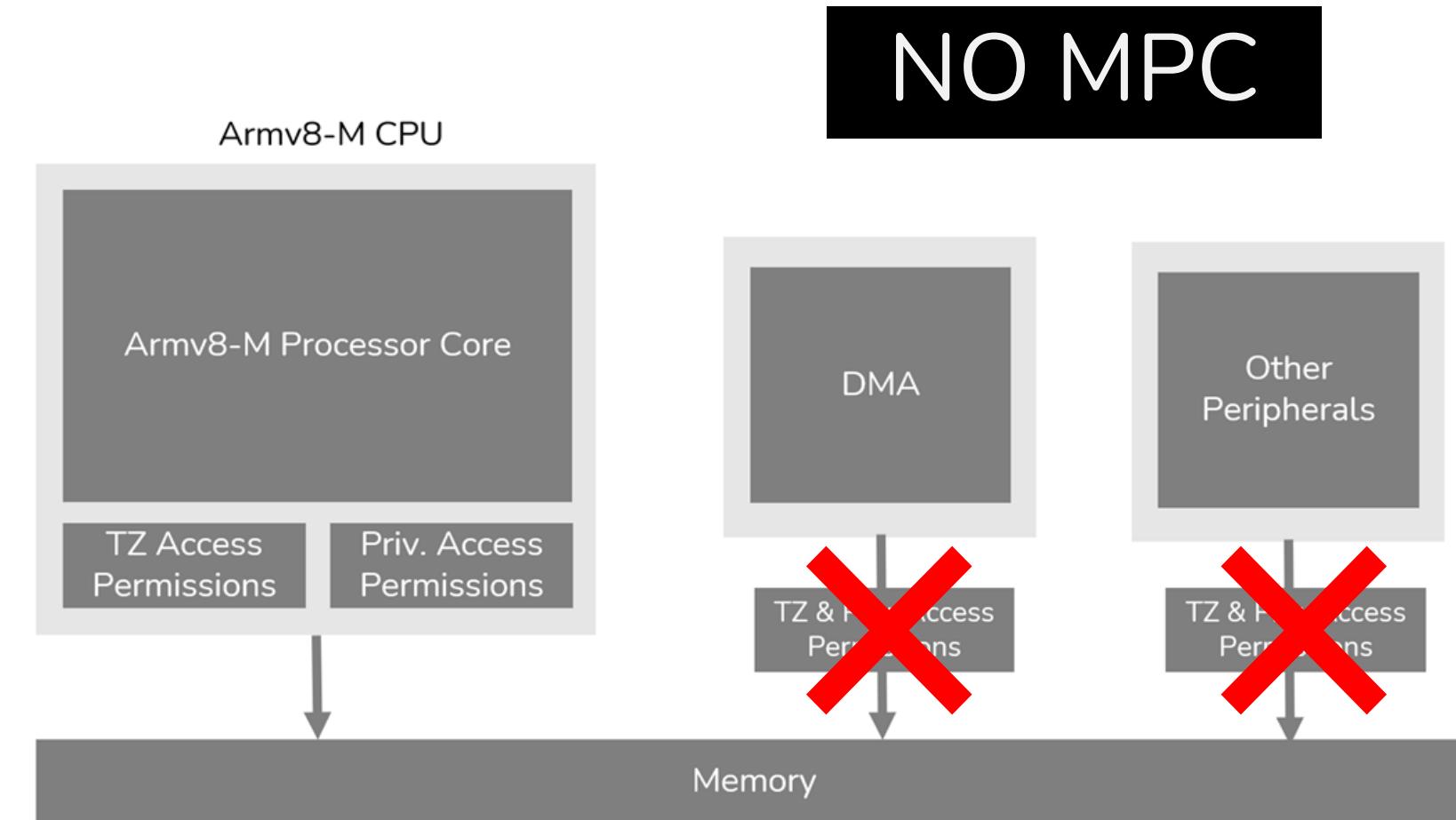
Attack Examples and “Live” Demo

WHEN WE WANT
“PSA 3+” ISOLATION



Kinibi-M Architecture
Seems Probably More then PSA Level 3

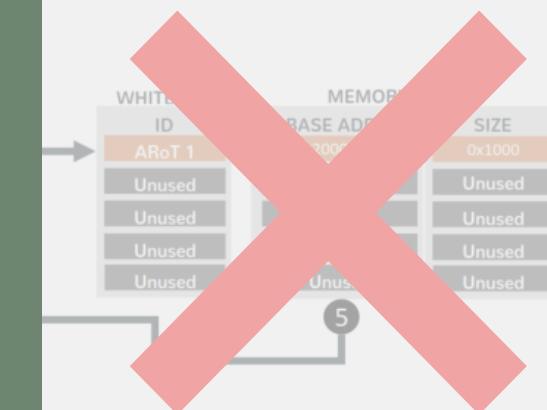
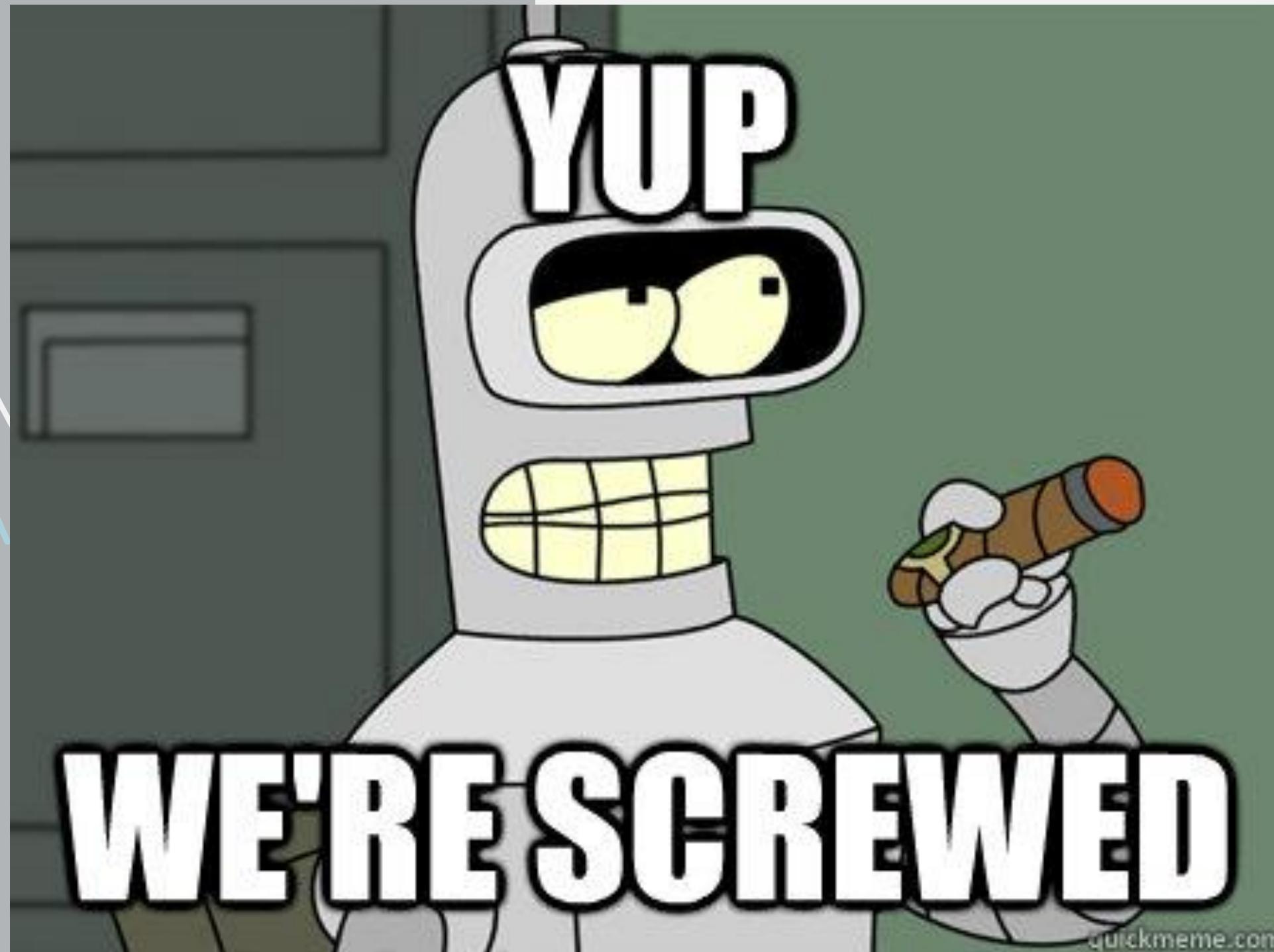
BUT THE MCU
HAS NO MPC



AND FIRMWARE HAS NO DMA MEDIATION



AND FIR
NO DMA



POTENTIAL EXPLOITS

01

Arbitrary Code Execution in Secure Privilege Mode

Demonstrates the capability to directly tamper with Kinibi-M and achieve **arbitrary code execution in secure privileged mode**, rendering all Kinibi-M memory protections ineffective.

Attack 1

02

Steal Proprietary Code from a Secure Module

Demonstrates the capability to **read arbitrary CODE memory** from other secure modules and entirely bypass Kinibi-M's system memory protections.

Attack 2

03

Steal Cryptographic Keys from Kinibi-M Secure Storage

Demonstrates the capability to **read and write arbitrary DATA memory** from other secure modules and entirely bypass Kinibi-M's system memory protections.

Attack 3

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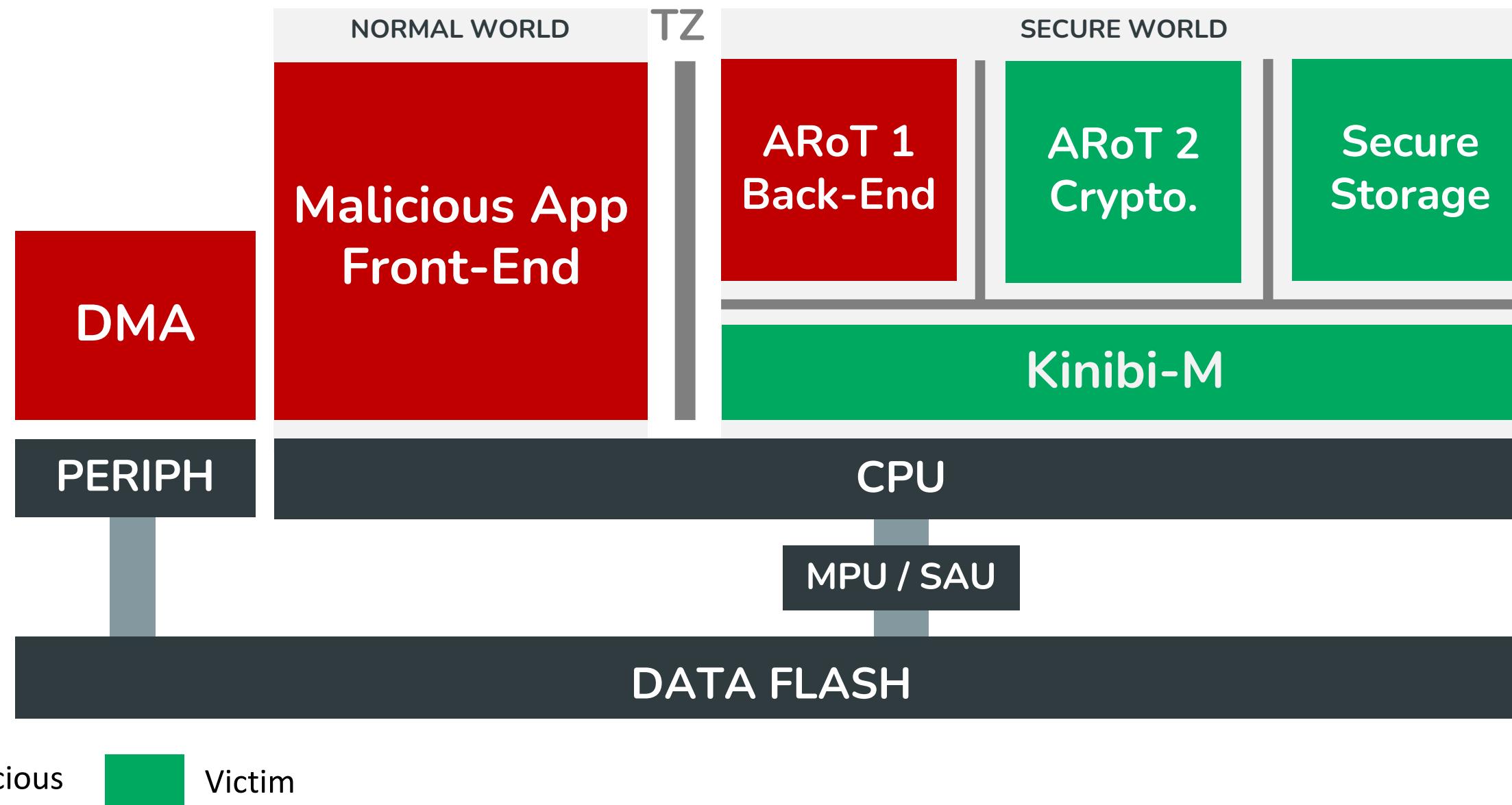
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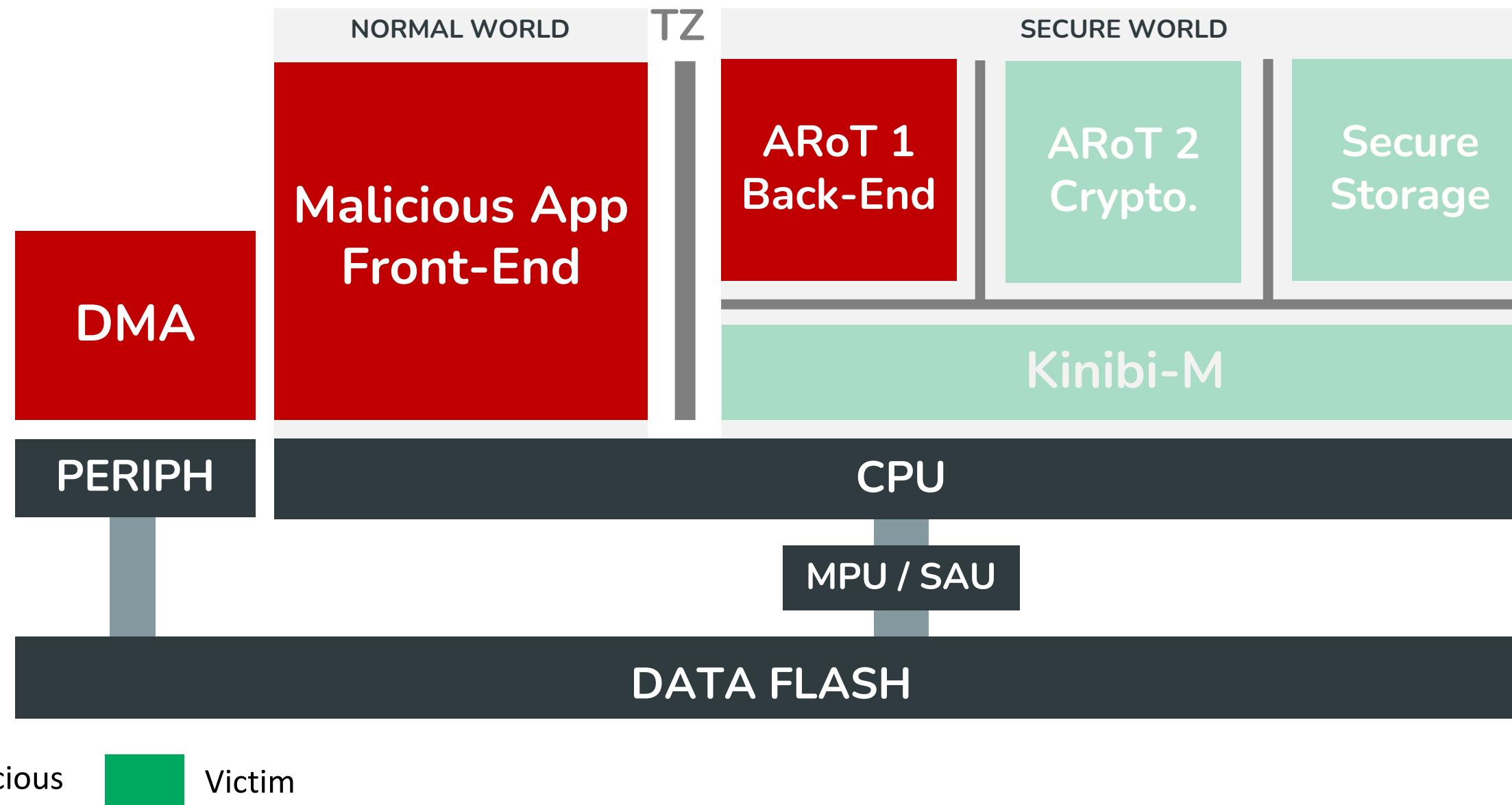
Attack 3

Steal Cryptographic Keys from Kinibi-M Secure Storage

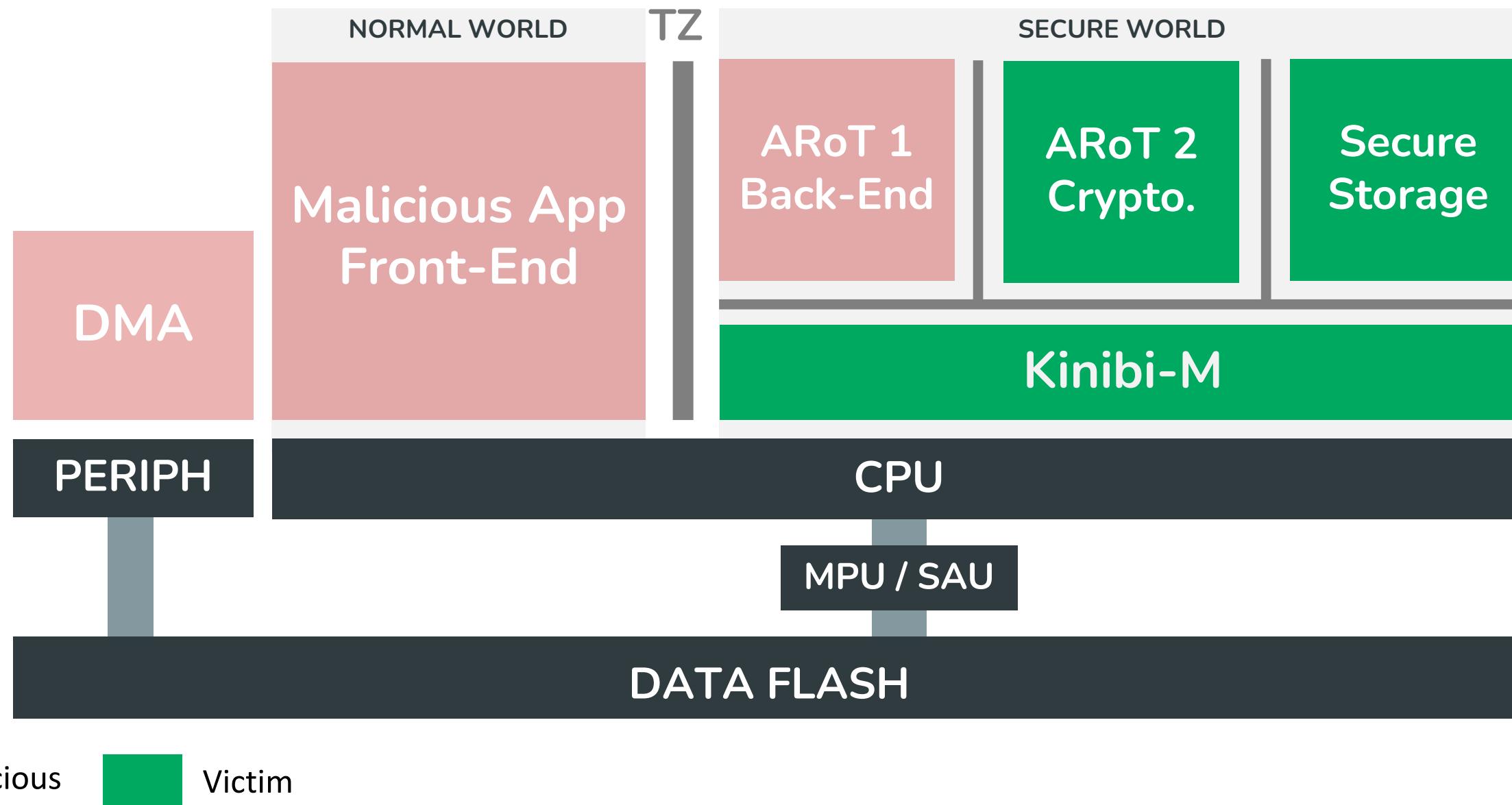
ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



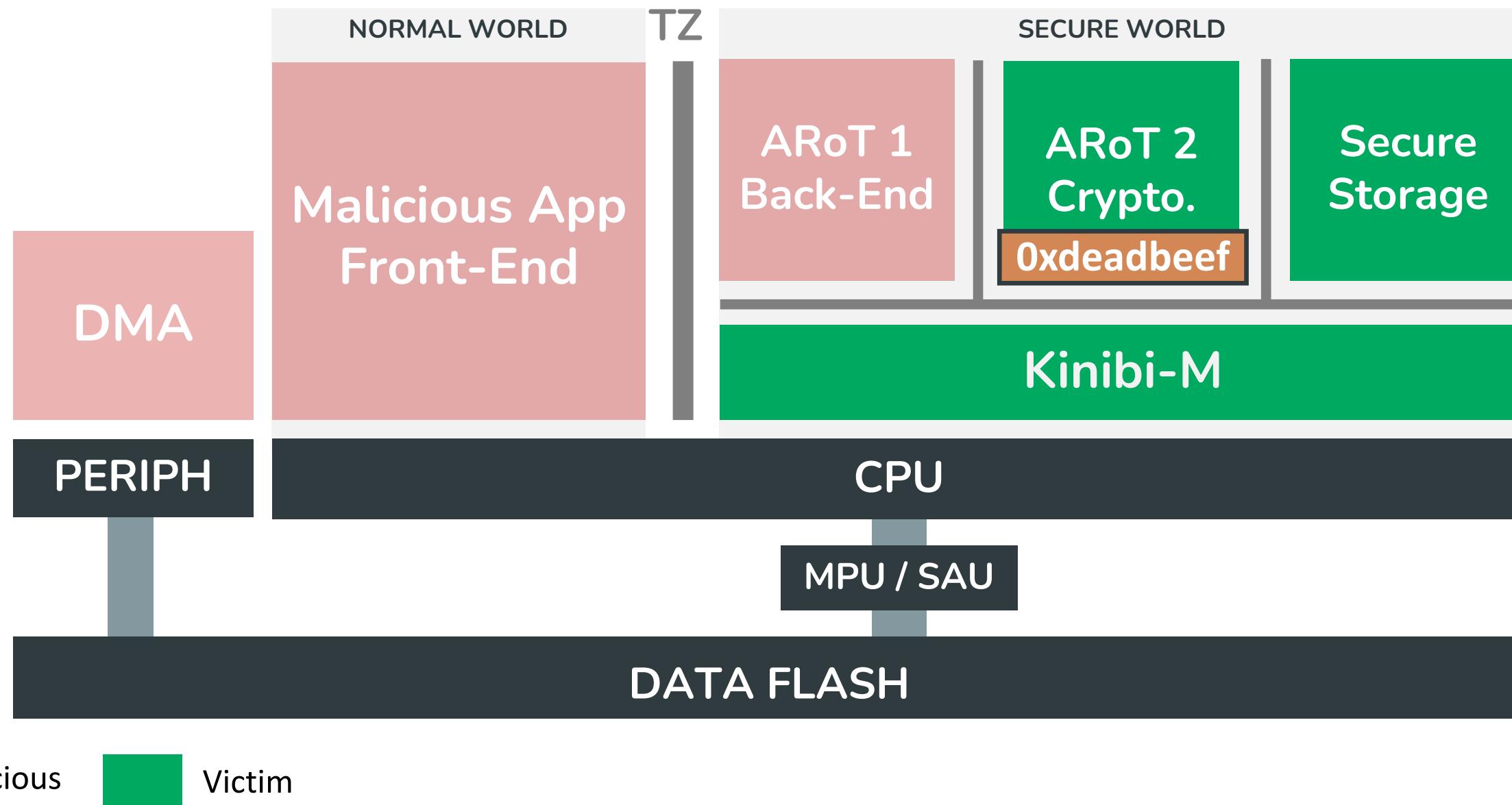
ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



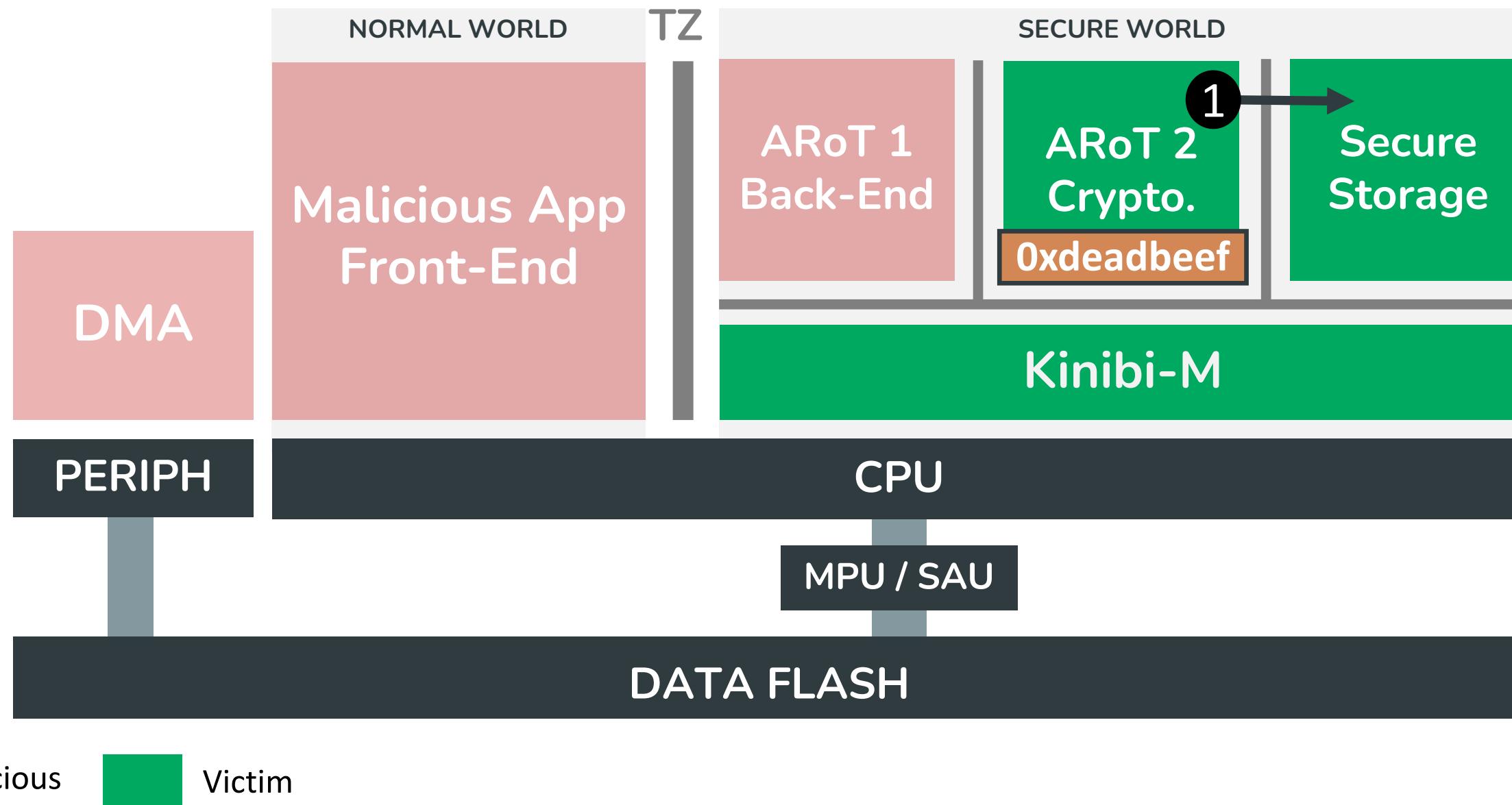
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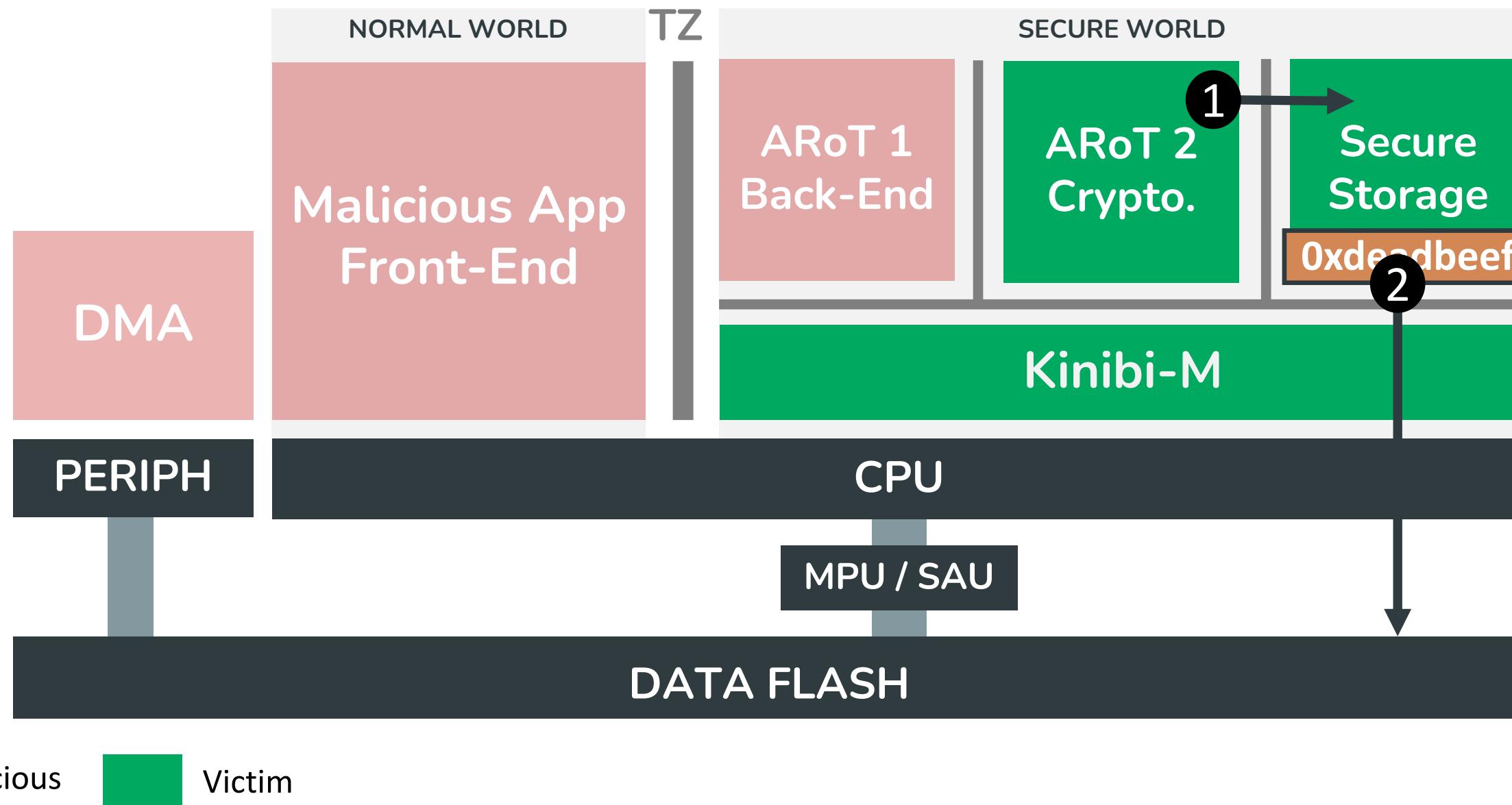
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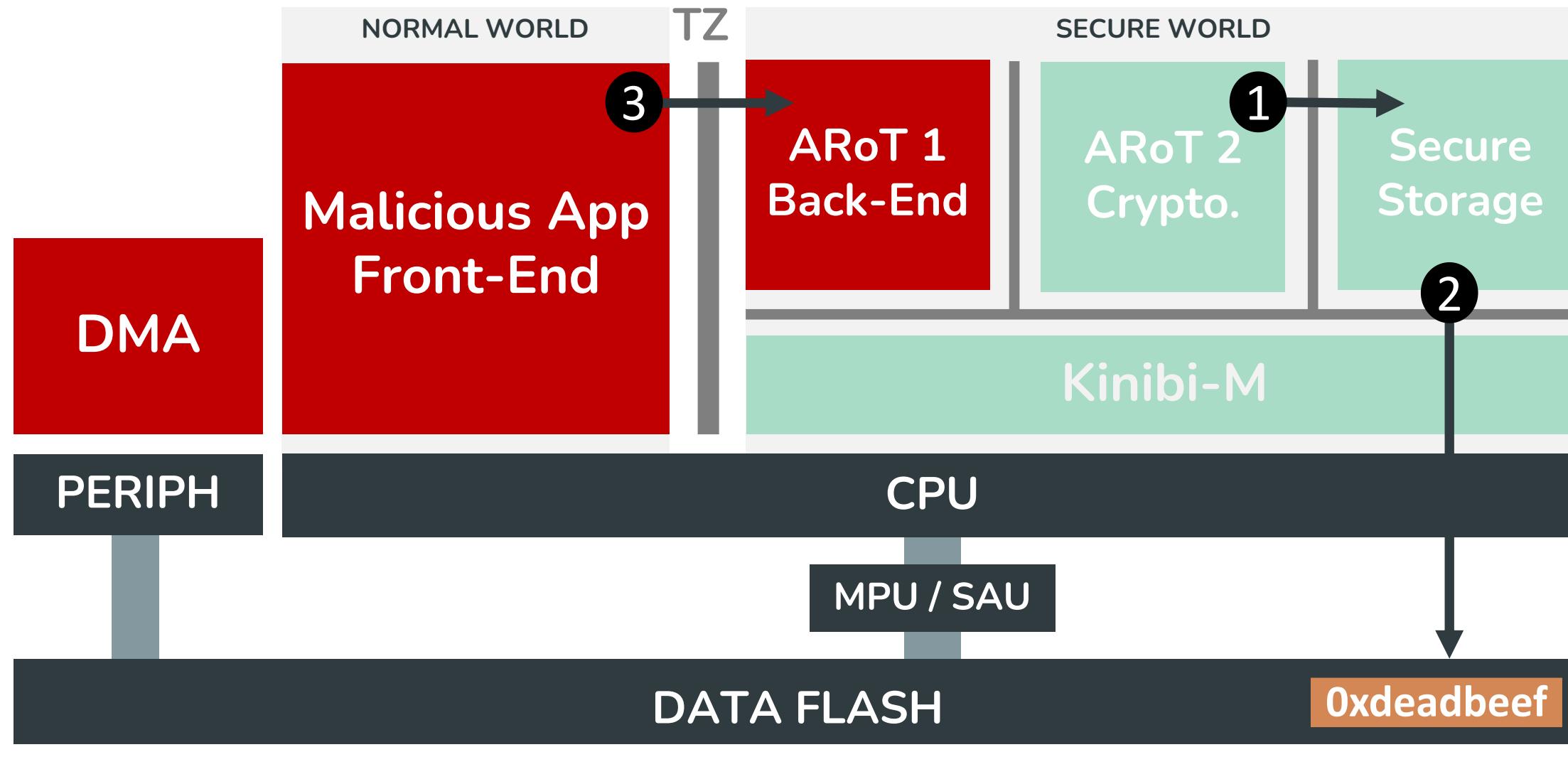
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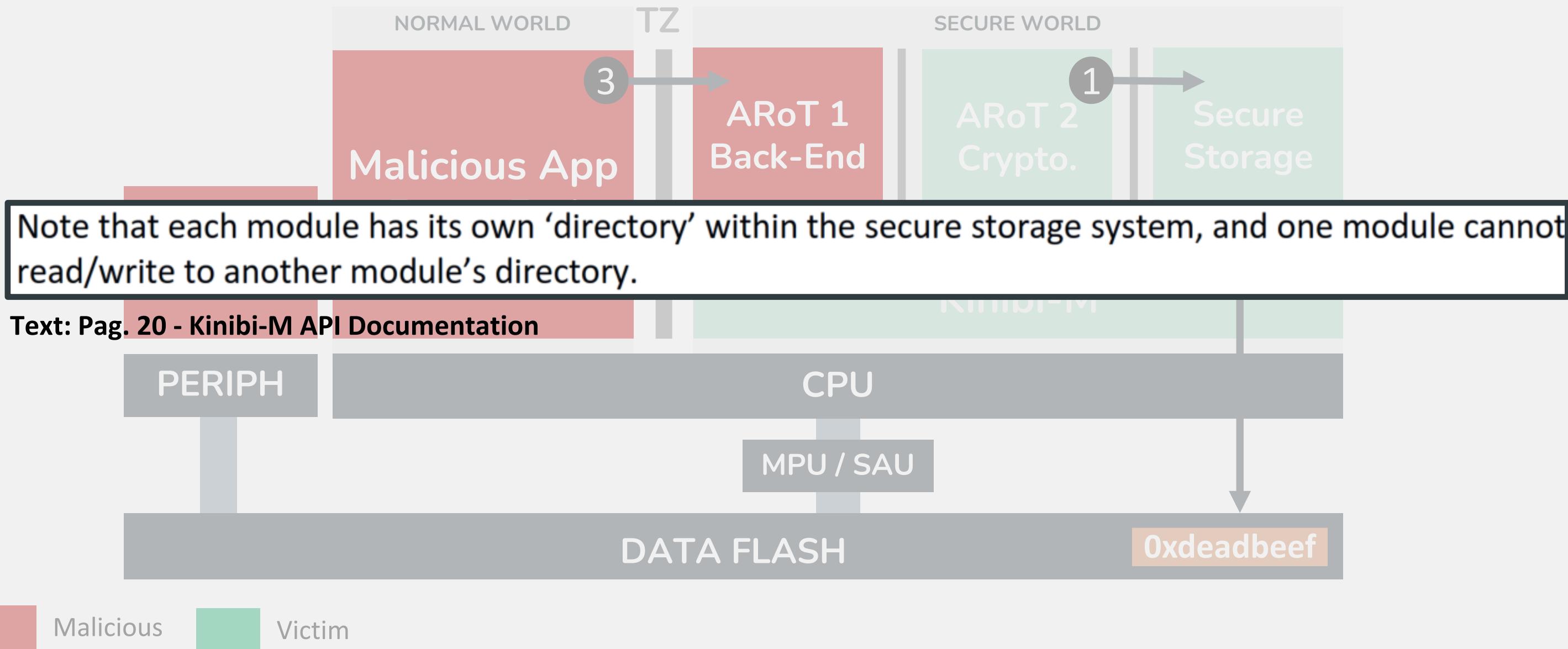
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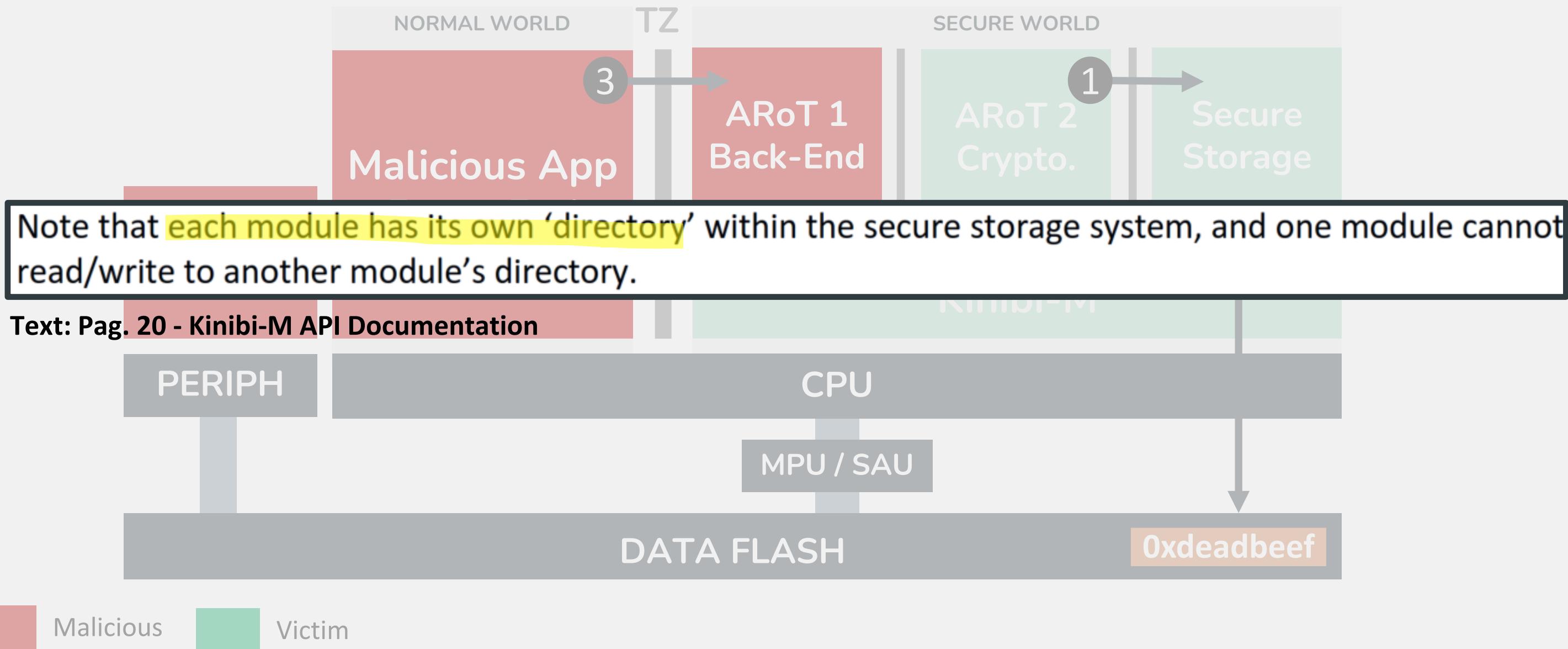
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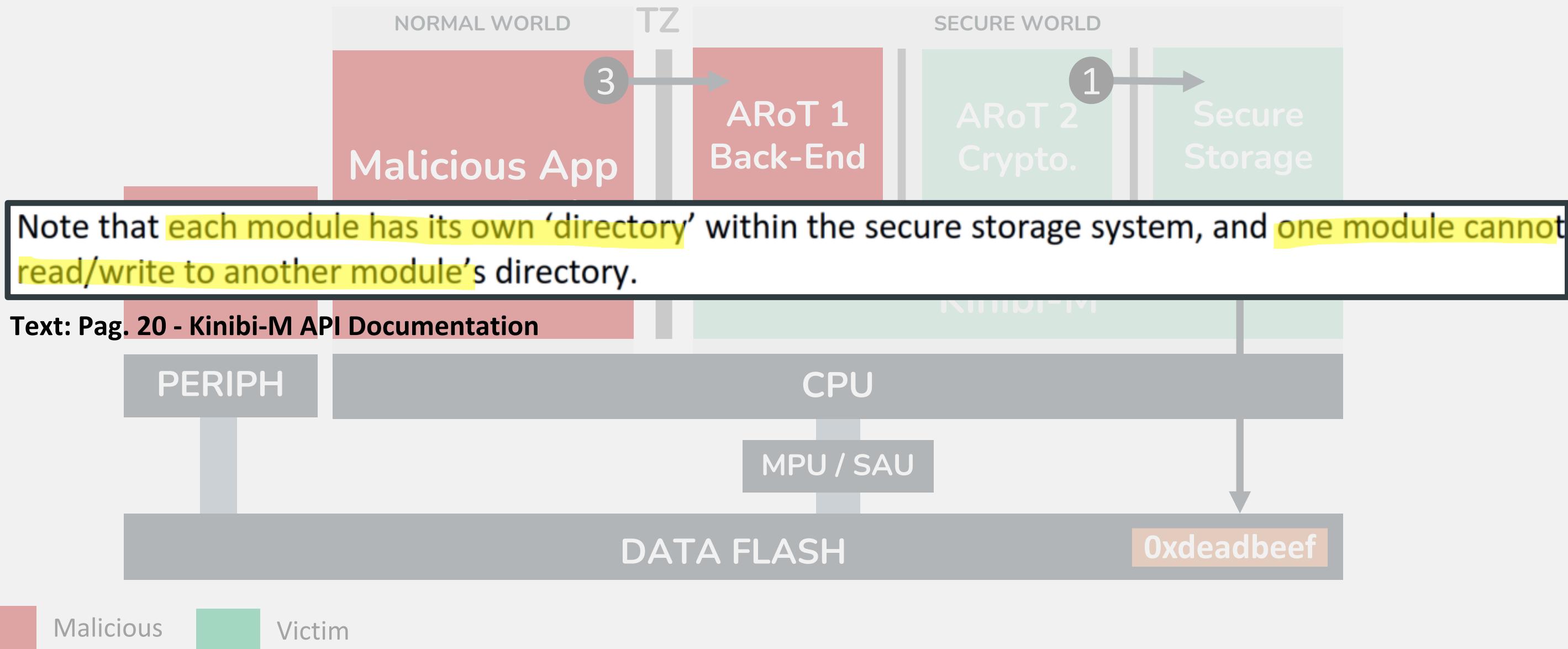
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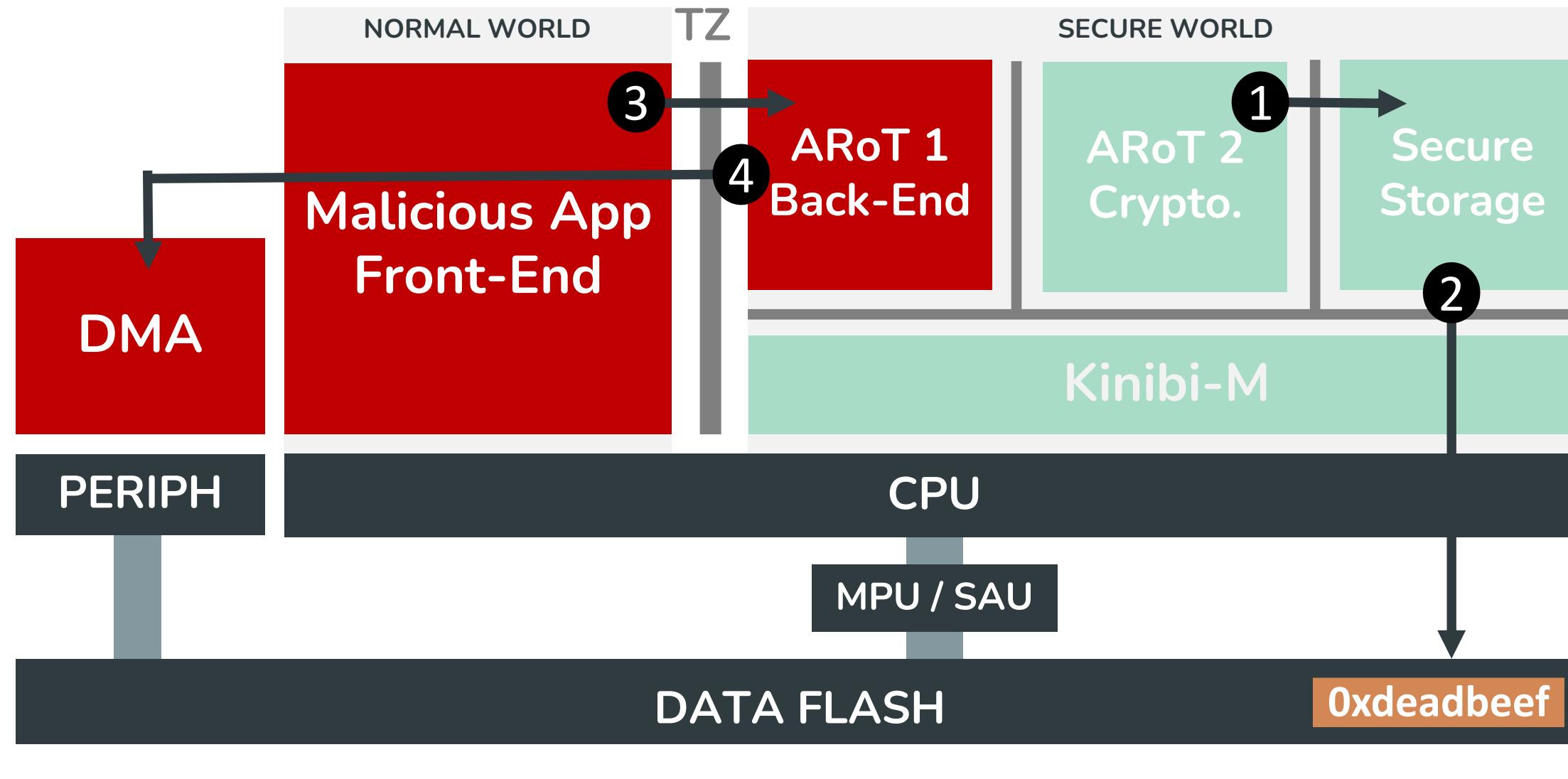
ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



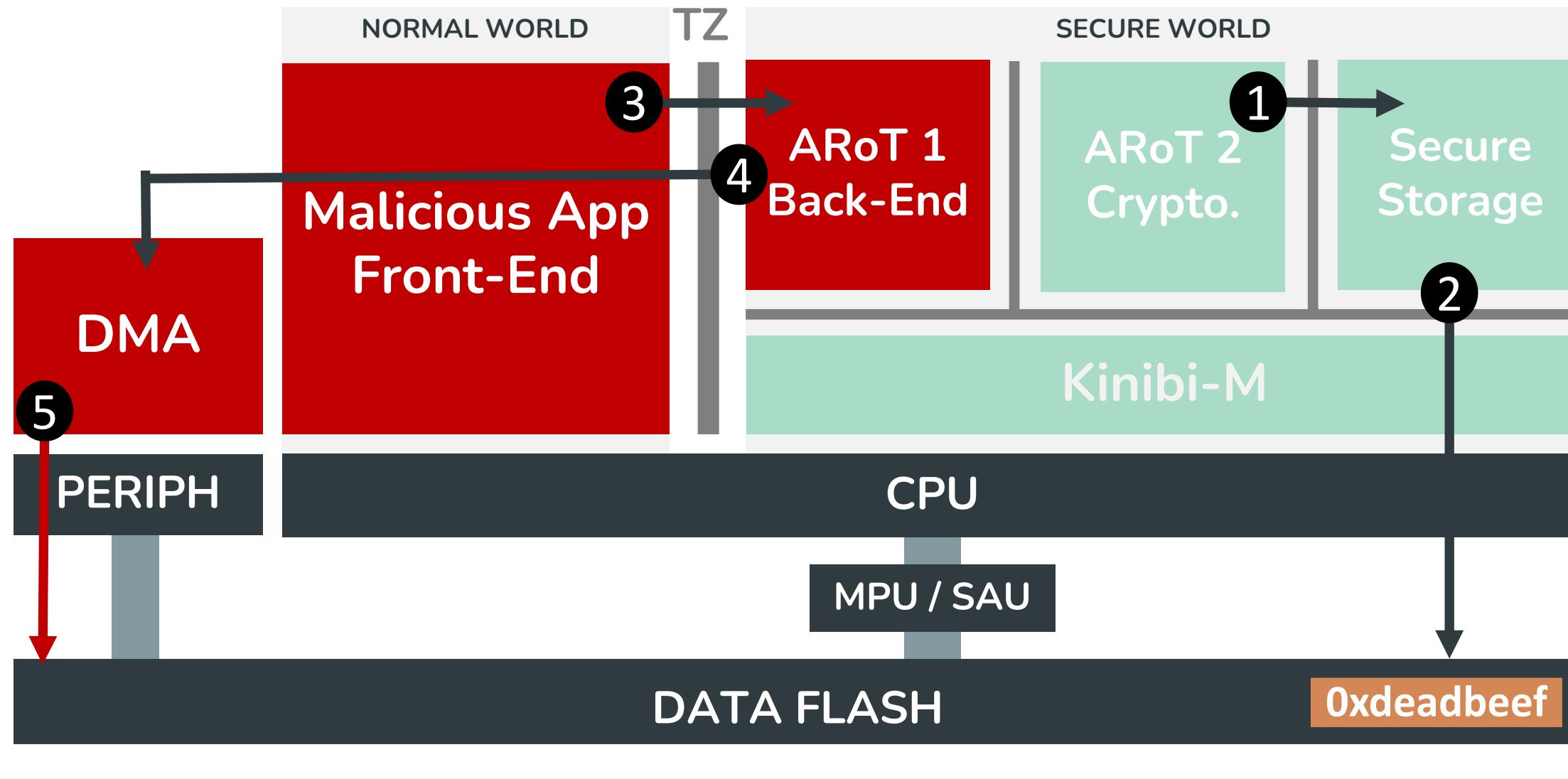
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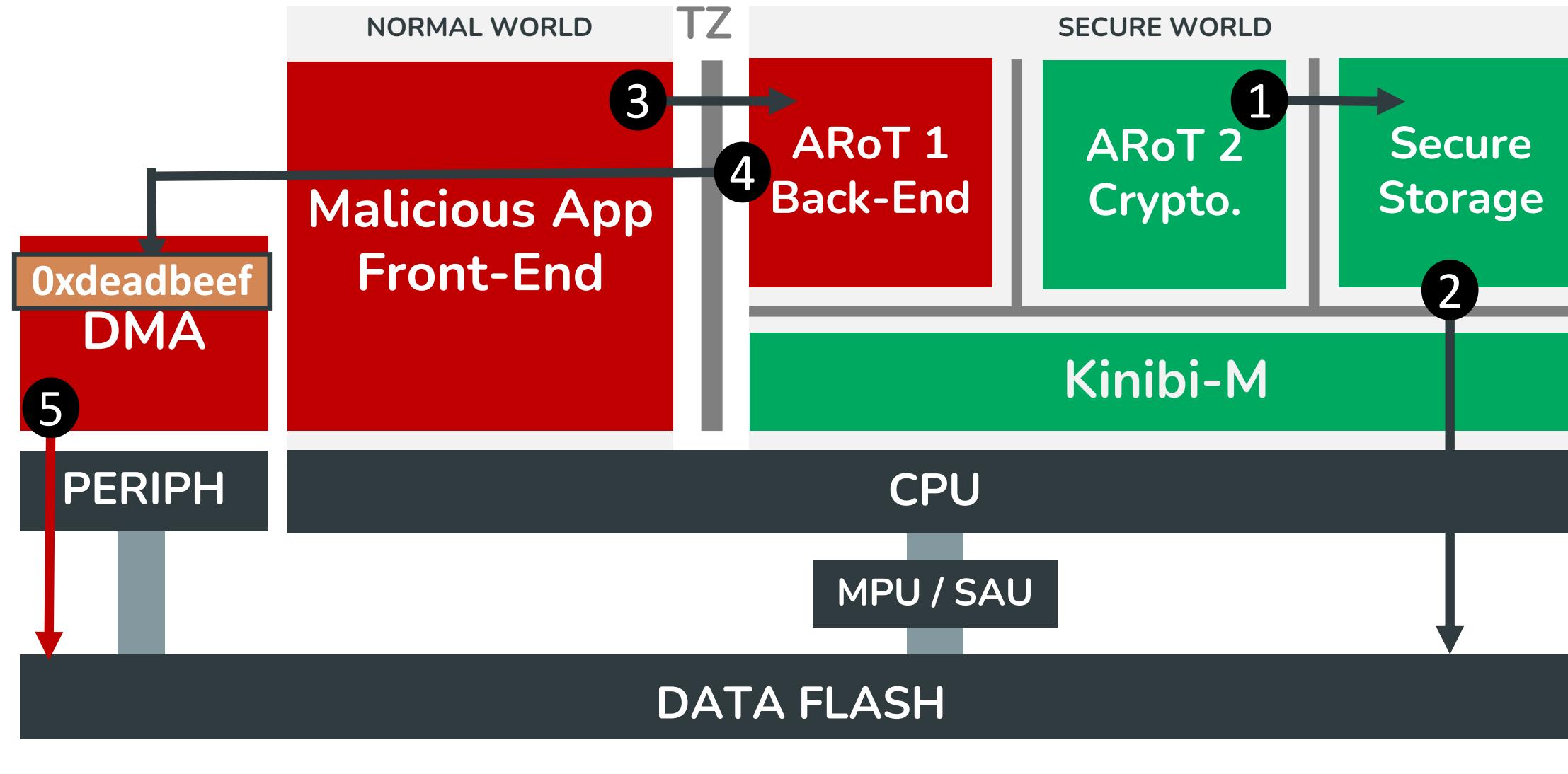
Malicious

Victim

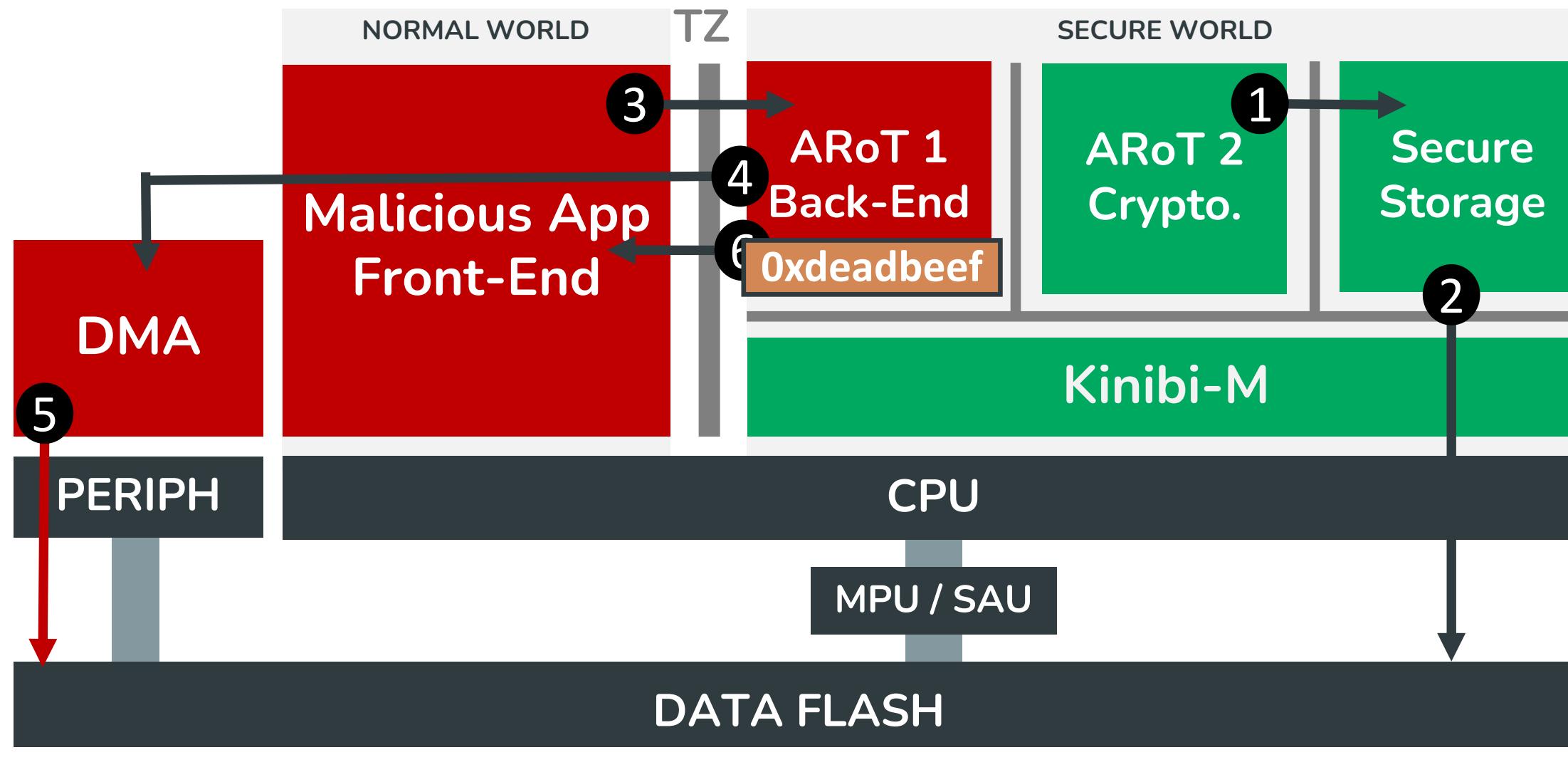
ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



ATTACK 3 STEALING KEYS



Live Demo

Video

Lessons Learned

Advices for HW & SW providers and System Designers

LESSONS

LESSONS



LESSONS

#1

For Hardware
Providers

#2

For Firmware
Providers

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware
Providers

#3

For System's
Users

For Firmware
Providers

#2

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware Providers

Hardware providers should implement protections at the **system-level** that takes in account both **privilege levels** and **security states**.

#3

For System's Users

For Firmware Providers

#2

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware
Providers

RECOMENDED

Hardware providers should implement protections at the system-level that takes in account both privilege levels and security states.

#3

For System's
Users

For Firmware
Providers

#2

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware
Providers

RECOMENDED

Hardware providers should implement protections at the system-level that takes in account both privilege levels and security states.

#3

For System's
Users

NOT RECOMENDED

For Firmware
Providers

#2

NXP LPC5500

LESSONS

#3

For System's
Users

NOT RECOMMENDED

Firmware
Providers

#2

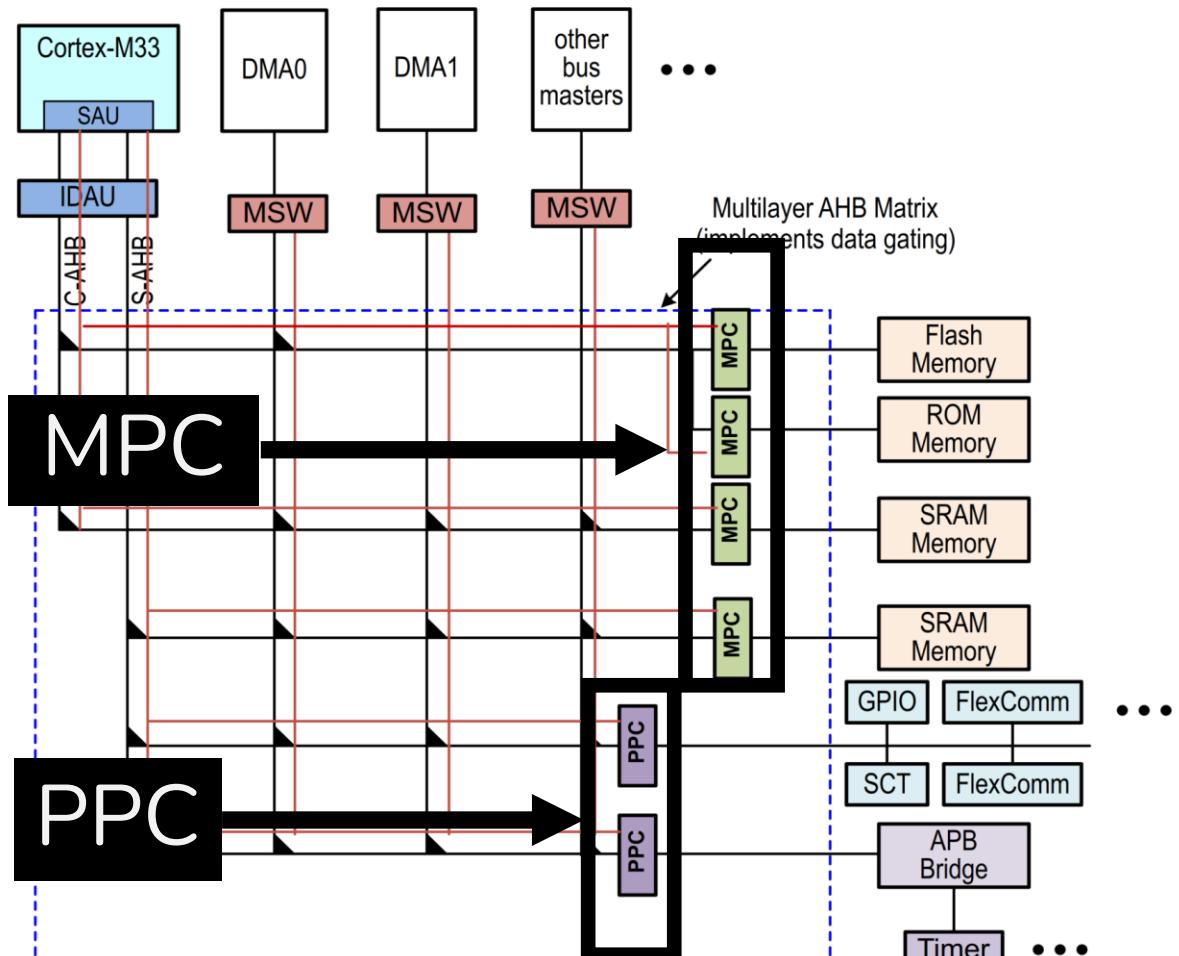
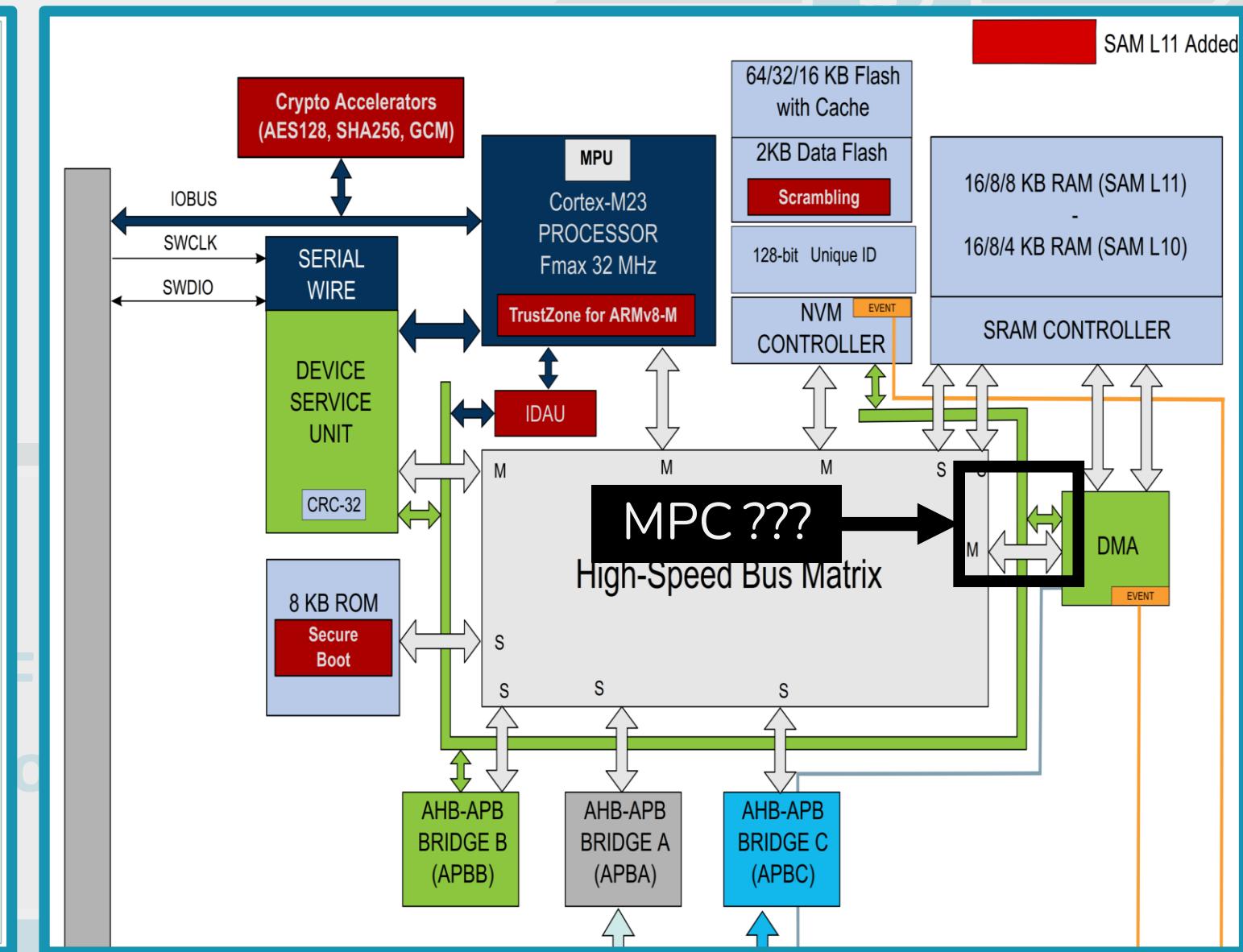
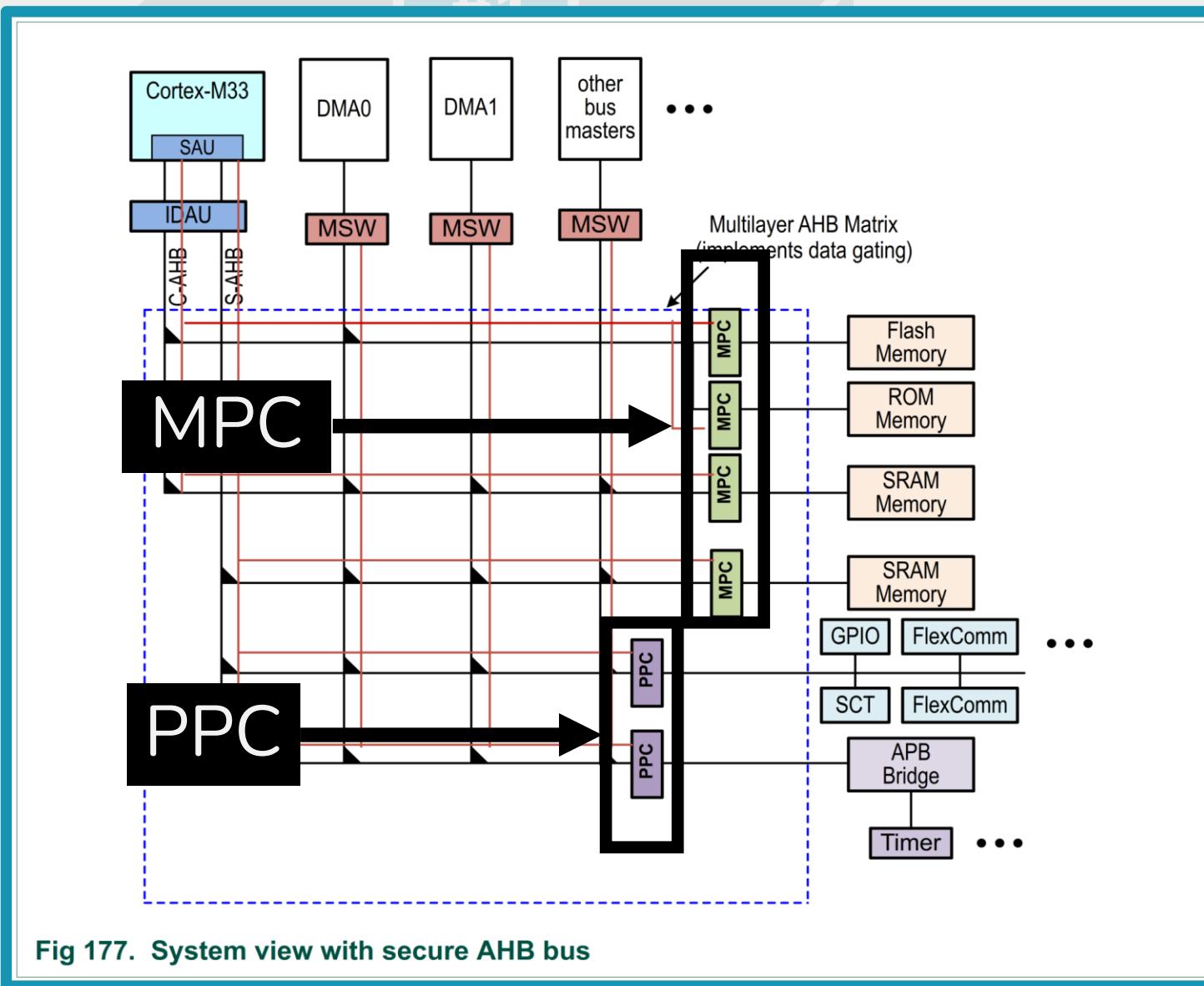


Fig 177. System view with secure AHB bus

NXP LPC5500

LESSONS

MICROCHIP SAML11



LESSONS

#1

For Hardware Providers

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#3

For System's Users

For Firmware Providers

#2

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware Providers

Hardware providers should **implement protections** at the **system-level** that takes in account both **privilege levels** and **security states**.

Firmware providers should implement mechanisms that enforce isolation defined in the PSA standard.

For Firmware Providers

#2

#3

For System's Users

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware
Providers

RECOMENDED

Hardware providers should implement protections at the system-level that takes in account both privilege levels and security states.

Firmware providers should implement mechanisms that enforce isolation defined in the PSA standard.

NOT RECOMENDED

For Firmware
Providers

#2

#3

For System's
Users

LESSONS

MULTIZONE

#1

0x5

HEX-Five Security

“To enforce system separation policies, MultiZone built-in support for protected DMA transfers traps all DMA requests and emulates the PMP logic in software”

Pag. 19 - MultiZone. MultiZone® Security Reference Manual, RISC-V. Tech. rep. MultiZone, Nov 2021.

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NOT RECOMENDED

for Firmware Providers

#2

#3

For System's Users

LESSONS

MULTIZONE

#1

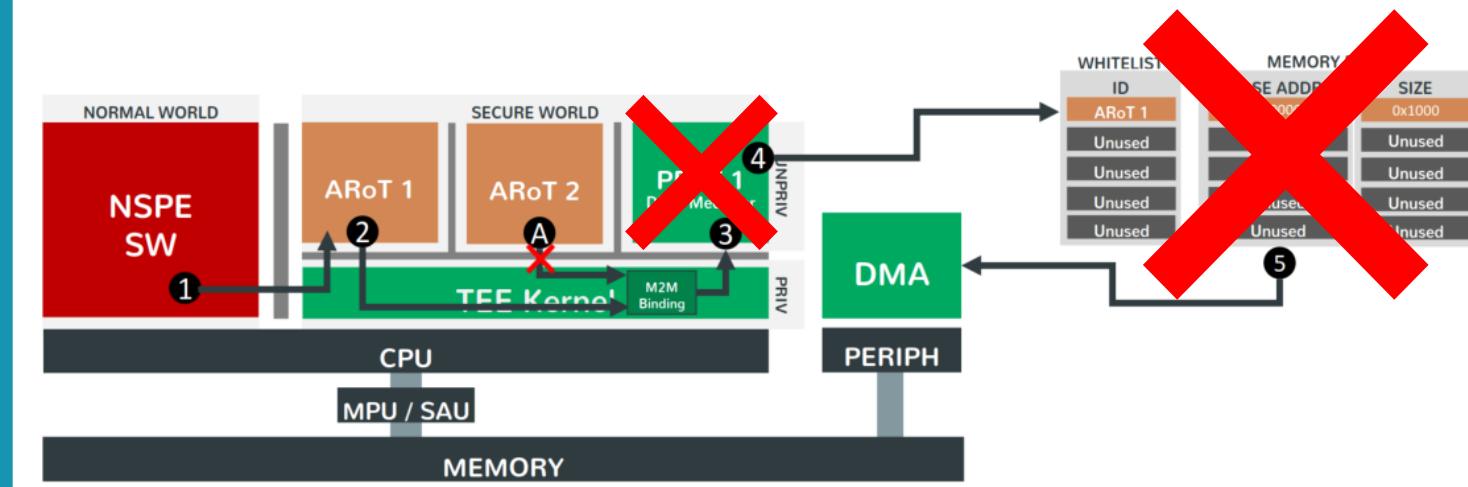
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Pag. 19 - MultiZone. MultiZone® Security Reference Manual, RISC-V. Tech. rep. MultiZone, Nov 2021.

KINIBI-M

#3



#2

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware Providers

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Firmware providers should implement mechanisms that enforce isolation defined in the PSA standard.

For Firmware Providers

#2

#3

For System's Users

LESSONS

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For Firmware Providers

#2

#3

For System's Users

Users (OEMs and software developers) should be cautious in choosing the system where they want to deploy their software.

LESSONS

#1

For Hardware Providers

WHY NOT AN EXTRA PSA LEVEL?

Hardware providers should implement protections at the system-level that takes in account both privilege levels and security states.

For Firmware Providers

#2

Firmware providers should implement mechanisms that enforce isolation defined in the PSA standard.

#3

For System's Users

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LESSONS

#1

NORMAL WORLD

For Hardware
Providers

NSPE
SW

Hardware providers
implement protocols
the system-level
takes in account
privilege levels and
security states.

SECURE WORLD

ARoT
1

ARoT
N

PRoT
1

PRoT
N

Kernel

CPU

#2

#3

Summary

Final Thoughts and BH Sound Bytes

Responsible Disclosure

Responsible Disclosure

MICROCHIP

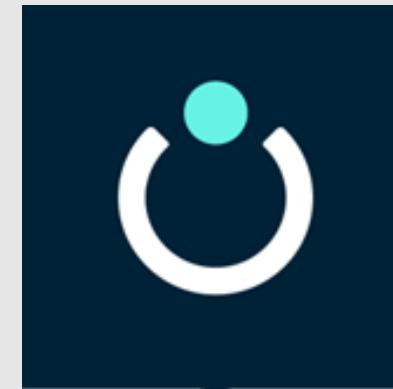


Responsible Disclosure

MICROCHIP



TRUSTONIC



Problem of the SW

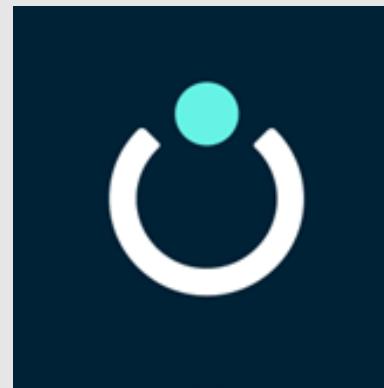


Responsible Disclosure

MICROCHIP

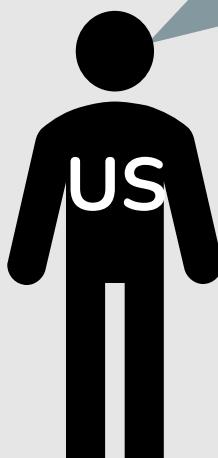


TRUSTONIC



Problem of the SW

It would be a Good
Security Practice to
Provide a MPC



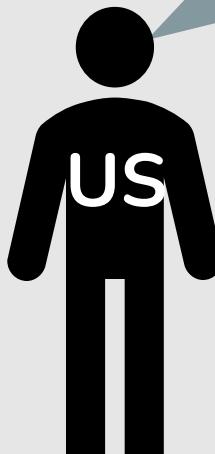
Responsible Disclosure

MICROCHIP

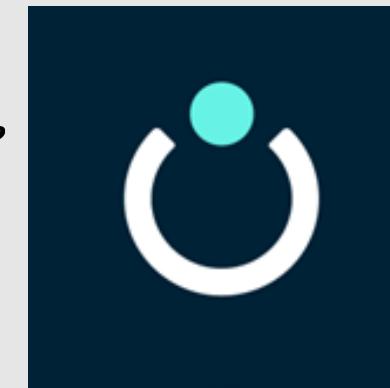


Problem of the SW

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DMA Module is Responsibility
of Developers

OEMs

Responsible Disclosure

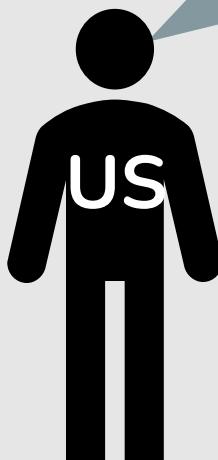
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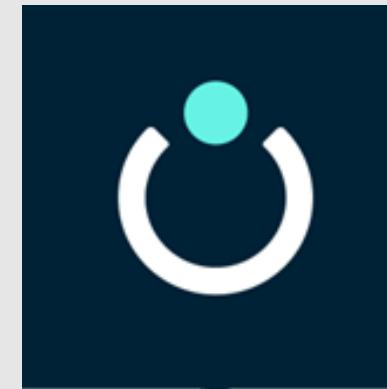
Problem of the SW



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TRUSTONIC

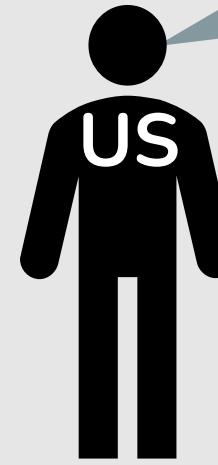


DMA Module is Responsibility
of Developers

OEMs



It would be a Good Security
Practice to Provide
DMA MEDIATION



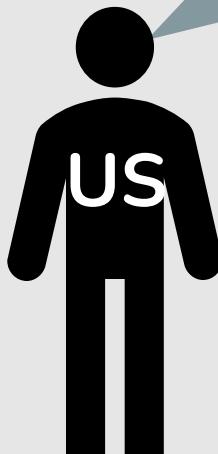
Responsible Disclosure

MICROCHIP

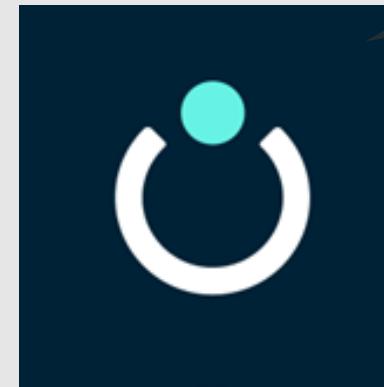


Problem of the SW

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TRUSTONIC



ATTESTATION
We signed all OEMs
Secure Modules

OEMs

DMA Module is Responsibility
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It would be a Good Security
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DMA MEDIATION

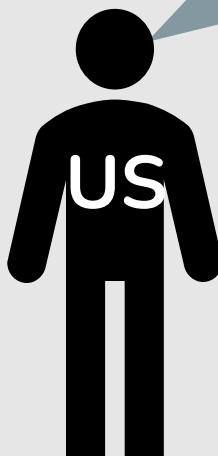


Responsible Disclosure

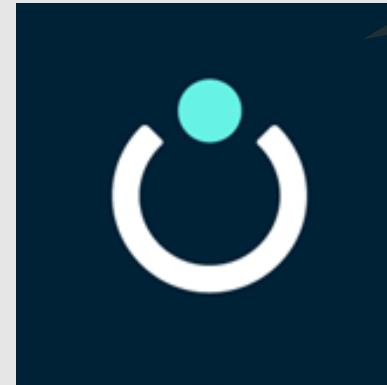
MICROCHIP



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TRUSTONIC



Problem of the SW



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DMA MEDIATION



ATTESSTATION is
ORTHOGONAL to the
problem

Responsible Disclosure

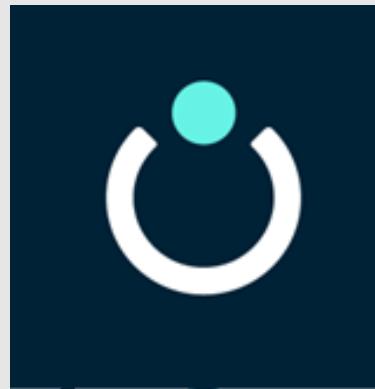
MICROCHIP



It would be a Good
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TRUSTONIC



Problem of the SW



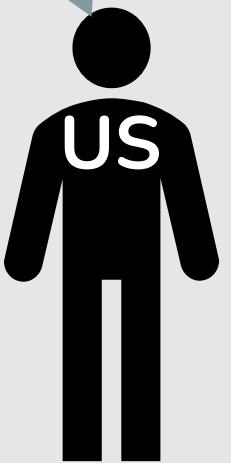
EVALUATION SDK
You Just Proved in an
Unsecure SDK Version

ATTESTATION
We signed all OEMs
Secure Modules

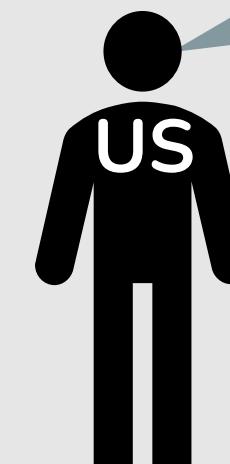
ATTESTATION is
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Responsible Disclosure

MICROCHIP



TRUSTONIC



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OEMs



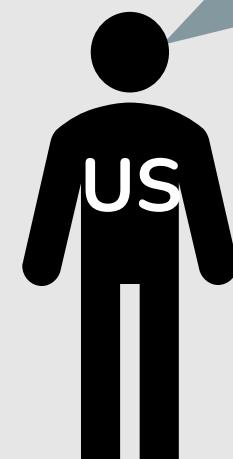
It would be a Good
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EVALUATION SDK
You Just Proved in an
Unsecure SDK Version

DMA Module is Responsibility
of Developers

You Didn't Provide us
COMERCIAL SDK

It would be a Good Security
Practice to Provide
DMA MEDIATION



Black Hat SOUND BYTES

1. We shared our **journey** on fully **assessing** an **MCU-based TEE (Kinibi-M) targeting** a reference TrustZone-M hardware platform (**SAML11**)
2. We presented how it is possible to **bypass CPU-level isolation primitives**, and explain the design of a TEE **core mechanism (DMA Mediator)** to offer such protection;
3. We perform a **live demo** of one potential **exploit that retrieves a cryptographic key** from other Secure Partitions **bypassing** all hardware and software **TEE isolation boundaries**.

THANK YOU!

Cristiano Rodrigues | Sandro Pinto, PhD
(Centro ALGORITMI / LASI, Universidade do Minho)

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 @_CRodrigues__

sandro.pinto@dei.uminho.pt

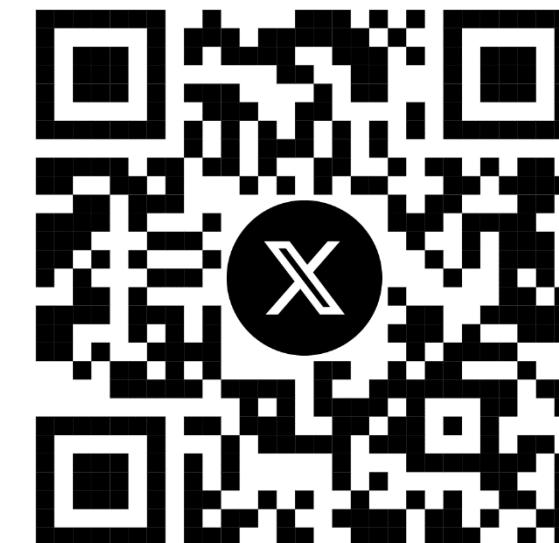
 @sandro2pinto

Q & A

Cristiano Rodrigues | Sandro Pinto, PhD
(Centro ALGORITMI / LASI, Universidade do Minho)



Cristiano Rodrigues



Sandro Pinto