The Asia Pacific Times

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The scale and potential impact of China’s foreign policy reorientation visible to most observers when China unveiled its new economic targets over the course of 2013 and 2014. The Silk Road initiative is a global project designed to redress China’s diplomatic and commercial energy to new sources, trade and transport connections in Southeast Asia and Eurasia, stretching out to the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The initiative promises USD hundreds of billions of investment for Beijing’s foreign policy agenda and already impacts strongly on the regional and political landscape.

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In today’s wobbly state of the world, de-specialized, de-commercialized and compartmentalized cooperation are the order of the day. Beijing’s diplomats have recently taken leadership positions at key international institutions that Beijing considers important for the PRC’s global expansion, including the World Bank, International Atomic Energy Organisation (IAEO), Standardisation Organisation (ISO) and Telecommunications Union (ITU). Now initiatives such as the World Internet Conference – held for the first time in 2014 in Wuzhen, China – are evidence of the PRC’s intent to become a leading power in global cyberpolitics.

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A North Korea with nuclear weapons capabilities is a global security threat

By Chung Min Lee

February 2016

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US commentators and internan- ional observers, it is striking how rapidly and suddenly Beijing has been moving forward in its own interests, by the pursuit of land reclamation activities on an unparalleled scale.

In relations with Beijing, despite lingering Chinese state, Beijing has continued to deepen its economic and political ties to Beijing through extensive urban infrastructure development, joint ventures, and direct investment.

Second, Beijing’s rising strategic importance can be seen from the perspective of its growing economic footprint. Its growing influence on global markets and financial institutions, as well as its increasing role as a regional hub for trade and investment, is clear in the increasing number of direct flights from Beijing to other major cities in China.

Third, despite superficial calm and Beijing’s economic prosperity, the persistence of regional conflicts and the strategic competition between China and other major states is evident in the region.

In the future, while the tension in the Korean Peninsula remains high, the possibility of a peaceful resolution of the conflict cannot be ruled out. The key lies in the determination of the international community to continue working towards a peaceful resolution of the Korean issue.
In a time of secular stagnation
Re-balancing in the global economy underlines international instability

By Robin Niblett

February 2016

The age of ambition
Japan is upgrading its defense capabilities in response to Chinese intimidation | By Masataka Suzuki

China is catching up, but the death in mourning already is beginning to unfold.

The last twenty years have witnessed a transformation of the global economy on an unprecedented scale. This has led to major structural changes, culminating in the last two decades: an international political and economic re-orientation over which China's leaders now have unprecedented control, and a global security environment that is no more certain than in the distant past. These structural changes have led to major changes in both the international economic and political landscape, as the pace of globalisation has increased. The cost of political instability, terrorism and conflict have also increased, with China seeking to ensure its own security and stability. The US is establishing on its presidential election year with China, the world's second-largest economy, to develop a comprehensive strategic partnership that would have broad implications for global stability. China has been increasing its military spending at a rate that has raised concerns in the US and other countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The new US-Japan Security Treaty, signed in 2015, has been seen as a strong signal of the US's commitment to the region. This is a major shift in US foreign policy, as it reflects increased concerns about China's growing military capacity and the potential for conflict in the region. The US is increasingly seeking to strengthen its alliances and partnerships in the region, as well as to enhance its diplomatic and economic ties with China. This is part of a broader strategy to maintain stability and security in the region. The US is working to develop a comprehensive strategy to address China's growing military capability, including through increased military spending, diplomatic efforts, and economic engagement. This is part of a broader US strategy to maintain stability and security in the region.
On one or another recent event in recent memory, the refugee crisis has been the elephant walking through our front door – so inescapable, so present.

The effect of a civil war 3,000 kilometers away is on display in German schools, gym classes and on the streets. Germany has shed a clear light on itself and on our responsibilities for Europe and the world.

Two years ago at the Munich Security Conference, we discussed how international responsibility starts at home. This ambition has become a test of will that I would not have imagined when I took office.

The world has illustrated that the world has to look to itself. The world has to take on board.

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This is why Germany has politically committed reassurance with a humanitarian component as well, and for a Trump presidency is a particularly worrisome proposition for America’s allies. This is why Germany has politically committed reassurance with a humanitarian component as well, and for a Trump presidency is a particularly worrisome proposition for America’s allies. This is why Germany has politically committed reassurance with a humanitarian component as well, and for a Trump presidency is a particularly worrisome proposition for America’s allies.

For America’s allies, their plea for a stable world, their plea for a stable world, their plea for a stable world.

The United States of America is at a crossroads. The United States of America is at a crossroads.

In Eastern Europe we have also stepped up our efforts to contribute to political and diplomatic solutions. In Eastern Europe we have also stepped up our efforts to contribute to political and diplomatic solutions. In Eastern Europe we have also stepped up our efforts to contribute to political and diplomatic solutions.

In 2015, Germany received more than one million refugees fleeing war and relative in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts. With the issue of integration, equality and solidarity, Germany, offering protection to hundreds of thousands of refugees and that is something we can be proud of.

At the same time, it is obvious that we will have to find ways to reduce the number of refugees coming to Germany and Europe, as the current trajectory is clearly unsustainable. But just scaling back our efforts will not help, nor will deferring the decisions of the member states.

Instead we need a strong and decisive collective response to the new realities.

The solution to this global challenge might seem tempting, because the EU is built to be robust, but it is not in theory and in practice.

Europe is renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security.

These are trying times for the European Union. Striking a balance between ensuring the security and the interests of European citizens and ensuring the integrity of the process – is a danger.

We cannot allow ourselves to be stuck on the side of the question.

We have been the continent for over half a century, we have our own experiences, power and strength. We know the way forward.

We need to continue to be an example for the world.

For the first time in decades, we have agreed on a road map to the end of the conflict, to a lasting peace within Syria.

Europe is a union, but it is also the only one that will not be the end of the story.

Ultimately, however, we will not be able to bring the ruthless bloodbath down back to manageable levels unless we address its root causes – most importantly by defeating the violent conflicts and the wars that have destabilized Europe’s southern and eastern neighbourhoods.

Crisis, conflict, dialogue

German foreign policy in a turbulent world: punching our weight

By Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Since the euro crisis, the continent has been quarrelling over the distribution of refugees – and the demagogues are having a field day

By Peter H. Koepf and Lutz Lichtenberger

The surge of refugees from Syria and elsewhere has induced panic in many European countries. The debate has sometimes turned into a battle of rhetoric, culminating in charges that migrants are taking jobs from locals and undermining the national identity. This year’s German general election was dominated by refugee policy. The AfD, the new right-wing populist party, has become a major electoral force, and others have tapped into this issue to satisfy their popular appetites.

The current German election campaign has revealed a deep divide between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats on one side, who regard the refugee problem as an issue of compassion and solidarity, and the Christian Democrats and the Alternative for Germany (AfD) on the other, who see these migrants as a threat to their national identity. This is not a novel phenomenon. This is the third time in the history of the EU that the issue of migrant policy has divided Europe, after the 2008 financial crisis and the 1990s migration crisis.

The AfD gained a strong following in Saxony-Anhalt with its first election victory, which the party attributed to the constitutional crisis of 2015, when Germany took in more than one million Syrian refugees. The AfD’s success in Saxony-Anhalt was similar to that of the Austrian Freedom Party, which won 26% of the votes in the 2013 Austrian general elections. The AfD’s national victory was particularly remarkable since it was a party that had only been formed in 2013.

The AfD’s success in Saxony-Anhalt is evidence of the growing popularity of populist parties across Europe. In Italy, the Five Star Movement has emerged as a major political force, and in France, the National Front is gaining in popularity. In Germany, the AfD has gained the most ground, winning 13% of the votes in the 2017 federal election. The party’s success has been particularly striking in Lower Saxony, where it won 21% of the votes.

The AfD’s success is a sign of the growing populism in Europe. This is a worrying trend, as it is likely to lead to a further increase in nationalist sentiment and a decline in cooperation between European countries.

The AfD’s success is also a sign of the growing economic and political uncertainty in Europe. The financial crisis of 2008 and the refugee crisis of 2015 have both highlighted the need for more solidarity and cooperation between European countries.

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Two years ago, at the 2014 Munich Security Conference, Germany’s President Joachim Gauck, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen all signaled that Germany, henceforth, was willing to play a more substantive role in international politics, particularly with regard to crisis management. Most of Germany’s partners and foes have indeed seen that something has changed in Berlin’s foreign policy behavior. Some, quite naturally, still criticize Germany for contributing too little, others applauded what they saw in terms of leadership, and still others worry about the way Germany leader where it does. This was particularly evident with regard to the refugee crisis, where more than a few EU partners complained that Berlin had failed to consult them.

Even in previous years, Germany was not exactly ‘machtvergessen’, i.e. oblivious to its international weight and power. Just ask policy makers from Greece. The last two years, however, were something like a crash course in geopolitical realism for post-Cold War Germany. Lessons included the Russian annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine; the explosion of Syria; the participation of jihadists with German or other European passports in the Syrian armies of Assad and the conflict in Syria; the explosions of ISIS in Europe; and an unprecedented influx of refugees.

While the European Union has only received some 3 percent or Germany’s new level of international co-leadership. Angela Merkel engaged in joint crisis management with David Cameron, Francois Hollande and Arseniy Yatsenyuk (from left).

On the sidelines no more

Two years into Germany’s “new” foreign policy

By Volker Perthes

Ultimate

The Eurasia Tunnel – an unparalleled milestone in tunnelling: 13.7 m TBM diameter, enormous 11 bar water pressure, connecting Asia with Europe in up to 106 m depth, through a highly variable and abrasive geology.

Success

A cooperation that led to success! Yapı Merkezi, SK E&C and Herrenknecht mastered the Bosphorus crossing with an unshakeable will and team spirit.

Pioneer

Final breakthrough on August 22, 2015 – after 16 months of extreme tunnelling, a dream came true.

www.herrenknecht.com
Germany's main framework of foreign policy is in the process of politicization, its leadership is more effective in their immediate home that without the EU, Germany would not only lose access to like-minded countries in the Western world, it would lose access to like-minded countries in the Western world. Germany's main framework of foreign policy is in the process of politicization, its leadership is more effective in their immediate...
**Letting go**

Even if full implementation of Minsk II seems unlikely, the EU and US should continue pressing all parties to meet its provisions | By Steven Pifer

The key to settling the conflict in eastern Ukraine, at least not on terms that would be considered reasonable for Kiev.

The West should continue to press Kiev political and – provided that the government acquires economic and anti-corruption reforms – additional financial, with the aim of bolstering Ukraine’s coal-

The most likely state in which Donbass will remain into the fore-

In a Dec. 31, 2015. Few were. Yet Moscow remains the sole settle-

Moscow gives the separate significant support, leadership, funding, and worry as political- 

While the local military continued discussion in accordance with Ukrainian law and under OSCE observa-

For Moscow and hosts the Black Sea.
Saudi Arabia and Iran: an escalating struggle for hegemony in the Middle East | By Thomas Avemarius

Despite the fact that oil is the lifeblood on which the economies of both Saudi Arabia and Iran depend, the two countries have at times been ideologically opposed to each other. They are at the core of one of the most sensitive conflicts in the world today – the Middle East's widening sectarian war, which has engulfed Syria, Iraq and Yemen. For more than 20 years, the struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia has raged on, although it has taken different forms. The current round of the conflict was ignited in 2016 with the ejecution of a prominent Shia cleric in Saudi Arabia.

The Arab Spring, which began in 2010, was fuelled by popular uprisings against leaders who were repressive and often corrupt. It started in Tunisia and quickly spread to Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. These uprisings forced established regimes out of power, including that of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Moammar Gaddafi in Libya and Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen. This triggered not only a political crisis in the Arab world, but also religious conflicts, as the introduction of new political parties and ideologies often resulted in a clash of values between Shia and Sunni. The result was a series of civil wars and conflicts that have claimed tens of thousands of lives.

In the case of Iran, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was a turning point in the country's history. The Shah was overthrown, and the Islamic Republic was established under Ayatollah Khomeini. The new regime sought to spread its ideology across the region, and its leaders were particularly keen on exporting the Islamic revolution to the Gulf States. This was reflected in the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which sought to spread its influence throughout the region and beyond. The result was a series of proxy wars and conflicts, including in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, which were fought by Iran's proxies and allies, such as Hezbollah and the Hashed al-Shaabi in Iraq. These conflicts were also financed by Iran, which poured billions of dollars into the region to support its proxies.

The Saudi-Iranian conflict, on the other hand, was fuelled by the Gulf States' concerns over Iran's nuclear program and its support for Shia rebels in the region. The Gulf States saw Iran as a threat to their security, and they were also concerned about the spread of Shia influence to Sunni-dominated countries. This led to a series of tensions and conflicts, including the Gulf War of 1990-1991, the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 and the Gulf War of 2003.

However, the current round of the conflict is different from the previous ones. It is more complex and more intense, and it has involved a wider range of actors. The result is a series of regional and international conflicts, which have created a new power struggle in the Middle East. The result is a series of proxy wars and conflicts, including in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, which are fought by Iran's proxies and allies, such as Hezbollah and the Hashed al-Shaabi in Iraq. These conflicts are also financed by Iran, which pours billions of dollars into the region to support its proxies.

The result is a complex web of alliances and conflicts, which is difficult to untangle. However, one thing is clear: the Saudi-Iranian conflict is a major challenge for the stability of the region and the world. The result is a series of proxy wars and conflicts, including in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, which are fought by Iran's proxies and allies, such as Hezbollah and the Hashed al-Shaabi in Iraq. These conflicts are also financed by Iran, which pours billions of dollars into the region to support its proxies.

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The new Syria peace process is in peril before it has even begun.

By Andreas Boehm

At least 12,000 civilians have been killed in Syria since the last round of talks in Geneva. As the war rages on, the international community continues to blame Russia for its failure to halt the violence. Yet, the real culprits are the Assad regime and its allies, who have continued to use chemical weapons and barrel bombs against civilians. The UN Security Council has failed to take decisive action to stop the violence.

At their meeting in Vienna on Oct. 30, 2015, the participants agreed on the following final declaration with the goal of bringing about an end to the violence as soon as possible:

1. Syria’s statehood, territorial integrity and secular character are fundamental.
2. Syria’s constitution must be respected.
3. The rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, must be protected.
4. The participants agree to accelerate all diplomatic efforts to end the war.
5. Humanitarian access will be ensured throughout the territory of Syria, and the participants will increase support for internally displaced persons, refugees and their host communities.
6. Daesh and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UN Security Council, and al-Qaeda, as agreed by the participants, must be dismantled.
7. The participants foster the Geneva Conference on National Reconciliation and ensure that the Geneva process continues to work toward a political solution.
8. The political transition will be based on the Geneva process and the Jordan Peace Agreement, and the new Syrian government will be based on the agreement reached in Geneva.
9. The participants support the Vienna Declaration on the Syrian Crisis and the future of Syria.
10. The participants, together with the United Nations, will explore modalities for, and the implementation of, a non-aggression pact among Syria’s neighbors.

The participants must work tirelessly to achieve a political solution to the conflict in Syria. This will require a commitment to the Geneva process and a willingness to compromise on all sides.

The failure to achieve a political solution will only lead to more suffering and loss of life. The international community must take action to prevent a permanent human rights crisis in Syria.

The Assad regime and its allies must be held accountable for their crimes against humanity.

Andreas Boehm is based in Vienna.
Mountains west of Mosul.

invasion of Iraq is now being

considerations that are likely to

the PKK are worse now than they

in the Middle East, 2011).
Europe needs security arrangements that take Moscow’s legitimate interests into account without relegating certain NATO and EU aspirants to a permanent zone of limited sovereignty. | By Michael Ruhle

Big decisions need strong security. Wherever important decisions are made, data security stays just as important. Giesecke & Devrient and secunet is your team for this task. Together, we ensure governments can safely critical data. And secrets stay secrets.
Four-plus months into Russia’s military operations in Syria, it is time to look at the results it has produced thus far, the objective Moscow pursues and the risks that are involved.

The Kremlin’s rationale for going in was rather straightforward. No government takes lightly the decision to put military forces in harm’s way. Those who argue that President Vladimir Putin went into Syria to replace on Russian TV the picture of a stalemate in Donbas with one of Russian Air Force prowess in the skies over Syria should know better. The first thorough average Russian had open hearing of their country’s commitment to Syria was “Afghanistan,” such a move is far less likely to win political capital than to spend it.

Russian airpower was deployed to Syria after Moscow had concluded that the collapse of Bashar al-Assad’s military was imminent. If allowed to happen, that would have almost inevitably led to the takeover of Damascus by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS). Such a triumph would have greatly enhanced the country’s reputation as an Islamic world superpower, something that Russia has never been, and stand.” Such a move is far less likely to win political capital than to spend it.

Putin’s overriding goal in the Levant is not defeating terrorism, but elevating Russia’s place in the world order. His decision to go to war in Syria can be understood as resulting from the unenviable combination of domestic and international factors that have been pushing Moscow to deploy its military in a country near its borders.

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Putin’s overriding goal in the Levant is not defeating terrorism, but elevating Russia’s place in the world order.
Giving up: Taliban fighters attend a surrender ceremony in Mazar-I-Sharif on Jan. 18, 2016.

The Talibans' temporary conquest of Kunduz made plain the Afghan army's continuing need for training and outside expertise. By Johannes Leithäuser

The Blaue Kugel reached the Munich Security Conference with the hope that there be not the image of a "continuousунзаметнческий" blue ball, but rather “a glimmer of hope that we will not fall victim to history’s misinterpretations.”

The Munich Security Conference revealed the wide chasm between the West. Fear has spread that the EU is discordant, particularly due to the refugee distribution crisis.

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The security dimension of climate change needs more attention. It’s already had a significant negative effect on global stability | By Dan Smith

February 2016

The security dimension of climate change is unavoidable yet seems little practical action.

It was the warmest month in recorded history. The average global concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere exceeded 400 parts per million for the first time ever. The average global temperature is now 1°C warmer than in the pre-industrial age. And it gets worse: a widely accepted scenario is that greenhouse gas emissions in addition to already existing average world temperatures by 1°C, hence assumed to be such an extent that an additional temperature increase of 0.8°C is unavoidable over the next four decades. Even if there were to be no more greenhouse gas emissions as of today, global warming is certain to exceed the 1.5° threshold set in the Paris Agreement.

This is where potential chaos in the international security agenda may lie. As the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change goes further than the previous version; it requires the agreement of more states, it places a focus on limiting global warming to 1.5°C (compared to pre-industrial figures) is more ambitious than the previous goal of 2°C, it has a feature of a binding mechanism in the atmosphere exceeded 400 parts per million for the first time ever. The average global temperature is now 1°C warmer than in the pre-industrial age. And it gets worse: a widely accepted scenario is that greenhouse gas emissions in addition to already existing average world temperatures by 1°C, hence assumed to be such an extent that an additional temperature increase of 0.8°C is unavoidable over the next four decades. Even if there were to be no more greenhouse gas emissions as of today, global warming is certain to exceed the 1.5° threshold set in the Paris Agreement.

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