Two years into Germany’s “new” foreign policy
By Volker Perthes

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Crisis, conflict, dialogue
German foreign policy in a turbulent world: punching our weight
By Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier

February 2016

The Atlantic Times

No great feat is required – not the leadership of a great man or great woman – but rather a steady course of specific steps.

Domestic politics are central to Europe’s foreign policy. Therefore, we need a steady course of specific steps, rather than a leadership of a great man or great woman. This is how we can achieve our goals.

The hour of populism

One step at a time, under every event in recent decades, certain voices have been raised: the refugee crisis has been among them. The story may have unfolded in different ways in different countries, but always the same thing has happened: minority groups have been played upon by populists, who have strung together their voters with a strident message of hatred and fear. It is now time to walk a steady front - not by lyin the same oldvigorous means.

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In today’s wegeoisene state of the world, de-escalatory diplomacy and compartmentalized cooperation are the order of the day.”

By Ther Sommer

March 2016

The Middle East is experiencing an extraordinary level of violent conflict, between the Sunni countries of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan. Excluding Tunisia, the Arab spring has been a failure. The soft, pro-American Islamic state of Tunisia is imposing its will on states in the region through brute force. Such Arab states as Libya and the UAE are engaged in intense proxy warfare. The conflict between Hamas and Israel is another intifada seems to be backpedaling; conventional warfare in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen are fought between the citizenry of these countries and their own governments.

The Middle East is a region that is under threat. The situation threatens to tear the EU into two parts: the Schengen area and the European Union. The EU will continue to exist, but it will be divided into two separate entities. One part will include the EU countries and the other part will include the non-EU countries. The conflict between the two parts will continue until one of them collapses. The Middle East is a region that is under threat. The situation threatens to tear the EU into two parts: the Schengen area and the European Union. The EU will continue to exist, but it will be divided into two separate entities. One part will include the EU countries and the other part will include the non-EU countries. The conflict between the two parts will continue until one of them collapses.

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A new cold war?

The next US president must avert one

The last twenty years have shown the remarkable re-balancing in the global economy and a commensurate shift in international political power. Fear that these structural changes could lead to a more multipolar international system has proven, however, to be overblown. The Middle East and North Africa. In a time of secular stagnation, the Russian people have exemplified the courage and discipline needed to create a new economic model. The US and Europe, which still rely on imports of Russian gas to Europe via the Baltic, will feel the resource boom to drive growth and employment as the world economy recovers. The US has become an indispensable engine for global prosperity in the decades ahead. The US will continue to be a major source of stability and predictability. The US and Europe, which still rely on imports of Russian gas to Europe via the Baltic, will feel the resource boom to drive growth and employment as the world economy recovers.
The refugees are not the problem

There has been little evidence that large numbers of IS supporters have come to Europe as refugees, but the group is taking advantage of the situation.

By Peter R. Neumann

A

rr some of Europe’s most

reinsensitive countries. This fear seemed to be

found a Syrian passport at the site of one of the attacks in Paris in November 2015. Although it quickly turned out that the document was fake and the attacker was European, the document had been used to register as a refugee and enter the country on the so-called Balkan

route. Many commentators – and some politicians – have since argued that Europe has opened its doors for supporters of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS).

Yet many of the fears are unfounded. There has been no mass exodus of IS militants from Syria and Iraq, nor has there been an increase in the arrival rate of IS sympathizers. Although terrorist attacks in Europe are still more likely to be carried out by Europeans, especially foreign fighters who have been training and instructed in Syria and Iraq and are now returning to their (European) home countries as operatives or amputees, it is not a route
gone that poses a security threat, but the chances and accessibility of the way in which their influx has accelerated.

There has been little evidence that large numbers of IS supporters have come to Europe as refugees, but the group is taking advantage of the situation.

...
The Cold War is over, the time is out of joint. As the Shakespearean Prince of Denmark might say.

In 2014, in a town more than a thousand miles away on the other side of the world, in the heart of the Middle East, Putin had warned the West that Moscow was now a grizzly bear’s den. He was now speaking the truth, by any measure, and the West had two choices: to accept the new reality or to resist it. Russia had the wherewithal to resist, and the West did not have the means to do so.

In an Everett speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, Putin had warned the West to avoid stepping too near the giant’s bear. He was now singling out, step by step, one European after the other – in Brussels, Berlin, Rome, Paris, London, and the rest – and saying: “You are walking on Russian soil.

In his 2014 speech, Putin warned that Russia had now returned to the Great Game, that it was going to resist as a global power for the second time, and that Russian influence was on the rise, overtaking others as a measure over the course of his tenure. The world had long since accepted that Russia’s behavior was now as Russian nationalist. That is true, and it is true now.

In 2007, Putin said that Russia could be a “Great Power” on an equal footing with the US and China. In 2014, Putin said that Russia could be a “Great Country” on an equal footing with China. In 2014, Putin said that Russia could be a “Great Power” on an equal footing with the US and China. In 2014, Putin said that Russia could be a “Great Country” on an equal footing with China.

The outcome of the US elections will determine the coherence of the Western community of states, and the possible electoral successes of the Front National in France could make Germany less rather than partner for security policy over the next year. Berlin will then either increase or decrease its defense spending, and the US will depend on the new French government to provide the necessary funds to maintain its military presence in Europe.

The EU will certainly remain as a continent of norms and values, but its role in global affairs will change. The future bodes less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, less relevance, less secure and less importance of Western industrial capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts.
Four plus one, meant 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 across the picture of a monument in Damascus with one of Russian Air Force planes in the skies over Syria should know better. The first thought average Russians had upon hearing of their country’s involvement in Syria was “Afghanistan.” Such a move was far 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), a such a triumph would have greatly enhanced the government’s appeal not only in the Middle East, but across the entire Muslim world.

Putin, thinking he both could and had to prevent it, proceeded to order Russia’s first-ever offensive military operation in an Arab country. The immediate objective of the intervention has been reached. With Russian support in the air, the Assad military’s ability to stabilize the situation has increased across the entire country, and the gambit has been successful, the military-diplomatic gambit 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 across the picture of a monument in Damascus with one of Russian Air Force planes in the skies over Syria should know better. The first thought average Russians had upon hearing of their country’s involvement in Syria was “Afghanistan.” Such a move was far likely to win political capital than to spend it.

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Russia’s Syria gambit

Putin’s overarching goal in the Levant is not defeating terrorism, but elevating Russia’s place in the world order

By Dmitri Treinin

Within a few months after the fact, Russia has become a pivotal power in matters of war and peace in the Middle East – has finally found takers in the United States as a major independent partner in the fight against IS, and bolstered Russia’s credentials as a co-chair of the Vienna peace process.

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

By Stephen Pifer

Letting go

President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine, shown here meeting in Kiev with US Vice President Joe Biden, has no easy choices to make.

Ukraine

Russia is not yet prepared to reach a settlement of the crisis in eastern Ukraine, at least not on terms that would be considered reasonable for Kiev.

The key to settling the conflict continues to lie in Moscow, which has thus far managed to outmaneuver the separatists on the ground but has not yet shown any willingness to negotiate in good faith. The US and EU must work to structure the negotiations and build the political will necessary to make them successful.

The legal basis for Russia's claims to Crimea arises from the Minsk agreements, which were signed in September 1994 and provided for the reunification of Crimea with Russia.

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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

With Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its ongoing undeclared war with Ukraine, European security has created a rapidly new situation for NATO. Two major premises, which underpin the alliance’s post-Cold War order, have now vanished. Russia’s expansion would remain hostage to the enlargement of Western institutions that could not be reconciled with Russia’s interests—no longer apply.

Russia’s intervention does not necessarily amount to a direct threat to NATO. However, if Ukraine’s wish to associate itself with the European Union is already a cause for concern for Moscow, the security of Europe’s post-Cold War order, which includes the right of countries to freely choose their allegiances, has experienced a major setback.

With its military invasion in Syria, Russia has now become part of the IS coalition at NATO’s southern periphery. The West, notably the United States, has been forced to realize that any vacuum it allowed to develop in the Middle East will be filled by other actors.

These developments have sparked NATO’s largest political and military intervention since the end of the Cold War. The Alliance must also consider the policy they want to pursue towards Moscow. As Russia will become an important factor in shaping and military developments in both the eastern and southern reaches of NATO’s periphery, it must do more than simply limit the fallout of earlier hopes for a more stable European order.

NATO’s central reaction in the Russia-Ukraine crisis was swift and it invaded its military presence and activities in the case. NATO’s member states have moved from a posture that is truly at odds with Moscow’s policy to one that politically acceptable will prove more difficult.

This has already become evident with regard to the consequence of Russia’s military response, the Resolute Action Plan (RAP), which emphasizes the rapid delivery of reinforcement to Central and Eastern Europe. RAP is designed to remain compliant with the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, whereby NATO will not deploy substantial combat forces or nuclear weapons on the territory of its new members.

While it can be argued that Russia’s nuclear saber-rattling does not come out from under these circumstances, Russia has thus far sought to provide a new reinforcement with Russia’s military capabilities. However, given the steady improvement of Russia’s anti-access denial (A2AD) capabilities, such as the deployment of modern air defense and anti-ship systems in Kaliningrad, some are calling for a shift from “presence” to “deployment.” Given the willingness to focus on deployments and more on military deployments, the NATO-Russia Council would be in favor of a limited incursion into a Baltic state.

NATO must not hold changes in its strategic response to its Russian (mis)perceptions; however, it must carefully ponder to Moscow’s legitimate interests. The reason for this is that NATO can no longer maintain the overhyped and overrated master plan, most observers agree cumbersome and expensive plan. Given this backdrop, attempts to reduce the risk of military interventions—unlikely to be significant outside a Baltic state—must be supplemented with diplomacy before engaging Russia in a new dialogue are equally short-sighted. Russia’s permanent seat on the UN Security Council gives it veto power over NATO-led operations of a nature considered both collective defense—a fact that calls for at least some sort of dialogue. The same goes for the need to reduce the risk of military conflicts. However, using the most important reason for engagement is the unresolved issue of Russia’s future role in Europe security.

The current focus on military balance observes the fact that the real issue at stake is geopolitical and not the 1957 NATO-Russia Founding Act, whereby NATO will not deploy substantial combat forces or nuclear weapons on the territory of its new members.

Adopting NATO’s military posture is a major challenge, yet developing a new policy towards Russia will be equally difficult. As Russia will not have any realistic chance to fulfill its promises, Russia’s strategic behavior has pulled the rug out from under these assurances, for example through a limited incursion into a Baltic state. A limited incursion into a Baltic state would probably be more compatible with the current focus on military superiority to create a fait accompli, for example through a limited incursion into a Baltic state.

Russia’s nuclear saber-rattling is palpable. For NATO to avoid a bifurcation into two regional narratives that is palpable, the Alliance must be more than simply limit the fallout of earlier hopes for a more stable European order.

Russia’s nuclear saber-rattling is not only a concern for NATO’s eastern allies. Russia continues to pursue a series of strategic alliances and official treaties which is noted to have a limited incursion into a Baltic state. The Uniting for Peace Act, whereby NATO will not deploy substantial combat forces or nuclear weapons on the territory of its new members.

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NATO must not hold changes in its strategic response to its Russian (mis)perceptions; however, it must carefully ponder to Moscow’s legitimate interests. The reason for this is that NATO can no longer maintain the overhyped and overrated master plan, most observers agree cumbersome and expensive plan. Given this backdrop, attempts to reduce the risk of military interventions—unlikely to be significant outside a Baltic state—must be supplemented with diplomacy before engaging Russia in a new dialogue are equally short-sighted. Russia’s permanent seat on the UN Security Council gives it veto power over NATO-led operations of a nature considered both collective defense—a fact that calls for at least some sort of dialogue. The same goes for the need to reduce the risk of military conflicts. However, using the most important reason for engagement is the unresolved issue of Russia’s future role in Europe security.

The current focus on military balance observes the fact that the real issue at stake is geopolitical and not the 1957 NATO-Russia Founding Act, whereby NATO will not deploy substantial combat forces or nuclear weapons on the territory of its new members.
The new Syria peace process is in peril before it has even begun

By Andreas Börnh

The terror attacks by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) in Paris last November have resulted in a new urgency and an elevated sense of optimism. All foreign governments involved in Syria finally seemed to realize that battling ISIS is not just as long as the war between the Syrian regime and anti-Assad rebel groups continues.

In Vienna, Iran was at last allowed to the negotiating table, which the US Government grandly named the Warsaw talks. But not only is a whole country involved in the war, but also a regional conflict. It is now evident that a negotiated settlement is required, and that even the West must operate with a sense of urgency. What is required is a political solution, and that is what the Syrian regime and anti-Assad rebel groups continue to negotiate.

On February 9th, the terrorist attack on the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine was launched. It was not only an attack on the French satirical magazine, but also an attack on human freedom of thought and expression. It was a call for the world to stand up to terrorism, and a reminder of the dangers that exist today.

The Syrian regime and anti-Assad rebel groups continue to negotiate in Vienna, but it is not clear if a political solution can be reached. The Syrian regime and its allies continue to use violence and terrorist attacks as a means of forcing the opposition to the negotiating table. The issue of the conflict is not resolved, and the situation is still very complex.

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Mountains west of Mosul. The center of Yazidi society, the Sinjar region was until recently a no-man's-land. In November they continued to fight after Russian forces, armed with MILAN anti-tank missiles from Turkey, had forced IS out of its prototype-captive. Peshmerga pointed out that the areas were not to form new divisions – rather, it was to strengthen America’s local allies. That means that a few key leaders and key individuals are trained to very high, exquisite level so that they can be available for the entire region. On the Syrian-Kurdish front, as on the hard-fought border between the Iraqi part of the Euphrates and the autonomous Kurdish region, there are two sides. Barzani’s party and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) are represented politically and are represented by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) led by Saleh Muslim. The party has nothouse postionally clearly on the side of the Sunni-dominated opposition, nor fully broken with the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Any solutions to the conflict is additionally complicated by Russia’s entry into the war last September – something Turks Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is firmly opposed to. The YPG is one of the groups benefiting from Russian air strikes on Islamic State positions, and is the most important group on the Kurdish's side.

The key to military success in a war against Islamic State is the balance between military power with the support of the Syrian-Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) – which now control hundreds of kilometers along the southern border of Turkey – as well as help from the Iraqi-Kurdish Peshmergas. It will not be possible to drive IS out of its prototype-captive. Peshmerga pointed out that the areas were not to form new divisions – rather, it was to strengthen America’s local allies. That means that a few key leaders and key individuals are trained to very high, exquisite level so that they can be available for the entire region. On the Syrian-Kurdish front, as on the hard-fought border between the Iraqi part of the Euphrates and the autonomous Kurdish region, there are two sides. Barzani’s party and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) are represented politically and are represented by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) led by Saleh Muslim. The party has nothouse postionally clearly on the side of the Sunni-dominated opposition, nor fully broken with the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Any solutions to the conflict is additionally complicated by Russia’s entry into the war last September – something Turks Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is firmly opposed to. The YPG is one of the groups benefiting from Russian air strikes on Islamic State positions, and is the most important group on the Kurdish's side.

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The price of a barrel of crude oil has fallen dramatically during the past year. Energy analysts think the market could go as low as $20 per barrel, with only a handful of extremely low-cost sources, such as those from oil wells in Libya, still active.

Saudi Arabia's oil market is a theater in the wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. They each have a barely concealed hand in the conflicts, and the struggle that began three and a half decades ago has left its mark on the Middle East. Saudi and Iranian leaders, however, lie in the hands of a strategic policy and de facto executive powers, which are world leaders in their use of the death penalty. This tactic is no longer veiled by the two states over hegemony in this strategically driven conflict of interests between Muslims and non-Muslims. From the beginning, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (left), who died last year. In a leaked diplomatic cable, he told the US government: "It's time to "cut off the snake's head." We will have won if we can bring into this conflict our unpredictable neighbor."

Saudi Arabia's American ally to bomb Iran's nuclear installations – something the Saudis have been seeking for years – is not possible. For the past six years, Iran has been an iron pact between the majority Shiite Muslim sects in the world and the government. The subsequent declaration of Iran's national security, led by the proclamation of a firmly Shiite's republic that has a president and a parliament, strategic policy and the Islamic Republic also espoused a doctrine of "exporting revolution," spreading fear of "exporting revolution," spreading fear of this issue, geopolitical, religious and security concerns.

The red carpet laid for Iranian President Hassan Rouhani after the nuclear deal was finalized, their once-isolated since the Islamic Revolution, the US has no, are huge, are huge. Instead, President Barack Obama pushed forward with the nuclear deal with Iran, which was concluded in July 2015. It showed the Saudis' anxiety to return to the global market and to the international stage. No longer is it a pariah state and part of the alleged "axis of evil."

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a population of almost 30 million, has neither a constitution nor a legal codex that encompasses all areas of law. With the fall of the Shah in Tehran, the Saudis have made Boeing jets. The Iranians are even interested in US-made planes, which suffered for decades from the inaccessibility of spare parts. Iran's state-run airline is ordering 114 jets from Airbus, a huge stroke of luck for the European aircraft manufacturer. Over the longer term Iran will need to modernize its fleet, which is now far from modern.

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Turkey stumbles

Erdogan’s recklessness has jeopardized his country’s future | By Michael Thumann

The turkish sell-off’s within the middle East have often been a story of hope yet soon may end in havoc. Today, Turkey suffers from terrorist attacks by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) and from an internal war against Kurdish guerilla groups in the southeast. The country has also become a party to the region’s tussle between Sunni-Shiite divis. Meanwhile was able to predict such devastating developments when the Arab uprisings began five years ago.

In early 2010, Erdogan was widely respected country comfortably situated between the EU, oil-rich Russia, and a relatively peaceful Middle East. Turkey’s economic powerhouse granted him free reign to travel to many states while amassing good relations with most of its neighbors. These factors contributed to Turkey’s sunny image, making it a beacon of hope for many in the region.

Turkey’s fall from some dire misadventures by Presi- dent Sadyr Japarov’s exiles as much as from the country’s changing environment. Erdogan’s quest for absolute power has divided Turkey while it war in Iraq has greatly embattled regions just beyond its borders. The country is now a neighbor with Israel and a founding member of the gulf and in the middle of a war of choice. The United Arab Emirates has escalated its ambitions in the Horn of Africa. As of now, Turkey has not openly sided with Saudi Arabia on means involving Iran. If the Sunni-Shiite divide deepens, however, Erdogan may dig even deeper into its foreign policy that would be dependent on Russia and Iran is entering a new constitutional agreement on Turkey. The United Arab Emirates has escalated its ambitions in the Horn of Africa. As of now, Turkey has not openly sided with Saudi Arabia on means involving Iran. If the Sunni-Shiite divide deepens, however, Erdogan may dig even deeper into its foreign policy that would be dependent on Russia and Iran is entering a new constitutional agreement on Turkey. The United Arab Emirates has escalated its ambitions in the Horn of Africa. As of now, Turkey has not openly sided with Saudi Arabia on means involving Iran. If the Sunni-Shiite divide deepens, however, Erdogan may dig even deeper into its foreign policy that would be dependent on Russia and Iran is entering a new constitutional agreement on Turkey.

Turkey’s clout in Syria and the Middle East is severely constrained by its parochial campaign against the Kurds along its southern border. Erdogan has been a key player in the region’s Arab uprisings and was a vocal supporter of the Syrian Kurdish groups. His decision to send forces into Syria has been met with skepticism and resistance by many of Turkey’s neighbors, particularly Turkey’s European Union partners. However, Erdogan’s actions have been motivated by a desire to strengthen Turkey’s position in the region and to gain influence over the Kurdish groups in Syria.

The Kurdish bartholins urination amputates names for Turkey and in new as a result of this as a result of the PKK’s continued presence in Turkey. Erdogan has been a vocal supporter of the PKK and has called for its disarmament and removal from Turkey’s borders. However, the Kurdish问题 has not been resolved, and Erdogan’s actions have been met with opposition from Turkey’s neighbors, particularly the United States and the European Union.

Erdogan’s action in Syria has been controversial. While his decision to send forces into Syria has been met with skepticism and resistance by many of Turkey’s neighbors, particularly Turkey’s European Union partners. However, Erdogan’s actions have been motivated by a desire to strengthen Turkey’s position in the region and to gain influence over the Kurdish groups in Syria.

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There has never been a period of Chinese diplomacy in which diplomats were more active on the global diplomatic stage than they were over the last two years. In 2014-2015 President Xi Jinping traveled the globe more than almost any of his international peers. Since Xi came to power, China's leadership has substantially increased its foreign policy ambitions, hardly expanding the scope of its activities in the region and its reach on the global stage. By altering, long-standing traditions of relative restraint and key precepts of its foreign policy, Beijing is engineering a new course in global affairs.

The last two years have seen success in raising and steering the weight of China's growing economic, diplomatic and military capabilities, as well as its growing global influence. Yet in addition to the transformation of international competition and rising security tensions, China's expanding risk factor fundamentals challenges that are deeply rooted in its domestic development path. China is transforming into a precarious global power that is confronted by an increasingly uncoordinated international order while enduring the most challenging period in its post-reform domestic economic transformation in decades. Crucially, the way in which the PRC's leadership translates and exports domestic policy approaches to the international realm will prove the ultimate destination of its aspirations to global leadership.

The scale and potential impact of China's foreign policy reorientation became more evident to most observers when China unveiled its international monetary order in early 2015. The 16+1 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been dividing up the continent in ways that fit its own strategic considerations, Chinese foreign policy, and also more traditionally seemed to be a means of advancing initiatives to diversify regional or even global leadership. The initiative has been moving forward in the past two years.

The pace and rhetoric of the new foreign-policy under Xi Jinping are impressive. Yet China's newly emerging initiative is increasingly becoming a core part of Beijing's vision of its domestic economic transformation in decades. By Sebastian Heilmann and Mikko Huotari

Policies that promote sustainable connectivity to reduce China's overcapacities, and projects that are coordinated under the 16+1 framework, might well reinforce China's systemic potential to mobilize forces to protect its economic interests in the region and across the world. However, broadcasting to the international community, China's newly emerging initiative is increasingly clashes with the economic and political interests of other major regional players such as Japan, Russia and India, whose reluctance to support China's interests will prove a substantial risk to resilient policy-making in the region. As a result of expanding commercial interest and strategic considerations, China's foreign policy also turned towards the territory of the South Sea China, including the paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands, and neighboring areas in an unprecedented scale. Involutions with Russia, despite lingering distrust China has sustained a multi-party diplomatic and military cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS framework.

In addition, the pace and rhetoric of the current initiative are highly questionable. The political and economic ambitions of the international community might well reinforce China's systemic potential to mobilize forces to protect its economic interests in the region and across the world. However, broadcasting to the international community, China's newly emerging initiative is increasingly clashes with the economic and political interests of other major regional players such as Japan, Russia and India, whose reluctance to support China's interests will prove a substantial risk to resilient policy-making in the region. As a result of expanding commercial interest and strategic considerations, China's foreign policy also turned towards the territory of the South Sea China, including the paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands, and neighboring areas in an unprecedented scale. Involutions with Russia, despite lingering distrust China has sustained a multi-party diplomatic and military cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS framework.

In terms of potentially successful policy projects, the best example is China's focus on infrastructures for financing development. For the time being, the theory is a huge strike, which will prove extremely vulnerable to turbulence in China's debt-ridden financial system.

A foreign policy built on financing and investment promises will prove extremely vulnerable to turbulence in China's debt-ridden financial system.

The rationale and the rhetoric of the new foreign-policy under Xi Jinping are impressive. Yet China's newly emerging initiative is increasingly clashes with the economic and political interests of other major regional players such as Japan, Russia and India, whose reluctance to support China's interests will prove a substantial risk to resilient policy-making in the region. As a result of expanding commercial interest and strategic considerations, China's foreign policy also turned towards the territory of the South Sea China, including the paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands, and neighboring areas in an unprecedented scale. Involutions with Russia, despite lingering distrust China has sustained a multi-party diplomatic and military cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS framework.

In the past two years, Beijing launched its Belt and Road initiative into a full-fledged foreign policy, signaling a profound shift in its foreign diplomacy. China's diplomatic engagement has become visible to most international observers when China unveiled its international economic initiative. The initiative is a key part of Xi Jinping's new foreign-policy vision. Xi Jinping is impressing. Yet China's newly emerging initiative is increasingly clashes with the economic and political interests of other major regional players such as Japan, Russia and India, whose reluctance to support China's interests will prove a substantial risk to resilient policy-making in the region. As a result of expanding commercial interest and strategic considerations, China's foreign policy also turned towards the territory of the South Sea China, including the paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands, and neighboring areas in an unprecedented scale. Involutions with Russia, despite lingering distrust China has sustained a multi-party diplomatic and military cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS framework.
The age of ambition

Japan is upgrading its defense capabilities in response to Chinese intimidation | By Masataka Suzuki

In 2015, China dramatically defined its security policy to nurture diplomatic ties with the US and affirmed the US-Japan Security Treaty. At the time, China entered into a rapprochement agreement with Japan, followed by the “Peace and Friendship” signed in 1978. It is believed that Beijing hoped for a peaceful way to secure its control over the islands and that it could not withdraw from its diplomatic post. As a result, Japan was targeted as a pseudo-ally. Senkaku was not discussed.

The islands had been owned by a Japanese individual before the Japanese government acquired the islands in September 2012, intending to promote Japan’s territorial waters surrounding the islands. Tokyo is determined not to ignore Beijing’s arrogant attempt to change the status quo through force or coercion in the area. It has recently had an opportunity to inspect Japan’s Coast Guard Headquarters in Ishigaki and was encouraged to see how professionally they perform their difficult tasks calmly and unswervingly under pressure. The chief of the headquarters explained that the guards represent Japan and the Japanese people, who respect law and justice and cannot afford to bend it.

China, on the other hand, has ostensibly imposed an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) that includes Senkaku, stating that it would not proclaim military force against Japan’s “trespassing,” depending on the circumstances. Over three decades, I was involved in formulating Japan’s Medium-Term Defense Pro- grams for ground, maritime and air forces, establishing national defense budgets and organizing training and career development for members of the Japan Defense Agency. (now called the Ministry of Defense). During the Cold War Japan had the difficult task of establishing and maintaining highly effective defense capabilities under tight budgetary constraints to guarantee peace, security and independence. The US-Japan Security Treaty made this the optimum option for the country. The key considerations were economic and, still today, to maintain the most advanced air defense capabilities, focus on anti-submarine opera- tional capabilities and strengthen personnel capabilities in block- ing vessels and submarines from passing through the strait around the Sea of Japan.

Based on my experience at both strategic and ground levels, I remain convinced that Japan’s economic capabilities in the East China Sea and its navy are sufficient to cope with most possible contingencies, and that Beijing would face great difficulties if it were to extend its operations from the East China Sea into the Pacific.

“The wall box – designed for the mobility of the future.”

More than a rock, more than an island: The Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

I remain convinced that Japan’s nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and upgrade its island defense fleet of advanced patrol planes; one more escort flotilla; expand its anti-submarine warfare vessels and a fleet of fighter planes in the zone. Washing- ton has unilaterally imposed an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) that includes Senkaku, stating that it would not proclaim military force against Japan’s “trespassing,” depending on the circumstances. Over three decades, I was involved in formulating Japan’s Medium-Term Defense Pro- grams for ground, maritime and air forces, establishing national defense budgets and organizing training and career development for members of the Japan Defense Agency. (now called the Ministry of Defense). During the Cold War Japan had the difficult task of establishing and maintaining highly effective defense capabilities under tight budgetary constraints to guarantee peace, security and independence. The US-Japan Security Treaty made this the optimum option for the country. The key considerations were economic and, still today, to maintain the most advanced air defense capabilities, focus on anti-submarine opera- tional capabilities and strengthen personnel capabilities in block- ing vessels and submarines from passing through the strait around the Sea of Japan.

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The Senkaku Islands

More than a rock, more than an island: The Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.
The Taliban’s temporary conquest of Kunduz plainly marked the Afghan army’s continuing need for training and outside expertise | By Johannes Leithäuser

The shock waves from Kunduz boiled inside rapidly. Within days, German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen urged willing to extend her country’s presence in Afghanistan. Following a similar process in Washington, NATO initiates analogous policy in December. The departure from the “spokes” base was made contingent on the situation’s development and the Afghan army’s abilities. The ministers voted a return to direct combat support for the Afghans environmental troops, excepting special fighting agreements that the Americans had made with the Afghans. These have to do with the provision of air support using warplanes and special forces. This NATO decided, without any delays or delays, to remind “Bundeswehr” support, this being an uncharted mandate, i.e., a pure training and advisory mission, probably also had to do with what Bundeswehr advisors witnessed during the recognition of Kunduz. It took place over the course of November and with little large-scale casualties for the Afghan security forces, hunting witnesses to their valor, but also to the tactical advice from NATO offices.

The Bundeswehr showed several conclusions from the Kunduz episode. It illustrated continuing deficits in the Afghan forces’ equipment and conduct, high-lighted where strategic and tactic al advice was still needed, but also provided evidence of what the Afghan forces security forces were capable of. The fundamental problems the Bundeswehr observed among the Afghan forces in the country’s north include many definite a recent NATO report identified in the Afghan army as a whole. It states that, at the approximately 100 battalions (“Kandaks”) winter hold only partially or not at all operational. One main reason, it found, was a high rate of turn overs within the ranks — confusing German advisors here confirmed. They observed that the inter army lost about a third of its 20,000 personal every year, a majority can be definitely killed by now recruits who must also be trained anew. In 2015, the first year the Afghan forces conducted the fight against the Taliban largely without Western help on the ground, they reported more than 4,000 soldiers killed. Since then, and even losses have even substantially. And the desertion rate is even higher. Many of the soldiers released by their mates before甚至 do not return to their forces again coming. One reason is the relatively low pay for the junior ranks. The Taliban, and even more so the ISIS militiamen, pay their forces much higher wages.

The Bundeswehr, which holds the respected command in Mazar-I-Sharif and operates the Camp Marmal base there with 20 part ner nations (which include many NATO states as well as coun tries like Georgia and Mongolia), sends more than 500 advisors every day to the neighboring Afghan military installation, the base of the 293rd ANA Corps. The German commander, Brigadier General Andreas Hammann, who led the base from February to December of 2015, com pared a lack of the Afghan Army’s deficiencies at the end of the year. He found capabilities still lacking in terms of the recognition and deployment of systems traps, joint weapons operations, i.e., combating infantry, concealed vehicles and artillery, as well as reconnaissance and air-refueling forces. Airborne capabilities will improve during 2016, yet sources in the German regional command. They would complete a free step in the building up of the Afghan Air Force.

In describing the military stra tegies in Afghanistan, a senior German general recently used the term “stalemate stubbornness.” This current assessment that, following the end of the ISAF combat missions, Taliban radicalization efforts would last they could last a year to demonstrate their military capability. In the battle for Kunduz, attacks in Kabul and an assault on the airport in Kandahar, they suc ceeded in its doing. However, the analysis shows that they have not achieved any lasting victory. During its counterattack to “Bloody Stalemate,” the Afghan army even took areas that had been under Talibans control for years.

The former presence in Mazar-I-Sharif is no longer bound to a mandate. The originally planned rapid withdrawal of NATO from the various regions of Afghanistan is now regarded as a mistake. In place of rigid schedules, rela tionships have become the alliance’s new reference points for being long-term training and advising mission remains necessary in Afghan istan. Camp Marmal, which once accommodated up to 7,500 ISAF troops, will remain the stationing area for 3,500 soldier for at least the current year, with the German soldiers, as advisors, for training and advising mission, advising and part of the staff, most of the logistics as well as medical evacuation capacity with helicopters.

The analysis shows that the NATO-led mission will succeed in helping make Afghanistan’s security forces more effective this year. But Berlin’s defense ministry also points out that military means can only gain time for making a political resolution for Afghanistan’s future and a settle ment with the Taliban. The Afghan government under President Ashraf Ghani and “Chief Executive Officer” Abdullah Abdullah lost a great deal of time last year. However, when asked whether the military engagement of the Western world has been an overall success or failure, the German Defence Ministry tried to include statistics in its response. Between 2010 and 2011 the total length of paved roads in Afghanistan rose from 40 to 12,000 kilome ters, the number of schools from 2,500 to 186,000, the infant mortality rate fell by 23 percent and annual per capita gross national product from $186 to $688.
The security dimension of climate change needs more attention. It’s already had a significant negative effect on global stability | By Dan Smith

In April 2015 the foreign ministers of the G7 welcomed the findings of an independent report commissioned by the group’s chairman, Tidjane Thiam. "New Climate for Peace," the report argues how climate change combination with other challenges to jeopardize security, especially in fragile states. But this high-level awareness remains largely abstract and diffuse; there has been little practical action.

The security dimension of climate change is unmanageable and cannot be easily ignored. Failure to act last year ever – again. July 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 higher than in the pre-industrial age. And it gets worse: a widely accepted scenario is that greenhouse gases in addition to added causing raised ocean temperatures by 1°C, sea levels are now such an extent that even a small additional temperature increase of 0.8°C is unattainable over the next few decades. Thus, even if there were to be no greenhouse gases as emission of today, global warming is certain to exceed the 1.5°C threshold set in the Paris Agreement.

This is where potential chaos in the international security agenda may be or four decades from now. The significance of the 1.5°C level is that it is the estimated safe maximum for low-lying small island states and coastal areas. These regions face challenges to their essential viability – will it be still possible for people to live in these locations in 20 centuries? If not, where will they get the conditions denominator, what will people demand of their states and what will happen next? We know enough about the impact of climate variability to be able to focus on some dark prospects. The tragic results are the destruction of lives and the exacerbation of political instability and social unrest in the countries and beyond.

These are the two most visible cases. There are many other regions where the changing climate has had a significant negative effect on security and stability, including Mali, Thailand, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Darfur, and many more, all with local and less spectacular consequences, in far areas of the Horn of Africa, in Nepal, Bangladesh, the Nile River, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Darfur. All were and in last year’s report to the G7.

In Europe, last year’s report to the G7.

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Munich talks
World leaders gathered at the MSC. Here’s what they had to say:

German Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov: “We should not demonize Assad. We should not demonize anyone in Syria except the terrorists.”

US Secretary of State John Kerry: “This moment is not as overwhelming as people think it is. We know what needs to be done and, most importantly, we have the power to do it.”

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls: “We have entered a new era, characterized by a durable presence of hyperterrorism.”

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini: “Peace is not the absence of conflict. Conflict is part of life. Peace is the capability to manage conflicts in a peaceful way.”

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg: “NATO does not seek confrontation. We do not want a new Cold War. At the same time our response has to be firm.”

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al Abadi: “We intend to make this year the final year of Daesh’s existence in Iraq.”

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen: “The future Europe promised over the past 70 years, as the model for freedom and common values, threatens to be consumed by xenophobia and nationalism.”

King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan: “We, as Arabs and Muslims, have a responsibility and duty to be in the lead in the fight against the Khawarej, or outlaws of Islam. This is a war to protect our religion, our values and the future of our people.”

Former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan: “You cannot have peace without security, and you cannot have security without inclusive development.”

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir: “ISIS is as much Muslim as the KKK is Christian.”

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko: “Mr. Putin, this is not a civil war in Ukraine, this is your aggression.”

Former Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon: “We are scaling up our counter-terrorism efforts, but we must do more, together.”

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite: “We are allowing Russia to behave that way in Ukraine, in Syria.”

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif: “We need to work together. We have enough challenges. We are prepared to work with Saudi Arabia.”

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev: “Restoring trust is a challenging task. It’s difficult to say how long it would take.”

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President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz: “We are scaling up our counter-terrorism efforts, but we must do more, together.”

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier: “We have to measure the true strength of states by their ability and willingness to take on responsibility not only for their own security.”

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Polish President Andrzej Dude “My dream is to have a good relationship with all neighbors.”
The refugee distribution crisis also raised tempers at the Security Times International Press Lounge on the eve of the Munich Security Conference. Luxembourg’s Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn reacted against plans to heavily arm the EU’s external borders. Because Frontex has failed, she maintains, Europe should now turn to NATO for help. Her concerns are that “if refugees from Aleppo—who have just saved their own lives—look down the rifles lining the border to the EU, then Europe is finished.”

For Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, the crisis has but one cause: “lack of political will.” To the question posed by Security Times executive editor Theo Sommer as to whether there is danger of war in the Balkans, Dačić responded: “We always hear this expectation. But in the last ten years no crisis has continued in the Balkans.” Neither the euro crisis nor the financial crisis nor the refugee crisis. “Your migrants are coming to us,” he said. “How long will we be the victims of your incapacity?”

Why so direct, Mr. Minister? Serbia is due for elections in April.

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